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41. Reiterates that the mechanisms of multi-level governance and the partnership principle are key elements in the effectiveness of operational programmes and in high absorption capacity; calls on the Member States, in line with the principles of subsidiarity and of their institutional autonomy, to reinforce consistently the partnership and transparency principle while establishing and implementing the operational programmes, and to involve therefore the regional and local levels and civil society from the outset, in a binding, comprehensive and sustainable manner, in defining and designing investment priorities, in all phases of the establishment of operational programmes as well as in their implementation and evaluation phases;

42. Calls on the Commission to have a more open debate on the measures envisaged for accelerating the absorption of the Structural and Cohesion funds; suggests, in this regard, that the Committee of the Regions might be invited to give a yearly opinion on the absorption capacity in all the Member States;

43. Calls on the Commission to ensure that, while supporting the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy in all Member States, cohesion policy reduces disparities between regions and micro-regions, takes due account of the specific needs of the outermost regions and promotes harmonious development in the EU, including by bringing additional targeted instruments and measures to bear in areas which still fall far short of European standards;

44. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Member States.

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## **European disaster response: role of civil protection and humanitarian assistance**

P7\_TA(2011)0404

### **European Parliament resolution of 27 September 2011 on 'Towards a stronger European disaster response: the role of civil protection and humanitarian assistance' (2011/2023 INI)**

(2013/C 56 E/04)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Article 196 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which states that 'the Union shall encourage cooperation between Member States in order to improve the effectiveness of systems for preventing and protecting against natural or man-made disasters',
- having regard to Article 122 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (the solidarity clause), which lays down that 'the Union and the Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or victim of a natural or man-made disaster',
- having regard to Article 23 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the 1994 Oslo Guidelines, reviewed in 2001, on the use of foreign military and civil defence assets in disaster relief,
- having regard to the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, signed on 18 December 2007 by the Presidents of the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council of 26 October 2010 entitled 'Towards a stronger European disaster response: the role of civil protection and humanitarian assistance' (COM(2010)0600),

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- having regard to the Communication of the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council of 5 March 2008 on reinforcing the Union's disaster response capacity (COM(2008)0130),
  - having regard to the report by Michel Barnier entitled 'For a European civil protection force: Europe Aid', published in May 2006,
  - having regard to the Council conclusions of 14 December 2010 welcoming the objectives outlined in the Commission's Communication of 26 October 2010 aiming at a more predictable, effective, efficient, coherent and visible European response to disasters,
  - having regard to the Council conclusions of December 2007 inviting the Commission to make the best use of the Community Civil Protection Mechanism and to strengthen cooperation between Member States,
  - having regard to Council Decision 2007/162/EC, Euratom, of 5 March 2007 establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument <sup>(1)</sup> and Council Decision 2007/779/EC, Euratom, of 8 November 2007 establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism <sup>(2)</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolutions of 14 December 2010 on setting up an EU rapid response capability <sup>(3)</sup>, of 10 February 2010 on the recent earthquake in Haiti <sup>(4)</sup>, of 16 September 2009 on forest fires in the summer of 2009 <sup>(5)</sup>, of 19 June 2008 on stepping up the Union's disaster response capacity <sup>(6)</sup> and of 4 September 2007 on this summer's natural disasters <sup>(7)</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the opinions of the Committee on Development, the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Regional Development (A7-0283/2011),
- A. whereas the European Union and its Member States are faced with many risks, for example: earthquakes and tsunamis; fires, including forest fires; flooding and landslides; industrial and nuclear accidents; terrorist attacks; natural disasters and major pandemics; whereas there has been a dramatic increase in the number and severity of these natural and man-made disasters affecting the Union and its citizens, as well as other countries and regions around the world, as tragically demonstrated by the recent severe catastrophe in Japan, which was hit by a combination of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear catastrophe, with a corresponding increase in the loss of life and in economic, social and environmental damage and damage to cultural heritage, and whereas we cannot exclude the possibility of such outlier events of a non-predictable magnitude happening at any time, in which case the European disaster response would be extremely useful, as national capacities could be challenged to their limits,
- B. whereas situations of extreme drought and forest fires have increased in frequency and scale in Europe, which means that the relevant scientific research needs to be further developed, with a view to improving risk assessment mechanisms, systems of prevention and means of combating these phenomena,
- C. whereas the increasing rate of climate change and depletion of natural capital will further increase the likelihood of more frequent and more intense natural disasters,

<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> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2010)0465.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ C 341 E, 16.12.2010, p. 5.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ C 224 E, 19.8.2010, p. 1.

<sup>(6)</sup> OJ C 286 E, 27.11.2009, p. 15.

<sup>(7)</sup> OJ C 187 E, 24.7.2008, p. 55.

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- D. whereas in 2008, the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) acknowledged the link between disaster risk reduction and climate change in the Bali Action Plan,
- E. whereas in 2010, the UNFCCC Cancun Adaptation Framework formally recognised disaster risk reduction as an essential element of climate change adaptation and encouraged governments to consider linking adaptation measures to the Hyogo Framework for Action,
- F. whereas the recent tragedies, such as the Haiti earthquake and the Pakistan floods, have demonstrated that the main tools available to the EU for responding to disasters (humanitarian aid and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism) proved to be working well for what they were designed for and given the circumstances, but whereas there is a vital need to further reinforce the coordination of the response to disasters affecting the European Union, both within and outside its borders, as well as scope for improvement in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and visibility of the EU assistance as a whole,
- G. whereas, moreover, during a number of crises, particularly the tsunami of 26 December 2004, many questions were raised about the lack of systematic scenarios or protocols at European level for responding to the risks and the inadequate visibility of Europe's action in relation to the overall effort,
- H. whereas various arrangements involving pre-identified Member States' assets and EU-funded assets have been successfully tested in pilot schemes initiated by the European Parliament <sup>(1)</sup>,
- I. whereas the European Parliament has consistently called on the Commission to present legislative proposals on the creation of an EU Civil Protection Force, fully respecting the subsidiarity principle, and thus complementing Member States' efforts, in line with Article 196 TFEU,
- J. whereas the solidarity clause under Article 222 of the TFEU establishes the obligation for Member States to assist each other in the event of a natural or man-made disaster on EU territory,
- K. whereas immediate coordination, coherence and communication within the EU and with international actors is crucial; whereas the current European coordination on the ground of several teams with differing chains of command inevitably leads to duplicating efforts and overlaps and proves costly in terms of human resources, coordination and efficiency; and whereas, given the context of the economic and financial crisis, the European Union must develop a protection system based on the sharing and rationalisation of existing resources without any increase in overall expenditure,
- L. whereas, in the wake of the recent disaster in Japan, the Japanese government asked the EU to form a single compact civil protection team, coordinated by the Commission, for the distribution of aid, rather than sending several civil protection teams from different Member States at different times; whereas stepping up operational coordination during that disaster made it possible to improve EU assistance as a whole in terms of cost-effectiveness, coherence and visibility,

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<sup>(1)</sup> Notably the pilot project to step up cooperation between Member States on combating forest fires (2008) and the preparatory action on an EU rapid response capability (2008-2010).

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- M. whereas political coherence must be ensured at EU level in view of the respective institutional roles without hindering or slowing down disaster response operations, and whereas this should be built on existing mechanisms without creating new structures,
  - N. whereas a culture of disaster prevention and preparedness should be mainstreamed in development policies, plans and programmes, in order to address some of the underlying causes of disasters,
  - O. whereas real-time prevention needs to be developed at all operational stages: monitoring, including through use of satellite data; issuing earlywarnings; sounding the alarm and subsequently responding and assisting the population potentially at risk,
  - P. whereas the EU supports the central role of the United Nations, in particular that of the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in coordinating international relief in third countries
  - Q. whereas an integrated European all-hazards approach, aimed at responding to crises at all stages of their life cycles, is the most effective strategy to deal with disasters; whereas this approach should link disaster prevention (including mitigation and risk reduction), preparedness, response and recovery, within the broad context of sustainable development; whereas it is of great importance to put in place operational tools such as an operational risk prevention plan (including reference procedures and planning tools); whereas there is a need for the EU to make real investments in the prevention and prediction of risks and whereas the EU should pursue an equally ambitious approach with regard to disaster prevention and preparedness as well as response,
  - R. whereas the Regulation establishing the Solidarity Fund contains prior conditions which hinder and delay the Fund's use in certain disaster situations, particularly in relation to the amounts and types of eligible expenditure, as well as the inflexibility of the deadlines and procedures,
  - S. whereas, during a crisis, it is essential for rescue teams to have access to precise information as soon as possible so as to distribute basic necessities, equipment and critical resources, and whereas telecommunications are therefore the most important link in the crisis management chain,
  - T. whereas conventional communications links and resources may be overwhelmed or destroyed in a crisis situation,
  - U. whereas the usefulness of the European Space Policy and the positive results achieved by the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security programme (GMES) launched by the Commission to use satellite data and information, and its practical application in the civil protection sector and also through the Emergency Response Core Service, has already been recognised by the Commission and the Member States,
1. Welcomes the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council entitled 'Towards a stronger European disaster response: the role of civil protection and humanitarian assistance' and its objectives; emphasises that the proposals outlined in the Communication should be further examined to fulfil the expectations for an enhanced, coordinated, consistent, effective, cost-efficient and visible cohesive and comprehensive European response;

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2. Underlines the need to rationalise and simplify the functioning of current European disaster response and to optimise the resources available for common benefit, whilst encouraging all Member States to contribute and thus guarantee European solidarity; considers, accordingly, that the EU's reaction capacity should form part of an integrated multi-risk approach; moreover, it should carry out 'bottom-up' delegated resources and information management; in other words, the initiative could come from the Member States, which would provide voluntary resources and expertise;
3. Invites the Commission, when setting up the European disaster response capability, to take into account the Solidarity Clause and its implementation arrangements, which need to be adopted as a matter of urgency and which will ensure a more effective and coherent response to disasters inside and outside the European Union;
4. Reiterates the need for the Solidarity Fund Regulation to be revised so as to adapt the eligibility criteria to the characteristics of each region and each disaster, including slowly-evolving disasters such as drought, and enable mobilisation to be more flexible and timely;
5. Reasserts that disaster preparation, prevention and response cannot be dissociated from each other and that it would therefore be advisable to consolidate an integrated approach to tackling catastrophes;
6. Endorses the need for a qualitative shift from the current ad hoc coordination to a predictable and pre-planned system within the EU Civil Protection Mechanism based on pre-identified assets available for immediate deployment in EU disaster relief operations and on any other means and resources which Member States may consider appropriate for deployment; stresses the need to introduce a system for monitoring, supervising and developing EU action in disaster relief operations;
7. Calls on the Commission to bring forward proposals as soon as possible for establishing, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity, an EU civil protection force, based on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and enabling the Union to bring together the resources necessary for providing civil protection and immediate emergency relief aid to the victims; believes that the EU response should build on the existing roles and capacities of European civil protection forces and ensure that current gaps and bottlenecks are addressed;
8. Agrees that the European disaster response should build both on a European emergency response capacity through the strengthening of the European Civil Protection Mechanism based on the capacities and availability of pre-identified and therefore predictable Member States' emergency assets and on a European emergency response centre as the cornerstones of such a strategy, as outlined in the Communication of 26 October 2010; underlines that these developments should follow an all-hazards approach, bringing together all relevant players – in particular civil society – including non-governmental organisations and volunteers, for joined-up action, and should exploit synergies among the various existing tools and instruments;
9. Considers that the all-hazards approach should go hand in hand with greater flexibility in reacting to the different categories of risk, which need to be considered on a case-by-case basis; this in turn calls for the development of a decentralised capacity for analysis and the planning of measures required in the light of the nature, probability and seriousness of the risks;
10. In addition, calls for the EU's disaster reaction capacity to make use of Europe's outermost regions and overseas territories, which can form bases for facilitating logistics operations and, for pre-positioning of the EU's resources in every ocean;

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11. Calls on the Commission to draw up and forward to Parliament a list of Community instruments funding disaster prevention activities, with a view to evaluating the possibility of incorporating disaster prevention programmes to a greater extent in existing EU funding programmes, as requested by the Council in its draft conclusions on a Community framework on disaster prevention within the EU (document No 15394/09 of 12 November 2009);

12. Emphasises that the European disaster response system should respect the principle of subsidiarity both of the Member States (who should be able to use their own assets, especially in any case of conflicting national needs) and of the United Nations, i.e. that it should respect the national, regional and local competences of each Member State on the one hand – taking into account the crucial role those authorities play in the disaster-management cycle, particularly as in many Member States legislative power is exercised at a local or regional level – and the coordinating role played by the United Nations in disaster relief operations when acting outside the EU on the other; points out that this strategy should be complementary to that of the UN, which sees clear value added in creating a European pole with a response capability;

13. Points out that the cross-border nature of disasters implies that the EU should coordinate its resources and work with third countries, not least in its neighbourhood where Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) countries are concerned;

14. Supports the Commission's proposal to establish a European emergency response capacity, including arrangements to guarantee the more predictable availability of Member States' key assets, inter alia by setting up a pool of pre-identified assets, available within pre-agreed response times, to be deployed under a voluntary commitment by Member States to make those assets available on a voluntary basis for European disaster relief interventions both inside and outside the Union at national, regional and local level; takes the view that, in this way, and by assisting people affected by natural disasters such as major fires, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes and tidal waves, and also by accidents at sea, oil spills or nuclear risks, the European added value of EU interventions will be considerably enhanced;

15. Points out that certain areas, such as coastal, insular and mountainous areas, are extremely vulnerable on account of their geography, and calls for special attention to be paid to these areas;

16. Notes that the European regions situated on the EU's borders may be affected by disasters occurring in regions which are part of third countries, in which case intervention is even more difficult; proposes that specific measures be developed to support these regions and that special attention be paid to disasters caused by people or industrial accidents, which require different strategies;

17. Believes that particular attention should be paid to fires, for which targeted strategies and actions are needed;

18. Affirms the need to adhere to the 'polluter pays' principle as regards liability for environmental damage and the recovery of costs related to disaster response from private entities responsible for damage;

#### ***European Emergency Response Capacity***

19. Considers that the pool of pre-identified capacities, resources and assets made available on a voluntary basis for EU disaster relief interventions, both inside and outside the Union, will constitute the nucleus of the EU relief capability, which could be complemented by additional ad hoc offers from the Member States; recommends that a clear and detailed scheme of incentives should be designed in order to permit Member States to commit sufficient capacities to the voluntary pool without increasing the overall spending of the Member States;

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20. Asks for the creation, within the future EU Civil Protection Force, of specific mechanisms which will enable the EU to deal with instances of large-scale pollution caused by offshore oil and gas installations;
21. Recalls the central role of the United Nations in coordinating the disaster response efforts of the international community;
22. Underlines that a stronger EU disaster response capacity will provide a coherent EU contribution to the overall UN-led relief effort and coordination role;
23. Affirms that EU-funded assets managed by Member States should further supplement the Member States' assets available for relief operations; notes that these should build on models developed through preparatory actions which have been successfully tested in recent emergencies both inside and outside Europe, such as the multinational flood response unit for the Baltic countries and the supplementary tactical reserve for aerial fire-fighting;
24. Calls on the Commission, along with the Member States, to identify existing capacity gaps. The creation of EU-level assets should be considered, avoiding any form of competition and/or overlap with national assets, in order to fill existing capacity gaps where they would result in significant savings for the EU as a whole or enable access to assets that are not available for Member States acting alone, thus offering a good model for burden-sharing;
25. Considers that it is also important to identify shortcomings in resources and to clarify precisely how the EU could contribute to Member States' efforts to improve their preparedness; takes the view that more effective utilisation of existing resources will prevent the creation of additional financial and administrative red tape, especially in the context of regional and local administration;
26. Calls on the Commission to aim at EU involvement in terms of the provision of resources, capacities and coordination in connection with disasters which take place in the EU and directly affect its citizens;
27. Takes the view that the main focus should be on making full and timely use of the financial resources available, as well as on simplifying all the administrative procedures involved in mobilising those resources; considers that steps must also be taken to ensure that emergency humanitarian assistance reaches people affected by disasters without delay;
28. Considers advanced planning and the preparation of operations by developing reference scenarios and mapping Member States' assets potentially available for deployment in EU disaster relief operations and contingency planning as key elements of an enhanced EU disaster response and essential for rapid deployment and immediate appropriate response to each emergency; calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement these measures immediately and without prejudice to other actions; calls, finally, on the Commission to launch a feasibility study on the merits of setting up, allocating European research budget funding to, and naming European reference laboratories to combat bioterrorism and identify victims;
29. Calls in particular for adequate planning for specific contingencies to respond to man-made disasters related to oil spills, nuclear installations or involving hazardous substances both on land and at sea;

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**European Emergency Response Centre**

30. Welcomes the Commission's decision to merge the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) and ECHO humanitarian aid crisis room to create a genuine 24/7 Emergency Response Centre as a planning and operational coordination platform as a step in the right direction and calls for this also to be implemented in real-time cooperation by the Member States, in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, in the areas of monitoring, issuing early-warnings and sounding the alarm; calls on the Commission to strengthen the Centre to enable it to serve as the central hub for prompt and effective coordination of all European in-kind assistance as well as financial humanitarian aid contributions; stipulates that it should function as the single entry point for requests for assistance related to all types of natural and man-made disasters in order to allow a coherent EU response;

31. Calls for an effective merging of the ECHO crisis room and the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC), whilst ensuring adequate funding;

32. Calls on the Commission to actively involve the new European Emergency Response Centre in the two Community tools to protect forests from forest fires: EFFIS and EFFICS;

33. Calls on the Commission to coordinate actions in case of emergency, simplifying and optimising the existing universal service and the 112 emergency number;

34. Insists that decisions on deploying assets from the pool of assets be made quickly by the Emergency Response Centre along with Member States, in order to ensure predictable, immediate and effective assistance to victims and avoid delays, duplications and overlaps;

35. Believes that a list of the key assets that could be made available by Member States for the EU emergency response to these scenarios should be identified and mapped;

36. Calls for clarity and coherence of EU action in view of the respective institutional roles of the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service (EEAS) which should be mindful of their respective powers and respect the limits of each others' mandates; calls therefore on the Commission and the EEAS to develop appropriate working arrangements and transparent rules with a view to ensuring, where possible, close cooperation and coordination of issues pertaining to EU disaster response, building on existing mechanisms without slowing down relief operations; underlines the need for flexible, simple and rapid inter-service coordination involving only the relevant services, which should respond within a very short timeframe whilst avoiding red tape; emphasises that EU humanitarian aid should be provided irrespective of all political considerations, while adhering to internationally agreed humanitarian principles;

37. Emphasises the increased risk of disasters caused by forest fires, primarily because of climate change, which is instrumental in the outbreak of large forest fires; calls on the Commission to set up a special unit within its new European Emergency Response Centre to deal with this risk;

38. Emphasises that, as a last resort and in compliance with the Oslo Guidelines, the use of military means under civilian oversight often constitutes an important contribution to disaster response, particularly for specialised assets, strategic lifting or heavy engineering; stresses that coordination of the use of all the capabilities available – civil and military – and Member States' crisis management assets should be enhanced in order to avoid costly duplications;

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**Logistics and transport and telecommunications**

39. Recognises that the use of military assets – transport, logistics, security – to support humanitarian operations may provide key back-up, particularly in the case of large-scale natural disasters; reiterates that these military assets should be used in very specific circumstances and as a last resort, in accordance with United Nations recommendations;

40. Calls for shared, effective logistics arrangements, notably including the EU-funded all-purpose technical assistance and support teams (TAST) that could support any EU or Member States' officials and teams on the ground, notably in cases of collapsed local infrastructure;

41. Calls for technical assistance and support teams to be mobilised in the event of disasters and for recommendations to be made on the way in which those teams can provide more effective support to those affected by disasters;

42. Proposes, with a view to maximising efficiency and the proper use of existing capacity, that thought be given to pooling the consular resources of the Member States in order to improve the speed and quality of our global response by making optimum use of the resources already available; recommends in this respect that an assessment be made of the different Member States' consular capacities in order to take stock of the European Union's current worldwide resources;

43. Asks that the existing relief systems coordinated by the United Nations be taken into account, whilst calling for improved, strengthened, more cost-effective and well-coordinated transport for all in-kind assistance to disaster sites, in particular through streamlined simplified procedures, an increased co-financing rate and the introduction of new ways of allowing access to additional transport capacities, possibly through framework contracts;

44. Recalls the existing monitoring and prevention tools (especially in-situ observation devices) such as those provided by the European Union's Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) programme or the INSPIRE and GALILEO programmes which could monitor areas potentially at risk and thus prepare more effectively for providing disaster relief to the victims; calls on the Commission to explore the possibility of equipping the EU with a dedicated and secure telecommunications capacity and integrated crisis management solutions ranging from prevention to recovery; calls on the Commission to make optimum use of the existing and future solutions and capacity provided by telecommunications satellites in order to facilitate the development of services for citizens in the fields of public security and emergency response, in collaboration with the European Space Agency, Member States and stakeholders (private operators, industry);

45. Calls on the Commission to develop a communication and information network, exploring in particular the use of telecommunications capacity, including satellites, in order to give rescue teams access to rapid and detailed information to facilitate the effective distribution of basic necessities and of equipment essential for social reorganisation in the wake of disasters;

**Communication, Visibility, Training, Research**

46. Calls for a comprehensive communications strategy, involving all EU institutions, Member States, social partners and civil society that will improve the overall visibility and transparency of European actions in beneficiary countries as well as among European citizens, while ensuring that disaster relief is never subordinate to trading or political and strategic concerns; considers that this strategy should seek to simplify and standardise communication methods and tools; proposes to this end the establishment, for example, of a standard dress code and logo in conjunction with national badges for all European staff and the appointment of a single spokesperson responsible for communications concerned with emergency response; calls for any communications strategy to ensure a clear distinction between humanitarian assistance and military activities;

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47. Emphasises that information is another vital component of an effective disaster prevention and response policy at all levels and that the changing risk scenario requires a continuous updating of knowledge, solid and comparable data on the frequency of occurrence, risks and the associated consequences of disasters and related analytical tools; therefore calls for coordinated action, greater availability and systematic dissemination of technical and scientific information and expertise and the sharing of best practices, including studies and putting into practice lessons learnt, such as the experience gained through projects implemented in the past under the Community's INTERREG initiative;

48. Highlights the need to raise awareness of the procedures to be adopted when faced with disaster situations, paying particular attention to training young people, from school age on; calls on the Commission to foster, with the involvement of schools and specific voluntary associations, the culture of planning, prevention and resilience which is a prerequisite for optimising civil protection work;

49. Points to the key role of regional and local authorities, which are in the front line when disasters – above all, cross-border disasters – occur, and whose involvement can raise the EU's visibility among its citizens; therefore calls on the Commission to ensure that the Member States involve their regional and local authorities in disaster response from an early stage, building on the multi-level governance model applied in the area of cohesion policy, through a win-win communication strategy for all the actors involved in the response mechanism;

50. Calls on the Commission and Member States to develop a clear information and prevention system for all European citizens when they travel, both within the EU and outside the Member States; proposes, to this end, that European passports bear the 112 emergency number with clear indications of its EU-wide accessibility, so that it may be used by travellers within the EU, as well as a reference to Article 23 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which lays down that 'every citizen of the Union shall, in the territory of a third country in which the Member State of which he is a national is not represented, be entitled to protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities of any Member State (...)', which can be used by travellers to non-Member States;

51. Calls for efforts to communicate the pan-European emergency call number '112' more effectively to European citizens and third-country nationals in the EU, particularly by making use of written and audio-visual media and public notices, so that all citizens can use it automatically to report any disaster that occurs in the territory of the EU;

52. Considers that the dedicated training of European staff and experts in disaster response would make it possible, through 'common core' training and specialised modules, to develop awareness of common European working methods and response procedures; in this framework, recommends joint disaster response exercises between civil and military logistic units;

### ***Disaster Response, preparedness and prevention***

53. Notes that preventing disasters is often more cost-effective than combating them; therefore, stresses the vital need to complement the policy for enhancing the EU's emergency reaction capacity by stepping up the EU's and Member States' risk prediction and prevention policies and encourages the Commission to prepare a comprehensive and innovative EU strategy on disaster risk reduction; calls for sufficient resources to be dedicated to early identification of possible disasters and asks the Commission to ensure that the revision of the Structural Funds and the Solidarity Fund are used to encourage the development of policies and investments in these areas; furthermore, calls for improved education on disaster prevention, investment in the prevention of disasters and climate change, appropriate legislation on water management and efficient

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risk management and for close monitoring of the implementation of the Floods Directive at regional and local level; points out, in this context, that regional and local authorities play a key role in disaster prevention by implementing risk prevention strategies at territorial level, including joint interventions involving teams from different countries;

54. Reiterates its position that, in view of the interconnections between drought, forest fires and desertification, the Commission should present a proposal, similar to the Floods Directive, to promote the adoption of an EU policy on water scarcity, drought and adaptation to climate change; also reiterates, in this context, the importance of establishing the European Drought Observatory, which would be responsible for studying, mitigating and monitoring the effects of drought;

55. Reiterates, likewise, its call for the Commission to adopt a directive on preventing and managing fires, which should include the regular collection of data, preparation of maps and identification of areas at risk, preparation of fire risk management plans, identification by the Member States of the resources allocated and facilities available, coordination of the various administrations, minimum requirements for training crews and establishment of environmental responsibility and the corresponding penalties;

56. Considers that further exploitation of the opportunities offered in the context of the European Territorial Objective is of crucial importance; believes, in this connection, that the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) can constitute an important instrument for further strengthening transnational, cross-border and interregional cooperation, even with countries which are not EU Member States; sees the development of interregional cooperation across national borders as evidence of the particularly important contribution made by the regions to rapid assistance for the purposes of civil protection; considers that this fruitful cooperation extends, inter alia, to the shared aim of mapping risks and assessing potential threats, and that it is here that the EU can make a valuable and visible contribution to even more effective and efficient cooperation, above all by improving coordination;

57. Points out that, in the European Year of Volunteering, it would be symbolic and worthwhile to support those countries which seek to promote such activities and organisations;

58. Invites the Commission to bring forward ambitious legislative proposals to that effect as quickly as possible but not later than by the end of 2011;

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59. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

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## Tourism in Europe

P7\_TA(2011)0407

**European Parliament resolution of 27 September 2011 on Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe (2010/2206(INI))**

(2013/C 56 E/05)

*The European Parliament,*

— having regard to the Commission Communication entitled 'Basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism' (COM(2003)0716),