

# EU Aid Volunteers Network Workshop



**EU Aid Volunteers**  
We Care, We Act  


Brussels

13 & 14 February

2017



European Commission, DG ECHO, unit A3



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## EU Aid Volunteers Network Workshop 2017

The first EU Aid Volunteers Network Workshop took place at the Thon Hotel, Brussels, from 13 to 14 February 2017. The key aim of the workshop was to gather lessons learnt, experience, advice and opinions from humanitarian aid and volunteer organisations to shape the future of the EU Aid Volunteers' programme. The workshop was supported by ProPager and facilitated by Ralf Otto.

13 February 2017 - Day one

### A] Introductions

**Julia Stewart-David from the European Commission's DG ECHO** welcomed the organisations from the EU and from outside the EU to the workshop. During her speech, she said that “we are looking to tap into your experience, knowledge and ideas on EU aid volunteering and how it is organised”. She said that volunteers deployed from Europe are supporting local people in non-EU countries and stressed that partnership between the volunteer hosting organisations and volunteer sending organisations is essential for the programme and that the Commission “doesn't want volunteers to go where there isn't a need locally”. She described the budget for the programme, of 140 million euro between now and 2020, as “small in humanitarian terms and EU budget terms but significant as a contribution to volunteer management”.



**John Atkins from EACEA, which is tasked with the project management of the initiative,** stressed the importance of project monitoring. He said that, when the Commission asks for updates about activities of the volunteer organisations, it is not about checking or interfering but is a strong desire to showcase these activities during the lifetime of the project rather than waiting until the end. He stressed that this showcasing is important because “what you do is putting into practice ideas and values of solidarity, compassion and respect” which he sees as under threat in Europe and the world at the moment. “It's important to show this at a time when Europe is seen as distant from people's lives and not doing anything useful. Even if you think it's small, we want to help you publicise and disseminate it,” he said.



## B] Six break-out sessions on the main lessons identified during the first phase of implementation of the EU Aid Volunteers programme.

The participants split into 6 groups in order to discuss issues that could be addressed in the future by the Commission in order to further develop and promote the EU Aid Volunteers initiative. It was also an opportunity for the Commission to get feedback on the first two implementing years and to hear about possible improvements or ongoing obstacles to participation in EU Aid Volunteers.

### 1) EU Aid Volunteers – where are we in five years?

- *Volunteer placements vs country risk*

Important humanitarian needs exist often in high-risk countries. How can the needs be addressed and at the same time safety / security of volunteers be ensured? A solution could be to assess the risks not for the country as a whole but in different regions. For example Ukraine is currently not on the list of countries where volunteers can go. Western Ukraine is quite stable so there is scope for a future programme there. It could therefore be considered to divide countries in areas and define which areas are safe and which not.

- *Implementation of the programme*

Certification of hosting organisations is still challenging.

Matching the expectations about the profiles of volunteers between Sending and Hosting organisation and collaborating for the selection of the volunteers is sometimes not easy.

There is a lot of documentation about the programme. Sometimes this takes a long time to reach local NGOs. Simplifying the message could be good.

The complexity of the programme could be further reduced, e.g. by providing the possibility to change the project in case of sudden needs or by extending the duration of contracts.

Joint training of staff from hosting organisations and volunteers would enable bridging cultural differences and could lead to a smoother integration of volunteers into the hosting organisation

It is important to have transparent and open communication between sending and hosting organisations to prepare the selection and recruitment of volunteers.

Different EU volunteering programmes (e.g. European Voluntary Service, European Solidarity Corps) could be streamlined to avoid overlaps or duplication.

- *Volunteers*





Alumni volunteers will have a wealth of experience. Therefore it could be explored how to involve them in the future programme in some way. One could also consider developing an alumni system where previous EU volunteers work to help new volunteers. Creating a community between previous and new volunteers is a good idea.

If the EU sends volunteers, the EU should receive volunteers from third countries too as there is a wealth of experience that the EU could benefit from. The initiative should benefit the overall human resources management in hosting organisations.

## 2) Volunteering in humanitarian aid: current and future challenges and trends

- *Transition Humanitarian Aid / Development Assistance*

A recurring issue was how to divide up emergency, humanitarian aid and development assistance for volunteers as some volunteers are, for example, transitioning from development to humanitarian situations. Security came up as the main issue in humanitarian situations.

- *International vs local volunteers*

Another key issue was the cultural differences between local volunteers and expat volunteers. There are 'payment' issues as expats coming to the country receive more money for volunteering than the locals do. There are also intercultural issues.

In terms of cultural differences, it is important not only to prepare a volunteer to step into a new culture but also to prepare the hosting team to receive someone from a very different culture. That is the way to break the boundaries of a 'visit from the boss's office' mentality. Also key is to set clear guidelines for volunteers well in advance.

There is still some scepticism about the usefulness of volunteering in humanitarian aid: volunteers are often not well enough prepared and it is expensive to train staff to increase qualification. However, there are also a lot of skilled people who wish to volunteer. It was also discussed that international volunteers could potentially discourage local volunteers. It is therefore important to bring local and international volunteers together to talk and to have good relations.

- *Forming partnerships*

A future challenge will be the need to work more in partnership and create more networks of organisations, which is often challenging for hosting organisations especially when they are small.

## 3) Volunteering in disaster contexts: current and future challenges and trends



- *How could volunteers be used*

In disaster contexts volunteers should only be deployed to support preparedness and rehabilitation, but not to support emergency response. An area that can be looked into more is chronic crises and where plans can be made for post-event reconstruction. Volunteers could also increase the mapping capacity of organisations in the field and contribute to the needs assessment.

- *Training*

Intercultural training of volunteers is very important in order to integrate them into the local culture. Ensuring that volunteers have knowledge about the disaster profile of the country is also helpful. Providing contingency plans and ensuring safety and security of volunteers are highly important.

In terms of preparedness and disaster risk reduction, the focus should be on training the trainers and the specificity of inputs that volunteers can bring to the table. Volunteers can for example bring in expertise and skills for those areas where gaps have been identified.

A current challenge for the use of volunteers in disaster contexts is how to prepare them sufficiently for their deployment. A roster of volunteers with the right profiles who are prepared for different types of disasters would be useful.

#### 4) Forming partnerships – how difficult is it?

- *Theory vs Practice*

There were concerns about how to set up a partnership and how to overcome different priorities among partners. The abstract idea might have been good but does not always pan out well in practice.

- *Forming partnerships for EU Aid Volunteers*

Submitting a proposal can be too lengthy a process and partners may drop out. There are challenges with the certification process (e.g. preparing a deployment project and finding partners). The certification process can be long and partners might be interested but then might drop out if it is a lengthy process. Ideally organisations should apply for certification well in advance of preparing a deployment project application.

Positive experience is that partnership can help organisations improve their standard levels (e.g. management of volunteers), identify weaknesses that they had not seen before, share experiences and organise their time.

It is important to be clear on each partner's priorities and what they expect from the programme. If that is not clear from the outset, that is where problems start.



One solution is for organisations to do a ‘capacity building /technical assistance’ project to get to know their consortia better before creating a ‘deployment’ project.

It is important to have places to find partners (e.g. on the Executive Agency’s website, there is a list of all organisations that have received funds and have been certified) and to find partners early. Meetings such as this workshop are an opportunity to find partners.

## 5) Developing the EU aid volunteers’ network: recommendations to the Commission – do’s and don’ts

- *What makes a network work*

How to build a sense of community is key. Persons who are part of a 'network' needs to feel part of a group that shares the same values, interests, etc. A key question is how to involve hosting organisations from third countries if they have technical limits (e.g. accessing the internet and the platform). There is the need for face to face meetings (in Brussels but also in third countries) such as this Network Workshop and the need for peer learning. Face to face meetings are important as they help with lessons learnt and tips on how to deal with specific issues.

For small organisations, networks are particularly important. When good work is done, it is good to share it with the other partners. A problem is that, in a small organisation, this information can be very quickly lost.

Peer-to-peer experiences and face-to-face experiences are better than interaction on an individual basis behind a computer or alone in an organisation.

Networks can play a role as a forum for NGOs working in international volunteering and support advocacy. They should make use of the added-value of different partners.

- *IT Platforms*

It would be good to have a ‘code of conduct’ for deployed volunteers (e.g. including rules about how they communicate about the EU Aid Volunteers’ programme when they are in the field).

Beyond the online platform, one recommendation was to hold thematic webinars from time to time and invite experts from implementing partners, DG ECHO and the Agency to them.

- *EUAV Network*

It is important to have networking events but also online support and technical assistance in the field to promote exchanges. Having a specific section for volunteers to provide assistance when they are deployed so that they can talk to someone is a recommendation.





Creating a network of former EU Aid Volunteers is important in order to act as a link between international and local volunteers (e.g. if another volunteer is deployed to the same organisation and will work with the same local volunteers).

EUAV Network needs to cover the whole volunteer experience – from pre-deployment to post-deployment. It is good to keep volunteers in touch and involved as advocates and ambassadors. When volunteers come back, they can be like ‘brand ambassadors’.

Channelling the experiences of hosting organisations is important as they have more and more partners. Forming networks between hosting organisations would be useful.

Important to have DG ECHO representatives in the third countries involved in the networking.

Keep in mind that organisations have different sizes and resources, are diverse in terms of local needs and are also competing with each other for resources.

## 6) How to achieve sustainable results from capacity building / technical assistance?

- *Pre-conditions to achieve sustainability*

Sustainability relies on a strong partnership and mutual confidence. Capacity building is an ongoing process and a mutual process. All participating organisations learn from each other. Each project is different and not a ‘copy paste’ because it depends on the local organisation (e.g. infrastructure). Furthermore, capacity building for a humanitarian programme is different to capacity building for a disaster at a certain time.

Capacity building should be demand driven (i.e. there must be a gap that needs to be covered).

Projects must involve all partners in the design.

- *Project implementation*

It is key to follow some standards, build up a common set of values and objectives so that the sending organisations and hosting organisations understand each other better. It is also key to set up common standards that newcomers will be able to follow.

There need to be clear rules about transparency, for example how we communicate with each other, about reporting, etc.

A system to monitor the implementation and to evaluate the outcome of capacity building is needed.

It is key to share knowledge with others, with partners and the local community. A common platform could be used to exchange and to store the results developed by the project.



- *After the project*

Resources are needed to have sustainable capacity building. High turnover of employees in the humanitarian aid sector is an issue.

If capacity building can be mainstreamed into other programmes then it will last for a long time.

Training is an important way to make progress. Contributing to the country's development, to values and lessons learnt are important. 'Train the Trainers' trainings must continue after the project in order to create a multiplying effect for the local community.

## C] Update on EU Aid Volunteers Platform

**Caroline White from the European Commission's DG ECHO** explained that the EU Aid Volunteers' platform contains information about, for example, how to apply to be an EU Aid Volunteer, what is expected of a volunteer and what they can expect (e.g. coaching and mentoring). It also contains information for organisations about how they can be certified. Once an organisation carries out a deployment of volunteers, the Commission will create a project page for them. Vacancies for a deployment programme would then be published on this platform. There are also areas for sharing information and showing videos.



There is also a section on EU aid online volunteering. This gives people who may not have time or cannot travel or do not want to be a full time EU Aid Volunteer the opportunity to carry out tasks from their computers at home. Tasks could for example include writing, translating, graphic design or administrative ones. Online volunteering must be in support of EU Aid Volunteer projects. There is a new feature, with a template, for 'stories from the field' which allows volunteers and organisations to share stories about their experiences in the field.

Asked about using languages other than English, she said that the Commission is working on making the platform more multilingual (e.g. a learning and development plan for volunteers so that they can work in French and Spanish) and that stories from the field can be written in languages other than English. Vacancy announcements must at least be in English but could potentially be in other languages too.

There is a new forum coming out next month which people can join as individuals. The forum is a tool for sharing information.

Asked about difficulties accessing the platform for countries without the necessary technical and financial resources, she said that the Commission has set up mobile versions (lighter versions) of the platform so that it is not too "resource-heavy".



## D] Training of EU Aid Volunteers

**Dan Ungureanu from ICF International** gave a presentation on this.

The pre-deployment training programme for EU Aid Volunteers is a combination of online training (up to 30 hours) and face to face training (up to 12 days) to assess if a potential volunteer is fit to be deployed. There are 12 training modules (six are mandatory and six are optional and take from 9 to 12 days).



The training approach is about ‘learning by doing’. For example, the volunteer’s reaction in the event of a kidnapping could be assessed. The online training consists of 12 online modules (including videos, external courses, interactive quizzes, online assessment and self-assessment). The face to face training includes an entry test about knowledge gained from the online training and an exit test about knowledge gained from the face to face training. Feedback from trainers and trainees is used to improve the training programme.

Asked if the training programme included location specific training, the Commission explained that this training programme does not because that is covered by the pre-departure training done by the Sending Organisation or the induction training provided by the Hosting Organisation.

Asked whether the training was more like a “hard competition” than training, Mr Ungureanu explained that it is not about deciding who is better but about preparing trainees for the worst case scenario and testing their limits.

He also said: The programme determines people who are fit to be deployed but does not determine who is actually deployed. If a person successfully passed the training but is not selected for deployment, they are put in a database so that, whenever someone drops out they can replace volunteers and do not need to be tested again. Specific training or training for a profile/country is outside the scope of this training programme. There is scope to design new modules for specific training based on volunteer organisation feedback if there is high enough demand.

We try to group volunteers so that they do not work in the same group if they are competing with each other so that they focus on the training. We are trying to improve the experience of the volunteers based on our experience from last year.



## 14 February 2017 - Day two

### E] Introduction of the DG ECHO Director for Emergency Management

**Johannes Luchner, Director, Emergency Management, DG ECHO**, gave a keynote speech at the start of day two.

His key points included:

The European Emergency Response Coordination Centre coordinates the support of the EU in case of emergencies – natural disasters; humanitarian crises. E.g. the EU is currently supporting efforts to fight wildfires in Chile; has delivered tents, medicine and medical equipment to Mosul to civilians displaced in Iraq. DG ECHO also provides funding to partners that support humanitarian crises, e.g. in Haiti in the aftermath of Hurricane Mathew.

Humanitarian crises are increasingly long-term (e.g. *refugee camp' cities such as Dadaab in Kenya*); the number of displaced persons is on a steep increase; and the impact of climate change is contributing to more frequent and more severe natural disasters.

Humanitarian funding is stretched to the limits. The only way out is to all together get better prepared to face and successfully manage such situations and to invest in improved resilience and reduction of risk. This is a task of states, of regions and of communities.



We need to better assess risks; we need to be situationally aware; to train ourselves to cope with disaster situations; manage humanitarian support effectively; and volunteering can play an important role here. This is because response is first and foremost local. International assistance comes in support of local first responders. This is why the EU Aid Volunteers initiative was set up with strong support from EU Member States and the European Parliament.

Volunteer organisations can access EU funding to improve their knowledge and training about disaster risk management and humanitarian aid; to collaborate and learn from each other either between European organisations or between European organisations and organisations abroad; to strengthen their networks; to train their staff and their local volunteers; and to strengthen the management of their organisation to deal with future risks.

For example, funding could be accessed to make use of qualified and motivated European volunteers of all ages to work together with local staff and local volunteers to become better fire fighters; to improve the provision of first aid or to deliver assistance to incoming refugees or displaced persons.

It is not easy to cope with the administrative demands that the Commission places on volunteer organisations to get EU support. But the Commission is accountable for what they



are doing and for spending EU public funds well. The Commission wants well-designed projects; wants volunteers to have useful tasks that make a lasting contribution; wants volunteers that are safe and well managed; and wants to make an impact on the ground.

The Commission really needs the advice of participating organisations. This is the reason for the workshop. It is important that volunteer organisations learn from each other but also tell the Commission what their needs are so that the initiative can be shaped to becoming the initiative of humanitarian organisations.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Round of Parallel Sessions

### F] Project discussions: round 1

#### 1. Deployment: Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (GVC) -

#### The recruitment process of volunteers: lessons learnt, dos and don'ts

Recommendations to *organisations*:

- Review candidate profiles with Hosting Organisation before drafting the vacancies.
- Use a needs assessment grid (table with minimum requirements for the particular position). GVC has for example developed 'jotform', which makes it easy to copy the grid and export it. It directly exports the evaluation grid of candidates based on the minimum requirements as this facilitates screening and makes the selection process more transparent.
- Expect a high effort using the EUAV Platform for the publication of vacancies (if you do it for the first time).
- Shortlist (for interview) five or six profiles for each position and have a minimum of four or five candidates shortlisted for one position. Consult then this shortlist with the hosting organisations. Maintain a close relationship (day to day contact) with the hosting organisation.
- Expect a high number of applications.
- Expect a high effort of coordination with the EC and training providers.
- Competence frameworks are a helpful tool to support organisations as they clarify how volunteers are expected to behave and how they will be held accountable for their behaviour.
- Foresee at least 4 days induction training for the volunteers.
- Be aware that the country of deployment might need to be changed if the security situation in the country deteriorates (flexibility).

Recommendations to the *Commission*:

- Avoid having candidates who have applied for the same position in the same group at the training.
- Publish vacancy publication timeline (with the profiles and deadlines) on the platform in advance of the opening of the vacancy.
- Leave vacancies online even when they are closed for reference.
- HR costs for selection process are high. Ceilings for eligible costs should be reviewed.
- Training and Development plan / methodology should be send to organisations as soon as possible.

Questions during the session were for example how the needs assessment was done between Sending and Hosting Organisation, to what extent the Hosting Organisations were involved in the selection process to find the most suitable candidate and how many resources are needed to carry out the selection process. For one project, GVC analysed around 1,000 applications itself as, had it consulted the hosting organisation on all these applications, it would not have met the deadlines of the EU Aid Volunteers' programme. GVC received on average 33 applications per vacancy (1006 for 30 positions).

COUNTRY OF DEPLOYMENT	APPLICATIONS RECEIVED PER VACANCY	FEMALE	MALE
Bolivia	90	68	22
Cambodia	95	55	40
Ecuador	380	257	123
Haiti	133	84	49
Jordan	73	44	29
Lebanon	65	43	22
Nicaragua	155	107	48
Tunisia	15	12	3

## 2. Capacity Building: ADICE -

### Development and management of an EU and non-EU partners' network: lessons learnt and dos and don'ts

#### Recommendations to *organisations*:

- Don't wait for the call to be published but work in advance to build a partnership.
- Take time to find partners, explain the programme, organise meetings. It takes time to build trust.
- Share the vision of your project and the objectives you plan to reach to develop sustainable actions with reliable partners.
- Approach national Ministries to receive lists of organisations that could be potential partners.
- Think in advance about the activities and which partner could contribute with what.





- Use the network of partners to find partners in different geographical areas. It is easier to work with traditional partners but good to open up to new partners.
- Organise lots of sessions and be sure to meet the call's deadlines.
- Use your local offices to help you to assess the needs of the local partners and organise local networking events.
- Try to find partners with knowledge in areas different from your own.
- Use events and support from umbrella organisations to find new partners.
- Avoid a situation that a partner drops out just before the deadline for submission so that you do not have the minimum number of partners needed to be eligible for funding.
- Be sure that your project stays focussed and your local partners are involved.
- Be sure that your partners have the necessary human resources to manage their part of the project.
- Explain clearly what the expectations are from your partners, take into account different cultures and know the context of the country where the projects will take place.
- Have clear and open communication with partners – be ready to shape the way to reach the goals, be open to conflict and be ready to face it and to try to resolve it.
- Share the vision of the project and other things that you want to achieve in order to have sustainable actions with sustainable partners.
- Organisations should be transparent from the beginning to try to make a clear partnership.
- Prepare a clear list of tasks for each partner to avoid conflicts about who does what.
- Ensure that you have a good project coordinator, good logistical equipment and good human resources.

### 3. Capacity Building: Caritas Austria - EU Aid Volunteers initiative: European-Asian partnership for building capacities in humanitarian action

#### Recommendations to *organisations*:

- Having a partnership with like-minded organisations within a network that already exists, like Caritas, works well.
- Exchange on volunteer management between Eastern/Western European countries works well because the infrastructures, rules and regulations are similar.
- An online platform is instrumental to exchange lessons learnt.
- Avoid duplication of projects in the same network.
- Link-up with national / local authorities to promote your results.



Focus areas of the project are the humanitarian principles and standards, response mechanisms, volunteer management and peer exchange activities. The results of the project will be a "Volunteer Management Notebook" that will be used by all the partners and an online portal learning space. Asia, e.g. in Nepal, there are several dialects. So translating a handbook into all languages is difficult and very expensive. The EU Aid Volunteers programme is barely known in Asia. In The project will also provide "Training of Trainers" in Asia at regional level and re-echo the trainings on national and diocesan level.



#### 4. Technical Assistance: La Guilde Européenne du Raid - Building good relationships among partners within a consortium and throughout the duration of a project: do's and don'ts, lessons learned, exchange of good practice.

The Objectives of the project are:

- 1) To improve the procedures of each partner in the consortium for volunteer management in order to reach the standards for certification.
- 2) To address the specificities of volunteering in humanitarian aid and to bridge the gap between volunteer management and humanitarian aid organisations.
- 3) To learn what it entails for Hosting Organisations to manage multinational and multilingual teams.

Recommendations to *organisations*:

- Ensure complementarity of skills and needs in your consortium to be able to focus on co-operation and to avoid competition between consortium members.
- Define draft common rules for the consortium before the 1<sup>st</sup> consortium meeting to save time. Make use of expertise of more experienced organisations in your consortium.
- Create or make use of an existing IT platform to share documents and information to avoid tons of e-mails.
- Use peer learning and exchange to improve the skills of each partner.
- Face-to-face meetings are important. Don't restrict your communication to video / telephone contact.
- Keep in mind that internet access can be an obstacle for some hosting organisations.
- Be aware of potential language barriers.
- The lead organisation in the consortium has a key role in putting in place clear communication and dedicating time for partnerships (e.g. meetings and communication with partners).



- It is important to avoid a top down relationship in which the lead organisation imposes its view on other organisations.
- Apply democracy and efficiency!
- Use volunteers to get a different look at things, to hear fresh ideas, to get new energy, to use their research potential and to strengthen your overall organisational capacity.

## 2nd Round of Parallel Sessions

### G] Project discussions: Round 2

#### 5. Deployment: Concern -

Preparation of volunteers for deployment: training, apprenticeships, induction training: lessons learnt, dos and don'ts.

Recommendations to *organisations*:

- Offering an apprenticeship is useful because it is challenging to recruit in the humanitarian aid field.
- EUAV allows you to get access to potential volunteers from various EU countries, e.g. if you need to fill positions that require specific language skills.
- If the project consortium works with field offices of the same organisation, pre-deployment and induction training can be more easily organised.
- Apprenticeships in various departments of a volunteer organisation's headquarters are a very useful way to build relationships and for volunteers to get to know the organisation.
- Training volunteers at the headquarters helps them get familiar with and understand the headquarters' administrative procedures.
- The organisation of an apprenticeship requires structured task assignments, induction training, mentor and line management arrangements and the availability of HQ staff in various fields to organise sessions with the volunteers.
- A clear single technical task or project for completion in the apprenticeship seems to make most of the resources available.
- It could be considered that the Sending Organisation and not by the Hosting Organisation provides mentoring to the volunteer (mentor accompanies the volunteer during the apprenticeship and follows on also during the deployment). However, this might only be advisable if the volunteer is deployed to field offices of the same organisation.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:



- ? How long should the apprenticeship be if one considers the length of the deployment afterwards – varies. A 3-months apprenticeship seems already long for some volunteers.
- ? Does the prolongation of the deployment period through an apprenticeship lead to less applications – No.
- ? How are volunteers assessed after their apprenticeship – Learning and Development framework of the EUAV initiative.
- ? Do many of the volunteers stay after the deployment – yes, apprenticeship plus deployment could be used to train future employees who start on entry level positions in the organisation.

## 6. Capacity Building: France Volontaires, Action Aid Bangladesh, Croix Rouge Burundi, FOCSIV - How to coordinate EU Aid Volunteers with local volunteers' dynamics and actions?

The session focused on possible measures to be taken in order to involve and commit local volunteers in order to strengthen the capacities of local organisations and to fill skills gaps. It also addressed training-of-trainers.

Action Aid Bangladesh explained that there is a need for civil protection volunteers working in urban settings (targets: 62,000 volunteers in big cities and 20,000 volunteers in small cities). Croix Rouge Burundi underlined that volunteers are often at the same time witness of a disaster, victim and actor / first responder. There is a need to provide technical training to local volunteers, to identify areas for which external support is required and to improve the capacities of local organisations to manage disasters. In order to respond effectively it is also necessary to know the stakeholders / communities well. FOCSIV emphasised that it is important to build strong and close partnerships and that reciprocity has to be ensured so that local and external volunteers and staff have a common understanding and build trust.

Recommendations to *organisations*:

- An action plan for community resilience should include training local volunteers, building up the local volunteering organisation's capacities, identifying the needs for external support, defining the activities and resources and connecting with stakeholders.
- Projects need to be linked to local communities (civil society) to ensure that they become sustainable.
- There is a need to make volunteers more professional to deliver a quality service at the right moment and for EU volunteers to develop synergies with local volunteers.

## 7. Capacity Building: ICCO - Capacity building to reduce the risks of disasters: lessons learnt, dos and don'ts

ICCO's project focuses on resilience building. They presented different training modules on disaster management and risk reduction. The project partners and especially DR Congo are very happy with the results and actions taken within the project.



Recommendations to *organisations*:

- It is important to apply best learning methods to learn from your environment. Learning methods are therefore of key importance.
- Even in remote areas with low connectivity, e-learning is possible.
- Simulations of disasters are always useful.
- Don't share e-learning shortly before training.
- Learning about disaster risk reduction has to be adapted to the local hosting organisation's needs.
- A disaster risk reduction module should be central to EU training.
- A capacity building project is a good preparation for a later deployment project, because it can help to identify gaps and needs for action and to help to build a network of partners.

Recommendations to the *Commission*:

- It would be good to have a common place/platform to share tools produced during EU aid volunteer projects.

## 8. Technical Assistance: Alianza por la Solidaridad - Certification mechanism for sending organisations – lessons learnt and challenges so far

The project proceeds in 3 phases:

- Phase 1: EU standards in humanitarian aid and volunteering are explored and organisations self-assess their compliance with these standards.
- Phase 2: Tailored assistance is being provided to participating organisations in order to comply with the standards (visits)
- Phase 3: Focal points at national level are established (here in 6 countries).

It includes training, building a community of practice among participating organisations (<https://volonteurope.eu/project/eu-aid-volunteers-technical-assistance/>), and the establishment of an online platform for networking.

Overall, it was found that certification is an opportunity for organisations to learn from other organisations. NGOs are now aware of the administrative work linked with the certification process and focus their attention now on specific aspects of the certification where organisational weaknesses have been identified and to reinforce their own tools. Small NGOs find it a useful exercise to gain experience. Organisations find it still challenging to go through the certification process, to find partners for a consortium and to define a good deployment project.

Recommendations to *organisations*:

- The certification process is seen as challenging but is a good opportunity to find out about the EU Aid Volunteers' programme and to strengthen the organisation's capacity.



- Take into account the vast diversity of organisations in terms of experience in humanitarian aid / volunteering. It requires therefore time to get organisations on board. Furthermore, organisations with vast experience in volunteering management may need more tailored advice regarding procedures related to duty of care and security while organisation with vast experience in humanitarian aid might need more advice with regard to volunteer management procedures.
- Technical assistance need to be tailored and adapted to the needs of the organisations involved.
- Share practices with other organisations (mutual learning).
- Make use of membership in national platforms/networks. Networks might have documents that define a policy / a code of conduct / manuals on procedures, etc.
- Check the national legal requirements for volunteers and compare them with the EUAV standards to identify similarities or gaps.
- Use experience from other schemes (e.g. the European Volunteering Service) that might be useful and can be applied also to EUAV.
- Ensure compliance with data protection standards.
- Try to include as much as possible optional evidence to make your case for certification stronger.
- During the certification process with the Commission: be prepared to reply to additional questions from evaluators. When replying to further questions, discuss your answers with your partners and prepare informative, clear and evidence-based responses.
- Supply of evidence documents to the Commission: documents must have a logo / stamp / signature to be validated. Documents should have clear titles so that they can be easily understood by the external evaluators.

Recommendations to the *Commission*:

- Provide very practical advice to help organisations undergo certification.

### 3rd Round of Parallel Sessions

#### H] Project discussions: Round 3

9. Capacity Building: Italian Civil Protection Department, Anpas, Cri, Crr, Cima Foundation - Short term deployment for long term impact: developing training curricula for disaster risk reduction





The objective of the BE DRIN project (Balkans and Europe for Development of Resilience Initiatives) is to improve preparedness and disaster response in Albania and Kosovo. Project partners are: three National Departments of Civil Protection, six volunteer organisations and one research foundation. It aims to raise resilience against hydrological risks in the Drin river basin in Albania and Kosovo. The approach is based on a triangle – bringing together

EU Aid Volunteers, local aid volunteers and political institutional stakeholders who have the power to implement a new approach at the local level. BE DRIN partners developed a set of five main activities to achieve the goals:

- ✓ Enhancement of Balkans partners volunteer management capacities.
- ✓ Capacity building activities and development of training-of-trainers curricula.
- ✓ Support the EUAV certification process for Hosting Organisations.
- ✓ Disaster risk reduction activities related to floods of the DRIN river basin with local field exercises.
- ✓ Development of synergies with ongoing activities to grant sustainability and enhancement of impact and visibility.

Recommendations to *organisations*:

- Concrete terms of reference are needed so that every partner knows what to do and knows the project requirements.
- Clear indications on how to evaluate the success at the local level are needed.

## 10. Capacity Building: GVC – Certification of local organisations: challenges and benefits

GVC Italy manages this project composed of three additional EU-based organisations, seven local organisations and ten local GVC offices. The project includes workshops with the objective to create a toolkit that provides guidelines on certification for local organisations ([http://www.gvc-italia.org/eu\\_aid\\_volunteers\\_guidelines\\_for\\_local\\_organisations.html](http://www.gvc-italia.org/eu_aid_volunteers_guidelines_for_local_organisations.html)). The session focused on the technical aspects on how to become a certified hosting organisation.

Recommendations to *organisations*:

- Do not wait until the deadline for the deployment call to apply for certification as this could delay the process of evaluation.
- Certification is seen as a very challenging exercise, especially for organisations outside the EU, to find all the necessary papers. Here, communication with local institutions is very important.
- It is very important to have face to face meetings with the different project partners.
- Local communities need to be involved in awareness raising actions.
- Communication is crucial, especially sharing information with partners.



<b>CHECKLIST FOR HOSTING ORGANISATION</b>	
<b>I want to host EU Aid Volunteers, I need to have:</b>	
A security management and evacuation plan for actions under the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative (as a minimum complying with the requirements of point 5 of Annex I of EU Commission Implementing Regulation N° 1244/2014).	
Written assessment of security, travel and health risks for the country of deployment (as a minimum complying with the requirements of point 6 of Annex I of EU Commission Implementing Regulation N° 1244/2014).	
A risk assessment reviewed and updated as regularly as required by the context and, as a minimum, before the deployment of the EU Aid Volunteer.	
Ensure that all information on security and safety procedures is shared with and understood by the EU Aid Volunteer.	
A context-specific security briefing shall be provided within 24 hours upon arrival in the country of deployment.	
A regularly updated evacuation plan suitable for the operating environment at all times and easily accessible for the EU Aid Volunteer.	
Update the EU Aid Volunteer about any change in the operating environment and any of the security procedures or protocols.	
Be aware of the location of the EU Aid Volunteer and the contact number to reach them at all times, including when on leave.	
A debriefing for the EU Aid Volunteer in case of a security incident.	
A monitoring and evaluation framework able to capture lessons learned from security incidents and to inform project review and improvement.	
A comprehensive set of health and safety policies and guidelines to meet their duty of care obligations and to ensure the physical and emotional well-being of EU Aid Volunteers.	
Assess whether the placement provides safe and secure working and living conditions for the EU Aid Volunteer (based on indicators set out in point 7 of Annex I of EU Commission Implementing Regulation N° 1244/2014).	
Provide the EU Aid Volunteer with up-to-date information on local resources concerning health and safety (such as contact details of doctors, hospitals, paramedical services).	
Provide the EU Aid Volunteer with guidance on local customs and norms as part of their in-country briefing in order to limit risks to safety and to facilitate integration.	

## 11. Technical Assistance: Concern -

### Short term deployment for long term impact: developing training curricula for disaster risk reduction

#### Recommendations to *organisations*:

- Take into account that establishing a competencies framework and making use of the framework provided by the EUAV programme might be a new and challenging part for the project partners.
- Use available cloud-based recruitment/selection tools.
- Use video questionnaires.
- Performance management is required for EU Aid Volunteers. There may be a need to create courses on mentoring for the staff of your organisation.
- Volunteers need to be taken care of. Establish training, e.g. on stress-management.

Recommendations to the *Commission*:

- It could be useful to share guidance material on the development of training curricula for volunteers on the EUAV Platform.

## 12. Technical Assistance: Polish Humanitarian Action - Technical Assistance for humanitarian aid organisations from Central Eastern Europe to enable efficient deployment of volunteers

The project objectives are: to improve volunteer and human resources management; to improve knowledge management and training of trainers; to improve project management, e.g. needs and risk assessments as well as monitoring and evaluation; to improve safety, security, psychological self-help and stress management; to improve competencies in disaster risk reduction.

Partners therefore share experience on the provision of humanitarian aid in difficult environments; on practical support and counselling to refugees and IDPs; on staff and volunteers' deployment and on project management techniques. Trainings, visits/consultations and the creation of an IT tool help to carry out the exchange of good practices and enable mutual learning.



The project will enable the organisations to achieve a good understanding about the volunteering approach in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative; to develop tools for volunteer management; to develop a knowledge management model and system; to disseminate knowledge among other staff; to develop new/updated procedures adjusted to EUAV standards and in the end to achieve certification.

Recommendations to *organisations*:

- Before starting a training it is necessary to carry out a needs assessment that takes into account the varied experiences and scope of activities of the different project partners.
- It is necessary to involve many different departments in the process.
- Use established structures / procedures that already work well (do not re-invent the wheel).
- Match your strategic plans with future needs for the deployment of volunteers.
- It may be necessary to adopt a long-term approach that integrates volunteers in the existing organisational working culture (if no volunteers have been employed so far).



## I] Concluding Session

Participants hoped that the next network meeting will also involve volunteers. This would then be an opportunity to discuss about the real tasks that EU Aid Volunteers fulfilled when they go out to the field. It should also be discussed further how it can be ensured that the EU aid initiative can live on with the support of the hosting organisation when the volunteers have left. It will be interesting to hear about the impact that the volunteers have had on the hosting organisation and countries where they have worked.

As follow-up to the workshop, the Commission will share the presentations, a summary of the big themes of the discussions, a group photo, a video and a series of video clip interviews.

There is due to be an information day about the two calls that will be partially web-streamed on 5 April in Brussels ([https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eu-aid-volunteers/news/save-date-2017-infoday-eu-aid-volunteers\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eu-aid-volunteers/news/save-date-2017-infoday-eu-aid-volunteers_en)). The plan is for there to be a networking tool available during the day with real time interactivity via mobile phones or computers.

**John Atkins from EACEA** said that the deadline for certification applications is September 2020. Whilst acknowledging that it is a demanding process, he said that the Commission expected to meet its target for numbers of organisations certified by 2020 this year or next year. This shows that a lot of organisations are getting through the process.

The Agency does not have a Twitter account but he urged organisations to remain active on Twitter via the EUaidvolunteers hashtag.

**Julia Stewart-David from the European Commission's DG ECHO** announced that a mid-term evaluation of the EU aid volunteer programme is coming soon. This is important as it will enable a case to be made in the EU institutions that the EU should keep supporting this programme in the future. The evaluation, which will consult a wide range of stakeholders, will be launched in a few months. She urged organisations to give their views on the impact of it, its added value and on things that they want changed. She said that the hard work needed to build a consortium is worth the investment and that the added value of the programme is that:

We learn together,  
We establish trust,  
We push our own boundaries,  
We find ways to complement each other's skills.

She stressed that the EU Aid Volunteers' network represents a lot of capacity globally. "Invest in the partnership and the power of the network," she concluded.



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## Useful Links

EU Aid Volunteers: DG ECHO website

[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/eu-aid-volunteers\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/eu-aid-volunteers_en)

EU Aid Volunteers: EACEA website

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eu-aid-volunteers\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eu-aid-volunteers_en)

EU Aid Volunteers Platform:

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/echo/eu-aid-volunteers\\_en/](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/echo/eu-aid-volunteers_en/)

Project Websites:

- EU Aid Volunteers technical assistance project "AIDCSO"  
<https://volonteurope.eu/project/eu-aid-volunteers-technical-assistance/>
- GVC EU Aid Volunteers Guidelines for Local Organisations:  
[http://www.gvc-italia.org/eu\\_aid\\_volunteers\\_guidelines\\_for\\_local\\_organisations.html](http://www.gvc-italia.org/eu_aid_volunteers_guidelines_for_local_organisations.html)
- Project "PEACH"  
<https://www.caritas.at/auslandshilfe/auslandsprojekte/detail-auslandsprojekt/news/75875-kapazitaetsaufbau-fuer-humanitaere-hilfe/>
- Project "BE DRIN"  
<http://www.bedrin.eu/>
- Project "Volunteering in Humanitarian Aid"  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N350KDIm1E&list=PLuMjNvJIK\\_i5FuGDH-ZdUZdINEGzOcNAW](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N350KDIm1E&list=PLuMjNvJIK_i5FuGDH-ZdUZdINEGzOcNAW)
- Project "EU Aid Volunteers 4 You"  
<http://la-guilde.org/volontariat/eu-aid-volunteers/>
- Project "PHASE"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXWYqF-fqao>





## Agenda of the Workshop

### EU Aid Volunteers network workshop, 13-14 February 2017,

Thon Hotel, Rue de la Loi 75, 1040 Brussels

#### Day 1: 13 February 2017

Time	Theme	Facilitators/ Presenters	Room
14h00	<b>Welcome &amp; Introduction to the event</b>	<i>Julia Stewart-David (DG ECHO) &amp; John Atkins (EACEA)</i>	Belgium I/II/III
14h30	"Ice-Breaker"	<i>Ralf Otto, Professional Facilitator</i>	
15h00	6 breakout sessions on the main lessons identified or stories that could be shared during the first phase of implementation of the EU Aid Volunteers.  <i>1] EU Aid Volunteers – where are we in 5 years?</i>  <i>2] Volunteering in humanitarian aid: current and future challenges and trends</i>  <i>3] Volunteering in disaster contexts: current and future challenges and trends</i>  <i>4] Forming partnerships – how difficult is it?</i>  <i>5] Developing the EU Aid Volunteers network: recommendations to the Commission – do's and don'ts.</i>  <i>6] How to achieve sustainable results from capacity building / technical assistance?</i>	<i>Commission staff</i>	Netherlands II Belgium I/II/III Belgium I/II/III Netherlands I Luxemburg Netherlands III
15h45	<b>Coffee break</b>		Forum
16h15	Summary of discussions	<i>Rapporteurs</i>	Belgium I/II/III
16h45	Update on EUAV Platform (especially also online volunteering)	<i>Caroline White (DG ECHO) &amp; Daniel Tudor, (DG DIGIT)</i>	
17h15	Training of EU Aid Volunteers	<i>Dan Ungureanu (ICF International)</i>	
18h00	<b>Dinner Buffet</b>		Hotel Restaurant
20h30	End of the first day		



**Day 2: 14 February 2017**

Time	Theme	Facilitators/Presenters	Room
9h00	Welcome	<i>Johannes Luchner, Director Emergency Management, DG ECHO</i>	Belgium II/III
09h30	Introduction to the day	<i>Ralf Otto</i>	
09h45	Presentation of 8 projects in <u>short pitches</u>	<i>Project managers; facilitated by Ralf Otto</i>	Belgium II/III
10h30	1 <sup>st</sup> round of <b>four</b> parallel sessions  Participants will split into 12 breakout sessions of which 4 are run in parallel.  <i>1) Deployment – facilitator(s): <b>Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (GVC)</b> "The recruitment process of volunteers: lessons learnt, dos and don'ts"</i>  <i>2) Capacity Building – facilitator(s): <b>Association pour le Développement des Initiatives Citoyennes et Européenne (ADICE)</b> "Development and management of an EU and non-EU partners network: lessons learnt and dos and don'ts"</i>  <i>3) Capacity Building – facilitator(s): <b>Caritas Austria</b> "EU Aid Volunteers Initiative: European-Asian Partnership for Building Capacities in Humanitarian Action"</i>  <i>4) Technical Assistance – facilitator(s): <b>La Guilde Européenne du Raid</b> "Building good relationships among partners within a consortium and throughout the duration of a project: dos and don'ts, lessons learned, exchange of good practice"</i>	<i>Facilitated by Commission Staff</i>  <i>Stefania Piccinelli, GVC</i>  <i>Eudes Bastid, ADICE</i>  <i>Silvia Holzer, Caritas Austria</i>  <i>Yoanna Talopp, La Guilde</i>	Belgium I  Netherlands I  Netherlands II  Netherlands III
11h30	<b>Coffee break</b>		
12:00	2 <sup>nd</sup> round of four parallel sessions:  <i>1) Deployment – facilitator(s): <b>Concern</b> "Preparation of volunteers for deployment – training, apprenticeships, induction training: lessons learnt, dos and don'ts"</i>	<i>Lorna Lalor, Concern, Petra Weissová, People In Need</i>	Belgium I

	<p>2) <i>Capacity Building – facilitator(s): <b>France Volontaires, ActionAid Bangladesh, Croix Rouge Burundi, FOCSIV</b></i>  <i>“How to coordinate EU Aid Volunteers with local volunteers' dynamics and actions?”</i></p>	<p><i>Abdul Alim, ActionAid Bangladesh; Dervla King, Comhlamh; Venerand Nzigamasabo, Croix Rouge Burundi; Agnès Golfier, France Volontaires; Daniela Peschiulli, FOCSIV</i></p>	<p>Netherlands I</p>
	<p>3) <i>Capacity Building – facilitator(s): <b>ICCO Cooperation</b></i>  <i>“Capacity building to reduce the risks of disasters: lessons learnt, dos and don'ts”</i></p>	<p><i>Julian Pavel, ICCO</i></p>	<p>Netherlands II</p>
	<p>4) <i>Technical Assistance – facilitator(s): <b>Alianza por la Solidaridad</b></i>  <i>“Certification mechanism for sending organisations – lessons learnt and challenges so far”</i></p>	<p><i>Kasia Tusiewicz, Alianza por la Solidaridad</i></p>	<p>Netherlands III</p>
13:00	<b>Lunch</b>		Hotel Restaurant Belgium II/III
14h15	<p>Presentation of 4 projects in <u>short pitches</u></p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> round of four parallel sessions</p>		
14h30	<p>1) <i>Capacity Building – facilitator(s): <b>Italian Civil Protection Department (DPC), Anpas, Cri, Crr, Cima foundation</b></i>  <i>“Short term deployment for long term impact: developing training curricula for Disaster Risk Reduction”</i></p>	<p><i>Viola Vallini, DPC; Markus Leimegger ANPAS; Lorenzo Massucchielli CRI; Davide Miozzo CIMA Foundation</i></p>	<p>Belgium I</p>
	<p>2) <i>Capacity Building – facilitator(s): <b>GVC</b></i>  <i>“Certification of local organisations: challenges and benefits”</i></p>	<p><i>Maria Chiara Lesi, GVC</i></p>	<p>Netherlands I</p>
	<p>3) <i>Technical Assistance – facilitator(s): <b>Concern</b></i>  <i>“Strengthening human resources for effective volunteer management”</i></p>	<p><i>Honor Marr, Concern, Petra Weissová, People In Need</i></p>	<p>Netherlands II</p>
	<p>4) <i>Technical Assistance – facilitator(s): <b>Polish Humanitarian Action</b></i>  <i>“Technical Assistance for Humanitarian Aid Organisations from Central Eastern Europe to Enable Efficient Deployment of Volunteers”</i></p>	<p><i>Aleksandra Zabłocka, Polish Humanitarian Action</i></p>	<p>Netherlands III</p>



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15h15	Wrap-up, Next Steps, Closing	<i>Julia Stewart-</i>	Belgium
<b>16h00</b>	<b>End of the Workshop</b>	<i>David/John Atkins</i>	II/III



## List of Participants

### EU Aid Volunteers Network Workshop 13/14 February 2017 - List of Participants

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