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**NOTE**

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From: Presidency

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To: Working Party on Civil Protection

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Subject: Work programme of the Maltese Presidency in the field of Civil Protection

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

**Work Programme of the Maltese Presidency in the Field of Civil Protection**  
**January – June 2017**

Malta is the last of the Trio of the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta to hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (from 1 January to 30 June 2017).

While the agenda in the field of Civil Protection is to some extent determined by developments both inside and outside the EU, the Maltese Presidency will, in particular, focus on the maritime challenges for civil protection authorities which will also have bearing on the work done by the trio partners on resilient critical infrastructure. The ongoing refugee and migration crisis will undoubtedly continue to play an important role in the broader policy discussions in the field of Civil Protection and is also expected to feature on the agenda.

**1. Civil Protection Maritime Challenges**

The EU's dependence on the seas and oceans is evident and undeniable. A majority of the Member States have a blue border and all 28 Members rely, to varying degrees, on sea transport for the provision of goods. One single marine accident may have repercussions at regional, national, and possibly international levels which may seriously affect and jeopardise Coastal Critical Infrastructure, thereby affecting the lives and livelihoods of thousands of citizens. It is with this in mind that Malta would like to bring the maritime challenges faced by civil protection practitioners to the fore. In line with a focus on maritime issues, this will be one of the general themes of the Maltese Presidency.

*The rationale*

Within the EU as a whole, Civil Protection entities are not regarded as the main authorities responsible for the management of maritime disasters. However, it is an undisputed fact that such entities are key partners and are, to varying degrees, involved when major maritime emergencies strike.

The choice of such an issue by the Maltese Presidency should not detract from the need to analyse the links and synergies that already exist or should be sought between civil protection and other agencies and authorities involved in maritime incidents. There is a need to recognise the structures that are already in place. However, it is also necessary to adopt an integrated approach to prevention, preparedness and response in this field. The reason is that there can be no room for duplication, given the high costs of maritime assets.

#### *A clear civil protection focus*

This issue needs to be tackled with a clear focus on civil protection, given that Civil Protection is always critical when lives are at stake. In view of the vast scope of maritime challenges and the outcomes of the Presidency Workshop of 19-20 January, the Presidency would like to structure and encourage discussion between Member States under the following three areas:

#### **A. The role of Civil Protection entities in different types of maritime incidents**

- i) Identifying the scope and remit for civil protection interventions, particularly in view of the impact on people. Such impact can entail the domino effects arising from a given incident, such as the need for medical evacuation from vessels and further treatment, humanitarian needs, firefighting and rescue on board vessels, etc. The impact on coastal critical infrastructure and on the general population living in coastal areas, as well as other cascading effects, will also need to be considered. Furthermore, there is a need to define these roles in the light of the new maritime challenges resulting from the effects of increased maritime traffic and climate change, and the potential need to rescue citizens from vessels in distress in remote regions or outside the EU.
- ii) Identifying other relevant stakeholders and defining their roles and limitations. Such stakeholders include national authorities, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). Account should also be taken of regional sea conventions, international conventions, NGOs and volunteer entities that operate within this area, as well as industry.
- iii) Analysing multi-agency coordination and management of incidents as experienced in the responses to the Deepwater Horizon, Costa Concordia incidents and the lessons learnt from similar major accidents.

iv) Exploring the possibility of further funding of joint training and exercises targeting the maritime scenarios from a Civil Protection context.

## **B. Taking stock of existing tools and current EU capacities**

Efforts shall be made to identify capacities and tools that can be used to respond to maritime incidents, including the domino effects on coastal human activities and shoreline critical infrastructure. These need to be based on identified risks and should determine the availability of current marine assets at national, regional and EU level. There is a need to identify gaps in the current set-up and consider what measure can be taken to address these.

## **C. New emerging technologies**

The Maltese Presidency would like to develop an overview of new technologies, identifying those that would be most useful for filling gaps. It would also like to provide a platform enabling Member States to share their experience in using new technologies or to identify best practice.

## **2. Management of the consequences following terrorist attacks**

Following the discussions at the JHA Council on 9 December 2016 and at PROCIV on 19 December 2016 on the ways in which the EU could support Member States in improving preparedness and response of civil protection services and the cooperation of these with other relevant emergency and security services, the Presidency will identify for discussion a set of possible areas for follow-up action.

## **3. Other relevant topics**

On 18 January 2017 the Court of Auditors issued a special report entitled “Union Civil Protection Mechanism: the coordination of responses to disasters outside the EU has been broadly effective”. COREPER has instructed the Working Party on Civil Protection to examine the report. Draft Council Conclusions will be prepared in this regard.

The Working Party will follow the ongoing mid-term evaluation process regarding the implementation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (report due on 30 June 2017). It will also consider the first Commission report on progress made towards the achievement of capacity goals and remaining gaps within the European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC).

Finally, PROCIV will be involved in the preparations for the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, which will be held in Cancun, Mexico, on 22-26 May 2017.

#### **4. Presidency-related events**

The Presidency Workshop “Civil Protection Maritime Challenges” was held in Malta on 19-20 January 2017.

PROCIV meetings will be held on 17 February, 17 March, 10 May and 7 June.

The Directors-General of Civil Protection of the participating states to the Union Civil Protection Mechanism will be invited to the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Directors General Civil Protection in Malta on 26-27 April.

#### **5. Deliverables**

By June 2017, a Presidency Report on the progress made in the area of civil protection will be issued. The Report will also include a compilation of the outcomes of the discussion on the maritime challenges facing civil protection. Furthermore, draft Council Conclusions will be prepared on the European Court of Auditors’ Special Report.