

Union Civil Protection Mechanism 2014-2020

2011/0461(COD) - 30/08/2017 - Follow-up document

In accordance with Decision No 1313/2013/EU, the Commission presented a report on the interim evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) for the period 2014-2016.

On the basis of the findings of the external evaluation report, its own assessment and the operational experience and lessons learned, the Commission concluded that the mechanism is well on track to achieve the general and specific objectives set out in the decision.

Main findings: the report showed that, in general, the objectives of the UCPM seem to remain relevant to the needs of Europe:

- according to Eurobarometer 2017, a large majority of European citizens support a common EU policy in the field of civil protection and agree that the EU should lead the coordination of disaster responses to help the affected countries, both in Europe as in the rest of the world;
- recent resolutions of the European Parliament also called on the Commission to further support cooperation between the various European civil protection authorities;
- stakeholders consulted also highlighted the flexibility of the UCPM which they perceive positively.

As regards the specific objectives, the analysis of the UCPM effectiveness showed that:

- it is fully on track to achieve objectives pertaining to disaster prevention framework (objective 1) and readiness for disasters (objective 2);
- the UCPM's response to disasters (objective 3) has been timely and effective according to the vast majority of stakeholders consulted;
- public awareness and preparedness to disasters (objective 4) have received slightly less satisfactory views from stakeholders when compared to the other objectives;
- external coherence, that is the linkages between the UCPM and other Union policy areas, has increased as compared to the previous framework (2007-2013).

The existence of a single European hub for information sharing and operational coordination, the introduction of common European standards for disaster response capacities and common guidelines on risk assessments, which have contributed to the development of an overview of risks in the EU in the framework of the UCPM legislation, are perceived as having delivered high EU added value in the areas of disaster response, preparedness and prevention, respectively.

Challenges and necessary improvements: the evaluation also highlighted a number of challenges that, if addressed promptly, could increase even further the impact of UCPM supported action.

A general area identified for improvement is the strengthening of the UCPM results monitoring framework, including better measurability through the possible introduction of quantitative indicators and baselines, in support of a stronger focus on impact over time.

Several improvements are suggested:

1) Prevention:

- increase the focus of the annual prevention (and preparedness) projects that the UCPM finances every year;
- better articulate the linkages between the UCPM prevention (and preparedness) projects and broader EU programmes (e.g. Cohesion/European Regional Development Fund, European Investment Bank, etc.);
- strengthen the link between prevention and preparedness/response activities.

2) Preparation:

- re-assess the system of incentives for pooling assets in the Voluntary Pool based on lessons learnt and other knowledge emerging from operations;
- develop a more needs-based approach to training and exercise programmes by focusing on skills rather than performance (i.e., the number of individuals trained) to better meet the needs of operations;
- expand the end-user side of trans-national early warning systems platforms, such as the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) and the European Flood Awareness System (EFAS).

3) Reaction:

- promote a consistent collection of quantitative data and produce systematic analysis of response missions to improve future performance;
- consider the pre-deployment of a small UCPM team ahead of the formal UCPM activation when facing imminent disasters (e.g. cyclones, river floods, etc.);
- further simplify the administrative and financial procedures for engaging response capacities under the UCPM;
- ensure the best match between operational needs and experts deployed in the EU civil protection teams.

From a cross-cutting perspective, prevention and preparedness missions should adopt a results-based approach, and coherence between the UCPM and the instruments of the neighbourhood policy should be strengthened.

Outlook: the report stressed that the UCPM needs to be closer to local and regional actors, while continuing to strengthen, through national civil protection authorities, the governance of disaster risk management at both cross-border and along the European-national regional-local chain.

The Commission shall assess the appropriateness of amending the provisions of Decision No 1313/2013/EU with a view to: (i) strengthening effectiveness by providing realistic incentives, attaining simplifications and reducing administrative burden; (ii) matching current/emerging risks with response capacities; (iii) making full use of Europe's expertise and assets for preparedness and response.