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From: Presidency

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To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

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Subject: Report from the Bulgarian Presidency on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection

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1. Delegations will find attached a Presidency Report on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection.
2. COREPER is advised to invite the Council to take note of the report.

**REPORT FROM THE BULGARIAN PRESIDENCY ON THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS**  
**AT EU LEVEL IN THE FIELD OF CIVIL PROTECTION**

This report outlines the main achievements of the EU in the field of civil protection during the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Discussions in the Working Party on Civil Protection (PROCIV) focused on the legislative proposal to amend the Union Civil Protection Decision, as well as on strengthening disaster risk reduction. Work also continued in the field of critical infrastructure protection.

Civil protection was involved in the response to natural and man-made disasters around the globe, with a number of activations of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).

**1. Proposal for a Decision amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism**

In November 2017 the Commission adopted a proposal for a Decision amending Decision 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism<sup>1</sup>, with the aim of strengthening prevention, preparedness and response in the EU.

Throughout the Bulgarian Presidency, PROCIV held intensive discussions on the proposal. A compromise text is currently under examination.

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<sup>1</sup> 14884/1/17 REV 1; 14883/17.

## 2. Best Use of Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies

In recent decades, disaster risk reduction (DRR) has become a global priority. In March 2015, with the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the new global approach, which represents a shift from disaster management to disaster risk management, was agreed. One of the global objectives of the framework is to substantially increase the number of countries with **national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020**<sup>2</sup>. It is expected that implementation of this global target will be an important driver to improve disaster risk reduction policies at global level.

The Presidency workshop on "Best use of disaster risk reduction strategies" was held on 30 and 31 January 2018 in Sofia. It brought together representatives from 31 countries participating in the UCPM and experts in disaster risk management from the Commission, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank Group. The Presidency's overall objective was on the one hand to encourage sharing of good practices, lessons learnt and challenges identified during development and implementation of disaster risk reduction strategies and on the other hand to bridge countries' needs with the available support and mechanisms of the Commission, UNISDR, OECD and the World Bank.

Based on the outcome of the workshop the Bulgarian Presidency structured the discussions at PROCIV meetings in March and April around the following two topics: fostering disaster risk reduction<sup>3</sup> and investing in disaster risk reduction<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, United Nations, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Presidency discussion paper on Best use of disaster risk reduction strategies – Fostering disaster risk reduction: 7235/18.

<sup>4</sup> Presidency discussion paper on Best use of disaster risk reduction strategies – Investing in disaster risk reduction: 7804/18.

### *Best Use of Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies - Fostering disaster risk reduction*

One of the key messages from the Presidency workshop emphasises the importance of greater consistency between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction policies and their inclusion in development policies, and that the added value and benefits of linking disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and development policies need to be widely disseminated and further promoted.

The Presidency welcomes the efforts at EU level aiming to establish a comprehensive disaster prevention approach and improve consistency between the various sectoral policies. However, the discussions at PROCIV underlined some issues, based on which the Bulgarian Presidency identified a need to improve the link between scientific research and achievements in the fields of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation as well as a need for more joint meetings. The Presidency would like also to encourage the Commission to examine how disaster risk reduction could be better integrated in different policies and in this respect has taken note of the Commission Communication on Strengthening EU Disaster Management: rescEU Solidarity with Responsibility<sup>5</sup>.

### *Best Use of Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies – Investing in disaster risk reduction*

Investing in disaster risk reduction is one of the guiding principles – namely (j) – and a main priority of the current Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The framework highlights that public and private investment in disaster risk prevention and reduction is, firstly, cost-effective and, secondly, essential to enhancing the resilience of most areas of life. It explains that investments not only prevent disasters, reduce losses and save lives but they also contribute to innovation, growth and job creation, ensuring effective recovery and rehabilitation. However, one of the issues related to promoting and investing in disaster risk reduction is that the effects are not always visible until a disaster happens.

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<sup>5</sup> 14883/17; COM(2017) 773 final.

The Bulgarian Presidency commends the adoption of the Commission's Communication on Financing Sustainable Growth<sup>6</sup>, at the core of which are sustainable investment and a commitment to development that meets the needs of present and future generations.

Discussions at PROCIV highlighted the importance of cost-benefit analysis of disaster risk reduction investments as well as identification of appropriate indicators to measure their results.

Based on the discussions the Bulgarian Presidency identified the following needs:

- for disaster risk reduction to become a core component of EU funding;
- to strengthen an evidence-based and cost-effective disaster risk reduction approach at EU level.

### **3. Civil Protection Forum**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Civil Protection Forum, held in Brussels on 5-6 March 2018, brought together around 900 representatives from the European civil protection community, European Neighbourhood countries, first-line responders, academia, international organisations, NGOs and European institutions to discuss the current developments in the UCPM framework and put forward new ideas for tackling common challenges. The participants also had the opportunity to visit an exhibition on disaster risk communication and awareness.

The meeting was structured around four main pillars:

- strengthening preparedness,
- simplifying response,
- scaling up prevention, and
- fostering resilience in Europe's neighbourhood.

Two plenary sessions and 12 break-out sessions were held. During the first plenary session, "rescEU: Solidarity with Responsibility", political leaders discussed recent developments in the area of European civil protection focusing on efforts to enhance European emergency response capabilities and regain the confidence of European citizens by bringing the EU in when they most need it.

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<sup>6</sup> COM (2018) 97 final, 8.3.2018.

The second plenary session, “Working Across Sectors to Increase Climate Resilience”, focused on the need to adopt a cross-sector approach when mainstreaming climate change considerations into EU civil protection policies and to increase the synergies between disaster risk management planning and climate change adaptation strategies at all governance and policy levels.

Organised around four strategic pillars, the 12 break-out sessions covered the main issues emerging from the recent evaluation of the UCPM’s performance as well as additional analytical work carried out on the mechanism.

A roundtable was also organised with local governments on "Scaling up disaster prevention: from local to European level" to discuss synergies between different programmes in the field of disaster risk prevention and the need to scale up investment.

The final report of the conference is available at the following link:

[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partnerships/civil-protection-partners/civil-protection-forum\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partnerships/civil-protection-partners/civil-protection-forum_en)

#### **4. Administrative arrangement with Tunisia**

On the margins of the above Civil Protection Forum, the Commission signed an administrative arrangement with Tunisia, to enhance cooperation in civil protection and disaster risk management. After the agreement with Algeria signed in December 2016, this is the second administrative arrangement signed with a country from the EU's southern neighbourhood.

The document outlines key areas of cooperation on disaster prevention, preparedness and response. Tunisia will benefit from greater sharing of knowledge and good practice, while its participation in joint exercises and other capacity-building activities will be further encouraged.

## **5. Protection of critical infrastructure**

The 8th EU-US-Canada expert meeting on Critical Infrastructure Protection was held in Sofia on 11-12 April 2018, in the framework of regular cooperation with the US and Canada in the field of critical infrastructure protection, which has been in place since 2009 as part of the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection (EPCIP programme).

Gathering 60 experts from EU Member States, the US and Canada, the meeting focused on cyber, physical and emerging threats, such as hybrid threats to critical infrastructures. Among other topics discussed were insider threats and security aspects and the malicious use of drones, as well as a different approach to critical infrastructure protection legislation.

Discussion also focused on a possible joint table-top exercise to be held in advance of the next meeting, which was planned for the autumn of 2019.

## **6. 3rd Annual Seminar of the Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (DRMKC)**

This year's edition of the seminar on disaster risk management, held in Sofia on 26 and 27 April, was co-organised by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior and the Commission's DRMKC. The seminar gathered around 120 inter-disciplinary experts on disaster management, early detection, forecasting, warning and risk assessment of natural and man-made disasters, in both civil protection and humanitarian aid.

The meeting discussed progress made by the DRMKC since its launch in September 2015, challenges for policy and science in disaster risk reduction, including disaster risk management capabilities assessment and the Sendai monitoring framework, as well as the upcoming 2019-2020 DRMKC Action Plan.

The discussion looked at enhancing the science-policy interface through the outputs of the DRMKC, but also the implications of recent policy developments in EU disaster risk management. The key issue set for the four break-out sessions was how to move from knowledge sharing to implementation (i.e. uptake by decision-makers).

The session on Partnerships for Resilience highlighted the need to bring science into policy on disaster risk management.

The session on Data for Resilience covered recent developments in data collection and analysis. Examples included the DRMKC Risk Data Hub and the Global Human Settlement Layer developed by the JRC, which overlays hazard-prone areas over human settlements to discover trends that put an increased number of people and assets at risk and identifies the areas most at risk.

The session on Education for DRM looked at the integration of disaster risk management into the education sector, also a crucial means to raise awareness.

There was a session dedicated to the need to advance innovation for first-responders.

Key conclusions included:

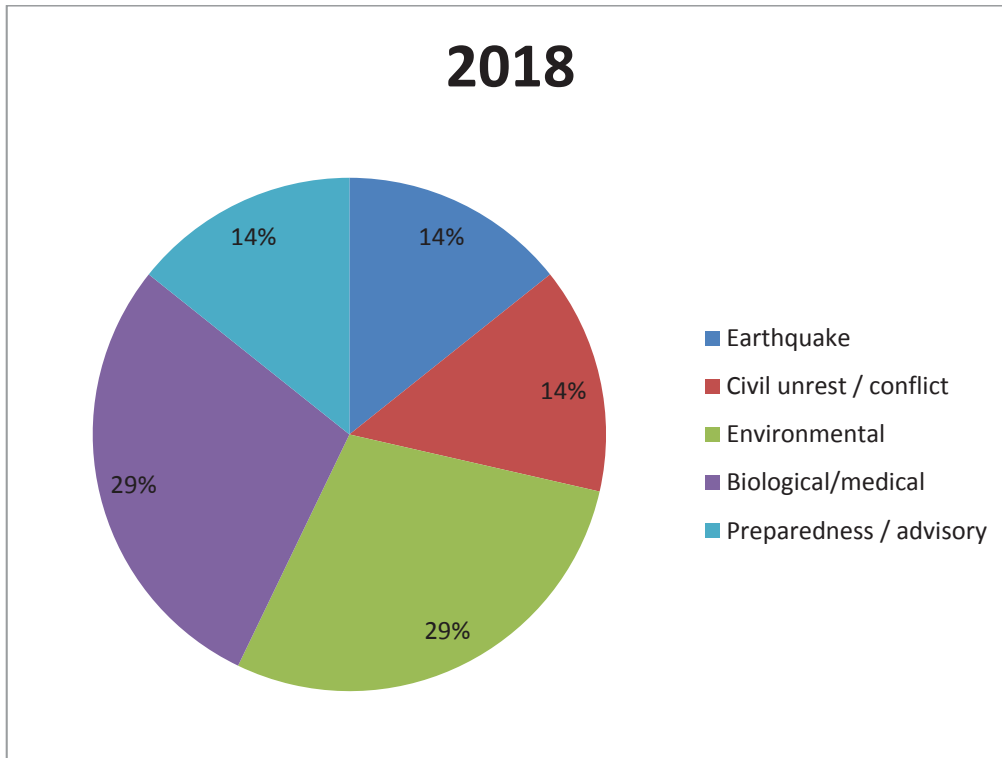
- i) the need to involve policy-makers and practitioners in research teams to ensure knowledge gaps are filled and the results of projects are taken up in decision-making;
- ii) data must be collected in a harmonised way, while at the same time remaining useful for practitioners at the local level;
- iii) the importance of building local capacity to use datasets and platforms;
- iv) the importance of bringing social science into DRM (and the DRMKC), to understand and build human coping capacity and in turn reduce vulnerability to disasters;
- v) the need to make DRM knowledge accessible also to land managers and forest managers (e.g. for forest fire prevention) and to better integrate ecosystem-based solutions into Risk Management Plans in particular making better use of platforms like the DRMKC.



## 7. Response to disasters and crises

Since the beginning of 2018, the UCPM has been activated for seven requests for assistance (two inside the EU and five outside the EU).

The overall 2018 situation is presented in the chart below – based on the type of emergency:



The disaster situations which required the activation of the UCPM were as follows:

- Environmental:
  - Colombia – oil spill (9 April)
  - Colombia – risk of dam failure in Ituango (18 May)
- Biological/medical:
  - Romania – lack of immunoglobulin (5 March)
  - Democratic Republic of the Congo – Ebola outbreak (12 May)
- Forest fire prevention and preparedness/advisory mission: Portugal (23 April)
- Earthquake: Papua New Guinea (25 February)
- Civil unrest: Democratic Republic of Congo – support for World Food Programme (WFP) operations (4 May).

Furthermore, the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) actively monitored developments on various other disasters/crises for which no request for assistance was made through the ERCC and these events were treated as monitoring and information sharing. Nonetheless, the ERCC contributed with coordination, situation analysis and satellite mapping to the response to:

- Extreme weather: UK (12 January) and the cold spell in Europe (23 February)
- Tropical cyclones: Mauritius (16 January) and Tonga (12 February).

## **UCPM activations inside the EU**

### **a. Romania, lack of immunoglobulin**

Romania activated the UCPM to request information about potential suppliers for 150 kg of human immunoglobulin, following a sudden shortage at national level. Austria identified a supplier for 50 kg and linked them with the Romanian public health authorities for delivery. Romania paid all the costs of the operation including transport. For the remaining 100 kg, Romania is in contact with a supplier from the US facilitated via NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC).

### **b. Portugal - forest fire preparedness**

On 23 April, Portugal requested an advisory mission through the UCPM to support the identification of preventive and preparatory measures that could complement ongoing efforts, to identify critical areas of intervention, to improve and consolidate procedures and possibly also to redefine the system in these critical sectors.

The scope of the advisory mission also included the transfer of practical knowledge through training, workshops and case studies.

The ERCC deployed a team of three experts:

- One meteorological and fire behaviour expert who worked in Lisbon with the central meteorological authority and conducted training in Mangualde (Viseu area).
- Two fire prevention experts who conducted field work in Portalegre, Algarve, Lisbon and Sintra together with the National Forestry Institute.

The mission duration was from 29 April to 18 May. By the end of the mission, the European Union Civil Protection Team provided a number of deliverables to the Portuguese authorities including:

- specialised training in fire behaviour and meteorology to over 194 firefighters;
- the assessment of five natural parks with recommendations provided to municipal bodies;
- guidance on the adaptation of nationwide fire indices, with all technicians of the Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF) provided with learning opportunities;
- ICNF forestry technicians in São Mamede and Sintra-Cascais provided with direct training on fire risk simulation;
- improved risk mapping, including the development of indices for urban areas in both São Mamede and Sintra-Cascais in coordination with the National Forestry Institute;
- recommendations as to possible systemic improvements at the macro-scale developed in conjunction with the relevant authorities;
- risk reduction measures for all areas assessed and generalised extrapolations proposed;
- capability building through exchange of ideas with a number of responding agencies.

A draft technical report has been provided to the Portuguese authorities. The report is in the process of finalisation.

## UCPM activations outside the EU

### c. Papua New Guinea – Earthquake

On 25 February at 17:44 UTC, a magnitude 7.5 (35 km depth) earthquake struck Papua New Guinea. First reports indicated around 80 people dead and 270 000 people in need of assistance. On 2 March, the ERCC received a request for assistance from the UN Environment/OCHA Joint Unit (JEU) for one environmental expert to join the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team. Following activation of the UCPM, the Netherlands offered one expert in waste water management and water quality who was deployed as an EU civil protection associated expert to the UNDAC team from 6 to 24 March 2018.

On completion of the assessment, the expert provided an extensive debriefing to national authorities and partners including the National Disaster Centre, the Controller of the Emergency Disaster Restoration Team, the Department of (Environmental) Health and the World Health Organisation.

In addition, the Copernicus Emergency Management Service produced 16 satellite maps, including maps requested based on the conclusions of the environmental assessment.

The EU humanitarian budget provided EUR 110 000 to support the Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society for emergency shelter and essential relief items, such as tarpaulins, blankets, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, kitchen sets, and hygiene kits. The funding is part of the EU's overall contribution to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

#### **d. Colombia – oil spill**

Starting on 2 March, an oil spill occurred from Ecopetrol's Lisama field 158 in the Santander province of Colombia. The leak was contained one month later. The spill primarily affected the La Lizama and Sogamoso river ecosystems. According to reports, noxious gases affected around 195 people, causing nausea, dizziness, minor poisoning and respiratory problems, while 2 000 people were left without clean water.

On 9 April, the ERCC received a request for assistance from the UN Environment/OCHA Joint Unit for two senior environmental experts in oil spill management to be deployed for a two-week mission to Colombia as part of a larger UNDAC team to support the Government in responding to the environmental emergency.

Upon activation of the UCPM, Spain and France offered environmental experts. Two experts were selected to join the UNDAC mission and were deployed to Colombia from 12 to 26 April.

On completion of the assessment, the experts provided an extensive debriefing to national authorities and partners. They presented recommendations on:

- the ecological and social restoration of the affected area;
- the improvement of future responses to environmental emergencies;
- the revision of the national contingency plan for hydrocarbons;
- strengthening of institutional coordination.

**e. Democratic Republic of the Congo – civil unrest**

In response to the deepening humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), especially in the Kasai, that has led to severe food insecurity in the region, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been enhancing logistics capacity on the ground through emergency coordination, security and supply chain management. Access remains one of the main constraints to ensuring the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance. The WFP had identified and prioritised Kananga as a location for establishing an inter-agency humanitarian hub, and requested support from the UCPM to set it up.

On 4 May 2018, WFP submitted a request for assistance through the UCPM for 13 pre-fabricated containers and one Hybrid Energy Module. Sweden offered the requested items. The transport for the first batch of containers will be organised in the second week of June, and completion of the construction of the pre-fabricated containers is tentatively scheduled for August 2018.

**f. Democratic Republic of the Congo – Ebola outbreak**

An Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was declared by the DRC Ministry of Health (MoH) on 8 May 2018. In response to this new outbreak of Ebola in the province of Equateur, international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) scaled up capacity on the ground and put in place provisions to respond to any further developments.

On 18 May 2018, WHO requested assistance from UCPM consisting of: emergency medical teams for infection prevention and control, specialist referral support teams, a specialist medical evacuation (Medevac) support team to contribute to local Medevac capacity and a transport isolation bubble (pod) also for Medevac.

France offered one specialist referral support team (two medical doctors and two nurses). Norway offered one transport isolation bubble and training of trainers on how to use the device.

At the date of reporting, 59 cases of infection had been registered, resulting in 27 deaths (lethality rate 46 %). 649 contacts with the disease had been identified, of which the MoH was monitoring 541 (89 %).

**g. Colombia – risk of Ituango dam failure**

Heavy rains increased water levels in the Cauca River which feeds the Ituango Dam in the Antioquia Department of Colombia. Between 28 April and 7 May 2018, two tunnels which divert water to the Cauca river collapsed. On 16 May, the machine rooms were flooded in order to decrease the water levels. Further obstructions in the powerhouse complicated the situation and resulted in the preventive evacuation of downstream areas (up to 120 000 people).

On 18 May, ERCC received a request for assistance from the UN Environment/OCHA Joint Unit for (hydro) geologists and dam integrity experts/engineers to be deployed for two weeks to Colombia as part of a larger UN Environment team to support the Government of Colombia in responding to the emergency. Two dam integrity experts were offered and selected from France to join the mission and were deployed to Colombia on 21 May 2018 for two weeks.

The UCPM experts were tasked with assessing the dam's structure and stability, with specific focus on potential impacts on communities, providing recommendations to the national authorities on appropriate preparedness and mitigation measures and addressing immediate and mid-term threats to nearby communities and the environment. The experts will work with national authorities and other relevant stakeholders, under the guidance of the UN Resident Coordinator and with support from UN Environment Colombia and OCHA Colombia, to address any potentially life-threatening situations and environmental risks derived from the instability of the dam.