

Financial instrument for civil protection

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The Council examined a proposal establishing a civil protection financial instrument, in particular its main outstanding question: whether a part of the Community budget foreseen for EU civil protection activities could, under certain conditions, be used for the hiring of transport and equipment.

The Council, while confirming its willingness to conclude an agreement by December 2006, instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) to prepare a compromise on all outstanding questions. In particular, Coreper is tasked to conclude the discussion on transport and equipment financing taking into account the ideas expressed in the Council:

- § Article 4(2)(b) of the draft Decision [supporting Member States in obtaining access to equipment and transport resources] will remain in the text without amendments;
- § Financial assistance from the Community budget for major civil protection emergencies as foreseen in Article 4(2)(c) and (a) [financing additional resources for transport and equipment] will be available for interventions in third countries;
- § Financial assistance for major emergencies within the European Union will, as a rule, be reimbursed by the accepting Member State. The reimbursement may be waived, taking account the nature of the emergency and the extent of the damage;
- § The Commission will submit a first evaluation (Article 14) of the implementation of the relevant provisions in Article 4(2)(c) and (d) already by mid-2008;
- § The first evaluation report, to be submitted by the Commission in accordance with Article 14 as mentioned above, will take into account the results of an analysis conducted jointly by the Commission and the Member States, by 31 December 2007, on the transport and equipment needs experienced in major civil protection interventions and the measures taken under this Decision to address these needs;
- § Depending on the results of this evaluation, the Council may request the Commission to present a proposal for an amended Decision to be agreed before the end of 2008.

For the purpose of establishing the analysis, the Commission undertakes to establish a group composed of experts appointed by the Commission and the Member States before the end of 2006.

Background

The aim of the proposal is to establish, during the period of validity of the Financial Framework 2007-2013, the financial basis for Community action in the field of civil protection. The indicative amounts made available under the Financial Framework 2007-2013 are annually EUR 17 million for actions inside the EU and EUR 8 million for actions in third countries. Since the current Civil Protection Action Programme will expire on 31 December 2006, and since the present proposal includes the financing for the Civil Protection Mechanism, a failure to formally adopt the present financial instrument before January 2007 would lead to difficulties in financing after that date civil protection activities currently covered by that programme, as well as the operation of the Mechanism.