

Executive Summary

Community Civil Protection cooperation

Community co-operation in the field of civil protection aims to better protect people, their environment, property and cultural heritage in the event of major natural or manmade disasters occurring both inside and outside the EU. It is a long tradition for EU Member States to express their solidarity with EU Member States and third countries affected by major disasters by providing civil protection assistance. However, the coordination of the assistance has only really started a decade ago, increasing over time the reliance on co-operation and the pooling of resources in order to be as effective as possible on the disaster site. The EU has developed and continuously reinforced the *Community Civil Protection Mechanism (the Mechanism)* which facilitates these cooperation efforts.

Aim of study – a scenario approach

This study focused on building scenarios for various types of disasters as a tool to explore potential gaps in current civil response capacities as part of the Commission's efforts to develop a knowledge base for improving the overall European civil protection capacity.¹ For each selected disaster type (storm, flood, earthquake, tsunami, oil spill, forest fire, and industrial accident) one scenario was located within the EU and for some types an additional scenario was located in a third country (Chapter 3).

Registered and reported resources at European level

For determining the potential gap of current response capacities versus needed response resources for the various types of disasters an inventory² for comparison is determined: the current civil response capacity in Europe (Chapter 4). The inventory focused primarily on the so-called civil protection modules³. Whilst civil protection modules will increasingly become the basis for significant European civil protection assistance operations launched through the Mechanism, their action will often be complemented by the provision of other in-kind assistance such as for example low capacity equipments (e.g. pumps) and relief items (e.g. tents, blankets).

In January 2009, the European civil protection rapid response capacity included a total of 86 modules⁴. In addition, the Mechanism's capacity includes 8 technical assistance support teams providing support functions, such as kitchen, IT, logistics, etc. At this point in time no forest fire fighting module using helicopters has been registered, nor do any emergency temporary shelter modules currently

¹ COM (2008) 130 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0130:FIN:EN:PDF>

² This inventory is based on the consolidated outcomes of a questionnaire completed by the Participating States combined with latest European Commission information.

³ Civil protection response modules are task / needs driven pre-defined arrangements of resources of the Participating States.

⁴ Modules include high capacity pumping, water purification, various types of urban search and rescue, forest fire fighting planes, mobile medical posts and field hospitals, medical aerial evacuation capacity, and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) sampling and detection equipment as well as search and rescue specialised for CBRN situations.

exist. By the end of 2010, when taking into account planned modules, the capacity will likely increase by about 40 to 44% of its current capacity, and it will likely be more balanced across all types of modules.

Furthermore, the MIC has trained over 600 experts, some of which can be rapidly deployed to the place of crisis to perform assessment and coordination tasks.

Identification of potential gaps in the overall EU civil protection response capacity

Chapter 5 then identifies the potential qualitative and quantitative gaps in the overall EU civil protection response capacity; synthesised in five categories: (a) gaps hindering the degree of availability of existing resources; (b) lack of sufficient quantities of major categories of resources; (c) lack of sufficient quantities of specific equipment or expertise; (d) lack of information on specific categories of equipment or expertise; and (e) limited preparedness of major categories of response resources.

Chapter 6 analyses identified policy options for addressing each gap category as regards their potential economic, environmental and social impacts, and likely level of effectiveness. Options are compared to the status quo – ‘no action’-situation.

Policy options for addressing major gaps

Category (a) gaps are the lack of capacity to guarantee deployment because of soft factors and limited access to transport solutions and represent a major obstacle to deployment. Currently we cannot guarantee European solidarity for these resources. Similarly, some major categories of resources are limited in their existence (category (b) gaps), which limits the capacity of European solidarity to address potential needs in these fields. These major types of gaps thus require an in depth reform of the Mechanism to move to a situation where European solidarity is guaranteed. All assessed policy options for inducing such a reform would significantly improve the level of burden sharing and thus offer improved means of deploying nationally available resources for external assistance. The main differences between options are (1) whether the centre of gravity of decision-making resides more with the Community or with the Member States, and (2) the extent of sharing of cost-burden of solidarity between all Participating States.

The slightly less extensive gaps listed under gap category (c) ‘lack of specific equipment and expertise’ can be addressed via similar policy options and require the same type of Mechanism reform and movement towards greater solidarity and burden sharing.

Need for further research and analysis

All gaps identified under category (d) ‘lack of information on specific categories of equipment or expertise’ require further in-depth analysis, including inventories, before being able to develop meaningful policy options. Such exercise of further information gathering and analysis will likely improve preparedness and may reveal further gaps.

Need for strengthened preparedness activities

All gaps falling under category (e) ‘limited preparedness of major categories of response resources’, could be significantly reduced or eliminated via new and strengthened preparedness activities offered by the Mechanism to address the identified gaps.

The key conclusion (Chapter 7) of this study is that the Community Civil Protection Mechanism currently facilitates assistance without guaranteeing European assistance; but that several options exist that have the potential to reform the Mechanism into a tool that guarantees European assistance. The main condition of this system to function is the sharing between all Member States of the cost burden of European assistance, and various policies to improve the availability of equipment and expertise for rapid deployment. Finally, the assessment of options for addressing current insufficiencies in coastal oil spill clean up resources has signalled a clear niche where improvements on the European level and thus a new role for the Mechanism would make sense.

