



2017/0309(COD)

21.2.2018

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DRAFT REPORT

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(2017/0772/2) – C8-0409/2017 – 2017/0309(COD))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Rapporteur: Elisabetta Gardini

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

Amendments to a draft act

Amendments by Parliament set out in two columns

Deletions are indicated in bold italics in the left-hand column. Replacements are indicated in bold italics in both columns. New text is indicated in bold italics in the right-hand column.

The first and second lines of the header of each amendment identify the relevant part of the draft act under consideration. If an amendment pertains to an existing act that the draft act is seeking to amend, the amendment heading includes a third line identifying the existing act and a fourth line identifying the provision in that act that Parliament wishes to amend.

Amendments by Parliament in the form of a consolidated text

New text is highlighted in ***bold italics***. Deletions are indicated using either the ■ symbol or strikeout. Replacements are indicated by highlighting the new text in ***bold italics*** and by deleting or striking out the text that has been replaced.

By way of exception, purely technical changes made by the drafting departments in preparing the final text are not highlighted.

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DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

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)0772/2 – C8-0409/2017 – 2017/0309(COD))

(Ordinary legislative procedure: first reading)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to Parliament and the Council (COM2017/0772/2),
 - having regard to Article 294(2) and Article 196 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, pursuant to which the Commission submitted the proposal to Parliament (C8-0409/2017),
 - having regard to Article 294(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to the reasoned opinion submitted, within the framework of Protocol No 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, by the Czech Chamber of Deputies, asserting that the draft legislative act does not comply with the principle of subsidiarity,
 - having regard to Rule 59 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (A8-0000/2018),
1. Adopts its position at first reading hereinafter set out;
 2. Calls on the Commission to refer the matter to Parliament again if it replaces, substantially amends or intends to substantially amend its proposal;
 3. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the national parliaments.

Amendment 1

Proposal for a decision Recital 3

Text proposed by the Commission

(3) Natural and man-made disasters can strike anywhere across the globe, often without warning. Whether of natural or man-made origin, they are becoming increasingly frequent, extreme and

Amendment

(3) Natural and man-made disasters can strike anywhere across the globe, often without warning. Whether of natural or man-made origin, they are becoming increasingly frequent, extreme and

complex, exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, and irrespective of national borders. The human, environmental, and economic consequences stemming from disasters can be enormous.

complex, exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, and irrespective of national borders. The human, environmental, and economic consequences stemming from disasters can be enormous. *Unfortunately, those disasters are sometimes intentional and can also be caused by terrorist attacks.*

Or. it

Amendment 2

Proposal for a decision

Recital 4

Text proposed by the Commission

(4) Recent experience has shown that reliance on voluntary offers of mutual assistance, coordinated and facilitated by the Union Mechanism, does not always ensure that sufficient capacities are made available to address the basic needs of people affected by disasters in a satisfactory manner, nor that the environment and property are properly safeguarded. This is particularly so where Member States are simultaneously affected by recurrent *disasters* and collective capacity is insufficient.

Amendment

(4) Recent experience has shown that reliance on voluntary offers of mutual assistance, coordinated and facilitated by the Union Mechanism, does not always ensure that sufficient capacities are made available to address the basic needs of people affected by disasters in a satisfactory manner, nor that the environment and property are properly safeguarded. This is particularly so where Member States are simultaneously affected by *disasters that are both recurrent and unexpected, both natural and man-made*, and collective capacity is insufficient.

Or. it

Amendment 3

Proposal for a decision

Recital 4 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(4a) Forest fire prevention is vital in the context of the global commitment to reduce CO2 emissions. Indeed, the combustion of trees and peat-rich soils in

forest fires results in the emission of CO2. More specifically, studies have shown how fires cause 20% of all CO2 emissions around the world, i.e. more than the combined emissions of all the transport systems on earth (vehicles, ships and aircraft).

Or. it

Amendment 4

Proposal for a decision

Recital 5

Text proposed by the Commission

(5) Prevention is of key importance for protection against disasters and requires further action. To that effect, Member States should share risk assessments on a regular basis as well as summaries of their disaster risk management planning in order to ensure an integrated approach to disaster management, linking risk prevention, preparedness and response actions. In addition, the Commission should be able to require Member States to provide specific prevention and preparedness plans in relation to specific disasters, notably with a view to maximising overall Union support to disaster risk management. Administrative burden should be reduced and prevention policies strengthened, including by ensuring necessary links to other key Union policies and instruments, notably the European Structural and Investment Funds as listed in recital 2 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013¹³.

¹³ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common

Amendment

(5) Prevention is of key importance for protection against disasters and requires further action. To that effect, Member States should share risk assessments on a regular basis as well as summaries of their disaster risk management planning in order to ensure an integrated approach to **natural and man-made** disaster management, linking risk prevention, preparedness and response actions. In addition, the Commission should be able to require Member States to provide specific prevention and preparedness plans in relation to specific disasters, **including man-made ones**, notably with a view to maximising overall Union support to disaster risk management. Administrative burden should be reduced, **by improving links and cooperation**, and prevention policies strengthened, including by ensuring necessary links to other key Union policies and instruments, notably the European Structural and Investment Funds as listed in recital 2 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013¹³.

¹³ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common

provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).

provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).

Or. it

Amendment 5

Proposal for a decision

Recital 6

Text proposed by the Commission

(6) There is a need to reinforce the collective ability to prepare and respond to disasters notably through mutual support in Europe. In addition to strengthening the possibilities already offered by the European Emergency Response Capacity ('EERC' or 'voluntary pool'), from now on referred to as "European Civil Protection Pool", the Commission should also establish rescEU. The composition of rescEU should include emergency response capacities to respond to wildfires, large-scale floods and earthquakes, as well as a field hospital and medical teams in line with World Health Organisation standards, that can be rapidly deployed.

Amendment

(6) There is a need to reinforce the collective ability to prepare and respond to disasters notably through mutual support in Europe. In addition to strengthening the possibilities already offered by the European Emergency Response Capacity ('EERC' or 'voluntary pool'), from now on referred to as "European Civil Protection Pool", the Commission should also establish rescEU. The composition of rescEU should include emergency response capacities to respond to wildfires, large-scale floods and earthquakes, ***terrorist attacks and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks***, as well as a field hospital and medical teams in line with World Health Organisation standards, that can be rapidly deployed. ***In this regard, it is important to strengthen and include the specific capacities of local and regional authorities, since they are the first to intervene after a disaster. Those authorities should develop cooperation models in which communities can share best practices, giving them the***

*opportunity to help develop their
resilience in the face of natural disasters.*

Or. it

Amendment 6

Proposal for a decision

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 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, *such as cross-border epidemics*. Union procurement of capacities should allow for economies of scale and better coordination when responding to disasters.

Or. it

Amendment 7

Proposal for a decision

Recital 11

Text proposed by the Commission

(11) There is a need to simplify Union Mechanism procedures to ensure that Member States can access assistance and capacities needed in order to respond to

Amendment

(11) There is a need to simplify *and increase the flexibility of the* Union Mechanism procedures to ensure that Member States can access assistance and

natural or man-made disasters as rapidly as possible.

capacities needed in order to respond to natural or man-made disasters as rapidly as possible.

Or. it

Amendment 8

Proposal for a decision

Recital 12

Text proposed by the Commission

(12) In order to maximise the use of existing funding instruments and support Member States in delivering assistance, **particularly** in response to disasters outside the Union, a derogation to Article 129(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 966/2012 of the European Parliament and the Council¹⁴ should be provided for when financing is granted pursuant to Articles 21, 22 and 23 of Decision No 1313/2013/EU.

¹⁴ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1).

Amendment

(12) In order to maximise the use of existing funding instruments and support Member States in delivering assistance, **including** in response to disasters outside the Union, a derogation to Article 129(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 966/2012 of the European Parliament and the Council¹⁴ should be provided for when financing is granted pursuant to Articles 21, 22 and 23 of Decision No 1313/2013/EU.

¹⁴ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1).

Or. it

Amendment 9

Proposal for a decision

Recital 13

Text proposed by the Commission

(13) It is important to ensure that Member States take all the necessary actions in order to effectively prevent

Amendment

(13) It is important to ensure that Member States take all the necessary actions in order to effectively prevent

natural and man-made disasters and mitigate their effects. Provisions should reinforce links between prevention, preparedness and response actions under the Union Mechanism. Coherence should also be ensured with other relevant Union legislation on prevention and disaster risk management, including for cross-border prevention action and response to threats such as serious cross-border health threats¹⁵. Likewise, coherence should be ensured with international commitments such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030, the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

natural and man-made disasters and mitigate their effects. Provisions should reinforce links between prevention, preparedness and response actions under the Union Mechanism. Coherence should also be ensured with other relevant Union legislation on prevention and disaster risk management, including for cross-border prevention action and response to threats such as serious cross-border health threats¹⁵. ***Territorial cooperation programmes under cohesion policy provide for specific actions to take into account disaster resilience, risk prevention and risk management, and further efforts should be made towards more vigorous integration and greater synergies.*** Likewise, coherence should be ensured with international commitments such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030, the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

¹⁵ Decision No 1082/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 on serious cross border threats to health and repealing Decision No 2119/98/EC (OJ L 293, 5.11.2013, p. 1).

¹⁵ Decision No 1082/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 on serious cross border threats to health and repealing Decision No 2119/98/EC (OJ L 293, 5.11.2013, p. 1).

Or. it

Amendment 10

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 4 – point a

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 6 – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

‘(a) develop risk assessments at national or appropriate sub-national level and make them available to the Commission by 22 December 2018 and every three years thereafter;’

Amendment

‘(a) develop risk assessments at national or appropriate sub-national level and make them available to the Commission by 22 December 2018 and every three years thereafter, ***based on a model agreed on***

Amendment 11

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 4 – point a a (new)

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 6 – point d

Present text

(d) *participate*, on a voluntary basis, in peer reviews on *the assessment of* risk management capability.

Amendment

(aa) point (d) is replaced by the following:

‘(d) participate, on a voluntary basis, in peer reviews on risk management capability with a view to identifying actions that bridge the gaps.’

Or. it *Justification*

The purpose of the decision to amend the original text is to clarify the aim of the measure in the context of the overall revision of Article 6.

Amendment 12

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 4 - point b

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 6 – second subparagraph

Text proposed by the Commission

‘A summary of the relevant elements of the risk management planning shall be provided to the Commission, including information on the selected prevention and preparedness measures, by 31 January 2019 and every three years thereafter. In addition, the Commission may require Member States to provide specific prevention and preparedness plans, which shall cover both short- and long-term efforts. The Union shall duly consider the progress made by the Member States with

Amendment

‘A summary of the relevant elements of the risk management planning shall be provided to the Commission, including information on the selected prevention and preparedness measures, by 31 January 2019 and every three years thereafter. In addition, the Commission may require Member States to provide specific prevention and preparedness plans, which shall cover both short- and long-term efforts. *In this regard, these efforts may include a commitment on the part of*

respect to disaster prevention and preparedness as part of any future ex-ante conditionality mechanism under the European Structural and Investment Funds.'

Member States to encourage investments based on risk awareness and to ensure better post-disaster reconstruction. The Union shall duly consider the progress made by the Member States with respect to disaster prevention and preparedness as part of any future ex-ante conditionality mechanism under the European Structural and Investment Funds.'

Or. it

Justification

The Commission's decision to establish possible specific consultation mechanisms should include the involvement of the Member States which are an integral part of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

Amendment 13

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 4 - point b

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 6 – third subparagraph

Text proposed by the Commission

The Commission may also establish specific consultation mechanisms to enhance appropriate prevention and preparedness planning and coordination among Member States prone to similar type disasters.'

Amendment

The Commission may, ***in cooperation with the Member States***, also establish specific consultation mechanisms to enhance appropriate prevention and preparedness planning and coordination among Member States prone to similar type disasters. ***The Commission and the Member States, where possible, shall also foster consistency between disaster risk management and climate change adaptation strategies.***'

Or. it

Justification

The Commission's decision to establish possible specific consultation mechanisms should include the involvement of the Member States which are an integral part of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

Amendment 14

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 5

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 10 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

‘1. The Commission and the Member States shall work together to improve the planning of disaster response operations under the Union Mechanism, including through scenario-building for disaster response based on the risk assessments referred to in point (a) of Article 6 and the overview of risks referred to in point (c) of Article 5(1), asset mapping and the development of plans for the deployment of response capacities.’

Amendment

‘1. The Commission and the Member States shall work together to improve the planning of disaster response operations under the Union Mechanism, including through scenario-building for disaster response based on the risk assessments referred to in point (a) of Article 6 and the overview of risks referred to in point (c) of Article 5(1), asset mapping, ***including earth-moving machinery, mobile electricity generators and mobile fire-fighting equipment among those assets***, and the development of plans for the deployment of response capacities.’

Or. it

Amendment 15

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 5

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 10 – paragraph 1 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

‘1a. Member States shall establish and maintain up-to-date lists of machinery owned by private individuals outside the European Civil Protection Pool in order to make it available, together with its management structures, in the event of local disasters, or to lease it in accordance with the provisions of Article 23.’

Or. it

Amendment 16

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 7

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 12 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

‘2. The composition of rescEU shall consist of the **following** capacities:

- (a) **aerial forest firefighting;**
- (b) **high capacity pumping;**
- (c) **urban search and rescue;**
- (d) **field hospital and emergency medical teams.’**

Amendment

‘2. The composition of rescEU shall consist of **capacities additional to those that already exist in the Member States, to be identified on the basis of any gaps in response capacities to health, industrial, seismic or volcanic disasters, to mass movements and emergencies, to floods, forest fires (including aerial forest fire-fighting equipment), to terrorist attacks and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks.’**

Or. it

Justification

The definition of rescEU on the basis of risk rather than on the basis of capacities is more flexible and enables all types of disaster response capacities to be included, both now and in the future, also taking technological developments into account.

Amendment 17

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 7

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 12 – paragraph 7

Text proposed by the Commission

‘7. rescEU capacities shall be available

Amendment

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for response operations under the Union Mechanism following a request for assistance through the ERCC. The decision on their deployment shall be taken by the Commission, which shall retain command and control of rescEU capacities.’

for response operations under the Union Mechanism following a request for assistance through the ERCC. The decision on their deployment shall be taken by the Commission – ***under agreed arrangements*** – which shall retain command and control of rescEU capacities.’

Or. it

Amendment 18

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 7

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 12 – paragraph 10 – point b

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

‘(b) in case of leasing and rental, the registration of the equipment in a Member State.

‘(b) in case of leasing and rental, the registration of the equipment in a Member State ***shall not be compulsory.***’

Or. it

Justification

The compulsory registration of an aircraft in a Member State may be regarded as an element of regulatory and operational inflexibility. The specific contractual practices used in the aviation sector must also be applied to aircraft registered in countries outside the European Union, to ensure full availability of the largest possible number of aircraft. The amendment prevents the text of the amended point from conflicting with the Commission’s command and control of rescEU capacities.

Amendment 19

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 7

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 12 – paragraph 10 – point b a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(ba) aircraft management shall be

assigned to EASA certified operators .’

Or. it

Justification

The amendment was tabled in order to safeguard the compliance of the selected aircraft operators with EU standards and certifications and with shareholder constraints.

Amendment 20

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 9 a (new)

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 13 – paragraph 1 – point a

Present text

(a) *set* up and manage a training programme for civil protection and emergency management personnel on prevention of, preparedness for and response to disasters. The programme shall include joint courses and a system for exchange of experts, whereby individuals may be seconded to other Member States.

The *training* programme shall aim to enhance the coordination, compatibility and complementarity between capacities referred to in Articles 9 and *II*, and to improve the competence of experts referred to in points (d) and (f) of Article 8;

Amendment

(9a) In Article 13, point (a) of paragraph 1 is amended as follows:

(a) *set* up and manage a training programme for civil protection and emergency management personnel on prevention of, preparedness for and response to disasters. The programme shall include joint courses and a system for exchange of experts, whereby individuals may be seconded to other Member States.

A new Erasmus civil protection programme shall be introduced, in keeping with the rules and principles of Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013* establishing ‘Erasmus +’;

The *new Erasmus civil protection* programme shall *also* aim to enhance the coordination, compatibility and complementarity between capacities referred to in Articles 9, *II* and *12*, and to improve the competence of experts referred to in points (d) and (f) of Article 8;

The new Erasmus civil protection programme shall include an international dimension aimed at supporting the Union’s external action, including its development goals, through cooperation between Member States and between

partner countries.'

**Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50).*

Or. it

Justification

Your rapporteur considers it necessary to amend Article 13(1) of Decision 1313/2013/EU, even if the new Commission proposal for a decision does not make provision for this. The amendment ensures consistency with the objectives of the Commission proposal. The establishment of an Erasmus civil protection programme will help to develop uniform European training standards based on the same basic training levels for civil protection staff in all Member States.

Amendment 21

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 13

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 20 a

Text proposed by the Commission

'Any assistance or funding provided under this Decision shall give appropriate visibility to the Union, including prominence to the Union emblem for those capacities referred to under Article 11, 12 and 21(2)(c).'

Amendment

'Any assistance or funding provided under this Decision shall give appropriate visibility to the Union, including prominence to the Union emblem for those capacities referred to under Article 11, 12 and 21(2)(c). *A communication strategy shall be developed in order to make the tangible results of the actions taken under the Union Mechanism visible to citizens.'*

Or. it

Amendment 22

Proposal for a decision

Article 1 – paragraph 1 – point 15 - point b

Decision No 1313/2013/EU

Article 23 – paragraph 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

‘2a. For Member States’ capacities that are not pre-committed to the European Civil Protection Pool, the amount of Union financial support for transport resources shall not exceed 55% of the total eligible cost. To be eligible for such funding, Member States shall undertake to produce a register of all the capacities at their disposal, together with the relevant management structures, over and beyond those pre-committed to the European pool, enabling them to respond to health, industrial, seismic or volcanic disasters, to mass movements and emergencies, to floods and forest fires, to terrorist attacks and to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks’.

Or. it

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

A worrying context

Natural disasters in Europe and worldwide are increasing significantly, both because of the frequency with which they occur and their intensity, and pose a serious threat to our societies, economies and ecosystems.

The scale of the problem can be understood simply by looking at, for example, the natural disasters of 2017, which, in Europe alone caused 200 deaths. The fires which spread in 2017 devastated the south of the continent, burning more than one million hectares of land and killing over 100 people in just six months. 2017 was also the year in which a series of tropical storms repeatedly struck the European overseas territories in the Caribbean, testing EU assistance to its limits. Still more unexpectedly, in the same year, there were even violent hurricanes which caused serious flooding and destruction on the North Atlantic side of Europe.

The future scenario described by scientific researchers is even more worrying, given that these events are expected to intensify. Years like 2017 will no longer be an exception, but the rule. Without a shadow of a doubt, the main reason for this is climate change, which has amplified the negative impact of events caused by extreme weather conditions. It is no coincidence that climate change has been described as one of the biggest global health threats of the 21st century.

The situation could be improved

However, in the face of such a scenario, the European Union has not remained idle. Over the years, it has developed a sound disaster response network; the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) is key to this system. In playing its support role, the Mechanism has helped Member States to optimise their disaster prevention and risk reduction efforts. The Mechanism has intervened both inside and outside the EU, through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre - ERCC. The recent interim evaluation of the Mechanism points out that it 'constitutes a visible expression of European solidarity'.

However, recent operational experiences at events such as the 2017 fire season or the 2015-2016 migration crisis have highlighted the shortcomings of the Mechanism in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

The current model is based on voluntary contributions from Member States, which make available in advance their capacities to the EERC (from now on referred to as the European Civil Protection Pool) in exchange for financial support by the Union to cover expenses such as adaptation, certification and transport costs. However, this system has proven to be insufficient to respond to major emergencies that affect several Member States at the same time. The main problem in relying primarily upon national capacities is that they are not available for use in the EU if they are being used nationally.

To ensure that the European Union can provide for the safety of its citizens in the face of disasters, it must be underpinned by a stronger Mechanism that is able to respond robustly and reliably. Your rapporteur believes that a more ambitious Mechanism is needed.

A vision for the future

Your rapporteur's vision for a fully developed Union Civil Protection Mechanism is built on three essential elements.

1. A genuine European civil protection capacity. The future mechanism should acquire further capacities compared to those currently existing in the Member States, in addition to having its own capacities. A genuine European Civil Protection Capacity should be established. This new Capacity will fill the gaps identified in the national response systems. The intention is not to take over or duplicate the work of the Member States, but to complement it where necessary.

To build this Capacity, the Union will fund the acquisition of new resources, such as, for instance, fire-fighting aircraft. The new capacities could be based on rental contracts, or on the repair or adaptation of existing capacities, for which the Union should contribute significantly. There are other examples of financial incentives: the Union could bear the costs resulting from the action of the Union Mechanism, or transport costs.

Some of these aspects are already provided for in the current Union Mechanism, which is a good start. However, the low level of co-financing offered by the current system means that the incentives are not being properly exploited.

2. The consistency of the Capacity with other existing instruments. The new Mechanism should also be more consistent, both within the EU and beyond. This means that the establishment of the Capacity must go hand in hand with further efforts by Member States in terms of prevention. The new system encourages everyone to be responsible. Prevention will have a key role in disaster management and will have to be developed in the future. Therefore, your rapporteur's idea of the new Mechanism is one that does not act in isolation, but builds on the strength of other EU instruments and focuses on risk prevention.

Such consistency, however, should not only relate to prevention, but also to response. The new Mechanism should dovetail with other existing EU disaster response instruments, such as the humanitarian aid instrument. Proper coordination between the two instruments will ensure that overall EU action is more consistent and effective both outside and within EU borders.

3. A fair allocation of resources. As a direct consequence of the two preceding elements, your rapporteur believes that in the future, the EU needs to make a greater financial commitment. The current Mechanism budget of EUR 368 million for the period 2014-2020 is paltry compared to the more than EUR 433 billion in economic losses caused by extreme climate-related events since 1980 in the Member States.

Your rapporteur takes the view that a greater EU financial commitment should be accompanied by an appropriate coordination role for the Union. The European Union will be expected to exercise full command over, and control of, any new European Civil Protection Capacity. Given that the Union will make full provision for the acquisition of resources for the new Capacity, it will also retain possession of it.

In addition, your rapporteur considers it advisable to establish an Erasmus civil protection programme, to strengthen the cooperation that already exists between Member States.

Lastly, your rapporteur wishes to stress that citizens continue to trust in a European civil

protection service: over the years, Eurobarometer data have constantly shown that 90 % of respondents considered it important that the EU help to coordinate the response to disasters within its territory through its civil protection role. Most EU citizens (56 %) believe that their country does not have sufficient capacities to cope with all major disasters alone. These figures show that a Europe based on civil protection is what the citizens want to see.