

Setting up an EU rapid response capability

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PURPOSE: to set up an EU rapid response capability.

PROPOSED ACT: Proposal for a European Parliament Recommendation to the Council.

CONTENT: this draft recommendation, submitted by the ALDE group pursuant to Article 121 (1) of the Rules of Procedure, recalls the need for better coordination and pooling of existing humanitarian assistance, within 24 hours of a disaster. It refers to the fact that, following the recent earthquake in Haiti, the Commission for the first time successfully deployed there two modules made available through a preparatory action on an EU rapid response capability, established with Parliament's support. Accordingly, Parliament addresses the following recommendation to the Council:

- that it call on the Commission to bring proposals before Parliament as soon as possible for establishing an EU civil protection force based on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and enabling the Union to bring together the resources necessary for providing initial emergency humanitarian aid within 24 hours of a disaster;
- that a European rapid response mechanism should: (i) be civilian and/or humanitarian; (ii) capable of being mobilised at any time and as rapidly as possible; (iii) operate under the banner of the EU; (iv) observe international humanitarian law; (v) be open to cooperation with other bodies involved in humanitarian action; (vi) be prepared to cooperate with the UN system; (vii) be open to contributions from third countries; (viii) respect the voluntary nature of the Member States' participation in the intended arrangements; (ix) endeavour on an ongoing basis to keep up the standard of the human and material resources available for mobilisation at any time; (x) be based on the principle of burden sharing.

Lastly, the proposal recommends that the Council call on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response to play a leading role in coordinating the Union's crisis response, using the responsibilities created under the Lisbon Treaty to coordinate the Union's response to future crises more effectively, while building on what has already been achieved.