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Committee on Foreign Affairs

2011/2023(INI)

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on towards a stronger European disaster response: the role of civil protection
and humanitarian assistance
(2011/2023(INI))

Rapporteur: László Tőkés

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses the new role granted by the Treaty of Lisbon to the High Representative/Vice President of coordinating EU operations in third countries to guarantee the consistency between the EU's crisis response and the overall political and security elements involved; urges that working arrangements be developed among all relevant services dealing with emergency response and crisis management in the Commission and the EEAS, including EU Delegations;
2. Underlines the need to enhance coherence in the use of the different EU instruments, some of which fall under the responsibility of the HR/VP, such as the Instrument for Stability, as well as to improve coordination with Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) civil or military missions which are already on the ground or which could be set up in the aftermath of a disaster; insists on the linkage between crisis prevention, disaster response and post-disaster reconstruction;
3. Emphasises that, as a last resort and in compliance with the Oslo Guidelines, military means often constitute an important contribution to disaster response, particularly for specialised assets, strategic lift or heavy engineering; stresses that use of all the capabilities available – civil and military – and Member States crisis management assets should be enhanced in order to avoid costly duplications;
4. Insists on the need to develop a comprehensive communication strategy to project a common and coherent image of the EU's disaster response, consistent with its values and policies, in order to increase the visibility of the EU in beneficiary countries as well as a better understanding of EU action among European citizens; stresses that the European Union should reaffirm through disaster relief the commitment of the European people to the value of solidarity;
5. Recalls the role of the United Nations in coordinating the efforts of the international community.