



5.3.2018

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Budgets

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

on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council
amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism
(COM(2017)0772 – C8-0409/2017 – 2017/0309(COD))

Rapporteur for opinion: José Manuel Fernandes

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SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The rapporteur welcomes the proposal to amend the present Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) with the aim of ensuring that the Union can provide a better crisis and emergency support to its citizens in and outside Europe, including through enhanced disaster prevention efforts. He recalls that the UCPM is one of the most tangible expressions of the EU's core value of solidarity.

The rapporteur underlines that investing in prevention and disaster preparedness is the best form of protection, not only because it has the greatest potential for saving lives and preventing human suffering, but also because it can avoid incurring huge remedial costs once a disaster strikes. According to the Commission's own calculations, 1 euro spent on disaster preparedness saves up to 7 euros in relief efforts.

The rapporteur is convinced that an overhaul of the current system has been long overdue. The insufficiency of the present, voluntary system has been painfully exposed in the Union's response to a number of recent disasters, in particular through the lack of available assets during the 2016 and 2017 forest fire seasons, whereby only 10 of 17 requests for forest fire assistance could be granted, and even those often after significant delays, resulting in a loss of over 100 lives. Also, several reports have pointed out the existing gaps in terms of the availability of certain critical response capacities, in particular with regard to forest fire fighting planes, shelter, and possibly other types of resources.

The rapporteur is of the opinion that the proposed structure with two complementary pillars, consisting of, on the one hand, a European Civil Protection Pool of pre-committed Member State response capacities and, on the other hand, the so-called 'rescEU', a dedicated reserve of response capacities with command and control at Union level, which is to serve as a last-resort capacity, is the most appropriate and effective way of overcoming the limitations of the current framework. By pooling resources optimally and generating economies of scale, the strengthened UCPM will also lead to significant savings for Member States.

The rapporteur recalls that the total cost of the Commission's proposal is estimated at EUR 280 million for the period 2018-2020, of which EUR 256,9 million in Heading 3 'Security and citizenship', EUR 6,3 million in Heading 4 'Global Europe' and EUR 16,9 million in Heading 5 'Administrative expenditure'. Of the proposed operational expenditure, 54 % would be allocated to preparedness, including the acquisition or leasing of rescEU assets, 37 % to response, and 9 % to prevention activities. The proposal also entails the recruitment of 100 additional staff over three years. The rapporteur considers these proposals proportionate to the scale and purpose of the revision.

The rapporteur welcomes the proposed use of the Flexibility Instrument to cover the bulk (88 %) of the additional resources needed. However, he strongly rejects the proposed redeployment of funding from existing programmes in Headings 3 and 4 to the tune of EUR

31,3 million. As has been underlined by the Committee on Budgets on many occasions, significant new policy proposals should be accompanied by new resources. Moreover, many of the affected programmes, such as the Rights, equality and citizenship and Justice programmes, boast excellent implementation rates and have been underfunded for years. The rapporteur therefore proposes to finance the full amount of the additional resources needed under Headings 3 and 4 through the Flexibility Instrument, as detailed in a new Annex I.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to take into account the following amendments:

Amendment 1

Draft motion for a resolution

Paragraph 2 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

2 a. Calls on the Commission to refrain from using redeployments for financing new policy priorities that are added in the course of an ongoing multiannual financial framework, as this will inevitably have a negative impact on the implementation of other key Union activities.

Or. en

Justification

New policy proposals should be accompanied by new resources. The rapporteur strongly rejects the use of any redeployments at the expense of successful, chronically underfunded programmes such as the Rights, equality and citizenship and Justice programmes.

Amendment 2

Draft motion for a resolution

Paragraph 2 b (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

2 b. Calls on the Commission to provide

for sufficient financing for the Union Civil Protection Mechanism under the next multiannual financial framework starting in 2021, building on the present overhaul.

Or. en

Justification

In order to build on the current revision of the UCPM, which strengthens both the policy and the financing, it will be important for the Commission, when coming forward with its new proposals for the next multiannual financial framework, to propose an ambitious financial envelope for the UCPM after 2020.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a regulation

Recital 7

Text proposed by the Commission

(7) The Union should be able to support Member States where available capacities are insufficient to allow for an effective response to disasters by contributing to the financing of leasing or rental arrangements for ensuring rapid access to such capacities or by financing their acquisition. This would substantially increase the effectiveness of the Union Mechanism, by ensuring availability of capacities in cases where an effective response to disasters would otherwise not be ensured, particularly for disasters with wide ranging impacts affecting a significant number of Member States. Union procurement of capacities should allow for economies of scale and better coordination when responding to disasters.

Amendment

(7) The Union should be able to support Member States where available capacities are insufficient to allow for an effective response to disasters by contributing to the financing of leasing or rental arrangements for ensuring rapid access to such capacities or by financing their acquisition. This would substantially increase the effectiveness *and deployability* of the Union Mechanism, by ensuring *the speedy* availability of capacities in cases where an effective response to disasters would otherwise not be ensured, particularly for disasters with wide ranging impacts affecting a significant number of Member States. Union procurement of capacities should allow for economies of scale and better coordination when responding to disasters. *Optimal and transparent use of financial resources should be ensured.*

Or. en

Justification

When mobilising capacities through the UCPM, speed is of the utmost importance, as illustrated by the tragic consequences of the late deployment of firefighting planes in the most recent forest fire seasons in Southern Europe. EU co-funding should always be provided under conditions of full transparency and accountability.

Amendment 4

Proposal for a regulation Recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission

(10) In order to achieve the functioning of the rescEU capacity, additional financial appropriations should be made available to finance actions under the Union Mechanism.

Amendment

(10) In order to achieve the functioning of the rescEU capacity, additional financial appropriations should **be** made available to finance actions under the Union Mechanism, **but not at the expense of the financial envelopes allocated to other key Union policies such as those promoting rights, equality and citizenship, justice or human development worldwide.**

Or. en

Justification

When mobilising capacities through the UCPM, speed is of the utmost importance, as illustrated by the tragic consequences of the late deployment of firefighting planes in the most recent forest fire seasons in Southern Europe. EU co-funding should always be provided under conditions of full transparency and accountability.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a regulation Recital 10 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(10 a) Separate funding and budgetary allocations should be guaranteed for the revised Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Considering the need to

avoid any negative impact on the financing of existing multiannual programmes, the increase in financing for the targeted revision of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism in the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 should be drawn exclusively from all means available under Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013^{1a}, with particular recourse to the Flexibility Instrument.

^{1a} *Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884).*

Or. en

Justification

New policy proposals should be accompanied by new resources. The rapporteur strongly rejects the use of any redeployments at the expense of successful, chronically underfunded programmes such as the Rights, equality and citizenship and Justice programmes. Instead, any additional funding necessary should be mobilised using the flexibility provisions of the MFF Regulation.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a regulation

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 8

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 12 a – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

The Commission shall inform the European Parliament and the Council of operations and progress made under Articles 11 and 12 every **two years**.'

Amendment

The Commission shall inform the European Parliament and the Council of operations and progress made under Articles 11 and 12 every **year**.

Or. en

Justification

To ensure full parliamentary scrutiny and oversight of the process and in order to detect

possible changes with a budgetary impact as early as possible, it is suggested that the Parliament and Council receive updated information on the progress of the reinforcement of the UCPM on an annual basis, including mandatory information of budgetary and cost developments.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 8

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 12 a – paragraph 1 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

This information shall include an overview of the budgetary and cost developments with a detailed technical and financial assessment, precise information on cost increases and changes in the types of response capacities required and their quality requirements, if any, and the reasons for any such increases or changes.'

Or. en

Justification

To ensure full parliamentary scrutiny and oversight of the process and in order to detect possible changes with a budgetary impact as early as possible, it is suggested that the Parliament and Council receive updated information on the progress of the reinforcement of the UCPM on an annual basis, including mandatory information of budgetary and cost developments.

Amendment 8

Proposal for a regulation

Article 1 – paragraph – point 12

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 19 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

The necessary appropriations for the Union Mechanism shall be gradually authorised by the European Parliament

and the Council in the framework of the annual budgetary procedure, taking due account of all means available under Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013, with particular recourse to the Flexibility Instrument, as set out in Annex I.'*

** Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884).*

Or. en

Justification

New policy proposals should be accompanied by new resources. The rapporteur strongly rejects the use of any redeployments at the expense of successful, chronically underfunded programmes such as the Rights, equality and citizenship and Justice programmes. Instead, any additional funding necessary should be mobilised using the flexibility provisions of the MFF Regulation.

Amendment 9

Proposal for a regulation Annex I (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

ANNEX I

INDICATIVE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR THE PERIOD 2018-2020

		2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
Total additional appropriations under Heading 3*	CA	19,157	115,2	122,497	256,854
	PA	11	56,56	115,395	182,955
Total additional appropriations	CA	2	2	2,284	6,284

*under Heading 4**

	<i>PA</i>	<i>0,8</i>	<i>1,8</i>	<i>2,014</i>	<i>4,614</i>
<i>Total additional appropriations under Headings 3 and 4 combined*</i>	<i>CA</i>	<i>21,157</i>	<i>117,2</i>	<i>124,781</i>	<i>263,138</i>
	<i>PA</i>	<i>11,8</i>	<i>58,36</i>	<i>117,409</i>	<i>187,569</i>

(figures in EUR million)

** The full amounts are to be provided through the Flexibility Instrument.*

Or. en

Justification

The additional financing needed for the present revision of the UCPM in the years 2018-2020 should be defined in more detail in the Decision itself, through a self-standing, detailed Annex I. Any additional funding necessary for financing this revision of the UCPM should be mobilised using the flexibility provisions of the MFF Regulation.