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From:	Presidency
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
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Subject:	Report from the Maltese 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 MALTESE 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 Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The agenda for the Working Party on Civil Protection (PROCIV) is to some extent determined by developments both inside and outside the EU, and the emphasis is more often than not on land-based emergencies. The Maltese Presidency, in line with the overarching Presidency priority, has shifted focus to the maritime challenges facing civil protection authorities. To some degree, this report should be seen in relation to the work covered by the trio partners (the Netherlands and Slovakia) on enhancing the resilience of critical infrastructure.

Civil protection was also involved in the response to crises around the globe, from the ongoing migration and refugee crisis within the EU, to several activations of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) outside the EU.

## **1. Maritime challenges**

*“We are, naturally, vitally interested in the sea which surrounds us and through which we live and breathe” – Arvid Pardo<sup>1</sup>*

With a majority of the Member States having a blue border and all 28 Members relying, to varying degrees, on sea transport for the provision of goods, the EU's dependence on the seas and oceans is evident and undeniable. One single marine accident may have repercussions at regional, national, and possibly international levels which may seriously affect and jeopardise the coastal critical infrastructure. It is with this in mind that Malta brought the issue of the maritime challenges faced by civil protection practitioners to the fore.

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<sup>1</sup> First Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations (1964-1971).

While civil protection entities are not considered as the main authorities responsible for the management of maritime incidents, they are nevertheless key partners when major maritime emergencies occur. The scope of discussions under the Maltese Presidency was not to address 'unexceptional' incidents, but rather to address those events or incidents which have catastrophic consequences with adverse effects on a significant number of individuals, either directly by putting their lives at risk, or indirectly by affecting their livelihoods for months, if not years, following the event.

One case in point is the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in which 4.9 million barrels of oil were released into the open sea following the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon drilling platform. The response to the incident, discussed during the Presidency Workshop held on 19-20 January in Malta, was particularly significant, costing around USD 61 billion, and the response operation lasted almost five years. The capsizing of the Costa Concordia cruise ship in 2012 was another case discussed at PROCIV.

Climate change may also impact on the severity of such maritime incidents. The receding polar ice caps have made remote regions more accessible to cruise ships, thus encouraging operators to organise cruises to places and ports close to the polar region. While this may encourage greater economic activity in the region, there may not be adequate resources available in the vicinity to handle the rescue and evacuation of thousands of civilians on board a cruise ship in the event of an incident.

The Presidency endeavoured to tackle the issue of maritime challenges with a clear focus on civil protection, given that, whatever the circumstances, civil protection always plays a key role where lives are at stake. Considering the outcomes of the Presidency Workshop held in January, and in view of the vast spectrum of topics related to the subject, the Presidency structured subsequent discussions around three principal themes: the role of civil protection entities in different types of maritime incidents; taking stock of tools and current EU capacities; and the new and emerging technologies.

The outcomes of the Presidency Workshop established that, although not primary, civil protection's involvement in the response to maritime emergencies was vital, particularly in view of the resources available through the UCPM. With maritime traffic at an all-time high, and considering the emerging trend in global shipping for fewer but larger ships, there is a greater risk that when accidents occur their impact will be more severe than before.

The scope and remit of civil protection interventions in maritime incidents has changed over the decades as a result of increased maritime traffic, climate change and the potential need to rescue citizens from vessels in distress, including in remote regions.

Based on the discussions with delegations, the Presidency recommends:

- establishing national maritime risk assessments by those Member States which have considered such risks, as well as supporting and promoting risk assessment and mapping activity at regional level through the sharing of good practices, methodologies and expertise;
- establishing the compilation of Regional Maritime Risk Maps;
- organising regional training exercises with a scenario of major emergencies in remote locations considering that more vessels are venturing into remote locations that were previously inaccessible;
- greater information sharing between Member States on their experiences of responding to such major emergencies.

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<sup>2</sup> For delegations' written contributions to the Presidency discussion paper on the role of civil protection in maritime incidents, see 7139/1/17 REV 1 + ADD 1-4.

The Presidency commends the invaluable work by the Commission and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in the promotion of maritime safety, and welcomes the fact that DG-ECHO and EMSA have been exploring avenues for cooperation. The Presidency also welcomes the recent efforts by REMPEC and EMSA to achieve closer collaboration. This is a step in the right direction towards improved harmonisation in the sector. However, discussions underscored the need for greater awareness, particularly among regional maritime bodies, of the capacities and capabilities available via the UCPM and EMSA. In this regard, the Presidency recommends:

- greater effort among Member States to strengthen the cooperation between civil protection and maritime response entities, and to register national assets suitable for maritime emergencies within the UCPM;
- improved communication between the relevant stakeholders, including Member States, the Commission, EMSA, and other regional entities;
- considering the possibility of including wildlife (marine life) experts within the UCPM response, since the protection of the environment is also a key part of a response to maritime emergencies;
- considering the possibility of carrying out exercises involving a 'terrorism at sea' scenario since, although this is not the primary responsibility of civil protection entities, they are major stakeholders in providing assistance.

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<sup>3</sup> Delegations' comments on taking stock of tools and current EU capacities: 7983/17.

Industry and research laboratories are constantly coming up with new inventions and updating existing technologies. It is therefore vital that national authorities are aware of the latest technological advances in the sector, as well as being well informed of their pros and cons. In light of this, the Presidency encourages:

- the Commission and Member States to develop the necessary links between research institutes and the emergency response community in order to make available or update existing technologies which could improve a response to an emergency;
- the exchange of information on new technologies and their use, in the field of maritime safety and emergency response, between the appropriate agencies. Existing information exchange frameworks should be used or adjusted before considering the development of new tools;
- greater use of existing tools and platforms for the sharing of knowledge and experiences, such as the Joint Research Centre's *Disaster Management Knowledge Centre*, and the *Community of Users on Safe, Secure and Resilient Societies*, coordinated by DG HOME.

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<sup>4</sup> Delegations' comments on new emerging technologies in the maritime sector: 9577/17.

## **2. Management of the consequences following terrorist attacks**

The Maltese Presidency has continued the deliberations on the management of the consequences of terrorist attacks which started under the Netherlands and Slovak Presidencies following the recent terrorist attacks.

As a follow-up to the Council discussion in December 2016, the Presidency has put forward a set of possible areas for actions and implementation measures, in particular regarding training, exercises, thematic workshops, public awareness-raising and exchange of good practices.<sup>5</sup>

The Commission is working to deliver on the actions identified and has, inter alia, held a workshop on soft target protection, with the participation of Member States.

The Directors-General for Civil Protection held a further exchange of views on management of the consequences following terrorist attacks at their meeting in Malta on 26 and 27 April 2017, also in the light of ongoing activities by the Commission in the field of security.

## **3. EU-NATO relationship**

As a reciprocal gesture in response to the NATO International Staff briefing to PROCIV on NATO's current efforts to enhance resilience and civil preparedness on 19 December 2016, on 10 April 2017 the PROCIV Presidency briefed NATO's Civil Emergency Planning Committee on the Presidency programme in the field of civil protection. On that occasion the Chair of the Friends of the Presidency Group on the Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements and the General Secretariat of the Council also briefed NATO on the IPCR.

This was in line with the European Council conclusions for the further enhancement of the EU-NATO relationship, and the subsequent EU-NATO Joint Declaration of July 2016.

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<sup>5</sup> 5940/17.

#### 4. Special Report of the European Court of Auditors

On 18 January the European Court of Auditors adopted its Special Report, entitled *Union Civil Protection Mechanism: the coordination of responses to disasters outside the EU has been broadly effective*<sup>6</sup>, based on an analysis of the response to three recent disasters: floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014), the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa (2014-2016), and the Nepal earthquake (2015).

Considering that the Commission has been broadly effective in facilitating the coordination of responses to disasters outside the Union since the beginning of 2014, the Court recommended that the Commission should aim to:

- gain time in the critical early stages of the response,
- improve certain features of CECIS,
- strengthen coordination and potential synergies on the ground,
- explore potential changes to arrangements for deploying epidemiologists, and
- strengthen accountability through improved reporting.

As mandated by COREPER on 1 February<sup>7</sup>, PROCIV (in cooperation with the COHAFA Working Party) examined the report and prepared relevant Council conclusions<sup>8</sup>.

#### 5. Interim evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)

In accordance with point (a) of Article 34(2) of the UCPM, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and to the Council an interim evaluation report on the implementation of the Mechanism during the first half of its implementation cycle (2014-2016), with the aim of assessing whether the general and specific objectives of the UCPM are being met, and formulating recommendations on how to further increase its effectiveness. Over recent months a broad consultation process involving Participating States, a number of stakeholders and the general public has been conducted by an independent contractor.

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<sup>6</sup> 5643/17; OJ C 19, 20.1.2017, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> 5644/17.

<sup>8</sup> 9056/17.



A presentation of the preliminary findings of the external evaluation report, followed by a floor discussion, took place at the 38th Meeting of the Directors-General for Civil Protection held on 26-27 April 2017 in Malta. The report will provide the basis for a Commission Staff Working Document (SWD) and a report to the European Parliament and the Council which will summarise the key messages.

In addition, in accordance with Article 12(4) of the UCPM, on 17 February 2017 the Commission issued a **report on progress made and gaps remaining in the European Emergency Response Capacity**<sup>9</sup>. The report compares commitments made to the voluntary pool and capacities available outside the voluntary pool with the established capacity goals, as of 1 October 2016. It concludes that the main gaps concern forest firefighting planes and shelter. Further assessment is needed for CBRN-related assets, big field hospitals, medevac, remotely-piloted aircraft systems and communication teams.

## **6. Disaster Risk Reduction**

The Fifth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Cancun, Mexico, on 22-26 May 2017, has been the first occasion for the global community to take stock of implementation of the 2015 Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030). PROCIV, in cooperation with COHAFA, prepared an EU statement delivered by the Commission on behalf of the EU and its Member States.<sup>10</sup>

This meeting was preceded by the European Open Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Istanbul on 27-28 March 2017.

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<sup>9</sup> 6448/17.

<sup>10</sup> 8278/2/17 REV 2.

## **7. Implementation of Council Regulation (EU) No 2016/369 on the provision of emergency support within the Union**

On 15 March 2016 the Council adopted a Regulation on the provision of emergency support within the Union, which was immediately activated for the refugee crisis in Greece. 12 months after the adoption of the Regulation, as required in Article 8, the Commission issued a report on 15 March 2017 on the implementation of the Regulation<sup>11</sup>. EUR 191 920 000 have been contracted to 14 partner organisations, with a focus on five priorities - shelter, cash assistance, protection, education in emergencies and health care.

On 4 April 2017 a high-level workshop, 'Refugee Crisis in Greece: Bringing Together the Humanitarian and Civil Protection Communities', was held in Athens as a first step towards identifying lessons from the activations of both the UCPM and the abovementioned Emergency Support Regulation for the refugee crisis in Greece.

The workshop served as a forum to gather broad, initial reflections of those involved in the response, particularly in relation to the interactions between differing emergency response instruments used during coinciding time periods. This could provide a basis for more technical discussions in future as part of the regular 'lessons learned' meetings organised via the UCPM.

## **8. Response to disasters and crises**

The responses to the migration crisis in Europe and the humanitarian response in Iraq are still ongoing. In addition, the UCPM has been activated twice during the term of the Maltese Presidency. These activations were in response to forest fires in Chile and floods in Peru.

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<sup>11</sup> 7395/17.

## **A. Ongoing crises**

### **a) Refugee and migration crisis**

Five Participating States activated the UCPM in the context of this crisis: Hungary on 28 June and 11 September 2015, Serbia on 21 September 2015, Slovenia on 22 October 2015, Croatia on 26 October 2015, Greece on 3 December 2015. These activations have been closed.

On 29 February 2016 Greece activated the UCPM for the second time. The main reasons were that Greece was still facing challenges concerning provision of accommodation and hygiene supplies. The second Greek activation is still ongoing. In total, 26 Participating States have provided more than 800 000 relief items for the different activations in the context of the refugee crisis. The Commission has supported the offering countries with transport co-financing totalling EUR 1.5 million.

### **b) Iraq/Mosul – civil protection support to the humanitarian response**

The Mosul operation which began on 16-17 October 2016 led to large-scale displacement, with over 580 000 people forced to flee their homes and displaced since the beginning of the military operations (as of 4 May 2017) and many more trapped in areas affected by the conflict. Those displaced and in areas newly retaken required urgent emergency assistance to cope with the hardship of winter in Iraq, poor water and sanitation conditions and almost non-existent health care. Needed goods were not available on the local market in adequate quantities and the already overstretched humanitarian pipelines could not procure and import goods in time.

The UCPM was activated on 17 November 2016 based on a request from UN OCHA to the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), following full coordination with the relevant humanitarian clusters. The request focused initially on critically needed WASH, health, shelter and non-food items. The Request for Assistance was later updated by (among others) the World Health Organisation for medicines and medical items, notably for specialised trauma care.

The ERCC considered all items requested as 'critical needs', meaning that the rate of EU co-financing for the transport of assistance within the framework of the UCPM is set at 85 %. Eight Participating States<sup>12</sup> offered over 273 tonnes of relief assistance through the UCPM and two small EUCPTs were deployed to Erbil.

## **B. UCPM activations since 1 January 2017**

### **a) Chile - forest fires**

Between December 2016 and February 2017, Chile experienced the worst forest fire emergency in its history. The National Office of Emergencies of the Interior Ministry (ONEMI) reported 11 deaths, more than 6 300 people affected and thousands of houses destroyed and damaged. As of 14 February 2017, the National Forestry Corporation of the Agriculture Ministry (CONAF) reported that close to 600 000 ha had been affected since July 2016.

The UCPM was activated on 26 January 2017 by Chile. The request consisted of ground forest firefighting teams, technical expertise, aerial means and specialised equipment. 177 European firefighters were deployed from France (voluntary pool), Spain and Portugal from 28 January to 12 February 2017. This was a significant EU contribution, amounting to approximately 30 % of the total international response of ground firefighting capabilities.

14 European Union Civil Protection (EUCP) Team members, including 11 experts<sup>13</sup>, two ERCC Liaison Officers and one DG ECHO Regional Information Officer, were deployed between 28 January and 18 February 2017.

Two field assessment missions were carried out by the EUCP Team experts. A technical report on forest fire behaviour and fire dynamics was produced and handed over to the Head of the EU Delegation in Santiago to be subsequently presented to the national authorities. While on mission, the team presented preliminary findings and immediate recommendations to the authorities.

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<sup>12</sup> AT, DK, FI, FR, DE, NO, SK and SE.

<sup>13</sup> ES, FI, FR, IT, SE, PT.

The EU Copernicus satellite mapping service was activated for the Los Rios region: two delineation maps and two reference maps were produced.

Transport costs for the delivery of the in-kind assistance<sup>14</sup> were co-financed by the EU. The total amount requested by the Participating States was EUR 847 248. The return to Europe was coordinated by the ERCC by pooling the transport resources in one large aircraft with stopovers in Lisbon, Madrid and finally Marseille.

The EU's response through the UCPM was substantial and appreciated by the Chilean authorities. A ceremony to express their gratitude took place in Santiago at the end of the mission. The emergency was closed in CECIS<sup>15</sup> on 27 February 2017.

#### **b) Peru - floods**

The worst floods and mudslides in almost 30 years affected the country between December 2016 and April 2017. More than 100 people lost their lives, while more than 1.1 million people were affected.

The UCPM was activated on 19 March 2017 in order to provide one UNDAC-associated environmental expert. On 21 March, the ERCC received a formal request for assistance through the Permanent Mission of Peru to the EU in Brussels that was followed up by a detailed list of needed items. A second request for assistance in the form of expertise on WASH and waste management was received on 5 April 2017.

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<sup>14</sup> Offered by AT, ES and SE.

<sup>15</sup> Common Emergency Communication and Information System.

In addition to the EU-seconded environmental expert to UNDAC, a seven-strong EUCP Team of experts<sup>16</sup> including two TAST<sup>1718</sup> was deployed to Peru, as well as two ERCC Liaison Officers in rotation and DG ECHO Technical Assistants. The EUCP Team - with the exception of the ERCC Liaison Officer - returned to Europe on 5-6 April 2017. During the deployment, the EUCP Team was involved in coordination meetings with national authorities and relevant stakeholders with a view to identifying further needs, which resulted in a detailed list of requested items.

The EUCP Team produced and delivered to the national authorities a technical report on water, sanitation and waste management for shelters and affected areas in Piura (north of Peru). The report included a rapid needs assessment for the abovementioned sectors and technical recommendations for the short and medium term.

The EU Copernicus satellite mapping service was activated for this emergency and has delivered 45 maps so far (as of 3 May). EU humanitarian aid support to Peru amounted to EUR 1 million and focused on WASH, health and shelter.

### **C. Tropical cyclone in Madagascar**

Tropical Cyclone Enawo, equivalent to a Category 4 hurricane, made landfall over Antalaha district, in the north-eastern coast of Madagascar, on 7 March 2017. Wind speeds of 220–230 km/h were recorded, along with heavy rains. The storm traversed almost the whole length of the island over two days, affecting communities from north to south.

As of 16 March 2017, the Government's Office for Disaster and Risk Management reported over 433 000 people affected, 81 deaths and 253 injured.

The authorities issued a 'declaration of national emergency' and formally requested international assistance on 14 March 2017. The ERCC closely monitored the situation on pre-alert mode. However there was no indication of the 'uncovered needs'.

The Copernicus Emergency Management Service service produced 14 satellite maps on the extent of the damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Enawo, at the request of the authorities.

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<sup>16</sup> ES, SE, NL.

<sup>17</sup> Technical Assistance and Support Team.

<sup>18</sup> DE.

A pre-selected EUCP Team (10 experts) was on standby for two days (9-10 March 2017), but was not deployed since no official request was received from Madagascar.

## **9. European Disaster Response Exercise (EDREX)**

EDREX has been an 18-month-long exercise project commissioned by the European Commission and implemented by the Valcyría Consortium<sup>19</sup>. The overall aim of the project is to provide the ERCC and its interlocutors with an opportunity to explore, further develop and assess their combined crisis response capabilities at national, European and international level, to produce a comprehensive evaluation report and to provide the setting for the ERCC and participating interlocutors to create their own development plans.

Following a Discussion-Based Exercise (DBX) held in October 2016, a Command-Post Exercise (CPX) was carried out on 13-17 March 2017, designed to assess the four core capabilities:

- establishing a common situational awareness picture,
- clarifying roles and responsibilities at different levels,
- further outlining and assessing the procedures involving the Voluntary Pool,
- using social and traditional media in public crisis communications.

The exercise simulated an earthquake in a fictitious country. More than 20 UCPM Participating States and eight European institutions were involved. Some 900 persons took part in the exercise. More than 70 offers of in-kind assistance were processed through the UCPM, totalling over 110 000 items. The EEAS activated CoOL (Consular Online), connecting Member States' consular departments and crisis centres, and identified over 3 370 fictional EU citizens. DG SANTE health emergency system (HEOF) convened their Health Security meeting, providing expert advice and experts to be deployed with the EUCP Team. The Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) mechanism was activated and a full Integrated Situation Awareness and Analysis (ISAA) report was produced. A high-level round table was convened at COREPER level with ambassadors from

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<sup>19</sup> Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), Italian Civil Protection Department and Public Health England.

five Member States, as well as representatives from the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council.

The final workshop was held in Brussels on 4-5 May 2017 in order to assess the combined crisis response capabilities of the ERCC and its interlocutors through the lessons identified from the EDREX evaluation, and to explore and develop the combined crisis response capabilities of the ERCC and its interlocutors by discussing and planning how the lessons identified can become lessons learnt, essentially translating the outcomes of EDREX into an improvement of the relevant processes.