


Procedure file

Basic information		
CNS - Consultation procedure Decision	1995/0098(CNS)	Procedure completed
Civil protection: Community action programme 1998-1999		
See also 1998/0354(CNS)		
Subject 4.30 Civil protection		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	GUE/NGL GONZÁLEZ ÁLVAREZ Laura	27/06/1995
European Parliament	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	BUDG Budgets	ELDR GREDLER Martina	01/06/1995
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Fisheries	2063	19/12/1997

Key events			
04/05/1995	Legislative proposal published	COM(1995)0155	Summary
16/06/1995	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/03/1996	Vote in committee		Summary
21/03/1996	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A4-0100/1996	
18/04/1996	Debate in Parliament		
19/04/1996	Decision by Parliament	T4-0208/1996	Summary
08/05/1996	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1996)0219	Summary
19/12/1997	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
19/12/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
14/01/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1995/0098(CNS)
Procedure type	CNS - Consultation procedure
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
	See also 1998/0354(CNS)
Legal basis	EC before Amsterdam E 235
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/06754

Documentation gateway					
Legislative proposal		COM(1995)0155 OJ C 142 08.06.1995, p. 0019	04/05/1995	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0963/1995 OJ C 301 13.11.1995, p. 0003	13/09/1995	ESC	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0300/1995 OJ C 100 02.04.1996, p. 0111	20/09/1995	CofR	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A4-0100/1996 OJ C 141 13.05.1996, p. 0006	21/03/1996	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T4-0208/1996 OJ C 141 13.05.1996, p. 0247-0258	19/04/1996	EP	Summary
Modified legislative proposal		COM(1996)0219 OJ C 202 12.07.1996, p. 0009	08/05/1996	EC	Summary

Additional information	
European Commission	EUR-Lex

Final act
Decision 1998/22 OJ L 008 14.01.1998, p. 0020 Summary

Civil protection: Community action programme 1998-1999

This proposal for a decision aimed to establish a Community action programme in the field of civil protection. The programme's objective was to help protect persons, the environment and property in the event of natural or technological disasters. It was drawn up in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity (the idea was to complement and accompany the initiatives undertaken by the Member States rather than to replace the action of the Member States in this area) and had three main goals: - to help increase the level of preparation of those responsible for civil protection in the Member States in order to increase their ability to respond to an emergency; - to use pilot projects to help improve intervention techniques and methods; - to help promote public information, education and awareness in Europe in order to help citizens to protect themselves more effectively. An annex to the proposal detailed the type of actions financed and gave an indication of the allocation of resources to each action: - increase in the level of preparation of those responsible for civil protection: training (organisation of workshops bringing together senior experts from the Member States), exchanges of experts between Member States (training for a limited period of time in another Member State), secondment of one or several qualified training officers to undertake training modules, Community simulation exercises (comparison of the various means of intervention in the Member States with a view to improving effectiveness); - pilot projects to help improve the ability of the Member States to respond in the event of an emergency; - greater public information, education and awareness: exchanges between Member States of particularly effective measures to raise awareness, with emphasis on actions targeted at young people undergoing initial training or still at school, funding for travelling exhibitions and the distribution of information; - other actions: conferences, seminars directed at large audiences, actions having a direct impact on other Member States; - rapid mobilisation of experts to strengthen the emergency arrangements put in place in the Member States or third countries following a natural, technological or environmental disaster; - additional actions further to those provided for in the programme could also be envisaged if the necessary financial resources were available.

As regards the budget, the Commission allocated the programme a financial envelope of ECU 13.8 million for the period 1996-2000. In implementing the programme, the Commission would be assisted by an advisory committee composed of representatives of the Member States. ?

Civil protection: Community action programme 1998-1999

The ESC hoped that as well as supporting, backing up and supplementing national activities, the programme would seek to inject Community added value in an area that was closely bound up with the development of a citizens' Europe. It noted that in the absence of a specific legal basis, the proposal for a decision establishing the action programme was based on Article 235. The ESC felt that the forthcoming Treaty revision should include a Title on civil protection, either in the form of a separate chapter or as an adjunct to an existing chapter, bearing in mind the potential Community added value in this field. The insertion of a separate chapter would be justified by the cross-sectoral nature of the problem, as in the case of the new chapters on public health and consumer protection. As part of the preventive approach advocated by the ESC, it was important to enable the non-governmental organisations to contribute to the work of the advisory committee provided for in Article 4, as well as to training and experience-swapping activities.

Civil protection: Community action programme 1998-1999

In its Opinion, the Committee of the Regions welcomed the Commission's proposal for an action programme and wholly supported its objectives. The Opinion drew a distinction between civil protection and disaster rescue. As regards the allocation of funding, a further distinction had to be made between the local and regional level on the one hand, and the supra-regional level on the other. The action programme should concentrate on the supra-regional or inter-regional aspects of civil protection. The Opinion recommended that Community resources be provided for supra-regional measures. It also put forward a number of recommendations to improve the efficiency of such cooperation in practice. As disasters rarely required supra-regional assistance, there was little mention of the EU's experience in areas such as communication or intervention. The rapporteur suggested that the programme should give priority to reciprocal training in the various methods used in the Member States, by both the authorities and the rescue services. The specific amendments related to: - the involvement of rescue services in the action programme; - increased reaction speeds through the improvement of the communication.

Civil protection: Community action programme 1998-1999

The committee adopted with amendments, the draft report (PE 214.470) by Mrs Laura GONZÁLEZ ÁLVAREZ (EUL/NGL, Sp) on a proposal for a Council Decision establishing a Community action programme in the field of civil protection. The purpose of the Commission proposal is to establish a Community action programme in the field of civil protection so as to make it easier to deal with disasters of all kinds, including environmental emergencies, such as floods, earthquakes, drought, forest fires, etc. The committee's rapporteur, Mrs González Álvarez, was very pleased with the Commission proposal, pointing out in her explanatory statement that the 580 disasters recorded by the UN in 1994 had caused 16 000 deaths and huge financial losses. She believed that the programme would contribute to increasing environmental protection provided that the projects and action undertaken were based on scientific techniques and developments which offered the highest level of protection and respect for the environment. Accordingly, the committee adopted a number of amendments to the Commission proposal, including one stressing the need to use "those techniques which best safeguard the environment". It also took the view that many disasters, including natural disasters such as floods, could be prevented by a more understanding approach to environment. Another amendment noted that "the scant action taken by the Community in this field since 1985 had not made it possible to develop effective cooperation between the Member States with the necessary urgency and determination". By contrast, the pooling of experience and mutual assistance under the proposed programme would make "more tangible the goals of social cohesion, solidarity and European citizenship". Another amendment said that the aim of the action was in particular "to enhance prevention, the ability of European citizens to protect themselves against risks and crisis situations at local level, the coordination of regional and subregional potential when combating major disasters, and, above all, exchanges of experience at all levels". The committee was particularly concerned to involve decision-makers at local and regional levels. The committee rejected amendments seeking to turn the Advisory Committee to be set up to help the Commission implement the programme into a Management Committee. It feared that the Commission's discretion would be fettered by interference from Member State representatives, who would have stronger representation on a management committee. The committee paid particular attention to the special needs of the Community's outlying regions (the FOD and TOM, the Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla, the Azores, Madeira, etc), which are particularly prone to emergencies such as typhoons, tidal waves, etc. It adopted an amendment recognizing that "the geography, landscape and social and economic characteristics of the Union's isolated and ultraperipheral regions affect and impede the bringing in of aid and means in cases of major risk". Another amendment called on the Commission, together with the Member States concerned, to investigate the possibility of presenting a scheme of specific measures for the Union's isolated and ultraperipheral regions in conjunction with third countries. Commenting in her explanatory statement on the need to cooperate with third countries, Mrs González Álvarez said: "We should not forget that emergencies and ecological disasters know no frontiers". The committee also wanted the isolated and ultraperipheral regions to receive a higher level of financing under the programme than other regions. It rejected cost-cutting amendments from Parliament's Committee on Budgets. According to another amendment, information campaigns should pay particular attention to the conservation of natural resources, the application of safety standards and the need to be prepared in situations of potential risk. Inter alia, the general public should be made more aware of health hazards which could arise from specific disasters, such as the accidental release of toxic materials. ?

Civil protection: Community action programme 1998-1999

In adopting the report by Mrs Laura GONZALEZ ALVAREZ (GUE/NGL, E), Parliament approved this proposal with the following amendments: - Parliament calls for actions which seek, in particular, to enhance prevention, the ability of citizens to protect themselves against risk and crisis situations, and to improve coordination at regional and local level when combating major disasters. It draws particular attention to the importance of heightening awareness of hazards which could arise from specific disasters, such as the accidental release of toxic materials; - the programme should contribute to increasing environmental protection, with a particular emphasis on the Union's isolated and ultra

peripheral regions where the bringing-in of aid is difficult and the intervention procedures are limited as far as major emergencies are concerned. Particular attention should be paid to the smaller islands; - provision should be made with regard to determining the causes of disasters as well as their prevention (and, in particular, introducing the risks of disaster in the environmental impact assessment and taking any preventive measures required, including closure of the installation, for example); to the same end, the Annex to the proposal was amended in order to highlight these various points (by introducing new rates of Community financial contribution for one or other action and by clarifying the role of the NGOs); - a contribution should be made to increasing the degree of preparedness of those responsible for civil protection at all levels (including local and regional), the introduction of new intervention techniques, and self-protection and collective solidarity actions; - a report evaluating the programme should be forwarded to it every two years (instead of three years); - a new committee (advisory committee on civil protection) should be set up to implement this programme of actions jointly with the Commission. ?

Civil protection: Community action programme 1998-1999

In its amended proposal, the Commission took over several of the amendments adopted by the EP in the House. These amendments related, in particular, to actions aimed at: - promoting the exchange of experiences at all levels within the framework of the programme, - contributing, within the framework of the actions implemented, to the prevention of natural and technological disasters, particularly by including the risks of disaster in environmental impact assessments and by taking preventive measures, - helping to ensure that those primarily responsible for and most directly involved in civil protection were better prepared and thus better able to respond to emergencies, - improving technical forecasting methods by means of demonstrations and pilot projects, - promoting collective solidarity. Research activities should give priority to the techniques which were least harmful to the environment. In the annex dealing with the implementation of actions on the ground, the Commission stated that actions relating to training and the exchange of experiences should also involve specialists and technicians involved in civil protection (particularly the services responsible for dealing with disasters in isolated and ultra-peripheral regions). With regard to simulation exercises, the actions should be aimed at improving effectiveness and speed of response in the event of disasters. In the case of pilot projects, the emphasis was placed on projects designed to increase the speed of response of the emergency services. These projects should, where possible, be multinational and make an impact and be publicised throughout the Union. The Commission also took over in part the amendments aimed at: - giving greater consideration to environmental aspects when forecasting disasters (particularly floods), - enhancing the sense of shared responsibility on the part of citizens and public awareness of hazards (particularly in connection with accidental discharges of toxic substances), - emphasising the role of NGOs and their possible participation in the programme, - implementing actions in close cooperation with national, regional and local authorities, particularly in the Union's isolated and ultra-peripheral regions, - keeping Parliament better informed of the programme's implementation. However, the Commission did not accept the amendments aimed at: - strengthening Community cooperation in the field of civil protection or coordinating the resources available to combat disasters at regional and supraregional level, - integrating a reference to the fifth Community programme on the environment, - providing for Community disaster simulation exercises and measures for peripheral regions in conjunction with third countries, - granting aid to NGOs to help them to improve the resources at their disposal in case of disasters within or outside the Community, - changing the comitology procedure (including the submission of the committee's assessment to Parliament), - amending the financial aspects of the action programme. ?

Civil protection: Community action programme 1998-1999

OBJECTIVE: to establish an action programme in the field of civil protection which seeks, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, to help protect persons, the environment and property in the event of natural or man-made disasters. **COMMUNITY MEASURE:** Council Decision 98/22/EC establishing a Community action programme in the field of civil protection. **CONTENT:** this two-year programme (1998-1999) seeks to support and supplement the efforts made by Member States at national, regional or local level to promote civil protection and to encourage cooperation in this field. It explicitly excludes any harmonization of the legislation and regulations of the Member States in this area or the organization of the level of preparation at national level. The programme has a budget of ECU 3 million for the period in question and seeks specifically to: - help increase the level of preparation of those responsible for civil protection (training, exchanges of experts, Community simulation exercises); - use pilot projects to help improve intervention techniques and methods; - help promote information, education and sensitization of the public in order to improve their self-protection (exchanges of experience, distribution of information, travelling exhibitions); - mobilize experts in an emergency. An Annex to the decision details the type of action financed and gives an indication of the allocation of resources to each action. Actions are to be carried out in close cooperation with the competent national authorities and coordinated with other compatible Community action. The Commission will be responsible for implementing the programme, with the help of a committee of representatives from the Member States. An annual report on the progress and implementation of the programme will be drawn up. **ENTRY INTO FORCE:** 1 January 1998.?