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

2017/0309(COD) - 20/03/2019 - Final act

PURPOSE: to strengthen the collective capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision (EU) 2019/420 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

CONTENT: this Decision amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council aims to strengthen cooperation between the Union and the Member States and facilitates coordination in the field of civil protection in order to improve the Union's response to natural and man-made disasters.

From now on, the Union civil protection mechanism shall:

- facilitate rapid and efficient response in the event of disasters or imminent disasters, including by taking measures to mitigate the immediate consequences of disasters;

- increase the availability and use of scientific knowledge on disasters; and

- step up cooperation and coordination activities at cross-border level and between Member States prone to the same types of disasters.

rescEU

Existing civil protection rules provide for a voluntary pool of national capacities to provide mutual support in Europe and the rest of the world.

In addition to strengthening existing capacities, the new rules establish ‘rescEU’, additional capacities shall be used to provide assistance in situations of a particular magnitude when the overall capacities existing at national level and the capacities previously allocated by Member States to the ‘European Civil Protection Pool’ are not sufficient to ensure an effective response.

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

rescEU capacities shall be acquired, rented or leased by Member States. For that purpose, direct grants may be awarded by the Commission to Member States without a call for proposals. Where the Commission procures rescEU capacities on behalf of Member States, the joint procurement procedure shall apply. Union financial assistance shall be awarded in accordance with the Union's financial rules.

rescEU capacities shall be hosted by the Member States that acquire, rent or lease those capacities. In the case of joint procurement, rescEU capacities shall be hosted by the Member States on behalf of which they are procured.

Decisions on deployment and demobilisation, and any decision in the event of conflicting requests, shall be taken by the Commission in close coordination with the requesting Member State and the Member State owning, renting or leasing the rescEU capacities in question.

Improving risk prevention and management

Member States shall be required to:

- further develop the assessment of risk management capability at national or appropriate sub-national level;

- make available to the Commission, by 31 December 2020 and every three years thereafter, a summary of the relevant elements of the assessments, focusing on key risks;

- participate, on a voluntary basis, in peer reviews on the assessment of risk management capability.

Additional prevention and preparedness measures shall be considered in the event that a Member State frequently requests the same type of assistance for the same type of disaster.

The Commission, in cooperation with Member States, may also establish specific consultation mechanisms to enhance appropriate prevention and preparedness planning and coordination among Member States that are prone to similar types of disasters, including for cross-border risks and low probability risks with a high impact identified.

Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network

With a view to improving training and knowledge sharing, the Commission shall 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 Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network. The Commission shall also strengthen cooperation on training and the sharing of knowledge and experience between the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network and international organisations and third countries.

The Commission shall develop a communication strategy in order to make the tangible results of the actions taken under the Union Mechanism visible to citizens. It shall award medals in order to recognise and honour long-standing commitment and extraordinary contributions to Union civil protection.

Eligible actions relating to equipment and operations

The Union financial assistance for transport shall not exceed 75 % of the total eligible cost related to the transport of the capacities pre-committed to the European Civil Protection Pool, when deployed in the event of a disaster or imminent disaster outside the Union.

Actions receiving financial assistance shall be monitored regularly in order to follow their implementation

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 21.3.2019.