

# European Union policy for civil protection and humanitarian aid in Iraq after 2003

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**European Union Policy for Civil Protection and  
Humanitarian Aid in IRAQ after 2003**

Master Thesis

University of Zagreb, July 2023

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**European Union Policy for Civil Protection and  
Humanitarian Aid in IRAQ after 2003**

Master Thesis

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University of Zagreb, July 2023

## **Acknowledgment**

I hereby declare that I have written my master thesis “**EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection in IRAQ Since 2003**” that I submitted to my supervisor doc. dr. sc. Nika Bačić Selanec, for evaluation, independently and that it is entirely in my authorship. I also declare that the paper in question has not been published or used to fulfil teaching obligations at this or any other institution of higher education and that I did not obtain ECTS credits based on it. Furthermore, I declare that I have respected the ethical rules of scientific and academic work, particularly Articles 16-19 of the Code of Ethics of the University of Zagreb.

Saad Nagmadin Kaka Mostafa Barznje

## **Abstract**

Through an examination of the European Union (EU) foreign policy towards Iraq, and the EU's intervention via either source of financial support or assistance on the ground, this study aimed to assess the effects of EU humanitarian aid and civil protection in Iraq since 2003. Attention was paid mostly to the EU emergency response between 2014 and 2018 since the emergency response needed by humanitarian organizations during that time was critical.

Through an investigation into previous studies, and the EU policy documents and reports, the findings show that overall, the response to Iraq humanitarian aid and civil protection was in line with the DG ECHO's objectives and the legal framework. The actions taken in Iraq were, for the most part, especially in the Mosul crisis after 2014, consistent with the principles on providing humanitarian assistance and civil protection to civilians. Given Iraq's complex security environment, both the field presence of DG ECHO and the collaborative approach via financing were meaningful, although a lack of local ownership of humanitarian aid sometimes rendered it ineffective in certain cases. Overall, the outreach effort in Iraq was successful in a number of different areas, although there were still opportunities for improvement. The levels of efficiency in Iraq were satisfactory, and there were opportunities to expand staffing capacity and availability.

The findings of this study have important theoretical implications, as they provide an insight on the effectiveness of EU aid and civil protection in Iraq.

Keywords: European Union, The EU Foreign Policy, DG ECHO, Humanitarian Aid, Civil Protection

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## List of Abbreviations

DG-ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian aid Operations
EU	European Union
EUJUST LEX	European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission in Iraq
GOI	Government of Iraq
HIP	Humanitarian Implementation Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INFORM	Inform Severity Index, the Index for Risk Management
IP	Implementing Partner
ICRC	International Red Cross and Red Crescent
KOI	Key Outcome Indicators
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
Minha	Ministry of Planning COVID-19 emergency transfer initiative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism
UN	United Nations

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Since 2003, after the overthrow of Bath regime, the European Union (EU) has been one of the primary contributors in humanitarian aid and civil protection in Iraq (European Commission, 2022). Iraq's efforts to restore peace and revitalize the nation have been greatly aided by the EU, which has shown to be a reliable partner in its commitments (European Commission, 2021). Since 2003, the EU has aided more than one billion euros to Iraq in the form of aid, elevating it to the position of one of the major foreign aid contributors at 2023. The EU's approach includes providing financial and material assistance to vulnerable populations, supporting the rule of law (Gardner, 2017), promoting respect for human rights (MERI, 2017; Frisch, 2008), and Civil Protection Mechanism (European External Action Service, 2021), which provided emergency relief and support to Iraq during the COVID-19. While there are different views on the effectiveness of EU aid in Iraq (Ammar, 2020), there is evidence to suggest that the EU's assistance has contributed to mitigating the humanitarian consequences of the conflict, improving the capacity of Iraqi authorities to respond to emergencies, and enhancing the EU's profile and influence in the region (Barret, 2020).

## Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the EU foreign policies in respect of providing civil protection and humanitarian aid in Iraq since 2003 through an investigation on the interactions between European Union foreign policy, and EU intervention through either source of financial support or assistance on the ground. The study will examine whether or not EU humanitarian assistance have contributed to an improvement in humanitarian aid and civil protection in Iraq. Previous research on the EU's involvement in Iraq has mostly focused on the EU's development role in Iraq (Ammar, 2020). Other publications on humanitarian assistance are primarily based on facts and data (Barret, 2020), but from an academic standpoint, no or less attention has been paid to the effectiveness of EU participation in humanitarian aid and civil protection in Iraq. The study aims to fill the gap and further explore whether or not the engagement and actions taken by the EU in humanitarian relief and civil protection have been truly effective. Assuming that positive implications of the EU intervention outweigh the negative ones, this study will explore a number of secondary reference materials, case studies as well as resources that are considered to be trustworthy in the areas of humanitarian aid and civil protection. Particular



attention will be given to EU foreign policy, the cooperation between the EU and Iraq, EU engagement of the EU in response to humanitarian aid more specifically between 2014 and 2018 where effective and efficient humanitarian needs were crucial, and the goals that the EU has set for humanitarian aid until 2023.

This study has been organized in four parts. First of all, the introduction has set out the research questions, objectives, hypotheses and methodology of the study. The second chapter will then provide background information on the humanitarian aid in the world, Iraq humanitarian crisis situation and EU intervention in Iraq, necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the topic and the relevance of its research. The third chapter will provide an overview of the EU foreign policies, focusing on current events. Next, the EU strategy and intervention toward humanitarian aid and civil protection in Iraq, which is the focus of the study will be elaborated. Afterwards, the major effectiveness of EU policy for civil protection and humanitarian aid along with an assessment of the main challenges will be discussed. The chapter will conclude by discussing the future prospects of the relationship and partnership between the EU and Iraq. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the key research findings of the thesis and set out certain recommendations for more study in this area.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Humanitarian Crisis**

As a result of conflicts and natural disasters, large numbers of people are displaced from their homes across the world. In this aspect, not only does humanitarian aid provide temporary shelter for individuals affected by crises, but it also provides communities with the supplies, materials, labor, and other resources needed to begin the reconstruction process following a natural catastrophe or conflict and war (Last, 2022). Humanitarian aid has the capacity to serve an important role in the provision of reliable, safe, and secure housing. Furthermore, civil protection services oversee the deployment of help from the government throughout, whether in the run-up to a disaster or in its aftermath of a disaster. In-kind assistance, the deployment of specially equipped teams, and on-the-ground evaluation and coordination of support are all examples of conceivable assistance (European commission, 2022). When a country's ability to manage a crisis exceeds the point where it can no longer be handled, other participating nations step in for humanitarian aid and civil protection assistance. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2018) estimates that only in the year 2018, 128.8 million people had to seek humanitarian relief, while only 105.1 million people have received humanitarian aid. In 2005, there were 40 million individuals who received support, and since that time, that number has continuously risen, hitting 65 million people in 2011 and reaching 97.6 million people in 2016 (OCHA, 2015). These numbers shed light on how increasingly important it is to give importance to humanitarian aid and civil protection. Even though it is true that humanitarian aid programs are now more important than ever before, ensuring that they are functional, continues to be a tough and challenging task.

### **Iraq humanitarian crisis**

Many countries in the world are in need of urgent humanitarian aid. Still, it is important to acknowledge the scale and complexity of the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, particularly since 2003 after the fall of previous regime. Iraq is one of the countries suffered from internal conflicts and continues to be a country that is at an extremely elevated risk of a humanitarian catastrophe rated 20 out of 191 on the (INFORM Risk Index, 2023), and the nation is now dealing with major crises that are overlapping with one another. Many years of violent warfare and multiple sources of instability have resulted in people being uprooted from their homes for extended periods of time resulting in significant humanitarian issues. The political

turbulence and instability, together with tensions in the area, particularly over natural resources, have made the situation more volatile and heightened the likelihood of violent clashes. Further to that, the COVID-19 has contributed to the worsening of these difficulties, which has increased the total number of potential dangers (GPF, 2021).

After the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) was officially declared ended in December 2017, Iraq found itself in a new risky scenario. There had been violent instability for many years, and as a result, a huge number of people who had been forced to evacuate and displace from their home due to the struggle with the Islamic State from 2014 to 2017, are still living in temporary settlement. Following the battle's conclusion, about 4.97 million people have gradually returned home. According to the International Organization for Migration's (IOM), and Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), as of September 30th, 2022, around 1.17 million people were still staying in shelters, out-of-camp communities, and settlements where they were hosted (IOM, 2023). People frequently struggle to make enough money to support their families and pay for their children's education. In all impacted governorates of Iraq, with the exception of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG), the Government of Iraq (GOI) has made the decision to either remove or reorganize camps for internally displaced person (IDP) as informal settlements. This, together with the newly stated aim to complete the IDP dossier by the end of 2023, has prompted a large number of families to either leave the camps early or be compelled to displace again, particularly to unofficial relocation zones where IDPs have resided (Kurdistan24, 2023). In the wake of the conflict and COVID-19, a significant number of Iraqis in disadvantaged situations find themselves unable to satisfy their necessities because of political uncertainty and increasing food costs. This has an immediate impact on people being displaced, the viability of returning home efforts, and the social cohesiveness of communities that have been damaged by violence (Kebede et al., 2020).

Additionally, as a result of a rise in natural catastrophes in a number of countries where increased needs outweigh local capability, the annual worldwide financing for the delivery of humanitarian aid in Iraq started to decrease, and it is anticipated that this decline will continue in the years to come. Iraq is struggling with worsening water scarcity and conditions of drought, both of which are having an adverse impact on the living conditions and means of subsistence of the affected populations (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2021).

Moreover, the absence of civil identifications and documents is the primary protection concern, and it prevents the bulk of displaced people from returning to the locations from where they were initially evacuated. Access to fundamental services like education and healthcare is still a major obstacle to overcome (Protection Cluster, 2021). Last but not the least, the biggest problems that people want to see resolved are structural issues that inspire youngsters to express their opinions in public and advocate for collective rather than individual approaches. Still, a not minor proportion of individuals believe that there is no way to solve problems with corruption and how local political parties behave. They believe that there is no chance to address these issues (Alaaldin F. 2021).

### **The EU humanitarian aid**

The mission of EU humanitarian aid program is to deliver emergency aid and civil protection for those living in third countries who are affected by natural disasters or sufferings created by humans (European Commission, 2023). When both the EU's aid and the mutual aid provided by its member countries is considered, the EU emerges as the largest donor of humanitarian assistance worldwide (European Commission, 2023). In excess of one billion euros is spent each year on humanitarian aid by the European Commission alone. Only in 2014, Syria, South Sudan, Iraq, and the Central African Republic all received assistance from the European Union in the field of humanitarian assistance. Even when the EU does not conduct its own operations on the ground, it provides funding and coordination for programs that are carried out by collaborators, the majority of whom are non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In addition to this, the EU is responsible for the formulation of the primary principles that underpin the policy of international humanitarian assistance and operates as an entrepreneur, promoting its own philosophical perspective on the provision of humanitarian assistance (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2014).

### **The EU humanitarian aid intervention in Iraq**

In light of Iraq's immediate need for humanitarian assistance, the EU, which is considered one of the most significant donors in the world, has made its distinct contribution and engagement in the process of addressing the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, particularly after partnership agreement with Iraq in 2012. On May 11th, 2012, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and Iraq was signed.

During 2014 and 2018, a significant portion of the EU funding for Iraq was distributed across many categories of project execution collaborators. In point of fact, the EU has

greatly enhanced its contributions to humanitarian relief and civil protection over this time period in Iraq. Figure 1 shows that, the total amount of money being spent continued to steadily expand across all fields until 2016, when it reached its highest point during the Iraq crisis, after which it began to decrease. Needless to say, that the budget for civil protection activities continued to climb until 2017, afterwards it decreased substantially (European Union, 2020).

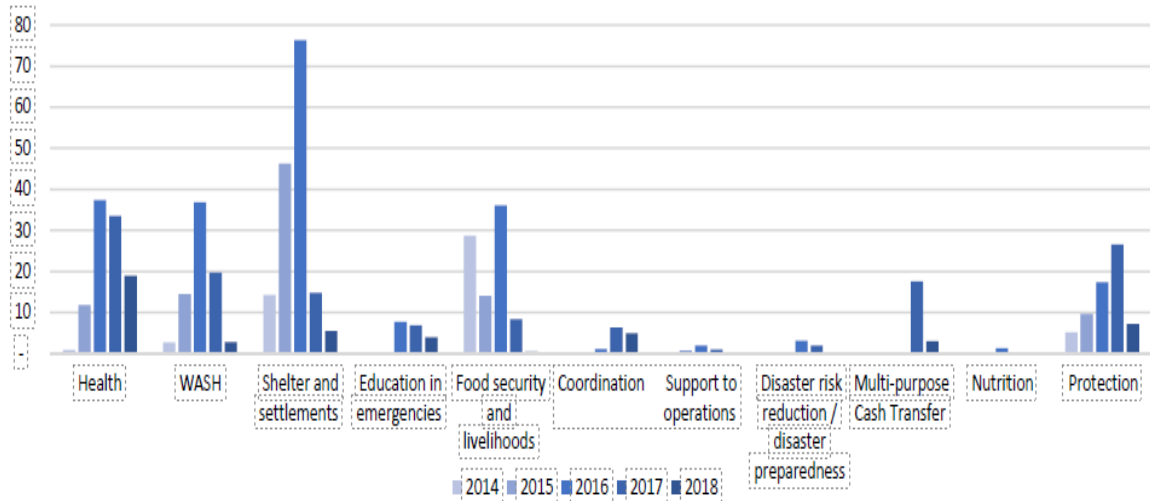


Figure 1: DG ECHO funding in Iraq, in M€ by sector (2014-2018)- Source: (European Union, 2020)

The majority of the EU aid has been directly assigned to its major partners including OXFAM, International Rescue Committee, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Care Germany, United Nations Children’s Fund, ACT Alliance / Diakonia, Sweden, Terre des Hommes – Italy, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, INTERSOS Humanitarian Aid Organization, Terre des Hommes – Italy (OCHA Services, 2022).

By the end of 2019, extra funds were allocated for humanitarian aid and adjustments in the security sector, bringing the EU's overall contribution to the broader humanitarian-stabilization-development link to around 500 million euros (European Commission, 2022). Further, in 2022, the EU spent 24 million euros to humanitarian programs in Iraq. This assistance intended to support efforts that were being made to help those who were most in need, such as IDP who were living in camps and families who were residing outside the shelters in unofficial settlements (European Commission, 2022). In addition, in 2023, the EU made another contribution with funding 1 million Euro for man-made crises and natural hazards, initial emergency response/small-scale/epidemics, disaster preparedness, and

transport / complementary activities in Iraq. In addition, the EU made a further contribution in the year 2023 by providing financing in the amount of 17million Euro for human-caused crises and catastrophes, first emergency response/small-scale/epidemics, preparedness for disasters, and transport/complementary operations in Iraq (DG ECHO1/C4, 2023). It should come as no surprise that the majority of the EU's contributions to humanitarian help in Iraq have been made between the years 2016 and 2022. During this time period, the EU contributed more than 496 million euros to Iraq in the form of humanitarian aid, placing it among the top contributors of humanitarian aid and civil protection in the country as a whole.

## Chapter 3

The previous sections have provided a background about the world humanitarian aid, humanitarian crisis in Iraq, as well as the volume of EU aid to Iraq related to humanitarian assistance and civil protection. This chapter will provide an overview of the legislative frameworks of the EU, as well as the foreign policies of both the EU and Iraq with regard to providing humanitarian aid and civil protection in Iraq.

### EU Legal Framework

Humanitarian principles might have been recognized in a variety of EU papers, law, and regulations throughout the years. The EU's supply of humanitarian aid is part of the wider immediate action and emergency response system. The opening section to the Council Regulation on Humanitarian assistance of 1996 establishes the fundamental legislative basis for the development of a specialized humanitarian assistance strategy on the grounds of the European Community (Council of the EU, 1996). It underlined that the primary goal of humanitarian assistance is to safeguard against or alleviate human suffering, regardless of issues related to politics (Orbie et al, 2014).

The EU, together with its many other member states, is actively engaging in humanitarian relief operations organized across the world by its Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian aid Operations (DG ECHO) institution. In essence, it is not a solitary actor, instead a group of 27 member countries that, in addition to delegating the coordination of humanitarian assistance to DG-ECHO, pursue their own individual humanitarian aid approaches (European Council, 2020).

DG ECHO allocates funds on the basis of facts and investigation with the goal to comply with highest standards of humanitarian assistance and provide humanitarian relief merely on the necessities of those in need. The financing is evaluated yearly by DG ECHO based on the key factors. First, it employs internationally accepted indicators such as the Inform Severity Index, the Index for Risk Management (INFORM) (Poljansek et al, 2020). Secondly, DG ECHO undertakes studies making use of data collected on the ground by its many offices comprised of humanitarian practitioners and specialists (Cox, 2009).

The EU humanitarian aid and civil protection adheres to four guiding values. Humanity means that human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable; neutrality means that humanitarian aid must not favor any side in an

armed conflict or other dispute; impartiality means that humanitarian aid must be provided solely on the basis of need, without discrimination; and independence means the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from political, economic, military or other objectives (Broberg, 2014).

As stipulated in article 21 of the Treaty on European Union (TFEU), the EU external action measures include providing relief in the form of humanitarian aid as well as civil protection.

Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) serves as the legal basis for the EU's humanitarian assistance activities, as well as the establishment of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Assistance Corps (EUR-Lex, 2012). This article outlines that the Union's operations in the field of humanitarian aid shall be conducted within the framework of the principles and objectives of the external action of the Union. Such operations shall be intended to provide ad hoc assistance and relief and protection for people in third countries who are victims of natural or man-made disasters, in order to meet the humanitarian needs resulting from these different situations. The Union's measures and those of the Member States shall complement and reinforce each other. The Union shall ensure that its humanitarian aid operations are coordinated and consistent with those of international organizations and bodies, in particular those forming part of the United Nations system. (Hergaden M. F., 2023; EUR-Lex, 2012).

Furthermore, the EU competence for civil protection is based on Article 196 TFEU which states that Union action should aim to promote swift, effective operational cooperation within the Union between national civil protection services, as well as consistency in international civil protection work. The mechanism has two main objectives. Firstly, it aims to strengthen the cooperation between the Union and the Participating States. Secondly, it aims to facilitate coordination in the field of civil protection in order to improve the effectiveness of systems for preventing, preparing for and responding to natural and man-made disasters (European Court of Auditors, 2016).

The EU's civil protection action is regulated in more details in Decision No. 1313/2013/EU constituting the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). This decision has been updated twice with the purpose of strengthening the EU's collective ability to avoid, prepare for, and react to natural catastrophes. While the EU's cooperation on civil protection are part of the EU's internal policies and actions, the UCPM is an essential external element that could also



be activated in the event that natural disasters affect regions and countries that are not members of the EU.

Both humanitarian assistance and civil protection are the responsibility of the EU ECHO. This Directorate-General serves not only as the provider of humanitarian assistance on behalf of the EU but also as the point of contact and enabler of civil protection actions carried out at the EU level by means of the UCPM (Morlino, 2021).

For the purposes of its humanitarian interventions, DG ECHO generally offers funding for operations to a diverse spectrum of about 200 partnerships. These partners include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), agencies of the United Nations (UN), and international organizations, among them the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (LexUriServ n.d). The Directorate General for Economic and Social Affairs has a significant presence in the field thanks to its network of around 450 employees located in over 500 field offices in 40 countries (DG ECHO, 2022). The field offices assist with the development of intervention strategies and policy development, provide technical support to EU-funded operations, protect tracking of these activities, and support donor coordination at field level. They also provide assessment of present and forecasted needs in any particular nation or geographic area. Therefore, humanitarian aid is one of the most significant tools of European Union (EU) foreign policy, and it is one of the primary channels by which the EU can extend its involvement in humanitarian aid. The aid intervention notably includes the crises in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Ukraine, as well as the Ebola outbreak, and outbreak of covid-19. As a result, the European Union (EU) provided assistance to 121 million people who were impacted by either natural or human-caused catastrophes in the year 2014 alone, and 80 countries acquired humanitarian relief (DG ECHO, 2015).

In addition, DG ECHO is not only responsible for providing financing for humanitarian relief, but it is also in charge of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (DG ECHO, 2015), which helps to organize the response to catastrophes in Europe and abroad, and it helps cover at least 75% of the transportation and/or operating expenses associated with dispatches. The Mechanism, which was established in 2001, promotes collaboration among the national civil protection agencies of Europe's various countries. At this time, there are a total of 34 nations that are members of the Mechanism. These countries include all 27 of the EU Member States, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Iceland, Norway, Serbia, North, and Montenegro (EEA Agreement, 2016). The Mechanism was established to make it possible

for the participating governments to provide Macedonia coordinated aid to sufferers of both natural and human-caused catastrophes in Europe and other parts of the world (DG ECHO, 2015).

### **EU foreign policy toward Iraq**

In 2003, as a result of the failure of some major EU member states to unite behind one flag during the Iraq War, the EU showed some of its internal fault lines, which called into question the effectiveness of establishing a uniform EU foreign policy (Spyer, 2007). After the EU maintained a permanent base of operations in Iraq in 2012 as a result of the Joint Cooperation in many areas, its participation in the country increasingly involved partnering with international and national players to strengthen the nation's capability in a number of domains, including the provision of humanitarian aid. Afterward, the EU foreign and security policy, which aims to increase knowledge of global problems and put an end to hostilities, is founded on diplomacy and respect to international laws. This policy's primary goals are to raise awareness of global issues and put an end to hostilities. Trading, humanitarian help and civil protection, as well as development cooperation, all have a significant impact on how the EU is seen in the eyes of the rest of the world. (European union, 2023).

The foreign policy of the EU toward Iraq is based on establishing long-term partnerships. Iraq is one of the nations in which the EU has entered into long-term agreements to provide humanitarian aid on an ongoing basis. There are several reasons why the EU places a high emphasis on its relationships with Iraq. Iraq has a geographically significant and strategically crucial location due to its position as one of the "neighbors of neighbors" of the European Union. Therefore, Iraq is considered as both a crucial partner and an ally in the effort to solve the obstacles that are prevalent in the region. As a result, it is in the EU's best interest to assist Iraq in establishing peace (Thapa, 2023).

The EU has placed a significant emphasis on the delivery of humanitarian assistance all over the world. Since after 2003, the EU and Iraq have been working together to provide humanitarian aid and civil protection; nonetheless, the degree of coordination between the two sides did not become significantly important until after 2014. Following significant humanitarian aid efforts were undertaken by the EU following 2014, more current regulations have been put into place to eradicate discriminatory aid. In order to deliver essential amenities such as food, water, and shelter, the EU has been collaborating with non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations such as the United Nations (Furness & Gänzle, 2017; Isakhan).

The course of action that has set forward in Iraq in 2023 may have resonating effects on the efforts made to address the ongoing displacement and the humanitarian needs that have arisen as a direct consequence of the conflict. Therefore, the EU found it very crucial to step up its contribution to the field of humanitarian aid and emergency assistance. Given its extensive involvement in and focus on Iraq throughout the years, the EU is in an excellent position to provide assistance for Iraq as it moves ahead. In addition, it is essential for the EU to become involved if the displaced people of Iraq are to be remembered and if they are to have access to governmental services and social protection programs. The EU is in a position to continue assisting and ensuring that humanitarian needs are appropriately handled and included into its longer-term development aid. Additionally, the EU may provide assistance to the government in the delivery of long-term solutions for those who have been displaced (Thapa, 2023).

## Chapter 4

The previous sections have provided an overview of the legal framework of the external action of the EU, as well as the foreign policies of the EU related to humanitarian assistance and civil protection in Iraq. The EU has presented a series of goals with the intention of addressing the humanitarian crisis in Iraq. The objectives of this chapter are to address the effectiveness of EU aid and the challenges that the EU has in providing humanitarian assistance and civil protection in Iraq.

### **The effectiveness of EU humanitarian aid and civil protection**

Humanitarian aid and civil protection have been provided by the European Union to Iraq for years, most successfully since 2014, yet it is arguable whether or not this aid has been beneficial to the Iraqi people. While some assert that the EU's aid has been beneficial, others argue that more might have been done to address the underlying causes of Iraq's humanitarian crisis (Marks J., 2023) and that the aid has not gone far enough to alleviate the country's grave humanitarian situation.

As an immediate response to the continuous humanitarian catastrophe that has been occurring in Iraq mostly since 2014 (European Union, 2019), the EU has contributed more than 435.27 million euros for implementation of humanitarian aid and civil protection. It is justifiable to assess the effectiveness of the EU aid fund and engagement in Iraq according to the urgent requirements of the Iraqi civilian population and the length of time they have been in need of assistance from the international community. Furthermore, the correlation of the EU policy outcome with the practice of policy is essential to effective policy implementation. Since the purpose of this research is to understand the effectiveness of EU aid intervention in Iraq, the best way to see how well it met its goals is to analyze whether the EU's measures were in agreement with the goals set in the different strategy papers. The Key Outcome Indicators (KOI) for the whole Iraq portfolio demonstrate that the majority of the targets were reached between 2014 and 2018, when the urgent response to humanitarian needs on the ground was at the height of its intensity. Most of the KOI goals were fulfilled in a similar way everywhere in the country which are as follows:

First, the engagement of the EU to provide help in Iraq has been coherent to a sufficient amount and interventions were often coordinated effectively and matched with the larger humanitarian agenda. It is crucial to reiterate that, in accordance with the Humanitarian Aid

Regulation, support, relief, and protection were supplied in Iraq with the intention of meeting the need of those who were the most vulnerable. According to (Transtec, 2021), generally, actions taken by the EU were well coordinated and fit in with the larger aid response by other humanitarian donors. Collected actions were in accordance with the humanitarian principles, but DG ECHO's reaction to the Mosul humanitarian disaster, while also in line with the guiding principles, gave the EU greater significance than a few other major players (European Commission, 2020). However, DG ECHO contends that Implementing Partner (IP)s who are also operating on the ground occasionally turned down to serve on the frontlines and were excessively reluctant to take risks and failed to value the well-being of humanity appropriately, leading to prolonged response to humanitarian aids. This kind of actions which most of the time were out of the control of the EU, had an impact by discrediting the other organization's position including the EU and therefore could damage the process of decision-making, highlighting the need for strong decision-making procedures and instructions to be established in order to make decisions based on values when lives are at risk. Nonetheless, overall, according to (European Commission, 2020), practically all of the EU's efforts by fund or on the ground were aligned with the EU goals to tackle humanitarian crisis, as well as the principles defined in the related DG ECHO policies on gender, WASH, and civil protection.

Second, the efficiency in funding and cash transfer was promoted by DG ECHO as a beneficial mode of transfer. Within the context of the strategic goals of the EU, the DG ECHO distributes funding according to needs assessments. In order to meet the ever-increasing demands placed by DG ECHO, the organization needs to prioritize the efficiency of its humanitarian aid spending (OECD Library, 2018). During the height of the Mosul crisis, employee turnover was identified as an efficiency concern, and personnel changes led various organizations to experience fluctuations in the efficiency and quality of their job duties. Given the context and variety of operations, the cost-effectiveness of the Iraq projects was generally very good, with budget variances appropriate and adequately provided for. Additionally, DG ECHO's attempted to guarantee the cost-effectiveness of Iraqi measures during the course of the project cycle were varied. DG ECHO was certain that funds were utilized efficiently and cost effectively to accomplish outcomes; IP participants reported that DG ECHO-funded initiatives were adequately efficient and/or cost effective considering relevant criteria; however, NGO participants were more hesitant (European Commission, 2020). Furthermore, there were substantial synergies between the

total budget of DG ECHO in Iraq and the changing circumstances, notably from 2014 to 2016. Needless to say, despite severe budget cuts in 2017 and 2018, there remained major humanitarian needs and safety considerations for IDPs and those who returned home. This raised some worries about the entire budget for 2017-2018 being acceptable in proportion to the Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP)s' estimated requirements. According to the European Commission (European Commission, 2020), in general, the percentages of the overall funding provided to each subject area were closely matched with requirements. In terms of civil protection, funding was broadly in line with HIP requirements, however it is unclear if the sudden reduction in 2018 was entirely suitable.

Third, the EU's humanitarian aid and civil protection assistance to Iraq have also had strategic implications and effectiveness for the EU's relations with the country and the broader region. By providing substantial and consistent support to Iraq over the years, the EU has demonstrated its commitment to promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the Middle East. This has strengthened the EU's profile and influence in the region, and opened up opportunities for cooperation and dialogue with Iraqi authorities and civil society organizations. For example, on August 14, 2014, in response to the progressively worsening circumstances, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated to enable and support the swift delivery of in-kind aid and knowledge to Iraq. In order to transport relief supplies, logistics, and other types of resources, a humanitarian air bridge was established. Via this humanitarian air bridge, ten different Member States have been providing necessary aid, either directly or indirectly via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Tents, sleeping bags, blankets, kitchen cooking sets, food rations, cars, hygiene kits, power generators, and medical supplies are some of the things that have been donated by EU in response to an urgent need. As a direct consequence of this collaboration, over twenty planes delivering supplies, both food and non-food related, have landed in Iraq. Additionally, according to qualitative research conducted by Transtec (2020), the result revealed that DG ECHO's Iraq programming functioned effectively in many areas. Notably, the health response, integrated response, and cash programming were successful due to their efficiency and adaptability. The swift response mechanism and DG ECHO's financial flexibility were other strengths. DG ECHO's assistance to the OCHA also improved the response, according to respondents. Civil protection was an advantage of the Mosul response, especially owing to the range of initiatives supported by EU. However, local

organizations were less powerful or more inconsistent in their civil protection operations. Protection mainstreaming, gender-based violence response, child protection, and health action referrals were further weaknesses (Transtec, 2020).

Fourth with regard to the long-term presence and sustainability of the EU intervention in Iraq, there has not been much evidence of long-term success in Iraq's humanitarian aid and civil protection. This is not surprising when one considers the challenges of successfully managing humanitarian aid on the ground in Iraq. According to Transtec (Transtec, 2020), in Iraq, programs focusing on medics/health, WASH, and training and education were significantly strong, whereas the efforts focusing on civil protection were relatively poorer. The report by Transtec (Transtec, 2020) also states that it was complicated to achieve long-term viability within the context of civil protection, especially because of to the limited options for carrying out self-protection and the chance that the governing bodies might not possess the same infrastructure as well as funds or the same goals as humanitarian aid and civil protection contributors. This was one of the factors that contributed to the difficulty in ensuring sustainability of the EU humanitarian aid in Iraq.

Fifth, in an area of conflict with as much division as Iraq, it might be difficult to identify the right IP and group who are appropriate to cooperate with. Nevertheless, in order to be effective, it is essential to have an understanding of the balance of power of the region in question as well as the little influence that the centralized government in Baghdad possesses. (Mohammed et al., 2017). The EU repeatedly stated that it supports local ownership in Iraq; nonetheless, it has ultimately supported the efforts of NGO's operating the Iraq. Whereas it would be preferable to seek out local NGOs with substantial expertise, relationships, and affiliations for the EU's humanitarian relief programs, the majority of the assistance that the EU provides passes to foreign NGOs. The prevalent argument for reasoning is that local NGO's do not have the capacity for operation to carry out large-scale humanitarian aid projects, and although this point is seldom made explicit, they frequently lack the confidence of international players to manage financial resources in a manner that is accountable. (Mohammed, 2018).

## The challenges of EU humanitarian aid and civil protection

The provision of humanitarian aid and support with civil protection by the EU to Iraq has not been without difficulties and restrictions. These obstacles have without a doubt hampered the EU and other aid organizations from addressing humanitarian crises. A number of these challenges are described in further detail below:

The fragile security situation in Iraq specially between 2014 and 2018 was one of the key issues that the EU confronts in Iraq (IOM UN Migration, 2018). This condition created a substantial danger to aid contractors, consultants and to aid workers as well as civilians. As a result of an increasing amount of violence and assaults on humanitarian groups and relief workers, it was very difficult to deliver support to those who are most in need and are in danger locations. For instance, in 2018, a group of employees from the International Committee of the Red Cross were assaulted in the city of Mosul, which resulted in the murder of one of the employees from the organization. Due to the security situation, aid workers were unable to travel freely, which made it difficult to assist individuals who are in need in some regions. The threat posed to humanitarian aid workers, specifically was significant and unprecedented in terms of what the majority of humanitarian organizations are willing to endure. Even though it can be challenging to determine what the alternative scenario would have been if the aid worker had been killed, it could happen that the entire humanitarian response not just trauma but any other program (shelter, WASH, protection, etc.) would have been impacted, possibly reduced backwards, or even stopped for a particular amount of time (Paul et al., 2018). Needless to say, the security situation gradually very much was improved after 2017 when the Iraqi prime minister proclaimed the defeat of ISIL. Figure 2 shows the attacks affecting civilian in Iraq between 2016 and 2021.

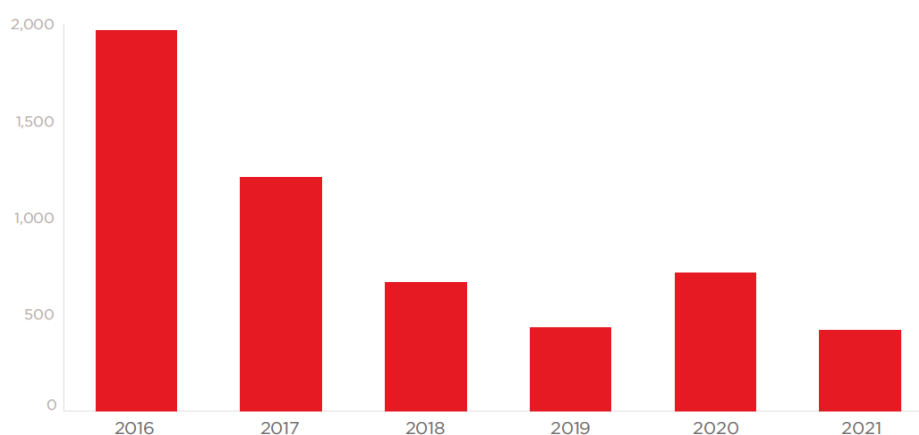


Figure 2: Attacks affecting civilians in Iraq, 2016–2021- Source: (Stoddard, et al., 2021, ACLED, 2020)



An additional challenge is the absence of coordination that exists between the many humanitarian participants. In Iraq, aid is being provided by a number of different organizations, such as the EU, the United Nations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from the region in which they operate. The failure of various actors to coordinate their efforts results in unnecessary repetition of those efforts, interruptions in the delivery of services, and miscommunication among the recipients. According to (IOM Migration, 2023), the shelter closures have been carried out in a manner that violates both the protection requirements and the framework for principled returns, and that this has occurred in the absence of collaboration with humanitarian agencies. For example, during Covid-19 pandemic, the failure to share information and coordinate efforts regarding the emergency transfer project carried out by the Ministry of Planning COVID-19 (Minha) was a missed opportunity to strengthen social protection and humanitarian collaboration (Savage and Labs, n.d.).

Another challenge is the lack of civilian documentation and identity of those in need of humanitarian aid. There are around 433,000 people who do not have a minimum of one proof of identity, which remains to be a barrier to accessing civil papers and the services provided by the government and humanitarian agencies (Islam I., 2023). Since there are difficulties in observation, it is probable that these figures are much higher. Furthermore, a climate that is cruel and fast deteriorating threatens to erase advances that have been made in terms of employment and availability of food, as well as heighten the dangers of migration caused by climate change. Despite the fact that the number of persons who do not have civil documentation has declined since 2019, which indicates that some progress has been achieved in the process of providing civil documentation, those who do not have essential forms of identification continue to be at danger of being excluded from basic government services, and international humanitarian aids consisting of the provision of education and medical care (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2022).

According to James Munn, NRC's country director in Iraq, without key components of civil records, war-affected families and households have been pushed to the outskirts of society, which compounds and reinforces other vulnerabilities. James Munn states that “Without civilian identity papers, they cannot access basic services, they cannot freely move through checkpoints, and they cannot move beyond the five years of suffering since the declared end of the conflict” (Info Migrants, 2022). Aid Organizations including EU are demanding that the Iraqi government, donor countries, and humanitarian response leaders help these people

get the legal papers they are legally entitled to in order to receive the basic humanitarian aids.

A further challenge stems from the sophisticated sociopolitical and sectarian differences that exist inside Iraq. Aid organizations need to handle preconceptions and allegations of partiality and be attentive to sectarian and political disputes, as well as the possibility of excluding specific groups from their aid programs (Stoddard, et al., 2021). Tensions occur in various complicated directions. The Iraqi government views the large number of aid organizations in the northern region as a potential security risk. There have been significant human rights concerns about the stigmatization, marginalization, and unfair treatment of persons in need who have been displaced from regions that were once held by ISIL. Additionally, there are dissatisfaction from localities and officials who witness aid being offered to such populations (Saieh and Petersohn, 2019).

Another challenge hampering humanitarian aid in Iraq is that, there are obstacles connected to reaching out to those who are in need. It might be difficult to give relief and safety to the local people in some regions, especially in those that are under the control by armed forces. Furthermore, the presence of bureaucratic impediments and prerequisites for visas for relief workers makes it more difficult to reach individuals who are in need (Humanitarian Response, 2021). A concentration on these challenges has resulted in a recurrent cycle in which government agencies are kept preoccupied with dealing with imminent and more manageable obstacles, which leaves them with insufficient energy and time for tackling more significant problems.

Last but not the least challenge the EU has is the diverse range of interests held by EU member states which makes it an essential obstacle that the EU must continually work to overcome. These voices impede a clear and strategic engagement in Iraq and contribute to a "Brusselization" of program design, which is to the disadvantage of talks with local actors. The EU may have the ability to overcome challenges connected to its own internal operations; yet, because of its size and the restricted scope of the influence that its humanitarian crisis management itself has, the EU may only have a limited ability to affect the situation as it now exists. Following that, one might question if its goals are attainable and whether its strategy is genuinely an approach that can be maintained over time.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

The EU is an aid contributor and donor that, via its Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response (DG ECHO), distributes the administration of its programs to intermediaries that are mostly UN agencies and NGO's. In such an environment, it is essential to be aware that the EU is not a unified body but rather is made up of 27 Member States, each of which is responsible for the administration of its own regulations on humanitarian aid and response to crisis. In spite of this, the member states of the EU have decided to outsource part of their policymaking authority to the EU's DG ECHO. Therefore, humanitarian assistance is one of the most crucial components of the EU's foreign policy. It is also one of the areas in which the role of the EU in geopolitics may be better understood by analyzing what 'the EU does' while seeking at the manner in which it actually changes the lives of people in need.

This study seeks to understand the effectiveness of the humanitarian assistance and civil protection efforts undertaken by the European Union in Iraq since 2003. In particular, the purpose of this study is to analyze the complex linkages that exist between the foreign policy of the European Union and the EU members with Iraq, and the response of the European Union Directorate General for ECHO to the humanitarian crisis in Iraq. The results indicate that the European Union's aid intervention in Iraq from 2014 to 2018 was, on an overall basis and to a significant degree, effective and involvement of the EU in Iraq for the purpose of humanitarian aid and civil protection is in line with the foreign policy of the EU and the foreign policy of Iraq.

The plan of action that DG ECHO implemented in Iraq was appropriate given the circumstances of complicated situation in Iraq, and it was also cohesive to an adequate degree. Interventions were often coordinated well, and they were in line with the greater humanitarian objective. However, activities that, for the most part, were outside the EU's control could negatively impact the decision-making process, highlighting the importance for solid decision-making processes and instructions to be formed to make judgments on the basis of values when lives are at stake.

The efforts taken by DG ECHO contributed to the reduction of severe civil protection worries. In general, vulnerabilities were effectively addressed, especially via the use of civil protection mechanism. However, there were certain shortcomings with respect to effectively targeting vulnerable subgroups due to lack of coordination between EU and IP's on the ground.

Additionally, the increased value of the EU's participation in Iraq was tied to its specialist knowledge, views of it having more urgently needed led than other players, and the numerous levels of its support effort. These factors combined to make the EU's intervention more valuable.

Furthermore, the goals of DG ECHO in Iraq were accomplished in large part because to the many activities that were taken on the ground and the financing that was provided to NGOs. The financial and health programs, the quick and effective reaction to the tragedy in Mosul, and the fast response system were all successful areas.

There have been barriers that have prevented the EU from responding to humanitarian emergencies in a more effective and timely manner. The fragile security situation in Iraq, particularly between 2014 and 2018, coordination between the many humanitarian participants, a lack of documentation and identity for civilians, sophisticated sociopolitical and sectarian differences, and a diverse range of interests held by EU member states are some of these challenges.

## **Future prospect**

The EU keeps providing protection and assistance to those in need through its network of allies and delivers humanitarian relief, particularly legal aid, and protection to people who are in the highest necessity (European Commission, 2022). It achieves this through expanding access to essential services including medical care, educational opportunities, and support across several sectors (European Commission, 2022). At the European Humanitarian Forum and the Civil Protection Forum in 2022, the European Union reaffirmed to retain its leadership and participation in the areas of humanitarian assistance and civil protection. The two meetings provided a venue for fostering conversation on humanitarian and civil protection policy challenges, as well as bringing the attention of the media and the general public to the EU important policy outcomes (European Commission,

2022). Given the EU's considerable engagement in Iraq, it has the ideal opportunity and crossroad to keep collaboration and assist the people of Iraq sustainably. In fact, the EU's involvement is critical to ensuring that underprivileged people in Iraq are not left behind and continue to have access to government services and social protection programs (Thapa, 2023).

### **Limitation and recommendation for future studies**

This study, like every other research project, has a few significant limitations, although those limitations point to some exciting new avenues for investigation in the future. Also, there are a lot of gaps, and even now there are a lot of topics that need to be researched in the future. This research focused on the role that the EU plays in providing civil protection and humanitarian aid in Iraq.

First, the scope of this study does not extend to other areas of the EU's participation in Iraq, such as its development plans or the political objectives of either the EU or Iraq. It is suggested that future research might be made more intriguing by including these additional factors. The combination of these elements may be helpful in gaining a better understanding of the obstacles that the EU may face in its response to humanitarian crises.

Second, and more importantly, this research made use of secondary sources of information, such as unstructured data from the EU, fact and figure compilations, and a few scholarly articles on the topic of humanitarian relief and civil protection provided by the EU and others. There are only a handful of scholarly works that address the role of the EU in Iraq in relation to the humanitarian crisis. As a result, the literature review relied mostly on available policy documents, reports and analyses produced by the EU as well as those produced by other humanitarian organizations with a presence in Iraq. It is suggested that future research adopt either quantitative or qualitative research approaches and collect data from three distinct parties, including people who have received the aid, the aid authorities in Iraq, and IP at the field level. The conclusion of research of this kind would provide more comprehensive and practical insight into how successful aid and civil protection efforts by the EU have been in Iraq.

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