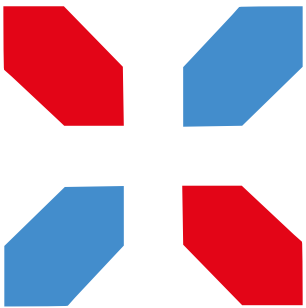




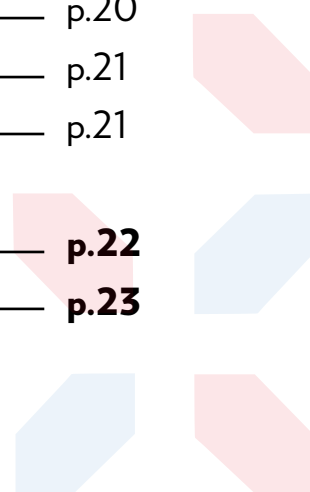
# **LUXEMBOURG'S HUMANITARIAN ACTION STRATEGY**





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# PREFACE

International solidarity and humanitarian principles are at the core of Luxembourg's commitment to humanitarian action. They are the driving force behind the country's ambition to be an actor of positive change in light of growing humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities at a global scale, exacerbated by the current COVID-19 pandemic. As set out in Luxembourg's General Development Cooperation Strategy adopted in 2018, Luxembourg's humanitarian action is strictly needs based and remains independent from any political, strategic, economic or military influence. It complies with fundamental humanitarian principles to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need, and abides by the principle of 'doing no harm' to affected populations, both in the physical and digital space, as well as to the environment.

The aim of this Humanitarian Action Strategy is to further leverage Luxembourg's means and expertise to help address the unprecedented level of humanitarian needs around the world, and to do so in an impactful, sustainable and inclusive manner and in full respect of humanitarian principles. To achieve this, we are committed to remaining a flexible and predictable donor, to contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian ecosystem and to seeking sustainable complementarity to the longer-term solutions provided by development and peace actors. In this respect, Luxembourg will increase its support to multiannual programmes in protracted humanitarian settings in line with the so-called nexus approach and maintain its emphasis on the Sahel region.

Over the course of the last 20 years, Luxembourg has developed a specific expertise in providing rapid, inclusive and efficient assistance to people affected by humanitarian crises. In this regard, innovation has always been a key component of Luxembourg's assistance, not just in terms of developing new digital solutions such as the platform emergency.lu but also by reducing the administrative burden for our partners. Strong and trusted humanitarian partnerships have also been fundamental and will continue to play a central role in Luxembourg's humanitarian action. Our longstanding partnerships with the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, international and non-governmental organisations as well as within the private sector, where appropriate, will remain key players to providing quality assistance and protection to populations affected by crises worldwide.




The humanitarian ecosystem in Luxembourg has grown increasingly diverse and professional over the years. Humanitarian action has become a top priority of the government's foreign policy. This is reflected in the professionalisation of its personnel and the significant evolution of Luxembourg's humanitarian budget, which has doubled since 2010 to reach more than 60 million euros in 2021. Over the past 10 years, the humanitarian budget has made up on average 12% to 15% of Luxembourg's total Official Development Aid (ODA). In response to humanitarian crises increasing in number, duration and complexity, Luxembourg will seek to establish a fixed share of 15% dedicated to the humanitarian budget of its overall ODA as of 2022.

The Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) is at the centre of this development. Its mandate includes the coordination of international humanitarian assistance and the implementation of Luxembourg's humanitarian policy in close cooperation with its public and private partners as well as international organisations. Based on the experience gained in this field, a strengthened cooperation within Luxembourg's humanitarian action has proven to be crucial, for an effective coordination of all its operational activities in the areas of humanitarian action and disaster relief, with the goal of implementing these activities even more effectively.

Another objective of this revised Humanitarian Action Strategy is to promote the expertise and capacities of the MFEA, the humanitarian personnel of its diplomatic missions and that of its partners. It forms a strong basis to contribute to positive change and sustainable impact while providing the necessary flexibility to adapt to increasingly complex humanitarian contexts and the needs of affected populations. Moreover, this policy document illustrates ways to make Luxembourg's humanitarian assistance even more inclusive, localised, context-specific as well as conflict- and gender-sensitive. It will continue to contribute to influencing and strengthening the humanitarian system in an innovative way. Training, research and capacity building will therefore be key.







In addition, Luxembourg seeks to strengthen its humanitarian action by ensuring that its partners comply with the highest international quality standards. The simplification of reporting mechanisms is just one example of how the Luxembourg MFEA is aligning itself with international standards and commitments such as the Grand Bargain.

This strategy also seeks to formulate in a clear and more transparent manner how Luxembourg intends to continue to implement the commitments it took at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016, its commitments as part of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, the Grand Bargain as well as a number of other important initiatives. In this regard, the six crosscutting priorities, the six strategic objectives and the 50 action points laid out in this policy document will allow for a better assessment of the impact of Luxembourg's humanitarian action in practice. In addition, for the first time in its history, Luxembourg will have a seat at the Human Rights Council in Geneva for the mandate 2022-2024 and will remain committed to promoting the respect and safeguarding of International Humanitarian Law at all fora.

Today, humanitarian crises last longer, are more complex and affect more people than ever before. This is why "business as usual" is no longer acceptable: we must break down the silos, connect the different communities of aid workers through a nexus approach and leverage all the resources we have to respond to humanitarian challenges. Luxembourg will take up the challenge and play its part.

**Franz Fayot**

*Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs*

*"Humanitarian action intends first and foremost to save lives, alleviate human suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations."*

**Good Humanitarian Donorship**

# GENERAL CONTEXT

The combined effects of systemic global challenges such as conflicts and other forms of violence, natural disasters, climate change, health crises and pandemics have had a disastrous impact on the humanitarian landscape, leading to unprecedented humanitarian needs that continue to rise.

The persistence and intensity of conflicts and violence are causing global instability and fragility, triggering human suffering at a massive scale, leading to forced displacement and protection crises, and exacerbating the food insecurity of millions of people. The consequences on civilians and others not taking an active part in the hostilities are devastating and disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including women and children, who are at a higher risk of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. The dynamics of conflict and violence may also have a long-term impact on people's mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.

The evolving elements of conflicts and other forms of violence, including the proliferation of non-state armed actors and criminal groups and the politicisation and instrumentalisation of humanitarian access, underline a tendency towards more complex and protracted human-made crises.

The increasing violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in the form of direct and deliberate attacks against civilians, including health and aid workers, and schools and hospitals are extremely worrying. The lack of respect for IHL also renders the safe, unhindered and unconditional access for humanitarian assistance and its delivery to affected populations increasingly difficult. This poses a significant threat to humanitarian principles and the safeguarding of humanitarian space. Due to protracted conflicts, worsening acute food insecurity in conflict-affected countries but also due to weather extremes and economic shocks, the number of displaced people and people who are at risk of being displaced has dramatically increased.

In addition to conflicts and violence, climate change with its adverse contribution to environmental degradation and natural disasters, further fuels conflict and leads to growing humanitarian needs. Weather hazards, such as storms, floods and droughts resulting from environmental degradation, are also putting an increasing pressure on food security, causing further displacement. Climate-sensitive diseases such as malaria are on the rise. Disease outbreaks are increasing and hard-won gains to alleviate poverty, as well as those made in the fight against malnutrition, Tuberculosis (TB) and AIDS are at risk.



Humanitarian action has also been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has laid bare and even exacerbated vulnerabilities as well as pre-existing fragilities and inequalities, and has forced the humanitarian sector to rethink its modus operandi. COVID-19 significantly disrupted the socio-economic life of countries across the globe and hampered access to essential health services, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable groups, including women and girls, people with disabilities, elderly people and those with mental health needs. The health crisis further deepened the digital divide and underscored the importance of accelerating digital transformation within the humanitarian sector, all while keeping affected people at the centre and adhering to the «do no harm» principle in the digital environment as well. Lastly, travel bans and lockdowns aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 considerably restricted access to humanitarian settings and hindered the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need.

On the policy front, global initiatives pertaining to changing the future of humanitarian assistance continue to be implemented, namely the Agenda for Humanity, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Secretary-General's reform agenda.

*"Humanitarian Action cannot be held hostage to political ends."*

**Peter Maurer, President of the ICRC**



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# VISION

Luxembourg aims to enable principled, needs-based, inclusive and sustainable humanitarian action, while keeping people affected by crises at the centre of all its interventions, be they of physical or digital nature.

By better connecting the various instruments at its disposal, and by providing funding, in-kind support as well as thematic and technical expertise, Luxembourg intends to prevent and reduce human suffering, maintain human dignity and reinforce the resilience of communities through actions aimed at ensuring the protection of and assistance to vulnerable populations, particularly in fragile contexts.

Luxembourg's humanitarian action further aims at reaching the highest international quality standards and contributing to sustainable humanitarian impact by leveraging effective partnerships, local knowledge and capacity building as well as digital tools and innovative approaches.





# REFERENTIAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Luxembourg's humanitarian action is anchored in the respect of the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. As State party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their additional Protocols, Luxembourg's actions are further guided by International Humanitarian Law (IHL) as well as other relevant provisions of international law aimed at the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Humanitarian principles are not only central to ensure coordination, accountability and needs-based humanitarian assistance but are also instrumental in making sure that humanitarian assistance remains distinct from political objectives and internal interests.<sup>1</sup>

In light of the often politicised and militarised environments in which humanitarian efforts to assist and protect affected populations take place, a principled approach is also critical for humanitarian organisations to gain trust and acceptance by relevant actors on the ground.

Luxembourg's humanitarian strategy is based on the Law of 9 May 2012 amending the amended Law of 6 January 1996 on Development Cooperation<sup>2</sup>, which mentions humanitarian action for the first time. It is also based on the UNGA Resolution 46/182, which substantially reformed the multilateral humanitarian system.

Luxembourg's humanitarian action adheres to the specific nature and mandate of humanitarian action as set out in the European Union Humanitarian Aid Regulation of 1996 and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid of 2007, and it operates in full respect of Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Luxembourg is thus committed to ensuring that its humanitarian assistance is based solely on the needs of affected populations, is in accordance with the principles and good practices of the Good Humanitarian Donorship and its commitments taken as part of the Grand Bargain.

Moreover, Luxembourg's humanitarian action builds on the value of solidarity in line with the framework of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, which affirms that "humanitarian aid is a fundamental expression of the universal value of solidarity between people and a moral imperative".<sup>3</sup>

To further strengthen Luxembourg's commitment towards the respect of humanitarian principles, Luxembourg and its main Luxembourg-based NGO partners signed the first Humanitarian Charter in 2016. This Charter constitutes a key guiding document for all signatories when providing and enabling humanitarian assistance in areas affected by crises.

Luxembourg's Humanitarian Action Strategy is also aligned with and builds upon its General Development Cooperation Strategy "The road to 2030" as well as the complementary policy papers on Gender and Environment adopted in 2021.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/ten-years-european-consensus-humanitarian-aid-point-reference-challenging-world>

<sup>2</sup> <https://maee.gouvernement.lu/dam-assets/domaines/politique-cooperation-action-humanitaire/rb-legislation/loi-du-9-mai-2012.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130\(01\)&from=FR](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130(01)&from=FR)



# OUR APPROACH

## Standards

Considering the growing gap in terms of humanitarian needs and available funds to respond adequately to those needs, the necessity for greater coherence in humanitarian standards is undisputed.

Consequently, Luxembourg seeks to continue to improve its humanitarian action by ensuring that its NGO partners comply with the highest international quality standards such as the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). This means that only certified partners are eligible for financial support by Luxembourg, thereby contributing to increasing accountability and transparency to taxpayers. Luxembourg's adherence to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) in 2020 further underscores its commitment to sharing public data on its foreign aid spending, thereby rendering this information accessible to a wider public.

Moreover, as signatory to the Grand Bargain, Luxembourg aims to support the efficiency and transparency of the humanitarian sector by simplifying and harmonising procedures, such as reporting requirements (e.g. 8+3 Template), among donors.

As an advocate for the implementation of the CHS or an equivalent quality certification across all areas of its humanitarian action, Luxembourg will continue to support the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI) as well as the CHS Alliance.

## Cooperation and coordination

For Luxembourg to achieve its humanitarian objectives and contribute to improving the situation of populations affected by humanitarian crises around the world, diverse and complementary partnerships are paramount. Luxembourg thus relies on the cooperation with a vast network of partners, including national and international non-governmental organisations, UN agencies, funds and programmes, the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, other international organisations, and, where appropriate, the private sector and academia, to help transform its policy commitments into impactful and meaningful action.

Multilateralism is essential in humanitarian action. Luxembourg supports the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), chiefly its Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator system and the operations of multilateral humanitarian partners through multi-year strategic frameworks to enable them to respond adequately to rising humanitarian needs. These strategic partnerships also allow Luxembourg to better understand and help address the many challenges humanitarian actors face when assisting and protecting affected populations.

Moreover, with a view to improving humanitarian coordination and enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian action, Luxembourg supports partners in all 11 clusters: health, logistics, nutrition, protection, shelter, WASH, Camp coordination and management, early recovery, education, emergency telecommunications, and food security.



With regards to public-private partnerships, such as the platform emergency.lu, Luxembourg recognises and values the important role they may play in responding to humanitarian needs and in making humanitarian assistance more effective. Therefore, its humanitarian action strategy seeks to promote commitments with private actors, where appropriate, while maintaining a principled approach.

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) will also continue to be critical partners when it comes to Luxembourg's multilateral approach towards humanitarian action, not only at a policy level but also through direct financial contributions to the budget of the DG for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, DG ECHO (e.g. External Assigned Revenues). Luxembourg seeks to strengthen its cooperation and collaboration with the EU and with EUMS by engaging in the "Team Europe" approach, through active participation in the Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) and by supporting the implementation of the Commission's Communication on the EU's Humanitarian Action adopted in March 2021, amongst other measures. Luxembourg will also enhance its coordination at a field level across the EU's and Luxembourg's humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actions, with the support of EU Delegations and Luxembourg's diplomatic representations.

## Research, knowledge sharing and institutional learning

Research, knowledge sharing and institutional learning are priorities for the Luxembourg MFEA, not only in view of continuing to support evidence-based humanitarian action but also to leverage different expertise and comparative advantages within the donor community as well as among humanitarian actors and local communities. Today's challenges must be tackled jointly, thus making collaborative approaches key. Luxembourg remains committed to supporting meaningful research, studies and evaluations that will generate knowledge allowing for stronger operational approaches of its humanitarian partners. Furthermore, taking into due consideration the local contexts will remain crucial when implementing an adequate response and will increase accountability to affected persons. Luxembourg therefore believes that traditional (indigenous) knowledge should be given a more prominent role in disaster risk reduction and responses when facing earthquakes, floods, storms, wildfires and health crises.

<sup>4</sup><https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0110&from=EN>





# CROSSCUTTING PRIORITIES

**The crosscutting priorities set out in this policy document will be streamlined across Luxembourg's humanitarian action and will help guide its legal and policy commitments as well as its engagement with partners: localisation of aid, gender, disability inclusion, mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, innovation and greening of humanitarian action.**

## Gender

Given that women and girls are often in a disadvantaged position in many humanitarian contexts, the promotion of gender equality implies an explicit attention to the empowerment of women and girls. Especially in times of crisis, already existing gender inequalities can be exacerbated, leading to discrimination, exploitation, and affecting an individual's access to humanitarian, recovery and development assistance, as well as their access to human rights.

Luxembourg's Humanitarian Action Strategy will place greater emphasis on the need to promote gender equality and gender equity in humanitarian programmes, and the importance of addressing the specific needs of women and girls and all individuals with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. Guided by its General Cooperation Strategy and its feminist foreign policy, Luxembourg also promotes gender-transformative change in humanitarian action, thereby supporting capacity and resilience building that goes beyond temporary needs.

Taking into account the disproportionate effect and differential consequences of crises on other vulnerable groups including children, displaced people, people with disabilities, indigenous people, persons with diverse gender identities, sexual orientations or identifying as LGBTIQ+, as well as elderly people will also be central to Luxembourg's humanitarian action. This is essential because they often face additional specific and overlapping vulnerabilities and protection concerns.

Whenever possible and relevant, Luxembourg encourages its partners to develop strategies and programmes that address gender equality through an intersectional lens (such as gender identity, displacement, disabilities, ethnicities, etc.), which help to uncover dynamics that can shape vulnerability but also resilience. The implementation of this approach is also key to the women's peace and security agenda and more specifically to ensure their actual inclusive participation in peace processes.

Gender-based violence (GBV) predominately affects women and girls. It is therefore important that humanitarian interventions respond to, mitigate and prevent GBV from the onset of emergencies.

People identifying as LGBTIQ+ are more likely to be socially isolated and face discrimination in humanitarian contexts such as in emergency shelters. Moreover, in the aftermath of natural disasters, members of the LGBTIQ+ communities are more likely to be excluded from response, relief, and recovery efforts. They are also more likely to encounter obstacles when crossing borders to escape conflict and disaster. It is therefore important that humanitarian organisations make their disaster prevention and response activities accessible to the LGBTIQ+ communities.

To conclude, humanitarian planning and assistance must contribute to gender equality by effectively identifying and responding to the needs, priorities and capacities of all crisis-affected people.

## Disability-inclusive humanitarian action

Disability inclusion is a key thematic priority in Luxembourg's Humanitarian Action Strategy. Luxembourg is extensively committed to promoting a disability-inclusive humanitarian action using a rights-based approach at all phases of humanitarian action (disaster preparedness, response, recovery). Disability-inclusive humanitarian action is closely linked to efforts in inclusive development, including in the domains of governance and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

Promoting disability inclusion is complementary to efforts towards promoting protection of most at-risk groups and promoting gender-responsive programming. Whenever possible, Luxembourg encourages partners to develop strategies and programmes that address discrimination and stigma through an intersectional lens (e.g. programmes that prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in emergency settings and that are inclusive of women and girls with disabilities). Luxembourg is also committed to applying a non-discrimination policy across their own programmes and ensuring the fair participation of people with disabilities.

In addition, Luxembourg recognises that addressing disability inclusion using a nexus approach brings positive outcomes for the rights of people with disabilities. Partners are therefore encouraged to establish longer-term strategies across their areas of work and promote collaboration between different key stakeholders.

## Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Luxembourg recognises that mental health and psychosocial wellbeing are important factors in successful humanitarian aid programming. It will therefore continue to promote mental health and psychosocial support aimed at people affected by crises. Similarly, supporting wellbeing and recovery during and after emergencies to help strengthen people's own coping mechanism and resilience remains another priority.

Efforts will be deployed to support stakeholders in designing humanitarian programmes in a way that promotes wellbeing for all beneficiaries in humanitarian settings, with specific attention on people with disabilities and marginalised groups.

Promoting wellbeing should also target staff and volunteers working in difficult contexts. Luxembourg will therefore play an active role in supporting the inclusion of staff and volunteer mental health and wellbeing in higher-quality programmes and initiatives. In this regard, the provision of more flexible funding will be necessary to create new budget lines to support these activities.





## Localisation of aid

There is no one-size-fits-all approach for every context, yet the role of local and national humanitarian actors should neither be ignored nor underestimated. Covid-19 was a stark example of how local aid was once again at the forefront of the response.

Luxembourg has been a strong supporter of localised humanitarian aid. In fact, localisation plays a key role in the Luxembourgish humanitarian action and can be considered one of its characteristics. Given the relative size of Luxembourg as a donor but also the organisational size of its NGO partners, Luxembourgish humanitarian assistance has always heavily relied on local actors as well as local markets when implementing humanitarian projects through Luxembourgish partners.

Luxembourg continues to be a strong supporter of local and community-led solutions that address humanitarian needs. Local actors and local partnerships will thus continue to play a crucial role in the implementation of its humanitarian action, in particular when it comes to finding solutions through the humanitarian-development nexus and implementing the principles of accountability to affected populations.



## Innovation and digitalisation

Luxembourg will also continue to place a particular focus on scaling up innovation and digitalisation to accelerate global humanitarian responses, and to increase their efficiency and impact. Together with trusted humanitarian partners, research institutes and, where appropriate, the private sector, the aim will be to further explore innovative avenues to improve humanitarian effectiveness in a principled manner and to contribute to the reflection on how to address the respect of fundamental humanitarian principles in the digital era.

Recent years have exposed the fragility and vulnerabilities in many parts of the world and have underlined the urgent need to radically rethink our approach to humanitarian action to be more resilient, localised, inclusive, and sustainable. Moreover, the number of protracted crises and the increasing humanitarian needs worldwide have stressed the importance of accountability to affected people. This has further pushed us to reflect more deeply on how to adapt innovatively in order to adequately respond to those growing and increasingly complex needs of populations in the midst of humanitarian crises. In that regard, Luxembourg aims to leverage digital and non-digital innovation as a tool for positive impact and change, in order to make humanitarian action more effective and efficient, by keeping people at the centre of all interventions.

Luxembourg will keep placing considerable emphasis on the importance of connectivity for the delivery of humanitarian services (connectivity for aid) as well as connectivity for affected populations in humanitarian crises (connectivity as aid), while ensuring the responsible use of and thoughtful approach to digital tools and (new) technologies.

Luxembourg will also seek to contribute to creating or enabling a safe(r) space in the digital sphere for humanitarian actors to assist and protect people in need.

# Greening of humanitarian action

The link between humanitarian assistance and climate change is undisputed: 12 of the 15 countries most affected by climate change are receiving humanitarian assistance<sup>5</sup> and the international response is being increasingly stretched due to the large number of protracted crises. Considering the impact of climate and environmental crises on all aspects of life from food, water and economic security to the physical and mental health of affected communities, Luxembourg has made the greening of humanitarian action another thematic priority.

Building on its commitment to «do no harm», Luxembourg wishes to reduce the environmental footprint of its humanitarian action, particularly by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste and its direct impact on the environment, in line with its Development Cooperation Strategy on Environment and Climate Change 2021-2030.

Luxembourg also seeks to help communities prepare and adapt to the impact of climate crises, promote the experience and participation of local stakeholders and invest in innovative, evidence-based and risk-informed solutions. In addition, Luxembourg will encourage its partners to mainstream environmental considerations throughout all phases of an emergency.

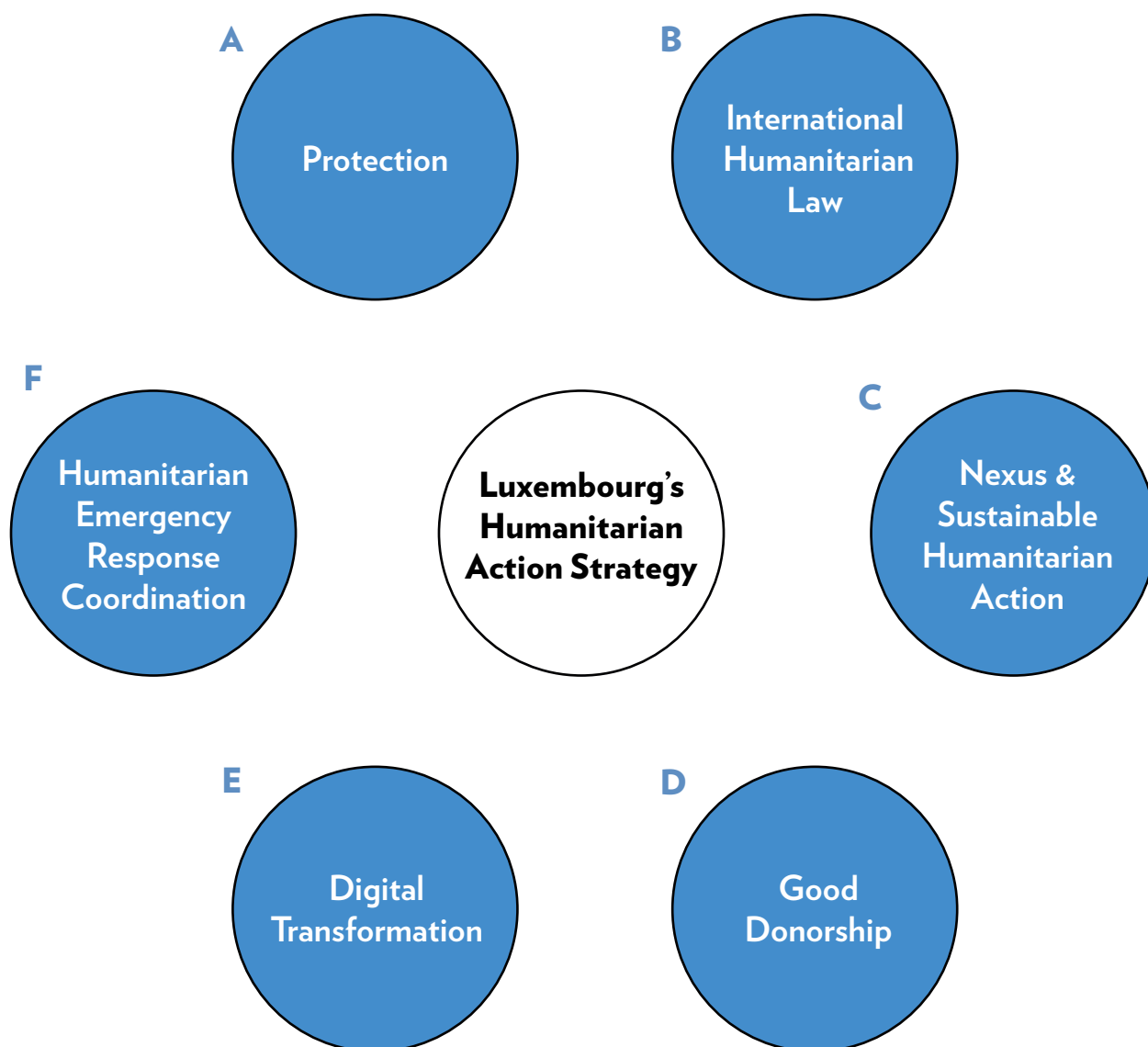
Luxembourg's humanitarian action strongly supports the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations developed by the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and will raise awareness of the recently adopted Charter among its partners and national NGOs.

<sup>5</sup> <https://gain.nd.edu/>



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# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



**Good Donorship** will remain a distinct feature of Luxembourg's humanitarian action. Two strategic objectives at the forefront of this present strategy are increased protection efforts and the respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), especially as armed conflicts are on the rise throughout the world. Other strategic objectives such as digital transformation or the humanitarian-development nexus approach in protracted crises have only recently become an important element of Luxembourg's humanitarian action but will fundamentally shape its future. Finally, in this context, humanitarian emergency response coordination is an essential element of the Humanitarian Action Strategy.



## A. Increase protection efforts

Saving people's lives and ensuring the protection of civilians caught up in the midst of conflicts and violence remains a priority for Luxembourg's humanitarian action. It is therefore crucial to strengthen prevention and protection efforts, to scale up humanitarian diplomacy and to increase collective efforts to better address the root causes of human suffering. With growing humanitarian needs arising as a result of the combined effect of increased conflicts, failed governance, the impact of climate change and the adverse consequences of pandemics, there is a high risk for the most vulnerable people to be left behind. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has been an accelerating force of vulnerabilities of populations affected by crisis and conflict and has further amplified protection crises around the world, including in the digital sphere.

Luxembourg remains committed to advocating for and supporting actions that aim to reduce and prevent people's exposure to risks and to ensure respect for the rights of individuals, in accordance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. As stated in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) principles, Luxembourg's actions and programmes are informed by the protection needs of all people affected and at risk. The protection needs of people must be central to the preparedness efforts of our partners on the ground, as part of immediate and life-saving activities, and throughout the duration of the humanitarian response and beyond.

Luxembourg will continue to prioritise child protection and education in emergencies, in particular access to education for girls in humanitarian settings. The direct impact of conflicts on civilians includes deaths, increased vulnerabilities in terms of acute food insecurity, difficult access to education and health services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as various forms of abuses, including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. Luxembourg will further seek to address the devastating impact of climate change related incidents that continue to disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. This also implies addressing the increasing protection challenges related to the digital transformation in humanitarian action and the impact of cyber activities on people in need.

Considering the impact that armed conflicts, natural disasters, health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies have on people's mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, Luxembourg will continue to promote improvements in the provision of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and endorses its integration in all humanitarian assistance response by joining the Amsterdam Conference Declaration.

## B. Promote and ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), principled humanitarian action, and humanitarian access

Luxembourg will continue to support its partners' activities and programmes to promote International Humanitarian Law (IHL) codified by the Geneva Conventions and their additional Protocols. Given the centrality of humanitarian principles for the provision of effective humanitarian assistance to persons in need, Luxembourg also remains committed to promoting and ensuring respect for these principles in every humanitarian response.

The need to negotiate and maintain neutral and impartial humanitarian space, which is non politicised or polarised, and in which humanitarian organisations can safely assist and protect affected populations, remains another critical issue demanding increased attention and firm collective action.

Luxembourg will therefore increase support to initiatives aimed at strengthening respect for IHL and safeguarding space for principled humanitarian action to alleviate human suffering and enable a more effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.

By means of its advocacy work in international fora, such as the United Security Council, the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, Luxembourg will step up its efforts in humanitarian diplomacy to continue to advocate for the protection of civilians in armed conflict. This includes the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel, the protection of children in armed conflict, the fight against impunity regarding sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict as well as the full application of IHL to cyberspace.





## C. Nexus : promote and support sustainable and inclusive humanitarian action

Luxembourg's priority actions will continue to be saving lives and responding to immediate needs, alleviating suffering, providing access to emergency health services and helping affected populations restore safe living conditions. However, the challenges facing humanitarian action are increasingly complex. If we wish to sustainably reduce the needs and vulnerabilities of people, decrease their exposure to risks and support anticipatory and prevention efforts, we need to opt for a differentiated approach in order to move from "delivering humanitarian assistance to ending needs".<sup>6</sup> To achieve this, it will be essential to address the root causes of the systemic challenges that generate humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities, namely conflicts and other situations of violence, natural disasters resulting from changing weather systems, climate change, failure of governance, social and economic inequalities, etc.

As part of its transition approach, Luxembourg's humanitarian action supports the reconstruction of vital infrastructure with the aim of rebuilding and improving the resilience of conflict- and disaster-affected communities, and restoring basic services. Furthermore, Luxembourg calls upon its partners to ensure, to the extent possible, that reconstruction projects co-funded by Luxembourg are part of national plans (co-)developed by the governments of the affected countries.

Supporting preventive measures in humanitarian contexts contributes to reducing humanitarian needs, alleviating the suffering and loss of life caused by climate-related disasters and strengthening the resilience of populations to climate related events, trends or disturbances. Luxembourg will reinforce its partnerships with humanitarian actors to invest in recovery preparedness as well as mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in its programmes.

In line with its Gender Strategy adopted in 2021, Luxembourg's humanitarian action "is committed to ensuring that its humanitarian programming takes into account the gender perspective and to supporting humanitarian actors who respect the existing standards in terms of gender equality enshrined in international legal instruments".<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> OECD, DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, OECD/LEGAL/2019

<sup>7</sup> Gender Strategy of the Luxembourg Development Cooperation



## D. Good Donorship : address growing humanitarian needs in an effective manner through flexible and predictable funding, localisation and innovative approaches

In line with its commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, Luxembourg's humanitarian action will continue to devote the majority of its budget to address the immediate needs of affected populations in humanitarian contexts with a particular focus on forgotten and protracted crises as well as fragile countries and regions.

The continuous engagement of Luxembourg to provide flexible, non or softly earmarked and multi-year funding, and to reduce the administrative burden on humanitarian organisations by e.g. harmonising reporting requirements, aims to create greater operational flexibility for its partners to address urgent needs generated by evolving crises and conflict situations as well as sudden climate-related disasters.

To boost the efficiency and effectiveness of its humanitarian assistance, Luxembourg will encourage its partners to adopt an inclusive and participative approach in addressing humanitarian needs through actively involving affected communities in the design and implementation of programmes dedicated to them.

Luxembourg has been a strong supporter of innovation, especially innovative ideas that drive our common quest for positive change and impact for affected populations, that help reduce humanitarian needs and that create opportunities for a better future. Recent years have exposed the fragility and vulnerabilities in many parts of the world and have underlined the urgent need to radically rethink our approach to humanitarian action to be more resilient, local, inclusive, and sustainable. Moreover, the number of protracted crises and increasing humanitarian needs worldwide have stressed the importance of accountability to affected people. It has pushed us to reflect more deeply on innovative adaptations that allow for an adequate response to the growing and increasingly complex needs of populations in the midst of humanitarian crises. In that regard, Luxembourg aims to leverage innovation as a tool for positive impact and change to make humanitarian action more effective and efficient, by keeping people at the centre of all interventions.

## E. Promote and support responsible and ethical digital transformation in the humanitarian sector

In its humanitarian policy, Luxembourg will continue to be a strong advocate for and supporter of technological innovation as well as protection and the “do no harm” principle in the digital era, including in the context of cyber-related activities. While recognising the need to harness the potential of technological solutions as critical tools within humanitarian responses, Luxembourg will continue to raise awareness and support initiatives aimed at mitigating potential protection risks linked to the use of technology and data in humanitarian action. Ensuring that people in need of humanitarian assistance and affected communities remain at the centre of all interventions, be they of digital or human nature, will thus remain one of Luxembourg’s priorities.

Questions around data protection and data responsibility will play a crucial role in Luxembourg’s Humanitarian Strategy in the years to come. According to the IASC, the practical implementation of data responsibility is often inconsistent within and across humanitarian response contexts despite the existence of principles, norms and professional standards regarding the respect for the rights of affected populations. Therefore, Luxembourg will seek to leverage its data ecosystem for the benefit of the humanitarian community and help establish common, system-wide standards.

<sup>8</sup><https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2021-02/IASC%20Operational%20Guidance%20on%20Data%20Responsibility%20in%20Humanitarian%20Action-%20February%202021.pdf>

<sup>9</sup>[http://www.emergency.lu/admin/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/e.lu\\_factsheet\\_EN\\_02\\_PUBLIC-PRIVATE-PARTNERSHIP.pdf](http://www.emergency.lu/admin/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/e.lu_factsheet_EN_02_PUBLIC-PRIVATE-PARTNERSHIP.pdf)

## F. Strengthen humanitarian emergency response coordination as an essential part of Luxembourg’s humanitarian action

Building on the experience gained over the last ten years, emergency.lu continues to be an essential tool of Luxembourg’s humanitarian action, providing targeted and effective implementation of international humanitarian emergency relief to respond to natural and man-made disasters and humanitarian crises. Thus, emergency.lu will continue providing satellite connectivity and state of the art ICT services.


emergency.lu is made up of public and private partner organisations, coordinated by the Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs in close cooperation with its partners. Based on specific needs, the current emergency.lu partnership framework may be extended.

In close collaboration with international humanitarian partners and within well-established frameworks, such as the UN Standby Partnership programme and the European Civil Protection Mechanism, emergency.lu capacities and humanitarian intervention specialists are deployed to respond to climate-related disasters and humanitarian crises.

Based on the acquired experience over the last years, the service portfolio of the humanitarian response could be extended based on needs identified and capacities and expertise available in Luxembourg. This extension could include capacity building and emergency preparedness. Enhanced coordination of the various operational activities implemented by the Government of Luxembourg in the areas of humanitarian action and disaster relief would contribute to consolidating the impact of Luxembourg’s humanitarian action. In order to foster the coordination between emergency.lu and its partners and to allow for an effective joint response, the Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, charged with the coordination and implementation of the humanitarian action policy, aims to establish, in close cooperation with its partners, a national platform, aimed at enhancing information exchange and promoting coordination in humanitarian emergencies. This platform would be made up of a strategic coordination committee and an operational coordination team, with the participation of the different actors in this field.



# NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF COMMITMENTS AND INITIATIVES THAT LUXEMBOURG IS SIGNATORY OF AND/OR HAS ENDORSED

- The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative
  - "European Union Humanitarian Aid Regulation": Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid, and as modified/amended afterwards
  - "European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid": Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission
  - Amsterdam Conference Declaration on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Crisis Situations
  - Collective commitment to "leave no one behind"
  - Grand Bargain launched during the WHS in Istanbul in May 2016
  - Luxembourg Humanitarian Charter
  - Call for Action to strengthen respect for international humanitarian law and principled humanitarian action
  - "Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action" endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)
  - Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action
  - Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action
  - Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations developed by the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
  - Safe Schools Declaration
  - Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies
  - School Meals Coalition
  - Food Assistance Convention
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# ANNEX : ACTION POINTS

## A. Increase protection efforts

1. Advocate for the “leave no one behind” principle, particularly with regards to vulnerable groups, and for the strict adherence to the “do no harm” principle, be it in relation to affected populations or the environment.
2. Increase investment and support innovative finance for Mine Action.
3. Increase investment for the protection of vulnerable and marginalised groups, which are often disproportionately affected by crises, including children, women, displaced persons, refugees, people with disabilities, elderly people and LGBTIQ+ communities.
4. Strengthen support for the protection of children, with a focus on children in armed conflict as well as children associated with armed groups or armed forces.
5. Advocate for the protection of education for children in humanitarian crises and the (safe) access to education in emergencies.
6. Increase investment for the protection from gender-based violence and sexual violence of people affected by humanitarian crises, with a particular focus on women and girls.
7. Advocate for the inclusion of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) for affected populations as well as relief actors in activities and programmes supported by Luxembourg.
8. Contribute to increasing (personal) data protection in humanitarian action within the donor community as well as humanitarian organisations.
9. Advocate for the systematic consideration of climate-related and environmental concerns, including risk analyses and knowledge management, in all activities and programmes supported by Luxembourg to help protect affected populations and the environment.
10. Firmly commit humanitarian partners to the protection of affected populations from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment, as well as any other forms of wrongdoing or misconduct.



## **B. Promote and ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), principled humanitarian action, and humanitarian access**

11. Contribute to strengthening the coordination at national level between the various policies and actions aimed at promoting and ensuring respect for IHL, including within the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.
12. Advocate for a reinforced respect of IHL, other relevant bodies of law, including international human rights law, and humanitarian principles at both policy and operational levels, including the safe, unconditional and unimpeded humanitarian access in the face of armed conflicts and other situations of violence.
13. Encourage and support the initiatives of trusted and impartial humanitarian partners aimed at strengthening the protection of civilians and those who no longer participate in hostilities.
14. Promote and support efforts to safeguard humanitarian space, including through policy dialogue as well as humanitarian diplomacy and humanitarian negotiation by humanitarian partners.
15. Advocate for the need to prevent any potential negative impact of sanctions on humanitarian activities.
16. Promote the importance for states to adopt measures at national level to implement IHL, including legislative, administrative and practical measures, and provide support to existing and new initiatives in this regard.
17. Support efforts to engage with and influence non-State armed groups and those providing them with support in order to increase their understanding and respect of IHL.

## **C. Nexus: promote and support sustainable and inclusive humanitarian action**

18. Strengthen coordination and increase complementarity among humanitarian and development efforts in all sectors to promote and contribute to a more coherent humanitarian-development nexus approach, particularly in protracted humanitarian contexts.
19. Support, where possible, research and policy work that aims to help generate a better understanding of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and its implications in crisis-affected contexts.
20. Support efforts aimed at building sustainable peace, including through transitional justice activities.
21. Invest in efforts of humanitarian partners to design gender transformative and conflict sensitive humanitarian action.
22. Invest in efforts aimed at supporting reconstruction and recovery in humanitarian contexts, particularly in protracted crises and ensure the sustainability of these efforts in terms of resilience and adaptation capacity.
23. Encourage partners of Luxembourg's humanitarian action to integrate disaster risks reduction (prevention) and environmental factors and/or climate adaptation plans into the design of their humanitarian projects and programmes to build and/or strengthen communities' resilience to climate-related shocks.
24. Support the development of new and leverage existing preventive measures and anticipatory actions to enhance resilience and adaptation as well as preparedness in humanitarian contexts.
25. Evaluate and adopt measures to reduce the environmental footprint of Luxembourg as a humanitarian actor as well as that of its humanitarian partners.

## **D. Good Donorship: address growing humanitarian needs in an effective manner through flexible and predictable funding, localisation and innovative approaches**

26. Maintain and extend Luxembourg's flexible, predictable and multi-annual funding arrangements with trusted humanitarian partners.
27. Increase Luxembourg's support to local responders, including by expanded use of pooled funding and other funding modalities, thus prioritising implementation by local actors.
28. Increase support to the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, also in view of strengthening coordination and localisation efforts, and to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, notably its Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator system.
29. Invest in the capacity building of local actors and frontline responders, including the topics of humanitarian diplomacy and humanitarian negotiation.
30. Support and encourage equal and inclusive partnerships with local actors.
31. Continue to devote the majority of its humanitarian action budget to address the immediate needs of communities in humanitarian contexts with a particular focus on forgotten conflicts, protracted crises and fragile contexts.
32. Simplify and harmonise reporting requirements in line with the Grand Bargain commitments and the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles.
33. Help shape and influence policy discussions on the future and the effectiveness of humanitarian action in national and international fora.
34. Invest in policy and operational research activities of trusted partners aimed at making humanitarian action more effective, efficient and transparent, particularly in the fields of prevention and protection.
35. Promote research on humanitarian topics as well as collaborative approaches and help strengthen skills and expertise of humanitarian actors as well as of the Luxembourg MFEA staff.
36. Where appropriate, leverage the added value and expertise of the Luxembourg private sector to contribute to the humanitarian ecosystem.

## **E. Promote and support responsible and ethical digital transformation in the humanitarian sector**

37. Advocate for and support digital innovation as well as protection in the digital sphere, including in the context of cyber-related activities.
38. Encourage and promote the proactive advancement of the responsible and ethical use of data and technology in humanitarian action in the context of cyber-related activities, particularly regarding data affecting vulnerable populations in fragile contexts.
39. Support activities that aim to leverage the potential of new technologies and data (such as a centre of excellence in the sector of data and technology in humanitarian action) to improve humanitarian action while respecting fundamental humanitarian principles, protecting the dignity of affected populations and preserving their trust.
40. Support the initiatives of trusted partners aimed at assessing protection risks related to the use of digital solutions as well as those aimed at mitigating potential risks for affected populations.
41. Continue to raise awareness of potential risks for affected populations associated with the use of digital tools among the international and donor communities.
42. Encourage responsible and ethical use of digital and innovative tools by humanitarian partners, including through joint collaboration, to build a more enabling humanitarian environment and increase the impact of humanitarian assistance.

## **F. Strengthen humanitarian emergency response coordination as an essential part of Luxembourg's humanitarian action**

43. Consolidate and strengthen Luxembourg's position as a provider of new technologies for the benefit of the humanitarian community, such as emergency.lu.
44. Continue expanding infrastructure support services for humanitarian agencies, primarily in the area of emergency office and accommodation facilities.
45. Contribute to setting up a technical assistance and support team (TAST) within the European Civil protection pool.
46. Develop a logistics support capacity.
47. Support the development of the pool of thematic experts, ready for deployment in the international humanitarian and emergency response context.
48. Build a stock of humanitarian assets, in order to respond to any urgent needs of humanitarian partner organisations, when local procurement is not an option.
49. Contribute to preparedness and capacity building activities of partner agencies in the areas of expertise of emergency.lu.
50. Set up a coordination platform, including all current and potential new humanitarian emergency partners, which includes a strategic coordination committee and an operational coordination team.

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**LUXEMBOURG**  
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