



25 April, Brussels – A roundtable discussion, hosted and moderated this morning in the European Parliament by MEP Ricardo Cortés Lastra, urged international food assistance agencies and the EU to work together more closely to address the recurrent food and nutrition crises affecting the world's most vulnerable populations.

The roundtable included speakers from the United Nations World Food Programme ( [WFP](#) ), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, officials from the European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection ( [ECHO](#) ) and [EuropeAid](#) and MEP Keith Taylor, a member of the European Parliament's Development Committee.

The participants reviewed experiences and lessons learned in recent crises, focusing on European Commission-led initiatives such as AGIR-Sahel (Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative – Sahel) and SHARE (Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience). They also looked ahead

to see how future challenges should be met by putting policies into practice.

Following the Parliament event a consultation on the Commission's recent communication on an 'EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from Food Security Crises', hosted by ECHO and EuropeAid is now underway.

During the roundtable discussion, Director of WFP in Brussels, Krystyna Bednarska said: "In the last two years food crises have affected 31 million people in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel regions of Africa. I commend the European Commission for their sustained efforts to develop policy that will increase the resilience of these people. Our success in preventing future disasters will be determined by how we move towards common goals in a true culture of partnership."

Mr. Cortés Lastra said: "The European Parliament will continue its work to strengthen the EU's policy on building resilience in order to obtain the future that we want - a future free from hunger and malnutrition."

Henrike Trautmann, Head of ECHO's policy unit, added: "Resilience clearly pays off. Investing in resilience building not only reduces cost by avoiding humanitarian emergency interventions. Above all, it reduces the cost of missed opportunities for development in countries vulnerable to disasters and in fragile states. Resilience requires a true partnership approach."

The participants agreed that national governments should be primarily responsible for stepping up resilience-building. Alongside this, the international community – donors, aid agencies and the private sector – should be ready to contribute their specific expertise and comparative advantages. Such concerted joint efforts enable the most vulnerable populations to help themselves.

Today's roundtable discussion and consultation represent the next steps in developing an action plan for the international aid community to help vulnerable communities increase their resilience. There was strong consensus that such efforts must begin by addressing the underlying causes of recurrent food crises including high rates of acute malnutrition, low levels of food production, poor access to basic services, acute poverty, environmental degradation, rapid population growth and poor governance.

**List of other key speakers:**

- Valerie Guarnieri, WFP Regional Director for Eastern & Central Africa
- Inge Breuer, WFP Country Director for Senegal
- Rodrigue Vinet, Senior Officer, Emergency Operations & Rehabilitation Division, FAO
- Jean-Pierre Halkin, Head of Rural Development, Food Security & Nutrition, EuropeAid
- Keith Taylor, MEP and member of the European Parliament's Development Committee

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