

ROADMAP

Title of the initiative: **Reinforcing the European Union's Disaster Response Capacity**
Type of initiative (CWP/Catalogue/Comitology): Communication
Lead DG/contact person/details: DG ECHO
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Initial IA screening & planning of further work

A. Context and problem definition

(i) What is the political context of the initiative? (ii) How does this initiative relate to past and possible future initiatives, and to other EU policies?

In the wake of the EU response to the Haiti earthquake, Member States and the European Parliament called for an improvement of the EU's Rapid Response Capacity (RRC) to disasters. President Barroso has indicated that this would be a priority for the Commission..

Over the last two decades, the EU has developed two main instruments for the response to disasters inside and outside the EU. First, the EU has a firmly established reputation as the world's largest donor of official humanitarian aid, not including the important contributions from EU citizens to humanitarian aid organisations. On the basis of humanitarian aid as a shared competence, the Commission has triggered a significant strengthening of EU coordination on humanitarian assistance over the last three years on policy issues and specific humanitarian situations. Secondly, European civil protection cooperation has developed rapidly since the establishment of the Community Civil Protection Mechanism in 2001, through which the EC Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) facilitates and supports the deployment and coordination of Member States' assistance in the event of major emergencies inside and outside the EU.

The current economic context provides strong incentives for further strengthening of EU cooperation and coordination on disaster prevention, preparedness and response. Closer coordination in the response to disasters will result in efficiency gains and important savings for all Member States, as well as low-cost mutual learning opportunities. Further investment in disaster prevention and preparedness will minimise the impact of disasters and reduce their cost. Ensuring a more effective use of disaster management capacities is therefore a key challenge for the EU.

Given the scarcity of resources for disaster response on the international level, and the growing number of disasters, it is more important than ever to maximise the efficiency of the response by humanitarian organisations: UN, Red Cross Movement and NGOs. With a joint EU strategy on disaster response/ strengthened European coordination in the area of humanitarian assistance, the EU could provide coherent and results-based support to the organisations in a joint and strengthened effort.

What are the main problems identified? *In the EU, 494 disasters occurred between 2000 and 2007, claiming over 79,000 lives.¹ The economic cost of these disasters is estimated at €103 billion, or approximately €15 billion per year.² The statistics are even more sobering at global level. Since 1975, the annual number of disasters worldwide has increased from 75 to 400. Disasters claim on average 85,541 lives per year and affect some 230 million individuals.³ Oxfam predicts that this figure could grow by more than 50 % by 2015 to an average of 375 million affected by climate-related disasters every year. There is growing recognition among EU Member States of the imperative to work together on the prevention of, preparedness for and response to disasters occurring on their territories*

Who is affected? *Member States, the Commission, the European Parliament (only in a political sense), and citizens inside and outside the European Union. In addition, this subject will have an important influence on our relations with partners (UN, NGOs, Red Cross).*

(i) Is EU action justified on grounds of subsidiarity? (ii) Why can the objectives of the proposed action not be achieved sufficiently by Member States (necessity test)? (iii) As a result of this, can objectives be better achieved by action by the Community (test of EU Value Added)?

Disaster management policy is mainly a responsibility of the Member States. However the Treaty (article 196) provides for an EU role to encourage cooperation between Member States in order to improve the effectiveness of systems for preventing and protecting against natural or man-made disasters. The EU action shall aim to support and complement Member States' action at national, regional and local level in risk prevention, in preparing their civil-protection personnel and in responding to natural or man made disasters within the Union, promote swift, effective cooperation within the Union between national civil protection offices, promote consistency in international civil-protection work.

There are real possibilities that disasters/emergencies occur of such a scale that national civil protection resources and assets would be overwhelmed. In such cases, assistance from other Member States is necessary but cannot be guaranteed under the existing arrangements.

EU action brings added value as it concerns managing situation with a strong trans-/multinational component, where there is a need for overall coordination and concerted action above national level. By pooling the civil protection capabilities of the participating states, the Mechanism ensures better protection primarily of people, but also of property and the environment.

B. Objectives of EU initiative

What are the main policy objectives?.

The overall objectives of EU cooperation in the field of civil protection are to ensure better protection of people, the environment, property and cultural heritage in the event of major natural, technological and man-made disasters, including accidental marine pollution, chemical spills as well as civil protection aspects of radiological emergencies and terrorist attacks, occurring inside and outside the EU. European cooperation enables the EU as a whole to be collectively prepared for facing major disasters and allows Member States and other participating states to pool resources and efforts on a large scale, in a collective effort to maximise the impact of such commitments. The

¹ CRED (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters) database

² ABI (2005) and Munich Re (2008). The total cost of Storm Klaus, which hit France and Spain in January 2009, equalled €3.8 billion. The earthquake in L'Aquila in April 2009 cost €1.9 billion. Floods – one of the most recurrent types of disaster in the EU – claimed 700 lives since 1998 and led to €25 billion in insured economic losses.

³ Based on data for the period 2000-2008. 2009 was an exceptionally moderate year, with only 328 disasters recorded worldwide and a decrease in disaster mortality to 10,443.

Communication will present ways to reinforce the EU Disaster Response capacities inside and outside Europe (by means, inter alia, of enhanced coordination and enhanced arrangements aiming at guaranteeing the availability of a core set of disaster management assets).

Do the objectives imply developing EU policy in new areas or in areas of strategic importance? Possibly; Although the main policy guidelines are set out in legal bases (Civil Protection Mechanism, Humanitarian Aid Regulation) and interinstitutional agreements some adjustments might be needed. (f In addition changes may be required related to the coordination mechanisms between Commission, Member States and Council.

C. Options

(i) What are the policy options? (ii) What legislative or 'soft law' instruments could be considered? (iii) Would any legislative initiatives go beyond routine up-date of existing legislation?

Three main options can be distinguished:

- o Maintaining the status quo: maintain existing instruments, bring them closer together and introduce improvements resulting from the operational response to the Haiti earthquake.*
- o A voluntary pool of standby modules: Can we make the overall EU response more predictable, effective and cost-efficient by establishing a voluntary pool of key assets available in MS for EU disaster response operations?*
- o a Disasters Response Force a genuine EU rapid response force could be developed based on standby capacities in MS and EU level assets.*

All the options entail updating Civil Protection legislation – in the case of the first option this would only involve renewing the Financial Instrument that runs out in 2013. Options 2 and 3 would require some legislative changes to the Civil Protection Mechanism Decision and an increase in financial resources for the Financial Instrument.

Does the action proposed in the options cut across several policy areas or impact on action taken/planned by other Commission departments. Close link to the Action Plan for the Stockholm Programme and the forthcoming Communication on the Internal Security Strategy

Explain how the options respect the proportionality principle. The current EU RCC does not correspond to the total potential capacity of Europe in responding to disasters. No encroachment on Member States' capacities is needed or implied. However, for the moment, Europe's response to major disasters is not always as efficient and as visible as it should be.

D. Initial assessment of impacts

What are the significant impacts likely to result from each policy option (cf. list of impacts in the Impact Assessment Guidelines pages 32-37), even if these impacts would materialise only after subsequent Commission initiatives?

Maintaining the Status Quo – the lessons learnt exercise on the Haiti emergency as well as the 2010 evaluation of the Civil Protection Instruments will address the effectiveness of the response capacity and identify improvements through implementation of the existing legislation. Based on the evaluation the Commission will also make a proposal for the extension of the Civil Protection Financial Instrument without any major changes.

Possible Impact – more efficient and simplified procedures for response to disasters would impact the public (civil protection) authorities in the Member States. The EU financial assistance enables these authorities to do more for the preparation for disasters (training, simulation exercises) and complement Member State actions in response to disasters - sending experts, transport of assistance, logistical support and mobilisation of equipment ; sectors – security, public health and safety

A voluntary pool of standby modules – This would aim to improve the availability of key response capacities in the Member States through more effective pooling of resources and standby arrangements. The pooling would be voluntary and the teams would remain under national command and control but with a commitment that the resources would be available for EU operations. This action would need to be accompanied by a strengthening of the coordination rule of the Civil Protection Mechanism, cooperation in planning of the use of resources. These

arrangements would require some modifications to the Mechanism Decision in addition to the renewal of the Financial Instrument outlined above;

Possible impact – in addition to the previous option there would be additional costs for the standby modules that could be financed through the Financial Instrument; sectors – security, public health and safety

An EU Disaster Reponse Force would combine the voluntary pool of standby modules with the development of complementary assets at EU level. The latter would be used to fill any gaps identified in the overall response capabilities available in the Member States. In addition to the legislative changes from option 2 the addition of complementary EU assets would have to be covered by legislation. This would also have a financial impact and require an increase in resources for the Financial Instrument

Could the options have impacts on the EU-Budget (above 5 Mio €) and/or should the IA also serve as the ex-ante evaluation, required by the Financial Regulation? *The current overall budget for Civil Protection for the period 2007-2013 is 189.8 million (humanitarian aid around 800 million per year). For the subsequent financial perspectives the budget should at least be around this figure*

Could the options have significant impacts on (i) simplification, (ii) administrative burden or on (iii) relations with third countries? The improvements in coordination will help efficiency but no changes to administrative burden *The only effect on third countries would be positive by the very nature of the exercise.*

E. Planning of further impact assessment work

When will the impact assessment work start? Immediately

(i) What information and data are already available? (ii) Will this impact assessment build on already existing impact assessment work or evaluations carried out? (iii) What further information needs to be gathered? (iv) How will this be done (e.g. internally or by an external contractor) and by when?

(v) What type and level of analysis will be carried out (cf. principle of proportionate analysis)? *The 2010 ongoing evaluation of Civil Protection policy will be a major building block for the impact assessment..*

Which stakeholders & experts have been/will be consulted, how and at what stage? *Member States, EU Parliament, civil society, civil protection, humanitarian aid partners. Informal consultations should start asap.*