Union Civil Protection Mechanism

2020/0097(COD) - 02/06/2020 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to enhance the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism in order to enable Member States to be better prepared and to react quickly and effectively to future crises with cross-border implications, such as the COVID-19 crisis.

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, in the event of serious emergencies whose scale and scope affect the whole of the European Union, a collective, coordinated and urgent response is needed to avoid a fragmented approach that would limit the effectiveness of the Union's response.

The COVID-19 crisis has shown the need for better European Union preparedness for future large-scale emergencies, while highlighting the limitations of the current framework. In this context, it is proposed to make further amendments to the existing legal framework in order to strengthen the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2021-2027.

The Union Mechanism has showed encouraging results in terms of performance in each of the three pillars (prevention/preparedness/response) so far. The Mechanism has proven to be a useful tool to mobilise and coordinate the assistance provided by the Participating States responding to crises inside and outside the Union, constituting a tangible proof of European solidarity. The Mechanism is generally well perceived by the participating States and key stakeholders.

CONTENT: the purpose of the proposal is to make certain targeted amendments to Council Decision No 1313/2013/EU on the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism.

Building on the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility, the overall objective of this proposal is to ensure that the Union can provide a better crisis and emergency support to its citizens in Europe and beyond. The decision is to be considered in parallel with the proposal also amending this mechanism.

In line with the proposal for the new MFF 2021-2027, funding related to civil protection has been integrated into a single heading: Heading 5 ‘Resilience, Security and Defence’.

Objectives

Specifically, the proposed amendments have the following objectives:

- reinforce a cross-sectoral and societal preparedness approach to trans-boundary disaster risk management, including establishing a baseline and planning elements at a European level;

- ensure that the Commission is able to directly procure an adequate safety net of rescEU capacities;

- provide the Commission with the logistical capacity to provide multi-purpose air services in case of emergencies and to ensure timely transport and delivery of assistance; d) design a more flexible system for response to large-scale emergencies;

- enhance the Emergency Response Coordination Centre's operational coordination and monitoring role in support of the EU's swift and effective response to a broad range of crises inside and outside the Union. The ERCC would be operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and would be at the service of the Member States and the Commission in achieving the objectives of the Union's mechanism;

- enable stronger investment in preparedness at Union level and further simplification of budget implementation;

- enable the financing of operations of efficient and scalable sustainable recovery and resilience measures under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism by external assigned revenues through financing made available under the draft Regulation establishing a European Union Recovery Instrument to support the recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This proposal envisages the deletion of Annex I, which currently establishes the relative percentages that each pillar of the Union Mechanism (prevention, preparedness and response) should receive in terms of funding from the overall financial envelope. As the COVID-19 outbreak has shown, the percentages outlined in Annex I do not appear to ensure sufficient flexibility so that the Union can achieve the objectives it has set.

The proposal stresses the need for close coordination with actions under other EU policies and instruments, in particular with the new EU programme EU4Health.

Proposed budget

The total budget allocated for the Union Civil Protection Mechanism amounts to **EUR 3 455 902 000** (in current prices) for the 2021-2027 period:

- EUR 1 268 282 000 shall derive from heading 5 'Resilience, Security and Defence' of the MFF 2021-2027;

- EUR 2 187 620 000 shall be made available through the European Recovery Instrument based on empowerment provided in the new Own Resources Decision.