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COVER NOTE

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Delegations will find attached document COM(2025) 528 annex 2.

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ANNEX 2

ANNEX

to the

**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the
European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**

EU stockpiling strategy: Boosting the EU's material preparedness for crises

ANNEX 2 – The future of the rescEU stockpiles

The current risk landscape and operational experiences have highlighted the need to further develop and strengthen the rescEU reserve, in line with the key action set out by the Preparedness Union Strategy. The aim of this underpinning should be to complement national capacities and be pursued in full alignment with other Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) initiatives such as the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP), to optimise synergies and operational gains.

The first rescEU capacities were set up to respond to the increasing and very specific risk of wildfires. Additional types of capacities followed, in response to the changing risk landscape. In line with the Preparedness Union Strategy, it is important to adopt a proactive preparedness mindset, which would allow rescEU to meet current and future challenges.

Operational experience has highlighted the effectiveness of versatile multi-purpose capacities in delivering support in a wide variety of scenarios, as reflected in the recently adopted capacity progress report on the response capacities of the UCPM ⁽¹⁾. Specifically, it has proved economically efficient to retrieve high-value loaned assets to serve other emergencies and enhance the overall sustainability of the reserve. Any future capacity building needs to be coupled with timely replenishment of stockpiles, making it possible to restore readiness and increase the reliability of the rescEU capacities over a longer timeframe.

To continue building solid and sustainable strategic reserves at EU level, the Commission proposes to further consolidate existing reserves, to ensure continuity and optimise the return on investment. Potential additional types of capacities, for which the EU added value would be optimised, could be identified and possibly quantified, together with the Member States.

Existing rescEU capacities

In view of the work undertaken with the Member States through the scenario-building initiative and the risks posed by climate change and security-related threats, there is a need to continue developing certain types of rescEU assets, to increase the overall level of preparedness at EU level and ensure a return on past investments in recent years.

On that basis, the Commission proposes to step up the efforts in the following areas:

- **Fire fighting assets:** The risk of wildfires has increased across Europe. Further firefighting assets are therefore necessary to boost preparedness across the UCPM. These include possible future European projects and initiatives reinforcing EU strategic autonomy on key civilian response assets. As a result of the sharp increase in prices, it has proved impossible to secure all those capacities included in the relevant strategy, adopted in 2019 by the Civil Protection Committee, established by the UCPM. The EU must, as a bare minimum, especially for countries historically prone to wildfires, maintain the current level of ambition in relation to medium amphibious planes and helicopters. Further capacities, not foreseen under the 2019 Strategy – in

¹ Capacity Progress Report on the Response Capacities of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (COM(2025) 286 final and SWD(2025)).

the form of additional helicopters and/ or light planes - will be needed to better equip some areas newly threatened by wildfires.

- Medical stockpiles and stockpiles for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) emergencies: One lesson learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic was the importance of developing and sustaining comprehensive medical stockpiles. While medical devices can be used in a different range of scenarios and emergencies, the stockpiles are also targeted to existing and possible future health-related threats, such as zoonotic diseases, burns and infectious diseases. Building stocks of further vaccines, countermeasures, and devices, as well as food items, should be further considered. To enhance the management and sustainability of these strategic reserves, innovative and alternative stock models such as virtual stockpiling (including vendor-based inventories) should be explored.
- Specialised medical and CBRN expertise: The changing threat landscape calls for more intensive efforts to develop highly specialised teams in the medical and/or CBRN areas, to address very specific scenarios. CBRN detection and decontamination teams will remain crucial assets in relevant emergencies, similar to emergency medical teams (EMTs) and their relevant modular specialised care cells. EMTs would support national healthcare systems in case of a collapse of hospital infrastructures in one or more Member States. The development of the EMTs and specialised care cells should also include a strategy for the timely replenishment of relevant material after deployment, to enable an effective response in multiple large-scale emergency scenarios in the future.
- Medical evacuation: Recent crises and emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the earthquake in Türkiye and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, have shown the need to improve medical evacuation capacities under the UCPM, possibly in conjunction with specialised medical care on the ground to provide comprehensive medical treatment. More assets need to be available for a range of scenarios in the future involving patients who may be highly infectious, CBRN contaminated, requiring intensive care or lightly injured, for example. There is also a need to strengthen capacity in situations where mass evacuations are needed. Alongside fully fledged capacities, specific medical evacuation (Medevac) modules could be considered, enabling commercial planes to be rapidly converted to be used in scenarios requiring additional Medevac capacity, such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis and armed conflict.
- Shelter: Requests for shelter items have exponentially increased in recent years as the consequence of earthquakes, mass displacements and/or extreme weather events. Therefore, different types of emergency shelter are necessary, which must take account of local specificities and of the needs of vulnerable groups, i.e. those most exposed in disaster scenarios. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the earthquake in Türkiye and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine it was reasonable to plan shelter reserves for a few thousand people, but needs have increased. The high deployment rate of existing reserves and the limited number of remaining deployable assets point to the need to scale up this type of capacity and formulate a comprehensive EU approach to shelter during emergencies.

- Transport and logistics: Multi-purpose assets are key enablers in all sorts of emergency operations. They can be adapted to meet specific needs – for cargo transport, transport of people, transport of cultural heritage artefacts, or for medical evacuation. Equipping the UCPM with this type of asset would increase collective preparedness and enable it to deal with different types of emergencies, including those that might occur simultaneously.
- Energy: Since it was set up in 2022, the rescEU reserve of generators has provided a lifeline to Ukraine during Russia's war of aggression. In recent months, other emergencies such as the Storm Éowyn in Ireland have also demonstrated the usefulness of such a strategic stockpile, in different scenarios. Given its pertinence, it is crucial to maintain a sufficient EU stockpile of energy supply items. These will be useful in future emergencies and should make it possible to meet the initial target of being able to deal with three events at the same time.

To increase efficiency and optimise resources, special attention will be given to ensuring that the reserves are sustainably managed so that value added by rescEU is maximised. rescEU reserves should also be inclusive and take into account the specific needs of possible beneficiaries and vulnerable groups. Also, rescEU relies on skilled technical experts, such as medical teams, to effectively respond to natural disasters and emergencies. Innovative solutions, such as increased circularity and enhancing the already established cooperation with the private sector around private donations and virtual stockpiling will also be considered as ways to supporting the development and sustainability of the EU strategic reserves.

Additional types of rescEU capacities

In recent years, the Commission and the Member States have worked together on 10 cross-sectoral EU-wide disaster scenarios, within the scenario-building initiative. Through this work, they have identified capacity needs at EU level that may warrant the development of new rescEU capacities. In addition, operational lessons learnt from previous UCPM emergencies also point to the need to add further to existing ECPP capacities and reinforce the rescEU reserve with additional assets. More recently, additional capacity gaps were described in a capacity progress report under the UCPM.

To address the gaps identified, either in the capacity progress report or as operational lessons learnt from past emergencies, the following additional cross-sectoral assets might be considered:

- mobile/pontoon bridges, which can also be used in conflict situations
- oversized and overweight load transport equipment
- water purification/wastewater treatment
- mobile cooling and hydration
- high-capacity pumping modules
- cable repair vessels, and functional modules in line with the recent EU Action Plan on Cable Security.
- communications capacities (e.g. broadband and secure telecommunications, satellite systems)
- capacities to deal with hybrid threats

- innovative capacities, such as drones and/or remotely piloted aircraft; and
- demining capacities

Such new capacities could further reinforce the EU's overall level of preparedness to face new types of emergencies related to climate change and the shifting security landscape.

Any future capacity-building under rescEU will be underpinned by needs identification with Member States, consultation of relevant stakeholders and mapping of existing capacities at national level, as well as market analysis, including when it comes to dual-use goods. This will avoid redundancies, increase efficiency, foster economies of scale, and possibly address market bottlenecks.

This continuous exchange and structured process will enable the Commission to identify new rescEU assets tailored to the needs of the civil protection community and other relevant constituencies, and capable of effectively supporting the EU's response to future emergencies and crises.

The legal framework provides for different tools, whose potential can be combined, to enhance a quick set-up while adapting to the relevant emergency at stake.

While the call for proposals and ensuing *grants* have been the default option for developing new assets, the Commission also has the option of *joint procurement* on behalf of Member States. This could be used where a quick coordinated process is conducive to economies of scale thanks to combined purchase power.

Where a simplified process is needed for reasons of urgency, the Commission could make use of *direct procurement*, to quickly obtain items while streamlining the process and reducing the administrative burden on Member States. In those situations, *physical stockpiling* will be preferred for reasons of immediate availability and deployability, and particularly because it provides tangible control. However, *virtual stockpiling* could also be explored to reduce storage costs and increase flexibility and sustainability. Special attention will be given to the assessment of the overall market situation and operational requirements for specific items, for which a deployment might be time sensitive.

As regards deployment, the UCPM transport arrangements, including the option of covering up to 100% of costs through rescEU, will facilitate the rapid mobilisation of any necessary assistance. To further support Member States in managing the cross-sectoral consequences of crises, specific types of capacities established by EU agencies (e.g. European Maritime Safety Agency vessels) could potentially be deployed under the UCPM through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre. This will help to enhance synergies and increase the overall effectiveness of the EU's response to all-hazards' emergency situations.