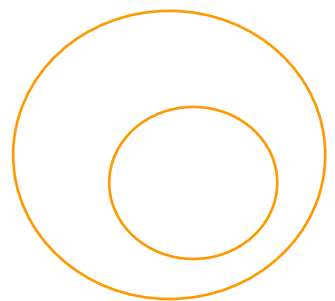


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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in humanitarian action
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CM Coord	Civil-Military Coordination Section (OCHA)
COHAFA	Council working group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid
CONCORD	European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development
COPS/PSC	Political and Security Committee
DEC	Disaster Emergency Committee
DEVE	Committee on Development (European Parliament)
DG	Directorate General (European Commission Department)
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness Programme in ECHO
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EAR	Emergency Aid Reserve
EC	European Commission
ECB	Emergency Capacity Building Project
ECHO	European Commission Department for Humanitarian Aid
EEAS	European External Action Service
EISF	European Interagency Security Forum
EP	European Parliament
EPLO	European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
EU	European Union
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
GA	General Assembly (VOICE Annual General Assembly)
GHP	Global Humanitarian Platform
GPPI	Global Public Policy Institute
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
LRRD	Linking of Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NOHA	Network on Humanitarian Action
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCM	Project Cycle Management
RELEX	European Commission Department for External Relations
SCHA	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Aid (VOICE Board)
TF	Task Force
UN	United Nations
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
VOICE	Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies
WG	VOICE Working Group

INTRODUCTION

In 2009 the VOICE network with its 85 NGO members, increased its visibility and impact through its expertise and activities at EU level.

Politically, 2009 saw the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty and the election of a new European Parliament. VOICE closely followed the institutional changes this brought about, and advocated for the maintenance of a strong and independent EU humanitarian aid within the new institutional framework. During the year VOICE achieved more access to the Council and Member States through regular collaboration with the EU Presidencies, namely the Czech and the Swedish. The network organised Round Tables in the respective member states. VOICE members addressed the Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA); and VOICE now has direct access to the Political and Security Committee through informal briefings with the EU Presidency. First exchanges already took place with the upcoming Spanish and Belgian Presidencies. VOICE lobbied strongly for the new European Parliament to reappoint a Rapporteur for Humanitarian Aid in its Development Committee, and good working relations have already been established with MEP Striffler who was elected for the post.

After its strong engagement in the adoption of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid in 2007 and the drafting of its Action Plan in 2008, the VOICE network closely monitored and encouraged the implementation of both documents by the EU institutions and Member States. VOICE members actively influenced a number of sectoral policies developed by DG ECHO as part of the Consensus Action Plan. Through flexibility and the adaptability to new issues VOICE also provided DG ECHO with consolidated positions from its members, especially on the Food Aid Convention and Strategy.

VOICE members continued their focused advocacy in 2009 on two key policy issues, namely Disaster Risk Reduction and civil-military relations through two Working Groups facilitated by the Secretariat. An ad-hoc Working Group was also created in late 2009 to contribute to the debate around the UN-led humanitarian reform as it relates to the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. Also the follow up of the DG ECHO Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) remained a high priority for ECHO partner NGOs engaged in the FPA Watch Group.

The VOICE Working Groups bring together a high-level of expertise and experience among operational NGOs, and the quality and timeliness of the common positions developed in 2009 have further contributed to the relevance of the VOICE network.

Combined with skilful advocacy, both the recommendations on civil-military relations and the policy statement on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation have been widely recognised and heard. These activities could only be successful thanks to the engagement of our members participating in these time-consuming activities and their ability to arrive at consensual results.

VOICE also strengthened its links with other humanitarian networks and actors. In the autumn the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and VOICE held a common Board meeting, while events were organised in Brussels with the ICRC and with the Humanitarian Policy Group of ODI focusing on gender based violence and aid workers' security respectively. Sharing and bringing together the perspectives of field practitioners and advocacy people at these events is of high importance to the network. The network also remained actively engaged in the Global Humanitarian Platform, a forum which brings together NGOs, the Red Cross and relevant UN agencies on an equal footing.

Throughout 2009, the expertise of the VOICE network was increasingly consulted. Requests for know-how on EU humanitarian policy and invitations to intervene in seminars and workshops have resulted in more opportunities for VOICE to promote the positions of humanitarian NGOs and to achieve visibility with the European institutions and decision makers. Outreach and collaboration with other NGO networks and humanitarian actors have further strengthened the relevance of the VOICE network.

However, with the Lisbon Treaty and a new Commission in place, there are many challenges ahead for the humanitarian NGO community: the new Commissioner's portfolio does not only include humanitarian aid but also Crisis Response, while DG ECHO now also includes Civil Protection. A European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps will also have to be established. What impact this might have on ECHO partners remains to be seen. The biggest challenge might be for the EU to continue delivering humanitarian aid that is based on the needs of crises affected populations only, and not driven by political and security purposes or by the need for greater visibility for the EU.

Kathrin Schick
VOICE Director

1

ADVOCATE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INDEPENDENT HUMANITARIAN ACTION

1. The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and its Action Plan

After having been involved in the development of both the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and Action Plan, VOICE members have actively engaged in following up the implementation of these two valuable documents. Over the course of the year VOICE has worked to underline both the importance of the Consensus and its practical implementation during discussions with the EU institutions in Brussels and also through contacts in EU Member States.

In order to monitor and foster EU Member States' engagement with the Consensus, VOICE engaged closely with the relevant representatives of Member States in the new Council Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA), in particular with the Czech and Swedish Presidencies of the Council. In order to raise awareness of the relevance of the Consensus, VOICE organised roundtables on humanitarian aid in both Prague and Stockholm. VOICE has placed particular emphasis on questions surrounding the independence of humanitarian aid, the need to preserve the humanitarian space, and DDR. VOICE also advocated with the Swedish Presidency to initiate discussion among Member States in the COHAFA around the most challenging area of the Consensus Action Plan, namely civil-military relations.

Member NGOs have been actively involved in consultations organised by DG ECHO concerning the development of various sectoral Policy Guidelines, developed under the Consensus Action Plan. The issues addressed included disaster risk reduction, protection, gender, food assistance and capacity building. On several occasions VOICE was asked by DG ECHO to provide a consolidated

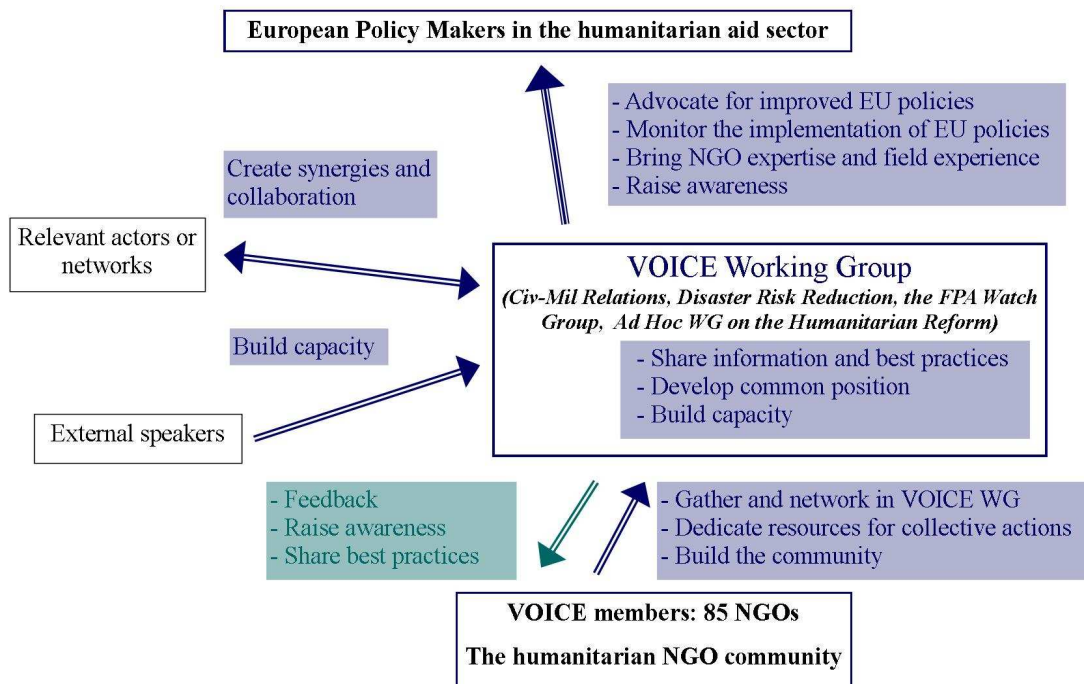
response from its members, and NGO comments were widely taken onboard. VOICE also welcomed the fact that ECHO called a meeting with its partners in May to report on the progress made in implementing the Consensus.

Furthermore, the Secretariat of the EP DEVE Committee invited VOICE to contribute to a briefing session for MEPs in the DEVE Committee on the Consensus on Humanitarian Aid to be held in 2010.

VOICE engagement with, and expertise on the Consensus process have been widely acknowledged. As a result of this work VOICE received numerous requests for presentations and advice concerning the NGO perspective on the Consensus.

2. The added value of members' coordinated advocacy

Building on the success enjoyed by its Working Groups in 2008, the VOICE network continued its advocacy on Disaster Risk Reduction, civil-military relations, the UN-led humanitarian reform process and the Framework Partnership FPA, mobilising the collective work of experts from member organisations. These working groups were facilitated by the VOICE Secretariat. Thanks to the high level of expertise and collective advocacy of its members, VOICE has been able to influence relevant EU policies. The Working Groups have also provided an excellent opportunity for information sharing, exchange of good practice and networking.



2.1. VOICE working group on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

The Working Group (WG) on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), which brings together twenty-four VOICE members, has become the European institutions' main interlocutor on DRR matters. It followed the advocacy strategy developed in 2008 which focused on influencing DG ECHO policy and the EU strategy on DRR. The group was invited to a significant number of consultation meetings and as a result had the opportunity to work closely with the staff responsible in DG ECHO and DG Development. Over the course of 2009 the WG met four times.

In June 2009, the DRR Working Group developed policy recommendations relating to the convergence between DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). This paper, endorsed by the network, both emphasises the similarities and acknowledges the difference between DRR projects and CCA. It builds on the broad expertise gained by NGOs over the last decade in the areas of risk reduction, mitigation and the prevention of natural and technological hazards.

It recommends that the EU institutions work to close the gap between the two fields of expertise by working in cooperation and coordinating between themselves, in order to enable long-term approaches to policy and funding sustainability.

Those recommendations were widely distributed to EU decision makers, universities and platforms, as well as to many agencies which specialise in DRR (such as Practical Action; Provention, Climate Action Network, etc). More importantly, the recommendations were also included in the background documentation of the global UNISDR international platform on DRR, which, in June, brought more than 1000 global actors engaged with the issue together in Geneva. Many VOICE members, together with the VOICE Secretariat, were present at this event, where the group increased its recognition and assessed the role played by the EU in this international setting.

In September, members of the Working Group increased the visibility of their work by contributing articles to the VOICE Out Loud newsletter on DRR and CCA. The newsletter was released in conjunction with a VOICE roundtable event held in Stockholm, which was dedicated to discuss DRR with Swedish NGOs

and the representatives of the Swedish EU Presidency.

VOICE member Tearfund gave a presentation detailing the WG policy recommendations. Towards the end of the year, the group members conducted an internal evaluation of the WG; assessing its strengths and weaknesses, the factors of success, and upcoming opportunities and challenges. This evaluation confirmed the Group's positive and enthusiastic view of its advocacy role, as well as reaffirming the group's relevance as a key forum for VOICE members to network, share information and build capacity.

2.2. VOICE working group on EU civil-military relations

In 2009 the VOICE Working Group on EU Civil-Military Relations (CivMil WG) concluded the challenging task of developing recommendations to the EU on civil-military relations in humanitarian action, along with a lexicon of related terminology. Moreover, it established dialogue with EU military decision makers, exchanged views with DG ECHO and built its own capacity in terms of Council advocacy.

Given the diversity of positions concerning humanitarian military relations in the NGO sector, it was very much welcomed that the CivMil WG achieved the challenging objective to formulate and adopt a set of policy recommendations to the EU. The policy paper draws attention to four key aspects of civil-military relations in humanitarian action: firstly, the life-saving, needs based and independent nature of humanitarian aid; secondly, the need for respect of humanitarian principles as defined by International Humanitarian Law; thirdly, respect for the roles and mandates of civilian humanitarian actors and the military; and finally, operational recommendations.

The recommendations need to be read with reference to the lexicon of key civil-military relations related terminology, also developed by the CivMil WG, which compiles definitions of essential concepts related to civil-military relations. The lexicon is being used as a

basis for common understanding in interaction between NGOs and the military.

In addition to formulating the VOICE recommendations, the Working Group also monitored the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid concerning civil-military relations. It also advocated for a clear definition of the distinct roles of humanitarian actors and the use of the military and civil protection assets in Humanitarian Aid. The Working Group also raised awareness on key messages within EU institutions, EU Member States, and in the field. The WG also promoted sharing lessons learnt and best practice through regular exchanges among its members and liaised with other NGO consortia and other actors such as OCHA.

Both the recommendations and the lexicon have been widely disseminated by the Working Group. They were distributed to the EU institutions, Presidencies and Member States' Permanent Representations, NGO networks, universities, and to many other interested parties. Members of the WG also promoted them with their national governments. VOICE also presented the recommendations to the European Inter-agency Security Forum (EISF) and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA). Given the relevance of the topic, the recommendations were generally very well received.

The CivMil WG also established dialogue avenues with military policy makers in the Council of the EU and welcomed representatives of the EU Military Committee and the EU Military Staff for an exchange of views. Furthermore, the group organised exchanges with DG ECHO and invited external specialists on advocacy to build its own capacity in relation to the Council structures – in particular with regards to civil and military crisis management.

In November, the Civil-Military Coordination Section (CMCoord) of OCHA Geneva visited the VOICE secretariat to discuss priorities and upcoming activities. OCHA stated that VOICE is perceived as having achieved something substantial on civil-military relations within the humanitarian NGO community.

VOICE also continued to advocate for the independence of humanitarian action from military and political interests in fora like the UK NGO Military Contact Group Conference in January and at NATO in a dialogue meeting called to discuss the Comprehensive Approach with NGOs held in May.

The VOICE CivMil WG was established in 2008 and is composed of twenty-six VOICE member organisations. In 2009, it met five times.

2.3. UN led Humanitarian Reform: The Global Humanitarian Platform and VOICE Ad Hoc Working Group

VOICE members are strongly engaged in the UN-led humanitarian reform process, especially as it relates to the reality in the field. As a result the VOICE network continued to be engaged in the Global Humanitarian Platform process, promoting the Principles of Partnership, which also form part of the Consensus Action Plan.

In 2009, VOICE set up an Ad-Hoc Working Group on Humanitarian Reform. Terms of Reference for the group were developed at the first meeting in November, and brainstorming and drafting of the recommendations was initiated.

The Group will focus on the UN-led humanitarian reform process and its four key pillars, namely coordination, leadership, funding, and partnership. By promoting the EU policy framework and the values of the European Consensus for Humanitarian Aid, EU Member States have an opportunity to add value to the Humanitarian Reform process towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian response for crisis affected populations. The EU Humanitarian Consensus principles of partnership, coordination and accountability are highly relevant in this context.

VOICE also promoted the findings of the Synthesis Report: *“Review of the*

engagement of NGOs with the humanitarian reform process”, commissioned by the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project.

3. Humanitarian concerns in EU policy processes

3.1. Advocating for European humanitarian budgets

- **EU annual budget – Securing the Emergency Aid Reserve**

In 2009 the Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR), which serves as ECHO’s financial buffer when unforeseen crises occur, was under threat. The Council approved the EAR commitment appropriations, but not the payment appropriations. VOICE contacted the Rapporteur for the budget on the DEVE Committee in the European Parliament, stressing the importance of the EAR for the timely and efficient delivery of humanitarian aid by DG ECHO. VOICE requested that the European Parliament amend the Budget for 2010 to restore the EAR payment appropriations. The European Parliament adopted a 2010 EU budget that restored the EAR payment appropriations.

- **Financial Regulations**

VOICE members, mainly from the FPA Watch Group, developed a common position feeding into the consultation on the EU Financial Regulation and its implementing rules. This consultation, launched by DG Budget, was a first step towards the revision of the Financial Regulations that is due to be finalised in 2013. VOICE provided the Commission with a consolidated answer to its questionnaire, based on input from its members, focusing on the management of grants for humanitarian aid.

3.2. Keeping Humanitarian Aid outside of the European External Action Service

Since the positive outcome of the Lisbon Treaty referendum held in Ireland in October, the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) has become highly relevant on the EU political agenda. VOICE has followed up as closely as possible on the EEAS preparation process, focusing specifically on possible implications for humanitarian aid, e.g. by monitoring European Parliament reports on the issue.

In order to avoid the instrumentalisation of EU humanitarian aid for political and security purposes, DG ECHO should not be a part of a future EEAS. With Member States and in other relevant fora like the EPLO seminar on the EEAS, VOICE underlined the risks of instrumentalisation for humanitarian aid if it should become part of an integrated, comprehensive approach. VOICE received numerous confirmations from Member States that humanitarian aid would indeed not be integrated in the European External Action Service.

2 STRENGTHEN VOICE MEMBERS' COLLECTIVE INFLUENCE

In 2009, VOICE reinforced its advocacy, thanks to its wider outreach to the European Union's main institutions. VOICE reinforced the solid working relations it has built up over the years with the European Commission and the European Parliament,

and further expanded them. An important breakthrough was made regarding VOICE relations with the Council of the EU, which traditionally has engaged in little dialogue with civil society.



1. European Commission

1.1. Partnership with DG ECHO

DG ECHO is one of the main donors for European humanitarian NGOs. Over the years, VOICE has developed a regular dialogue with DG ECHO, especially through the FPA Watch Group. In 2009, the policy dialogue focused on the implementation of the Humanitarian Consensus and on the preservation of humanitarian space. On the operational side, the collaboration centred on funding issues, mainly through the work of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) Watch Group, and facilitated by the VOICE secretariat. The relationship between VOICE and DG ECHO is guided by a solid partnership approach and mutual respect and was further strengthened in 2009 by increased consultation and interaction.

- **FPA Watch Group**

In 2009, the FPA Watch Group was made up of thirty-two organisations. The group was led by a Task Force (TF) composed of ten NGOs who played a vital role in taking the work forward. Given the complexity of ECHO funding procedures, and the open and constructive partnership spirit and dialogue between the Group and DG ECHO, there is high demand among NGOs to participate in the Group, in total, nine meetings took place throughout the year. The Watch Group is facilitated by VOICE on behalf of all ECHO partners.

The main focus of 2009 has been the monitoring of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA). In June, a comprehensive questionnaire was sent to all 85 network members. The objective was to provide ECHO B2 (Finance Management, Legal and Procedural Affairs Unit) with in-depth feedback from NGO partners regarding the implementation of the FPA 2008, one year after its launch. This exercise gave operational NGOs the chance to put forward their concerns and suggestions for improvement. The following recommendations were made:

- There is an urgent need to provide partners with procurement guidelines,
- To revise the final financial reporting guidelines in order to simplify the requirements,
- To ensure more consistency in the interpretation of the FPA.

Based on the conclusions and recommendations provided in 2009, ECHO B2 decided to update and revise the relevant guidelines and factsheets and the WG will actively engage in this process in 2010.

In late 2009, the Watch Group also addressed the need to make the audit process at headquarters more transparent and an exchange with DG ECHO B1 (Budget, Audit, IRM, Document management Unit) was organised.

- **Strategic Dialogue Meeting**

In February, the VOICE Board had its annual Strategic Dialogue Meeting with DG ECHO. This was the first meeting with Mr. Zangl, DG ECHO's new Director-General, and it focused mainly on each party's priorities for 2009. VOICE key EU policy issues were the independence and professionalism of humanitarian action, the link between fieldwork and advocacy, the follow-up on the Consensus, and the EU budget.

DG ECHO presented how EU coordination and policy discussions are led in the Council, and in particular the role and perspectives for the newly established COHAFA. Regarding the follow-up of the Consensus, VOICE welcomed the increased reference to humanitarian issues in EU Council Conclusions, but stressed the need for more emphasis on access, security and the respect of International Humanitarian Law. DG ECHO and VOICE also discussed the UN-led Humanitarian Reform and questions linked to UN funding of NGOs.

- **DG ECHO Partners' Conference**

VOICE was very visible during the annual DG ECHO Partners' Conference in Brussels in December. Its President made a speech which was very warmly received. He addressed the opportunities and challenges presented by the Lisbon Treaty and by the European Consensus for Humanitarian Aid, its Action Plan and their implementation. He welcomed the

constructive collaboration between VOICE and ECHO. He concluded by highlighting NGOs expectations for 2010.

During the plenary sessions, VOICE members asked questions regarding Civil Protection, the European External Action Service (EEAS), DRR and DIPECHO. These issues were of high concern to NGOs in a time of reshaping of ECHO's responsibilities and other institutional changes,

Acting upon the suggestion of the VOICE network, ECHO invited speakers from several Southern partner organisations, and organised a workshop that addressed the issue of working with local partners. The workshop on Clusters was facilitated by VOICE Director, while a Board member from Médecins du Monde acted as rapporteur. The network had a stand at the conference, and VOICE publications, including the latest newsletter on *Humanitarian Aid and Security*, were highly welcomed and distributed to over 300 people.

- **DG ECHO's reviews and Partners consultations**

In 2009, requests for participation and input made by VOICE and its members to DG ECHO stakeholder consultations and reviews increased substantially. This is indicative of ECHO's recognition of the expertise and experience of its NGO partners and also of the relevance of the VOICE network. Members participated actively and were strongly represented in consultation meetings. On several occasions the VOICE secretariat facilitated members' involvement by the development of consolidated replies. This strengthened the NGOs collective positioning and influence.

In Spring 2009 VOICE was asked to facilitate DG ECHO's **Food Assistance** consultation. Twenty-five VOICE members contributed to this consultation, which gave DG ECHO the opportunity to hear the main elements and expectations of the NGOs before it developed its policy. At a later consultation meeting numerous NGOs welcomed ECHO's draft policy as reflecting their views. Additional points were raised during the meeting which will hopefully be included in the final document. The NGOs requested a clear definition of the objectives and aims of the Humanitarian Food Assistance programmes, an understanding of linkages with other programmes such as Food Security, DRR, Livelihoods, etc., as well as

assurance on the linking of relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD).

Through VOICE, DG ECHO also sought NGO opinions regarding the current **Food Aid Convention** and expectations for its possible renewal. VOICE consolidated answer was a valuable contribution to the Commission, as DG ECHO is representing the EU on the international Food Aid committee. In the discussions it relayed many of the NGOs' positions in the discussions, bringing them to the attention of other participants.

Following the consultation meeting at the end of 2008, VOICE analysed the final version of DG ECHO's policy on the use of **Cash and Vouchers** in humanitarian aid, and was pleased to note that many of its members' comments had been included in the document.

ECHO also invited the DRR WG to its consultation meeting on **Disaster Risk Reduction where they presented their draft policy**. The group had been very active in 2008 when ECHO started to develop its policy on DRR, and was pleased to see many of their recommendations taken on board. Several VOICE members also gave presentations at the meeting.

1.2. Collaboration with other DGs in the Commission

In addition to strong relations with DG ECHO, VOICE has been engaging in dialogue with other Directorates General (DGs) in the European Commission relevant to humanitarian aid.

Throughout the year the VOICE Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was in close contact with DG Development and RELEX regarding the EU DRR Strategy. It was invited to the consultation meeting on the Implementation Plan of the EU strategy where DG DEV presented the annotated outline of the plan. The group provided input during the meeting and reinforced its messages in a letter sent few days after the consultation.

VOICE also participated in the biennial European Commission conference on conflict prevention and crisis response organised by DG RELEX; followed-up on the Development and Security Nexus study, and gave the humanitarian perspective on the draft Action Plan for Fragility and Conflict.

2. Council of the EU

In 2009, VOICE greatly extended its working relations with the Council of the European Union.

2.1. Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid

The EU Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) was established as a result of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, and came into effect from 1 January 2009. It is a forum for Member States to engage in regular policy-level exchanges relating to EU humanitarian aid and operational strategies. VOICE welcomed this development, closely monitored its first year of work, and strongly lobbied for NGO participation. VOICE also made solid progress in influencing and engaging directly with the EU Presidency Representatives to the COHAFA, who chair the meetings and set the agenda. In 2009, the Czech Republic and Sweden held the Presidency.

The VOICE Board had a strategic exchange with both the Czech and the Swedish representatives to the COHAFA during their respective Presidencies.

In January, the Board presented VOICE concerns and priorities for 2009 to the Czech Department of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid in Prague, and stressed the need for humanitarian NGOs to have access to the meetings of the COHAFA. The following day, during a roundtable discussion organised by VOICE and its member organisation People in Need, the Czech government shared the outcome of the first COHAFA with European NGOs. After consistent lobbying, VOICE and its members Norwegian Refugee Council and Oxfam International were finally invited to brief COHAFA members in advance of the official meeting. They addressed the humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka and in Gaza. This was a great achievement and sets a new precedent for future Presidencies.

The representatives of the Swedish Presidency responsible for humanitarian aid in Stockholm invited VOICE to a discussion regarding the issues of concern to NGOs ahead of their first COHAFA meeting in July. In September, the VOICE Board met the Swedish Deputy Director and Head of Section for humanitarian policy and conflict issues in Stockholm for an informal though constructive exchange on priorities.

In November, VOICE also initiated the exchange with the Spanish representative to the COHAFA, who will be setting the agenda and chairing the meetings in the first half of 2010. VOICE already presented humanitarian priorities to the Belgian Ministry for Cooperation at a roundtable discussion held in January in preparation of their Presidency in the second half of 2010. Furthermore, VOICE engaged in an exchange of views with other Member States' representatives to the COHAFA, including through strong engagement of VOICE members with representatives of their national governments.

2.2. Political and Security Committee (PSC/COPS)

The Swedish Presidency initiated regular informal meetings between their representatives to the Political and Security Committee of the Council (COPS/PSC) and Human Rights NGOs. The PSC is considered one of the most important Committees relating to EU Foreign Policy issues. Following the first meeting between VOICE and the Presidency, the network was invited to participate. In these meetings, VOICE brought up humanitarian NGOs' concerns and challenge areas in which the EU can exercise political leverage, such as the role of the military, the shrinking humanitarian space and access to crisis affected populations in countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia. The VOICE secretariat received solid, country-specific input from its members in preparation for these meetings. It was a huge achievement for VOICE to be invited to represent the humanitarian sector at the Council's most significant political working body.

3. European Parliament

2009 saw the election of new Members of the European Parliament and the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty which increases the powers of the European Parliament. The VOICE network took this opportunity to further engage with the democratic body of the EU. VOICE strongly advocated for the reappointment of a Standing Rapporteur for Humanitarian Aid and strengthened its relations with the Secretariat of the European Parliament's Development Committee (DEVE).

Given VOICE close collaboration with the previous Standing Rapporteur on Humanitarian Aid, it has strongly advocated for the reappointment of such a Rapporteur in the new European Parliament's DEVE Committee. This was a key point in the VOICE General Policy Resolution, and the network also sent a letter to the Chairwoman of the DEVE Committee upon her appointment reiterating this message.

Following DEVE's agreement to re-instate a Standing Rapporteur, VOICE established sound relations with Ms. Striffler and her office as soon as she was appointed. A meeting was held in November to discuss VOICE priorities for 2010, with particular emphasis placed on civil-military relations, DRR, and the upcoming mid-term review of the EU Humanitarian Consensus. Opportunities for further collaboration during the 2009-2014 term were explored.

Throughout the year, VOICE actively collaborated with the DEVE Committee and its Secretariat. VOICE provided the Secretariat with questions relating to humanitarian aid to be put forward by MEPs at the hearing of interim Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Karel De Gucht. The Secretariat also picked up on VOICE suggestion to organise a briefing for MEPs in the DEVE Committee on the Consensus on Humanitarian Aid during a session to be held in 2010.

Throughout the year VOICE also attended DEVE Committee meetings that discussed the 2010 EU annual budget, ECHO's 2010 Strategy and priorities of the Swedish Presidency.

4. Increased visibility in EU Member States

4.1. Roundtable and training in the Czech Republic – Reaching out to new Member States

VOICE organised a two day event in Prague in order to bring together humanitarian NGOs, especially from New Member States, to discuss EU policies on humanitarian aid. On 20th January, a roundtable discussion on the 'Challenges for EU humanitarian NGOs' allowed exchanges between the Czech EU Presidency, DG ECHO, and numerous NGOs from both old and new EU Member States. Members of the VOICE Board gave presentations on topics such as funding and the relevance of humanitarian principles. The following day, a Board member from Médecins du Monde trained twenty-five NGO workers on Project Cycle Management and the logical framework for ECHO. Through numerous practical exercises, the participants gained valuable knowledge directly applicable to their daily work. 14 NGOs from various new Member States participated and the participants' overall level of satisfaction was very high. Participants appreciated this great opportunity to gain insight into policy and practical management skills, and to network with humanitarian NGOs and other key humanitarian actors.

4.2. Roundtable in Sweden

On 29 September, in the early stage of the Swedish Presidency, VOICE organised a Roundtable on Humanitarian Aid in Stockholm in partnership with VOICE members Church of Sweden, IAS and PMU and other Swedish NGOs. This event offered an excellent opportunity for dialogue with the Swedish Presidency, and for the NGOs to express their opinions on current EU humanitarian policy issues affecting their work. It brought together 45 participants, mainly from Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway.

The roundtable discussed the progress made by Member States and ECHO in the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the upcoming challenges. Swedish NGOs and VOICE members discussed how NGOs can best engage in EU

advocacy, and what the main advocacy challenges are, namely civil-military relations, humanitarian funding and the humanitarian reform. As Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation were priorities of the Swedish Presidency, they constituted the operational perspective of the day, and there was an exchange of views between the Sweden International Development Cooperation Agency and NGOs. Finally, thanks to the presence of the VOICE Board, the last session focused on sharing experience and good practice for advocating at national level. The roundtable was very positively evaluated by the participants.

4.3. Other Member States

VOICE also reached out to other EU Member States. In France, VOICE gave input on EU humanitarian issues to the French NGOs' manifesto for MEP candidates in the 2009 elections. Furthermore, the VOICE Director was part of the "Comité de Réflexion" for a

report on humanitarian aid commissioned by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs. Moreover, staff from the French Permanent Representation requested a briefing from VOICE on humanitarian issues. In Germany, the VOICE President gave a presentation at a seminar on security, organised by VOICE member Welthungerhilfe, in April; he also participated in meetings of the body that coordinates dialogue between government institutions and NGOs. Given the important role UK NGOs and humanitarian actors play in the sector, VOICE embarked on intensive outreach to the UK to foster more engagement in EU humanitarian policy. VOICE gave a presentation to the Humanitarian Policy Group Advisory Committee, met with NGO networks such as the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) and NGO platform BOND, and actively participated in the Humanitarian Futures Annual Stakeholders meeting, the Ditchley Conference on Humanitarian Reform. The VOICE President and Director also engaged actively in the 25th ALNAP meeting.

3

OUTREACH WITHIN AND BEYOND THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM

1. Collaboration with humanitarian actors

During the last year VOICE considerably strengthened its collaboration with other humanitarian actors, and increased its visibility in the sector. The network collaborated with a wide range of partners and participated in a large number of events and initiatives.

1.1. Strengthening collaboration with ICVA

In 2009, VOICE strengthened its collaboration with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the global network of humanitarian NGOs. The networks attended each other's strategic meetings (General Assembly, Annual Conference, etc.). The mutual wish to strengthen

collaboration and complementarity between the networks was consolidated by holding a first common Board meeting in Geneva in October. This was done with the view to have a structured discussion intended to explore synergies and to learn from each others expertise.

1.2. Relations with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Family

Given the need for stronger collaboration between humanitarian actors on the EU advocacy scene in order to succeed in preserving humanitarian space, VOICE continued its collaboration with the Red Cross family.

The DRR Working Group had exchanges with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), who are also observers to the FPA Watch-Group.

In May, VOICE and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) collaborated on organising a roundtable debate on *Women in Conflict: "Greater Needs, Fewer Resources"* in Brussels. Both VOICE and the ICRC brought some of their experts from the field to this interesting debate.

VOICE also attended a conference organised in September by the ICRC and the Swedish Presidency to mark the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, which considered ways of enhancing non-State actors' respect for international humanitarian law.

1.3. OCHA - United Nations

In 2009, VOICE continued its liaison with UN-OCHA, particularly at the Brussels level. There was an agreement on the need for strengthened collaboration among humanitarian actors when addressing the implementation of the Humanitarian Consensus. The positive collaboration with OCHA in Geneva on civil-military relations was also maintained. UN agencies participated greatly in VOICE events.

Over the year VOICE also remained actively involved in the Task Force charged with the preparation of the High-Level Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) meeting scheduled to take place in February 2010. VOICE actively lobbied for the continuation of the GHP beyond 2010.

1.4. Universities

In 2009 VOICE has strengthened its collaboration with the NOHA network (University network supported by ECHO). As in previous years, the VOICE Director addressed 150 Humanitarian Masters students at the NOHA Introductory Seminar which took place in Warsaw in September.

In October, the VOICE Project Coordinator gave a presentation to the NOHA Fall School on the relationship between NGOs and donors, which sought to give an introduction to the humanitarian sector.

The VOICE Director was invited to join the newly established NOHA Advisory Council, together with the EP Rapporteur on Humanitarian Aid and other humanitarian policy makers and experts.

VOICE was also invited by several universities to contribute to training and research on humanitarian aid and EU humanitarian policy. In June, the VOICE Advocacy and Communication Officer briefed 15 European Studies Masters students from Hamburg on VOICE, humanitarian action and EU advocacy.

1.5. Transatlantic dialogue on humanitarian aid

In 2009, VOICE engaged in transatlantic debates on humanitarian aid. It was actively engaged in the Transatlantic Dialogues on Humanitarian Action organized by the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI). The VOICE secretariat engaged in a roundtable of the Raising the Bar Project at the European Parliament in April, while the VOICE President gave a speech at the 3rd Transatlantic Dialogue on Humanitarian Action in June.

In March, a joint meeting took place between the US NGO Platform InterAction, CONCORD and VOICE discussing common international aid challenges and perspectives. Furthermore, the VOICE President and Board members participated in the annual InterAction Forum in June in Washington.

2. Events

In order to link field actors and the reality they face with EU policy, VOICE organised two successful events in Brussels in 2009. These events offered the opportunity for debate between humanitarian NGOs and policy makers and raised the visibility of topical humanitarian issues amongst relevant stakeholders in Brussels.

In May, VOICE and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) collaborated on organising a roundtable debate on *Women in Conflict: "Greater Needs, Fewer Resources"* in Brussels. It brought together around 65 representatives from VOICE

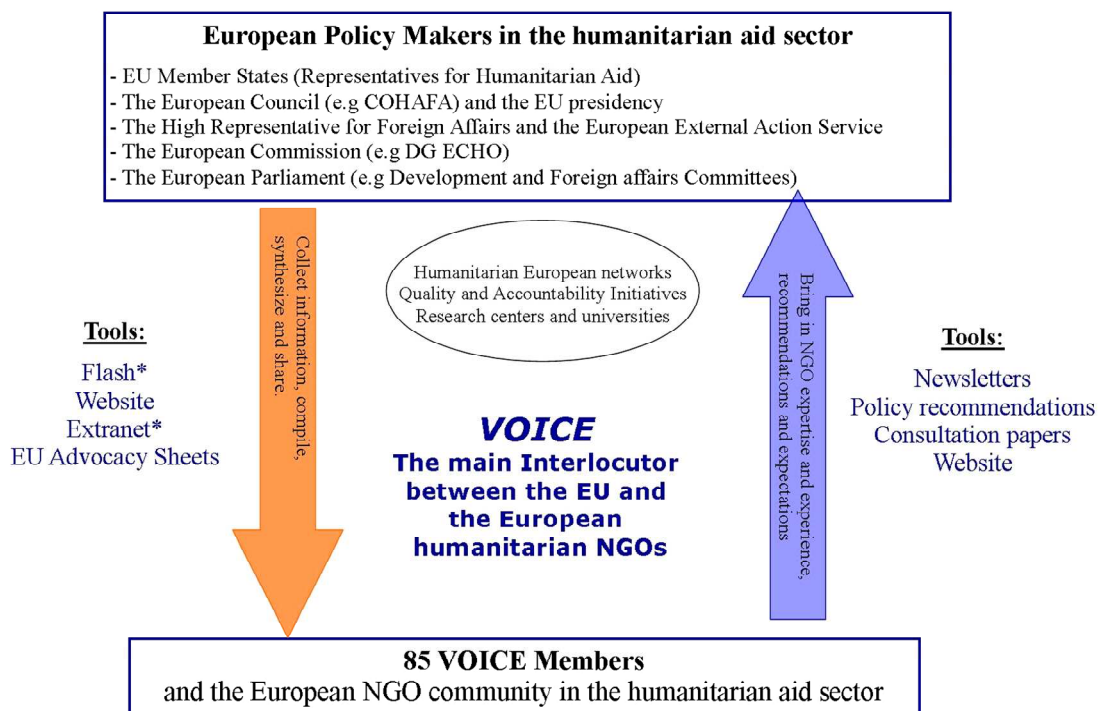
member organisations, the ICRC, UN agencies and EU institutions and Member States. NGO and ICRC speakers with field experience and a high level ECHO representative addressed pressuring messages from the field on the exacerbated vulnerabilities and on the particular needs of women and girls in crisis situations. With this roundtable, VOICE and the ICRC wished to create the opportunity to exchange views and share experiences on operational realities and on EU policies. The issues addressed were the particular vulnerability of women, the causes of gender-based violence, the need for appropriate, culturally sensitive and community-based approaches to response and prevention, the need to better link policy and funding with field realities, ECHO's response and persisting constraints.

On the eve of the ECHO Annual Conference, VOICE organised a successful event on humanitarian ***Aid Workers' Security: An Increasing Challenge?*** With the participation of 65 NGO workers, as well as representatives from ECHO and other relevant actors, the roundtable discussed questions such as: What are the causes of increased insecurity? What are the different alternatives for NGOs concerning security management? How to define an 'acceptable'

level of risk? Should the way NGOs are working be rethought? James Darcy (Director, Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, UK) presented the main outcomes of the ODI study: "Providing aid in insecure environments: trends in policy and operations" and its 2009 update. Wolf-Dieter Eberwein (VOICE President) submitted an analysis of potential causes of the increased insecurity for aid workers into the debate. Pascal Daudin (Director, Safety and Security Unit (CISSU), CARE International) focused his intervention on the changing perception of INGOs and on subjective sources of insecurity.

3. Reaching out to members and the outside world

In 2009, VOICE continued to play a major role in raising awareness of humanitarian aid issues and NGOs priorities within the EU institutions, and in increasing VOICE members' understanding of EU humanitarian policy developments. VOICE communication tools also aim to sensitise and share knowledge with the wider public.



* for members use only

3.1. VOICE Out Loud

VOICE Out Loud is the network's external thematic newsletter, published by the secretariat. It is intended to contribute to the understanding of the professional reality of humanitarian NGOs, with accounts of members' experiences, either operational, or in policy work and the expression of their resulting opinions. It is targeted at stakeholders in the humanitarian community and decision makers at EU level. The VOICE Out Loud newsletter draws extensively on the expertise of its members. In 2009 VOICE broadened its range of contributors by inviting inputs from external writers. In 2009, there were two issues of the newsletter; one in May and one in December. For each issue, the total number of people contacted through email and print distributions was over 1,300.

As the Swedish presidency put climate change high on their agenda, VOICE Out Loud 9 focused on **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)**, and was launched at the Roundtable in Stockholm. VOICE, through its Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction is highly engaged and well established in the DRR and Climate Change Adaptation debate at EU level. With the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit ahead, and as climate change was very high on the Swedish Presidency's agenda, humanitarian NGOs' advocacy efforts for the implementation of DRR best practices was highly topical in September 2009.

For VOICE Out Loud 10, the secretariat chose to focus on the issue of **Humanitarian Aid and Security** and to organise one of its annual events on the same topic. The launch of Issue 10 of VOICE Out Loud coincided with the event in December. The security situation and the lack of respect for International Humanitarian Law in some countries, the diminishing of humanitarian space and the reduced access to beneficiaries has become an issue of increasing concern for the humanitarian community. Delivering humanitarian aid is becoming more and more dangerous. In this issue, VOICE members expressed their views from the field and their daily work. They discussed

both the current difficult security context in which they operate and how they respond in order to deliver quality aid to people in need of assistance. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) also presented up-to-date indicators of recent trends, and gave some suggestions in an attempt to explain these difficult questions.

The distribution of VOICE Out Loud was further expanded in 2009, both electronically and in printed copies. In terms of electronic distribution, the newsletter was sent to the European institutions, to VOICE members, other NGOs, NOHA and relevant NGO networks, in addition to subscribers via the VOICE website.

VOICE Out Loud was also published on the VOICE website, on the ReliefWeb website and the DG ECHO Intranet. VOICE distributed printed copies of the newsletter at VOICE events and roundtables, conferences, and during other external meetings and events.

3.2. VOICE website

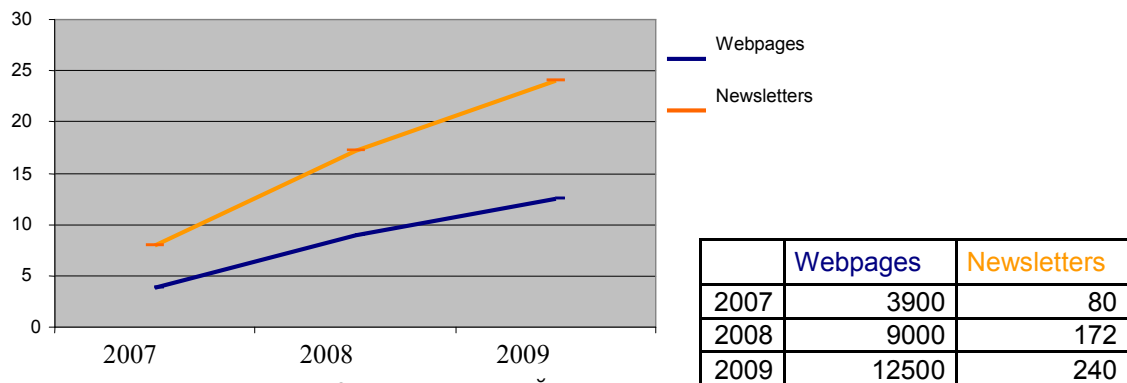
The VOICE website offers visitors the possibility to learn more about the network's organisational structure in general (President, Board, and Secretariat), VOICE members, activities (conferences, roundtables, trainings) and publications (position statements, briefings, reports, VOICE Out Loud newsletters). It provides links to all Member organisations' web sites, as well as a selection of NGO quality initiatives and humanitarian aid-related online resources.

The most frequently visited pages on the VOICE website in 2009, besides the Homepage, were the listing and descriptions of individual member organisations with a link to their websites, contact information for VOICE secretariat staff, and information about VOICE. The pages containing information on VOICE activities and the VOICE publications were also extensively visited.

This year special attention has been given to increasing the visibility of VOICE members' publications on the VOICE website.

www.ngovoice.org

VOICE Communication tools: an increased level of interest



Webpages: average number of visits per month

Newsletters: number of subscriptions

3.3. VOICE Extranet

The VOICE Extranet was developed and launched in 2008 and is exclusively accessible to members. In 2009, the Extranet has developed into an active, regularly updated tool that strengthens the internal communication between VOICE and its members. The Extranet offers the opportunity to keep up with relevant information on humanitarian aid, such as key information concerning VOICE advocacy and lobbying, the work and meetings of VOICE-facilitated Working Groups, an archive of the FLASH e-bulletin and current events via the Extranet Calendar. Members also have access to information related to VOICE as an organisation, including documentation concerning the annual General Assemblies.

In 2009, VOICE extended its use of the Extranet as a tool to communicate with its members. Staff from VOICE member organisations have shown increased interest and requested access to the Extranet. At the end of 2009, more than 350 people working in VOICE member organisations were invited as users and granted access. This is an increase of more than 15% compared to 2008.

3.4. VOICE Flash

The VOICE Flash is the internal e-bulletin of the network, which keeps VOICE members informed of the latest EU humanitarian policy issues, of the activities of the secretariat, and of other relevant initiatives from the humanitarian community. The Flash also includes announcements of events, trainings and publications from members and other relevant actors. In 2009, six issues of the Flash were disseminated. The distribution is mainly through VOICE contact persons in member organisations, but 105, increasingly interested colleagues subscribe to the VOICE Flash directly. These e-bulletins are also available on the VOICE Extranet.

3.5. Brochures on Working Groups and VOICE portfolio folder

In order to further promote the network's work and to increase its visibility, VOICE developed two new communication tools in 2009. Two leaflets were created and published to present the VOICE Working Groups and their achievements. They summarise the key objectives, achievements and priorities for each Working Group. A portfolio folder was also produced to give more visibility to VOICE documents when distributed externally.

3.6. External websites

VOICE expanded its visibility on other relevant humanitarian websites. This was achieved by renewing its agreement with

ECHO on the dissemination of VOICE documents to ECHO staff through the ECHO Intranet. VOICE publications have also been published on sector relevant websites like Reliefweb, the European Interagency Security Forum (EISF) website, disaster reduction community portal PreventionWeb.

SUPPORT THE HIGH LEVEL QUALITY OF VOICE MEMBERS' HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1. VOICE training sessions

1.1. The Sphere Project

In October, VOICE organised its 6th training session on the Sphere Project. The purpose of this training was to introduce the Sphere Project to humanitarian professionals. It should help humanitarian practitioners understand and use the Sphere Handbook as a practical tool, and apply the Sphere Standards, indicators and other tools as references in their programme management. Participants – VOICE members and the Red Cross – warmly welcomed the training which was delivered by M. Downham, director of programmes in Bioforce Institute (France).

In addition to the training, VOICE involved its members in the Sphere Project by encouraging them to take part in the Revision of the Sphere Handbook. Several members of the VOICE DRR Working Group engaged in the process of revising of the Sphere Handbook, giving their input on the transversal issues such as Environment, DRR and Climate Change.

1.2. Accountability

In 2009, the VOICE secretariat developed a new training concept, in collaboration with One World Trust (OWT) and with the involvement of the Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB).

The objective of the training was to give members an overall understanding of the importance of accountability in humanitarian work, both at headquarters and in the field. The purpose was to introduce the concepts of accountability, the debates and different initiatives and frameworks; to introduce tools to strengthen accountability and potential challenges to implementation; and to help participants develop their organisations' approach to complaints handling and participation. The training took place in December and was received with great interest. It was widely attended by experienced staff from VOICE member organisations and DG ECHO.

1.3. PCM training

In January and March 2009, VOICE, in collaboration with Punto.Sud, continued the series of three workshops initiated in 2008 on Project Cycle Management (PCM), focusing on the Logical Framework. Targeting staff with experience in project management, it aimed to increase the knowledge of the participants with regard to results-based management and more specifically the use of the 'logframe'. The case studies were based on DG ECHO tools and requirements. The evaluation of these sessions reflected the strong interest and relevance of such activities for NGOs. DG ECHO was also represented in the sessions and hosted all trainings.

2. Promotion of quality

VOICE members' efforts and commitment to high quality aid delivery and professionalism, and also the voluntary adherence by NGOs to several quality initiatives, have repeatedly been highlighted during discussions with European decision makers and other humanitarian actors.

Following up on the VOICE – Transparency International panel discussion on *Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Aid* in December 2008, VOICE supported the drafting of Transparency International's *Handbook on Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Operations*, which was developed in collaboration with six VOICE member NGOs. VOICE facilitated feedback and comments from members, in particular from French NGOs. The Handbook is expected to be launched in 2010, and will be shared with VOICE members.

VOICE became an associate member of People in Aid and is a member of ALNAP (Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action) and benefits from members' exchanges and reflection on factors that impact on the delivery of humanitarian aid.

In support of members' efforts in the areas of quality and accountability, VOICE liaises and

explores possibilities of collaboration with various NGO fora established to support high-level professional humanitarian response. Throughout the year VOICE members were kept informed of the various training sessions, studies, publications and tools provided by these quality initiatives.

Furthermore, in order to further strengthen the secretariat's expertise, staff attended workshops on *Controlling Corruption – the challenges in development aid*, the *Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse* and the VOICE training on accountability.

VOICE has also maintained constructive working relations with its development counterpart CONCORD. This partnership was particularly in evidence when VOICE accepted CONCORD's invitation to participate in its working group on CSO aid effectiveness. At the first meeting VOICE gave a presentation on the lessons learnt from the various humanitarian quality and accountability initiatives that have been pursued. VOICE has continued its engagement with the CONCORD Working Group, bringing humanitarian perspectives and experience into the discussions. VOICE also took part in the drafting committee in charge of developing a position paper on addressing impact and impact assessment.

5

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE NETWORK

1. VOICE General Assembly (Forum)

The VOICE Annual Forum took place on 11-12 May. It consisted of a roundtable on *Women in Conflict: "Greater Needs, Fewer Resources"* and of the General Assembly (GA). Through individual membership and family representation, a total of sixty-six VOICE member organisations were represented at the GA, which accounts for 73% of the total membership of the network. Members elected a new member to the Board and welcomed a new member organisation, People in Need (Czech Republic) to the network.

ECHO Director-General Mr Peter Zangl addressed the VOICE General Assembly, emphasising the fact that VOICE is a key interlocutor for ECHO. He addressed EU policy issues such as the COHAFA, sectoral policy developments and food aid. Other issues touched upon included ECHO's overall political priorities, and more specifically International Humanitarian Law and Good Humanitarian Donorship, key operational challenges, Sudan, and matters related to the Framework Partnership Agreement. Before concluding, he briefly addressed capacity building of ECHO partners and the grant facility. VOICE members asked questions on the UN reform, the scale of NGOs

projects, concept notes, food aid, transatlantic dialogue and NGOs access to the COHAFA.

In its General Policy Resolution, the General Assembly identified the key humanitarian issues that the network wished to bring to the attention of the EU institutions and Member States over the year. It focused on the respect of humanitarian principles especially in civil-military relations, and disaster risk reduction.

The GA participants very much welcomed the achievements of the three VOICE Working Groups, which were presented by member organisations. Care International gave the presentation on the FPA Watch Group, Oxfam Solidarité on the Working Group on DRR, and the International Rescue Committee UK on the Working Group on EU civil-military relations.

2. VOICE network members in 2009

VOICE is a network focusing on EU humanitarian aid, and is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and disaster preparedness. In 2009, the network was composed of eighty-five operational European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwide. The network's secretariat is based in Brussels. VOICE, unlike its members, is not operational in emergencies.

VOICE members are dedicated to saving lives, preventing suffering, and bringing swift humanitarian relief to the most vulnerable groups. They base their work on humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and independence. They are committed to following Codes of Conduct and set high standards of professionalism and expertise. They seek to include a participatory approach with their local partners and to link relief, rehabilitation and development in order to ensure the sustainability of their interventions. Seventy-nine of eighty-five VOICE members (over 90%) have signed a Framework Partnership Agreement with DG ECHO.

3. VOICE Board

The VOICE General Assembly of 2009 agreed to amend the VOICE statutes in order to change the name of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Aid (SCHA) to Board of Directors, and that of the Bureau to Executive Committee.

The role of the VOICE Board is to ensure that VOICE adheres to its purpose and statutes. It decides on strategic directions and policies, provides governance and accountability, and ensures proper management of the network. The Board members contribute their professional experience on a voluntary basis, and as such represent the broader membership of the VOICE network. The Board met seven times in 2009.

VOICE General Assembly 2009 elected Sid Peruvemba (Malteser International) as new Board member for a three-year mandate.

At the end of 2009, the VOICE Board was comprised of Wolf-Dieter Eberwein (VOICE President); Andréa Brezovsek (Handicap International France); Thomas Gonnet (Action Contre la Faim); Jean Saslawsky (Médecins du Monde France), Evert Van Bodegom (ICCO), Lisa Henry (DanChurchAid), Brian Ingle (Plan International UK), Paul O'Brien (Concern Worldwide) and Sid Peruvemba (Malteser International).

The Executive Committee is the executive body of the Board for administrative tasks, and guarantees the financial and legal accountability of VOICE. The 2009 ExCom consisted of Wolf-Dieter Eberwein (President), Jean Saslawsky (Treasurer), Evert Van Bodegom (Secretary) and Kathrin Schick (Director; without a vote), who met nine times in 2009. The Board confirmed the composition of the Executive Committee.

4. VOICE secretariat

The VOICE secretariat is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the activities as indicated in the VOICE Annual Work Programme and Strategic Plan. It is also in charge of the financial management of the association, under the supervision and general control of the VOICE Board.

The core staff of the VOICE Secretariat in 2009 comprised the Director (Kathrin Schick), the Advocacy and Communication Officer (Paula Hokkanen, replaced by Virginie Vuylsteke in March) and the Administration Officer (Teg Malla). The Project Coordinator (Magali Mourlon) coordinated a DG ECHO co-financed project of capacity building actions for the benefit of DG ECHO Partners. We would like to thank the secretariat for their commitment and dedication to the network. We also thank the very capable interns, Molly Hurley-Dépret, Aurélie Storme and Arturo Bureo who have supported the work of VOICE during the year.

5. DG ECHO Grant Facility project

In 2009, VOICE implemented the project 'Supporting Capacity Building: Networking, Training and Coordination for Humanitarian Actors in Europe with a Special Focus on New Member States'.

This action is co-financed by DG ECHO under the Grant Facility 2007 finished in March 2009. In April 2009, VOICE signed another agreement with DG ECHO under the Grant Facility 2008 that covers the rest of 2009. Since it is an operating grant, the specific objective and results are in line with VOICE strategic plan.

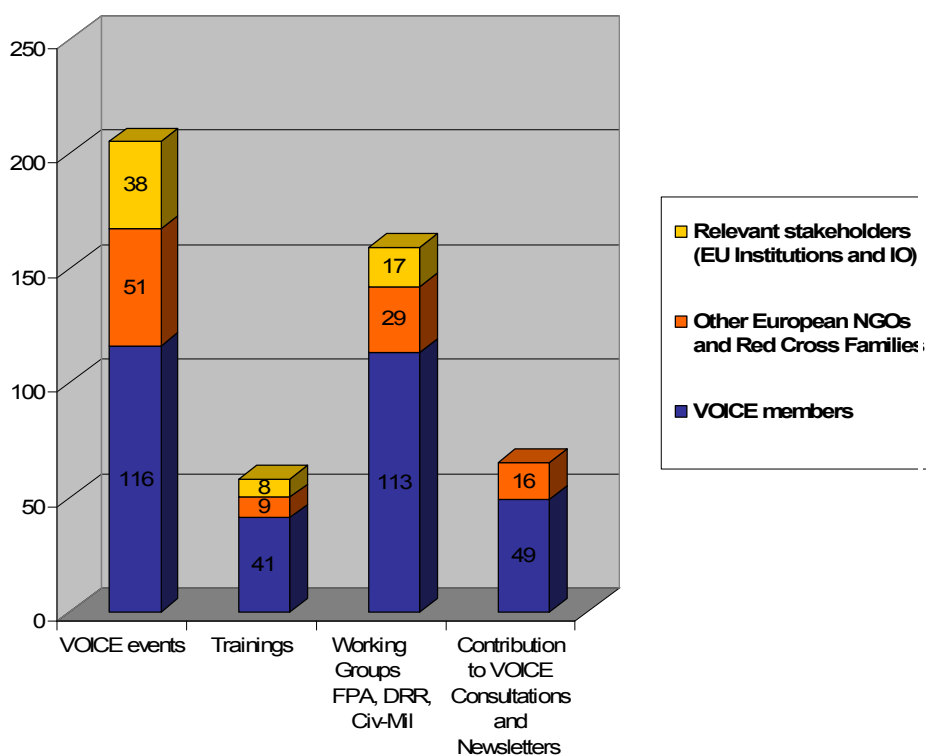
6. Finances

Financial independence has always been of importance to the network. In 2009, the total turnover of the VOICE Secretariat was € 449,033. This amount was made up of 59% membership fees and 41% from other sources. In 2009, VOICE received an operating Grant under the DG ECHO Grant facility which made it possible for VOICE to offer its members and DG ECHO NGO partners additional activities such as training programmes and resources for the secretariat to increase its outreach, as well as its role in advocacy and networking.

6

STATISTICS

Participation to VOICE activities in 2009



Most active members in 2009

Action Conte la Faim (Fr)
 International Rescue Committee (UK)
 Oxfam Solidarité (Be)
 Medecins du Monde (Fr)
 Mission East (Den)
 ICCO (NI)
 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (Ge)
 Concern Worldwide (Ire)
 Tearfund (UK)
 Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (Ge)
 DanChurchAid (Den)
 Fida (Fin)
 CESVI (Ita)
 Norwegian Refugee Council (No)
 Save the Children (UK)

VOICE MEMBERS IN 2009

Austria

CARE Österreich
CARITAS Österreich
Hilfswerk Austria
SOS Kinderdorf International
World Vision Österreich

Belgium

CARITAS Secours International Belgium
Handicap International Belgium
OXFAM Solidarité – Solidariteit Belgium
Médecins du Monde Belgium

Czech Republic

People in Need

Denmark

ADRA Denmark
ASF Dansk Folkehjælp
DanChurchAid – Folkekirkens Nødhjælp
Danish Refugee Council – Dansk Flygtningehjælp
Mission East – Mission Øst

Finland

FIDA International
FinnChurchAid
World Vision Finland

France

ACF – Action Contre la Faim
ACTED – Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement
CARE France
CARITAS France (Secours Catholique)
Handicap International France
MDM – Médecins du Monde France
Première Urgence
Secours Populaire Français
Solidarités
Triangle "Génération Humanitaire"
TSF – Télécoms sans Frontières

Germany

ADRA – Adventist Development and Relief Agency Germany
ASB – Arbeiter Samariter Bund Deutschland
CARE Germany
CARITAS Germany
Welthungerhilfe
Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
Johanniter Unfall Hilfe Bundesgeschäftsstelle
Malteser Hilfsdienst
Medico International
World Vision Germany

Greece

Médecins du Monde - Greece

Ireland

CONCERN Worldwide
Trócaire
World Vision Ireland

Italy

CARITAS Italia
CESVI – Cooperazione e Sviluppo
CISP – Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli

Luxembourg

CARITAS Luxembourg

The Netherlands

Cordaid
CARE Nederland
HealthNet – TPO
ICCO– Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation
NOVIB – Oxfam Netherlands
World Vision Nederland
ZOA Refugee Care

Norway

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

Portugal

Medicos do Mundo – Portugal

Spain

Acción contra el Hambre
CARITAS Spain
Intermón-Oxfam
Medicos del Mundo
MPDL – Movimiento Por La Paz, El Desarme y la Libertad

Sweden

CARITAS Sverige
Church of Sweden Aid – Lutherhjälpen
IAS–International Aid Services Sweden
PMU Interlife Sverige

Switzerland

Lutheran World Federation
MEDAIR

United Kingdom

Action Against Hunger
ActionAid UK
ADRA UK
CAFOD – Catholic Fund For Overseas Development
CARE UK
Christian Aid UK
CORD
IRC UK – International Rescue Committee UK
International Medical Corps
Islamic Relief Worldwide UK
Marie Stopes International UK
Mercy Corps Scotland
Merlin
Oxfam GB
Plan International UK
Save The Children UK
Tear Fund
World Vision UK

