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### **OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

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To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Council conclusions on civil protection work in view of climate change

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Delegations will find in Annex the Council conclusions on civil protection work in view of climate change, approved by the Council (Justice and Home Affairs) at its 3850th meeting on 3 March 2022.

## Council conclusions on civil protection work in view of climate change

**The Council of the European Union,**

**Considering the following:**

### I. **INTRODUCTION**

1. **Recalling** that the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the United Nations 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 aim to reduce climate disaster risks;
2. **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 the victim of a disaster;
3. **Taking into account** the priority the Union has expressly given to the green transition and the protection of biodiversity under the Green Deal, the objective of climate neutrality referred to in Regulation (EU) 2021/1119, as well as the project, supported by the Recovery Package, of a greener, more resilient Europe that is better equipped to face current and future challenges, including in its external action;
4. **Stressing** that the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), established in 2001 and strengthened in particular in 2013, 2019 and 2021, plays an increasing role in Europe's response to natural and man-made disasters, that recent amendment of the UCPM sets disaster resilience goals based on current and forward-looking scenarios, and that the UCPM contributes towards meeting the Union's overall financing targets for climate and biodiversity;

5. **Recalling** the Council Conclusions of 4 June 2009 on civil protection awareness raising, of 30 November 2009 on a Community framework on disaster prevention within the EU and of 3 October 2011 on the role of voluntary activities in social policy, which emphasise that voluntary activities benefit volunteers, communities and society as a whole; the creation of the European Solidarity Corps in 2018; the importance of civil society and citizens to enhance safety and resilience; and the Union commitments for the European Year of Youth 2022;
6. **Recalling** the Council Conclusions of 3 June 2021 on forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change and of 23 November 2021 on enhancing preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises;
7. **Noting** that the effects of climate change are evident and that extreme events related to climate change are becoming more frequent, intense and persistent, thus increasing the risk of human, material and natural losses and underlining the need for Member States to take action in this area;
8. **Acknowledging** scientific assessments on climate change, its implications and potential future risks, as well as adaptation and mitigation options provided by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;
9. **Acknowledging** the vulnerability of European populations and territories in their diversity, in particular with regard to the Mediterranean basin, mountainous and forest areas, flood plains, seas, coasts and island territories, the Arctic territories and the outermost regions and urban areas;
10. Noting the significant role of the Union's macro-regional strategies as one of the external policy instruments to tackle the impacts of climate change and strengthen resilience;

## **II. THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

1. **Reaffirms** the principle of solidarity in addressing the challenges posed by climate change in the Union and worldwide;
2. **Recalls** the primary responsibility of Member States for the protection of their people, the environment and property, including cultural heritage;
3. **Emphasises** the role of public and volunteer participation which contributes, as already underlined in the above-mentioned Conclusions of 3 October 2011, to develop active citizenship, democracy and social cohesion and, in doing so, to implement the fundamental values and principles of the Union, as well as resilience in the field of civil protection;
4. **Considers** that, as a result of climate change, Member States and Union institutions must be prepared to tackle large-scale, multi-sectoral, cross-border disasters with cascading effects, which may occur simultaneously and more frequently, within and outside the Union, and the consequences of which could deeply affect human life and activities as well as biodiversity;
5. **Notes** the need for the Union to develop a more coherent and proactive systemic approach to enhance resilience to the consequences of climate change in all phases of the disaster management cycle, which includes prevention, preparedness, response and recovery;
6. **Stresses** the importance of sharing and pooling knowledge, know-how and innovation, as well as lessons learnt from Member States and the Commission;
7. **Recognises** that measures undertaken by Member States and the European institutions in the context of adaptation to the effects of climate change, with regard to the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change, should aim to complement the Union's efforts in the field of disaster risk management;

8. **Stresses** the importance of having enough internationally deployable capacities within the Member States, a EU Civil Protection Pool (ECPP), and a strategic European reserve of capacities (rescEU) ready to respond rapidly and efficiently to climate change-related disasters when the scale of an emergency overwhelms the possibilities of a country to respond on its own;
9. **Notes** that the UCPM plays a significant role in disaster management, strengthens Union partnerships and contributes to a European culture of civil protection;
10. **INVITES the Member States to:**
  - a) **Take into account** the risks related to climate change in the disaster management cycle, for example capitalising on the tools set up together by the Commission and the European Environment Agency, such as the Climate-ADAPT platform;
  - b) **Foster** work and research on the ways in which the effects of climate change can be reviewed and incorporated into their disaster risk management systems; integrate such work and research into the Member States national risk assessment, the development of risk management capability assessment and the disaster risk management planning improvement provided for in Article 6 of Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism;
  - c) **Support and pool** research and innovation in order to improve national civil protection capacities in the context of climate change, in particular through the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network (hereinafter the ‘Knowledge Network’), and, in that context, through centres of excellence, universities, researchers and thematic communities or centres of expertise;
  - d) **Encourage** investment in research and innovation in the field of civil protection in the context of climate change and mobilise relevant European funding;

- e) **Develop** adequate prevention and preparedness actions, including ensuring the availability of sufficient capacities, aimed at the risks resulting from climate change such as forest fires and flooding, that both constitute an increasing risk for Union citizens;
- f) **Pursue**, in this regard, the development of ECPP and rescEU capacities based amongst others on current and forward-looking scenarios provided in Article 10 of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, taking into account identified and emerging risks and overall capacities and gaps at Union level, in particular in the areas of aerial forest-firefighting, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents, emergency medical response, as well as transport, logistics and shelter;
- g) **Make** civil protection operations greener and more sustainable in all phases of the disaster management cycle and promote research, innovation and knowledge sharing;
- h) **Take** account of environmental and climate change impacts in the assistance provided through the UCPM, notably by pooling resources where appropriate;
- i) **Support** the preparedness and resilience of the population exposed to climate change-related risks through specific information, education, training and exercises that may involve the national and sub-national levels and even a cross-border dimension, paying particular attention to people with specific vulnerabilities;
- j) **Strengthen** volunteers organisations as an integral part of civil protection;
- k) **Consider to integrate**, in this regard, spontaneous initiatives in response operations where appropriate and in coordination with local authorities;
- l) **Put forward** the importance of citizens' contribution to their own safety and resilience, and encourage any initiative aimed at valuing, recognising and promoting, where appropriate through a legal framework, their active involvement in voluntary actions and arrangements for disaster response;
- m) **Account for** the special role of youth in that regard;

- n) **Promote** the citizen who actively participates, as an actor of his or her own safety and resilience or as a member of national or local civil structures contributing to civil protection, through the following three dimensions:
  - i) alerting: clarifying the role and responsibilities of different institutions in issuing targeted alerts to affected people, also using modern information and communication technologies;
  - ii) provision of information: raising public awareness of the risks involved, particularly in the areas most exposed to the effects of climate change, by disseminating public information and organising training activities, including on a voluntary basis;
  - iii) mobilisation: encouraging citizens' networks, associations and volunteers involved in risk prevention initiatives, disaster response and first aid training;
- o) **Take into account** the importance of long-term emergencies and the increasing risks they can pose to civil protection systems both at national and European level;
- p) **Consider** the impact of climate change in international civil protection actions, by strengthening cooperation and supporting disaster and crisis management;

**11. INVITES the Commission to:**

- a) **Pursue** the regular update of the “cross-sectoral overview of natural and man-made disasters risks that the Union may face” by taking account of the impacts of climate change, on the basis of Member States national risk assessment reports;
- b) **Ensure** that the impacts of climate change are systematically taken into account throughout the disaster management cycle;
- c) **Ensure** that the UCPM takes account of the diverse nature of disasters in a manner which is both reactive and adaptable and, when possible, proactive;

- d) **Strengthen** the availability of experts in the field of environment and climate change for deployment under the UCPM;
- e) **Promote** the complementarity of the UCPM with other Union crisis management mechanisms;
- f) **Support** research and innovation in the field of civil protection namely by establishing an inventory of available knowledge and to enrich the Knowledge Network, the Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre and the centres of excellence that could be created within that framework, as well as the centres maintained by international organisations;
- g) **Strengthen** and adapt the Union’s disaster and crisis management and decision support instruments, tools and platforms under the Common Emergency Communication and Information System, the European Drought Observatory, the European Flood Awareness System, the European Forest Fire Information System as well as the Galileo, Copernicus and EU Governmental Satellite Communications programmes;
- h) **Improve** the anticipation and response capabilities of the Emergency Response Coordination Centre, in particular by exploring how to better use technological innovations, including artificial intelligence and available data sources to detect and anticipate extreme climate risks;
- i) **Foster** greener and more sustainable European civil protection operations by supporting research and innovation, establishing an overview of the current state of play and drawing up guides to good practice in this area;
- j) **Further promote** the engagement of civil society in the prevention of and operational response to climate change by supporting citizens’ contributions to their own safety and resilience and by promoting any volunteer-based disaster response initiatives, in coordination with the national or subnational authorities, including through European awards;
- k) **Develop** training programmes and exercises for the management of environmental and climate related disasters, including within the EU training programme, and encourage the availability of expertise with a view to deployment within the framework of the UCPM;



- l) **Explore** the issue of climate change in international civil protection actions, including through fostering exchange of experiences and good practices with partners, for example in the Western Balkans and in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy;
  12. **INVITES** the Commission to report to the Council on progress made within the framework of its triennial UCPM reports, and calls on the Member States to assist the Commission in this task.
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