

Civil protection: Council adopts new rules to strengthen disaster response

The Council today adopted a regulation to strengthen the EU civil protection mechanism. The new rules will allow the EU and the member states to better prepare for natural and man made disasters and to respond faster when they strike, including in cases which affect a majority of member states simultaneously, such as a pandemic. The text also sets out the funding of the civil protection mechanism in the context of the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027.



The EU civil protection mechanism is an emblem of EU solidarity both within our borders and abroad. In 2020 it was activated 102 times and provided support to 77 countries worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic has put its functioning to the test and has shown us that we need to go further. With the tripling of the budget and the new rules we will be better prepared to predict and respond to future crises, whatever their nature.

Eduardo Cabrita, Minister of Home Affairs of Portugal

The proposed rules will allow the European Commission to address gaps in the area of transport and logistics, and, in cases of urgency, directly procure certain additional rescEU capacities. These rescEU capacities, as well as those hosted by member states, will be fully financed from the EU budget.

Prevention and preparedness will also be improved under the proposed regulation. The Commission, in cooperation with member states, will define and develop EU disaster resilience goals in the area of civil protection

The text sets out a total of €1 263 million in funds for the 2021-2027 period. It also includes an amount of up to €2 056 480 000 to implement the civil protection related measures to address the impact of the Covid-19 crisis foreseen in the EU recovery instrument. This is an increase of over three times as compared to the 2014-2020 budget. It reflects the strengthening of the EU's collective response to disasters, including the recent establishment of a reserve of capacities (rescEU), the reinforcement of the European civil protection pool and the improvements in disaster prevention and preparedness.

Background

The EU civil protection mechanism was first established in 2001 and it coordinates the response to natural and man-made disasters at the EU level.

Its objective is to foster cooperation among national civil protection authorities, increase public awareness and preparedness for disasters and enable quick, effective, coordinated assistance to affected populations.

The EU civil protection mechanism includes a European civil protection pool. This is a voluntary pool of capacities pre-committed by member states for immediate deployment inside or outside the EU. The civil protection mechanism was last amended in 2019, when an additional reserve of resources, called rescEU, was created to provide assistance in situations where overall existing capacities are insufficient.

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