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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

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Subject: Council conclusions on strengthening whole-of-society resilience in the context of civil protection, including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) preparedness

Delegations will find in annex the abovementioned Council conclusions, as approved by the Council (Justice and Home Affairs) at its 3955th meeting held on 8-9 June 2023.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON STRENGTHENING WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY
RESILIENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF CIVIL PROTECTION, INCLUDING CBRN-
PREPAREDNESS**

Introduction

1. Having regard to Article 196 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which encourages cooperation between Member States to address disasters, and Article 222 TFEU, under which the Union and its Member States act in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is affected by a disaster;
2. Underlining that in recent years, Europe has experienced several parallel long-lasting, cross-sectoral and cross-border crises. This includes Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a large number of natural disasters such as earthquakes, wildfires, and floods, many of which are exacerbated by climate change, all of which require effective disaster management, and recognising the need for a whole-of-society resilience approach in responding to these needs and threats;
3. Having regard to the Council conclusions of 2009 on strengthening chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) security in the European Union – an EU CBRN Action Plan¹, the Council conclusions of 2009 on civil protection awareness raising², the Council conclusions of 2021 on enhancing preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises³, the European Council conclusions of December 2021 referring to our collective preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises as a major cross-cutting political priority for the Union⁴, and the Council conclusions of 2022 on civil protection work in view of climate change⁵ that stress the need for intensified actions to increase prevention, preparedness and response capacity in relation to climate change as well as the importance of citizens contributing to their own safety and resilience;

¹ 15505/1/09 REV1 + COR1 + COR2

² 9976/09

³ 14276/21

⁴ EUCO 22/21

⁵ 7146/22

4. Taking note of the Commission Communication and Recommendation on the Union Disaster Resilience Goals⁶, adopted 8 February 2023, setting out a non-binding common baseline to strengthen the EU's collective capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to the impacts of disasters, and to protect citizens, livelihoods and the environment;
5. Acknowledging that the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) plays a key role in Europe's response to natural and man-made disasters, including in the provision of in-kind assistance to Ukraine and other countries affected by Russia's war of aggression;

The Council of the European Union

6. Acknowledges the challenging times, with a full-scale war in Europe, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, stressing the importance of strengthening whole-of-society resilience in the context of civil protection in the face of an increasing number of long-term, complex, cross-border and cross-sectorial crises;
7. Appreciates the Commission's Communication and Recommendation on the non-binding Union Disaster Resilience Goals⁷, including the corresponding flagship initiatives, and underlines the importance to promote complementarity and possible future synergies with other work strands at EU-and global level, such as the implementation of the Directive on the resilience of critical entities⁸, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, as well as EU-NATO cooperation, in full respect of the principles of mutual openness and transparency, inclusiveness and reciprocity and decision-making autonomy, and on the basis of Union Disaster Resilience Goals and NATO seven baseline requirements for national resilience through the dedicated EU-NATO Structured Dialogue on resilience;
8. Recalls that in the civil protection domain, initial steps have been taken to strengthen whole-of-society resilience;

⁶ 6281/23 + ADD1, 6259/23

⁷ Commission Recommendation (C/2023/400) of 8 February 2023 on Union disaster resilience goals 2023/C 56/01, OJ C 56, 15.2.2023, p. 1.; Commission Communication COM (2023) 61 Final

⁸ Directive (EU) 2022/2557 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on the resilience of critical entities and repealing Council Directive 2008/114/EC, OJ L 333, 27.12.2022, p. 164–198

9. Welcomes the discussions on a European crisis awareness and preparedness initiative and stresses that it should be based on an all-hazards approach with the aim to empower the population to be resilient when societal functions are disrupted;
10. Appreciates the steps taken by the Commission to initiate a mapping and feasibility study to further conceptualise a European crisis awareness and preparedness initiative, taking into account the principle of subsidiarity and the need for flexibility for Member States to adapt the initiative to national variations;
11. Welcomes a step-by-step approach, starting with a mapping of good public-private cooperation practices, that could contribute to enhancing private sector involvement in civil protection activities during prevention, preparedness and response phases;
12. Acknowledges that the UCPM response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is the largest and most complex EU civil protection operation since the establishment of the UCPM and underlines the need to strengthen civil protection at both Union and Member State level;
13. Recalls the work done by the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and by the Council, including in the framework of the activation of the Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements (IPCR) for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
14. Notes in particular the proposed measures in CBRN preparedness and response arrangements that could be taken by the EU and the Member States in light of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
15. Underlines the importance of strengthening preparedness for CBRN incidents along the entire risk spectrum, both in and outside Ukraine;
16. Acknowledges that a number of actions need to be taken in the short-term, in order to further enhance preparedness in the event of a CBRN incident, but that also longer-term actions are needed to strengthen the Union's ability to prepare for and respond to CBRN incidents;
17. Underlines the importance of national CBRN resilience and the strengthening of CBRN preparedness and response capabilities at both national and EU level, thereby increasing the resilience of the EU, which simultaneously will enable support to third countries, including Ukraine;

18. Underlines the importance of civil-military cooperation regarding CBRN operations, including in the framework of EU-NATO cooperation in full respect of the agreed guiding principles, to ensure the coherence of capacity building efforts, adequate, reciprocal and non-discriminatory information sharing and coordinated response actions;

Invites the Member States to

19. Emphasise the need for a whole-of-society resilience approach in light of the increasing number of parallel long-lasting, cross-sectorial, and cross-border crises;
20. Support prevention and preparedness actions for the purpose of improving the capacity of the Union and its Member States to withstand the effects of a disaster which causes or is capable of causing multi-country, cross-border effects by promoting the implementation of the non-binding Union Disaster Resilience Goals;
21. Consider active participation in awareness and preparedness initiatives at EU-level, notably the newly proposed “preparEU”, with a particular focus on the preparedness of the individual, taking local, regional and national initiatives into account;
22. Incorporate and share, where appropriate, information about national risk awareness and preparedness campaigns to support the work of the flagship project under the Union disaster resilience goal 2;
23. Consider the further development of public-private cooperation practices that enhance civil protection activities in prevention, preparedness and response, where appropriate;
24. Further pursue the possibilities to offer and register new CBRN-relevant capacities into the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP);

25. Enhance cooperation within the Council, to support, as appropriate, coordination on communication, information actions and efforts in relation to preparedness for possible CBRN incidents. During an activation of the IPCR, in relation to possible CBRN incidents, the informal Crisis Communicator's Network (CCN), which sits as a part of the IPCR arrangements, should be tasked as appropriate by the Presidency to enhance communication to the public and coherent messaging on different aspects of the ongoing crisis. The CCN may also be tasked by the Presidency and IPCR roundtables to carry out other specific activities in relation to an ongoing crisis to explore possibilities for joint communication, information actions and efforts in relation to possible CBRN incidents;
26. Strengthen participation in CBRN-related trainings and exercises.

Invites the Commission to

27. Promote the implementation of the non-binding Union Disaster Resilience Goals, including the flagship initiatives and together with Member States assess the progress made, review and develop the goals, in light of changing needs and actions taken to address the gaps identified through lessons learnt, scenario-building and disaster management planning, on the whole territory of the European Union, including outermost regions, avoiding administrative burden and duplication;
28. Take forward, in close cooperation with Member States, work on a mapping and feasibility study to further conceptualise a European crisis awareness and preparedness initiative, including specific risks related to outermost regions of the EU;
29. Conduct, together with Member States a mapping of on-going cooperation with the private sector at EU and national level in the field of civil protection, while acknowledging Member States' different mandates and modes of implementation.

Regarding short-term CBRN measures, invites the Commission to

30. Enhance the capability of CBRN early warning, to ensure an effective and timely response, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including international organisations (e.g. IAEA, OPCW);

31. Ensure and facilitate specific CBRN scenario-based discussions with Member States, UCPM Participating States and relevant organisations to explore further actions;
32. Take necessary measures to explore the prospects for providing Member States with regular CBRN-specific information related to the war in Ukraine and CBRN risks, as appropriate, resulting in better collective preparedness and identification of supporting actions;
33. Accelerate the certification process of CBRN capacities registered in the European Civil Protection Pool, continue building up rescEU capacities, and explore together with Member States and international organisations, how CBRN capacities available at national level or within other organisations, can be utilised in the framework of UCPM;
34. Explore further possibilities to facilitate Member States' procurement of CBRN equipment including under rescEU, identify ways to further reduce capacity deployment times in the event of CBRN incidents and evaluate the effectiveness of activities and operations already taking place;
35. Explore solutions together with Member States to facilitate Member States' possibility to deploy civil protection related CBRN capacities to countries affected by conflict, and further explore training Ukrainian personnel;
36. Explore in close cooperation with Member States the prospects for setting up or expanding existing reach-back arrangements, to support first responders and other personnel with expert and analytical support through virtual means.

Regarding longer-term CBRN measures, invites the Commission, to

37. In close collaboration with Member States and relevant organisations, further explore possibilities to ensure that the UCPM is understood to be a primary channel for civil-protection related requests for material (teams, equipment, supplies etc.);
38. In close collaboration with Member States, further explore possibilities on how to address existing gaps in capacities needed to deal with cascading effects of major CBRN incidents;

39. Explore how to increase market access to different kinds of CBRN-relevant equipment, supplies and material by providing long-term purchase predictability;
 40. Follow-up with civil protection authorities concerning relevant training and exercise needs, and if possible, arrange more regular civil protection CBRN trainings and exercises;
 41. In close collaboration with Member States further discuss how to follow up and implement the proposed measures.
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