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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Council conclusions on European Court of Auditors Special Report No 33/2016 - 'Union Civil Protection Mechanism: the coordination of responses to disasters outside the EU has been broadly effective'
- Council conclusions adopted on 8 June 2017

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on European Court of Auditors Special Report No 33/2016 - 'Union Civil Protection Mechanism: the coordination of responses to disasters outside the EU has been broadly effective', adopted by the Council at its 3546th meeting held on 8 June 2017.

Draft Council conclusions on European Court of Auditors Special Report No 33/2016

- 'Union Civil Protection Mechanism: the coordination of responses to disasters outside the EU has been broadly effective'

1. The Council welcomes the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 33/2016 'Union Civil Protection Mechanism: the coordination of responses to disasters outside the EU has been broadly effective'¹, which examined the response to three recent disasters: the floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014), the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa (2014-2016), and the Nepal earthquake (2015).
2. The Council appreciates that, according to the Court, the Commission has been broadly effective in facilitating the coordination of responses to disasters outside the Union since the beginning of 2014.
3. The Council also notes the five recommendations made by the Court and welcomes the fact that the Commission accepts all of them. The Council notes that the Court recommends that the Commission should seek to:
 - gain time in the critical early stages of a response;
 - improve certain features of CECIS²;
 - strengthen coordination and potential synergies on the ground;
 - explore potential changes to the arrangements for deploying epidemiologists; and
 - strengthen accountability through improved reporting.

¹ 5643/17; OJ C 19, 20.1.2017, p. 3.

² Common Emergency Communication and Information System - web-based alert and notification application.

4. The Council reiterates the importance of strengthening cooperation between civil protection and humanitarian aid in response to disasters outside the EU. To that end, the Council supports the Court's recommendation that the Commission strengthen reciprocal knowledge between civil protection and humanitarian aid providers.
5. The Council further encourages the Commission to identify practical steps, including scope for joint activities, in order to achieve stronger synergies between the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and EU humanitarian aid, in respect of the humanitarian principles as the basis of the humanitarian response.
6. The Council welcomes the fact that the Commission has established an action plan and is already addressing some of the recommendations. These measures should be analysed in close cooperation with the Member States.
7. The Council welcomes the Commission's intention to follow the Court's recommendations to improve, *inter alia*, the process of expert selection, outreach to EU delegations and DG ECHO field offices, and CECIS usability. This should make it possible for the functioning of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism during the response to disasters to be improved further.
8. The Council invites the Commission to report to the Council on progress made in the implementation of the Court's recommendations by the end of 2017, and thereafter on a regular basis.
