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Preparedness and consequence management in the fight against terrorism

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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Council of June 2004 asked the Commission and the Council to assess Member States capacities to prevent and cope with terrorist attacks and to enhance the existing cooperation on civil protection. The present Communication gives an overview of the actions that the Commission is currently taking and proposes additional measures to strengthen the existing instruments and to meet the mandates given by the European Council.

2. THE CIVIL PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

2.1. The Community Civil Protection Mechanism

Mutual assistance and collective action are both a political imperative and a practical necessity in the event of a terrorist attack. Terrorist attacks may require the involvement of many different response teams, ranging from traditional civil protection capabilities to more sophisticated technical and scientific resources. The capabilities required to handle the consequences of terrorist attacks can easily exceed the capacities of the country affected. Only collective action, based on solidarity, can ensure a timely and adequate response to *all* terrorist scenarios.

For its part, the Commission is ready to assist Member States in the implementation of their solidarity commitment through the Community Civil Protection Mechanism. Established in October 2001, the Community Mechanism has quickly developed into the key instrument for European cooperation in the field of civil protection. Participation in the Mechanism has grown to a total of 30 countries (EU-25, Bulgaria, Romania, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), with others showing interest in joining the Mechanism. The Commission has worked closely with Member States to develop a series of actions and instruments aimed at enhancing preparedness and facilitating mutual assistance in the event of a major disaster. Most importantly, the Mechanism – which can be called upon by any country that is struck by a major disaster – has now provided real-time support in various emergencies, allowing it to gain experience and to build upon lessons learned.

When stricken by a disaster, the national authorities of the affected country can submit a request for assistance to the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC), which immediately forwards the request to its network of national contact points. It is then up to the individual countries to determine whether they are in a position to offer assistance. The MIC collects the responses and the requesting country can choose the capabilities it needs to supplement its own assets. In addition, the MIC can also offer technical support and dispatch small expert teams to coordinate assistance or to liaise with the national authorities or international organisations.

The MIC also collects validated information throughout the emergency and provides regular updates to all participating countries. A dedicated communication and information system (CECIS) is being implemented in 2004 to ensure even more efficient information flows during emergencies.

To date, the MIC has coordinated European civil protection assistance in a variety of natural and man-made disasters. In the past two years, more than 10 different countries have benefited from European civil protection assistance arranged through the Mechanism. The

types of assistance provided through the MIC cover the whole range of traditional civil protection activities - including fire-fighting, medical assistance, search and rescue – as well as more specialised equipment or expertise. Similar assistance can be provided, upon request, in case of a terrorist attack. The added value of EU wide cooperation can be realised whenever the scale of a disaster is such that it exceeds the national capacities, regardless of whether it is a natural disaster, a technological accident or a terrorist threat.

On the same day that the European Council adopted the Solidarity Declaration, 25 March 2004, the Commission expressed its intention and commitment to further strengthen the Community Civil Protection Mechanism. The Communication on Reinforcing the Civil Protection Capacity of the EU identified the following areas of improvement:

- stronger coordination and communication;
- the inter-operability of technical equipment, including civilian-military inter-operability;
- common insignia for the intervention teams to enhance the visibility of European solidarity;
- finding the means to finance transportation of equipment and teams in the event of a disaster.

The Commission is committed to further improving the system of mutual assistance along these lines. To be effective, however, each of these proposals requires the full support of the Member States.

2.2. Enhancing preparedness through training and simulation exercises

Training is a cornerstone of emergency preparedness and response. At European level, the Community Civil Protection Mechanism has invested significant efforts in the design and implementation of a training programme for national experts and team leaders. This programme currently consists of three components: courses, simulation exercises and an exchange of experts system.

The targeted audience of the training courses are national team leaders, liaison officers and technical, assessment and coordination experts who are eligible to participate in European assistance interventions outside their own country. The training curriculum has been carefully developed to cover all knowledge and skills required to contribute effectively to such interventions. The courses, which last one week, also encourage interaction between the participants to promote exchanges of information and knowledge of other countries' approaches to civil protection.

The first cycle of training courses has been successfully completed. More than 200 national experts and team leaders have received training. The Commission will continue and, where possible, intensify its efforts in this field. A second training cycle started in September 2004.

In addition, the Commission intends to organise specific training courses on selected topics. These are likely to include training on topics relevant to terrorist attacks, such as psychological or psycho-social aftercare for victims and responders, operating in a contaminated environment, etc. Simulation exercises are important to establish and maintain an effective and efficient response system capable of handling threats to public safety. They enable first responders to apply their skills in a realistic scenario and produce learning

situations at a level of complexity that cannot be achieved in training courses. For those in charge of the system, they present a unique opportunity to test and evaluate procedures, identify problems and build on past experience.

At European level, the Commission has financed since 2002 the organisation of 8 major simulation exercises, involving teams and experts from several Member States. These exercises are carried out within the framework of the Community Mechanism.

Three exercises were specifically modelled to reflect terrorist scenarios: the Euratox exercise (France) in October 2002, the Common Cause exercise (Denmark) in October 2002 and the EU Response exercise (Belgium) in January 2003.

Under the exchange of experts system, national experts can work for a limited period of time in other Member States. The system is designed to share knowledge and expertise and to ensure that all Member States can build upon this collective knowledge base.

2.3. Identifying and assessing capabilities

Terrorists will continue to expose and exploit our vulnerabilities. When prevention and deterrence fail and attacks occur, only a well-organised and effective response system can guarantee an expeditious return to normality. This requires an increased emphasis on preparedness for terrorist events at all levels. In response to this, the European Commission has developed a number of activities and instruments aimed at identifying and assessing the civil protection capabilities available for assistance at European level.

One way of enhancing preparedness is information gathering. Reliable and detailed data on the assets and capabilities available for assistance at European level will facilitate planning and can, in the long run, ensure a more rational use of limited resources. The Council Decision establishing the Community Mechanism recognised this need and requested Member States to make information on civil protection teams and experts available to the Community Mechanism. The information received from Member States has been entered into the civil protection database maintained by the Commission. The above mentioned Commission Communication on Reinforcing the Civil Protection Capacity of the EU identified a number of information gaps and called upon the Member States to provide more detailed data in order to allow better planning and preparedness.

In 2003, the EU Military Committee was mandated to establish a database of military assets and capabilities relevant to the protection of civilian populations against the effects of terrorist attacks, including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) attacks. In 2004, the content of the military database was made available to the Community Mechanism in order to enhance its overall response capacity.

In response to the mandates given by the June European Council, the Commission has initiated a new process designed to assess the civil protection capabilities that are available at European level to assist countries affected by a major terrorist attack. This exercise is not intended to provide a realistic picture of all national civil protection resources available within the participating countries, but focuses specifically on the assets and capabilities that could be made available to assist other countries in the event of a major terrorist attack.

The Commission has taken a scenario-based approach to identify both the needs for assistance at EU level and the resources available for such assistance interventions. With the help of national experts, the Commission designed a limited number of scenarios for the response to

terrorist attacks. Based on the scenarios, the Commission has developed a consolidated list of the civil protection assets and capabilities required to handle the consequences of major terrorist attacks in Europe. It devised a comprehensive questionnaire focusing both on quantitative and qualitative information, and on 17 August 2004, requested the 30 countries participating in the Community Mechanism to provide information on the civil protection assistance they could offer in each of these scenarios. In the meantime, the EU Military Staff has started upgrading the military database on the basis of the consolidated list and questionnaire developed by the Commission.

Once the information is received, the Commission will consolidate the information and start to draft an EU Restricted report assessing the capabilities available at European level for assistance to countries affected by a major terrorist attack. This report will be presented to the December European Council. The report could be a unique policy tool for the European Union and the Member States, allowing them to further strengthen the civil protection framework in Europe and to consolidate the solidarity commitments they have undertaken.

So far, only some of the Member States have responded with appropriate information. All Member States need to participate fully if the Union is to have an accurate picture of its response capability and to take forward its ability to deliver on its solidarity commitment.

3. HEALTH PROTECTION

3.1. The challenge

Incidents and terrorist attacks involving explosives, chemical, biological and chemical agents can be hugely disruptive and costly even if they do not kill or maim or involve "unlimited catastrophe" agents, such as smallpox, which will continue to spread unless effective counter-measures are applied. The action in the health field is intended to cover the whole spectrum of activities from risk assessment via the detection or exclusion of presence of biological, chemical or radioactive agents in packages, environmental compartments or humans, animals or plants, through to risk communication between health authorities, health professionals and the public, to risk management involving the introduction or application of counter-measures including travel advisories, screenings and contact tracing, vaccination, administration of therapeutics and treatments, decontamination, mass casualty triage, isolation, quarantine, interdiction of premises and movement, and waste disposal.

3.2. Cooperation in the field of health security

The Member States and the Commission are working together to ensure that there is adequate capacity and capabilities and to enhance preparedness and response in the health sector for any incident, no matter its origin. They have agreed in November 2001 a programme on health security, which has been the object of Commission communication COM(2003) 320 of 2 June 2003.

3.3. Threat awareness, command and control arrangements: Mechanism for information exchange, consultation and co-ordination

The platform of health security coordination in the EU is the Health Security Committee, set up in November 2001 by the Health Ministers and the Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection. It exchanges information on health-related threats, coordinates health preparedness and emergency response plans and crisis management strategies, raises the alert

and communicates rapidly in case of health-related incidents of EU concern, advises on the management of risk and facilitates and supports training and dissemination of good practice and experience.

A secure 24 hour/7 day-a-week rapid alert system (RAS-BICHAT) links the Commission and the members of the Health Security Committee with back-up contact points in appropriate government offices. It complements the early warning and response system (EWRS) system established by Commission Decision 2000/57/EC of 22 December 1999 for the formal notification of outbreaks and consultation and coordination of counter-measures under the terms of Decision No 2119/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. Both systems are linked under appropriate operating procedures with all the EU health-related alert systems and with systems that scan and summarise information made available through news agencies, other news media and specialised sources onto the World Wide Web in order to provide advance warning on adverse events.

Alert systems and coordination of measures ensured by this platform of cooperation on health protection apply over the full range of incidents from simple incidents and threats such as notification of unsafe food consignments and mailing of suspect letters, to mass casualties and interdiction of movement which might require deployment of significant law enforcement, security, and even military assets.

3.4. Surveillance and detection: Capability for inventorying, detection and identification

Biological agents have been prioritised on the basis of certain criteria, such as infectiousness, virulence, persistence in the environment, ease of manipulation and dissemination and existence of defences to counter their propagation and effects.

There are seven laboratory facilities in five Member States of the EU that are suitable for the handling and confirmation in samples and specimens of high-risk agents such as viral haemorrhagic fever or smallpox viruses (P4 laboratories). A network has been formed between these laboratories to provide quality-assured diagnostic services to all Member States and on-call availability 24h/7d to communicate rapidly with national authorities and the Commission, and organise tests and exercises, training and skill development.

To boost biosecurity defences, the Commission has put since June 2003 under mandatory surveillance *Bacillus anthracis* (for anthrax), *Franciscella tularensis* (for tularemia), *Coxiella burnetii* (for Q-fever), and *Variola major* (for smallpox) by their addition to the EU list of special agents and by laying down case definitions for these agents in Commission Decision 2003/534/EC of 17 July 2003. Moreover, in order to identify in a single tool and prioritise health security actions, a matrix has been developed together with a decision-making algorithm for use by the EU competent national authorities.

3.5. Response and recovery: Medicines' stocks and health services database and arrangements for provision of medicines, specialists, other medical goods and infrastructure

There are no authorised vaccines in the EU against pathogens such as smallpox or plague. Authorised anthrax vaccines are not widely available. Advantage has been taken of the opportunity presented by the current review of the EU pharmaceutical legislation to introduce

legal amendments in order to allow distribution and prescription of non- market authorised medicines under appropriate liability conditions.

The analysis of the antibiotics capacity of industry showed that there is very likely to be sufficient supply to meet demand in all foreseeable situations. Information has been obtained and shared, on a restricted basis, on stocks of bioagent vaccines, antibiotics, antidotes and anti-virals in Member States and consensus has been obtained on the general information that needs to be collected on medical resources for mutual assistance in disastrous medical situations. Most Member States have existing or are acquiring stockpiles of smallpox vaccines. There is an insufficient supply of immunoglobulins used for the treatment of serious adverse reactions to vaccines. A study by the Commission on the dilution of existing smallpox vaccines showed that it would be problematic under emergency conditions. Action is now directed towards the development of safer vaccines and the formulation of vaccination strategies, including for pandemic influenza. On request of the Commission, guidelines have been issued by the European Medicines Evaluation Agency, on the use of medicines against potential pathogens and the development of vaccinia virus- based vaccines against smallpox.

Clinical guidelines for the recognition and case management of diseases related to the pathogens that may be used in deliberate releases have been developed and issued on the basis of a consensus and peer review process on *anthrax, smallpox, botulism, plague, tularaemia, haemorrhagic fever viruses, brucella, Q fever, encephalitis viruses, glanders and melioidosis*.

On chemical agent terrorism, a series of lists of chemical agents has been compiled to arrive at groups of substances requiring the same public health and medical approaches. The clinical and toxicological aspects have been reviewed and data from a survey of poison centres conducted by the Commission have been used to compile an inventory of clinical and laboratory-related expertise in the EU. A network of chemical agent response centres will be set up to report incidents of EU concern and advice on counter-measures. Finally, guidance on the use of antidotes and pharmaceuticals for chemical agents has been obtained from the European Medicines Evaluation Agency and published.

Knowledge about terror agents and corresponding diseases and their clinical and epidemiological management and associated laboratory analysis is limited, hence the drive to identify relevant experts in the EU and their listing in a directory shared by the authorities of the Member States. Experts are designated by the Health Security Committee in accordance with criteria on qualifications, experience and deployment readiness.

3.6. Prevention and Protection: Interdiction of agent movement and biosafety

The EU has a stringent regulatory regime for recording CBRN agents and materials. The directives on biological and chemical agents for the purpose of health and safety at work have introduced, since 1990, obligations in respect of the possession, storage, handling and use of these agents in all workplaces, including laboratories, research and academic institutions, hospitals etc. They also require appropriate qualifications and registering of those involved in all of the above operations. Strict conditions exist for the registering and manipulation of radioactive substances in a series of directives regarding the radiological protection of the public and of workers against ionising radiation. Strict conditions and safeguards apply also in the food safety and veterinary and plant health sectors. A compulsory regime exists for the control of exports of dual-use items and technology which contains lists of radiological, nuclear, biological and chemical agents for which strict provisions linked to international non-proliferation regimes and export control arrangements apply.

3.7. Enhancing preparedness and response

Preparedness and response planning is a key priority in the EU. Making counter-measures by the Member States compatible and inter-operable is the key objective. To this end, a compilation of national health emergency plans has been made. EU- wide evaluation exercises on smallpox and pandemic influenza will be carried out in 2005 to evaluate communications and compatibility of national plans. The Commission has published a working paper setting out its blueprint for Community Preparedness and Response Planning on pandemic influenza in March 2004. It is now working on preparing a general health emergency plan for the EU.

Member States and the Commission are developing prediction models about the progress of disease and dispersal of agents under different scenarios and variable quantitative and qualitative information on movements of people, social habits, various geographical, weather and transport and utility conditions and to gauge the impact of particular health protection counter-measures, such as quarantine and mass vaccinations. These activities are supported with co-funding by the Community provided under the public health programme 2003-2008.

A training programme has been developed along two strands: First, training in the field of communicable disease outbreak investigation (EPIET), which is co-funded by the Commission and the Member States and provides a facility for flexible deployment of expertise inside and outside the EU. Second, a training course and production of materials on forensic epidemiology that have been prepared together with Europol for jointly training Member States' trainers from law enforcement and field epidemiologist services.

The future European Union Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (agreed on 21 April 2004 by the European Parliament and Council following a proposal by the Commission) will be a key player in providing advice to the Member States and the EU institutions, as well as in implementing surveillance and response actions in the area of health security.

3.8. International cooperation

The Global Health Security Action Initiative was agreed by the G7 and Mexican Health Ministers and Commissioner Byrne in Ottawa on 7 November 2001 and has similar goals to those of the EU cooperation An incident scale for risk communication and algorithms for response in various scenarios have been developed between the parties to the initiative, smallpox measures and patient isolation training has been held, inter-laboratory tests are being carried out within a laboratory collaboration platform and risk communication and co-ordination via a dedicated network have been established. Cooperation on field investigation techniques, chemical agent events and influenza planning is on-going, and a smallpox plan evaluation exercise (Global Mercury) was conducted in September 2003. The Commission leads on the cooperation platform on biosafety and biosecurity research. Ministers and the Commissioner meet regularly to review progress.

The Commission is cooperating with the WHO in activities concerning bioterrorism, first in the context of the Ottawa initiative and, second, in the context of on-going initiatives by the WHO to improve its Global Outbreak and Response Network activities.

4. THE COMMUNITY SPHERE RAPID ALERT SYSTEM NETWORKS

4.1. Existing Commission emergency rapid alert systems

The Commission has developed the operational capacity to assist in the response to a wide range of emergencies. This has resulted in the creation of several rapid response systems (RAS), such as the MIC (Monitoring and Information Centre, to facilitate and support mutual assistance between the participating countries), the ECURIE system (in the event of a radiological emergency), BICHAT (for biological and chemical attacks and threats), RAPEX (consumer health and safety - non-food aspects), RASFF (consumer health in relation to food and feed), EWRS (communicable diseases), EUROPHYT (phytosanitary network: interception of organisms harmful to plants), SHIFT (health controls on imports of veterinary concern) and ADNS (animal health).

The individual networks usually consist of an information exchange network on a "round the clock communication basis" receiving and triggering an alert and forwarding information to and from Member States and associated countries or IAEA Emergency Response Centre. While the precise scope, procedures and purposes of each of these systems differ, they all share the aim to respond quickly and efficiently to emergencies. Existing networks and alert systems have an excellent track record and they have proven their worth in handling alerts and information flows timely and efficiently. Above all they have created trust and mutual confidence and reliance among the specialised authorities.

4.2. Consolidating the emergency systems managed by the Commission

Information about an imminent or evolving threat or attack/disaster may reach the Commission through any of its RAS. Since alerts are often submitted through multiple entry points, the Commission needs to ensure that relevant information is shared forthwith with all its services and national authorities concerned. Certain emergency situations may be of such gravity and the risk of their degenerating into a serious crisis so great that overall coordination across virtually all EU policies is necessary. Cooperation and coordination between all relevant rapid alert systems (including a law enforcement network and a critical infrastructures network) is essential in the event of a major terrorist attack or disaster.

To strengthen the Commission's contribution to the fight against terrorism, the Commission will create a secure general rapid alert system (ARGUS) to link all specialised systems for emergencies that require action at European level. A new central entry point will be created and built upon the existing structures available within the Commission. The new system will respect the specific characteristics, competence and expertise of the individual and specialised systems which will continue to carry out their current functions. Since it is often unclear in the initial phase of an incident (e.g. an explosion) whether it is an accident or terrorist incident, the scope of this system will not be limited strictly to terrorist attacks, but should include all crisis centres and rapid reaction mechanisms aimed at ensuring safety and security.

Further to the creation of ARGUS, a central Crisis Centre should be established in the Commission, which would bring together representatives of all relevant Commission services during an emergency. This crisis centre would coordinate efforts so as to evaluate the best practicable options for action and to decide on the appropriate response measures. A comprehensive emergency system in place at EU level requires that associated with each degree of risk there be a uniform approach to risk analysis (assessments, security levels, response actions etc). Therefore a security risk analysis system should be developed, whereby

additional security measures may be triggered in general and, where appropriate, the use of specialised measures in particular. Member States not wishing to deploy a certain measure would be able to address a specific threat by alternative security measures.

4.3. A European Union law enforcement network

The only missing link of the present RAS systems managed at EU level is an alert system concerning public order and security as regards either preparation for or response to crises involving law enforcement. Terrorist attack responses require the participation of traditional law enforcement besides the present systems. A European law enforcement network (LEN) will be established and it should be managed by EUROPOL. It should be in place by 2005. It will consist of a dedicated 24h/7 days-a-week multi-layered access network, to serve in particular the EU law enforcement community, using the current secure communication channels of the Europol network. ARGUS must be notified when LEN would be triggered by the national law enforcement agencies to Europol and vice versa. Europol would dedicate an Operational Centre –that will act as a communications centre with a Europol Officer on call 24 h/7 days a week. The Europol Officer on call could interact with the Europol Liaison Officers of the National Bureaux at Europol. LEN would require the adoption of operational guidelines for handling the Europol law enforcement network alerts and agreeing notification criteria parameters and classification of events. Member States would need to identify a responsible national contact point authorised to issue/receive alerts and take further action where necessary.

4.4. A European Union Critical infrastructure Warning Information Network

As referred to in the communication "Critical Infrastructure Protection in the fight against terrorism", the Commission will lay down at the latest by the end of 2005 a European programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection. The Commission is of the opinion that a Critical Infrastructure Warning Information Network (CIWIN) needs to be established. ARGUS should interact with CIWIN in the same way it interacts with other RAS.

TECHNICAL ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

1. MULTI-SECTOR RESPONSE FOR HEALTH PROTECTION

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism has direct consequences not only for people, but also for the environment, the food chain and for property. Preventing terrorist acts and mitigating their consequences requires a mobilisation of actors and resources in many sectors other than health. Of major importance to health security are the measures and actions in food, animal, plant and water safety.

1.1. Food safety

The EU has a broad body of legislation which covers primary production of agricultural products and industrial production of processed food. This legislative body provides different means to respond to situations in specific sectors. The measures that would be taken in response to a terrorist act in the food sector are not fundamentally different from those adopted by the EU in response to accidents in the recent past. The aspect of the fight against bio terrorism that needs developing is the organisation of upstream information, investigation and information-gathering within the territory of the EU and third countries as well as an improved cooperation between authorities and those working in the food chain and their education.

1.2. Animal safety

Many EU regulations exist in the area of animal safety. In response to animal health emergencies, the Commission will adopt urgent safeguard measures to supplement existing regulations. The Commission manages a bank of about 40 million doses of various antigens of the foot-and-mouth disease virus for the rapid formulation of vaccines. There is on-going reinforcement of banks of vaccines against foot-and-mouth, classical swine fever, avian influenza and bluetongue. Imports are subject to strict controls at the EU borders.

1.3. Plant safety

Structures specifically intended to prevent the abuse of plant protection products, which sample, analyse and inspect randomly and at regular intervals, are already in place in the EU. Phytosanitary laboratories exist in all Member States. Strict notification requirements are enforced and inspections are carried out in third countries for plants intended for planting and for specified plant products. A system is also in place for temporary safeguard measures in the case of an imminent danger of introduction or spread of harmful organisms.

1.4. Water safety

As regards water safety, EU laws on the quality of drinking water and on the quality of surface waters used for drinking water abstraction are been reviewed to check whether they sufficiently cover the requirements for constant monitoring of drinking water and other appropriate monitoring and early warning systems. Multi-barrier systems, the use of appropriate markers at key points and the introduction of and adherence to the HACCP system by suppliers are being promoted in the context of the programme on health security to enhance safety and confidence in early detection of infective agents and toxicants.

ANNEX 2

1. ACTIONS IN OTHER FIELDS

1.1. Enhancing the protection of the external border with regard to the movement of goods

As the EU is a Customs Union, the protection of the Internal Market relies exclusively on the mechanisms in place at the external border and their efficient application.

The fight against terrorism or any other external threat relies on the capacity of the national customs authorities to block entry at the border of all goods that could present a danger to the EU while not hampering legitimate trade. With this in mind the Commission presented a Communication to the Council on the role of customs in the integrated management of the external border (COM(2003) 452).

Questions such as a common approach to risks or guaranteeing an appropriate level of human resources and equipment are examined in this Communication and further action in this area both by the Commission and the Member States is under consideration.

At the same time, agreement between the Community and the United States in the framework of their "Container Security Initiative" has been achieved. Bilateral negotiations on its implementation are continuing.

1.2. Export control lists

The EU has a compulsory regime for the control of exports of dual-use items and technology which contains lists of radiological, nuclear, biological and chemical agents etc. for which strict provisions linked to international non-proliferation regimes and export control arrangements apply. In the area of exports of dual use technologies (civil technologies which can be used for military purposes in particular for production or delivery of Weapons of Mass Destruction), "the responsibilities of exporters of dual use items as defined in Regulation 1334/2000 (legal and natural persons) in ensuring that exports of dual use technologies does not contribute to the development of Weapons of Mass Destruction by terrorists are extremely important. It is increasingly recognised that regular dialogue between exporters and national authorities and regular information and awareness raising by national authorities vis-à-vis their dual use suppliers are a prerequisite for the efficient implementation of Regulation 1334/2000.

At EU level, a working group established by the article 18 of the Regulation 1334/2000 has met regularly and facilitated interaction between EU Member States' authorities responsible for issuing export licenses of dual use items and exporters. However, the Commission is conscious that this dialogue can be improved and has started to consider options for such improvement which have been shared with UNICE at the highest levels as a follow up to the Thessaloniki Action plan against the proliferation of WMD (which includes a number of actions aiming at strengthening the community export control regime and at making the EU a leading player in the international export control regimes).

Concerns over the adverse impact of controls on public health activities, such as barriers for and delays in the transport of agents, samples, reagents and specimens for tests and comparisons, persist among national public health agencies and laboratories. Commission services have raised the attention of the EU Member States in 2002 on the risks that delays arising from the implementation of national- (EC) export control legislations in a number of important suppliers of relevant dual-use biological technologies (EU and non EU such as USA, Japan, Australia, Canada) might create in case of a public health crisis whose solution would imply quick international cooperation and move of sensitive dual use items across international borders.

The Commission has made a number of proposals for follow up regarding the strengthening of the community export control regime in the enlarged EU. In particular the Commission has drawn the attention of the EU Member States and of key third countries to the risks that non membership of new EU Member States in export control regimes such as Missile Technology Control Regime and Wassenaar Arrangement present in terms of weakening of the international export control regimes and for the very functioning of the Community export control regime due to the single market for dual-use items. The Commission has coordinated the Task Force in charge of the Peer Reveiws of Member States' application of Regulation 1334/2000 in conformity with the Thessaloniki Action Plan. Drawing on the peer review visits which are now finished, the Task Force will present a report to the WP Dual Use with suggestions for follow-up which should be of interest not only to the export control licensing officers of the EU but also to all the EU actors involved in the fight against terrorists getting access to dual use technologies in the EU.

Resolution 1540 of the UN Security Council which calls for all States to adopt measures to ensure that terrorists do not access relevant dual use technologies contains important provisions regarding controls of exports of dual use items. The Commission is contributing to the work carried out in the UN Committee 1540 established to monitor the implementation of this Resolution. The Commission has prepared its contribution on the aspects of the implementation of the Resolution which is of EC competence and it has been agreed that all Member States will mention it in their national report to the UN committee in charge of Resolution 1540.

1.3. The EU Solidarity Fund

Bearing in mind the significant costs involved after a major terrorist attack or natural disaster there exist a need to alleviate the financial consequences for those affected by it. The Commission is currently reviewing the possibility of a common approach to emergency situations through a revised EU solidarity fund (in addition to national compensation schemes) with the objective to provide financial aid to cope with emergency situations in the aftermath of an unforeseen crisis (COM(2004) 487). Such an instrument would provide funding to give support to victims of terrorism as well as to alleviate the effects of other natural and/or man-made disasters or public health crises.

Support to the victims and their families as well as contributions to rehabilitations efforts must be an integral part of the response to terrorist attacks in a society bound by solidarity. The Commission is currently working on different aspects of this response and implementing a pilot project agreed upon by the Parliament to support the financing of projects intended to help the victims to recover and to raise awareness of the public against terrorist threat.

1.4. Research and technology development

Following the different requests from the Parliament and the Council, the Commission has started a Preparatory Action entitled "Enhancement of the European industrial potential in the field of Security research 2004-2006", with a view to contributing to the improvement of the European citizens' security and to reinforce European technological and industrial potential in this area. This Preparatory Action covers the period 2004-2006 and addresses five main areas, including the protection against terrorism.

A Group of Personalities (GoP) was established in 2003 and tasked to propose key orientations, principles and priorities for a future European Security Research Programme (ESRP). The GoP report describes the essential elements of a **"**European Security Research Programme" (ESRP) and its contribution to address the new security challenges of a changing world. Its main recommendations include:

- The establishment of an ESRP, from 2007 onwards, with funding of at least 1 billion Euros per year, additional to currently existing resources,

- The creation of a **"**European Security Research Advisory Board" to define strategic lines of action, user involvement, implementation mechanisms and a strategic agenda for the ESRP,

As a follow-up, the Commission adopted on 7 September 2004 a Communication entitled "Security Research: The Next Steps" (COM(2004) 353) to initiate a debate with the Council and the Parliament. It subscribes to the main thrust of the report and indicates steps to be taken to progress the activity:

- Consultation and cooperation with stakeholders, especially via the "European Security Research Advisory Board" to be established in 2004.

- Development of an ESRP, to become, from 2007, a specific programme within the 7th Framework Programme of Community Research.

- Ensuring an effective institutional setting, taking into account Common Foreign and Security Policy and European Security and Defence Policy and other relevant Community policies (e.g. fight against terrorism including bio-terrorism, cross border control, transport, environment,…), and developing cooperation and synergies with the European Defence Agency.

- Establishing a governance structure responding to the needs of security research work in terms of contract, participation and funding.

In fields directly related to biological and chemical terrorism, the 6th Framework Programme's Scientific Support to Policies activities covers "Civil protection (including biosecurity and protection against risks arising from terrorist attack) and crisis management". Research is currently ongoing on biological agents, risk assessment, crop bioterrorism and modelling the propagation of bioterrorist agents. The Commission can also call upon the advice of the EU Research Group on Countering the Effects of Biological and Chemical Terrorism, encompassing experts from the Member States was established as a follow up to the Research Council of 31 October 2001.

The Commission has developed real time systems for emergency management (e.g. to help emergency response in transport accidents involving dangerous substances). Similar systems could be developed as early warning to address deliberate attacks in the areas of civil protection and health security. The Commission will further work on the establishment of a European level threat assessment methodology.

Improved surveillance on disease monitoring could be supported by the Commission's Joint Research Centre through the development of real-time monitoring networks, integrating normalised instrumentation (e.g. on capture systems for biological vectors) and sensors, remote sensing data, and meteorological data, which then feed into models that can provide alerts in the case of an outbreak, predict the spreading of diseases and be used to take preventive actions. In addition to disease monitoring, other vulnerabilities in the food chain can be reduced by improved traceability systems (e.g. in the cold chain, in feedstock and in food products), where the Commission can use its expertise developed in animal and meat traceability.

In addition, the Commission's services has substantial experience in the analysis of lessons learned concerning the management of past industrial and natural disasters, it can expand on this experience to collate and analyse data concerned with deliberate attacks on installations. The information could be conveyed to national civil protection agencies thereby contributing to the development of appropriate prevention, preparedness and response measures to address deliberate terrorist threats.

Further improvement and validation of Commission and external dispersion models of radioactive substances for the consequence modelling of various types of scenarios including 'dirty bomb explosions' will be supported by the Commission's Joint Research Centre. Other improvements include extending the geographic coverage of existing dispersion models to the entire EU territory, and integration of existing dispersions models within Commission interactive impact analysis map-based tools to provide the dispersion models with additional functionality in order to improve their scenario and impact analysis functionalities (such as estimating affected population and critical infra-structures within the vicinity of the incident). Development of statistical techniques will improve the Commission's early warning rapid alert system on outbreaks of communicable diseases by further studying bio-terror related incidents and outbreaks at large.

1.5. The Commission's internal rules of procedure for crises

On 5 March 2003 the Commission adopted a Decision[1] amending its internal Rules of Procedure for crises which directly affect the safety, operation and integrity pf the Commission in terms of persons, buildings and information. In this regard on 26 March the Commission adopted a second Decision[2] on security in crisis situations which institute operational procedures for a new crisis management structure.

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1 Minutes of the 1603rd meeting of the Commission of 5 March 2003, point No 9: doc. No C(2003) 744/2.

2 Written procedure No E/479/2003: document No C(2003)972 of 21 March 2003.