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From: Presidency

To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

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

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 Romanian Presidency

on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection

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

The first half of 2019 was marked by the adoption¹ and first phase of implementation² of the amended Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) Decision. In March 2019, negotiations also started on another legislative proposal³ to amend the UCPM, related to financial aspects for the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027.

In line with the 18-month programme of the Council⁴, Romania promoted civil protection activities, with a priority focus on the management of high-impact, low-probability (HILP) events throughout the negotiation of the amendments to the UCPM and during its Presidency, by facilitating the implementation process of legal provisions related to HILP. To that end, the Romanian Presidency organised a workshop on European preparedness and response to HILP events in Bucharest on 30-31 January 2019.

Another related topic on the agenda was cooperation between the EU and NATO in the field of civil protection, with a workshop and a table-top exercise held in Brussels on 21-22 February 2019.

¹ Decision (EU) 2019/420 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2019 amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, OJ L 77, 20.3.2019, p. 1.

² Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/570 of 8 April 2019 laying down rules for the implementation of Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards rescEU capacities and amending Commission Implementing Decision 2014/762/EU, OJ L 99, 10.4.2019, p. 41.

³ Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (7271/19, COM(2019) 125 final, 7 March 2019).

⁴ 14518/18.

Ten years after their last meeting, the Civil Protection Directors-General of the Partner Countries of the Union for the Mediterranean gathered in February 2019 in Barcelona and identified areas to strengthen cooperation in the field of civil protection.

The EU statement for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (13-17 May 2019, Geneva) was agreed, following examination by the Working Party on Civil Protection (PROCIV) and the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA).

The implementation of the 2017 Action Plan to enhance preparedness against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) security risks, and the protection of European critical infrastructure were also addressed.

Finally, the UCPM was activated a number of times in response to natural and man-made disasters around the globe, both inside and outside the EU.

1. Decision (EU) 2019/420 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism

Following political agreement reached in December 2018, the amended Union Civil Protection Mechanism was adopted on 13 March 2019 and entered into force on 21 March 2019. The amending Decision strengthens the existing mechanism by introducing several new measures, including the establishment of rescEU — a European reserve of civil protection capacities which can be activated when national capacities are overwhelmed. To ensure that Europe is prepared for the forest fire season, the new legislation included a transition phase during which Participating States can receive financing for aerial firefighting capacities which they commit to the UCPM ('rescEU transition').

On 8 April 2019, the first implementing act was adopted, focused on the initial composition of rescEU and the transitional period. A number of Participating States have committed their capacities as part of rescEU transition in order to have them ready for this year's forest fire season.

At their informal meeting in Bucharest on 9-10 April 2019, the Directors-General for civil protection continued discussions on practical aspects of the implementation of rescEU capacities, including the need to develop swiftly rescEU capacities and ‘no-regrets measures’ for the emergency medical response and to cope with CBRN incidents.

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

On 7 March 2019 the Commission submitted another legislative proposal to amend the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, in preparation for the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027.

The Commission’s proposal increases the budget of the UCPM by more than three times - from EUR 368.5 million for 2014-2020 to EUR 1.4 billion for 2021-2027, in order to reinforce the collective capacity of the Member States and the EU to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters, by developing rescEU capacities, setting up a civil protection knowledge network, co-financing the cost of adapting, repairing, transporting and/or operating European Civil Protection Pool capacities, etc.

While around two thirds of the current budget come from Heading 3 - Security and Citizenship, and one third from Heading 4 – Global Europe, the new financial appropriations are under the new Heading 5: ‘Security and Defence’.

The proposal removes Annex I, which provides for a budgetary breakdown, allocating 20 % of the financial envelope to prevention, 50 % to preparedness and 30 % to response (+/- 8 percentage points for each). This breakdown can currently be adjusted by more than 8 and up to 16 percentage points by way of delegated acts. The amendment is justified by the need for more flexibility related to the unpredictable nature of disasters.

Finally, the proposal amends the article on visibility and awards, in order to align it with the standard language related to corporate communication used in all the new MFF proposals.

The Romanian Presidency took up the file and started the negotiations in the PROCIV Working Party.

On 27 March 2019 Coreper approved the decision to consult the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee on an optional basis. Consultation letters to both committees were sent on 1 April 2019.

3. Presidency priority topic: EU and Member States' preparedness for high-impact, low-probability (HILP) events

The Romanian Presidency organised the workshop 'Preparing for High-Impact, Low-Probability Events – Way ahead' (Bucharest, 30-31 January 2019).

The meeting gathered around 100 experts from 33 UCPM Participating States, several Commission departments, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), NATO and the US. The aim of the workshop was for participants to reflect on principles and criteria for a common understanding of HILP events, to discuss and share experiences and good practices, and to examine which preparedness and response measures should be considered at EU level to manage the potential consequences of HILP events, thus facilitating the implementation of the UCPM provisions referring to HILP.

Based on the answers provided in advance by the national civil protection authorities to a questionnaire prepared by the Romanian Presidency and the workshop's discussions, a set of actions was identified, to be implemented at local, national and EU level, to ensure effective preparedness for and response to HILP events and to create the basis for resilience:

- the adoption of '*no regret*' measures, such as: the development of tools for anticipation of future events and future scanning/monitoring, correct situational awareness and expertise at the scene, well-equipped and informed first responders, adaptive solutions/organisation of first responders, a good understanding of the causes, location identification;

- appropriate means and capacities to intervene, specialised capabilities to be developed under rescEU to cope with HILP events, sufficient means to cope with long-lasting emergency situations;
- management plans for dispatching resources, solutions for individual and mass evacuation/displacements, and for the management of mass casualties and deaths;
- the deployment of all available resources (public, private, community) at local, national, regional and international level in an organised, coordinated manner;
- use of other advanced technologies for disaster management (e.g. artificial intelligence, drones, collaborative mapping, social media sentiment analysis, alternative technologies for search and rescue (SAR), hazard mapping, damage assessment, etc.).

Several criteria were mentioned for a common understanding of HILP events, such as:

- unpredictability of the event;
- complexity (cascade effects, which might pose a threat to national security or disrupt government continuity, or resulting in a social, environmental, economic, public health or critical infrastructure breakdown) and characteristics and severity of the impact (including long-term negative impact – e.g. economic losses, impact on critical infrastructure);
- duration (long-lasting consequences going beyond the national capacity to handle the event);
- scale (mass casualties, mass fatalities, mass displacement, psychological effects, etc.) overwhelming the national capacities to respond (including solidarity capacity through the voluntary pool);
- geographical spread (area affected/trans-boundary consequences);
- particularities of the necessary response measures and capacities (e.g. if highly specialised, very expensive intervention assets are needed which are scarce at EU level);
- invocation of the solidarity clause (Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), activation of EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements, or a request for international assistance, etc.

Discussions were also held on specific HILP response capabilities to be developed at EU-level under rescEU. Several capacities were mentioned as possible cost-effective and long-lasting solutions, such as:

- emergency medical capacities (Emergency Medical Teams - EMT3; medical evacuation (Medevac) air transport capacities for victims who are highly contagious/in a critical condition/have severe burns; stockpiles);
- CBRN capacities (detection; multidisciplinary teams including experts; sensors/drones; decontamination; laboratory capacity; specialised transport; upgrading to operate in search and rescue context; mass decontamination of persons and vehicles) and stockpiles (protective equipment; antidotes), management of nuclear waste;
- mass shelter capacities;
- large emergency communication equipment (platforms; telecom voice and data services; satellite communication).

Following discussions during the workshop, the PROCIV Working Party tasked the Commission with prioritising the necessary implementing acts containing HILP provisions, starting with the development of emergency medical response and CBRN capacities.

It is expected that upcoming EU Council Presidencies will build upon the work done to improve the effectiveness of the UCPM when EU and Member States are confronted with HILP events or with their impact.

4. EU-NATO cooperation in civil protection

The Romanian Presidency and the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, based in Helsinki, together organised the workshop ‘EU/NATO cooperation in civil protection’ (Brussels, 21-22 February 2019). The workshop was attended by 70 high-level experts from EU Member States, mainly healthcare service providers, civil protection and public order services, and EU and NATO officials with in-depth knowledge of civil protection.

The main objectives were: to highlight EU-NATO cooperation in civil protection, including when confronted with hybrid threats; to identify the ways and areas in which the EU Member States' health care systems are vulnerable to hybrid threats; and to analyse cross-border cooperation in the event of an incident with multiple victims.

It also included a table-top exercise based on an HILP medical emergency with multiple victims and a hybrid threat scenario – which explicitly showed that the assistance provided based on Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union and following the activation of the UCPM would help in the first instance, but — as the epidemic starts spreading out – there may not be sufficient help, due to the precedence given to protecting national interests; in addition, the stockpiles of basic and specialised medical materials that would be needed in the case of an airborne pandemic is insufficient.

There was general agreement among the participants that:

- The vulnerabilities and gaps identified need to be addressed by pooling resources as soon as possible, especially by stockpiling the relevant materials. rescEU should include the preparation of medical capacities to respond to possible severe medical shortcomings as was portrayed in the scenario (Note: the response needs to be calculated according to the needs of the EU as a whole and not of the individual Member States).
- Cooperation between the EU and NATO should be strengthened, through exercises at all levels, engaging the UCPM, Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and Euro-Atlantic Disaster Relief Coordination Centre (EADRCC) more closely, as the pooling of resources is an efficient mean to prevent and respond to HILP events.

As civil protection is part of national security, the need to increase the individual and collective capacity of EU Member States to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters, especially when consequences are multiplied by hybrid threats, was underlined.

5. Third meeting of Civil Protection Directors-General of the Partner Countries of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) (Barcelona, 11-12 February 2019)

The meeting, co-organised and co-chaired by the UfM and the Commission, was focused on the following topics:

- increasing the resilience of Mediterranean countries – cooperation between operational and scientific communities;
- enhancing preparedness through capacity development;
- strengthening citizens' awareness and involvement in disaster prevention, preparedness and response by empowering volunteers and young people;
- promoting efficient international assistance in the event of a disaster, including proper implementation of Host Nation Support.

6. Disaster risk reduction

The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held on 13-17 May in Geneva, gathered together participants from various sectors, mostly at ministerial level. The meeting took stock of the progress in implementation of the 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and gave further recommendations for policy makers. Its outcomes will contribute to the High-Level Political Forum (New York, July/September 2019) and to the UN Climate Change Summit in September 2019.

The PROCIV Working Party, in consultation with the COHAFA Working Party, agreed on the statement, which was delivered at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction by the Commission on behalf of the EU and its Member States.⁵

⁵ 8022/1/19 REV 1.

7. EU risk management capability

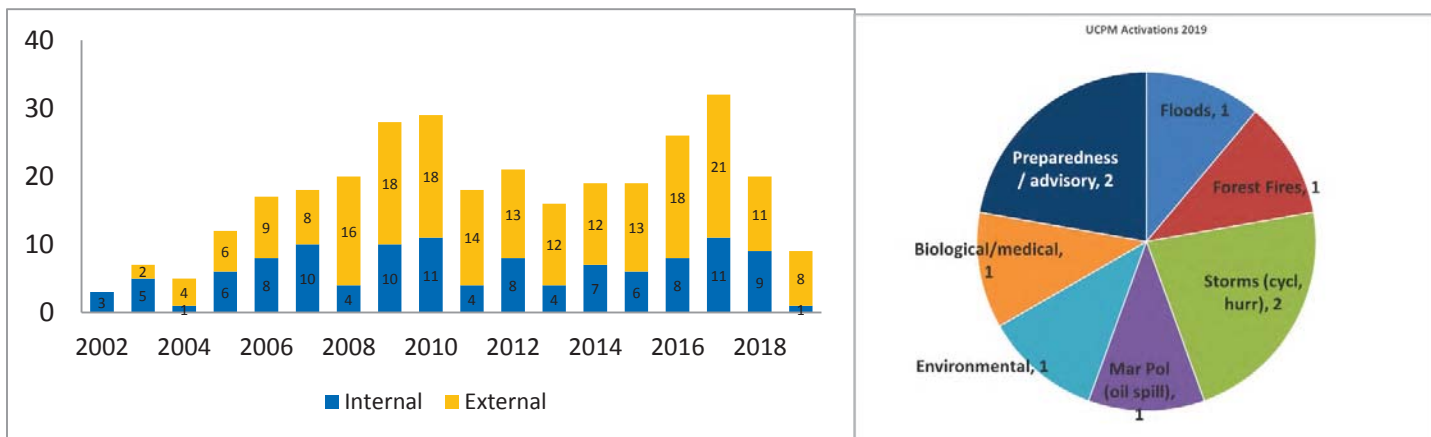
Under the 2013 UCPM Decision (Article 6), Participating States were required to provide the Commission with an assessment of their risk management capability, consisting of a self-assessment to carry out risk assessments, risk management planning and implement prevention and preparedness measures⁶. On that basis, the Commission prepared an overview of EU risk management capability in 2018.

The overview and its key conclusions were presented at the 42nd meeting of the Directors-General for Civil Protection of the European Union, of the European Economic Area and of the candidate countries (Bucharest, 9-10 April 2019).

Lessons learned from the process will be incorporated into the new guidelines, to be further developed according to the amended UCPM Decision.

8. Response to emergencies

Since the beginning of January 2019, the UCPM has been activated **nine** times (eight requests for assistance outside the EU and one inside the EU).



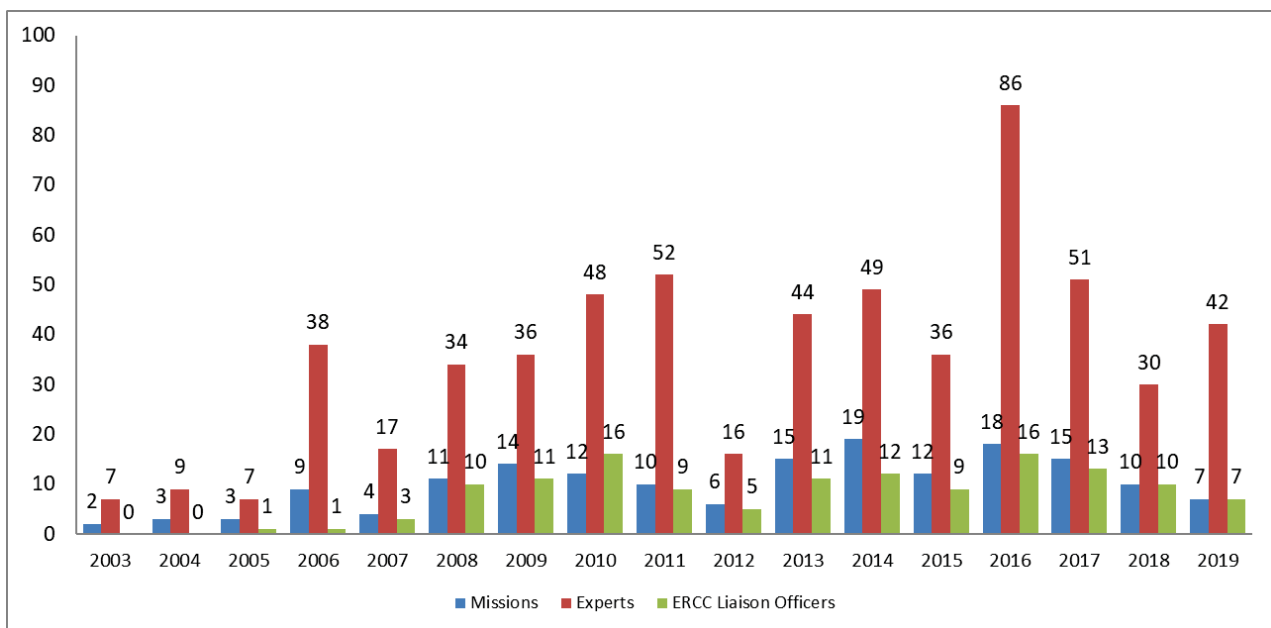
⁶ The deadline for the first submissions expired in August 2018, three years after the finalisation of the relevant guidelines.

The emergencies which resulted in activation of the UCPM were as follows:

- Biological/medical: **Democratic Republic of the Congo** – Ebola outbreak – Support to World Health Organisation (WHO) (5 April)
- Floods: **Iran** (8 April)
- Preparedness/advisory: **Bolivia** - Preparedness mission (3 January) and **Georgia** – Preparedness mission (12 February)
- Marine pollution: **France** – Grande America Vessel on fire - Oil spills (10 March)
- Storms (Cyclones, Hurricanes): **Mozambique** – Cyclone (20 March); **India** – Cyclone - - Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) (22 May)
- Environmental emergency: **Solomon Islands** (13 March)
- Forest Fires: **Guatemala** (14 May)

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) also monitored and shared information on forest fires in Norway and Sweden at the end of April.

So far, in 2019 there have been seven European Union Civil Protection (EUCP) missions, with 42 experts and seven ERCC liaison officers deployed. Out of those, six experts were EU experts assigned to the UN and WHO, and one was from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).



The Copernicus Emergency Management Service (EMS) was activated in response to **23** requests for satellite mapping, producing more than **200** maps. In addition, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) responded with specialised oil-spill satellite mapping to one request for satellite maps in a marine pollution case.

UCPM activations inside the EU

France – Marine pollution – March 2019

On 10 March, the vessel Grande America (Italian flagged) caught fire in the Gulf of Biscay, close to French shores. Consequently, several oil spills were detected and 30 containers were left at sea. On 12 March, the vessel was reported sunk and most of the cargo/containers were dispersed in the sea. France issued requests for assistance using the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) Marine Pollution, on 12 March for satellite imagery, and on 13 March for two oil spill response vessels and two drones for aerial surveillance.

On 12 March, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)'s CleanSeaNet service was activated and two response vessels were deployed by EMSA. On 25 March, the total amount recovered was estimated at 38 tonnes of solid hydrocarbon and 474 m³ of liquid pollution (hydrocarbon mixed with seawater). On 19 April, France closed the emergency in CECIS Marine Pollution.

UCPM activations outside the EU

a. Bolivia – Preparedness mission – January 2019

On 3 January, the UN Environment/OCHA Joint Unit (JEU) requested one environmental expert from the UCPM to support an assessment mission to develop a national disaster risk reduction strategy in Bolivia. The EU expert was deployed to La Paz as part of the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) mission from 14 to 28 January. It consisted of field visits to three regions at risk of snowfall (Oruro), flooding (Beni), and drought and fire (Tarija) and provided analysis and recommendations on local infrastructure and preparedness measures. The mission's preliminary findings and recommendations were presented to 100 governmental officials in La Paz on 28 January.

b. Georgia – Preparedness mission – February 2019

On 12 February, a request for assistance was received from Georgia to assess its current civil protection system and develop a roadmap for the creation of a training centre for firefighters, rescuers and local crisis managers. The ERCC deployed an EUCP team of 12 experts to Georgia from 13-21 March.

The outcome of their assessment was presented on 20 March in Tbilisi in the presence of high-level representatives from different departments. The mission ended on 22 March and the final report is being finalised. The Emergency Management Service of Georgia will report to the European Commission on the follow-up to the recommendations within one year.

c. Mozambique – Tropical Cyclone – March 2019

Between 14 and 15 March, Tropical Cyclone Idai made landfall as a category four cyclone near Beira City (Sofala Province). The high winds and heavy precipitation caused flash flooding and subsequent deaths, destruction of livelihoods and properties, leaving more than 600 people dead and an estimated 1.85 million people in need in Mozambique.

The UCPM was activated on 20 March following a request for assistance from Mozambique's National Authorising Office.

In total, nine Participating States contributed with offers of assistance through the UCPM, out of which five provided in-kind assistance. Six Participating States contributed by sending modules/response capacities that provided healthcare, clean water and communications support to the affected population in and around Beira, of which four were modules from the European Civil Protection Pool (ECP). Almost EUR 4 million in transport co-financing was requested by the Participating States, for the first time under the new legislation.

Two EUCP teams were deployed to Mozambique together with four ERCC liaison officers and one ECDC epidemiologist. The first team arrived in Mozambique on 23 March, and was replaced by the second team in mid-April. The two teams combined consisted of 16 experts representing nine different Participating States. In addition, the UCPM also provided two hydrology experts from the United Nations Disaster and Coordination (UNDAC) team.

41 maps were produced by the European Commission's Copernicus emergency satellite mapping service and the Presidency launched a monitoring page in the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) platform, constantly fed with operational information by the ERCC.

This was one of the biggest UCPM operations outside the EU, given the number of EU rescuers/staff deployed (more than 300) and the length of deployment (more than six weeks). It was by far the largest medical component deployed under the UCPM: four Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs), with more than 170 doctors and nurses.

Nevertheless, preliminary lessons indicate that an earlier deployment of the ERCC liaison officers and the full EUCP team would have facilitated both increased visibility of the response and better coordination of the UCPM operations during the first response phase.

d. Solomon Islands – Environmental emergency - March 2019

The bauxite bulk carrier MV Solomon Trader was grounded at Lavagu Bay in the Solomon Islands on 4 February. The vessel, leaking oil since 15 February, was carrying approximately 750 tonnes of hydrocarbons, of which an estimated 100 tonnes have already leaked into the surrounding marine environment.

Given the complexity of the operation, the national authorities requested additional support from the UN. Subsequently, the ERCC received a request for assistance from the UN Environment/OCHA Joint Unit (JEU) for one ecologist and one eco-toxicologist with specific expertise in oil spillages.

As no nominations were received through CECIS, the ERCC closed the emergency on 19 March.

e. DRC – Ebola outbreak – Support to WHO – April 2019

On 4 April, WHO made a request for assistance through the ERCC for experts in Ebola medical evacuation (medevac) preparedness, isolation bubbles and consumables.

One Participating State offered three experienced experts, who provided two training courses on the use of the Medevac EpiShuttle system to relevant stakeholders in Beni on 25 and 27 April. A second round of specific training is scheduled for the beginning of June in Goma/Beni and Geneva, the latter in the form of training of trainers. In addition, the same Participating State donated three additional EpiShuttles.

Since the Ebola outbreak in DRC in May 2018, the ERCC is keeping Participating States informed of the development of the situation on a weekly basis through the information transmission case in CECIS and through regular meetings.

f. Iran – Floods – April 2019

An extended period of severe weather in northern and south-western parts of Iran have resulted in devastating flooding in Lorestan, Khuzestan and Golestan provinces. On 8 April, the UCPM was activated following a request from the Iranian authorities for assistance in the form of medical care, water and sanitation, shelter, non-food items, rescue equipment and tools.

An ERCC Liaison Officer was deployed to Tehran on 23 April to coordinate with the national authorities and facilitate the arrival and distribution of EU assistance from five Participating States. All EU assistance has been distributed to the affected provinces by the Iranian Red Crescent.

In the absence of an EU delegation in Tehran, the Presidency supported the mission and organised a briefing with the EU embassies on site. The ambassadors were briefed on operational developments and the need for further in-kind assistance was emphasised.

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre also shared a dam release simulation report with the Iranian authorities, in preparation for a worst-case scenario.

14 maps were produced by the European Commission's Copernicus Emergency Management Service, and the Romanian Presidency launched a monitoring page on the IPCR platform.

g. Guatemala – Forest Fires – May 2019

On 14 May the UCPM was activated based on the request for assistance received from the Government of Guatemala related to the ongoing forest fires affecting this country. The request involved technical expertise in the form of civil protection experts to provide strategic, analytical and logistical support with a view to optimising the response operations. An EUCP team of eight experts and one ERCC liaison officer was deployed as of 19 May for approximately two weeks. At the time of the report, the mission is still ongoing.

h. India – Tropical Cyclone - Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) – May 2019

The UN Resident Coordinator in India has requested assistance from the UCPM in support of a PDNA in Odisha, India, following the tropical cyclone FANI. The request is for one expert in the area of telecommunications damage assessment. Nominations were still ongoing at the time of this report.
