

**STANDARD FORM OF EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM FOR EUROPEAN UNION
LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS**

10988/18
COM (2018) 496 final

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE
COUNCIL on the Interim Evaluation of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative for the
period mid-2014 to mid-2017**

Submitted by Department for International Development on 1 October 2018

SUBJECT MATTER

1. This report sets out the results of the interim evaluation (hereafter 'the evaluation') of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative and is accompanied by a staff working document covering the detailed findings of the evaluation. EUAVI aims to provide practical support to humanitarian aid projects by providing volunteers who can help strengthen the local capacity and resilience of disaster-affected communities. It also provides technical assistance for organisations based in Europe to strengthen their capacity to participate in EUAVI. The programme started in 2014 and will run until 2020.
2. The report sets out the results from the mandatory interim evaluation of the Initiative, undertaken between May and November 2017, to give an indication of the impact of the scheme.
3. The interim evaluation has found that the initiative has not yet been effective in achieving its five objectives, which are:
 - a. Contribute to increasing and improving the EU's capacity to provide humanitarian aid;
 - b. Improve the skills, knowledge and competences of volunteers;
 - c. Build the capacity of hosting organisations and foster volunteering in third countries;
 - d. Communicate the EU's humanitarian aid principles agreed in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid;
 - e. Improve coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States in order to improve opportunities for EU citizens to participate in humanitarian aid activities and operations.
4. The number of volunteers deployed to humanitarian projects, approximately 200, is off-track against the cumulative 2020 target of 4000. The main barriers are the certification requirements for participating organisations; the need to form partnerships with other organisations to apply for EU funding; and slow volunteer recruitment procedures. There is some evidence that volunteers feel their skills have improved through the deployment, but none yet that volunteering standards within the initiative have had positive effects on national standards of EU member states.
5. More positively, the Initiative's requirements, whilst burdensome in some contexts, have helped to establish a transparent recruitment process. A broadly efficient

monitoring process has been put in place, and while it is not yet possible to complete a cost efficiency analysis, the interim evaluation has observed cost consciousness within the Commission.

SCRUTINY HISTORY

6. See Annex One

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

7. The Secretary of State for International Development is responsible for UK policy on EU development assistance, including humanitarian aid.

INTEREST OF THE DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS

8. International Humanitarian Aid is a reserved matter under the UK's devolution settlements and no devolved administration interests arise. The devolved administrations have therefore not been consulted in the preparation of this EM.

LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL ISSUES

- i. Legal basis: This is not a proposal for legislation. This is a report and staff working document setting out the results of the interim evaluation of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative. The initiative is governed by three legal acts: Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1244/2014 of 20 November 2014, and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1398/2014 of 24 October 2014.
- ii. European Parliament Procedure: Not applicable.
- iii. Voting procedure: Not applicable.
- iv. Impact on UK law: None.
- v. Application to Gibraltar: None in respect of this document, although EU law on development issues does apply to Gibraltar.
- vi. Fundamental Rights Analysis: Not applicable.

APPLICATION TO THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

9. None

SUBSIDIARITY

10. No issue of subsidiarity arises from this Communication.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS (including Exit implications where appropriate)

11. On 23 June 2016, the EU referendum was held and the people of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. The Government respected the result and triggered Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union on 29th March 2017 to begin the process of exit. Until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force. During this period the Government will also continue to negotiate, implement and apply EU legislation.

12. The report finds that the Initiative is adding some value and its objectives are relevant to stakeholders. However, a number of changes need to be made to increase its impact and mitigate risks associated with the model during its current lifespan. The report highlights the following measures to improve effectiveness: simplification of processes to increase participation by sending and host organisations; shortening of deployment times for volunteers from the current 18-month turnaround; linking the Initiative to a wider range of activities that are better suited to less experienced volunteers. DFID recognises that humanitarian environments present multiple safeguarding risks and development challenges associated with deploying unskilled volunteers. DFID is already working with ECHO to address wider safeguarding concerns and will task UK representation in Brussels to raise the importance of safeguarding within the EUAVI.
13. HMG officials are considering the European Commission's proposal for making links between EUAVI and the European Solidarity Corps. The Initiative should also link to wider EU humanitarian and development objectives, to ensure that it is not embedded in the existing EU instruments providing humanitarian aid only. These shifts could help to shape a more effective and focused programme beyond 2020.

CONSULTATION

14. No consultation required.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

15. No impact assessment is required.

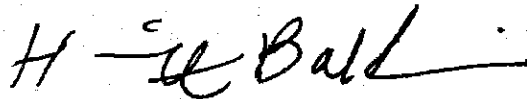
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

16. None

TIMETABLE

17. Not applicable

MINISTERIAL NAME AND SIGNATURE



**MINISTER BALDWIN
MINISTER OF STATE
FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

ANNEX ONE

| DOC | TITLE | DATE |
|----------------------|--|--|
| COM (2017) 313 | Annual report on the implementation of the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative in 2016 | Cleared by the House of Commons 13 November 2017 |
| | | Cleared by the House of Lords 12 July 2017 |
| COM (2016) 436 Final | Annual report on the implementation of the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative in (2015) | Cleared from Scrutiny 20 July 2016 |
| COM (2015) 335 Final | Annual report on the implementation of the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative in (2014) | Cleared from Scrutiny, 9 September 2015 |
| C(2014) 7725 Final | Commission Delegated Regulation: EU Aid Volunteers | Waived from Scrutiny, 2 December 2014 |
| COM(12) 514 | Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps Humanitarian Aid Corps | Cleared from Scrutiny, 26 February 2014 |