



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Development

2011/2023(INI)

16.6.2011

OPINION

of the Committee on Development

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

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

Rapporteur: Michèle Striffler

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development 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. Reiterates that the European Union should respect humanitarian principles (humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence) to meet humanitarian needs outside the EU and that the use of civil protection resources must be needs-based and must complement and be consistent with humanitarian aid, with a view to the subsequent medium and long-term development strategies; emphasises that these principles are not dogma but stem from operational efficiency considerations;
2. Encourages the Commission to support the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to keep working towards the definition of a common methodological framework for assessing needs by seeking the systematic involvement of local stakeholders, including non-state stakeholders;
3. Stresses the importance of developing relief asset pre-positioning capacities in order to improve the speed at which humanitarian organisations respond to disasters; notes that the development of depots/hubs reflects the effectiveness of this approach in terms of speed, quality and cost efficiency, and calls on the Commission to continue to provide financial support in this field; in this respect, endorses the recommendations of the Barnier report in 2006 that the EU's outermost regions should be used, on a non-exclusive basis, as support bases to facilitate the pre-positioning of vital products and logistics, thus making it easier to deploy the available European human and material resources in the event of an urgent humanitarian intervention outside the EU; highlights the importance of flexibility in terms of coordination and resource management in ensuring the speed and adequacy of humanitarian assistance and disaster response;
4. Calls for an increase in funding and the development of capabilities and resources in order to ensure that humanitarian aid and civil protection remain purely civilian tasks;
5. Recognises that the use of military assets – transport, logistics, security – to support humanitarian operations may provide key back-up, particularly in the case of large-scale natural disasters; reiterates that these military assets should be used in very specific circumstances and as a last resort, in accordance with United Nations recommendations;
6. Welcomes the proposal to create a European Emergency Response Centre; asks for the introduction of specific and transparent rules on cooperation and coordination between the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Commission, pointing out that humanitarian aid is not a policy instrument for crisis management;
7. Reaffirms the core role played by the OCHA in coordinating international humanitarian action;
8. Calls on the Commission to make active efforts to ensure the visibility of the resources and

capabilities deployed in the field, particularly through the use of EU symbols in conjunction with national badges.

9. Calls on the Commission to develop a communication and information network, exploring in particular the use of telecommunications capacity, including satellites, in order to give rescue teams access to rapid and detailed information to facilitate the effective distribution of basic necessities and of equipment essential for social reorganisation in the wake of disasters;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	14.6.2011
Result of final vote	+: 22 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Michael Cashman, Ricardo Cortés Lastra, Corina Crețu, Leonidas Donskis, Charles Goerens, Catherine Grèze, András Gyürk, Filip Kaczmarek, Franziska Keller, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Gay Mitchell, Norbert Neuser, Maurice Ponga, Birgit Schnieber-Jastram, Michèle Striffler, Alf Svensson, Eleni Theocharous, Ivo Vajgl, Iva Zanicchi
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Kriton Arsenis, Isabella Lövin, Csaba Óry