Recommendations

1. EEU look over a number of service functions in central Bosnia under the name of ECTF-EEU, thus providing ECTF with a high profile and presence on the ground. Such services include the running of the workshop, garages, and fuel station in Zenica, providing among others an indispensable support to UNHCR, ECMM, and NGO vehicles based in central Bosnia. This was done to help maintain stability within the international aid community at a time of high tension. These tasks should continue under EEU.

There seems to be little alternative but to keep the EEU under the ECTF as the logical place to situate an emergency unit. To place such an operation based on rapid and flexible response in the context of a general reconstruction strategy would most probably lead to confusion due to incompatible ways of operation.

Much more could be done on behalf of ECTF to control and monitor the operation. The lack of direct insight stems primarily from the fact that ECTF has not prioritised visits on the spot.

2. The EEU programmes are dependent upon an array of complementary factors determining the feasibility of its projects. These factors include the availability of diesel fuel deliveries, coal and electricity production, and food for work initiatives. Strenuous efforts must therefore be made continuously at the highest political level possible to overcome the delivery and distribution problems which affect every aspect of the humanitarian aid operations.

3. Due to the limits of capacity and operational constraints many repairs, particularly big and resource demanding, had to be left for future intervention.

Also the geographical outreach was hampered by the dividing lines of the war, and cities like Mostar, Zapa, and Srebrenica were thus not reached by the programme. From the field offices an impressive outreach of up to 100 kilometres was none the less made, but a stronger presence in some of the uncovered areas should be considered now.

4. The EEU operation is characterised by a series of unique features, which should be further analysed in relation to the impact made under very severe constraints.

- 1. Rapid response.
The rapid response demands presence in the field and continual mobility in dangerous circumstances, constituting one of the strong points of the EEU.

The micro-planning approach enables small carefully selected inputs to malfunctioning structures, thus producing surprisingly high impact value. The weakness is a certain lack of overall strategic focus, but as a complementary strategy under extreme conditions, it seems highly applicable.

- 3. Flexibility.
Flexibility means a highly visible leadership in the field able to find unconventional solutions to unplanned events. This is a special culture of enterprise, calling for high
mutual trust within the staff, as clearly visible in the EEU-staff, selected from the same cultural background.

- 4. Unbureaucratic structure.
   An unbureaucratic structure allows for decisions to be taken on the spot with a highly mechanised and simple reporting system.

- 5. Expertise.
   Expertise assures quality and qualified response to complex situations. Here the EEU experience has already shown how a qualified staff has made it a centre piece of support to the aid organisations on the ground.

- 6. Partnerships and counterparts.
   Involving local partners and finding a natural division of labour, utilising the capacity already in place is where the impact potential and sustainability of the interventions are really found, best illustrated in the cases presented.

- 7. European initiative.
   The EEU is based on British and Bosnian technical and managerial skills. There seems no reason not to think that the staff could be extended with other EU citizens or replicated by other EU member states. A precondition would however be that they continue to be selected by the one and same leadership according to the established criteria.

- 8. Visibility and communication.
   The interventions of the ECTF-EEU makes the EU highly visible in the field. The strong focus on the operations has logically meant that communication of achievements are neglected. Delays, however explicable, will therefore easily take on the wrong connotation in EU headquarters.

   Support mechanisms to such a highly operational programme must be at the same time be strong, offering at the same time both simplicity and strong discipline in procurement, agreements, accounting, reporting, and personnel management.

- 10. The potential of the EEU programme in producing extraordinary high impact under very difficult circumstances is considerable. The amendment of the weaknesses could make room for a future welcome addition to the organisation of humanitarian aid efforts.

5. Delays and inaccurate deliveries, and time spent checking and controlling arrivals at the warehouses, led to the decision that the EEU Procurement Engineer gradually should start making the procurement of articles made inside ex-Yugoslavia, limiting the purchase through the consortium to specialist goods manufactured in Western Europe. This should be supported.

6. The upper limit defined for project approval only by the Programme Coordinator up to 25,000 DEM seemed too strict. The head of ECTF should not get involved in contract approval of projects below 50,000 DEM.

7. Checks were made in two field offices of invoice controls of local expenditure and of the filing systems. It was found that not all invoices were originals but rather receipts made out by the administrative secretary. The explanation given was that it was difficult to get suppliers or shops to write receipts. The filing systems were generally in fine order but sometimes original invoices were found in files of active projects. Apart from these specific aspects the accounting system seemed effective and straightforward.
8. The long-term perspectives of the interventions made by the EEU Programme are evident not only in its preventive aspects of operation, saving substantial social costs and avoiding human agony.

Involving local partners and finding a natural division of labour, utilising the capacity already in place is where the impact potential and sustainability of the interventions are really found, best illustrated in the cases presented

ECHO should further consider the role model inherent in the nine special features of the EEU Programme and support, not only its continuation but also its expansion into a stronger European dimension.

(End p 23)