Facts & Figures

Key figures:

- 18 400 opportunities including:
  - 4 000 deployments of EU citizens worldwide
  - 4 400 people from non-EU, disaster affected countries trained
  - 10 000 online volunteering opportunities
  - €147.9 million of EU funding including:
    - Deployment
    - Capacity building in non-EU countries
    - Network and communication

Key messages

- The EU Aid Volunteers initiative provides opportunities for volunteers to engage in humanitarian aid. In the period from 2015 to 2020, 18 400 individuals will be able to participate in the initiative, including 4 000 who will be deployed by humanitarian organisations to projects worldwide.

- The initiative is open to a variety of profiles, from newcomers to experienced humanitarian experts. The initiative will also provide opportunities for staff and volunteers from local organisations and local communities, aiming at strengthening their capacities to deal with disasters.

- European standards on the management of volunteers by humanitarian organisations have been developed in the context of this initiative. A European training programme for volunteers will ensure volunteers are well-trained and prepared before deployment.

About the initiative

Humanitarian organisations need more well-trained people to carry out practical action helping communities affected by disaster. The EU Aid Volunteers initiative enables Europeans to contribute to humanitarian assistance in countries where help is needed.

The majority of the existing volunteering schemes in Europe have a domestic focus and few provide opportunities to support humanitarian aid. The EU Aid Volunteers initiative will bring volunteers and organisations from different countries to work together in joint projects in areas such as resilience building and disaster risk management, as a practical expression of solidarity with communities vulnerable to humanitarian crises.

The European Commission is setting up a European training programme for humanitarian volunteers and has developed European standards for humanitarian organisations to work with volunteers in EU-funded projects worldwide to help strengthen and support local capacities to prevent, prepare for and recover from disaster.
"I am a big fan of this initiative, because it is a real example of a European project that has a direct and positive impact on the Europeans who decide to participate.

For our future volunteers, I believe it will be an incredible experience to work with like-minded people from all over Europe and the world, making a difference for vulnerable communities, seeing first-hand some of the greatest challenges of our time."

Christos Stylianides, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management

Who can apply to be an EU Aid volunteer and when?

- EU Aid Volunteers candidates have to be over 18 years of age and be citizens of EU Member States or long-term residents in the EU. Citizens from countries such as EU candidate countries, potential candidate countries, countries from the EEA or the European Neighbourhood Policy may apply subject to the conclusion of bilateral agreements on their participation with those countries. Non-EU citizens in disaster-stricken countries could also participate in the initiative, as part of local capacity training activities.

- The initiative is open to a variety of profiles: candidates can be newcomers willing to gain experience in the humanitarian sector; experts in any field connected to humanitarian aid; who want to help out with their acquired knowledge. Preparation and deployment opportunities will depend on the level of skills and competences of candidates.

- **The deployment of EU Aid Volunteers will begin in early 2016.** A list of vacancies and further information on how to apply to be an EU Aid Volunteer will be published on the website of the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) in early 2016.

- Capacity building and technical assistance for sending and hosting organisations to support their preparation to participate in the initiative is also available.

How will the EU Aid Volunteer initiative work?

- The Commission has developed European standards on the management of humanitarian volunteers and is certifying humanitarian organisations that comply with these standards in both European and disaster-affected countries. These organisations will in turn identify suitable humanitarian projects based on identified need and apply for EU grants to deploy EU Aid Volunteers.

- EU Aid Volunteers will first be trained and then tested as to their readiness to be deployed. Importantly, the EU Aid Volunteer initiative also supports capacity-building of front-line local staff and volunteers of organisations in countries hit by disasters where the EU Aid Volunteers will work.

- Deployment of volunteers will take place in projects focusing for example on resilience building, disaster risk management in vulnerable, fragile or disaster affected countries and forgotten crises; support for preparedness and emergency response operations, including activities in logistics and transport, coordination, project management, finances and administration, and communication.

- EU Aid Volunteers will not be deployed directly to emergency response operations in areas of armed conflict.

Benefits and results

- By 2020, 4 000 EU Aid Volunteers will contribute to humanitarian projects worldwide.

- 10 000 'online volunteers' will support with tasks that can be done from home on a computer, for example helping out with translations, graphic designs or providing advice and support.

- 4 400 people from local organisations in non-EU, disaster affected countries will also benefit from the chance to undertake capacity building.

- Under the initiative's pilot phase (2011-2014), 70 organisations participated in deploying over 300 volunteers from across Europe to crises-affected countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Working with local organisations and local communities, the EU Aid Volunteers participated in a range of humanitarian projects, from disaster management planning and flood risk mapping to needs assessments and information management.
**Funding**

The budget for the EU Aid Volunteers initiative is €147.9 million from 2015 to 2020. This funding will be used for putting in place an extensive capacity building, training and support package for EU Aid Volunteers, for volunteers and staff in third countries and for the deployment of volunteers to implement practical action.

**Next steps for organisations:**

Follow these steps:

1. **Become a certified sending or hosting organisation**
   All organisations wishing to send or host volunteers under the EUAV initiative must be certified under the initiative. The certification process verifies that the high standards and procedures of volunteer management set to protect and manage volunteers during their deployment under the EUAV initiative can be fully realised and met by all participating organisations.

2. **Build a consortium of European and third country organisations**
   Transnational partnerships are at the core of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, valued as a means of transferring knowledge, sharing best practice and increasing expertise.

3. **Submit a project proposal for deployment of EUAVs**
   This summer, the call for proposals for deployment shall be launched. Certified sending and hosting organisations can apply for funding to deploy volunteers to humanitarian contexts, in support of disaster risk reduction/preparedness activities and emergency response.

4. **Not certified yet?**
   Submit, or be part of, a project proposal for technical assistance for sending organisations and capacity building for hosting organisations.
   Funding is available to support organisations in their preparation for certification for participation in the EUAV initiative. Project proposals for technical assistance for sending organisations and capacity building for hosting organisations are now being accepted.

**Examples of EU Aid Volunteers’ projects during the pilot phase**

Simon Bettighofer (Germany) is a social evaluation specialist and was deployed to *Solidaridad Internacional*’s Haiti office for four months to support better data collection and monitoring of activities. His team developed a system to assess food security. This includes several tools such as specific questionnaires, observation sheets concerning markets, cultivation conditions and demographics, as well as statistical and contextual instructions to carry out the surveys.

Nabila Loukili (France) was deployed for six months by *ADICE (Association pour le Développement des Initiatives Citoyennes et Européennes)* to *UPA (Uganda Pioneers Association)*. Her project goal was to work on innovative tools of monitoring and evaluation of the different projects managed by the local NGO. She created a needs assessment report based on several interviews with the local population and stakeholders helping to define the content of new guidelines. Her project also aimed to ensure sustainability. She organised a workshop to train targeted beneficiaries on the developed guidelines.

Abdul Aziz Turay (United Kingdom) was deployed by *Save the Children UK* to Somalia for a period of six months. He is originally from Sierra Lone and decided to go back to his continent as EU Aid Volunteer. His job was to raise awareness about the importance of good and timely data on IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons), the local population and returnees in Somalia. This type of data is needed to design needs-based interventions. His support to provide such facts and figures enabled his hosting organisation to focus on longer term projects in areas such as education, child protection, child rights governance, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene promotion), food security, nutrition and DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction).