



Raising the Bar: Enhancing transatlantic governance of disaster relief and preparedness

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CENTER FOR TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

Introduction

A rising number of humanitarian disasters call for a coordinated international response. With climate change, natural disasters are becoming more frequent and increasingly severe. Many 'weak states', prone to conflict, are particularly vulnerable to their effects, resulting in a rising number of compound crises.

Both the EU and the US do not just feel morally obligated to help—they also have a vested interest in assisting those in need in order to foster international stability and security.

Yet the debates on humanitarian action in the EU and the US usually run in parallel without coming together to promote coherent policies.

The **Raising the Bar** Project is responding to this challenge by providing a unique platform to enhance transatlantic dialogue and action on disaster preparedness and response.

A project team, based on a network of transatlantic organizations, will conduct empirical research to provide an in-depth analysis of the current state of humanitarian policy, thereby helping to identify the potential and limits of joint transatlantic action.

The dialogue component of the project will bring together decision-makers, experts, and practitioners from the EU and US to jointly discuss key research findings, and to sketch out an Action Plan for joint transatlantic leadership in humanitarian action.

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Research

Raising the Bar is organized around four study groups focusing on the following key topics:

1 Linking Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development (LRRD)

Both the EU and the US have declared LRRD as an essential concept guiding humanitarian aid. However, the implementation of LRRD remains a challenge, especially at the field level.

This study group compares the transatlantic partners' respective approaches to implementing LRRD and identifies best practices.

2 Improving Humanitarian Performance through the Implementation of Lessons Learned

The humanitarian community engages systematically in the collection of lessons learned. However, there remains a gap between reported good practice and actual practice.

This study group investigates the barriers to the application of lessons learned, and promotes mutual learning between the US and the EU on successful program adjustment.

3 Business Engagement in Humanitarian Action

The role of business in humanitarian action has recently become a prominent topic in policy debates. Europeans and Americans have developed different approaches to engage with the private sector in the humanitarian arena.

This study group compares the different modes and evaluates their strengths and weaknesses.

4 Civil-Military Relations in Disaster Response

Whether in the context of natural disasters or complex emergencies, civil and military actors are increasingly working together.

This study group addresses these relationships and evaluates the different modes in which the Americans and Europeans use their military assets in the context of humanitarian crises, as well as the specific approaches to civil-military cooperation adopted on both sides of the Atlantic.

Policy Dialogue

A core component of **Raising the Bar** is a conference series, the Transatlantic Dialogues on Humanitarian Action. These dialogues bring together EU and US policy-makers, NGOs, multilateral organizations, researchers, and the private sector. They provide unique opportunities for supplying practitioner feedback into the research process, and to foster the development of a transatlantic strategic community on humanitarian action.

Dialogue sessions will take place:

- Berlin (June 2008)
- Washington (December 2008)
- Brussels (May 2009)

For more information about the project, please visit:

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About us

The Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) is an independent think tank based in Berlin and Geneva. GPPi's mission is to develop innovative strategies for effective and accountable governance and to achieve lasting impact at the interface of the public sector, business and civil society through research, consulting, and debate.

The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) Center for Transatlantic Relations, located in Washington, DC, engages international scholars and students directly with government officials, journalists, business executives, and other opinion leaders from both sides of the Atlantic on issues facing Europe and North America. The goal of the Center is to strengthen and reorient transatlantic relations to the dynamics of the globalizing world.

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Partners

The following organizations support the **Raising the Bar** Project with their experience and expertise:

Development Assistance Research Associates (DARA)
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University of Paris X (Nanterre) Dep. of Geography
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Welthungerhilfe
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International Rescue Committee (IRC)
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