Disasters have become the new reality across the European Union. From flash floods and storms, to forest fires and earthquakes, all countries are at risk. 2017 has been a particularly tragic year with over 200 people losing their lives. The economic costs are huge: close to €10 billion in damages on the European continent were recorded in 2016. Much of these costs could be avoided if damage was prevented and societies better prepared.
The Commission proposes an ambitious new plan to strengthen the EU’s civil protection response:

**Response capacities: rescEU**

- **EU response**: a reserve of new civil protection capabilities managed by the EU, such as firefighting aircrafts, high pressure water pumps, urban search and rescue and field hospitals. To complement national capacities when overwhelmed. 100% EU financed.

- **Boosting national capacities**: EU financing for the adaptation, repair, transport and operation costs of Member States existing resources. These assets would become part of a shared pool of emergency response resources under the European Civil Protection Pool, and would be made available for deployment when disasters strike. 75% EU financed.

**Disaster prevention and preparedness**

- **Supporting national prevention and preparedness**: requesting Member States to share national prevention strategies with the Commission and provide guidance.

- **European Civil Protection Knowledge Network** to train national civil protection authorities and to share information.

- **Links with other EU policies**: strengthening cooperation and coherence with other EU policies dealing with prevention and preparedness.

**Less bureaucracy**: the proposal will streamline and simplify administrative procedures in order to reduce the time needed to deploy life-saving assistance.