



COMMISSION  
OF THE EUROPEAN  
COMMUNITIES

8 Storey's Gate London SW1P 3AT  
Telephone: 01-222 8122  
Fax: 01-222 0900

ISEC/B4/89  
8 February 1989

## BACKGROUND REPORT

### COMMUNITY CO-OPERATION ON CIVIL PROTECTION

#### Summary

The Commission of the European Communities has issued a draft Council Resolution (1) on the new developments in Community co-operation on civil protection. Its contents are the outcome of a resolution (2) passed on 25 June 1987 by the Council and Representatives of the Governments of the Member States which listed a number of steps to be taken in this field in the short term. Civil Protection was defined by the Commission in April 1987 (3) and covers a wide range of areas connected with the protection of the public involving assistance and solidarity in the event of a serious crisis or a natural or man-made disaster.

Since 25 June 1987 the Commission has been active in following up the Council resolution of that date. Firstly, A Guide to Civil Protection is being published. This is a practical manual for those responsible for civil protection and the national authorities in charge of emergency planning and will be updated each year. Secondly, simulation exercises and training courses have been organised. Thirdly, public awareness operations have been mounted. Lastly, at international level, the Commission has extended the scope of European action by seeking closer relations with international organisations.

New developments include the listing of existing data banks and a move to interconnect them. Another development is the progressive harmonisation of language and multi-lingual terminology. There is also a proposal to introduce a single Europe-wide emergency telephone number. The Commission is promoting the use of new telecommunications services and infrastructures, particularly space technology, for improving disaster managements. In this context, the Commission is planning to analyse and draw up, before the end of 1989, an initial detailed inventory of actual requirements, and the resources that would enable them to be met. Finally, the Commission plans a campaign of information and public awareness on the subject, possibly introducing a European civil protection logo, in the period March 1990 to April 1991. Expenditure on all these items in 1989 is targeted at about £1 million.

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- (1) COM (88) 494 final  
(2) OJ C176 4.7.87 p.1.  
(3) COM (87) 161 final

## A Review of Community Co-operation on Civil Protection

A Guide to Civil protection, the hub of the resolution of 25 June 1987, has been finished. This practical manual lists types of disasters, their features; multilateral and bilateral agreements between Member States; the various types of emergency planning arrangements at national, regional and local levels and resources available to assist people in the European Community. This guide will be updated each year with the help of national experts.

Co-operation has also been generated by the organisation of contacts and discussions at the periodical meetings of Member States' experts and liaison officers responsible for civil protection. In addition, Member States have organised simulation exercises and training courses to facilitate exchanges of skilled civil protection personnel able to handle specialised tasks. Initial experience shows that it is possible to mobilise land and air resources from the various Member States and bring them to the scene of the disaster within 24 hours and to co-ordinate effectively the simultaneous use on land and in the air of resources from various countries with differing capacity and [technical] features.

Other initiatives under the Commission's programme to step up the information effort - directed both at the general public and at those working in civil protection - have taken the form of public awareness operations.

### New Developments

One important new development is the fact that, with the help of an outside contractor, a list of data banks existing in the Community in the field of civil protection has been drawn up. The Commission reckons, that despite differing software, query languages and linguistic diversity, with the state of the art in data processing and telecommunications technology, it should be possible to interconnect different data banks and give users a uniform and simple method of access to these banks.

The interconnection of the existing data banks would safeguard the autonomy of national civil protection systems and would neither infringe nor compromise any existing bilateral or multilateral agreement; it would also make for optimal use of all resources. For these reasons the Commission is planning to assess the feasibility of such a system of interconnecting of data banks. The move after that will be to start a pilot project which would run for a limited period. When this period is finished a final assessment would be made on whether it is possible and worthwhile to set up a fully operational system.

Parallel with this the Commission plans to harmonise the basic language and multi-lingual terminology by producing a glossary of civil protection in the Community. It will draw up a technical and scientific thesaurus covering all the basic concepts in the nine languages of the Community in order to help emergency services work more effectively when dealing with crisis situations following major disasters. This thesaurus should be ready before the end of 1990.

The Commission has also proposed a single Europe-wide emergency telephone number (1) for contacting national civil protection services in case of disaster. The Commission followed up this proposal by sending the Council a communication (2) dealing specifically with the introduction of a standard emergency telephone number. Now it has been agreed that a timetable will be drawn up in consultation with national experts. The Commission would like the emergency Europe-wide number to be introduced gradually by 1992.

The improved use of new telecommunications services and infrastructures, particularly space technology, has also been suggested for improving disaster management (1). The use of telemetry to gather territorial data could already be of great help in predicting and assessing a disaster, and in some cases in following rescue operations once the disaster has occurred. Therefore the Commission believes that the need for a joint response to civil protection requirements is another reason for harmonising pan-European telecommunications systems. For this reason the Commission will draw up by the end of 1989 an initial detailed inventory of actual requirements and the resources that would enable them to be met. The Commission also plans to use the simulation exercises in the field to test new communications systems likely to be of use, particularly satellite systems.

One further idea to stimulate awareness of the major dangers and risks involved in natural disasters is the creation of a distinctive symbol or logo for European civil protection. An action and information campaign devoted entirely to civil protection is planned in the 12 months March 1990 - April 1991.

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- (1) COM (87) 161 final  
(2) COM (88) 312 final  
(3) SEC (86) 1965 Civil defence and co-operation in case of disaster;  
Report by the group of national experts.

