# Community Civil Protection Mechanism. Recast

2006/0009(CNS) - 08/11/2007 - Final act

PURPOSE: to recast the legislation on Community civil protection mechanism.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2007/779/EC, Euratom establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism (recast).

BACKGROUND: the Community Civil Protection Mechanism was created in 2001 under Council Decision 2001/792/EC, Euratom (CNS/2000/0248) to support and facilitate the mobilisation and coordination of civil protection assistance in the event of major emergencies occurring inside or outside the European Union.

This Decision, which revises that Mechanism, takes into account lessons learned in past emergencies and a series of European Council declarations outlining policy orientations on the further development of European civil protection cooperation, in particular on the setting up of a rapid response capability based upon the civil protection modules of Member States.

CONTENT: the general purpose of the Mechanism is to provide, on request, support in the event of major emergencies and to facilitate improved coordination of assistance intervention provided by the Member States and the Community, taking into account the special needs of the isolated, outermost and other regions or islands of the Community. Recent years have seen a considerable growth in the number of countries calling upon the Mechanism for civil protection assistance. The Mechanism needed to be strengthened to ensure a more effective and visible demonstration of European solidarity and to allow for the development of a European rapid response capability based on the **civil protection modules of the Member States**, as called for by the European Council held on 16 and 17 June 2005 and by the European Parliament in its Resolution of 13 January 2005 on the tsunami disaster.

This Decision, which uses the possibilities now offered by the Civil Protection Financial Instrument of 5 March 2007, aims at :

- developing the Monitoring and Information Centre (**MIC**) into a framework for collecting and sharing validated emergency information;
- contributing to the further development and establishment of **detection and early warning systems**;
- establishing and managing the Common Emergency Communication and Information System ( **CECIS**) to enable communication and sharing of information between the MIC and the contact points of the Member States;
- developing self-sufficient and autonomous interoperable civil protection assistance intervention capabilities or teams consisting of resources of Member States which aim to be fully interoperable (" **modules**");
- facilitating the identification and pooling of transport and equipment and supporting Member States in obtaining access to transport resources;
- providing the EU assessment and coordination teams with adequate supporting equipment, in particular communication tools;
- clarifying the respective coordination roles of the Member State entrusted with the Presidency of the Council, of the Commission, of the Member States' contact points and of the United Nations during interventions in third countries.

**Basic structure of the Mechanism**: the Mechanism will facilitate reinforced cooperation between the Community and the Member States in civil protection assistance intervention in the event of major

emergencies, or the imminent threat. It shall collect validated information on the emergency and disseminate it to the Member States.

**Scope of the application and types of emergency situations foreseen**: the Mechanism should facilitate the civil protection response to all types of major emergencies occurring **inside or outside the Community**, including natural and man-made disasters, acts of terrorism and technological, radiological and environmental accidents, including accidental marine pollution. Civil protection assistance may be required in all of these emergencies to complement the response capabilities of the affected country. It should it possible to mobilise, and facilitate coordination of, assistance interventions in order to help ensure better protection primarily of people but also of the environment and property, including cultural heritage.

**Preparedness and response**: the Decision provides for a series of technical measures:

**1) preparation of an intervention**: Member States shall identify in advance intervention teams or modules within their competent services and, in particular, their civil protection services or other emergency services, which might be available for intervention or could be established at very short notice and be dispatched, generally within 12 hours following a request for assistance. They shall take into account that team or module composition should depend on the type of major emergency and on particular needs in that emergency. Member States wishing to do so, may, subject to appropriate security constraints, provide information about relevant military assets and capabilities that could be used as a last resort as part of the civil protection assistance through the Mechanism, such as transport and logistical or medical support. Member States shall provide relevant general information on the teams, experts, modules and other intervention support.

**2) response in case of a disaster**: in the event of a major emergency within the Community, or of an imminent threat thereof, which causes or is capable of causing trans-boundary effects, the Member State in which the emergency has occurred shall, without delay, notify the Commission and those Member States which may be affected by the emergency. With respect to civil protection assistance interventions outside the Community, the Mechanism should facilitate and support the actions undertaken by the Community and the Member States. Assistance interventions outside the Community can either be conducted autonomously or as a contribution to an operation led by an international organisation, for which case the Community should develop its relations with relevant international organisations. The requesting Member State shall be responsible for directing assistance interventions. Where the use of **military assets** and capabilities is considered to be appropriate, cooperation with the military will follow the modalities, procedures and criteria established by the Council or its competent bodies.

The text states that in the event of a major emergency occurring outside the Community, the possible use of military assets and capabilities available to support civil protection should be consistent with the principles of relevant United Nations Guidelines.

**Reporting**: the Commission will evaluate the application of the Decision every third year from the date of its notification and transmit the conclusions of that evaluation to the European Parliament and the Council. The conclusions shall be accompanied, if appropriate, by proposals for amendments to this Decision.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 8 November 2007. Decision 2001/792/EC, Euratom shall be repealed.