

**H.E. MR. JOSÉ MANUEL BARROSO
PRESIDENT OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION
BRUSSELS, KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**

Subject: Statement of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, COM (2011) 934

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

At a regular sitting, held on 7 March 2012, the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds (CEAOEF) examined a Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, included as item 52 of the Annual Working Program of the National Assembly on European Issues 2011.

The Bulgarian Parliament welcomes the merging of the two current Council Decisions – in the field of civil protection – in a single legal act. The Bulgarian Parliament considers that the proposed changes will facilitate effective response of Member States to the affected states in times of natural and man-made disasters, thus demonstrating a visible expression of European solidarity.

In the framework of the informal political dialogue, enclosed herewith please find the approved CEAOEF Report (working translation in English is provided), which contains statement with a positive assessment of the principle of subsidiarity, as set out in Art. 5, paragraph 3 of the Treaty on European Union, since its goals can be better achieved at EU level.

With my best wishes this continued partnership between the European Commission and the Bulgarian National Assembly to grow and thrive through mutual respect and understanding, please accept, Mr. President, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

**PRESIDENT
OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:**

TSETSKA TSACHEVA

Enclosure: as per text



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

REPORT

**OF THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS AND
OVERSIGHT OF THE EUROPEAN FUNDS
TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

***On the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council
on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, COM (2011) 934***

I. At its regular meeting held on 7 March, 2012, the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of European Funds (CEAOEF) examined the proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, included as item 52 of the Annual Work Program of the National Assembly on European Issues 2011.

II. The Union Civil Protection Mechanism, created in 2001 by a Council Decision 2001/792/EC, Euratom, aims to facilitate cooperation between 31 European states (27 EU Member States, Croatia, Island, Liechtenstein and Norway) in civil protection assistance interventions. The main goals are to support better coordination among Member States in the field of crisis response, to provide assistance upon the request of participating countries and to facilitate effective response in the field of civil protection in times of emergency situations, natural and man-made disasters, terrorist and technological acts, radiological or environmental accidents, both within the Union and beyond. In any of these disasters, assistance may be needed in civil defence and other emergency help so as to supplement the response capacity of the affected state.

III. The Proposal for a Decision aims to improve actions of Member States related to preventing, preparing for and responding to disasters, by merging two current Council Decisions - Decision 2007/779/EC, Euratom establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism and Decision 2007/162/EC, Euratom establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument - in a single legal act. The financial provision of the proposal should be viewed in the context of the proposal for the financial perspective 2014-2020.

The specific objectives of the proposal are to achieve a high level of protection against disasters by avoiding or reducing their effects and by fostering a culture of prevention, to enhance the Union's state of preparedness to respond to disasters, to facilitate rapid and efficient emergency response interventions in the event of major disasters or their imminence.

The proposal is based on the main four blocks of civil protection policy: prevention, preparedness, response and the external dimension, plus a chapter on financial provisions.

A new Chapter II on prevention is added, which rules the prevention actions managed by the Commission (Article 5) and the commitment of Member States to communicate their risk management plans to the European Commission (Art. 6).

Regarding preparedness actions, Chapter III of the proposal introduces new measures, the most important of which are:

- Establish and manage the Emergency Response Centre (ERC), (Art. 7 p. "a");
- Improve the planning of the response operations (incl. drafting of reference scenarios) (Art. 10);
- Establish European Emergency Response Capacity in the form of a voluntary pool of pre-committed response capacities of Member States (Art 11);
- Addressing capacity gaps (Art 12);
- Training, lessons learnt and knowledge dissemination - setting up a training programme and training network for civil protection personnel, a programme of lessons learned from the interventions (Art. 13).

Chapter IV of the proposal includes some measures related to crisis response:

- Assistance in the form of temporary pre-positioning of response capacities (Art. 15, paragraph 2);
- Proposal for a response plan based on the needs on the ground and pre-developed contingency plans (Art. 15, paragraph 3, p. "c");
- Requests made by member-states to ensure host nation support for the incoming assistance (Art. 15, paragraph 6).

Article 16 of the Proposal introduces measures related to promoting consistency in the response to major disasters outside the Union.

Chapter V regulates the financial provisions of the civil protection. Within the EU Multi-annual Financial Framework for the period 2014-2020, a financial reference is laid for the EU policy in the field of civil protection constituting 513 million Euros at current prices of which 276 million Euros for operations within the Union and 237 million Euros for operations outside the Union.

Article 23 regulates the eligible activities linked to equipment, transport resources and related logistics. The proposal amends and simplifies conditions for financing transport resources and related logistics. The amount of the Union towards financing transport resources has been increased to 85 % of the total eligible cost, whereas at times of emergency it could cover a maximum of 100 % of the total eligible cost.

IV. According to the submitted position of the Council of Ministers, the Republic of Bulgaria supports the proposal for a decision, as it considers that the proposal will facilitate rapid and efficient emergency response in the event of natural or man-made disasters within the EU and beyond.

V. After a debate on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, COM (2011) 934, the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of European Funds expresses the following statement which will be communicated to the European institution within the framework of the political dialogue:

1. CEAOEF welcomes the merging of the two current Council Decisions – in the field of civil protection – in a single legal act, with a view to facilitate rapid and efficient emergency response in the event of natural or man-made disasters within the EU and beyond.
2. CEAOEF considers the Civil Protection Mechanism as a visible expression of European solidarity aimed at providing support, coordination and complementing the actions of the Member States, without affecting their reciprocal responsibilities, rights and obligations. In the meantime, the Proposal for a Decision creates an opportunity for Member States to contribute more effectively in times of large scale disasters within EU and beyond, as well as to benefit from rapid response capacity in such cases where they cannot cope alone.
3. The Proposal for a Decision is consistent with the principle of subsidiarity, as set out in Art. 5, paragraph 3 of the Treaty on European Union, since its goals can achieve better results when applied at the EU level. Managing more often and frequent natural and man-made disasters with a strong multinational component requires overall coordination and concerted actions beyond the national level.
4. The proposal is consistent with the principle of proportionality, as set in Article 5 paragraph 4 of the Treaty on European Union, since it does not go beyond the extent that is needed to achieve the objectives of the Treaty on European Union. CEAOEF considers that the proposed measures for simplification of the existing procedures for the implementation of the Mechanism (in relation to co-financing of the transport of assistance and the activation of the Mechanism in emergencies in third countries) will further reduce the administrative and financial burden for the participating countries in the Civil Protection Mechanism.
5. CEAOEF recognises as a positive step, the introduction of a new chapter and measures in the proposal for planning response operations, which draws on national risk assessment efforts for advanced scenario and contingency planning in view of optimal coordination of European actions. CEAOEF considers that in times of crisis coordinated actions preventing and mitigating effects of disasters is a useful tool. The risks of adverse social, economic and environmental impacts of disasters should be minimised, so as to lower costs for the national economies, the EU economy respectively and thus obstacles to growth.
6. CEAOEF welcomes the creation of the European Emergency Response Capacity in the form of a voluntary pool of pre-committed capacities from the Member States as well as keeping them under command and direction of the Member States in an event that necessitates their use.
7. With the aim to improve the level of preparedness, CEAOEF welcomes the advanced planning of response operations that replaces the current system of coordination where the

system provides aid in a specific situation. In this regard, the CEAOEF recognises as a positive step the development of a coherent planning framework for response operations by preparing reference scenarios in the EU and beyond, mapping existing capacities and developing contingency plans for their deployment.

8. CEAOEF supports the creation of the European Emergency Response Centre, built on the existing Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) managed by the European Commission and the improvement of the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) to enable communication and sharing of information between Emergency Response Centre and the contact points of Member States.
9. CEAOEF welcomes the importance given in the Proposal for a Decision on setting up a training programme and training network for civil protection and other emergency management personnel on disaster prevention, preparedness, and response as well as setting up a programme of lessons learned from the interventions, exercises and trainings conducted within the framework of the Mechanism. CEAOEF considers that enlarging the scope of the current EU preparedness actions in the field of training will contribute to increased coordination and improved level of effectiveness and interoperability during civil protection operations.
10. CEAOEF welcomes the proposed Financial Regulation, in particular the proposed increase of the maximum EU co-financing for transport for the most urgent priority needs of Member States, with a view to support better access to equipment, transport resources and related logistics. CEAOEF considers that the proposed changes will secure enhanced response of Member States to the affected states, thus demonstrating a visible expression of European solidarity. At the same time, CEAOEF underlines the importance of protecting EU financial interests through proportionate measures throughout the expenditure cycle, including prevention, detection and investigation of irregularities.

The Report and the attached statement were supported unanimously.