

BRUSSELS

COVERING: Institutions of the European Union, NATO, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and specific armed forces in Western Europe, and Belgium

The objectives and plans of action are valid for two years, while the budget presented applies to one year only.

The ICRC has been working in Brussels since 1999, building strong institutional and operational relations with European Union institutions, NATO and its Parliamentary Assembly, specific armed forces based in Western Europe, and Belgium. It aims to make the ICRC's mandate better known, to mobilize political, diplomatic and financial support for its activities and to ensure that relevant military decision-makers in Western Europe view the ICRC as the main reference point for neutral and independent humanitarian action, as well as for IHL.

BUDGET IN KCHF	
Protection	48
Assistance	-
Prevention	2,849
Cooperation with National Societies	225
General	14
Total	3,136
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	<i>191</i>

PERSONNEL	
Mobile staff	2
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	13

MAIN TARGETS FOR 2015–16

- ▶ European Union (EU) institutions take account of IHL and matters of humanitarian concern – particularly migration, sexual violence and the goals of the Health Care in Danger project – in their policies, decisions and activities
- ▶ NATO takes steps to further the inclusion of IHL/humanitarian perspectives in its training/operations, giving due consideration to ICRC contributions to military training and lessons-learned exercises following NATO operations
- ▶ EU member States implement pledges made at the 31st International Conference and adopt new ones at the 32nd International Conference in 2015
- ▶ ICRC dialogue – complementing its operations in places where EU and NATO civilian/military missions are ongoing – boosts support for neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action among European actors of influence

CONTEXT

The European Union (EU) is involved in crisis management and conflict resolution, and follows developments in armed conflicts and other situations of violence throughout the world: for instance, in Afghanistan, Kosovo,¹ Mali, Niger and Ukraine. A total of 16 EU field missions (including five military missions) are in progress, within the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

The European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which is in charge of all decisions regarding the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and the CSDP, are working together to develop a European foreign policy. The rotating biannual presidency of the Council of the EU, to be held by Latvia and Luxembourg in 2015 and the Netherlands and Slovakia in 2016, chairs some of the Council's working groups, such as the Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) and the Working Group on Public International Law (COJUR).

The EU channels humanitarian aid mainly through the European Commission's (EC) Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO). The EC's Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation (DEVCO) deals with early recovery, cooperation and prevention.

Council of Europe bodies and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) address, *inter alia*,

issues relating to the Caucasus and to migrants and asylum seekers in Europe.

European armed forces and Europe-based US commands are deployed in various contexts under the mandates of the EU, NATO, UN or individual States, either as parties to conflict or within the framework of cooperation/training programmes. NATO remains involved in Kosovo, through a peace-support operation conducted in cooperation with other actors, and in anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia. In Afghanistan, NATO's arrangements for withdrawing the International Security Assistance Force continue, as it makes the shift gradually from active military engagement to a training/advisory role in support of Afghan forces.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

In 2015 and 2016, the ICRC's Brussels delegation will continue to foster relations, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention and crisis management, with EU institutions, NATO and its Parliamentary Assembly, and the Belgian authorities, with a view to ensuring that IHL and humanitarian concerns are given due consideration in their policies, decisions and operations. Through dialogue, it will reinforce support for ICRC operations in places where EU and NATO civilian/military missions are in progress – for example, in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic (hereafter CAR), Kosovo, Libya, Mali, Niger and Somalia.

The ICRC will share its views on legal and operational matters with the bodies mentioned above to help them ensure

1/ UN Security Council Resolution 1244

the best possible response to humanitarian challenges. Dialogue will centre on operational contexts of common interest and humanitarian concerns such as displacement, migration and asylum, missing persons, sexual violence and access to health care. The ICRC will continue to advocate the implementation of the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with IHL. It will also encourage EU member States to honour pledges made at the 31st International Conference. It will maintain its interaction with the Belgian authorities on IHL-related issues.

Dialogue with NATO headquarters and with senior officers of NATO forces and Europe-based US commands – including their rapid deployment and special forces units – will focus on strategic, operational, legal and doctrinal issues relating to IHL and matters of humanitarian concern. In coordination with NATO commands and training centres, the ICRC will: contribute to lessons-learned exercises on IHL/humanitarian issues identified during/after operations; give presentations on IHL and the ICRC; contribute to military training exercises; and participate in NATO conferences/seminars.

The ICRC will raise awareness of IHL and humanitarian issues among the wider public, notably by: co-organizing events with academic circles, including the College of Europe and the Network on Humanitarian Assistance (NOHA) consortium of European universities; holding meetings/briefings with Brussels-based NGOs and think-tanks; pursuing joint communication campaigns with ECHO; and keeping the media updated on humanitarian issues and ICRC activities. It will organize IHL briefings/training sessions for representatives of European bodies.

To ensure coherence in the incorporation of humanitarian concerns in the commitments/policies of European institutions, EU member States and National Societies, the ICRC will coordinate with the Brussels-based Red Cross/EU Office, including its working groups on disaster management, legal support, and refugees and migration. The Belgian Red Cross will be kept up to date on ICRC initiatives, and its IHL-related activities given support.

The ICRC will continue to visit detainees serving sentences in Belgium handed down by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND ICRC OBJECTIVES

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

In Belgium, a number of people are serving prison sentences handed down by the ICTY and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Objective

People deprived of their freedom serving prison sentences in Belgium handed down by the ICC and the ICTY are afforded treatment and living conditions, including respect for judicial guarantees, that meet internationally recognized standards, and are able to maintain family links.

Plan of action and indicators

Protection

- ▶ visit people serving their sentences in Belgium, following their transfer from the ICC and the ICTY; share the

findings and recommendations confidentially with the detaining authorities

- ▶ help these detainees contact their families via the Movement's family-links network, if they so wish

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

The Council of the EU, the PSC and the EEAS, among other EU bodies, regularly address security and conflict/violence-related issues. The COJUR focuses on IHL-related work; the COHAFSA, as well as EC and EEAS geographical working groups/units, tackles diverse humanitarian issues. EEAS crisis response mechanisms mobilize actors/resources, helping in ensuring a coherent EU response.

At the EC level, ECHO and DEVCO play major roles in determining how humanitarian organizations address humanitarian needs. With the agencies concerned, the EC's Directorate-General for Home Affairs deals with migration issues.

NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan concludes at the end of 2014; it is now engaged, within the NATO Forces 2020 framework, in enhancing the flow of information among members' armed forces and strengthening rapid-response capacities. This has necessitated a shift of focus, to military training/education and exercises. The Europe-based US Africa Command is particularly involved in East and West Africa, providing military assistance and mentoring/training local forces.

Belgium plays an important role in developing, promoting and implementing IHL; its national IHL committee is recognized internationally as a model of its kind. With its large community of diplomats, international civil servants, academics and representatives of NGOs and the media, Brussels is an ideal venue for dialogue on IHL and humanitarian concerns.

Objective

EU institutions, NATO and its Parliamentary Assembly, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the Belgian authorities and the armed forces based in Europe understand and respect IHL and other fundamental rules protecting people in armed conflict and other situations of violence, and incorporate these in their decision-making processes. NGOs, think-tanks and other Brussels-based organizations, members of the academic community and the media help foster awareness of humanitarian issues and IHL among the parties mentioned above and in the wider public, thus securing greater respect for human dignity. All actors understand the ICRC's mandate and support its work.

Plan of action and indicators

Prevention

- ▶ to encourage the inclusion of contextual and thematic humanitarian concerns – including those related to IDPs/refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, missing persons, sexual violence and the goals of the Health Care in Danger project – in Europe-wide decisions and policies, and to enhance knowledge of and respect for IHL and gain support for the ICRC's mandate and activities in the region and beyond:
 - maintain dialogue on contexts of common interest – for example, Afghanistan, CAR, Kosovo, Mali, Niger, Somalia and Ukraine – with: countries holding the EU presidency; EU institutions, such as the Council of the EU and its working groups, the EEAS and its

- crisis management entities, the EC and the European Parliament; EU member States; NATO and its Parliamentary Assembly; the Council of Europe; the OSCE; and the Belgian authorities; organize IHL briefings/training sessions for representatives of these entities
- through high-level meetings/discussions with NATO headquarters and with EU and NATO armed forces and Europe-based US forces – including annual staff talks and contact with NATO’s strategic commands – sustain dialogue on strategic, operational, legal and doctrinal issues related to IHL and humanitarian concerns; contribute to discussions on civil-military relations by participating in key NATO seminars/conferences, including the Europe-based US commands’ annual legal conference
- to promote incorporation and enforcement of IHL:
- encourage the EEAS to implement the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with IHL and to incorporate IHL and other relevant norms in EU cooperation programmes
 - contribute to the inclusion of IHL and humanitarian perspectives in NATO’s training, education and exercises, as well as their incorporation in doctrine and operational planning, through: involvement in lessons-learned exercises on IHL and humanitarian issues identified during/after NATO operations, such as in Afghanistan and Libya; presentations on IHL and the ICRC during courses/conferences, including those hosted by the NATO Defence College; participation in training exercises for EU and NATO forces and Europe-based US commands; and briefings for rapid-response and special forces units on IHL rules pertaining to conduct of hostilities and protection of civilians and, with a view to facilitating ICRC operations in places where these units are deployed, on the organization’s working procedures in the field
 - work with Belgium’s national IHL committee, and its Foreign Affairs and Justice Ministries, on IHL-related issues
 - promote implementation of pledges made by EU member States at the 31st International Conference; encourage the adoption of pertinent pledges at the 32nd International Conference
- to raise awareness of IHL and humanitarian issues among the wider public, and to stimulate debate on these subjects:
- co-organize events with the Belgian Red Cross and academic circles, notably the College of Europe, the EU Institute for Security Studies and NOHA
 - hold meetings/briefings/seminars with Brussels-based NGOs, other humanitarian organizations and think-tanks, and the Friends of IHL group; provide IHL updates and expertise, and coordinate activities
 - pursue joint communication campaigns in Europe with ECHO
 - keep the media informed of humanitarian issues and ICRC activities

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Brussels-based Red Cross/EU Office, representing the National Societies of EU member States and the International Federation, promotes the inclusion of humanitarian concerns in the agenda/policies of EU member States and National Societies. Its working groups tackle various humanitarian issues, such as those related to migration and natural disasters and other crises.

The Belgian Red Cross maintains an expertise in IHL and organizes related events (see *Actors of influence*), including an annual IHL competition.

Objective

The ICRC and Movement partners cooperate in areas of common concern, in line with the Fundamental Principles and their respective mandates.

Plan of action and indicators

Cooperation

- maintain regular dialogue with Movement partners, particularly the Red Cross/EU Office, ensuring coherent communication and coordination of activities in preparation for the 32nd International Conference in 2015
- participate in meetings of the European Disaster Management Working Group, the European Legal Support Group, and the Platform for European Red Cross Cooperation on Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants; contribute to discussions on matters related to IHL and the ICRC’s operations
- keep the Belgian Red Cross abreast of ICRC initiatives; support its IHL-related events and its activities in connection with promotion/communication