

Press release – EU Civil Protection Mechanism must be sufficiently funded to save lives



The EU Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM) has supported member states to save lives in the midst of earthquakes, hurricanes and floods, fighting forest fires and evacuating EU nationals in crisis – including during the current COVID-19 outbreak in China – by coordinating and assisting in civil protection efforts.

The report, approved today by the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee with 60 votes to 2 and 7 abstentions, underlines the need to fund the CPM through the EU's next 2021-2027 long-term budget with at least EUR 1.4 billion, as initially proposed by the Commission.

Prevention, preparedness and response

To be more transparent about the use of EU funding, MEPs also believe that how money is allocated across the three pillars of the mechanism “prevention, preparedness and response” must be specified.

The committee also underlines that a significantly larger amount should be allocated to preparedness, including for the purchase of necessary new rescEU equipment, materials and resources. RescEU assist member states hit by disasters when national capacities are overstretched.

Finally, MEPs are also prepared to give the Commission greater flexibility to make any necessary changes over the next seven years.

Quote

After the vote the rapporteur, [Nikos ANDROULAKIS \(SD, Greece\)](#) said: “Today’s

vote shows Parliament's willingness to ensure that the EU Civil Protection Mechanism will be able to deliver. The cuts to the budget proposed by member states for one of the most successful and cost-efficient EU programmes are unacceptable. RescEU assets and civil protection operations need to be properly supported and defended: they embody EU solidarity at its best."

Next steps

The plenary will now vote on the report in one of its upcoming sessions, after which Parliament is ready to start negotiations with member states.

Background

The EU set up the European Civil Protection Mechanism in 2013 to help member states deal with increasingly frequent natural disasters. Until 2019, it was only based on a voluntary system, through which the EU coordinated the participating states' voluntary contributions to a country that requested assistance. In 2017 alone, the Mechanism was used 18 times for forest fire emergencies in Europe. Portugal, Italy, Montenegro, France, and Albania all received assistance via the Mechanism to respond to forest fires.

Since 2019, when rescEU was created, the EU can now also directly assist member states hit by disasters when national capacities are overstretched. It establishes a pan-European reserve of fire-fighting aeroplanes and helicopters, specialised medical supplies and equipment and other resources. The Mechanism was recently used to [repatriate EU citizens from Wuhan in China](#), following the outbreak of the Coronavirus COVID-19.