Financial instrument for civil protection

2005/0052(CNS) - 14/03/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Dimitrios **PAPADIMOULIS** (EUL/NGL, EL) and made some amendments to the proposal:

- the main purpose of the regulation was the protection of human health and the environment, and the legal basis should therefore be Article 175 of the EC Treaty, involving the codecision procedure, rather than Article 308 as proposed by the Commission (involving the consultation procedure);

- scope: whereas the original proposal did not address prevention, Parliament felt that preventive measures were essential in this field and amended the title and objectives accordingly. It also extended the scope of the proposal in other ways, so as to include a rapid response to emergencies, not only inside but also outside the Community, which have or may have "adverse impact on people, public health and safety, property, cultural heritage or the environment caused by natural, industrial or technological disasters, including marine pollution, or acts of terrorism". Special attention should also be given to isolated and outermost regions which are not easily accessible;

- duration and budgetary resources: the Regulation will apply from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013. The indicative financial framework for the implementation of the Instrument is set at EUR 278 000 000 for the seven year period. The budget initially proposed by the Commission (EUR 173 million for the period 2007-2013) was increased by EUR 105 million, bringing it up to EUR 278 m;

- new actions will be eligible for funding, including: special training for emergency operations personnel to enable them to deal better with the particular needs of the disabled; the transfer not only of technology but also of knowledge and expertise and the sharing of experience and best practices; networking of alert, early warning and response systems; the integration of civil protection measures into teaching programmes and awareness campaigns; and special training for volunteers, under the control and supervision of a local statutory authority;

- the Commission will ensure that the Instrument and the alert, early warning and response systems are effective and linked to other Community warning systems;

- a new article on volunteers states that volunteers' preparedness for and response to major man-made or natural disasters shall always be under the control and supervision of a local statutory authority and volunteers shall receive special training that enhances their ability to identify, respond to and recover from a major emergency or disaster situation;

- the interim evaluation report must, in particular, contain information relating to applications submitted, grant decisions taken and the winding-up of financial assistance granted.

Lastly, MEPs said that, when actions are implemented outside the EU borders, they should be coordinated with the United Nations. And they introduced a new article providing as a general rule for closer links and "enhanced, structured and continued cooperation" with international organisations.