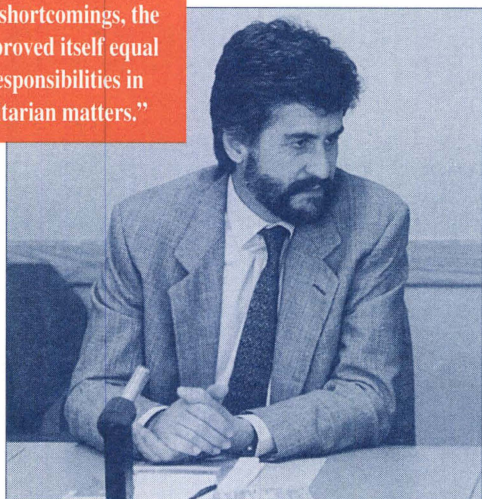


4.5 million people, or half the population of Belgium, have been expelled, displaced, become refugees or victims of a bloody war which is brutally shattering a country and all its people. That, in brief, is the drama which the Yugoslavian people have been living for over two years; the most tragic drama to take place in Europe since the end of the Second World War.

A concerned Europe

There is a popular belief that the countries of Western Europe and their people have little interest in this drama which is unfolding less than two hours flight away. This is a misconception. Never before has Europe provided aid on such a huge scale to the people of one country. When the Yugoslavian conflict began in October 1991, the people of Europe, through the Community and its Member States, responded immediately and on a mass scale to calls for help from the suffering Yugoslavian people.

Manuel Marin,
Vice-President
of the Commission :
"The Community's aid to
victims of the conflict in the
former Yugoslavia
constitutes an
unprecedented effort of
solidarity. In spite of its
political shortcomings, the
EC has proved itself equal
to its responsibilities in
humanitarian matters."



Since then, mobilization and solidarity have increased continuously so that, today, the Community and its Member States form the backbone of the largest humanitarian operation ever undertaken.

ex-Yugoslavia : Europe leads on the humanitarian front



The figures speak volumes: today the international effort on behalf of war victims in the former Yugoslavia exceeds one billion Ecus. 70% of this huge sum comes from the EC and its Member States. The European Community is therefore the principal world donor of aid to the former Yugoslavia, far ahead of the United States or Japan.

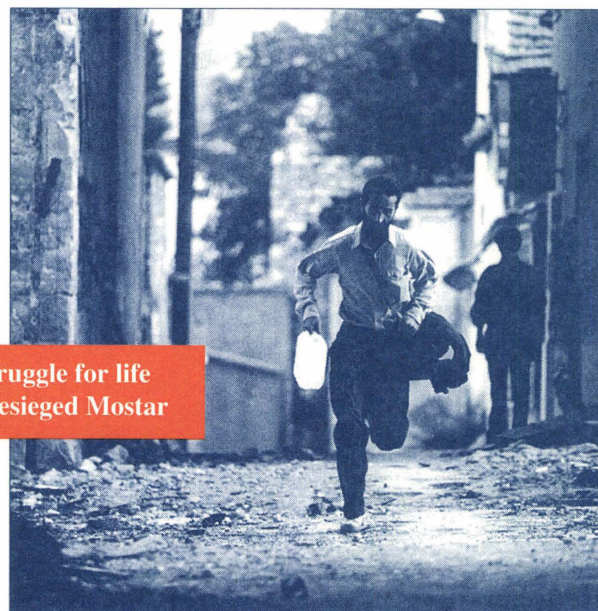
The European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) which coordinates EC humanitarian aid to third countries, is responsible for EC aid operations in the former Yugoslavia. In accordance with the ECHO principles, aid is provided wherever need is greatest, with no discrimination in terms of the republics, nationality or ethnic origin of the beneficiaries. As the republic worst affected by the fighting and by human suffering is Bosnia-Herzegovina, that is where a large share of the aid has been organized. This has been provided in the form of food and staple goods. In the other republics, aid has consisted mainly of improving the living conditions of hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled the combat zones.

A first : The EC is intervening directly in the field

The huge needs and catastrophic situation in the various republics led the EC, for the first time, to involve its personnel directly in aid operations. In mid-1992, an ECHO coordination team was set-up in Zagreb in Croatia. The European Council of Birmingham in October 1992 decided to create a Task Force (ECTF for European Community Task Force) to coordinate aid not

only from the Community but also from the Member States.

This new logistical base constitutes a first in the humanitarian history of the EC. In addition to financial assistance, the Task Force provides support in the form of manpower and material to its partners (in particular the UNHCR) to enhance the performance of the aid structure. ECTF-Zagreb is responding to three priority objectives: providing expertise and logistical support to the partners, improving coordination between EC action and that of Member States and implementing direct Commission action.



Struggle for life
in besieged Mostar

PHOTO NEWS / L. VAN DER STOCK

Coordination of aid to Bosnia

Distribution of the millions of tons of relief aid needs considerable coordination work if it is to be efficient and avoid duplication of effort. Lorry transport has to be managed and their routes, loading, storage centres, etc planned. Everyday, hundreds of drivers risk their lives to deliver food and staple goods to people isolated by the fighting in Bosnia. But reaching these trapped people is not without risk: shell explosions, mines, crossfire or road blocks are part of the daily fate of the men and women working in the field on behalf of the European Community. In May, two drivers working for the ECTF lost their lives in an ambush and others have died in accidents.

Direct aid to Croatian refugees

In addition to coordinating aid to Bosnia with all its partners, particularly the UNHCR, since June 1992 the Zagreb Task Force has been alone in providing for the total needs in terms of food of 520,000 refugees in Croatia. Some of these are sheltered by families (75%), others are living in community centres (25%). There is no shortage of food, water, heating and electricity in the camps. The difficulties of refugees are mainly psychological. They have no work, future prospects or means of survival. Total lack of occupation is very difficult to live with, particularly for the young who have completed their education. What does the future hold for them without a political settlement of the conflict? Waiting for a hypothetical solution is becoming increasingly unbearable.

Family parcels : a new idea from ECHO in Serbia and Montenegro

Imagine a family having major difficulties in providing for their own needs, suddenly required to take care of another, totally destitute family. This is exactly what is happening to families offering accommodation to refugees from Serbia and Montenegro. A great spirit of solidarity between the people of these 2 Republics has meant that 95% of refugees from the combat zones have found shelter with host families. But how much longer can these families who are suffering from the economic embargo, bear this huge burden? And imagine the feeling of helplessness of the refugee families who have nothing to offer in exchange for the hospitality which is so generously afforded them...

To try to alleviate to an extent this highly precarious situation, ECHO devised a means to sustain both the host families and the refugee families by distributing family parcels to the latter. These contain oil, yeast,

A queue of 20-22 ton lorries stretching, bumper to bumper, from the foot of the Pyrenees to the north of Paris; this gives an idea of the volume of relief aid on its way from ECHO to victims of the Yugoslavian conflict to date.

pasta, soap, sugar, powdered milk and feta cheese. Distributed regularly, in addition to staple goods delivered by the UNHCR, these parcels enable refugees to make their contribution to the running costs of the household sheltering them and to alleviate the burden on the host families. It is of prime importance to encourage the host families to persevere in their role. Tension between host and refugee families can rise very quickly and it is necessary to avoid at all costs that the latter find themselves on the street.

One case among hundreds of thousands of others is a family of 5 living in a 4-room apartment in Belgrade, currently housing a refugee family of 10 people aged from 6 months to 87 years. The old lady explains: "This is the third time in my life that I have been forced to flee Gorazde to take refuge in Belgrade, leaving everything behind me". The previous two times were in 1914 and 1940. Once again, she will have to rebuild her life from nothing.

The "family parcels" action is organized by the ECHO team based in Belgrade. It has been shown to be very effective thanks to a well-oiled distribution system. The proof: the UNICEF and the World Food Programme delegate to ECHO the distribution of baby products

Family parcels alleviate the burden on the host families and enable refugees to make their contribution to the running costs of the household

at specialist institutes in Serbia and Montenegro. In Montenegro, ECHO has set up a project for refugees in community centres. This consists of supplying them with fresh produce bought from the local market, as well as household utensils (saucepans, etc.). Some of these refugees had not eaten fresh meat



and vegetables for 4 months. The direct contact maintained by ECHO experts with the reality in the field enables them to take initiatives appropriate to the needs, e.g. obtaining insecticides for the showers and WC's of community centres infested with mosquitos. This kind of initiative helps to gradually build up relationships of trust with the refugees. For them, ECHO is not an empty word.

Other actions undertaken by ECHO

Following the Warburton report on Bosnian victims of systematic rape, ECHO has financed actions to provide medical and psychological treatment to women who have suffered severe traumatism. The Commission has also taken part in food aid release operations for civilian populations trapped in certain Bosnian towns under siege and inaccessible by road corridors (Mostar, Srebrenica). In order to uphold the freedom of the press and opinion in the former Yugoslavia, the EC has also financed the NGO "Droit de Parole". This has set up an independent radio station broadcasting from a ship in the Adriatic and supported freelance journalists in Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia as well as an independent radio station in Belgrade. ■

EC largest donor

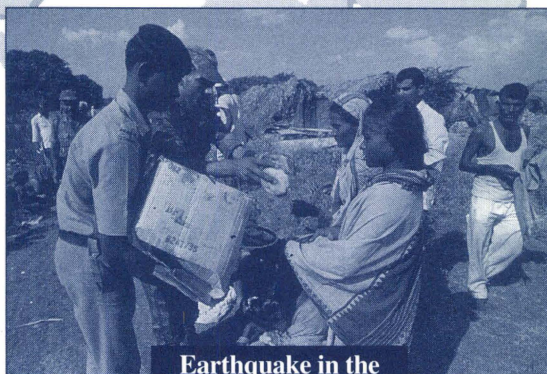
Since the start of the crisis in former Yugoslavia the EC has contributed with some 700 million Ecus. It has provided some 60% of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) funding for operations there, and some 40% of the World Food Programme. The Red Cross and over 30 non-governmental organisations were also partners of ECHO in this operation.





ECHO's Global Reach

ECHO is ready to meet the needs of populations in distress the world over. Whilst it is presently focusing on the former Yugoslavia and Somalia, ECHO has not lost sight of all the other areas of conflict in the world where humanitarian aid is vital. That is why, in the last six months, the EC's humanitarian aid has benefited the people of northern Iraq, the flood



Earthquake in the State of Maharashtra in India

PHOTO NEWS / MARC DEVILLE

victims in Nepal and Peru, the displaced populations in Azerbaijan and Georgia, the victims of a cholera epidemic in Colombia, the very high number of victims of the recent earthquake in India or the victims of the conflict in Burundi (and many others). Here are a few examples of ECHO's activities during the past six months.

Somalia

Aid to Somalia has entered its second phase. After concentrated efforts by the international community (to which the EC made a large contribution) to deal with the acute crisis by taking food, water and health care to the suffering population, Community humanitarian aid is now devoted to medical and sanitary assistance to victims of the civil war. This consists of opening medical centres (some districts have no health care services) to give medical training to local staff and monitor the peoples' nutritional situation. Several projects are dealing with water supply and hygiene facilities for the Somali population. ECHO also provided the 40 NGO's working in Somalia with a free and regular air transport service between Nairobi (Kenya) and various destinations in Somalia. For the past six months, the EC's aid to Somalia amounts to over 10 million Ecus.

ECHO Partners

Médecins du Monde (France) • Médecins du Monde (Greece)
Médecins sans Frontières (Spain) • CISP (Italy) • Association
Internationale contre la Faim (France) • Pharmaciens sans Frontières
(France) • Help (FRG) • Hands (Ireland) • AIVI (Italy)
ARC (USA) • SOS (Italy) • International Medical Corps.

Burundi



PHOTO NEWS / PETERSON

Refugees at Saga Camp

The coup d'Etat on 21st October last, the assassination of President Ndadaye and the ethnic violence which followed, brought about a massive exodus of thousands of people from Burundi to the neighbouring countries. The Commission released 5.5 million Ecus to provide assistance to refugees from Burundi, mainly of Hutu origin, who fled to Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire. The aim is to give refugees - 80 % of whom are

women, children and elderly people - assistance with basic needs (food, shelter and medical attendance), until the country's internal situation makes it possible to provide relief within the borders of Burundi.

ECHO Partners

The Belgian Red Cross • Médecins sans Frontières - Belgium
Médecins sans Frontières - France • UNHCR

Angola

The civil war which has been tearing Angola apart since the end of 1992 has led to the exodus of 2 million people who today are totally dependent on humanitarian aid. The sanitary and medical situation in the country is catastrophic. Currently, 70% of the population are suffering from malnutrition. Aid provided by the EC (4 million Ecus in the past 6 months) is mainly aimed at improving the nutrition and state of health of displaced people.

ECHO Partners

Médecins sans Frontières (Spain) • OIKOS • Cooperaçao e desenvolvimento (Portugal) • CICS (Italy) • Médecins du Monde (France)
Deutsche Weltungerhilfe (FRG) • Diakonisches Werk (FRG)
Save the Children Fund (UK)
Instituto Portugues de Medicina Preventiva (Portugal)

The Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia)

Over the past few weeks, the situation has become increasingly explosive in the three Caucasian republics. The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has widely breached the borders of Nagorno-Karabakh to the south and to the east. This, in turn, has brought about vast movements of people fleeing from the combat zones. The republic most affected by the flow of displaced persons is Azerbaijan. To date, these people represent almost 10% of the population. In Georgia, the conflict between the republic and its autonomous regions continues to further destabilize the region and adds to the flood of displaced people. Since January 1993, EC humanitarian aid has reached 21.7 million

Ecus for the three Caucasus republics, with no discrimination regarding the origin of the beneficiaries. The aid consists of vital assistance to the refugees.



PHOTO UNHCR / A. HOLLMANN

Displaced persons in Azerbaijan

ECHO Partners

Médecins sans Frontières (France) • Médecins sans Frontières (Belgium) • OXFAM (UK) • ICRC International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Diakonisches Werk (FRG) • UNHCR • GTZ (FRG) • BTH (FRG)

Cambodia

Within the framework of support in establishing the peace process in Cambodia, the EC finances mine clearance around the temples of Angkor (1 million Ecus). This provides access to the region which has great tourist potential. In addition, medical aid is provided in the north-west of the country. The beneficiaries of this are Cambodians from Thai refugee camps as well as local people (250,000 Ecus).

ECHO Partners

Médecins du Monde • COGEPAG

Peru

This spring, torrential rains and landslides in the north-east of Peru destroyed the agricultural infrastructure. Initially, the victims were evacuated. Now, the EC is financing aid to stricken farmers in the form of seed and tool supplies to restart the agricultural activity which is the only source of survival for the local indigenous people. This assistance represents 315,000 Ecus.

ECHO Partners

Caritas (Spain and Peru)



Santiago Gómez-Reino, ECHO Director:

"ECHO's humanitarian decisions : a matter of hours"

ECHO is a newcomer on the humanitarian scene. What has it contributed in this difficult situation?

Santiago Gómez-Reino: A single address, a single telephone number for the organizations or countries requesting humanitarian aid; this is enormous progress compared to the situation before 1992 (creation of ECHO). Today, requests go directly to the decision-maker who makes a decision within hours. ECHO centralizes all the Community's humanitarian actions and ensures more efficient coordination with the Member States. All this is done with a single goal of acting more rapidly and efficiently and avoiding duplication of work. And, believe me, the catastrophic situation in the former Yugoslavia demonstrates how necessary it was to create ECHO.

Is ECHO a sort of humanitarian bank?

Santiago Gómez-Reino: ECHO quite simply is the Commission department responsible for managing Community funds with the objective of bringing relief to all victims of natural or man-made disasters. ECHO works with the leading humanitarian actors, i.e. the humanitarian organizations - in particular the NGOs - and the international organizations. ECHO wants to facilitate the implementation of their projects and help them to find the necessary resources and adequate

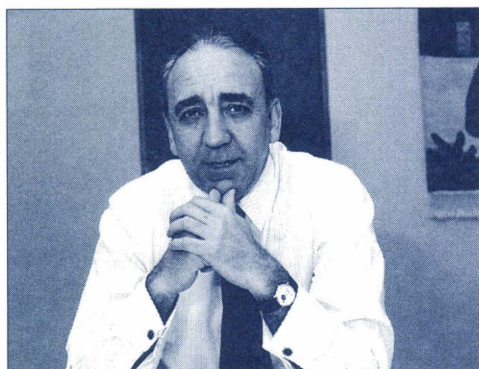


PHOTO BELGA / J-M TOUT

support. However, with the creation of ECHO, the Community is not satisfied with providing only financial aid. ECHO must also contribute to planning what form of aid is to be provided and, when required, to achieve this in the field in collaboration with its partners (United Nations agencies, the ICRC, the NGOs, the Member States and other states). In the former Yugoslavia, for the first time, ECHO is intervening directly in the field and using its teams on site to analyse the relief aid required, its transport, storage and distribution.

A competition with the NGOs ?

Santiago Gómez-Reino: Absolutely not. It is a true partnership. The direct actions of ECHO are always

very specific - they represent only 5% of the aid which ECHO provides - and fill a gap where the NGOs are lacking. ECHO's partners are absolutely vital in the field. This is why we have just concluded new forms of contract to establish a structured relationship between the EC and its humanitarian partners. These contracts set out their respective responsibilities and clarify their relationship.

In 1993, humanitarian aid will exceed one billion Ecus. Will this aid become a priority in Community policy?

Santiago Gómez-Reino: With its commitment in this field, the European Community is simply assuming its responsibilities as part of the civilized and developed world. But civilian society did not wait for the European Community. European NGOs had already amassed a wealth, tradition and experience in the field of humanitarian action.

Personally, I am delighted that European political commitment in this field now coincides with the response and attitude of civilian society and, consequently, to be able to contribute through my work and that of my colleagues, towards the expression and realization of European solidarity.

ECHO disaster preparedness activities

A workshop was organised with CRED (Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters) in Brussels on 15 and 16 June 1993 on the topic "Efficiency, Effectiveness and International Collaboration in Emergency Relief". Changes in emergency policy, the economic recession and the frequent inability of the emergency programmes to bridge the gap between disasters and development were some of the considerations that led ECHO to promote this reflexion on the policy and operational aspects of international and national relief operations.

ECHO hosted a meeting of the European Community national IDNDR (International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction)

Newsbriefs ...

Committees on 27 and 28 September in Brussels. This meeting prepares the European members for the World Conference to be held in Yokohama in May. The Conference will highlight the mid-term review of the IDNDR. The main objective of the Decade is to reduce the loss of life and economic and social disruption caused by natural disasters, primarily in developing countries.

Framework contracts with our partners

With its decision of 6th November 1991 creating the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the Commission laid down as one of its major objectives a greater

degree of efficiency in humanitarian actions and underlined the need for a framework for the relationship with the NGOs and the specialized international agencies.

In line with this, the Commission approved the model of the Framework Partnership Contract on 5th May 1993. This contract is aimed at speeding up procedures and simplifying decision-making.

This new instrument enables ECHO to structure and institutionalize its relationships with the NGOs and international organizations working in the humanitarian field.

To date, 70 NGOs have concluded this Contract with the Commission.

Cooperation with Member States

Since the summer new efforts are underway to strengthen coordination between official humanitarian actors within the Community. At their May 25 Council meeting, Community development ministers called for regular quarterly meetings of the heads of humanitarian and emergency relief agencies of the Member States with ECHO. The first of these meetings took place in mid-July. Ex-Yugoslavia and the impending UNHCR appeal for fresh funding dominated discussions. An additional meeting was called in late September for: a more in-depth review of humanitarian operations through a wide range of countries; review of relations with UN agencies and with third country partners; a look at several current initiatives in the field of disaster preparedness.