Union Civil Protection Mechanism: prevention; European Civil Protection Pool; rescEU

2017/0309(COD) - 12/02/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 620 votes to 22 with 35 abstentions a legislative resolution on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1313/2013 /EU on the Union's civil protection mechanism.

The position of the European Parliament adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Objectives

The Union's Civil Protection Mechanism aims to strengthen cooperation between the Union and the Member States and to facilitate coordination in the field of civil protection with a view to making systems for prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters more effective.

Parliament specified that the mechanism should also support Member States' action to (i) promote the implementation of a rapid and effective response when a disaster occurs or is imminent, including measures to mitigate the immediate consequences of disasters; (ii) increase the availability and use of scientific knowledge on disasters; and (iii) increase cooperation and coordination activities at cross-border level and between Member States exposed to similar types of disasters.

Preventive actions

In order to meet the objectives of prevention and to carry out preventive actions, the Commission should, among other things:

- compile and disseminate information provided by Member States, organise an exchange of experience about the assessment of risk management capability, and facilitate the sharing of good practices in prevention and preparedness planning, including through voluntary peer reviews;

- highlight the importance of risk prevention, support the Member States in awareness-raising, public information and training efforts, and support the Member States' efforts in providing public information about alert systems, by providing guidance on such systems, including on a cross-border level.

Risk management

Member States should:

- make available to the Commission, at regular intervals, summaries of their risk assessments as well as the assessment of their risk management capacity, focusing on the main risks;

- share information on prevention and preparedness measures, including those needed to address key risks with cross-border impacts and, where appropriate, those related to risks with a low probability of occurrence but with a high impact.

The Commission could, in cooperation with the Member States, set up specific consultation mechanisms. In addition, it could request information on prevention and preparedness measures related to specific risks

when frequent requests for assistance have been made by a Member State. The Commission should assess this information with a view to maximising the Union's overall support for disaster risk management.

European Civil Protection Pool

This would consist of a pool of voluntarily pre-committed response capacities of the Member States and include modules, other response capacities and categories of experts.Assistance provided by a Member State through the European Civil Protection Pool would complement existing capacity in the requesting Member State. Member States would retain primary responsibility for disaster prevention and response on their territory.

RescEU

RescEU would provide assistance in situations of overwhelming importance where the overall capacities existing at national level and the capacities previously allocated by Member States to the European Civil Protection Pool are insufficient to ensure an effective response to disasters. The Commission and the Member States would ensure, where appropriate, an appropriate geographical distribution of rescEU capacities.

The Commission would define, by means of implementing acts, the capabilities of rescEU, taking into account the identified and emerging risks, overall capabilities and gaps at EU level, in particular in the fields of aerial forest fire fighting, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents and emergency medical response.

RescEU capacities would be acquitted, rented or leased by Member States. To this end, direct grants could be awarded to Member States by the Commission without a call for proposals.

Rescue capabilities could only be used for national purposes when they are not used or required for response operations under the Union mechanism. They could be deployed if a disaster outside the Union were to significantly affect one or more Member States or their citizens.

Training, exercises, lessons learned and knowledge dissemination

The Commission should:

- establish a network of relevant civil protection and disaster management actors and institutions, including centres of excellence, universities and researchers, forming, together with the Commission, a European Civil Protection Knowledge Network;

- set up and manage a training programme for civil protection and emergency management personnel on the prevention of, preparedness for and response to disasters;

- stimulate research and innovation and encourage the introduction and use of relevant new technologies;

- strengthen cooperation on training and increase the sharing of knowledge and experience between the European Civil Protection Knowledge Network and international organisations and third countries.