



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**NOTE**

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from: Council Secretariat  
to: Working Party on Civil Protection  
Subject: Programme of the Cyprus Presidency in the field of Civil Protection

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Delegation will find annexed the programme of the Cyprus Presidency in the field of Civil Protection.

## **Working Programme of the Cyprus EU Presidency in the field of Civil Protection July-December 2012**

The priorities of the Cyprus Presidency programme are part of the three-presidency programme created by the Polish, Danish and Cyprus Presidencies, and they fit into the framework of goals and achievements so far.

Civil protection is now high on the EU agenda, which is demonstrated *inter alia* by the fact that it has been assigned its own legal basis, Article 196, in the Lisbon Treaty. This legal basis aims at creating a comprehensive and effective Union Disaster Management System, as set out in the Stockholm Programme, based on the two principles guiding Member States' responsibility for protecting their citizens, as well as on their expressions of solidarity towards one another when national capacities are overwhelmed or when a disaster strikes more than one Member State. The European Council clearly stated its intention to develop a strategic approach to disaster prevention, while further improving preparedness and response, in order to strengthen the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and improve the civil protection instruments and coordination of Member States' assistance, at the same time respecting national responsibility.

Cyprus takes over the Presidency of the European Union at a time when citizens are going through a difficult period, made worse by the fact that in recent years major natural and man-made disasters have struck our planet with great intensity. Meanwhile, infrastructure interdependencies and complex emergencies have shown that, without international and regional cooperation, risks cannot be effectively addressed. In these circumstances, the Cyprus Presidency will seek to promote even closer cooperation among Member States, particularly among those Member States facing common dangers, in order to reduce response time and maximise the effectiveness of EU actions, as well as managing to cover gaps at the national level. In this respect, special attention should be given to the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, in order to ensure that EU actions are based on the real needs and gaps present at the national level.

The Cyprus Presidency intends to pay special attention to and seeks to promote volunteering. The great value and usefulness of volunteers in relief operations for the population and in the work of rehabilitation following major disasters and humanitarian crises is widely recognised.

### **The Commission's legislative proposal for a new Civil Protection Mechanism**

The Presidency will work towards ensuring significant progress on the "Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism".

The Presidency will follow up on the progress made, will start discussions on the Presidency compromise text and hopes to start negotiations with the European Parliament. The Presidency intends to submit an information report to the JHA Council Meeting on 25 – 26 October 2012 and to hold an orientation debate on selected issues as appropriate.

### **Review of the Directive on the Identification and Designation of European Critical Infrastructure and the assessment of the need to improve their protection (EPCIP directive)**

The Presidency will take action in the light of the revision of the EPCIP directive and the Commission policy package expected for autumn 2012.

### **The EU CBRN Action Plan**

The Cyprus Presidency will continue work on the follow-up to the Commission's progress report on the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Action Plan. The Presidency will take the necessary steps with regard to the announced CBRN Conference during autumn 2012.

### **Issues related to civil protection**

#### **Solidarity clause (TFEU Article 222)**

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) contains a new provision for a "solidarity clause" (Article 222 TFEU accompanied by Declaration 37) establishing that the "Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster". Consultation with civilian and military representatives of Member States took place in the Council at the end of 2011: in the CATS, in the Security Policy Committee (PSC), in a joint meeting of the PSC and the Standing Committee for Operative Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI); and in the EU Military Committee. Many Member States have also expressed their initial position in writing on the basis of a questionnaire prepared by the Commission and the EEAS.

The Commission and the EEAS are currently working towards a proposal for a Council Decision on the arrangements for the implementation by the Union of the solidarity clause, expected to be adopted around October-November 2012. PROCIV will be involved in the negotiations for the Proposal.

### **Legislative Proposal on EVHAC (TFEU 214.5)**

The legislative Proposal on the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC) is likely to be submitted by the Commission in COHAFA during the Cyprus Presidency. PROCIV will be informed as needed.

### **Crisis Coordination Arrangements**

Some major emergencies or crises, of internal and/or external origin, are of such wide-ranging impact or political significance that they require timely policy coordination and response at EU political level. This could be because of the number of affected or involved Member States, or the cross-sectorial nature of the crisis from time constraints, or a combination of these factors. The EU Crisis Coordination Arrangements (CCA) have been developed to support such political coordination and response. Discussions on the need to review the CCA started in 2009, with important steps having been taken during the Danish Presidency, and will be continuing in the second half of 2012.

*The CCA current state of play:* The CCA Concept Note was approved by COREPER on 30 May 2012. For the Cyprus Presidency a calendar has been drafted aiming at the reaching of agreement on the CCA implementation measures by COREPER/COUNCIL in December 2012. This will allow CCA to be fully operational in January 2013. The Cyprus Presidency will be focusing on the following implementation measures (I) web platform, (II) training/exercises/lessons, (III) communication strategy, and is in the process of organising three informal implementation groups on these topics, which will work in parallel and deliver their results to the Friends of the Presidency working group.

### **Review of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances**

On December 2010, the Commission adopted a proposal for a new Directive (2003/105/EC) which would repeal and replace the current Council Directive (96/82/EC).

The Danish Presidency continued efforts for an agreement on the above mentioned proposal while an agreement has been reached between the Council and the European Parliament.

The Cyprus Presidency will follow up with the necessary work as required.

## **Events taking place in Cyprus**

### **29<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Directors-General for Civil Protection, Philoxenia Conference Centre, Nicosia, 29-30 October 2012**

The European Commission's half-yearly meeting of the Directors-General will be held on 29 and 30 October 2012 in Nicosia. The purpose of the meetings of the Directors-General is to foster dialogue on important civil protection topics, obtain guidance on the main Civil Protection policy topics and constitute a forum for the exchange of information on the latest developments in Civil Protection. The meetings also provide an opportunity for the Directors-General to meet their colleagues.

### **Workshop on "Best Practices regarding the assistance of volunteers in Civil Protection and Humanitarian Interventions", Philoxenia Conference Centre, Nicosia, 15-16 November 2012**

Millions of people throughout Europe devote their time and skills to help improve the societies in which we live. They are committed to working voluntarily, in such diverse sectors as health, education, sports, the environment and civil protection. Most of the volunteers focus on helping out in their own local communities - but many also work in third countries outside Europe.

Volunteerism is a way of expressing solidarity with fellow European citizens as well as with people in third countries. At the international level, volunteers have been particularly active in the fields of civil protection and humanitarian aid; and the Lisbon Treaty calls for the creation of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps.

This workshop during the Cyprus Presidency aims to strengthen volunteerism at both national and international levels through the exchange of best practices, the provision of a forum for learning and networking, and through the development of practical recommendations for Member States, the EU Commission, and NGOs alike. Given that experts from both the field of civil protection and that of humanitarian aid will be present, comparisons between these two fields can be drawn, and ways of jointly moving the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps forward can be discussed.

On the first day, international keynote speakers will kick off discussions about the working/deployment conditions for volunteers, their management and their training. Workshop participants will be encouraged to expand on these topics in different working groups by drawing upon their own experience. On the second day the Commissioner for international cooperation, humanitarian aid and crisis response, Ms Kristalina Georgieva, and the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, Ms Eleni Mavrou, will address the plenary to set out further ways of strengthening volunteerism in the future.

**EU Training coordinators of European Civil Protection, Larnaca, 7 November 2012**

The meeting will be hosted by Cyprus Civil Defence and will take place in a hotel in the city of Larnaca. The meeting will deal mainly with the evaluation of the results of the ninth training cycle, presentation of best practices and new technologies in training as well as discussion on the way ahead.

**"Estia" Exercise - Evacuation of third country nationals, Larnaca, 8-9 October 2012**

Cyprus has long been a safe sanctuary in the wider Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean in times of turbulence. ESTIA is Cyprus' National Plan of Action on assisting non-combatant evacuation operations in the area, and offering support and aid to possible future humanitarian evacuation missions of European Union citizens and Third Country nationals from a country in crisis. The critical issues of cooperation and coordination of the local and foreign agencies referred in ESTIA and the technical parameters expected to apply in real situations are incorporated as a scenario in the ARGONAUT national-scale exercise during the first two of the total five days of its duration. Invitations to participate in the exercise have been sent to all embassies in Cyprus.

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND MEETINGS DURING THE CYPRUS PRESIDENCY**

**JULY 2012**

11-12 July 2012 Civil Protection Working Party (PROCIV), Brussels

**SEPTEMBER 2012**

12-13 September 2012 Civil Protection Working Party (PROCIV), Brussels

24-26 September 2012 Meeting of the Committee of Competent Authorities for the implementation of the SEVESO II Directive

**OCTOBER 2012**

4-5 October 2012 Civil Protection Working Party (PROCIV), Brussels

8-9 October 2012 "Estia" Exercise - Evacuation of third country nationals

25-26 October 2012 JHA Council Meeting

29-30 October 2012 29th Meeting of the Directors-General for Civil Protection, Philoxenia Conference Centre, Nicosia

**NOVEMBER 2012**

7-8 November 2012 Civil Protection Working Party (PROCIV), Brussels

7 November 2012 EU Training coordinators of European Civil Protection, Larnaca

15-16 November 2012 Workshop on “Best Practices on the assistance of volunteers on Civil Protection and Humanitarian Interventions”, Philoxenia Conference Centre, Nicosia

**DECEMBER 2012**

5-6 December 2012 Civil Protection Working Party (PROCIV), Brussels