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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Working Party on Civil Protection

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

Delegations will find annexed the programme of the Netherlands Presidency in the field of Civil Protection.

Work Programme of the Netherlands Presidency in the field of Civil Protection
January – June 2016

The Netherlands is the first of the incoming Trio of the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta to hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (from 1 January to 30 June 2016).

The beginning of the Netherlands Presidency marks the second anniversary of the entry into force of the current legislation on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). The implementation of this legislation and the accompanying implementing rules of 16 October 2014 is in full swing. 2016 will be the first year in which the new voluntary pool is expected to be fully operational. In theory, this should be a year of stabilisation, with Commissioner Stylianides already in office for over one year. In reality, however, you can never foresee every eventuality in the field of civil protection. Therefore, the agenda of the Presidency in the field of Civil Protection will to a large extent be determined by developments both inside and outside the EU. The current migration crisis will also continue to play an important role in the broader policy discussions in the field of civil protection.

1. Resilient infrastructure

In keeping with the general theme of the Netherlands Presidency of ‘Focus, Innovation and Legitimacy’, and in line with the European Commission’s priorities for 2015-2020 of ‘growth and jobs’, the Netherlands Presidency will focus on **resilient infrastructure**. The main objective is to reach a better understanding of the possible cascading effects of disasters on critical infrastructure and the role of the civil protection authorities in strengthening the resilience of critical infrastructure. The link with the private sector and public-private partnership (PPP) in this area will be further explored. Our discussions will be based on an all-hazard approach: both natural and man-made disasters will be taken into consideration. Particular attention will be given to the cyber domain (one of the broader priorities of the Netherlands Presidency). The focus will be on the continuity of processes – something which is crucial to avoid social disruption.

The discussion will be explicitly linked to the UCPM, and will focus primarily on the identification and elaboration of capabilities necessary to strengthen the resilience of infrastructure. The Presidency organised a workshop for the PROCIV delegates and Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Contact Points on 12 and 13 January. The basis for the discussion during the workshop was a scenario concerning major disruption of critical infrastructure. The aim of the workshop was to identify cascading effects of disruption of critical infrastructure due to a natural or man-made disaster and the consequences of these effects on the operational response.

The idea is to initiate a discussion about the greatest risks to critical infrastructure and the capabilities necessary to enhance resilience. This could include preparing risk analyses, sharing information on cross-border risks to critical infrastructure 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 critical infrastructure. The discussion in PROCIV is an endeavour which will:

- establish the link between risk analysis and the capabilities necessary for the resilience of critical infrastructure as a part of the risk management cycle;
- identify certain overarching capabilities at EU-level which individual Member States cannot build on their own;
- facilitate discussion about the role of civil protection authorities and that of the private sector in strengthening the resilience of critical infrastructure.

As a follow-up to the discussions in the workshop and in PROCIV, the Presidency will draw up recommendations on actions which the Member States could take in order to enhance the resilience of critical infrastructure.

2. Floods

In January 2015, the World Economic Forum ranked Water Crises as the Top Global Risk. As far as Europe is concerned, in recent years floods have been among the most frequently occurring disasters, both inside and outside the EU. Floods cause loss of human life, extensive displacement of people, and material damage. Climate change and rapid urbanisation as a result of demographic and migration patterns are compounding this vulnerability. The Netherlands, being a low-lying delta itself with 60% of its territory counting as floodable area, has had to cope with such risks for more than a millennium. In response to the threat of climate change and as a consequence of lessons learnt *inter alia* from hurricane Katrina, the Netherlands has made a major policy shift and formulated an ambitious long-term delta programme to meet the challenges and prevent risks in a flexible, forward-looking and sustainable way. This has also included making use of structural and non-structural elements such as spatial and governance considerations, focusing on resilience and providing the programme with a substantial budget of 1 billion EUR/year. Our own vulnerability also acts as a driver for international cooperation, with the aim of increasing water security and resilience world-wide, while at the same time learning from others and improving our knowledge base – because there is not, and never will be, one solution that fits all. Within the framework of the resilient infrastructure debate mentioned above, the Netherlands intends to initiate a discussion on flood prevention and preparedness at home 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.

3. Other relevant topics

The implementation of the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection and the link to the new CBRN Agenda will be presented to PROCIV. Various meetings with Critical Infrastructure Protection contact points such as the annual EU-US-Canada meeting will take place during the Netherlands Presidency.

As provided for in Article 12(4) of the civil protection legislation (Decision 1313/2013/EU), the European Commission should, in the first half of 2016, inform the European Parliament and the Council on the achievement of capacity goals and remaining gaps in the European Emergency Response Capacity.

4. Events

The 36th Meeting of the Directors-General will take place in Amsterdam on 2 and 3 June 2016.

PROCIV will meet four times:

29 February

7 April

10 May

17 June.

5. Deliverables

At the end of its Presidency the Netherlands will issue a Presidency Report on the progress made in the area of civil protection.