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From: European Economy and Social Committee
To: General Secretariat of the Council

Subject: Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Union support for health emergency preparedness and response, and repealing Decision No 1313/2013/EU (Union Civil Protection Mechanism)
- Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee

Delegations will find attached the opinion adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee on 3 December 2025 on the above.

Other language versions, if needed, will soon be available on the following website :

<https://dmsearch.eesc.europa.eu/search/opinion>



OPINION

European Economic and Social Committee

Revision of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism

Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Union support for health emergency preparedness and response, and repealing Decision No 1313/2013/EU (Union Civil Protection Mechanism) (COM(2025) 548 – 2025/0223 (COD))

NAT/962

Rapporteur working alone: **Florian MARIN**

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EN

Advisor	Mihai IVASCU (for the rapporteur)
Legislative procedure Referral	EU Law Tracker Council, 16/10/2025 Parliament, 6/11/2025
Legal basis	Article 192(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
European Commission documents	COM(2025) 548 – 2025/0223 (COD) Summary of COM(2025) 548 – 2025/0223 (COD)
Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals
Section responsible	Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment
Adopted in section	13/11/2025
Adopted at plenary session	3/12/2025
Plenary session No	601
Outcome of vote (for/against/abstentions)	217/1/4

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) recommends:

- 1.1 more ambition in terms of allocated budget and addressing disaster risk reduction and prevention, rather than focusing primarily on response capacities. The establishment of an efficient and integrated Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) must include a comprehensive framework for risk reduction policies across the EU, as well as increased focus on cross-sectoral and cross-border disaster prevention, all implemented within a holistic risk management system;
- 1.2 that the UCPM take into consideration the protection of life, including animals and biodiversity, and, in this sense, adapt procedures, equipment, skills and interoperability, along with building specific capacities;
- 1.3 reducing administrative burdens, eliminating overlaps, upgrading inadequate data and support systems, increasing trained human resources and investing in interoperable capacities based on common standards and training pathways, while ensuring high-quality working conditions as prerequisites for strengthening societal resilience in a whole-of-society approach to crises;
- 1.4 better anticipation and understanding of disasters and crises, while considering the role of propaganda and disinformation in amplifying social stress. The UCPM's strategic approach should address risk asymmetry and concentration while improving disaster management efficiency. The EESC also calls for a robust, adaptive communication strategy to raise public risk awareness, counter hybrid threats and build broad societal support for preparedness;
- 1.5 strengthening the UPCM through supplementary funding, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups and regions, including the outermost regions and regions in proximity to war. Furthermore, the distribution of funds, as referred to in Article 6, should integrate the principle of territoriality in a cross-cutting manner, with social conditionalities attached;
- 1.6 ensuring coherence with National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs) proposed for the 2028–2034 programming period. The EESC finds it essential to establish an increased and ring-fenced financial envelope through thematic concentration for disaster management, based on a comprehensive all-hazard approach and an EU-level overview of risks and threats;
- 1.7 continuing to improve the efficiency and capacity of the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP) and rescEU, alongside increasing the effectiveness of the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS), based on key performance indicators that reflect quality, resource use, costs and outcomes;
- 1.8 fostering greater complementarities between existing instruments (such as Security Action for Europe, the European Solidarity Corps and the UCPM), while improving information sharing, coordination and best practice dissemination among Member States, EU institutions and civilian and military sectors. This whole-of-government approach should go hand in hand with stepped-up cooperation between intelligence and law enforcement agencies, and increased public awareness of the UCPM;

- 1.9 ensuring sufficient and stable funding for professional firefighters and healthcare personnel to maintain efficiency and rapid response within the UCPM, while strengthening the role of volunteers. Volunteers' activities and skills should be formally recognised and supported in the labour market, and they must complement, not replace, professional staff with adequate training;
- 1.10 that the UCPM be built on flexibility to respect the diversity of national disaster management systems, while ensuring cross-border cooperation and coordination for a prompt and effective response to disasters that know no borders, with the full involvement of organised civil society. A whole-of-society mindset rooted in preparedness, foresight and proactive prevention at every level needs a formal role for civil society in the UCPM;
- 1.11 adapting procurement rules to guarantee rapid and effective provision of critical supplies and services in times of crisis. Special provisions should ensure sufficient access for SMEs, given their central role in local economies and employment, and their capacity to support recovery and resilience in disaster-affected communities;
- 1.12 establishing, through CECIS, a standardised reporting form for reporting disasters to be used by all Member States. This measure will streamline communication, reduce administrative burdens, improve transparency and facilitate better coordination at EU level.

2. **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.1

- 2.1 The EESC considers the proposed allocated budget of EUR 10.67 billion for the UCPM insufficient to meet the growing challenges posed by natural and man-made disasters, including the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events linked to climate change. Compared to other EU programmes addressing security, climate adaptation and disaster resilience, the allocated funds for the UCPM appear modest relative to the scale and complexity of the threats it is designed to address.
- 2.2 Focus must be placed on cross-border cooperation and a common situational understanding that takes into account a wide range of cross-sectoral and cross-nation variables, including the nature and scale of the event, historical context, geopolitical factors, cultural dimensions, the presence of concurrent threats or risks, as well as existing capacities and expertise in the field. A more ambitious approach to disaster risk reduction and prevention would minimise the impact of emergencies before they occur, reduce costs and improve societal resilience.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.2

- 2.3 The UCPM should address the protection of life in a comprehensive way, including both humans and animals, as well as biodiversity. This requires adapting procedures, equipment, skills and interoperability to meet the specific needs of animal protection during disasters. Building dedicated capacities for animals will not only safeguard animal welfare but also support ecosystem stability, public health and community resilience, reinforcing the overall effectiveness of civil protection interventions.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.3

- 2.4 Existing administrative, structural and logistical barriers within the EU continue to impede cross-border deployment, transport and access during crises. Reducing administrative burdens, eliminating overlaps and upgrading data and support systems are essential for efficient crisis management. Increasing trained human resources and investing in interoperable capacities, while ensuring high-quality working conditions, will strengthen coordination, preparedness and societal resilience across the EU.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.4

- 2.5 Accurate information processes and adapted transparency are crucial for securing social support for the UCPM and for consolidating a culture of preparedness across all levels of society. A robust and adaptive communication strategy should also include the establishment of crisis-resilient communication infrastructures, ensuring that accurate, timely and trustworthy information reaches people even under conditions of heightened stress or disruption.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.5

- 2.6 Strengthening the UCPM funding will improve its capacity to address the needs of vulnerable groups and regions, including regions in proximity to war and outermost regions. Integrating the principle of territoriality and attaching social conditionalities to the distribution of funds ensures that support is equitable, targeted and effective, thereby increasing resilience and cohesion across all affected communities. The EESC calls for specific measures to factor in the long-term social consequences for vulnerable groups (e.g., older people, children, people with disabilities) in both planning and response stages.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.6

- 2.7 The effectiveness of the UCPM depends on aligning EU-level funding with NRPPs for the 2028–2034 programming period. By establishing an increased, ring-fenced financial envelope focused on disaster management, the EU can ensure that resources are available to address simultaneous, diverse and increasingly complex risks. Thematic concentration of funds will strengthen preparedness, support coordinated responses across Member States and improve resilience in the face of multi-faceted crises.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.7

- 2.8 The ECPP and rescEU are essential instruments for rapid and coordinated disaster response across the EU. Improving their efficiency and capacity will ensure that resources are deployed effectively during emergencies. At the same time, making CECIS more effective through clear key performance indicators reflecting quality, resource use, costs and outcomes will strengthen decision-making, coordination and accountability across all levels of civil protection.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.8

- 2.9 Improving complementarities between existing EU instruments will improve coherence, efficiency and the overall impact of disaster preparedness and response. Systematic sharing of best practices and easier access to knowledge will foster learning, innovation and interoperability among Member States. Strengthening these synergies is vital given the increasing diversity and complexity of EU, international and national actors engaged in preparedness and response, ultimately leading to more effective and coordinated civil protection at both national and EU levels.
- 2.10 Insufficient knowledge of the scope and procedures of the UCPM continues to hinder its optimal use, particularly regarding modalities for requesting and accessing assistance among certain Member States, participating countries and civil society actors. Addressing these gaps requires stronger outreach, targeted information-sharing and sustained capacity-building, alongside streamlined procedures for rapid response and greater EU-level capacity to address interconnected risks. This must also include raising public awareness of the UCPM by promoting people skills such as home preparedness, first aid and evacuation planning, thereby empowering individuals and communities, improving resilience and strengthening trust in the EU's coordinated response mechanisms.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.9

- 2.11 A robust and effective disaster response requires a well-balanced combination of professional staff and volunteers. Budget cuts and reductions in professional firefighters and healthcare personnel have already decreased efficiency and increased response times, generating additional costs, undermining the effectiveness of the UCPM and compromising public safety and security. The role of volunteers must be strengthened, as their efforts are vital support and complementary to institutional crisis response mechanisms, particularly in the context of simultaneous, diverse and increasingly complex challenges and threats.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.10

- 2.12 The EESC believes that an integrated response to crises and disasters needs an architecture of partnerships, efficiently coordinated and in complementarity with the diversity and complexity of the potential impact crises and disasters have on society. The role of civil society should be consolidated in a cross-cutting way, especially for increasing the capacity of dissemination of information that contributes to public risk awareness and civil preparedness. For this, investments in the capacity of civil society are strongly needed. Mutual cooperation and coordination between stakeholders, cities, regions and countries is crucial for an adapted response, since disasters know no borders.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.11

- 2.13 The Committee stresses that procurement procedures must not become a bottleneck during emergencies. Streamlined rules are essential to guarantee the timely delivery of critical goods and services. At the same time, ensuring fair and specific access for SMEs is crucial, as they are often

the first providers on the ground, deeply embedded in local communities, and key to safeguarding jobs and accelerating recovery. Their active participation strengthens both the EU’s crisis response capacity and the long-term resilience of disaster-affected regions.

Arguments in support of recommendation 1.12

2.14 The Committee believes that the effectiveness of the UCPM depends not only on rapid mobilisation of resources but also on the quality and comparability of information provided by Member States. At present, the lack of a uniform reporting structure may lead to delays, inconsistencies and difficulties in aggregating data during emergencies.

3. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Amendment 1 – Article 2(1)

linked to recommendation 1.2

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
This Regulation shall aim to ensure the protection of people, environment and property, cultural heritage, against all kinds of natural and human-induced disasters, including serious cross-border threats to health.	This Regulation shall aim to ensure the protection of life and people, environment and property, cultural heritage, against all kinds of natural and human-induced disasters, including serious cross-border threats to health.

Reason
The scope of the regulation should be extended to the protection of life in general, including animals. The proposal is more specific regarding the need to protect animals as well, while its reference to the environment is less specific.

Amendment 2 – Article 4(2)

linked to recommendation 1.5

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
(c) enhance preparedness at Member State and Union level, including all levels of society, to respond to disasters, in particular (i) with the support of the ERCC and the Hub, and their communication and information structures for coordination and situational awareness among authorities of the Member States and existing EU crisis management structures, (ii) by supporting the development and maintenance of effective early warning systems to detect and communicate imminent threats of disasters, allowing for timely action to be taken to prevent or mitigate impacts,	(c) enhance preparedness at local, regional, Member State and Union level, including all levels of society, to respond to disasters, in particular (i) with the support of the ERCC and the Hub, and their communication and information structures for coordination and situational awareness among authorities of the Member States and existing EU crisis management structures, (ii) by supporting the development and maintenance of effective early warning systems to detect and communicate imminent threats of disasters, allowing for timely

<p>(iii) by developing and maintaining response capacities, strengthening their interoperability and considering their potential dual use in case of crisis, (iv) by promoting the integration of disaster risk prevention and preparedness considerations into policies and financial frameworks at national and Union level, with the aim of strengthening long-term resilience, (v) by facilitating preparedness and resilience among all actors and stakeholders, including all levels of government, civil and military authorities, civil society, the private sector, and the provision of vital societal functions with a view to strengthening overall population preparedness and societal resilience;</p> <p>(f) to enhance Member States' and Union efforts in health emergency preparedness and response by:</p> <p>(i) strengthening the capability for prevention, preparedness and rapid response to serious cross-border threats to health, in particular by supporting health security policies and solutions, improving data collection, early warning and surveillance systems, and</p> <p>(ii) improving the supply of medical countermeasures by enhancing their availability and accessibility <i>of medical countermeasures</i>, in particular through reservation capacities, procurement, stockpiling and deployment, as well as</p> <p>(iii) <i>coordination</i> actions and strengthening capacity building.</p>	<p>action to be taken to prevent or mitigate impacts, (iii) by developing and maintaining response capacities, strengthening their interoperability and considering their potential dual use in case of crisis, (iv) by promoting the integration of disaster risk prevention and preparedness considerations into policies and financial frameworks at national and Union level, with the aim of strengthening <i>local, regional, national and Union-level</i> long-term resilience, (v) by facilitating preparedness and resilience among all actors and stakeholders, including all levels of government, civil and military authorities, civil society, the private sector <i>and people</i>, and the provision of vital societal functions with a view to strengthening overall population preparedness and societal resilience;</p> <p>(f) to enhance Member States' and Union efforts in health emergency preparedness and response by:</p> <p>(i) strengthening the capability for prevention, preparedness and rapid response to serious cross-border threats to health, in particular by supporting health security policies and solutions, improving data collection, early warning and surveillance systems, and</p> <p>(ii) improving the supply of medical countermeasures by enhancing their availability and accessibility, in particular through reservation capacities, procurement, stockpiling and deployment, as well as</p> <p>(iii) <i>coordinating</i> actions and strengthening capacity building.</p>
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Reason
<p>Many disasters are initially managed by local and regional authorities, fire brigades, civil protection units and emergency services. Explicit recognition ensures that the regulation reflects the reality of operational response. Disaster response is most effective when all levels of governance – EU, national, regional and local – are coordinated. Mentioning local and regional levels clarifies their role and fosters better integration within the UCPM framework.</p> <p>The other suggested amendments are for editing purposes.</p>

Amendment 3 – Article 2(7)

linked to recommendation 1.5

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
Where applying the prevention, preparedness and response measures under this Regulation, the special needs of isolated, outermost and other regions or islands of the Union in terms of prevention, preparedness and response.	Where applying the prevention, preparedness and response measures under this Regulation, the special needs of <i>regions in proximity to war</i> , isolated, outermost and other regions or islands of the Union in terms of prevention, preparedness and response.

Reason
Recognising the special needs of regions in proximity to war creates a framework for better integration with the MFF and cohesion policy, alongside approaching the asymmetry of needs and probability of risks.

Amendment 4 – Article 14

linked to recommendation 1.10

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
(d) in line with international commitments, improve the collection and dissemination of disaster loss data at national or appropriate sub-national level, including by better utilising space data.	(d) in line with international commitments, improve the collection and dissemination of disaster loss data at national or appropriate sub-national level, including by better utilising space data <i>and in collaboration with civil society</i> .

Reason
Organised civil society fulfils a pivotal function within the UCPM through advocacy, conflict prevention and resolution, monitoring and reporting, as well as through fostering social cohesion and inclusion and this should be included in the proposal.

Amendment 5 – Article 17

linked to recommendation 1.10

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
The Commission shall support Member States to enhance their capacity in dealing with risks by providing access to tools such as training and exercises programmes, technical and financial assistance, peer reviews, deployment of experts and EUCP Teams that provide advice on prevention and preparedness measures and other provision of expertise, learning and knowledge sharing, and support to uptake of research and innovation results in disaster risk management.	The Commission shall support Member States <i>and civil society</i> to enhance their capacity in dealing with risks by providing access to tools such as training and exercises programmes, technical and financial assistance, peer reviews, deployment of experts and EUCP Teams that provide advice on prevention and preparedness measures and other provision of expertise, learning and knowledge sharing, and support to

	uptake of research and innovation results in disaster risk management.
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Reason
Social partners, non-governmental organisations and other civil society actors play a crucial role in disaster preparedness and response. These actors often operate on the ground, have direct contact with affected communities and possess valuable expertise in risk awareness, prevention and emergency response. The Commission can strengthen the overall resilience of Member States and ensure a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to managing risks. Access to tools such as training, exercises and capacity-building programmes will improve the ability of civil society to contribute effectively to the UCPM, complementing the efforts of national authorities and fostering cooperation and interoperability across sectors.

Amendment 6 – Article 27(3)

linked to recommendation 1.12

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
The notifications referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall, as appropriate, be made through CECIS. The Commission shall define the components of CECIS as well as the organisation of information sharing through CECIS by means of an implementing act adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 35(2).	The notifications referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall, as appropriate, be made through CECIS. The Commission shall define the components of CECIS as well as the organisation of information sharing through CECIS by means of an implementing act adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 35(2). <i>The Commission shall ensure, through CECIS, the establishment of a standardised reporting form to be used by all Member States.</i>

Reason
Standardisation reduces misunderstandings and delays caused by different reporting formats or incomplete information. It enables the European Commission and UCPM bodies to quickly assess needs and mobilise the appropriate support. Using a single reporting template facilitates the integration of data into CECIS, supporting interoperability between national systems and EU-level monitoring.

Amendment 7 – Article 9(2)

Text proposed by the European Commission	EESC amendment
The association agreements for participation under this Regulation shall: (a) ensure a fair balance as regards the contributions and benefits of the third country associated <i>under this Regulation</i> ; (b) lay down the conditions of participation <i>under this Regulation</i> , including the calculation of financial contributions, consisting of an	The association agreements for participation under this Regulation shall: (a) ensure a fair balance as regards the contributions and benefits of the third country associated; (b) lay down the conditions of participation, including the calculation of financial contributions, consisting of an operational

operational contribution and a participation fee and its general administrative costs; (c) not confer any decision-making power <i>under this Regulation</i> ; (d) guarantee the rights of the Union to ensure sound financial management and to protect its financial interests; (e) where relevant, ensure the protection of security and public order interests of the Union.	contribution and a participation fee and its general administrative costs; (c) not confer any decision-making power; (d) guarantee the rights of the Union to ensure sound financial management and to protect its financial interests; (e) where relevant, ensure the protection of security and public order interests of the Union.
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Reason
Avoid repetition.

Brussels, 3 December 2025.

The president of the European Economic and Social Committee
Séamus BOLAND
