



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 10.11.2011  
COM(2011) 696 final

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND  
THE COUNCIL**

**Report on the evaluation of the application of the Civil Protection Mechanism and the  
Civil Protection Financial Instrument for the years 2007-2009**

{SEC(2011) 1311 final}

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Directorate-General of the Commission responsible for humanitarian aid and civil protection (DG ECHO) has carried out an evaluation of the following actions in the field of civil protection for the period 2007-2009:
  - Council Decision 2007/162/EC, Euratom of 5 March 2007 establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument ('CPFI' or 'Financial Instrument'<sup>1</sup>);
  - Council Decision 2007/779/EC, Euratom of 8 November 2007 establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism (recast) ('Civil Protection Mechanism' or 'Mechanism Decision' or 'Mechanism Recast'<sup>2</sup>);
  - A preparatory action, within the meaning of Article 49(6)(b) of the Financial Regulation<sup>3</sup>, on a EU rapid response capability in the 2008, 2009 and 2010 budgets;
  - Pilot projects, within the meaning of Article 49(6)(a) of the Financial Regulation, on cross border cooperation in combating natural disasters and on forest fires, in the 2006 and 2008 budgets respectively.
2. The Civil Protection Mechanism seeks to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance intervention in the event of major emergencies, or the imminent threat thereof. The protection to be ensured by the Mechanism covers primarily people, but also the environment and property, including cultural heritage, in the event of natural and man-made disasters, acts of terrorism and technological, radiological or environmental accidents, including accidental marine pollution, occurring within or outside the EU, taking also into account the specific needs of isolated, outermost and other regions or islands of the EU.
3. There are currently 31 States participating in the Civil Protection Mechanism (which are thus also eligible under the Financial Instrument): the 27 EU Member States, Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Croatia ('Participating States')<sup>4</sup>.
4. Article 14 of the Mechanism Decision requires the Commission to evaluate the application of the Decision by the end of 2010 and to transmit the conclusions of that evaluation to the European Parliament and the Council.
5. Financial assistance is provided under the CPFI for:
  - (a) actions under the Mechanism;

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 71, 10.3.2007, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 314, 1.12.2007, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1) as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 1525/2007 of 17 December 2007 (OJ L 343, 27.12.2007, p. 9).

<sup>4</sup> Countries other than Participating States may request civil protection assistance intervention under the Mechanism, even though they are not eligible for financial support under the Financial Instrument.

- (b) measures to prevent or reduce the effects of an emergency; and
  - (c) actions designed to enhance the Community's state of preparedness for responses to emergencies, including actions enhancing EU citizens' awareness.
6. In addition, the CPFI makes special provisions to fund certain transport resources in the event of a major emergency, in order to facilitate a rapid and effective response to such an emergency.
  7. Article 15(2)(b) CPFI requires the Commission to evaluate, on an interim basis, the results obtained and the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of the CPFI<sup>5</sup>.
  8. The preparatory action on an EU rapid response capability, which was launched in 2008, sought to improve the overall capacity of the EU to respond to disasters inside and outside the EU by ensuring that Participating States' assets are available on standby to be deployed in EU civil protection operations. The Commission/MIC was mandated to activate these standby assets to meet the needs on the ground.
  9. Furthermore, a pilot project on stepped-up cooperation between Participating States on combating forest fires was initiated in 2008 with the aim of improving the mobilisation of operational resources and emergency support to assist a Participating State in coping with forest fires that are too numerous and too intense to be handled by its own logistical capacity and manpower. The objectives of the pilot project were integrated into the preparatory action on an EU rapid response capability as part of the 2009 call for proposals. In this form, the preparatory action was continued for a third and final year in 2010 (implementation of some of the projects is continuing until mid-2012).
  10. Lastly, a pilot project on cross-border cooperation in the fight against natural disasters provided grants to support actions for cooperation and the development of closer cooperation on civil protection measures with a view to raising awareness and preventing or minimising the consequences of natural disasters by developing cross-border early warning tools, coordination tools and logistical tools.
  11. Article 21(2) of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation<sup>6</sup> requires an evaluation of the preparatory actions and pilot projects in terms of the human and financial resources allocated and the results obtained in order to verify that they were consistent with the objectives set.

---

<sup>5</sup> This evaluation will cover the whole of the CPFI, including its transport related provisions. A first evaluation of the transport provisions was mandated under Article 15(2)(a) CPFI, but, by the given deadline (31 December 2008) no sufficient practical experience had been gained to carry out a meaningful evaluation.

<sup>6</sup> Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p. 1). Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 478/2007 of 23 April 2007 (OJ L 111, 28.4.2007, p. 13).

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

12. The results of the evaluation provide the Commission and other stakeholders with key findings on and lessons to be drawn from the experience gained in the implementation of the above-mentioned actions in the field of civil protection. These will help the Commission in the continued effective implementation of the Mechanism and the Financial Instrument.
13. Furthermore, the results of the evaluation will inform the preparation of a comprehensive policy package under preparation in 2011, which will review EU disaster management cooperation with particular regard to two key themes: (1) the responsibility of all actors to take adequate preventive and protection measures, and (2) solidarity and assistance within the EU and among the Participating States in times of need.
14. Lastly, the evaluation will inform the preparation of the communication on the continuation of the Financial Instrument to be presented no later than 31 December 2011 (pursuant to Article 15(2)(c) CPFI), which in practice will be part of the proposal for a new Civil Protection Financial Instrument.
15. The Commission services prepared preliminary internal review papers based on information and experience available in-house. Following this, an external consultancy (COWI A/S in collaboration with Aguaconsult) was commissioned to independently evaluate the European Commission's activities in the field of civil protection and carry out a broad and comprehensive stakeholder consultation<sup>7</sup>, including interviews and an internet-based eSurvey. The consultants have drafted an evaluation report which also takes into consideration the findings of the preliminary internal review papers. The report is available on the Commission's portal<sup>8</sup>. All Commission departments interested in the evaluation have contributed to the process and participated in a dedicated Steering Group. In addition, the Commission services have consulted Participating States, including in a meeting of the Directors-General of national civil protection authorities, to gather their views on the functioning of the Mechanism, the Financial Instrument, and the preparatory and pilot actions.
16. The external consultants were tasked to independently evaluate the implementation of the European Commission's actions in the field of civil protection carried out between 2007 and 2009 (inclusive)<sup>9</sup>, and in particular:
  - The functioning of and the services delivered by the Monitoring and Information Centre ('MIC') referred to in Article 2(5) of the Mechanism Decision;
  - The operation of the transport provisions of the CPFI (Article 4(2) points (b) and (c) and (3));

---

<sup>7</sup> The terms of reference for the external consultancy work are annexed to their report.

<sup>8</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/evaluation/thematic\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/evaluation/thematic_en.htm).

<sup>9</sup> Information related to 2010 is taken into account where appropriate.

- The implementation of the so-called "modular approach" and the arrangements tested under the pilot projects and preparatory action to enhance the availability of response assets;
- The training programme referred to in Article 5(5) of the Mechanism Decision (including the exercises programme and the exchange of experts programme).

### **3. FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION**

#### **3.1. Monitoring and Information Centre**

17. The MIC is the central hub of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism which aims to facilitate strengthened cooperation between the EU and the Member States in civil protection assistance intervention in the event of major emergencies.
18. The assessment of its operations in the years 2007-2009 shows clearly that the MIC has fulfilled its purpose of serving Member States, Commission and the EU in general, with its growing involvement in the civil protection activities inside Europe and around the world. The MIC has been accessible and able to react immediately 24 hours a day as stipulated in Article 2(5) of the Mechanism Recast Decision. The MIC is widely acknowledged for providing useful services that are relevant to Participating States when civil protection assistance interventions are conducted within or outside the EU, by advising on the needs on the ground, by facilitating closer cooperation among Participating States and by pooling resources. The hallmark of the MIC in that context is its nature of a "one-stop shop". This has saved precious time for States who need to request international assistance, and also for the Participating States providing it. In assistance interventions outside the EU the MIC has carried out functions of operational coordination, and integration of the European response within the UN coordinated efforts. The number of activations of the Mechanism has steadily increased over the years, which testifies to its added value.
19. Enhanced cooperation between the MIC and other international relief emergency responders, in particular UN agencies, was noted and commended in the external evaluation, even though further efforts should be made with respect to other actors, such as the humanitarian NGO community and military actors (such as NATO) insofar as the involvement of the latter would be duly justified in the light of the relevant UN (Oslo and MCDA) guidelines.
20. In its Communication of 2008<sup>10</sup> to the European Parliament and the Council on Reinforcing the Union's Disaster Response Capacity, the Commission noted some points where it saw room for further improvements:
- (1) Improving the effectiveness of its action in cooperation with Member States, international, national and local stakeholders, in particular through synergies and better coordination of training, needs assessment, planning and operations;
  - (2) Further streamlining 'horizontal' coordination between the Commission, the Presidency, the Member States and the High Representative, in particular for

---

<sup>10</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0130:FIN:EN:PDF>

larger scale natural disasters, both in Brussels and on the ground, for crises involving both the Civil Protection Mechanism and CFSP instruments.

- (3) Improving the 'vertical' coordination between the EU level and Member States. This coordination should be optimised because the differences in the respective mandates of the various Member States and humanitarian services/agencies have an impact on the Commission's response.

On the basis of these findings the Commission has started to look at how to improve the functioning of the MIC. The Communication on Reinforcing the Union's Disaster Response Capacity advocates the following<sup>11</sup>: **building up of the Monitoring and Information Centre so that it can play the role of operational centre for European civil protection intervention.** This requires a qualitative shift from information sharing/reacting to emergencies towards proactive anticipation/real time monitoring of emergencies and operational engagement/coordination. This includes early warning systems, performing needs assessments, identifying matching resources, and providing technical advice on response resources to the Member States; developing scenarios, standard operating procedures and lessons learned assessments; implementing the Commission competencies to pool available transport and provide co-financing for transport; increasing training and exercise activities for Member States and other experts; and helping the Member States to set up common resources. On the basis of these elements from its internal review, the external evaluation and the statements of stakeholders, the Commission concludes that the MIC has successfully, proactively, and in an effective way fulfilled its role at the heart of the Civil Protection Mechanism. While cooperation among European actors has continuously progressed as is evidenced e.g. by the European Earth monitoring programme and its Emergency Response Service, as well as synergies with all health related Commission activities, there are remaining challenges to ensure that all activities are coherent, well coordinated with, and complementary to interventions and actions implemented under other EU and international (in particular UN sponsored) disaster management capabilities (including those available in the field of humanitarian aid, but also longer-term development assistance) and the interventions of Participating States. The European cooperation and coordination in the field of civil protection would however appear to have still unused potential which can be further facilitated by the future MIC.

21. In addition, in its Communication to the European Parliament and the Council "Towards a stronger European disaster response: the role of civil protection and humanitarian assistance"<sup>12</sup>, the Commission outlined further actions to achieve a more effective, efficient, coherent and visible European response. This includes the merger of the MIC and DG ECHO's crisis room to create a genuine 24/7 *European Emergency Response Centre* as one of the cornerstones of its vision. The Centre should develop into a platform providing full support to Participating States, other EU services and international organisations during emergency relief operations, and also playing a pivotal role in the planning of EU operations (including scenario

---

<sup>11</sup> Brussels, 5.3.2008, COM(2008) 130 final, pages 6, 7; accessible at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0130:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>12</sup> COM (2010) 600 final

development and contingency planning), as well as coordination of the resources made available for European response.

### **3.2. Training Programme**

22. The internal desk study, the statements of stakeholders, the external evaluation, and the Commission's experience from the training practice all indicate that the training programme is a highly valued asset of EU civil protection co-operation. The training courses have proved to be an asset in preparing national experts for civil protection assistance interventions and have significantly improved the response capability of the EU civil protection system. The Commission concludes that the training programme should remain an important component of preparedness in the context of the EU civil protection co-operation.
23. From the evaluations it is clear that the course contents are considered fully complementary to other training events provided at national and international level. The Commission concludes that future developments of the EU training system must continue to ensure consistency among the different programmes at different levels, which would seem to require continued or enhanced coordination between all training providers, in particular if any further integration of programmes were to be envisaged in the future.
24. A Training Policy Group was formed in 2009 (first meeting in September 2009). This is a first step towards establishing European Disaster Management Training Arrangements (DMTA). In addition to this, course directors meet up to seven times per cycle; three of these meetings are evaluation meetings. An annual meeting of training coordinators is held at the end of each year. In this framework, discussions have also touched upon the aspects of comparability of national training programmes, governance and quality topics, as well as on possibilities to devise trainings on prevention and preparedness matters.
25. In the past years, the training programme has managed to keep pace with the developments of an enhanced civil protection Mechanism, which has significantly extended its activities and expertise over the years. The evaluation has clearly highlighted the widening of the scope of training activities, including new types and more numerous courses. Considering these developments in the context of increased pressures on public financing possibilities leads on to the question of how to provide for a more efficient civil protection training programme, which may not be able to rely entirely on the central organisation of training on international coordination in the future.
26. The training courses have provided an excellent platform for experience sharing and networking among civil protection experts of the Participating States as well as with other partners, such as members of the UNDAC (United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination) teams and other Commission services. The costs and benefits of such formal and informal contacts are generally difficult to evaluate with objective indicators. The Commission considers that, in the event of a large scale emergency situation, such contacts and networks can make the crucial difference between the best possible relief intervention and a less optimal scenario, where critical time is lost in inefficient coordination and organisational actions. Obviously, experience sharing and the creation of networks also come at a cost to the system.

However, such network effects can be generated as a side-effect while pursuing the main training objectives mentioned above.

27. In this context, the Commission is also reflecting on how to better organise the exchange of field, exercise and training experiences and the sharing of lessons to be learnt in a more structured way.<sup>13</sup>
28. The review of the Civil Protection legislation in 2011 will provide an opportunity to consider these various aspects further. It will also raise the question of whether larger amounts can be provided for training actions under the new Financial Instrument, or whether other ways must be found to further enhance the benefits of closer EU co-operation on disaster preparedness.

### **3.3. Exercise programme**

29. As established by the Commission internal review, the findings and conclusions of the external evaluators, and the views of Participating States and other stakeholders, exercises have proved to be an effective action to boost European preparedness for natural and man-made disasters. They have helped in refining procedures and practical arrangements that have to be established for civil protection interventions and co-operation, including the opportunity to start exercising host nation support arrangements. In particular, it emerges clearly that the aims set out in Article 24 of the Mechanism Implementing Decision<sup>14</sup> are met: i.e. improving the response capacity and providing the necessary practice of teams, improving and verifying procedures, establishing a common language for the coordination of civil protection assistance interventions, reducing the response time in major emergencies, enhancing operational cooperation between the civil protection services of the Participating States, and sharing lessons learned.
30. The Commission concludes that full-scale exercises in the field of the Civil Protection Mechanism co-funded by the EU have proved to be an essential element in improving the preparedness level of all components of the Civil Protection Mechanism.
31. While overall the exercises conducted during this period have provided fertile ground to achieve the declared aims, they have also suffered from the fact that they are not integrated into a more comprehensive exercise programme and mainly form a series of proposals put forward by Participating States. This assessment was highlighted by many stakeholders when asked to consider the overall effectiveness, coherence, co-operation and complementarity of the exercise programme. Some interviewees stated that the EU should provide guidelines to ensure comparable levels and procedures for exercises, e.g. a minimum standard.
32. The Commission concludes that the exercises programme has matured to a point where it is now time to review the concrete priorities and objectives of the policy with a view to enhanced EU preparedness, starting in particular by assessing the

---

<sup>13</sup> In the future, an annual meeting will be organised to facilitate these exchanges of experiences.

<sup>14</sup> Commission Decision of 29 December 2003 laying down rules for the implementation of Council Decision 2001/792/EC, Euratom establishing a Community Mechanism; 2004/277/EC, Euratom

currently agreed minimum requirements for EU funding and developing improved requirements.

33. Full scale exercises train at the national and the European coordination levels. This characteristic has been posing significant challenges at all stages of the exercise cycle, not least because Participating States have arrived at different levels in their civil protection systems and in their approach to planning, conducting and evaluating exercises. This raises the question as to whether closer cooperation between the European exercises programme and national exercises programmes is beneficial. Closer cooperation could further enhance the effectiveness, coherence, co-operation and complementarity of the exercise programme, as well as its efficiency, but may in return mean that additional resources have to be earmarked for planning and coordination efforts and the setting up of an EU exercises framework.
34. From the above elements, the Commission acknowledges that, in order to better serve the ultimate aim of improving operations through better preparedness, the establishment of an integrated and comprehensive exercise programme/ framework needs to be considered. This would require several steps, starting from the drawing up of a common glossary and agreed minimum requirements of an exercise methodology (evaluation and improvement plan programme, exercise control, common safety rules, etc), and including setting out a vision on the disaster scenarios to be practised. The focus here should be on using the results of the risk assessments and scenarios developed in the Participating States and on the overview scenarios to be developed at EU level in the coming years. In addition, such an exercise policy framework could also consider important deployment scenarios for assistance interventions outside the EU.
35. As regards the EU exercises programme, the Commission concludes that while it is overall successful it may be necessary to develop a strengthened exercise framework in order to further enhance the level of preparedness and cooperation among European countries and to optimise the benefits for all Participating States.

#### **3.4. Exchange of experts programme**

36. In a European and international context of EU civil protection activities, developing a direct knowledge of the working methods and procedures of partners, such as the relevant authorities and entities of other Member States, generates many benefits.
37. The Commission concludes that the exchange of experts programme has met its objectives as set out in Article 25 of the Mechanism Implementing Decision<sup>15</sup>, i.e. enabling experts to: (1) gain experience in other fields; (2) become acquainted with various techniques and operational procedures used; and (3) study approaches taken by other participating emergency services and institutions. Generally, meeting colleagues working in other Member States on the same issues greatly contributes to streamlining and easing communication in case of emergencies where time is critical.

---

<sup>15</sup> Commission Decision of 29 December 2003 laying down rules for the implementation of Council Decision 2001/792/EC, Euratom establishing a Community Mechanism; 2004/277/EC, Euratom

38. As only a limited number of experts have been trained so far and there appears to be an ongoing need, it would seem useful to continue this scheme, and even considering making it more widely known.
39. The Commission notes that the programme is primarily organised as a learning opportunity for the experts sent abroad. In the context of enhancing cooperation among Participating States, it is worthwhile considering organising exchanges in such a way that experts on particular subjects are made available to other Participating States on request.

### **3.5. Modules**

40. The modular approach is now firmly established in the European civil protection world as a means of enhancing the interoperability, the speed of deployment, the predictability of response, the support that is needed from the affected state (for the module to be able to perform its tasks), and the overall quality and effectiveness of European civil protection interventions. The establishment of modules and the setting up of the modules database in CECIS<sup>16</sup> also facilitated the process of requesting and delivering assistance inside EU, as it improved the planning at both donor and recipient ends (i.e. in the case of floods, when the request refers to a certain number of high capacity pumping modules, it clearly specifies the capacity of the module, the location where the module could be used, the support it needs, etc.). The Commission believes that the modular approach has clearly proved its added value.
41. The Commission internal review, the findings and conclusions of the external evaluators, and feedback by Participating States stakeholders have established that the civil protection modules are generally considered to be effective ways to boost European preparedness for natural and man-made disasters.
42. The concept of modules needs to be further strengthened by involving them in specific exercises. Work in this direction was initiated in 2010, when the first cycle of six modules exercises started. The modules exercises are specific field exercises for training the cooperation and coordination between different modules and an EU Civil Protection coordination team during an emergency. Although the modules exercises are not part of this evaluation report (due to the fact that progress only started at the end of 2010), the initial feedback from Participating States on this component is very positive.
43. In addition, work is progressing on developing standard operating procedures for modules, aimed at further improving interoperability and coordination on site and with headquarters. Guidelines on host nation support are also under development. Both initiatives are coordinated by the Commission, with the Participating States being involved in the framework of the Modules working group.

### **3.6. Pilot projects and preparatory actions**

44. A number of projects aimed at ensuring the availability of response assets were co-financed by the EU through pilot projects and preparatory actions. These projects

---

<sup>16</sup> CECIS – Common Emergency Communication and Information System, to which all national civil protection authorities of the Participating States and the MIC are connected.

sought to test innovative governance arrangements on managing Participating States assets (mostly modules) that are put on standby for EU operations in a mutual arrangement between the Commission and the Participating States concerned, as well as supplementary EU-level assets/services.

45. A significant number of standby assets of Participating States, as well as supplementary capacities/services, have been deployed in actual emergencies with encouraging results as part of preparatory action and pilot projects, indicating that the models tested are viable. While the external evaluation concludes that it would seem to be too early to draw definitive conclusions from the limited number of deployments on whether a more effective EU disaster response has been achieved, it is acknowledged that these facilities have contributed to a more adequate EU response to disasters.
46. As part of the Preparatory Action on an EU Rapid Response Capability, the Commission has co-financed around 20 projects involving more than half of all Participating States to develop standby arrangements for key resources. Through these projects a series of intervention assets (mostly modules, including search and rescue, water purification, medical teams, forest fire fighting<sup>17</sup>, CBRN detection and decontamination, temporary shelter, technical assistance and support teams (TAST)) were put on standby for EU civil protection operations by Participating States. These assets have been tested in exercises and have been used in real-time operations (for instance, in response to the Haiti earthquake and floods in Poland), effectively adding to the overall EU response. The mobilisation and deployment of these modules at the request of the Commission/MIC has been smooth. Some projects are still ongoing and will continue until mid-2012.
47. The full benefits of standby assets would materialise in a coherent system encompassing an adequate number of assets of various types, coupled with an advance planning (including reference scenarios and contingency plans). This could be done in particular by developing the European Emergency Response Capacity in the form of a pool of Member States' assets that are pre-committed on a voluntarily basis for EU disaster relief operations, as outlined in the Commission Communication of October 2010 (COM (2010) 600 final).
48. A pilot project on stepped-up cooperation between Participating States to combat forest fires (EU Forest Fire Tactical Reserve - EUFFTR) was initiated in 2008 with the aim of improving mobilisation of operational resources and emergency support to assist a Participating State in coping with forest fires which are too numerous and too intense to be handled by its own logistical capacity and manpower. The EUFFTR project consisted of two fire-fighting planes (Canadair CL-215) that were leased

---

<sup>17</sup>

As regards forest fire fighting and relevant activities supported by the EC, according to Article 4 of the LIFE+ Regulation (EC) No 614/2007 the specific objectives of the LIFE+ Programme's component "LIFE+ Information and Communication" include activities targeted on forest fire prevention and training on forest fire prevention. Currently there are three ongoing projects from the Call for proposals 2008. FORESTFIRE (PL) aims to reduce the risk of forest fire caused by human activities by raising awareness of forest fire prevention. EEFOREST (PT) expecting to reduce the number of forest fires in Tavira municipality by increasing the efficiency of forest awareness campaigns. FFPE (EE) focuses on enhancing implementation of forest fire prevention measurements and increasing awareness of protection against forest fires at a national level.

from the commercial market and available to fly 150 hours each during 1 July - 30 September 2009. The planes were a supplementary European resource designed to reinforce the overall EU fire-fighting capacity. They were available to assist EU Member States requesting aerial fire fighting assistance through the Civil Protection Mechanism.

49. The decision to deploy the EUFFTR was taken by the Commission after consultation on the forest fires situation with all the Southern Member States. Following the decision, the French Ministry of the Interior (the project beneficiary) ensured the deployment of the planes, stationed in Bastia (Corsica). The EUFFTR intervened in six of the total of nine forest fire emergencies for which the Mechanism was activated in 2009: twice in France-Corsica and Portugal, once in Italy, and once in Greece. In the remaining three Mechanism activations (Albania, Greece and Portugal) sufficient and timely assistance was provided by the Member States and the EUFFTR was not mobilised.
50. As noted also by the external evaluation, the complementarity of the actions is more difficult to assess. Would some of the actions have been carried out without the co-funding provided at the EU level? The eSurvey is indicating quite clearly that complementarity was fully achieved (80% versus 10% of respondents, see above). However, it is noted that some of the results may also be biased to a certain extent, as the beneficiaries of the co-financed projects made up a large proportion of the group of respondents. The evaluators found concerns that the funding of pilot projects or preparatory actions is not fully complementary but rather a stop-gap for incomplete prevention/preparedness activity in a country or region. Furthermore, the interviewees raised some concern that there might be some kind of 'unintended disincentive', whereby some Participating States may rely on assistance through the Mechanism instead of making the investments themselves (e.g. for preventive measures). An objective evaluation would have to rely on a counterfactual baseline scenario describing what would have happened in the absence of EU co-financing. In the specific context of the various Participating States, such an analysis is difficult to make and will produce only uncertain results.
51. Given these difficulties, the Commission is not in a position to fully ascertain complementarity or the lack thereof. As regards the possible "crowding-out" or replacement of national prevention measures, such a judgement would need to refer to an assumed minimum standard of what level of prevention would be appropriate.
52. It may be discussed in an evaluation whether any of the results, in particular the achieved enhanced rapid response capability, could have been achieved at a lower cost. With the data currently at its disposal, the Commission is unable to reach definitive conclusions on the cost-effectiveness of the approach. This being said, a number of eSurvey respondents and interviewees in the external evaluation pointed out the need for more control and evaluation.
53. The Commission concludes that the development of the concept of civil protection modules, preparatory actions and pilot projects has raised Europe to a higher level of preparedness. Any major disaster will be met with an enhanced rapid response capability and thus help to save lives, protect property and the environment both within Europe, and outside. However, it is also clear that the benefits of this enhanced preparedness will need to be preserved in the medium and longer term by

maintaining and developing the modules already in operation. The Commission notes in this respect that the evaluators found a strong interest on the part of almost all respondents in maintaining the system of preparatory actions after it expires in 2010 (20 out of 25 responses are positive).

### **3.7. Transport assistance provisions**

54. The transport provisions have been in place since 2007, and they were implemented in order to address an observed transport deficit. The Commission is contributing either through: (1) the award of direct grants to the Participating States (all transport means are eligible: civilian or military assets as appropriate provided that the relevant international/UN guidelines are fully complied with<sup>18</sup>) or (2) through using the services of a transport contractor ("broker") to lease transport assets. A maximum of € 90 million can be used for transport under the Civil Protection Financial Instrument during the period 2007 to 2013. The Participating State requesting financial support has to reimburse at least 50% of the EU funds received within 6 months of the intervention.
55. It took some time before Participating States could make full use of the transport provision. The total of CPFI co-financing used since the start of the transport provisions up to the end of 2010 amounts to around €7.5 million, with 2010 and 2011 showing a marked increase in the number of requests for pooling and financial assistance.<sup>19</sup>.
56. The evaluation found that the transport provisions have contributed to an overall improvement in the delivery of assistance and led to a more effective disaster response. The transport provisions also provide a valuable contribution by allowing for the presence and visibility of all Participating States in international disaster situations. Overall the transport arrangements have proved to be useful both in terms of supporting Participating States in pooling and sharing their transport assets and enabling additional offers by tackling the transport deficit problem (either through transport services provided by the "broker" or through financial assistance). In the eSurvey, 40% of the interviewees indicated that the transport provisions have a decisive impact on the decision to offer assistance.
57. The procedures put in place in order to manage the financial assistance via direct grants awarded to Participating States have proved to be useful by contributing to closing a major gap. At the same time it is universally acknowledged that the procedures are complicated and burdensome and should be streamlined; plus, there needs to be more flexibility.
58. Important considerations arising from the evaluation lead to the need to further investigate different levels of co-financing transport operations, depending on the urgency or priority of delivery for certain relief resources, as well as improving access to transport assets/options.

---

<sup>18</sup> In particular the so-called 'Oslo' and 'MCDA' guidelines.

<sup>19</sup> In 2007, there was one request for transport financing of a total value of around €0.03 million; the total value of the transport co-financing during 2008 and 2009 stayed at around €0.4 million yearly; in 2010, it reached around €6.6 million (for 55 requests), and in 2011 it has increased to €10.8 million (for 35 requests) so far.

### **3.8. Cooperation projects**

59. The Commission has carried out its evaluation of this segment without the help of the external evaluation. The consultants were not tasked to evaluate the cooperation projects on prevention and preparedness, mainly because the eSurvey and interview methodology would not have been appropriate for this purpose, as the individual results are not known in detail to a wider group of people.
60. Cooperation projects co-financed by the Civil Protection Financial Instrument in the field of prevention and preparedness would seem to have reached their intended objectives. The completed projects under the 2007 call resulted in a number of interesting guidelines, conferences and reports. In the interests of transparency, the final reports are published and the individual merits of each project have been acknowledged by the Commission by its acceptance of the final reports. An increase in the number of proposals and number of projects receiving financial support over the years can also be noted, which tends to suggest that there are needs to be met. Although many of the projects cannot be assessed with simple financial indicators, much like research and development projects in general, each of the projects is nevertheless considered a useful addition to European prevention and preparedness efforts, which may suddenly have to rely on the developed projects in the event of a major emergency.
61. The Commission concludes that the prevention and preparedness projects have contributed significantly to a number of improvements in the EU civil protection and disaster management system, and the funding possibility should also be maintained in the future.
62. However, the question is whether adding individual ad-hoc projects whose actual objectives, intended beneficiaries and deliverables are very diverse, can sufficiently contribute to achieving the underlying policy objectives if there is no overall policy framework which could be used for benchmarking purposes. Giving financial support to a selection of unrelated projects on the basis of successive annual calls for proposals is arguably not an appropriate substitute for a policy framework.
63. The situation differs slightly in the area of preparedness, as the Mechanism deals extensively with this issue. However, the question of a overall policy framework is still relevant insofar as the Mechanism focuses on civil protection actors in the strict sense, while preparedness under the Civil Protection Financial Instrument also considers other beneficiaries, such as the public at large and general preparedness and awareness-raising actions. Issues of ensuring greater complementarities between projects, minimising overlapping and enhancing the sustainability of the project outcomes would seem to warrant further consideration.
64. Even though this goes beyond the scope of the present evaluation, attention could also possibly be directed to examining the potential for possible synergies with EU programmes and policies with instruments able to support certain aspects of prevention and preparedness activities.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

65. The Commission notes that the conclusions of the external evaluators are positive overall, in that they recognise and emphasise the usefulness and relevance of EU Civil Protection activities during the period under review. In particular, it has been widely acknowledged that the Monitoring and Information Centre provides useful services that are relevant to Participating States when civil protection assistance interventions are deployed within or outside the EU.
66. The Commission also noted the concerns and ideas for possible improvements that stakeholders have passed on to the evaluators. The preparation of the legislative proposals in 2011 provides opportunities to consider all relevant issues. Moreover, the merging of the Civil Protection Units with the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO), which was decided at the beginning of 2010, together with the establishment of a new Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection<sup>20</sup>, will produce further synergies and complementarities, in particular with regard to relief operations in third countries.
67. The Commission also noted the *ad hoc* nature of the current EU disaster response and the need to move to a system where advance planning allows core assets to be available for immediate deployment. The planning of EU civil protection operations will be improved by developing reference scenarios, mapping Member States' assets and drawing up contingency plans, establishing a pool of Member States' assets pre-committed on a voluntary basis to the EU operations, streamlining and reinforcing provisions on transport support, as well as other measures outlined in the October 2010 Communication on disaster response.
68. The training courses have proved to be a valuable asset in terms of preparing national experts for civil protection assistance interventions, thus improving the overall response capability of the Mechanism. Nonetheless, the evaluation also showed that the further evolution of the training arrangements is limited due to the lack of an overall policy framework. Similar conclusions have been drawn in respect of the exercises programme, which has received overall support but has been affected by the lack of a general policy framework. To better serve their ultimate purpose, i.e. the improvement of operations, the establishment of an integrated training and exercises policy will need to be considered.
69. The transport assistance provisions now seem to be firmly embedded in the Mechanism, and a highly significant use of the pooling and co-financing arrangements has been noticed in the last two years, even though calls for streamlining the procedures have been voiced and duly noted. Beyond the mere simplification of rules and administrative procedures, important considerations arising from the evaluation lead to a need to investigate different levels of co-financing depending on the urgency or priority of delivery for certain relief resources, as well as improving access to transport assets/options.

---

<sup>20</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm).

70. The modular approach met with great interest and success among Participating States, and should be further developed, including through specialised exercises and the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs).
71. Innovative arrangements seeking to enhance the availability of key relief assets tested through pilot projects and preparatory actions proved to be viable and should be built upon. It is to be noted, however, that pilot projects and preparatory actions are time-limited by their very nature and cannot be a substitute for a more permanent policy and regulatory framework. The experience gained in the design and implementation of these projects is informing the preparation of the 2011 legislative review.
72. The Commission concludes that European cooperation and coordination in the field of civil protection has made substantial progress, but there is still also unused potential. One important area which has attracted increasing awareness and acknowledgment is the policy need in the field of disaster prevention and disaster management. An enhanced EU prevention policy framework would be able to address the various prevention aspects in different EU policy fields (environment, security, health and regional policies) and facilitate further co-operation among Participating States.
73. The Commission invites the European Parliament and the Council to take note of these evaluation findings.