



What is the European Network of Humanitarian Thinktanks (HuT)?

The humanitarian thinktank network “HuT” is an informal partnership of independent European humanitarian thinktanks. It was founded against the backdrop of consistent reform deficits in international humanitarian policies and practices and in light of the crucial role European donor governments need to play to ensure humanitarian space and reform. Its objective is to jointly improve humanitarian policies and practices in response to crisis. It aims at enhancing the impact of engaged thinktanks by increasing cross-national collaboration to pursue synergies, exchange know-how and expertise, cooperate in thematic areas of joint interest, avoid duplications and work jointly on the strategic advancement of our thinktanks in an increasingly complex humanitarian context. Currently, the network primarily focuses on European members and policies but is also open to engaging in thematic collaborations with non-European partners.

The “HuT” pursues cooperation as appropriate on up to three levels:

1. Information sharing is the baseline of the network, whose members have committed to updating each other at least 1-2 times a year on the latest plans and projects to identify synergies, pursue collaboration over competition and avoid working in silos.

Information sharing will contribute to cross-country learnings about the humanitarian policies of our European host countries and the European context of our work and analysis. It is the starting point for identifying areas of thematic cooperation and enhancing the impact of all our thinktanks’ work.

2. Thematic cooperation: While priority areas of our work may vary, there are many thematic areas that complement each other and present excellent opportunities for cooperation, thereby enhancing the impact and reach of each member. Common challenges and reform needs, such as climate change and humanitarian change, locally-led humanitarian action, humanitarian coordination and Western donor policies, can benefit from collective efforts through profound analysis and relevant debates beyond our local and national communities. Thematic cooperation can also be flexible,

allowing subgroups of network members to collaborate on specific priority areas of their current work while other members concentrate on different joint projects or cooperations.

3. Strategic cooperation: Given the leverage and scope of all network members, there exists significant potential to identify and pursue areas of joint strategic interest in both the medium and long term. This relates to a collaborative reflection on the work, future roles, and strategic positioning of our thinktanks, taking into account the rich diversity of mandates, expertise, approaches and funding structures of our members. Furthermore, it extends beyond existing individual work plans, presenting opportunities to proactively identify cross-cutting themes and objectives and develop strategic activities for an impactful joint engagement with respect to long-term trends in the humanitarian arena, such as escalating humanitarian needs and crisis, slugging reform processes and endangered humanitarian spaces, among others.

In practical terms, the network established in 2022 has agreed to hold regular meetings twice a year, with at least one meeting conducted in person. It aims to maintain an informal network with minimal procedures and formalities, without imposing member fees or legal requirements. It remains open to other European thinktanks, that possess expertise in the humanitarian field and can contribute to the network’s work and impact, but generally aims to have only one organisation per country as a member. It will exchange views and perspectives with non-European actors, in particular from the Global South, while focusing initially on European humanitarian policies and partnerships, ensuring a thematic focus and manageability. The inclusion of new partners is determined by consensus among network members.

The Centre for Humanitarian Action (CHA) is currently the administrative coordination body of the network and is pleased to serve in this role for the time being. No member of the network will serve as spokesperson, but each institution retains full autonomy on all external communication conducted on its behalf.

