Towards a stronger European disaster response: the role of civil protection and humanitarian assistance

2011/2023(INI) - 12/05/2011

At the request of Belgium and in light of the nuclear accident in Japan, the Council was briefed by the Commission on the situation in Japan, and had an exchange of views on how existing preparedness and response mechanisms to nuclear incidents could be strengthened, mainly within the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

The suggestions presented by Belgium include:

- to more closely involve national and international nuclear authorities in the activities of the work of the EU's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC);
- to identify and improve reference scenarios for nuclear incidents (such as Chernobyl, Fukushima and others) and the specific means necessary to respond;
- to give priority to certain reference scenarios based on comprehensive and high quality risk assessments, alongside a more predictable availability of member states key assets (e.g. iodine tablets, alternative cooling systems, decontamination units, nuclear experts, robot modules etc.), including through the possible creation of an assets pool.

With a view to improving civil protection operations, the Commission had proposed last yearthe development of reference scenarios for the main types of disasters, including CBRN(Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) and cross-border terrorist attacks, inside and out the EU (see COM (2010)0600).

In addition, the existing Civil Protection legislation is currently subject to a review. A legislative proposal is expected to be presented by the Commission later this year.