

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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COOPERATION IN THE COMMUNITY ON CIVIL DEFENCE

(Communication by the Commission)

DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES

meeting within the Council on the introduction of
Community cooperation on civil defence

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Draft resolution of the Council and Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At an informal meeting in Rome on 2 and 3 May 1985, the Ministers responsible for civil defence in the Member States suggested that:

- the Commission should examine the possibility of cooperation between the Member States;
- a high-level working party on civil defence should be convened to provide a channel for the regular exchange of information and frequent meetings held at ministerial level.

2. In November 1985 the Commission sent the Member States a working paper¹ giving its initial impressions.

3. At their meeting in March 1986, the senior civil servants responsible for civil defence decided to produce an inventory of existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The national experts carried out the preparatory work² and in November 1986 the senior civil servants examined their report and identified a number of possible areas for Community cooperation.

4. Moreover, Parliament has repeatedly expressed an interest in this subject and has called for the establishment at Community level of a European disaster

¹SEC(85)1833.

²SEC(86)1655.

relief programme³ calling on the Commission to submit proposals for the coordination of assistance between Member States.

5. The basic principle underlying any initiative in this area is that the Community dimension should make the action under consideration more effective either by creating benefits of scale or by reducing or eliminating duplication.

II. NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

6. In a disaster, whether natural or industrial, the Member State affected may be incapable of reacting adequately.⁴

The object of disaster management is to prevent incidents as far as possible and to reduce their effects on the population. It therefore entails more than merely responding to emergencies; it involves forecasting, early warning, rescue operations, disaster control, aid and short and medium-term reconstruction.

7. One of the main problems, in all types of disaster, is the deployment of available resources and the effectiveness of the response. These are determined by:

³Ghergo resolution (1-111/81), Combe resolution (1-364/81 and 1-1349/83):
cf. OJ C 77/84 of 19.2.1984.

⁴This document does not cover:

- nuclear accidents,
- chemical accidents (Seveso; marine and fresh water pollution),
- terrorism,
- mass epidemics,

all of which are the subject of other procedures.

- rapid information on the nature of the disaster, the risk involved, the scale and extent of the incident;
- identification and prompt evaluation of the resources available;
- the possibility of conveying information to those authorized to take decisions and to provide immediate aid;
- matching of assistance to the specific requirements which, in some cases, are quite new.

All Member States have some degree of national planning to provide the best possible response to different types of emergency and there is a wide range of sectoral plans dealing with specific disasters.

Apart from making intervention more effective, cooperation between Member States allows technical information to be exchanged and time and resources to be saved in the development of the most appropriate procedures.

8. The senior civil servants decided to concentrate first of all on action during the disaster which, in several countries, is traditionally the responsibility of the Civil Defence.

III. BASIS FOR COOPERATION

GUIDE TO CIVIL DEFENCE

9. At present, information passes from country to country by means of official or informal contacts between heads of civil defence departments.

Cooperation will be facilitated and made more effective by a guide describing the latest situation as regards disaster relief in the Community, including information on mechanisms for placing the emergency services on alert and for raising the alarm in good time, on the possibilities for calling on outside assistance, the coordination of action extending beyond national frontiers and the range of resources which can be deployed. The purpose of this guide will be to help members of the civil defence service and other authorities responsible for relief planning at national or local level to prepare better action plans for major emergencies.

The draft guide contains the following main types of information:

- existing bilateral and multilateral agreements on mutual assistance;
- warning systems, means of implementing relief plans, and communications systems;
- existing procedures for the exchange of information, including the frequency of meetings;
- names, addresses and telephone numbers of organizations to be contacted;
- all specialist resources (lists of equipment, personnel, services, data base, etc.).

PERMANENT NETWORK OF LIAISON OFFICERS

10. One of the major problems is providing other countries with information about the incident quickly. In the past, information on what is needed and in what quantities, generally issued by the competent organizations, has been very limited. The time has come to introduce a more effective machinery for cooperation between the Member States and procedures for assessing the action that needs to be taken and what has already been done.

The senior civil servants agreed that steps should be taken at Community level to improve, by better information and greater cooperation, the resources available to the Member States in the event of disasters both in terms of immediate relief and short term emergency aid.

(a) Extent of coordination and procedures

11. Cooperation will concentrate on immediate emergency relief.

Once an incident occurs the prime objective should be speed of response. In these circumstances cooperation will take the form of an exchange of information between liaison officers on the situation in the country or countries concerned and the production of an inventory of action already taken.

12. The liaison officers' first task will therefore be to circulate, where necessary, information on the nature and scale of requirements in any emergency. The role of the Member States will be to transmit all the information at their disposal to the liaison officers.

13. In addition, a list of the measures taken by the Member States and the Community will have to be prepared and circulated to all concerned in the form of progress reports on the operations as a whole. The public will also be informed by appropriate means.

14. Joint operations will also seek to bring assistance more into line with requirements during the second stage - when coordination becomes more important than speed.

Preparations for the final stage of restoring normality to the disaster area will, of course, make use of the information acquired during the emergency aid stage.

(b) Administrative provisions and operational details

15. The Member States and the Commission will appoint a person with the appropriate means of communication to maintain direct contact with the other liaison officers and gather data on emergency aid.

16. Contacts within this network will need to be as flexible as possible. Contacts could be made:

- by telephone, telex or telefax, in the interests of speed,
- at informal meetings to be convened by the Commission's liaison officer where necessary and attended by liaison officers involved in a given operation,

- during visits to the scene by the liaison officers directly involved in national operations.

17. The possibility of holding regular meetings of Ministers and senior civil servants responsible for civil defence in the Member States had already been discussed at the ministerial meeting in Rome in May 1985.

Unquestionably, the consultations conducted by the Commission and the meetings of civil defence experts proved valuable to all concerned and helped to improve awareness and understanding of individual situations and problems.

Permanent contacts and regular meetings between experts will encourage cooperation and consultation on the activities of individual Member States. This type of meeting can also lead to the exchange of information on new ideas and progress made in each Member State in terms of information systems and the resources which can be made available.

This group, which might meet once a year or more often at the request of a Member State or the Commission, would therefore have several tasks associated with the various actions and activities referred to in this document. In particular, it would be responsible for ensuring that plans for cooperation were in fact implemented in the Member States and for reporting on them at regular intervals.

18. It might also study other forms of cooperation on civil defence dealing with other stages not yet considered in detail (forecasting, prevention, etc).

DISASTER SIMULATION AND TRAINING

19. It is necessary to ensure that the plans and available resources are compatible and this can best be done by means of simulation exercises.

In particular, the cooperation which needs to be developed in these areas should gradually lead to:

- (a) a "common language" and standardization of vocabulary for ideas, strategy and logistics alike;
- (b) "operational units" which, because of their specialization, could be placed on alert and directed by the quickest possible means to the scene of the disaster; a common radio frequency and a single emergency telephone number in all Member States might facilitate matters.

20. The Commission has successfully tackled these problems in the specific area of fighting forest fires. In 1985 the first Community forest firefighting exercise was financed and organized in France at the Commission's initiative.

This exercise, ("FLORAC 85") proved that it was possible to mobilize land and airborne fire-fighting teams from the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal within 24 hours.

It became clear during this exercise that many of the limiting factors on cooperation could be removed if each partner:

- accepted the principle of a minimum standardization of its materials and the harmonization of procedures for committing its resources;
- made provision for regular contacts between senior experts to draft harmonized standards and provide information/training material for use in the national training modules of each civil defence department.

21. This specific experiment has more general advantages for civil defence, since every type of natural disaster immediately reveals analogies and similarities with scenarios for the deployment of resources in other types of disaster.

A European dimension to operations in this area will largely be a matter of the timing of exercises, the attendance of observers from all Member States, the organization, where appropriate, of seminars to draw conclusions from the various exercises, the choice, where possible, of distinct types of "risk", the preparation of one or more ad hoc information brochures for the public, the choice of frontier regions where more specific cooperation between certain Member States, can be organized etc.

22. Civil defence also includes intervention by specialist rescue units in the event of a disaster, as well as a whole range of technical activities such as first aid, land, sea and underground rescue services, and radio communications (radio hams). Appropriate financial assistance should be provided to encourage such activities both in terms of quality, by providing better training, and quantity, by extending it to Community level.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

23. Information should be understood in its broadest sense, in this context since it covers two concepts. The first of these is the need to educate the individual in preventive action, enabling him to act in a disaster to protect himself and, possibly, take part in rescue operations.

This task is first and foremost the responsibility of the national authorities which generally employ a variety of means (the media, advertising, schools) which should be supported and developed. The Community's role would be to back national efforts.

24. Secondly, information is concerned with the resources provided at all levels to deal with disasters. In this connection one of the most useful common initiatives would be the creation of a single emergency telephone number for all the Member States, enabling individuals to raise the alarm, to obtain information on the scale of a disaster, and to enquire about the condition or identity of victims.

25. The Commission will take the necessary steps to develop all forms of cooperation and heighten public awareness of the solidarity which exists between Member States. These measures, which are fully in line with the spirit and the letter of "a people's Europe", are bound to make a positive contribution to the development of a sense of belonging to a Community. Young people in particular could be encouraged to participate through exchanges and training projects, which because they were altruistic and dynamic, would attract young people who feel the need for commitment and action.

Draft

Resolution of the Council and the Representatives
of the Governments of the Member States
meeting within the Council on the introduction of
Community cooperation on civil defence

The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States
meeting within the Council:

- whereas all the Member States have plans for dealing with natural or man-made disasters which might occur on their territory; whereas these plans vary in extent, scale of intervention and resources available for mobilization;
- whereas the Commission is already carrying out research on forecasting, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and major industrial accidents, and whereas the results of this research could be put to use in the context of Community cooperation on civil defence; whereas instruments for Community cooperation already exist in other fields (such as the major-accident hazards of certain industrial activities (Directive of 24 June 1982) and pollution caused by the spillage of oil and other harmful substances at sea (Decision of 6 March 1986));
- whereas cooperation between the Member States in this area would increase the ability of all Member States to respond according to circumstances and requirements; whereas such cooperation could improve the efficiency of the individual disaster management operations; whereas practical initiatives are therefore called for at Community level;
- whereas the Ministers responsible for civil defence at their meeting in Rome on 2 and 3 May 1985 reached agreement in principle on this matter;

- having regard to the report on cooperation in the event of a disaster presented by the national experts in October 1986;
- having regard to the conclusions reached by the senior civil servants responsible for civil defence at their meeting in November 1986;
- Referring to Parliament resolutions 1-111/80 and 1-364/81 on mutual assistance between the Member States in the event of large-scale disasters, which called on the Commission to submit proposals for the coordination of aid between Member States;
- Believing that an initiative in this area would be of direct benefit in protecting the European citizen and would make a tangible contribution to a people's Europe;
- Wishing to contribute still further to the social progress of the people of Europe, in line with the fundamental objectives of the Treaties establishing the Communities and with the new impetus which the Single European Act has given to the achievement of European Union,

1. Decide to create a permanent network of liaison officers from the Member States and the Commission in the civil defence sector. The task of this network, which will come into operation from 1 July 1987, will be to permit the immediate and rapid exchange of information on requirements and resources available within the Community to deal with natural and man-made disasters occurring within its territory. This network will help to increase potential assistance available to the individual Member States.

In addition, regular meetings of Ministers and senior civil servants responsible for civil defence in the Member States will be held to ensure that the Member States are implementing the various initiatives which may be required (simulation exercises, public information, ease with which assistance can be summoned, single emergency telephone number, youth training, etc.).

2. Decide to adopt a Guide to Civil Defence in the European Community in accordance with the draft submitted by the Commission, and request the Commission to complete and publish the document as soon as possible.

3. Request the Commission to encourage the Member States to hold regular simulation exercises, coordinated at Community level, which could receive Community support, in order to ensure that the preventive measures and the organization of assistance in the event of a natural or man-made disaster operate effectively throughout the Community.
4. Request the Commission to introduce financial incentives to develop schemes for training young people in voluntary rescue activities in the civil defence sector and measures to encourage cooperation between young volunteers from the different Member States.
5. Urge the Commission to continue to coordinate research into natural and man-made disasters.
6. Instruct the Commission to study the possibility of extending the system of information networks already introduced by the Council to new areas at Community level.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

New budget heading (as from 1988):

Article 694 "Community cooperation on civil defence".

Proposed classification: NCE

Description of the action:

Implementation of Council decisions of 25 May 1987 on civil defence.
The remarks under the new Article 694 of the budget will be worded from 1988 as follows: "Community cooperation on civil defence".

Nature of expenditure and method of calculation:

- Creation of a permanent network of liaison officers from Member States and the Commission in the civil defence sector: token entry (various expenses on telecommunications equipment)
- Guide to Civil Defence: printing costs 30 000 ECU
- Simulation exercises (such as FLORAC 85):
Community contribution 300.000 ECU
- Training: organization of field courses 170 000 ECU

Financial impact on intervention appropriations:

500 000 ECU proposed for 1988 (item 694)

Staff and operation:

1 A - 1 B - 1 C (Staffing requirements will be examined in the context of internal redeployment or under the "rolling plan".)

Fiche d'impact de certains actes législatifs sur les PME et l'emploi

1. OBLIGATIONS ADMINISTRATIVES DECOULANT DE L'APPLICATION DE LA LEGISLATION POUR LES ENTREPRISES

2. AVANTAGES POUR L'ENTREPRISE

- ~~OUI~~/NON

- LESQUELLES

3. INCONVENIENTS POUR L'ENTREPRISE
(coût supplémentaires)

- ~~OUI~~/NON

- CONSEQUENCES

4. EFFETS SUR L'EMPLOI

5. Y A-T-IL EU CONCERTATION PREALABLE AVEC LES PARTENAIRES SOCIAUX ?

- ~~OUI~~/NON

- AVIS DES PARTENAIRES SOCIAUX

6. Y A-T-IL UNE APPROCHE ALTERNATIVE MOINS CONTRAIGNANTE ?

NON