



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



**GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Brussels, 18 July 2005**

***COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON IMPROVING
THE EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION CAPABILITIES***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. HAVING REGARD TO:

- the conclusions of the Council of 7 January 2005 on the earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean ¹;
- the European Union Action Plan of 31 January 2005 on the earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean ²;
- the conclusions of the Council of 4 October 2004 on strengthening the overall Civil Protection Capacity in the European Union ³;
- the conclusions of the Council of 25 November 2004 on prevention, preparedness and response to terrorist attacks ⁴;
- the Communication from the Commission of 20 April 2005 on Improving the Community Civil Protection Mechanism ⁵;
- the Communication from the Commission of 20 April 2005 on Reinforcing EU Disaster and Crisis Response in third countries ⁶;
- the note from the Secretary-General/High Representative of 20 April 2005 on the Follow-up to the EU Action Plan following the earthquake and tsunamis in the Indian Ocean ⁷;

¹ 5187/05.

² 5788/05.

³ 11549/04.

⁴ 15232/04.

⁵ 8430/05 - COM(2005) 137 final.

⁶ 8382/05 - COM(2005) 153 final.

P R E S S

- the note from the Presidency of 20 May on the Follow-up to the EU Action Plan following the earthquake and tsunamis in the Indian Ocean ⁸;
 - the Presidency conclusions of the European Council of Brussels of 16 and 17 June 2005, which wished addressing as a priority during the second half of 2005 the strengthening of civil protection capabilities, particularly the medical resources available to deal with a bioterrorist attack, and the development of a rapid reaction capability based on the civil protection modules of the Member States ⁹.
2. BEARING IN MIND that the financial implications of the proposed improvements, and in particular of the proposal establishing a Rapid Response and Preparedness Instrument for major emergencies, must be compatible with the financial framework set for the period 2007-2013 and respect the principle of subsidiarity.
 3. REAFFIRMS the need to develop an "European Union rapid response capability" to tackle natural or man-made disasters inside or outside the Union, drawing on national resources and teams trained to work together.
 4. WELCOMES in general the Communication from the Commission on Improving the Community Civil Protection Mechanism, which sets out short term and medium term proposals to strengthen European cooperation in the framework of the Civil Protection Mechanism.
 5. INVITES the Commission together with the Member States to improve, within their respective competences, the European civil protection cooperation, including the strengthening of the Community Civil Protection Mechanism, in order to ensure that the European Union can provide civil protection assistance rapidly and effectively in case of all kinds of emergencies inside and outside the Union.
 6. UNDERLINES the overall role and responsibility of the United Nations in coordinating international civil protection assistance in third countries, where present. The EU should support the capabilities of the United Nations in coordinating civil protection interventions in third countries. In this regard, the European rapid response capability could contribute to the strengthening of the UN capacity building for rapid action in the face of humanitarian disasters.

⁷ 8204/05.

⁸ 8961/1/05 REV 1.

⁹ 10255/05.

P R E S S

7. ENCOURAGES the Commission together with the Member States, within their respective competences, to further develop a modular approach through a program which will establish scenarios, capability assessment, operational plans, training and exercises and common methodologies for risk assessment under an all-hazard approach covering natural and man-made disasters, including terrorism. This program should drive action, building on the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity, and of operating under national responsibility. The civil protection identified modules are one in a number of significant assets in the EU rapid response and will be able to operate independently or in cooperation with or support to other EU bodies or international institutions.
8. STRESSES that evaluations, taking into account risk assessments, deficit analyses and lessons learned from emergencies, training and exercises, are the basis for decisions on improving the response capacity of the EU.
9. ENCOURAGES the Commission and the Member States to take forward, in the short term, work in the following priority areas:
 - a) further assess the civil protection capabilities which the Member States may make available to each other for all types of major disasters;
 - b) develop a rapid response capability based on the civil protection modules of the Member States and for that purpose establish a program building on the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity, the modules being independent and self-sufficient units operating under national responsibility, which could be used alone or in addition with other contributions;
 - c) further develop training activities, exercises and the exchange of experts to stimulate the capacity to work together and to promote interoperability;
 - d) develop at the latest by 31 December 2005, in addition to national insignia, common EU insignia for intervention and assessment/ coordination personnel on site;
 - e) further develop civil-military cooperation with the EU Military Staff, in particular the Civil-Military Cell;
 - f) strengthen the on site assessment of needs by developing a common assessment methodology, based on internationally agreed methodologies where they exist, and by reinforcing the assessment capacity;
 - g) strengthen the capacity to facilitate the coordination on site and at head quarters, both within the EU and with relevant international organizations;
 - h) reinforce the links between the Mechanism and early warning systems at EU and UN level;
 - i) further work on facilitating the transport of civil protection assistance.
10. WELCOMES the Commission's offer to make the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) available for the European consular cooperation in order to support EU citizens victims of disasters in third countries.

P R E S S

11. INVITES the Commission to submit as soon as possible more complete proposals on strengthening preventive action, inspired by the terms of the Civil Protection Action Programme ¹⁰, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2016 ¹¹ and the European Union Action Plan on the earthquakes and tsunamis in the Indian Ocean ¹², and enhancing detection and early warning systems in general, and in particular for the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.
12. INVITES the Commission to submit as soon as possible, and at the latest by October 2005, further legislative proposals for improving civil protection cooperation, including the Community Mechanism, taking into account the above conclusions.
13. WILL RETURN to the whole issue dealing with the European rapid response capability before the end of 2005.

¹⁰ Council Decision 1999/847/EC of 9 December 1999 establishing a Community action programme in the field of civil protection (OJ L 327, 21.12.1999, p. 53), amended by Council Decision 2005/12/EC of 20 December 2004 (OJ L 6, 8.1.2005, p. 7).

¹¹ Resolution on the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 : Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, adopted on 22 January 2005 by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (A.CONF.206/6).

¹² 5788/05.

P R E S S