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## Diversity in Unity. The European Union and Member States Emergency Aid to the Countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region

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**Abstract:** *This paper<sup>2</sup> draws the attention of the EU foreign policy professionals and researchers community towards the aid policy of the European Union and the major Member States towards the countries affected by humanitarian emergencies and disasters. The determinants and vertical coherence of this policy are put under observation. In particular, by measuring and comparing financial aid to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, the MENA region, the present study assesses the importance of the aid policy vertical coherence. The analysis of the data supports the mainstream view about the common values and goals of the foreign aid policies of the Union and the Member States but warns about coherence between the Union and the state level as the European countries' aid allocation to the MENA countries is apparently driven by different priorities.*

**Keywords:** *EU humanitarian policy, MENA region, Emergency policy, Vertical coherence*

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State policy-makers and international organizations officers are very much concerned today with building efficient policies of response to the large-scale emergencies that are caused by disastrous events. Such emergencies are hardly faced with routine procedures and normal courses of action. Exceptional, apposite actions are to be launched fast to cope with the emergency conditions and come back to the normal conditions. The later the appropriate response is given to an emergency problem, the longer the consequences will last. Since disaster-triggered emergencies result in serious instabilities within the event-afflicted country and drop their effect into near and distant areas, international organizations, non-governmental groups and the governments of many states, especially those of the advanced ones like the European Union (EU) Member States, are willing to aid the countries hit by disasters bursting into emergency conditions. Normally they do it in the post-event phase but are willing also to give assistance, know-how and resources before any disaster event and provide aid for disaster preparedness and prevention to the states of disaster-prone areas.

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International cooperation when disasters and emergencies occur is a research theme visited by political scientists from time to time. In the last few years, the study of prevention and response policies towards serious natural and human-made emergencies has been gaining momentum (see Ansell, Boin and Keller, 2010; Attinà, 2012; Boin, Ekengren and Rhinard, 2013; Boin, Busuioac and Groenleer, 2013; Clapton, 2011; Ekengren *et al.*, 2006; *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 2014). In general, researchers look at an emergency as the critical condition of a society hit by an un-pre-empted event that (a) causes serious human sufferings, life losses and huge material damages, and (b) can be faced only with exceptional means and special actions. In a past study (Attinà, 2013), four areas of emergency problems have been distinguished, namely (1) the problems caused by *man-made disasters*, i.e. by large-scale human violence like war, genocide, and mass persecution; (2) the problems arising out of the enduring conditions of massive *poverty* of a society in which the population has little or no means for decent life like food, shelter, clothes, healthcare, and education; (3) the *natural disaster* problems caused by floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, droughts, wildfire, and geologic processes that bring huge distress and loss of life and property to people; and (4) the *systemic-risk* problems, i.e. the problems that come into existence as a risk turns into a real event like the break down of important infrastructures and technological systems, or into a chain of negative events in one of the main sectors of social life like the last global crisis in the financial sector. Such areas of emergency problems, though different from one another in important aspects, need similar response capabilities and the employment of almost the same exceptional instruments to relieve the victims, provide security, rebuild infrastructures, re-launch the economy and improve the political institutions and administration offices of the affected societies and states.

The objective of the present study is twofold. First, it wants to deepen the existing knowledge about the EU's and Member States' involvement in disaster aid and in emergency cooperation. Second, it processes official data in order to assess the state of coherence and Europeanisation of this policy area. In particular, it aims at expanding the knowledge base of the debate about two issues of concern to the community of the EU foreign policy analysts. The first issue is the nature of the European aid policy determinants. An answer to the question "why the EU and the Member States give financial aid to states in need?", however, is not found by uncovering a EU-specific set of determinants as these do not differ from those of other donor states. The second issue is about the coherence of the policy the two actors of concern to this study, the EU and the Member States, run on their own in humanitarian and emergency affairs. The analysis is aimed at responding to the question "do the European Union and the Member States address the same emergencies and fund recipient countries with the same amount of money as they share principles and goals of humanitarian aid?".

After the short presentation of the research objectives and the dataset, this chapter first discusses the two issues, and then analyses the relevant data. As stated in the concluding remarks, the results of the present analysis support the common view about "one voice Europe", i.e. the importance of shared values and goals in the Union's policies, but it warns about the diversity overarching the unity as the data show the existence of four groups of EU countries and each group has a priority order of aid allocation to the countries of the MENA region different from the order of the other groups.

### *The research objectives and the data source*

The article “European Aid to Foreign Countries in Emergencies - Are ECHO and the EU Large-Donor Countries on the Same Track?” (Attinà, 2014) demonstrated that the European Union countries and the Commission’s ECHO Directorate-General allocate similar amounts of emergency-aid funds to countries of seven international regions, Africa, Asia, Caribbean & Latin America, Central & Southern Asia, East Europe & Balkans, and the MENA region. Africa, as the region with the largest number of countries undergoing emergency crises, has been the largest aid-recipient region in the examined time period 1999-2012. Either the MENA or the Central & Southern Asia region was the second largest recipient region of the aid of individual EU Member Countries but Spain<sup>3</sup>. In the present chapter, the ECHO’s and TEDD countries’ allocation of emergency-aid funds to the states of the MENA region is further analysed. ECHO is the European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid in charge of the EU’s response to disasters inside and outside of Europe. The TEDDs, i.e. the Top Eleven Direct Donors, are the EU member countries that give the highest amount of humanitarian and emergency aid to foreign countries. They are Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. MENA is the acronym in use to indicate the region including the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, namely Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen. The source of the data and information about the foreign assistance given to third countries by the ECHO and the TEDD EU Member States is EDRIS, the “European Disaster Response Information System”. It was created in 1999 after the Member States agreed to inform DG ECHO about the funding for humanitarian aid activities (Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid, Article 10). Data are recorded by the Member States’ Ministries of Foreign Affairs according to the standard 14 points format of HOLIS (Humanitarian Office Local Information System), which was set up by the DG ECHO in 2002<sup>4</sup>. The definition of what constitutes humanitarian aid is left up to the Member States but in 2003, DG ECHO established “Guidelines” for a harmonized approach to the definition of humanitarian aid. For reasons of compatibility, the Member States have to distinguish operations corresponding to DG ECHO’s mandate as defined in the Council Regulation from “other” operations that correspond to varying definitions and/or practice.

### *European emergency aid policies: determinants and coherence*

The determinants of foreign aid, i.e. the donor state reasons to aid countries in need, are the object of a continuing debate among concerned scientists and professionals. The analysis of the EDRIS dataset shows that no EU country overwhelmingly concentrates aid in a particular region of the world (Attinà, 2014). In other terms, the aggregate data analysis does not support the view about the primary drive to emergency aid being the TEDD countries’ particular interest. One can say that the EU and the TEDD countries, by aiding countries in emergency need in any region of the world, pursue the general interest of preventing systemic instabilities and sustain as well their own particular interests, either political or

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<sup>3</sup> Data and charts are available also at <http://www.archiviofscpo.unict.it/europa/JMAP/reshapeprin.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Read more at [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding/key\\_figures/ms\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding/key_figures/ms_en.htm) (June 02 2013)

economic in nature. Accordingly, the aid given by the EU countries to the MENA countries is explained by the general European interest in containing the political conflicts that ravage many countries of the nearby MENA region. Such assertion is not undisputed but is supported as well by a large group of scientists and professionals. The analysts of foreign aid maintain that aid is given either in the interest of the donor or to respond to the urgent needs of the recipient country (see, for instance, McKinley and Little, 1979) but many analysts argue that both motives play a role in determining the decision to aid. This is the view of Vicky Reynaert (2011) in a study of particular concern to the present analysis. She detailed a long list of motives to explain the EU's decisions to allocate different amounts of aid to the Mediterranean countries in the period from 2002 to 2010. In particular, she employed four empirical models, namely the 'donor interest', 'recipient need', 'good governance', and 'economic reform' model, to analyse the allocation of the EU's MEDA and ENPI funds<sup>5</sup> to Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia. Reynaert's empirical analysis defends the view that the EU aid was aimed at rewarding the countries that "*made good progress in reforming themselves into market-based economies*". Accordingly, she affirms that the EU's decisions to aid the Mediterranean countries in the 2002-2010 years were driven to the achievement of a *long-term objective* (Reynaert, 2011: 422), namely strengthening market economy all over the world, a goal which is seen as of universal interest and of EU's particular interest as well. Reynaert's conclusion matches my generalization that the donor country promotes the *general interest* of preventing instability and crisis as well as the *self-interest* upholding its own concern in the receiving country (Attinà, 2014).

The assessment of the European foreign aid determinants is tightly linked to the analysis of policy coherence. The more the determinants are clearly identified and shared by the EU institutions and the Member State governments, the stronger the coherence of their policy actions is. Coherence between foreign, security and defence policy, development aid policy, humanitarian aid policy, and other external relations policies like trade, environment and so on, is the permanent object of interest of the analysts and professionals that are concerned with the efficiency of the decision-making, and the efficacy of the actions, of the EU as a player on the world system stage. But policy coherence is a multifaceted quality and, consequently, an elusive concept, difficult to study and assess thoroughly, especially in the double dimension this concept has in the multilevel system of the European Union. The first dimension is the coherence of the various policies of the foreign relations area that are issued and implemented by the EU institutions. The second dimension is the coherence of the EU's and Member States' policies in the same area.

In a recent study that critically examines the policy coherence concept, and overviews the state of the art in the relevant literature, Mayer (2013) distinguishes five faces or dimensions of coherence worth distinguishing in researching and assessing the EU foreign relations. *Vertical* coherence is the substantial agreement existing between the member states' and the EU institutions' foreign policies and actions. *Horizontal* coherence is the smooth coordination of the decisions and actions of the different EU institutions about the same object. *Strategic* coherence exists as all the EU external policies go straight towards the same

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<sup>5</sup> MEDA (*Mesures d'Ajustement*) was a program of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) set out by the so-called Barcelona Process between 2002-2006. ENPI is the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument, created after the new program European Neighbourhood Program (ENP) that incorporated the EMP into the EU initiative towards the countries on the Eastern and Southern border.

objectives and follow the same principles, values and goals. Coherence between what the EU claims to do and what it actually does is the fourth dimension that Mayer calls *narrative coherence*. Last, *external engagement* coherence consists in matching the EU actions with the actions of the international partners, as the EU's room of action is dependent on the smooth and viable dialogue with the partners and allies. All such dimensions are in relation to one another and, consequently, all of them may be of concern to the analyst of European foreign policy matters. However, vertical coherence is of greater concern to the study of the emergency aid policy than the other dimensions because humanitarian and emergency affairs represent an area of the shared competence of the Union and the Member States. Accordingly, the EU institutions are in power of shaping and conducting the humanitarian and emergency policy of the Union as much as the governments are in power of doing the same policy for their state. At the same time, sharing competence in a policy area means that both the EU institutions and the member state governments are/should be driven by non-contrasting values, principles and goals in running their own policy. In this perspective, the vertical coherence of the humanitarian and emergency policy of the EU and the Member states is firmly tied to the strategic coherence of the policies of all these actors. Finally, the Lisbon Treaty Article 24.3 demands that the states comply with the principle of vertical coherence as it requires from them to refrain from any action that may impair the EU's action effectiveness in international relations. Since the competence is shared in the EU multi-level governance system, the Member State' policy has to be in tune to the EU's policy and as well to the policy of the other Member States so as to develop the positive synergies one expects from the states involved in the integration process. In other terms, all attempts on enlarging policy coherence in all the dimensions are attempts at furthering the Europeanisation of the humanitarian policy within the shared competence scheme.

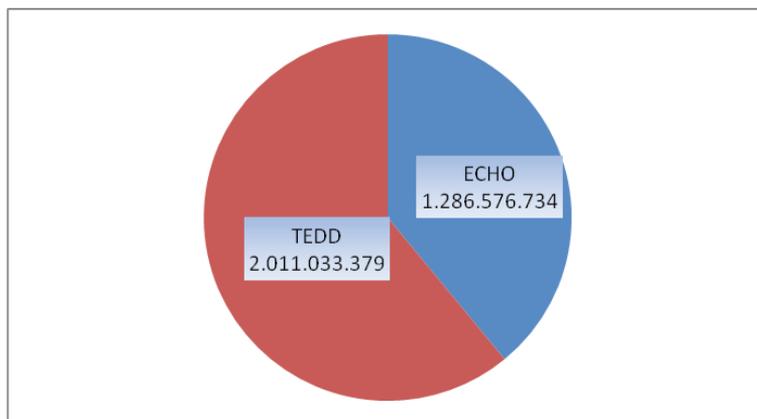
In the last 10 years, despite of the fact that the analysts have not supported unreservedly and have instead expressed multiple views about the link between insecurity and underdevelopment (Merket, 2013), the EU official documents have endorsed the development-security nexus as the driving principle to enhance the horizontal coherence of the EU's aid policy with the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, adopted in December 2007 by the Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Member States (European Union, 2008) stipulates that the EU humanitarian aid is guided by the four internationally agreed principles of neutrality, impartiality, humanity and independence. Additionally, the Lisbon Treaty has defined humanitarian aid as an EU external policy in its own right and, therefore, independent from the Common Foreign and Security Policy and all other external relations policies as well. In contrast to this perspective that seems to undervalue the requisite of policy coherence in the case of humanitarian affairs, Orbie, Van Elsuwege and Bossuyt (2014) have called the attention of concerned professionals and students towards the necessary condition of reconciling humanitarian policy with the other EU foreign relations policies, i.e. towards the importance of the horizontal coherence dimension, since all the foreign relations policies matter in responding effectively to humanitarian crises. The response of a state and an international organisation like the EU to the social, economic and political problems caused by a civil war, a natural disaster, and the persistent conditions of extreme poverty in a country involves humanitarian aid as much as other foreign policy actions and instruments. Since this is true for the EU as well as for the Member States, the vertical coherence issue comes to the

fore and mixes with the horizontal one in the very complex game that is played by the policy-makers of the EU multilevel system. The EU as well as each Member State has to account for the horizontal coherence of all its foreign relations policies, the humanitarian one included. At the same time, each Member State is expected to link the national foreign relations policies to the EU's policies within the shared competence scheme. However, as Mayer (2013) rightly remarks, policy coherence is hardly achieved by any state but to an indefinite and variable extent. In agreement with this assertion, it is here admitted that assessing policy coherence in the EU is a matter of good sense. Above all, it means finding and pointing out that great lack of coherence problems, should they be really existent, have critical consequences on the efficacy of the EU's actions and policies. Accordingly, the present analysis of the allocation of the emergency aid of the EU and the largest donor Member States is aimed at checking whether vertical coherence in this area is so large as to be the potential cause of inefficient humanitarian and emergency actions or, on the contrary, it is not that large and remains behind the line of the 'harmless difference' that any shared competence area can bear on.

*Analysis of the aid allocation: the donors and the recipients*

In the 14 years under study, 1999-2012, the TEDD countries threw in almost 2/3 of the aggregate (i.e. of the EU and the Member States) funds of the humanitarian and emergency aid given to the 14 countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean and the Middle East (Figure no.1). The large surplus of the TEDDs funds on the ECHO funds may raise concern about the consequence missing coherence between the EU's and Member States' aid may have on their performance as emergency aid-givers. Hence, deepening the existing knowledge about the member states' emergency aid *vis-a-vis* that of the EU is of significance to assess the all-Europe emergency cooperation and how coherent to one another are the EU's and member states' actions.

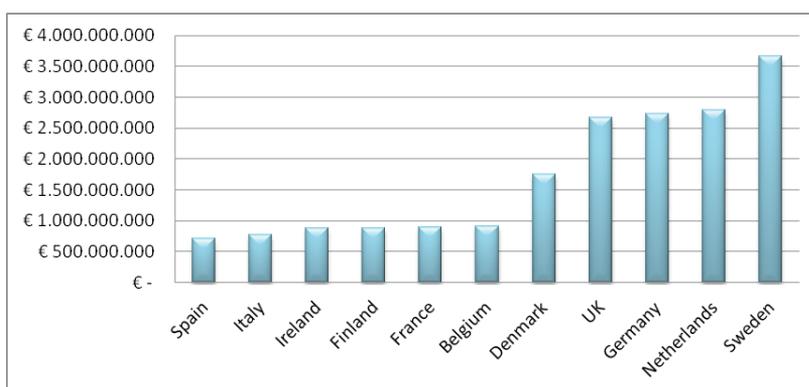
**Figure no. 1 – Total aid by ECHO and the TEDD countries to the MENA countries (in Euros) – 1999-2012**



Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO

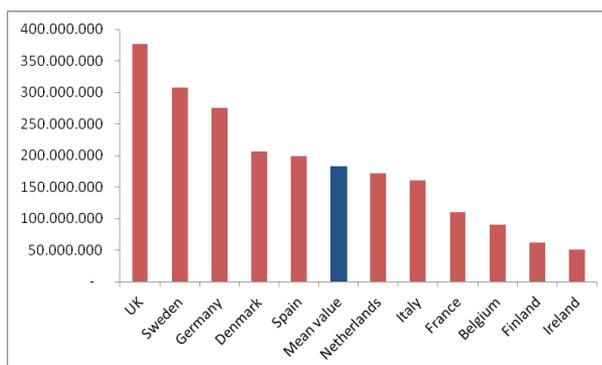
In the aggregate analysis (Attinà, 2014), two groups of the TEDD countries have been distinguished according to the size of the aid to the seven regions of the world in the time period 1999-2012. The top donors group comprises, in decreasing order, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Denmark. The low donors group comprises, in decreasing order, Belgium, France, Finland, Ireland, Italy, and Spain (Figure no.2). Such a two-size group picture does not fit to the data of the MENA case. A different pattern emerges from the data of the total aid of each TEDD country to all the MENA region countries. In this case, the TEDD countries set one after the other in a rather regular decreasing order. In contrast to the aid rank order of the aggregate world data, UK jumps from the fourth to the top place. Spain moves from the last to the fifth place, namely above the mean value. Italy leaves the second last and goes to the seventh place, a little below the mean value. Also countries like Belgium, Finland and the Netherlands place themselves in different positions in each of the two rank orders (Figure no.3).

**Figure no. 2 – The total emergency-aid of the TEDD Countries to all the world regions – 1999-2012**



Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO

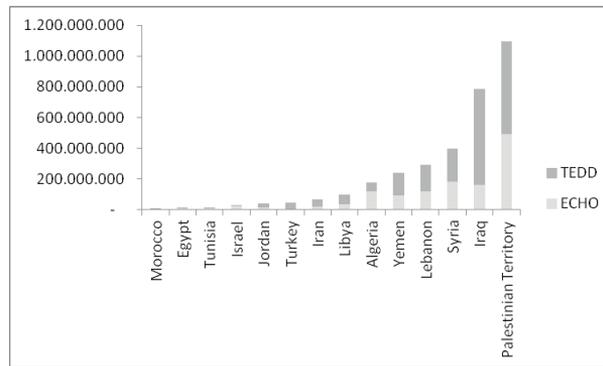
**Figure no. 3 – TEDD countries' total aid to MENA countries (in Euros) – 1999-2012**



Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO

Important information is given also by the data of the recipient countries. Three groups of aid-recipient countries are distinguished according to the size of the donation given by the TEDD countries and ECHO. Eight out of the 14 MENA states have been small recipients, namely Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Iran, and Libya; and very small recipients, namely Morocco, Egypt, and Tunisia. Four are middle-rank recipients, i.e. Algeria, Yemen, Lebanon, and Syria. The great recipients of the whole European aid are Iraq and the Palestinian Territories (Figure no.4).

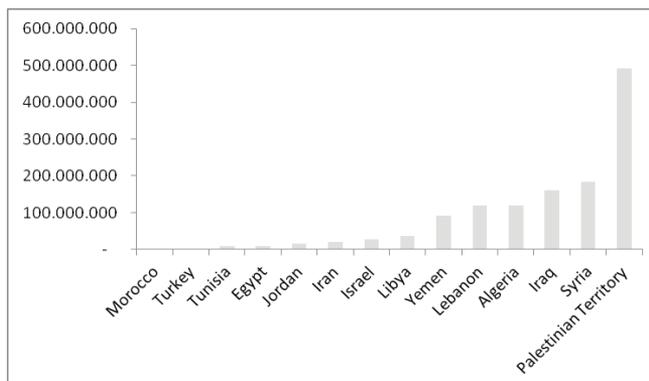
**Figure no. 4: ECHO's and TEDD countries' aid to MENA countries (in Euros) – 1999-2012**



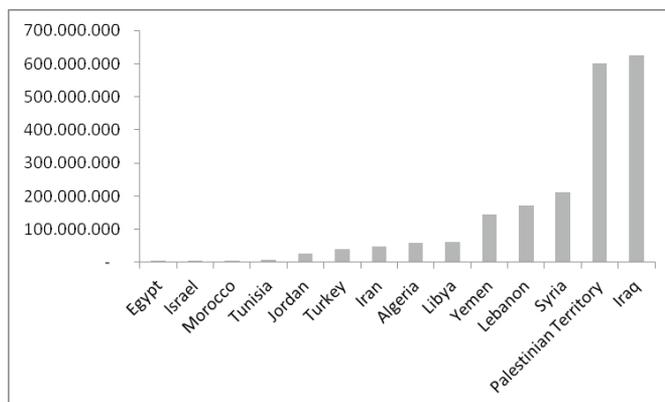
Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO

Separating the ECHO's from the TEDDs' aid, two different orders of aid-recipient countries are apparent. The Palestine Territories are the only great recipient of the ECHO's aid while Yemen, Lebanon, Algeria, Iraq and Syria are mid-level recipients and the remaining eight MENA countries are small and very small recipients of the ECHO's aid (Figure no. 5). But the aid given by the 11 major European donor countries gives place to a different rank order (Figure no. 6). Iraq jumps to the top position, a bit ahead of the Palestinian Territories, while Algeria falls down to the small-recipient group.

**Figure no. 5: ECHO's aid to MENA countries (in Euros) – 1999-2012**



Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO

**Figure no. 6: TEDD countries' aid to MENA countries (in Euros) – 1999-2012**

Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO

The EDRIS data, then, make apparent few but important differences between the allocation priorities adopted by the Commission and the aggregate allocation priorities of the TEDD countries' policy-makers. In particular, Algeria is an important recipient of the ECHO's aid while giving aid to Iraq gets the highest score from the TEDDs but not from all of them as it is demonstrated in the following. From knowledge about the different position of the EU member countries about the Iraq war, it is easy to infer that in giving aid to this country the TEDD countries divided themselves in different groups as they did in response to the war on Saddam Hussein declared by the American ally.

Though each TEDD country sets alone in the scale of donation to the MENA region countries, as it has been remarked above (see Figure no.3), a four-type sorting of the major European countries' approach towards emergency-aid allocation is apparent from the close inspection of the EDRIS processed data of the single donor and recipient state (see Appendix). 'Type One' countries prioritise Iraq and the Palestinian Territories. This is the largest, homogeneous group formed by four North European countries, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden. The "Type Two" group gathers Germany, Finland, and Spain. They gave large aid to the Palestinian Territories and Iraq and also significant funds to other MENA countries, namely Syria and Yemen. "Type Three" countries are Belgium and France. They gave about half the total aid to one country, the Palestinian Territories. Lastly, Italy and UK are the "Type Four", residual group. Both of them allocated emergency aid in a disparate way. Italy is the only country concentrating aid on Lebanon where it contributed significantly to the UNIFIL peace operations up to 2008 and to a lower extent to the Palestinians and Iraq. The United Kingdom concentrated aid on Iraq and to a lower extent to Syria and Yemen.

### **Conclusion**

As the MENA region has not been the theatre of numerous nature disaster events in the time of this analysis and less so of systemic-risk problems, two of the four emergency problems that have been distinguished in the introductory part of this chapter, occupy the

space of the emergencies of the region, namely the problems caused by large-scale human violence, and the problems of poverty and lack of adequate means of living born by large groups of people. One can argue that in the Middle East and North Africa the problems of violence and poverty are strictly linked to one another. Accordingly, the data analysis demonstrates that ECHO and the TEDD countries adopt different aid allocation priorities to select the most-funded recipient countries but they all share the same perspective on the foundation of emergency aid to the MENA countries, namely they all prioritise the allocation of large amounts of aid to the countries, albeit different ones, that are affected by violent conflicts. In this perspective, problems of vertical coherence do exist but against the overall horizontal coherence that exists between the emergency aid policy and the foreign and security policy of the EU and the Member States as far as the emergency aid policy matches the goal of security enhancement of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The present analysis, however, wants to draw the attention of the scientists and professionals towards the importance of the different priority orders of the recipient countries that have been adopted by the EU member states' governments as the four priority types demonstrate. Consequently, the implications of this coherence problem have to be further studied by those concerned with the conditions for the efficacious actions of the European Union towards the conflicts causing humanitarian problems in the MENA region.

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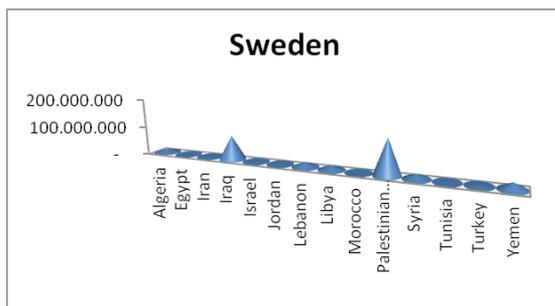
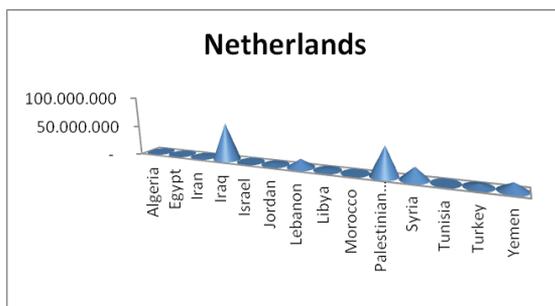
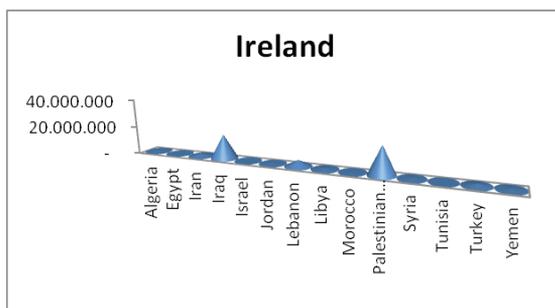
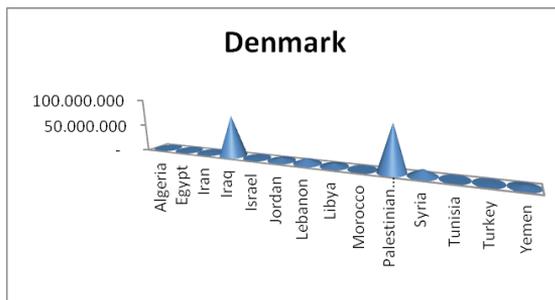
**Appendix**

Individual TEDD countries' emergency-aid allocation to individual MENA countries – 1999-2012

	Belgium	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Netherlands	Spain	Sweden	UK
Algeria	3.831.068	77.052	3.068.188	2.428.065	2.603.921	700.000	6.724.726	156.045	25.206.222	12.330.753	375.336
Egypt		73.735			2.290.926		2.000.000			321.700	
Iran	1.757.606	1.079.592	1.000.000	1.220.645	9.981.029	2.012.627	1.009.948	1.441.457	20.204.373	2.620.007	4.594.451
Iraq	8.830.630	77.138.433	14.100.000	10.443.506	49.117.172	17.808.749	20.469.550	62.701.580	92.677.264	85.043.548	185.738.804
Israel		1.163.394	1.707.754	73.260	307.435			13.682		2.100.068	
Jordan	1.000.000	6.002.897	870.000	534.784	6.678.532	530.000	4.755.974	2.450.000	1.100.000	2.213.982	
Lebanon	5.600.000	10.390.141	5.409.588	18.307.261	16.075.622	4.634.212	59.767.116	14.219.873	5.727.702	16.713.829	14.958.925
Libya		6.222.158	1.650.000	2.840.440	10.872.415	1.000.000	6.978.120	2.500.000	7.400.345	15.807.690	5.264.750
Morocco	3.798.948			881.159		200.000	410.340	28.009		32.062	228.792
Palestinian Territory	59.004.036	87.007.005	18.100.000	52.405.175	94.054.502	20.475.571	41.625.572	49.644.878	36.200.588	124.886.902	18.900.860
Syria	2.000.000	12.597.064	3.547.418	13.811.421	47.522.179	800.000	5.586.190	20.787.564	3.000.000	16.581.415	85.600.173
Tunisia	1.000.000	214.612	1.200.000	167.284	978.348		1.873.585		362.539	2.031.881	
Turkey	2.786.595	586.137	1.282.074	722.156	17.787.818	1.641.549	1.818.836	5.588.844	2.127.071	4.624.982	1.605.371
Yemen	1.000.000	3.626.272	9.661.697	6.345.306	17.081.191	800.000	7.763.313	12.834.188	4.551.156	22.502.607	59.729.487
<b>Total</b>	90.608.883	206.178.492	61.596.719	110.180.462	275.351.090	50.602.708	160.783.270	172.366.120	198.557.260	307.811.426	376.996.949

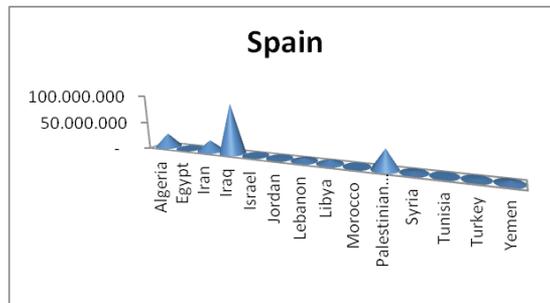
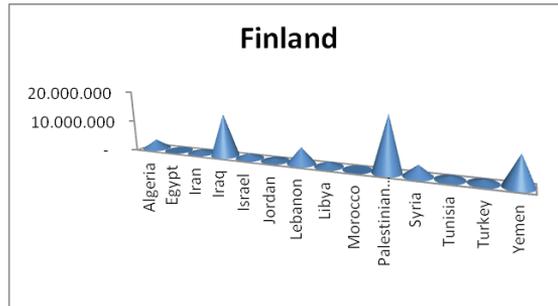
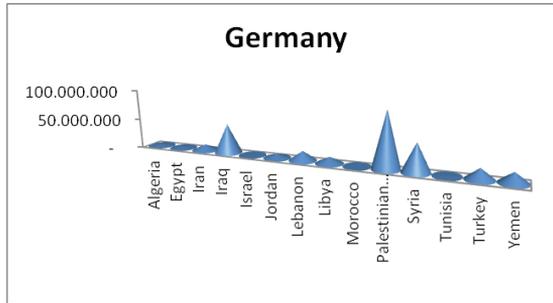
Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO

### Type One "Iraq/Palestinian Territories" - Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden



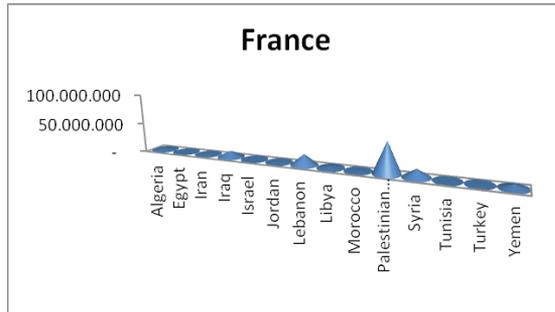
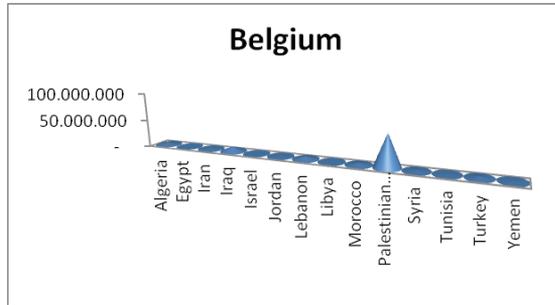
Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO

Type Two “Iraq/Palestinian Territories and Others” - Germany, Finland, and Spain



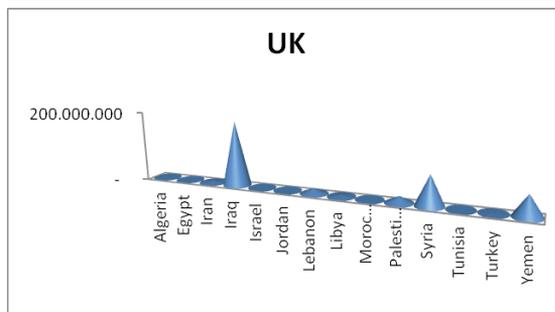
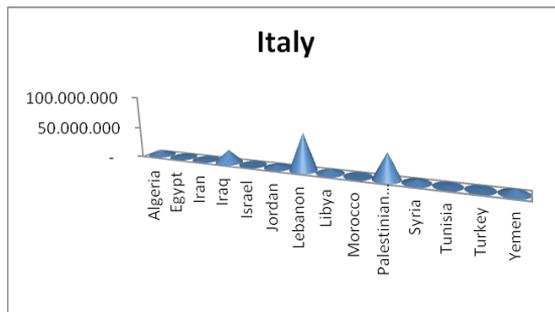
Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO

**Type Three “Palestinian Territories foremost” - Belgium and France**



Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO

**Type Four “Residual” - Italy, and UK**



Source: EDRIS dataset, ECHO