Union Civil Protection Mechanism 2014-2020

2011/0461(COD) - 08/01/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Elisabetta GARDINI (EPP, IT) on the proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

The Committee on Development, exercising its prerogatives of an associated committee in accordance with Rule 50 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, was also consulted for an opinion on this report.

The parliamentary committee recommends that the European Parliament's position adopted in first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission's proposal as follows:

Moving from a coordination mechanism to a European mechanism: Members consider that it is urgent to leave behind the system of *ad hoc* coordination and move towards an efficient European disaster management mechanism based on an integrated approach.

General objectives of the mechanism: Members stipulate that the Union should support, coordinate and supplement actions of Member States in the field of civil protection with a view to improving the effectiveness of systems for preventing, preparing for and responding to major disasters **minimising especially human, but also environmental and material losses**.

With a view to emphasising the subsidiarity principle, Members specify that the Union's action should render the Mechanism more efficient and effective, and mobilise resources more quickly, with the Member States still retaining their individual responsibility.

Members also added technical details to the **specific objectives** of the Mechanism with a view to increasing public awareness and preparedness for major disasters.

1. Prevention: Members insisted on the following points in regard to this area:

- **strengthened regional cooperation** in the field of sharing knowledge and best practices, and in the training programmes;
- **introduction of risk mapping** based on guidelines, defining terminology, methodology, impact assessment and scenarios ;
- the use of Union funds for **sustainable disaster prevention**.

2. Risk management plans: in order to ensure the effectiveness of the Mechanism, Members States shall communicate to the Commission their risk management plans. The risk management plans shall, as a minimum, be **a collation of the information from either national or regional plans**, including, but not limited to, possible risks together with risk maps, capacities available, and contingency plans in place. The submission of information concerning both national and regional plans, as well as the plans themselves, and any relevant data, shall be encouraged.

In terms of timetable, Members consider that Member States should ensure by the end of **2014** (and not 2016), at the latest, that their risk management plans are ready and communicated to the Commission. Member States shall update their risk management plans **every two years**, and communicate those updated plans to the Commission. The involvement of the regional and local authorities concerned and of specialised institutions in the preparation and updating of their risk management plans is also desirable.

3. Preparation: Members call on the Commission to establish and manage the Emergency Response Centre (ERC) in coordination with the **existing national and regional bodies**, ensuring 24/7 operational capacity. A number of other amendments are proposed in particular in regard to the integration and coordination of the mechanism.

The Commission should develop and update guidelines on **host nation support**, in cooperation with the Member States, on the basis of operational experience and support the creation of **voluntary peer review assessment programmes** for the Member States' preparedness strategies.

Members stress the following points:

- **priority intervention modules:** in this regard, Members stress the voluntary nature of the development of the modules and call for special attention to be paid to civil protection capacities in the border areas of the Member States;
- **planning of operations:** the involvement of non-governmental civil protection and humanitarian actors, as well as strengthened cooperation at regional level;
- in regard to the **European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC),** the interoperability of the capacities mobilised and its **European visibility** are important (by displaying, in particular, the national and European emblems). It should be noted that Members propose **an exception from the principle of mobilising the available capacities for the purposes of the EERC** when the Member State that manages given assets is itself faced with a major disaster. In this case, the responsibility of the affected Member State to protect its people and territory by using the given asset should have priority over the obligation to make the asset available;
- **joint exercises** should be included under the cooperation mechanism's training programme. These would be in cooperation with Member States and would take account of the needs and interests of Member States of a given region which face similar disaster risks.

4. Response: as far as this aspect is concerned, Members stress the role of Member States in particular at the moment of response in the event of a disaster **in the EU**. In the event of a disaster **outside the EU**, Members emphasise the need to strengthen the link between emergency measures, rehabilitation and development with humanitarian and development operators.

The use of military means as a last resort: Members consider that the use of military means under civilian oversight as a last resort often constitutes an important contribution to disaster response. Where the use of military capacities as a last resort is considered in support of civil protection operations to be appropriate, cooperation with the military should follow the modalities, procedures and criteria established by the Council or its competent bodies as well as "The Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief" (Oslo Guidelines, rev. 1.1 of 2007) of the UN for making available to the Mechanism military capacities relevant to the protection of civilian populations.

Consistency and complementarity: Members call for the Union and the Member States to coordinate their respective support programmes with the aim of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of support and policy dialogue in line with the established principles for strengthening operational coordination, and for harmonising policies and procedures. Coordination shall involve regular consultations and frequent exchanges of relevant information and best practices.

Involvement of third countries in the Mechanism: Members stipulate that funding under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism should be complementary to funding from other sources, such as the IPA and the ENPI, as this would ensure greater funding for civil protection activities for candidate and potential candidate countries and Neighbourhood Policy countries.

Delegated acts: Members have totally restructures the decision-making process in regard to the Mechanism. They consider that the power to adopt acts in accordance with Article 290 of the TFEU should be delegated to the Commission in respect of

- establishing and managing the Emergency Response Centre (ERC);
- specifying the functioning of the Common Emergency Communication and Information System;
- specifying the conditions for identifying **modules** and the general requirements for their functioning and interoperability;
- establishing conditions for resources available for assistance intervention;
- specifying the functioning of the European emergency response capacity (EERC) as a **voluntary pool**, the capacity goals for the EERC, the interoperability and quality requirements for capacities in the EERC, and the process for certification and registration of capacities; specifying the modalities for addressing capacity gaps;
- defining the aim, the content, the structure, the organisation, and the target group of the training programme and the training network; specifying the procedure for responding to major disasters or imminent major disasters within and outside the Union;
- specifying the functioning of the expert teams and the conditions of selection, dispatching and disengaging an expert team;
- specifying the level of detail of the information on equipment and transport resources and specifying the procedures for the identification of such equipment and resources and for the provision of additional transport resources;
- specifying the procedure for requesting and deciding on granting Union financial support for transport; and
- adopting the annual work programmes.

In order to ensure uniform conditions for the implementation of this Decision, implementing powers should be conferred on the Commission with respect to the managing the process for certification and registration of capacities of the EERC and applications for funding from third countries.

Financial allocation: in the draft legislative resolution, Members recall that the financial envelope specified in the legislative proposal constitutes only an indication to the legislative authority and cannot be fixed until agreement is reached on the proposal for a Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the years 2014-2020. They reiterate that sufficient additional resources are needed in the next MFF in order to enable the Union to fulfil its existing policy priorities and the new tasks provided for in the Lisbon Treaty. They underline that **even with an increase in the level ofresources for the next MFF of at least 5% compared to the 2013 level** only a limited contribution can be made to the achievement of the Union's agreed objectives and commitments.

It should also be noted that Members propose an indicative allocation (in percentages) of the budget lines relevant to the Mechanism: actions inside the EU (financed from heading 3 "Security and Citizenship") would receive 70% of the budget, while actions outside the EU (financed from heading 4 "Global Europe") would receive 30%. Of the overall financial envelope, at least 20 % should be allocated to general actions to strengthen prevention, preparation and response effectiveness. This portion of specific aid could be granted to candidate countries and potential candidate countries not participating in the Mechanism and to countries coming under the European Neighbourhood Policy, in so far as it complements funding under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).