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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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"I/A" ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat

To: Coreper/Council

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Subject: Draft Council Conclusions on civil protection awareness raising
- Adoption

1. In the light of the outcome of the Seminar on Public Awareness Raising in the event of major disasters, held in Brno, Czech Republic, on 18-20 February 2009, the Presidency drew up a set of draft Council conclusions on civil protection awareness raising.
2. These draft Council conclusions were examined by the Working Party on Civil Protection on 12 March and on 2 April. On 14 May 2009 the Working Party reached an agreement on the compromise text set out in the Annex.
3. On this basis, the Permanent Representatives Committee is asked to invite the Council to adopt the conclusions set out in the Annex as an "A" item on the agenda of a forthcoming meeting, and to enter these conclusions in its minutes.

Draft Council Conclusions on civil protection awareness raising

1. **Having regard** to the Council Decision of 8 November 2007 establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism (Mechanism Recast)¹;
2. **Having regard** to the Council Decision of 5 March 2007 establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument²;
3. **Pointing out** that, in recent years, the frequency and severity of natural and man-made disasters have increased;
4. **Having regard** to the European Union guidelines on the implementation of the consular Lead State concept, approved by the Council on 8 December 2008³;
5. **Emphasising** the importance of timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information about citizens' safety and security before, during and after disasters in order to mitigate the effects in terms of casualties and damage, and to strengthen citizens' self-resilience;
6. **Taking account** of the fact that the European emergency number 112 was introduced in 1991 according to the Council Decision 91/396/EEC⁴ of 29 July 1991 to complement national emergency numbers and to make emergency services more accessible in all EU Member States; and that Directive 2002/22/EC of 7 March 2002 on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and services (Universal Service Directive)⁵ laid down further requirements concerning the 112 emergency number;

¹ OJ L 314, 1.12.2007, p. 9.

² OJ L 71, 10.3.2007, p. 9.

³ OJ C 317, 12.12.2008, p. 6.

⁴ OJ L 217, 6.8.1991, p. 31.

⁵ OJ L 108, 24.4.2002, p. 51.

7. **Acknowledging** the important work of rescue service personnel and **bearing in mind** that aggression and violent behaviour undermine their security at work and proper functioning, and that increasing public awareness helps to counter potential aggression, diminish threats and increase respect for people who work under difficult conditions for the benefit of others;
8. **Bearing in mind** that the diplomatic missions and consular cooperation of the EU Member States in third countries play an important role in facilitating assistance to EU citizens, such as in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks in November 2008;
9. **Recalling** the Council conclusions of 16 June 2008 on reinforcing the Union's disaster response capacity - towards an integrated approach to managing disasters⁶, covering prevention, preparedness and response;
10. **Taking note of** the outcome of the recent expert Seminar on Public Awareness Raising in the Event of Major Disasters, held in Brno on 18 - 20 February 2009, as well as other public awareness raising projects;
11. **Recalling** the Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission of 19 December 2007 on the European consensus on humanitarian aid⁷, in particular paragraphs 57 to 60 thereof, which in paragraph 58 establishes the principles for use of European civil protection resources in humanitarian operations: "where deployed in any humanitarian crisis, the use of civil protection resources should be needs driven and complementary to and coherent with humanitarian aid";

⁶ 10128/08.

⁷ OJ C 25, 30.1.2008, p. 1.

The Council of the European Union

12. CALLS ON the Member States and the Commission to continue to develop their work in the following areas of awareness raising :

- providing targeted public information and/or education on what to do before, during and after an emergency;
- enhancing the security of rescue personnel in the EU;
- enhancing the knowledge and skills of diplomatic personnel *inter alia* by means of training and information activities with regard to civil protection.

Public information and/or education aimed at the EU population

In order to raise public awareness and the self-resilience of citizens with regard to civil protection, the Council:

13. INVITES the Commission to:

- a) Enhance public awareness by linking the relevant national civil protection websites to the existing EU website concerning civil protection matters;
- b) Support actions aiming at the identification, sharing and dissemination of good practices, and develop, together with Member States, EU reference documents containing e.g. inventories on good practice;
- c) Continue to promote the single European emergency call number 112⁸;
- d) Take awareness raising into account in relevant Community initiatives on civil protection;

⁸ Council Decision 91/396/EEC of 29 July 1991, OJ L 217, 6.8.1991, p. 31, and Directive 2002/22/EC of 7 March 2002, OJ L 108, 24.4.2002, p. 51.

14. INVITES Member States to:

- a) Contribute to improving public awareness by linking relevant national civil protection websites to the existing EU website;
- b) Participate in information exchange activities in order to identify, disseminate and make best use of good practices and develop EU reference documents containing e.g. inventories on good practice;
- c) Continue to promote the use and knowledge of the single European emergency call number 112 at national level;
- d) Share at Community level existing initiatives relating to public information and/or education;
- e) Involve, where appropriate, NGOs, State- and non-State organised volunteers, as well as private companies, in enhancing public awareness regarding civil protection;
- f) Promote awareness raising among vulnerable groups including children and youth by means of targeted civil protection programmes (e.g. competitions in the context of school education).

Awareness raising as regards security of rescue personnel

In order to raise awareness and to enhance the security of rescue service personnel,

INVITES the Commission to:

- 15.** Develop an overview of the security of rescue service personnel, based on Member States' experience, including the scope and nature of violent and aggressive behaviour towards these personnel in the Member States, and support activities contributing to this overview;

16. Report back to the Council on this overview and, where appropriate, draw up recommendations on possible measures to be taken by the Member States or at EU level, e.g. support possible activities concerning the security of rescue service personnel;

ENCOURAGES Member States to :

17. Promote public awareness on the work done by rescue service personnel with a view to enhancing their security, since this can lessen the risk of aggressive and violent behaviour;
18. Continue to actively engage in enhancing security situation of rescue service personnel.

Civil protection training for diplomatic personnel

In order to enhance the knowledge and skills of diplomatic personnel regarding civil protection, the Council

19. INVITES the Commission to:

- a) Enable and provide to the Member States information and supporting documentation on the Mechanism and on other relevant Community instruments, with a view to the national training and briefing of diplomats;
- b) Organise, in disaster-prone third countries, information sessions for representatives from diplomatic missions of EU Member States with a view to raising awareness of the Mechanism and other relevant Community instruments;
- c) Develop and implement training on the wide range of EU disaster management instruments and activities within the framework provided for Member States' diplomatic personnel and EU Institutions by the Community;

- d) Include in the existing Community Civil Protection Mechanism Training Programme a course for diplomatic staff from EU Member States and from the European Commission;

20. INVITES the Member States to:

- a) Enhance the flow of information on civil protection issues between the Ministries and other relevant authorities having a potential role in civil protection interventions in third countries;
- b) Encourage the circulation of the information materials provided by the Commission to personnel in their diplomatic missions dealing with disaster management;
- c) Establish or enhance information channels for correspondents linking diplomatic missions of the Member States and EC delegations in third countries with respect to disaster management issues;
- d) Include essential information about the Mechanism and relevant up-to-date contact points in diplomatic missions' contingency plans;
- e) Explore opportunities for incorporating training on the Mechanism and other relevant Community instruments into national training for diplomats;
- f) Encourage the participation in Community training courses of diplomats from diplomatic missions in the most disaster-prone countries and from Ministries of Foreign Affairs;
- g) Facilitate the sharing of information during relevant lessons-learnt meetings.

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