

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



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European voluntary humanitarian aid corps established

The Council today established the European voluntary humanitarian aid corps, which provides a framework for joint contributions from European volunteers to support and complement humanitarian aid operations worldwide. The European voluntary humanitarian aid corps was provided for in the Lisbon Treaty.

The EU Aid Volunteers initiative, as it will be branded, will provide thorough training to volunteers and place them in humanitarian organisations, based on the needs of beneficiaries.

The initiative is designed to empower Europeans from different backgrounds to jointly demonstrate solidarity with the growing number of victims of natural and man-made disasters outside the EU.

Volunteers' safety is a paramount concern: EU Aid Volunteers will in no circumstances be deployed to operations conducted in a theatre of armed conflict.

Until 2020, the EU Aid Volunteers initiative will have a budget of EUR 147.9 million, which will be used for the selection, training and deployment of the volunteers as well as for capacity building in host organisations. The initiative will complement and dovetail with other instruments and areas of EU external action and with existing national and international volunteering schemes.

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In addition to the deployment of volunteers, the EU Aid Volunteers initiative will provide opportunities for contributing to humanitarian operations through online volunteering, i.e. the performance of online tasks from home.

EU citizens aged 18 or older will be able to participate in the initiative, as will citizens from a range of associated states, including candidate countries and European neighbourhood partner countries, on the basis of bilateral agreements between their countries and the EU.

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