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## Opinion

**Title**                                    **Impact Assessment on: Towards a comprehensive community strategy on natural and man made disasters (resubmission)**

**(draft version of 3 July 2008)**

**Lead DG**                                   **DG ENV**

### **1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion**

#### **(A) Context**

This initiative is presented in the context of the Council Decision recasting the original Council Decision establishing the Mechanism for Civil Protection (2001/792/EC, Euratom) adopted on 8 November 2007. It also constitutes follow up to the Communication on reinforcing the Union's disaster response capacity (COM(2008)130), and is linked to the future White Paper on Climate Change Adaptation. A separate communication on disaster related to third countries is under preparation by DG DEV.

The IAB issued a first opinion on 24 June 2008, asking for resubmission of the IA.

#### **(B) Positive aspects**

The IA includes an informative overview of costs of damages caused by natural and manmade disasters, as well as sources of the available EU funding.

#### **(C) Main recommendations for improvements**

*The recommendations below are listed in order of descending importance. Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG and are expected to be incorporated in the final version of the impact assessment report.*

**General recommendation: the IAB recommendations from the previous opinion have been followed to some extent. The IA requires further work on several important issues, such as problem definition, policy objectives and options. As recommended in the previous IAB opinion, the IA report should still include a clear timeline for further initiatives.**

**(1) Problem definition requires additional information on a number of points.** The IA needs to explain whether there is a general scarcity of funding and if so at what level (national/EU/public/private); this analysis should then allow for building up appropriate policy options. The IA needs to better explain what is meant by a lack of individual responsibility (p.17), specific impacts of disasters on administration (p.15) and why it is problematic that that not all of the EU citizens are covered by the same protection level (p. 10). The information on specific problems should be quantified whether it concerns all the MS, or only some of them (e.g.

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under 3.3.2 – does the lack of co-ordination concern all the MS, even those with good national disaster prevention policies?). The difference between natural and man-made disasters should still be clarified.

**(2) Subsidiarity issues and value added of a Community intervention should be better argued.** While the revised version of the IA report provides more information about spill over effects of some disasters, the main argument used – different levels of protection of citizens against disasters across the EU – does not seem sufficient. In particular, differences in vulnerability to different types of disasters among the MS should be taken into account. A comprehensive overview of current situation/preventive measures applied in MS would be a great asset.

**(3) The policy options need to be clarified – and broadened.** Feasibility of different policy instruments (guidelines, voluntary approaches, open method of co-ordination, legislation) should be more consistently checked for all policy areas (for instance it is not clear why risk mapping can be achieved only by legislative measure, or why no directives are proposed for policy areas other than forest fires). The difference between option "legislation on risk mapping" (under point 5.2) and "framework legislation on prevention" (point 5.3) needs to be explained. Additionally, taking into account that this is a practice in some MS, a greater involvement of the private sector should be considered. Finally, a policy option of "reviewing existing initiatives" (analysis under point 6.5.2, p. 49) cannot be regarded as a stand-alone policy option, as this should be a standard procedure when proposing any new policy initiatives.

**(4) The specific policy objectives should be measurable.** This concerns in particular two specific objectives: "link the various actors and policies" and "better target specific risks". As far as the latter objective is concerned, the IA should explain, why targeting specific risks (piece meal approach) should be better than adopting a more comprehensive framework (which seems to be an overall objective). This, however, should be done when analysing impacts of policy options, rather than decided upfront at the level of policy objectives.

**(5) Analysis of impacts requires some clarifications.** The table 6.1 (p.32), which provides a useful overview of damage and its costs caused by natural and manmade disasters, should be completed by a brief discussion to what extent the reported losses could have been avoided by a better prevention and response to these disasters, and what would be costs of these preventive and response actions. It needs to be explained what is understood by "acceptable and comparable level of protection of the EU citizens" (e.g. p.41)

#### **(D) Procedure and presentation**

The IA report should be shortened not to exceed the 30-page limit. Executive summary would be an asset. To further improve readability of the report the numbering of the tables and references to them should be verified. All other procedural requirements seem to be complied with.

## **2) IAB scrutiny process**

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