Union Civil Protection Mechanism

2020/0097(COD) - 16/09/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 617 votes to 52, with 23 abstentions, amendments to the proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on the Union civil protection mechanism.

The matter was referred back to the committee responsible for inter-institutional negotiations.

The main amendments adopted in plenary are as follows:

Strengthening the legislative proposal on prevention and preparedness

Members stated that Member States should take into account the EU's disaster resilience goals when drawing up their risk management plans. These are objectives set out to support prevention and preparedness actions to improve the capacity of the EU and its Member States to withstand the effects of a disaster that causes or is likely to cause cross-border effects.

The Commission shall cooperate with Member States to:

- develop transnational detection and early warning systems of Union interest in order to mitigate the immediate effects of disasters or pandemics on human lives;

- provide technical training assistance to local communities for the purpose of enhancing their capacities as regards their first unassisted reaction to a crisis.

Member States, for their part, shall:

- improve disaster risk management planning at national level, including cross-border collaboration, taking into account the Union's disaster resilience objectives;

- improve disaster loss data collection at the national or appropriate sub-national level to ensure evidence-based scenario, especially when it comes to identifying gaps in cross-border disaster-response capacities.

Strengthening rescEU capacities

In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to improve the EU's health and civil protection response capacity, Members considered that the EU's response capacity should be considerably strengthened in order to improve its performance in each of the three pillars of the EU mechanism: prevention, preparedness and response.

The Commission shall:

- establish, within logistical hubs, European reserves of medical countermeasures and equipment which would include the medical countermeasures that respond to high impact low probability events;

- regularly update the information on the number and classification of rescEU capacities and make that information directly available to other Union institutions.

Members consider that the European Commission should be able to acquire capacity directly, so as to enable the EU mechanism to respond quickly and effectively to Member States' needs, where appropriate.

Where the Commission acquires rescEU capacities, it shall retain the ownership of such capacities even when they are distributed to Member States. Where rescEU capacities are rented, leased or otherwise contracted by the Commission, the Commission shall retain full control of such capacities. Where the Commission acquires non-reusable capacities, it may transfer ownership of such capacities to the requesting Member State.

The Commission shall also put in place specific provisions to guarantee accountability and the correct use of rescEU capacities in third countries, including providing for access by Union controlling officers.

Synergy with the Health programme

For capacities dedicated to responding to medical emergencies, such as a strategic stockpile, emergency medical teams and any other relevant capacities, the Commission shall ensure that effective coordination and synergies are achieved with other Union programmes and funds and in particular with the EU4Health Programme1a and with relevant Union and international actors.

By 2 years from the date of entry into force of this amending decision], the Commission shall evaluate the functioning of the Union Mechanism as well as the coordination and synergies achieved with the EU4Health Programme and other Union health legislation, with a view to presenting a legislative proposal that would include the creation of a specific European Health Response Mechanism.

Financial envelope

Members proposed reinstating Annex I, which currently sets out the relative percentages from which each pillar of the EU mechanism (prevention, preparedness and response) should benefit in terms of funding compared to the overall financial envelope.

Percentages for the allocation of the financial envelope for the implementation of the Union Mechanism for the period 2021-2027 shall be as follows:

- Prevention: 8% +/- 10 percentage points;

- Preparedness: 80% +/- 10 percentage points;

- Response: 12% +/- 10 percentage points.

It is recalled that an amount of EUR 2 187 620 000 shall be made available through the European Instrument for Recovery.

In addition, Parliament reintroduced the obligation for the Commission to lay down, by means of a delegated act, actions carried out under the Union Mechanism, which may be implemented by indirect management.