Union Civil Protection Mechanism

2020/0097(COD) - 27/04/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 641 votes to 44, with 14 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 a Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

The proposal aims to strengthen the Union civil protection mechanism in order to enable Member States to be better prepared and to respond rapidly and effectively to future crises with cross-border implications, such as the COVID-19 crisis.

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amends the Commission's proposal as follows:

General objective

Protection under the Union Mechanism should cover primarily people, but also the environment and property, including cultural heritage, against all kinds of natural and man-made disasters, including the consequences of acts of terrorism, technological, radiological or environmental disasters, marine pollution, hydrogeological instability and acute health emergencies, occurring inside or outside the Union.

In practical terms, the EU mechanism should support, complement and facilitate the coordination of Member States' action to facilitate a rapid and effective response when a disaster occurs or is imminent, including by taking measures to mitigate the immediate consequences of disasters and by encouraging Member States to remove bureaucratic obstacles.

Strengthening prevention and preparedness

In order to achieve the prevention objectives and carry out the prevention actions, the Commission should develop and regularly update a cross-sectoral overview and map of natural and man-made disaster risks, including disaster risks with transboundary or multi-country effects, to which the Union is exposed.

The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, should define and develop EU disaster resilience objectives in the field of civil protection. These non-binding objectives should be set out in Commission recommendations and be based on scenarios based on current situations and on prospective scenarios, taking into account data on past events and the effects of climate change on disaster risks.

RescEU

The Commission should, by means of implementing acts, define the capacities rescEU, based *inter alia* on any existing scenario-building, taking into account identified and emerging risks and overall capacities and gaps at Union level, in particular in the areas of aerial forest-firefighting, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents, emergency medical response, as well as transport and logistics.

In duly justified cases of urgency, the Commission may acquire, rent, lease or otherwise contract capacities to the extent necessary to address the gaps in the areas of transport and logistics.

Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network

The Commission should establish a European Civil Protection Knowledge Network to aggregate, process and disseminate knowledge and information relevant to the EU Mechanism, following an approach involving relevant civil protection and disaster management actors, centres of excellence, universities and researchers.

To that end, the Commission, through the Network, should, inter alia, set up and manage a training and exercises programme for civil protection and disaster management personnel on prevention of, preparedness for and response to disasters. The programme shall focus on and encourage the exchange of best practices in the field of civil protection and disaster management.

Budget

The regulation provides for a total amount of EUR 1263 million in funds for the period 2021-2027. It also includes a maximum amount of EUR 2056 million to implement civil protection related measures to address the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis foreseen in the EU Recovery Instrument.

In addition, the proposed regulation sets out the percentage of funds to be allocated to prevention, preparedness and response, while providing for a margin of flexibility. In case of urgent need, the Commission will be able to reallocate funds to response actions beyond the flexibility margin. This flexible approach will allow the EU to better react to the unpredictable nature of disasters and make use of the funds where they are most needed.