# Union Civil Protection Mechanism

2023/0095(COD) - 14/04/2023 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to amend Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism in order to ensure that the Union can continue providing emergency support to Member States in fighting wildfires through the capacities developed under the ‘rescEU transition’, until the permanent European aerial forest firefighting fleet will become available.

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 and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: with rising temperatures and prolonged periods of drought, the wildfire risk in the Union is increasing in scope and the wildfires are becoming more frequent and intense.

The 2022 wildfire season in the Union was a record-breaking season. The total number of wildfires in the Union above 30 hectares totalled 2 707 786 316 hectares (over three times the size of Luxembourg) of land were burnt. This amount has significantly increased compared to the year before (416 413 hectares). Furthermore, the data for 2022 reveal a more than 250% increase over the average burnt area of land since Union-level recording started in 2006.

The limited availability of specialised response capacities, including amphibious aerial forest firefighting capacities, remains a major weakness and constitutes the Union’s main operational challenge when confronting simultaneous wildfires.

CONTENT: the proposal is intended to amend Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), under which the European Union supports, coordinates and supplements the actions of Member States in the field of civil protection to prevent, prepare for and respond to natural and man-made disasters within and outside the Union.

The sole purpose of the proposed change is to ensure that the Union can continue providing emergency support to Member States in fighting wildfires through the capacities developed under the ‘rescEU transition’, until the permanent European aerial forest firefighting fleet will become available. In concrete terms, this proposal suggests **extending the end of the transitional period from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2027**. This date is aligned with the end of the current Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF).

***Budgetary implications***

Starting in 2023, the rescEU transitional fleet aims to have a total of 22 planes and 4 helicopters. Sustaining this level of fleet capacity until the end of the current MFF (that is to say, 31 December 2027) is indispensable.