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NOTE

From: Presidency

To: Working Party on Civil Protection

Subject: Programme of the Slovak Presidency in the field of Civil Protection

Delegations will find in annex the programme of the Slovak Presidency in the field of civil protection.

Work Programme of the Slovak Presidency in the Field of Civil Protection

July – December 2016

1. Sharpening the focus on the resilience of critical infrastructure

Slovakia is the second country of the current Trio consisting of the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta to hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Taking forward the work on resilient critical infrastructure (CI) initiated by the Netherlands Presidency, Slovakia will focus on how the civil protection and critical infrastructure communities can jointly take stock of existing analytical and operational tools and put forward concrete recommendations for addressing possible gaps, with a particular focus on flash floods. Resilience of critical infrastructure is also one of the seven targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted in 2015 by the UN Member States. Working in close cooperation with EU Member States, the Slovak Presidency aims to put forward Council conclusions which will reinforce linkages between disaster management and critical infrastructure protection (CIP) around the core issues of risk assessments, risk management capabilities and response planning.

Exacerbated by climate change and variability, as well as by the exposure of communities and businesses to hazard-prone areas, the impact of floods can be long lasting and widespread, bringing into play a wide range of policy areas such as public safety, the provision of lifeline services, and civil protection. Widespread flash and riverine flooding across Europe in 2015 and more recently in 2016 have caused, in addition to a large number of fatalities, a larger amount of damage and economic losses than other hazards, emphasising the need to step up prevention and preparedness at European scale.

In addition to having a significant socio-economic value, critical infrastructure plays a pivotal role during and after a disaster. It acts as an essential vehicle for providing lifeline services to populations affected by a disaster (e.g. bridges to allow emergency vehicles to rescue people; water and energy to populations in shelters; etc.) and to restart economic recovery. Ensuring the resilience of CI to floods and other related hazards can only be done through closer cooperation between the civil protection and critical infrastructure protection communities.

2. Revisiting the Approach to Resilient Critical Infrastructure

In the first Semester of 2016, the Netherlands Presidency underscored the need for civil protection and CI authorities in Member States to work closely to develop a holistic approach encompassing prevention, preparedness and response. At EU level, this calls for close cooperation between the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection (EPCIP). Traditionally, risk assessment and risk reduction measures for CI have focused on reducing the risk of physical damage during a disaster without defining resilience indicators for CI and steps needed to achieve it. However, safety standards (e.g. building codes) alone do not necessarily guarantee the functioning of that infrastructure during or after disasters. A new, more system-based approach needs to look at: (i) performance-based risk assessment for CI (e.g. what is the impact on the disruption of a *service*, as opposed to merely infrastructure damage), as well as (ii) measurable business continuity indicators for recovering services disrupted by an event (e.g. number of hours/days for re-establishing a given % of the service, etc.). As a cross-cutting driver of risk, the inter-dependency of certain CI sectors (e.g. cascading effects on different lifeline services) and their impact on the community also needs to be factored in.

The Slovak Presidency intends to focus this approach on strengthening CI resilience to floods, particularly in the energy, transport and ICT sectors. In addition, one of the Slovak Presidency's aims could also be ensuring the continuity of CI protection in the drinking water sector and by some education and public awareness actions. The Slovak Presidency will also continue the work on the development of 'building bridges' between the civil protection and critical infrastructure protection communities to strengthen the linkage with the private sector and public-private partnership. This includes, among others, addressing the following issues:

- a) Reviewing existing risk assessments and preparedness plans for critical infrastructure against a systemic (i.e. factoring in sector inter-dependency) and performance-based approach;
- b) Main challenges for effective cooperation and information sharing between the CP and CIP communities (shared terminology, guidelines, tools, etc.);
- c) Existing capacity gaps;
- d) Communication on critical infrastructure resilience;
- e) Existing mechanisms for cross-border cooperation (e.g. UCPM).

The main idea is to initiate a discussion about the greatest risks to CI and the tools and capabilities necessary to enhance resilience. This could include preparing risk analyses, training of experts including lessons learned, field exercises, sharing information on cross-border risks to CI and exchanging views on capabilities. The goal is to identify the steps which the Member States could take in order to minimise the risk of disruption of CI.

3. A Close Look at Flash Floods

Floods cause loss of human life, extensive displacement of people and material damage. The World Meteorological Organization has said that flash floods are among the world's deadliest natural disasters, with more than 5 000 lives lost annually, and result in significant social, economic and environmental impacts. Accounting for approximately 85% of flooding cases, flash floods also have the highest mortality rate (defined as the number of deaths per number of people affected) among different classes of flooding (e.g. riverine, coastal). Flash floods have a different character from river floods, notably short time scales and occurring on a small spatial scale, which make the forecasting of flash floods quite a different challenge from traditional flood forecasting approaches. When forecasting of flash floods, the main concern is the forecast of occurrence, and to date the focus has been on two causative events: 1. heavy rainfall; and 2. rainfall on saturated soils. Flash floods occur throughout the world, and the time thresholds vary across regions from minutes to several hours depending on the land surface, geomorphological, and hydro-climatological characteristics of the region. However, for the majority of these areas there is no formal process for flash flood warnings and there is a general lack of capacity to develop effective warnings for these quick response events.

The Decision on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism provides that all the Member States will develop a National Risk Assessment (NRA) and submit a summary of it no later than by 22 December 2015 to the European Commission (Article 6(a)). National Risk Assessments identify major risks, which are addressed at national (or sub-national) level using sets of clear methods and processes, often within country-specific legislative contexts. A first reading of the summaries by the European Commission confirms that flooding remains the key risk (cited in 24 NRAs) assessed in the EU countries. Loss of critical infrastructure including power outage (20) is a high ranking risk,

considered both to be a risk trigger and the impact – or cascade effect – of other hazards. Other key risks assessed include, among others: extreme temperatures (19), industrial accidents (18), radiation releases (18), wildfires (18), terrorist attacks (16), pandemics (15), earthquakes (13) and cyber threats (12). As far as Europe is concerned, in recent years floods have been among the most frequent.

In conjunction with the focus on resilient CI, the Slovak Presidency sees a strong need to address this important topic, which has not yet been discussed at the Working Party on Civil Protection (PROCIV) meetings. In the course of its Presidency, Slovakia intends to initiate a discussion on flash-flood prevention and preparedness both domestically and abroad, with the aim of exchanging ideas and good practices, identifying possible gaps, discussing possible buffer capacities and looking for common action and synergies.

4. Other relevant topics

Besides the urgent challenges and focus themes of the Slovak Presidency there are also other themes to be followed:

- developments in Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) activation regarding the migration crisis or any major crises that might trigger its activation;
- presentation of the Commission action plan on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030;
- the upcoming Commission communication on chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives (CBRNE);
- selected issues in the field of civil protection will also be presented at the PROCIV meetings. In particular, discussions may be needed on the report on progress made towards the achievement of capacity goals and remaining gaps in the European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC). This is expected to be submitted by the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council by the end of 2016;
- furthermore, in order to strengthen cooperation between the PROCIV Working Party and the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA), the Slovak Presidency aims to invite COHAFA members to one of the PROCIV meetings in order to discuss the common topics.

5. Events

- The workshop on Enhancing Resilience of Critical Infrastructure will take place in Bratislava on 13 and 14 July;
- The 37th Meeting of the Directors-General for Civil Protection will take place in Bratislava on 27 and 28 September;
- The EU–US–CAN meeting of experts on critical infrastructure protection will take place in Senec on 27 and 28 September;
- The National Training Coordinators Meeting will take place in Bratislava on 24 and 25 October;
- PROCIV will meet five times on:
 - 26 July
 - 15 September
 - 10 October
 - 11 November (includes short meeting with COHAFA members)
 - 19 December.

6. Deliverables

Slovakia's aim during its Presidency is to come to a consensus on **Council Conclusions on Tools for Enhancing Resilience to Flash Floods for Critical Infrastructure Protection**, indicating that the Member States would like to share information on the following subjects:

- The internal organisation of Member States with regards to Civil Protection and the EPCIP programme, e.g. by sharing organisational diagrams.
- Lists of national critical infrastructure sectors.