Basic information

2010/2096(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Setting up an EU rapid response capability **Subject** 4.30 Civil protection 6.50 Emergency, food, humanitarian aid, aid to refugees, Emergency Aid Reserve	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
DEVE Development	ZANICCHI Iva (PPE)	04/05/2010
	Shadow rapporteur GUERRERO SALOM Enrique (S&D) DONSKIS Leonidas (ALDE) SARGENTINI Judith (Verts /ALE)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	WEBER Renate (ALDE)	01/07/2010
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)	GEORGIEVA Kristalina

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
23/03/2010	Non-legislative basic document published	B7-0228/2010	Summary
08/07/2010	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
09/11/2010	Vote in committee		Summary

01/12/2010	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0332/2010	
14/12/2010	Decision by Parliament	T7-0465/2010	Summary
14/12/2010	Results of vote in Parliament		
14/12/2010	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2010/2096(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 134o
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	DEVE/7/03220

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document		B7-0228/2010	23/03/2010	Summary
Committee draft report		PE448.852	01/10/2010	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE450.626	18/10/2010	
Committee opinion	AFET	PE448.676	28/10/2010	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0332/2010	01/12/2010	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0465/2010	14/12/2010	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2011)1737	06/05/2011	

Setting up an EU rapid response capability

2010/2096(INI) - 23/03/2010 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to set up an EU rapid response capability.

PROPOSED ACT: Proposal for a European Parliament Recommendation to the Council.

CONTENT: this draft recommendation, submitted by the ALDE group pursuant to Article 121 (1) of the Rules of Procedure, recalls the need for better coordination and pooling of existing humanitarian assistance, within 24 hours of a disaster. It refers to the fact that, following the recent earthquake in Haiti, the Commission for the first time successfully deployed there two modules made available through a preparatory action on an EU rapid response capability, established with Parliament's support. Accordingly, Parliament addresses the following recommendation to the Council:

- that it call on the Commission to bring proposals before Parliament as soon as possible for establishing an EU civil protection force based on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and enabling the Union to bring together the resources necessary for providing initial emergency humanitarian aid within 24 hours of a disaster;
- that a European rapid response mechanism should: (i) be civilian and/or humanitarian; (ii) capable of being mobilised at any time and as rapidly as possible; (iii) operate under the banner of the EU; (iv) observe international humanitarian law; (v) be open to cooperation with other bodies involved in humanitarian action; (vi) be prepared to cooperate with the UN system; (vii) be open to contributions from third countries; (viii) respect the voluntary nature of the Member States' participation in the intended arrangements; (ix) endeavour on an ongoing basis to keep up the standard of the human and material resources available for mobilisation at any time; (x) be based on the principle of burden sharing.

Lastly, the proposal recommends that the Council call on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response to play a leading role in coordinating the Union's crisis response, using the responsibilities created under the Lisbon Treaty to coordinate the Union's response to future crises more effectively, while building on what has already been achieved.

Setting up an EU rapid response capability

2010/2096(INI) - 14/12/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 557 votes to 32, with 72 abstentions, a recommendation to the Council on setting up an EU rapid response capability.

The resolution underlines that disasters causing significant human, economic and environmental damage are on the increase worldwide and they are happening with greater impact, frequency and scope in more parts of the world, mainly due to the effects of climate change. However, the multiplication and greater frequency of interventions inside and outside the European Union are compounded by the global financial situation and budgetary constraints which underline the need for more cost effective operations.

Progress has been made in recent years towards a more coherent EU disaster response, notably through progressive strengthening of the civil protection mechanism. The European Union's response to the earthquake in Haiti triggered a rapid, significant and large scale humanitarian aid intervention.

However, Parliament considers that lessons learned from recent crises continue to demonstrate the need to improve the EU's disaster response in terms of efficiency, coordination and visibility, and whereas these disasters have once again highlighted the need for an EU rapid response capability (**European civil protection force**). It calls for the **immediate establishment of an EU Civil Protection Force which must be adequately equipped with the necessary technological and technical resources**.

Parliament recommends that the EU civil protection force be based on the principles that it should:

- be based on an assessment of needs, with the participation of all humanitarian actors;
- be civilian;
- operate under the banner of the EU;
- observe international humanitarian law;
- respect the voluntary nature of the Member States' participation in the intended arrangements;
- be based on the principle of burden-sharing;
- be open to contributions from non-EU countries;
- recognise the UN's overall role in coordinating international relief outside the territory of the European Union;
- be organised on a preventive basis, according to specific scenarios.

Parliament considers that the EU civil protection force should build on the EU Civil Protection mechanism, should optimise the tools available, which would gain in efficiency and visibility, should involve the voluntary pooling of existing logistical and human resources with regard both to disaster-response training and disaster management by developing initiatives taken during preparatory actions, and it should be capable of providing initial aid within 24 hours of the occurrence of a disaster.

Against this background, Parliament addresses the following recommendations to the Council:

- it urges the Council to strengthen the EU's disaster response capacity as a high priority, especially in view of the discussions on setting up an EU Civil Protection Force, and to follow up the European Parliament's repeated requests that the proposals put forward in the Barnier report in 2006 should be implemented;
- it calls for the immediate establishment of an EU Civil Protection Force which must be adequately equipped with the necessary technological and technical resources;
- calls also, in the context of operations following a natural disaster, for better coordination between the humanitarian agencies and the civil protection mechanisms of the Member States and DG ECHO, and any future European civil protection force;
- it urges the Commission to develop programs with national governments, local authorities and civil society organisations in beneficiary countries with regard to community-based disaster prevention and response management capacity;

On a **structural and financial level**, the European civil protection force should be based on:

- the commitment by some Member States to voluntarily make available pre-determined civil protection modules that are ready to intervene immediately in EU operations coordinated by the MIC, that most of these modules, which are already available nationally and thus would not

entail significant additional costs, would remain under their control, and that the deployment of these modules placed on standby would form the nucleus of the EU's civil protection system for responding to disasters inside and outside the EU;
- the provision of additional civil protection modules which could be financed by the EU for certain specific requirements where gaps have been identified and where the European level would add value, and stresses the importance of increasing funding for transport and developing standby transport modules;
- the need to develop a comprehensive and proactive approach in response to disasters, coordinating the various means of action available to the Union and its Member States, such as crisis management(civil and military), financial assistance and development or social and environmental policies. Parliament believes in this context that the transition between disaster response and post-disaster reconstruction should be managed more efficiently.

Others proposals are outlined in the resolution. They suggest:

- **the Council to adopt, under the ordinary legislative procedure, measures (to be proposed by the Commission) for improving the predictability and the forward-planning capacity of the current EU civil protection mechanism**, which is currently based on ad-hoc and voluntary contributions from Member States: these measures may include arrangements tested under the EU Preparatory Action including EU-level assets, **voluntary pooling of resources**, mapping of existing capacities, identification of scenarios and the development of further training activities;
- calling for realistic budgets in which appropriations for natural disasters or humanitarian action are allocated on the basis of previous years' spending.

- setting up a **European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps** in accordance with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty (Article 214(5));
- providing localised coordination efforts, in cooperation with the national government of the affected state, using EU and Member States' representatives on the ground to ensure a targeted and competent response to affected localities;
- that operations be conducted in compliance with the principles of international law and with the principles of impartiality, neutrality and non-discrimination;
- clarifying the arrangements for cooperation and coordination between the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Commission for the management of a large-scale disaster response outside the territory of the European Union;
- cooperation on the implementation of a visibility action plan that should include concrete measures to enhance the visibility of the EU's disaster response;
- using the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) system to keep potential crisis areas under surveillance.

Lastly, Parliament reminds the Council that the **use of military assets and capabilities in disaster response**, particularly for logistics, transport and infrastructure support for humanitarian aid operations, should be **exceptional**, **used as a 'last resort'** and always in compliance with existing agreements. Military means often constitute an important contribution to disaster response, along with civil protection and humanitarian aid, and notes that military assets can be necessary for filling critical capacity gaps (particularly strategic lift, specialised assets, heavy engineering and transport). It therefore stresses the need to develop a comprehensive approach and to improve synergies between civil and military capabilities, and to identify areas in which Member States can pool their efforts and capabilities at EU level to contribute to EU disaster response, which is particularly important in a difficult economic climate. The resolution emphasises the need to build up permanently available civilian capabilities in the EU which operate independently from military structures and to identify areas in which Member States can pool their efforts and capabilities at EU level in this respect.