European Commission | Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

ECHO - Q&A on EU Aid Volunteers

When will it start?

- Regulation 375/2014 has been adopted and published in April 2014[1].
- The next steps are:

  - First call for proposals for capacity building and technical assistance for sending and hosting organisations: **January 2015**
  - Start of certification of sending and hosting organisations: **January 2015**
  - First calls for proposals for deployment of volunteers: **Second half of 2015.**
  - Publication of vacancies for volunteers: **December 2015**

What are the different elements of the EUAV?

- **Procedure and Standard setting**: The Commission is developing volunteer management standards and procedures for the EUAV initiative covering the whole volunteer cycle and elements such as safety and security; living and working conditions.
- **Certification**: Sending and hosting organisations will need to be certified against the above-mentioned standards and procedures.
- **Training**: The Commission is developing a common European training programme for the candidate volunteers.
- **Deployment**: Consortia of sending and hosting organisations will apply for funding to deploy EU Aid Volunteers; ECHO can also directly deploy a small number of volunteers to its field offices.
- **Database**: Including successfully selected and trained volunteers, ready for deployment or re-deployment.
- **Capacity building and technical assistance**: Stand-alone feature directly targeted to sending and hosting organisations to fund activities to strengthen their capacities.
- **Networking and online volunteering**: EU Aid Volunteers will be encouraged to act as Ambassadors for the initiative and EU humanitarian aid and to mutually support each other; online volunteering provides additional opportunities for people to support different 'back office' elements of the initiative from their home base.

What is the role for ECHO field offices?

- The sending and hosting organisations are fully in charge of their volunteers, including responsibility for their safety and security at all times in accordance with the standards and the procedures developed by the Commission.
- ECHO field offices will be informed on a timely and regular basis on deployment of EU Aid Volunteers in their respective countries.

(1) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.122.01.0001.01.ENG

- The EU Aid Volunteers contribute to our efforts to provide support for needs-based humanitarian aid. These volunteers are well skilled and prepared humanitarians wanting to make a difference. Their field of activity will be anchored in a local 'host organisation' that may not be a standard ECHO operational partner and more often than not will have a DRR or resilience focus. As such they should be considered by the ECHO field offices as part of what we do.
- Field offices could, thus, envisage engaging with volunteers by taking them into account for relevant meetings and activities organised for field staff and partner organisations, or by simply organising an ad hoc visit to the office for volunteers. They provide an opportunity to expand your network of humanitarian colleagues working locally, so they should certainly be kept in mind for ECHO's work
- **Hosting a volunteer: As of 2016, ECHO will also be able to directly deploy a small number of volunteers for support tasks.** The rules and conditions for this are still to be developed and input from the field will be very welcome in this respect. The focus should be clearly on activities that support general humanitarian capacity, needs, resilience, preparedness and prevention.

Operationnally, who does what?

- **Commission:**
    - Sets out in Annual Work programmes and calls for proposals priority areas for the deployment and the capacity building to be funded each year, based on assessment of need.
    - Runs the database and the network.
    - Undertakes communication activities to promote the initiative
    - **Sends a small number of volunteers to ECHO field offices.**
    - **ECHO field offices: Engage with volunteers where relevant; a few may directly host volunteers where need has been clearly identified (as of 2016).**

- **Sending and hosting organisations** (NGOs, IFRC, public sector agencies, international organisations):
    - Undergo certification
    - Apply with joint projects to calls for proposals; select, and provide candidate volunteers with apprenticeship postings, deploy and manage EU Aid Volunteers
    - May be an existing FPA partner, but may be other organisations specifically certified particularly under the EUAV initiative.

- **The Commission Executive Agency EACEA:**
    - Manages call for proposals and tender and resulting contracts and grants.
    - Manages the certification process.

- The **Volunteer training programme** will be delivered by organisation(s) to be identified in response to a call for tender on the basis of the EU training programme and competency profile for the EU Aid Volunteers.

What kind of placements will volunteers be sent to?

- **75%** of EU Aid Volunteers shall engage in resilience building and disaster risk management in vulnerable, fragile or disaster affected countries and forgotten crises; including capacity building by EU Aid Volunteers and actions in disaster prevention, preparedness, disaster risk reduction and recovery from natural and man-made disasters.
- **25%** in support for emergency response operations, including capacity building by EU Aid Volunteers and activities in logistics and transport, coordination, project management, finances and administration, communication and advocacy.
- **EU Aid Volunteers shall not be deployed to operations conducted in the theatre of international and non-international armed conflicts,** i.e. directly at the frontline of (immediate) emergency response in conflict.