

Brussels, 20 November 2014
(OR. en)

15831/14

PROCIV 100
COHAFA 120

"I/A" ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
No. prev. doc.:	13382/1/14 REV 1
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on cooperation between humanitarian aid and civil protection authorities: building a new partnership for disaster management - Adoption

1. In the light of the outcome of a consultation meeting, co-organised by the Presidency and the Commission, held in Brussels on 12 September 2014, the Presidency drew up a set of draft Council conclusions.
2. These draft Council conclusions were examined by the Working Party on Civil Protection and by the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid. Agreement was subsequently reached through a written procedure, on 12 November.
3. On this basis, the Permanent Representatives Committee is asked to agree on the text set out in the Annex and to submit it to the Council for adoption at a forthcoming meeting.

Draft Council conclusions on cooperation between humanitarian aid and civil protection authorities: building a new partnership for disaster management

1. Recalling Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism¹, which states that the Commission and the Member States shall identify and promote synergies between civil protection assistance and humanitarian aid funding provided by the Union and Member States in the planning of response operations for humanitarian crises outside the Union;
2. Recalling Council Regulation No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid²;
3. Considering the Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission of 2008 - "The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid"³ which emphasises that civil protection assistance in response to humanitarian situations must be in line with the humanitarian principles and should be needs-driven and complementary to and coherent with humanitarian aid, recognises the central and overall coordinating role of the United Nations, particularly the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in promoting a coherent international response to humanitarian crises; and specifies that, in complex emergencies, recourse to civil protection assets should rather be the exception;
4. Recalling the Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ("EU Aid Volunteers initiative")⁴;

¹ OJ L 347 of 20.12.2013, p. 924.

² OJ L 163 of 2.07.1996, p. 1.

³ OJ C 25 of 30.01.2008, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 122 of 24.4.2014, p. 1.

5. Having regard to the Council conclusions on the EU approach to resilience of 28 May 2013⁵, which underline the importance of assisting vulnerable and disaster-prone countries and regions in developing effective early-warning information systems and disaster management and risk reduction strategies;
6. Underlining the civilian nature of European civil protection, while considering the UN's “Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations and Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies” and the “Oslo Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief”, which recall that the use of civil protection resources in response to humanitarian situations must be in line with the humanitarian principles and emphasise that military assets should only be used as a last resort under civilian leadership;
7. Acknowledging that significant progress has been achieved in promoting closer cooperation between civil protection and humanitarian partners in recent years;
8. Considering the outcome of the consultation meeting involving both civil protection and humanitarian aid experts, which took place in Brussels on 12 September 2014 and demonstrated the added value of improving synergies between humanitarian aid and civil protection authorities.

⁵ 9325/13.

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9. Emphasises that enhanced cooperation between civil protection and humanitarian aid authorities in disaster response operations as well as in prevention and preparedness missions can make an important contribution to the shared objective of saving lives in risk-prone countries outside the Union.
10. Stresses the importance of further enhancing the European response in humanitarian crises, building coordination and cooperation between civil protection and humanitarian aid assistance in line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.
11. Agrees that in the field of disaster preparedness and response as well as disaster risk reduction, relations with the relevant United Nations bodies and UN-led structures in the field should be further enhanced with a view to improving cooperation and coordination, building upon existing arrangements, while recognising the UN's overall coordination role.
12. While acknowledging their different mandates and *modi operandi*, recognises the complementary role of humanitarian aid and civil protection, and thus underlines the importance of increasing awareness amongst the two communities in order to strengthen synergies in providing the European response to disasters as well as in promoting disaster management.
13. Underlines that the potential of the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) in linking up civil protection and humanitarian aid authorities, together with other relevant EU bodies and services, should be further encouraged.
14. Recognises the potential of the European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC/"voluntary pool") also in humanitarian crises outside the Union, emphasising that its mobilisation should not reduce the general preparedness level for disasters inside the Union and be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure efficient response.

15. Underlines the importance of building local capacities in disaster prone areas and recognises the potential input of European civil protection and humanitarian aid actors in strengthening the resilience of communities.
16. Recognises the importance of Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) as part of an integrated approach towards mitigating crises and disasters, in particular through improved disaster preparedness.

Invites the Member States to:

17. Promote, where relevant, initiatives to raise awareness regarding the mandates, roles and *modi operandi* of humanitarian aid and civil protection authorities, communities and experts in order to encourage an effective exchange of information and coordination within and between the Member States and the Union. This should include information-sharing, coordination arrangements and, where relevant, joint training and exercises.
18. Foster coherence in the European response to humanitarian crises by:
 - making full use of the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) for information exchange between the civil protection points of contact;
 - enhancing communication between the ERCC and the humanitarian aid authorities in the Member States including, where necessary, the identification of points of contact;
 - sharing at national level, between humanitarian aid and civil protection authorities, relevant information available within the European Emergency and Disaster Response Information System (EDRIS) and the CECIS system.
19. Encourage the sharing of knowledge and expertise in the field of disaster management, including best practices developed in cooperation with the scientific community and the use of innovative technologies and tools, to strengthen the capacity for disaster management in risk-prone countries outside the Union.

20. Incorporate, where appropriate, the elements of early recovery in planning acute response thereby making the overall response more effective and efficient.

Invites the Commission to:

21. Make the best use of the available tools to increase, where necessary, awareness and knowledge among the civil protection and humanitarian aid communities on their respective mandates, roles and *modi operandi*.
22. Improve cooperation and coordination and in particular:
- a) Develop preparedness measures, through working groups from both civil protection and humanitarian aid communities, which can include practical guidance and Codes of Conduct for activities in different contexts, based on agreed international standards;
 - b) Promote joint training, exercises and sharing good practices and lessons-learned also based on the abovementioned preparedness measures;
 - c) Develop a concept for the strategic use of advisory missions under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, including their scope and duration, and where appropriate the use of European civil protection expertise in building or restoring national, regional and local disaster management structures, and supporting humanitarian partners in building capacities and strengthening the resilience of communities;
 - d) Link up civil protection initiatives with ongoing and planned disaster preparedness initiatives of Member States and the Union such as development or humanitarian initiatives for disaster preparedness or disaster risk reduction, where possible and appropriate;
 - e) Link relief with longer-term efforts including in terms of reconsidering the duration of civil protection missions and operations and/or ensuring handover to other players and funding instruments.

23. Promote initiatives aimed at combining humanitarian aid and civil protection capacities in the field of disaster management. Such initiatives should be connected to development cooperation actions and instruments in coherence with the United Nations initiatives, in order to achieve synergies and ensure the sustainability of assistance provided outside the Union. Concrete steps in this direction could include, *inter alia*: possible pilot and preparatory initiatives in the field of disaster management, risk assessment, capacity building, early warning and host nation support involving both communities.
 24. Make efficient use of the ERCC in linking civil protection and humanitarian aid governmental authorities, notably through information exchange and regular consultation during crises.
 25. Convene regular joint meetings of the civil protection and humanitarian aid authorities of Member States to encourage further exchange of information and report back to the Council as appropriate.
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