



VOICE (Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies) is a network representing 85 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in humanitarian aid worldwide, which are based in 20 European countries. VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid and disaster risk reduction and it promotes the values of humanitarian NGOs.

## VOICE 2017 GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NGOs, EU INSTITUTIONS AND MEMBER STATES

Humanitarian responses are inherently complex, posing significant challenges in ensuring that crisis affected people can access humanitarian aid, and that those delivering it can do so securely. It is essential that the partnership between NGOs, EU institutions and member states enables a people-centred approach, quality operations and accountability to affected populations. Humanitarian NGOs are committed to such partnerships.

Together we can do more and the upcoming negotiation of the Framework Partnership Agreement provides an opportunity. The 2007 Principles of Partnership (PoP) are framed around five key concepts of equality, transparency, a results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity. For NGOs these remain the gold-standard for humanitarian partnerships. Furthermore, the partnership cycle (from mapping potential partners to evaluating the partnership itself) is different from the project cycle and needs time and investment. More than ever, working in partnership, requires donors and NGOs to accept new ways of working.

## RECOMMENDATIONS: FROM POLICY TO IMPLEMENTATION

### 1. Partnerships strengthening political support for humanitarian aid

We call on the EU and its member states to continue to support their partners by reinforcing political backing for needs-based and principled humanitarian operations.

The EU and member states should ensure that the right legal frameworks and budgets are in place to lead to timely, predictable and flexible assistance.

We urge the EU and member states to strengthen the dialogue with humanitarian NGOs. Good policy development must be rooted in field reality. It requires systematic and meaningful consultations with NGOs, who are key implementing partners with essential operational knowledge and expertise.

### 2. Partnerships as a basis for quality operations

In light of the preparation of the next Framework Partnership Agreement, DG ECHO and its FPA partners should agree on a number of objectives for the new FPA. They should seek a joint understanding of what efficiency and effectiveness mean, based on concrete field evidence and include how risks are to be shared between ECHO and its partners.

Dialogue should be encouraged at member state level with the aim of reinforcing existing partnerships between member states and NGOs.

### 3. Towards concrete implementation of partnerships in the field

In the context of the Grand Bargain and the localisation agenda, donors should ensure that the trust and mutual accountability stemming from partnership are translated into acceptance of calculated risks. This will allow for timely, principled and needs-based responses.

Simplification of the administrative management and increased flexibility of expenditure are also needed for humanitarian partners to operate in often unpredictable contexts where intended results cannot always be guaranteed.

We urge donors to engage in dialogue with their NGO partners, on the real costs of new ways of working in different kinds of partnerships, including consortia, and work towards providing multi-year funding for them.