



**Humanitarian Aid Decision**  
**23 02 01**

Title: Strengthening international protection to refugees and other persons of concern through thematic funding to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Location of operation: Global

Amount of decision: EUR 4,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/THM/BUD/2006/01000

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**Explanatory Memorandum**

**1 - Rationale, needs and target population:**

1.1. - Rationale:

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is mandated by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees worldwide and resolve their problems. One of the UNHCR's primary purposes is also to safeguard the rights of refugees and others of concern. The UNHCR was invested with a clear mandate to “*provide protection to refugees*”<sup>1</sup>. Protection begins with securing their admission to a safe country of asylum, the granting of asylum and ensuring respect for their fundamental human rights, including the right not to be forcibly returned, or refouled, to a country where their safety or survival is threatened.

Securing the legal and physical protection of refugees is a central responsibility of states and a major concern for the UNHCR. Increasingly, refugees<sup>2</sup> are encountering problems while seeking international protection. Instances of refoulement<sup>3</sup> are on the rise, borders may be closed and there have also been instances of enhanced tension between refugees and local communities, sometimes translating into violence.

While the primary role of the UNHCR, to provide international protection to refugees, has not changed over the years, changes in the nature of armed conflict have affected patterns of population movements, while political repression and human rights violations remain

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1. The 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

2. A refugee, as defined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, is outside his/her country of origin, has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution. Refoulement: the removal of a person to a territory where the person would be at risk of being persecuted, or of being moved to another territory where the person would face persecution.

3. The principle of non-refoulement is included in refugee law and customary international law.

significant elements of current displacements<sup>4</sup>. The political scene has witnessed some changes in the last few decades: the wars of independence in the sixties and seventies have been replaced in the eighties and nineties by new forms of violence where guerrilla groups and other non state actors engage in fighting with regular Government armies.

Within this challenging context, the UNHCR had to take effective and appropriate initiatives to respond to refugee situations. In 2002, further to the traditional geographical DG ECHO financing, focussed on a particular country or region, DG ECHO decided to reinforce the UNHCR's protection activities through thematic funding. This was a concrete follow up to the 2001 Evaluation on the DG ECHO- the UNHCR Partnership which recommended that DG ECHO *"become a more predictable donor and concentrate funding on the UNHCR activities with optimum added value.... and support the longer-term efforts of the UNHCR to set up an integrated and performing global registration system for refugees"*. The UNHCR was the first DG ECHO partner to benefit from thematic funding- EUR 27 M between 2002 and 2005. Thematic funding has enabled the UNHCR to make significant progress in the important areas of protection and registration of refugees with the development of new programmes such as a completely new and modern system for the registration of refugee populations, Project Profile, an emergency deployment programme for qualified protection staff, Surge Project and the updating of their emergency preparedness and response procedures and mechanisms. Today, reinforcing the UNHCR emergency capacity becomes even more important given the increasing responsibilities the UNHCR is likely to have for IDP in the sectors of shelter, camp management and protection. The UNHCR has been tasked by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to lead the clusters on protection, camp coordination and management and emergency shelter for IDP situations in man-made disasters.

These enhancements are co-funded by DG ECHO to the point where they have now proven effectiveness and have therefore been incorporated into the UNHCR's Global Appeal. DG ECHO is planning to phase out its support to these programmes by the end of this funding decision, when the full implementation of "Project Profile" will be completed.

## 1.2. Identified needs:

### A. Registration

Over the last years, the UNHCR has identified the need for a comprehensive improved system of **registration and population data management activities**. All refugees need to be individually registered and to receive documentation, so as to improve their security, freedom of movement and access to essential services. In 2002 the UNHCR launched a "Registration Baseline Survey" to provide a global overview of the current status of registration. This Baseline Survey revealed considerable variability in registration standards and practices throughout the UNHCR, many of which had been developed over long periods of time to meet local needs and constraints. While these registration tools met an important need they led to inconsistencies which modern technology should make it possible to eliminate. In some cases this resulted in doubt being cast on the precision of certain refugee caseload numbers. The need was identified for a unified approach to registration, meeting international minimum standards, as an essential component of international protection. Therefore, in 2002 DG ECHO decided to support the longer-term efforts of the UNHCR to set up and integrate an effective global registration system, **Project Profile**. Registration systems touch on many

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<sup>4</sup> Refugees are not only "persecuted" refugees in the narrow sense of the 1951 Convention, but also people fleeing from a theatre of crisis.

aspects of the UNHCR's operations, including protection and durable solutions, assistance delivery, standards and procedures and as a result must account for the interests and activities of a wide range of UNHCR stakeholders. Registration, followed by periodic verifications, is the most effective tool to guarantee the refugee status to those entitled to it.

## B. Protection Staff

In order to enhance the **rapid deployment of protection staff** to respond to quickly developing refugee and returnee situations, in 2002 UNHCR developed the **Surge (Supporting UNHCR Resources on the Ground with Experts on mission) Project**<sup>5</sup>. The project became operational to cover situations where protection staffing needs increase temporarily beyond the UNHCR's capacity to respond with its current staffing levels.

The project has been funded by the EC, through DG ECHO and BPRM (U.S. State Department Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration). The UNHCR signed a Framework Agreement in July 2001 to implement this project together with the International Rescue Committee (IRC). To date, the project has been very successful and has organized 134 deployments to 37 countries and in 86 field locations in support of the UNHCR's operations around the world (Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, Chad, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, among others).

## C. Emergency Preparedness and Response

Enhancing the UNHCR's **response capacity in emergencies and its preparedness** to deal with humanitarian crises by improving its emergency intervention systems, has been widely acknowledged as essential for the UNHCR to remain able to fully implement its mandate. As a result of the lessons learned in the first Gulf War in 1991, the UNHCR established a dedicated operational emergency capacity. Within the Department of Operational Services, the Emergency and Security Service (EES) was created to develop a strong emergency response capacity within the UNHCR and respond to sudden and large-scale refugee displacement, IDP displacement and to some war affected populations at risk of displacement. Since returnee operations can be of an emergency nature, emergency response has been provided to some major return operations (e.g. Eastern Congo, South Sudan, Burundi, West Africa and Afghanistan). Currently the UNHCR maintains an emergency response capacity to cover rapid displacements of up to 100,000 persons, a number which has proved in the past to be insufficient.

In the last years, the UNHCR has conducted a number of important internal policy reviews, management and technical assessments and comparative studies, related to emergency and security management. Recently, at the request of the High Commissioner, the UNHCR has produced a policy paper which examines the UNHCR's critical gaps in emergencies and proposes to maintain a standing emergency capacity **to respond to refugee and IDP situations of 500.000 persons**. The UNHCR has approached DG ECHO and requested thematic funding to support this emergency preparedness and response programme which aims to have adequate resources in the field of emergency staffing, pre-positioning of relief items, emergency training activities and early warning information.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unhcr.ch/surge/>

### 1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

Funding under this decision will benefit refugee populations and other persons of concern to the UNHCR in developing countries. According to the UNHCR 2005 Global Appeal, there are some 17.1 million persons of concern to the UNHCR, including approximately 10.7 million refugees and asylum seekers worldwide.

Support to meet short-term staffing needs in the field of protection will be provided in a variety of countries all over the world, as required, through the Surge Project. The UNHCR is in the process of identifying the list of about 10 to 12 countries in which Project Profile will be implemented in 2006. These will be selected from the following list: Ukraine, India, Sri Lanka, Djibouti, Russia, South Africa, Algeria, Zambia, Angola, Albania, Bosnia, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Indonesia, Botswana, Malawi, and Mozambique.

### 1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

A significant constraint for the implementation of this programme is the continuing instability in most of the countries where the decision will be implemented, often entailing the deterioration of state structures and the weakening of governance capacity. Insecurity and difficulties in deploying international staff will remain a main constraint.

The UNHCR's ability to perform these functions depends on having skilled and experienced staff within countries, properly supported by regional offices and headquarters, all working towards the same standards. Funding from other donors to support the overall UNHCR programme will remain a vital component.

Regarding the implementation of Project Profile, it is challenging for the UNHCR to manage ongoing registration while simultaneously overseeing the development and implementation of a radically new system. The UNHCR has reported difficulties with planned registration, as it depends on the complex juncture of a variety of disparate factors. These include the political will of host governments, resource availability, appropriate materials, weather, security and co-operation from refugees. For political and other reasons not all host governments are either willing or interested in issuing identity documents to refugees and others of concern. Furthermore, new technologies are being introduced in remote areas where it is difficult to find technically qualified persons to maintain and operate such equipment. Sometimes registrations are disrupted by those who have a vested interest in avoiding efficient registration such as individuals or groups with fraudulently obtained ration cards.

## **2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:** <sup>6</sup>

### 2.1. – Objectives:

The principal objective of this decision is that refugees and other persons of concern to the UNHCR are provided with international protection, in accordance with the UNHCR's mandate.

The specific objective is that the UNHCR's capacity to respond to developments in refugee situations is strengthened by enhancing the organisation's protection, registration and emergency response mechanisms.

### 2.2. - Components:

#### A. Registration- Project Profile

Funding under this decision will continue to follow up on countries where Project Profile has been implemented in the last two years and support the implementation of the programme in 10 to 12 of the remaining countries where it is required. Activities related to the implementation of Project Profile comprise the assessment of current registration practice against the new standards developed by the UNHCR on registration. The objective is to identify which level of registration and which specific improvements are needed to serve operations, protection and durable solution goals. A registration strategy is prepared by the Profile team and staff is trained in the new registration procedures and the use of the new standardised registration software *Progress*. Existing registration data is migrated into Progress.

Once an implementation mission has been completed, the support team in Geneva continues to provide regular follow-up and answers to queries on how the new tools are used. In offices where major registration activities follow the implementation of the new tools, a Profile follow-up team will be sent back if requested.

As a result of the implementation of Project Profile, refugees and other persons of concern to the UNHCR are provided with photographic identity documents where agreed to by host governments of the country of asylum. This will enable them to improve their legal and physical protection, freedom of movement and access to basic rights including family reunification. Moreover, the new registration system will include, where appropriate, biometric technology (as one of several options). Experience with finger print recognition technology has been quite good, suggesting that wider use of this technology could save the UNHCR "substantial resources" because of its deterrent value to fraud. Iris recognition has been used in Pakistan during the repatriation to Afghanistan with good results but has proved more expensive in both equipment and licensing costs.

#### B. Protection Staff- Surge Project

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6. Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Article 168 thereof (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L248 of 16 September 2002 and No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 of 31 December 2002).Rate of financing: In accordance with Article 69 of the Financial Regulation, grants for the implementation of this Decision may finance 100% of the costs of an action. Humanitarian aid operations funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) (in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation) and by United Nations agencies based on the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA). The standards and criteria established in Echo's standard Framework Partnership Agreement to which NGO's and International organisations have to adhere and the procedures and criteria needed to become a partner may be found at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm)

Funding under this decision will contribute to the overall cost of the Surge Project in 2006, to maintain a roster of well qualified and experienced individuals available to meet demands for protection staff which otherwise may exceed the UNHCR's capacity to provide a rapid response. Emerging, ad hoc requirements need to be addressed in a timely and flexible manner, through the deployment of knowledgeable personnel. This is the objective of the Surge Project, which should ensure the timely deployment of staff with relevant experience in refugee protection. A specific roster on gender/community services and registration based specialists will continue to provide assistance in this field. Registration staff will support the implementation of Project Profile.

Surge protection officers will be involved in various protection activities, such as voluntary repatriation, returnee monitoring, local integration, physical security of refugees, arrest and detention, border monitoring, the prevention of sexual and gender based violence, statelessness, registration and internally displaced persons.

### C. Emergency Preparedness and Response programme

Funding under this decision will continue to support, for the second year, the UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response programme. The successful management of an emergency response is largely determined by the level of preparedness of an organization. It will specifically support UNHCR's emergency response staffing (9 Emergency Preparedness and Response Officers available for deployment world-wide) and the Emergency Response Teams (ERT). In order to maintain an internal emergency roster for a total of some 100 staff to be deployed within 48 hours for 2-3 months, the UNHCR carries out 3 Workshops for Emergency Management (WEM) per year. The WEM is designed to prepare ERT for deployments and focuses mainly on team building and emergency processes. DG ECHO field experts are invited to attend the WEM every year.

The UNHCR is pre-positioning emergency relief items for specific country operations and potential emergencies at global level. In 2006, the UNHCR will preposition the most essential relief items and operational support equipment in a UNICEF facility in Copenhagen (for 250.000 persons), in the city of Dubai (for 90.000 persons), and in Accra for East and Southern Africa (for 160.000 persons).

As a result of this funding, the UNHCR should have the capacity to respond to emergency needs of 500.000 beneficiaries and be better prepared for emergencies. Thematic funding will support the Situational Emergency Training (SET) for the UNHCR's and its partners in emergency prone countries and regions. This training provides basic knowledge of humanitarian work and contains elements of contingency planning for concrete emergency prone situations. DG ECHO will contribute to the Emergency Team Leader Learning Programme (ETLP) to provide emergency leaders with comprehensive training to strengthen the quality of leadership in humanitarian operations, support stronger coordination between agencies and foster the development of best practices in emergency leadership and management.

#### D. Visibility and Communication

The UNHCR will maintain visibility of the materials and services provided as a result of this thematic funding. Where appropriate indication of the role of the European Commission will be made at service delivery points and on emergency materials purchased (e.g. emergency relief items) will be labelled with the European Commission logo. At the same time the UNHCR will utilise a portion of this funding to communicate the needs of refugees and the role of the European Commission in meeting these needs using means that foster a better level of understanding amongst the citizens of the European Union and beyond. In 2005 this is being accomplished with the production of 4 short (3 to 5 minute) edited clips for television broadcast. This material has been widely distributed to television stations via international news-feeds. In this material the role of the European Commission is clearly stated and DG ECHO staff are featured.

#### **3 - Duration foreseen for actions within the framework of the proposed decision:**

The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be 15 months. This duration will allow for the streamlining of the implementation period of the operations with the UN Financial Year, thus ensuring a smoother implementation of the operations, covering effectively a full financial year. International protection of refugees in general and implementation of the actions proposed require a medium-term perspective. However, the activities and results of the operations financed under this decision have been adapted in terms of objectives and results to the DG ECHO short-term funding cycle. Humanitarian operations funded by this decision must be implemented within this period.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 January 2006.

The start date is 1 January 2006.

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

#### **4 – Previous interventions/decisions of the Commission within the context of the crisis concerned herewith**

The UNHCR has been DG ECHO's first partner to have benefited from thematic funding, receiving between 2002 and 2005 a total of EUR 27 M. The recent evaluation of the partnership between DG ECHO and the UNHCR between 2002 and 2004 looked closely at the achievements of DG ECHO thematic funding to the UNHCR. The draft report of the evaluation concludes "*Thematic funding contributed to reinforcing the UNHCR's protection activities..... Thematic funding is a highly effective tool to strengthen the capacity of DG ECHO mandated partners by addressing areas in need of managerial improvement*".

The European Commission, through DG ECHO, has been a key donor and has supported Project Profile, from its inception in 2002, with the development of new systems, software and methodologies, to its field implementation in 2004 and 2005. At the time of writing this funding decision Project Profile has been implemented in more than 35 UNHCR operations<sup>7</sup>. DG ECHO is satisfied to see that thematic funding to Profile has already produced good results at field level and is positive towards achieving the aim of making registration a standard and continuous process which should allow every refugee to be individually registered and to receive identity documents with photographs where the government of the asylum country gives their agreement – e.g. Liberia, Guinea, Congo Brazzaville, Malaysia or Malawi.

DG ECHO is satisfied to see that in most cases, Project Profile does not only represent the implementation of a new software and methodology but that it also gives the opportunity to update registration and provide figures adapted to field realities (Tanzania, Guinea, Thailand).

The challenge today, after all these years of funding, is to ensure that the progress made to date is sustainable, through the availability of skilled registration support staff in operations. It is important that the UNHCR creates the necessary expatriate posts to ensure proper registration and that necessary support and resources are made available.

Regarding the Surge Project, the recent DG ECHO-UNHCR Evaluation highlights “*Surge represents an efficient tool for the UNHCR, as the average time from the request to the deployment is around 36 days and it provides highly motivated staff who do not hesitate to go deep in the field*”. However, the Surge Project is not an adequate substitute for permanent protection posts. The UNHCR should improve its permanent capacity to deploy protection officers, to ensure an effective protection of populations in need.

DG ECHO has developed thematic collaborations with the following partners:

- UNHCR: Refugee Protection, Registration and Emergency Preparedness and Response programme (EUR 11 M 2002, EUR 11 M 2003 and EUR 5 M 2005)
- ICRC: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts (EUR 10 M 2003 and EUR 4 M 2005)
- OCHA: Humanitarian Information Systems (EUR 4 M 2004 and EUR 4 M 2005)
- WHO: Health Action in Crises programme (EUR 3.5 M 2004 and EUR 4 M 2005)
- WFP: Food Aid Needs Assessment (EUR 4.5 M 2004)
- UNICEF: Data collection, child protection and emergency preparedness (EUR 996.000 2003, EUR 7.4 M 2004)
- IFRC: Support to IFRC Disaster Management programme (EUR 3.5 M 2005)

## **5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms**

The UNHCR is mandated by the United Nations to lead and co-ordinate international action for the world-wide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems. The UNHCR's programme is reviewed for adoption every year in October by its Executive Committee (ExCom). Throughout the year, frequent consultations on specific programmes and themes are held with the Members and Observers of ExCom. The UNHCR co-ordinates

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<sup>7</sup> Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Hong-Kong, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

contributions to its programmes through the mechanism of its Global and Supplementary Appeals, regular updates to donors of funding requirements and through bilateral consultations with individual donors.

Like the European Commission, various EU Member States, as well as the US, Japan and Canada have provided continued strong support to the UNHCR operations, notably in Africa. All recognise that strong support is needed in this particularly vulnerable and volatile area.

ECHO has contributed to the UNHCR's programmes all over the world since 1992. The UNHCR ensures that there is no overlap in funding of activities by different donors and notably between DG ECHO funding at country and thematic level.

**6 – Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:**

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: EUR 4,000,000.

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

<b>Principal objective:</b> <i>Refugees and other persons of concern to the UNHCR are provided with international protection, in accordance with the UNHCR's mandate.</i>				
<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)</b>	<b>Possible geographical area of operation</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Potential partners<sup>8</sup></b>
Specific objective : The UNHCR's capacity to respond to developments in refugee situations is strengthened by enhancing the organisation's protection, registration and emergency response mechanisms.	4,000,000	Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deployment of qualified Surge Staff with relevant experience in refugee protection.</li> <li>- Implementation of Project Profile in the indicative list of countries.</li> <li>- Distribution of ID documents when agreed with host government.</li> <li>- Follow up missions to countries where Profile has been implemented.</li> <li>- Migration of refugee data into Progress.</li> <li>- Pre-positioning of emergency relief items for 500.000 beneficiaries.</li> <li>- EPRO and Emergency Response Teams available for immediate deployment.</li> <li>- WEM, SET and ETLP and Project profile training.</li> </ul>	- UN – the UNHCR - BEL
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>			

<sup>8</sup> UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES - BELGIUM

## 7 – Evaluation

Under article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of DG ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm).

## 8 – Budget article 23 02 01

	CE ( EUR)
Budget Appropriations for 2006	470,429,000
Supplementary Budgets	-
Transfers	-
<b>Budget Appropriations for 2006</b>	<b>470,429,000</b>
<b>Total amount of the Decision</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>

## COMMISSION DECISION

of

**on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Union to strengthen international protection to refugees and other persons of concern through thematic funding to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

### THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,  
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 15(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The evolution of the geopolitical and economical context in the last decade has led to an upsurge of mainly internal armed conflicts in developing countries, which has led to large-scale displacement of populations.
- (2) Increasingly, refugees are encountering problems while seeking international protection. Instances of refoulement are on the rise, borders may be closed and there have also been instances of enhanced tension between refugees and local communities.
- (3) After a number of positive results achieved in the last years, DG ECHO envisages funding measures designed to enhance the protection of refugees and other persons of concern by funding the UNHCR, an experienced partner with a unique mandate and a global outreach in that domain.
- (4) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that the Community should finance humanitarian aid operations for a period of 15 months.
- (5) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 4,000,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to refugee populations, taking into account the available budget, other donors' interventions and other factors.
- (6) In accordance with Article 17 (3) of Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 the Humanitarian Aid Committee gave a favourable opinion on 26 January 2006.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

*Article 1*

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 4,000,000 for humanitarian aid operations to strengthen international protection to refugees and other persons of concern to the UNHCR, by using line 23 02 01 of the 2006 budget of the European Union.
2. In accordance with Article 2 and 4 of Regulation (EC) No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:
  - The UNHCR's capacity to respond to developments in refugee situations is strengthened by enhancing the organisation's protection, registration and emergency response mechanisms.

The total amount of this decision is allocated to this objective.

*Article 2*

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be for a maximum period of 15 months, starting on 1 January 2006.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 January 2006.
3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the implementation of this Decision.

*Article 3*

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Commission*

*Member of the Commission*