



Background paper to Item 5: Progress on preventing and managing disaster risk in Europe

1. Background

Across the European continent, civil protection authorities are increasingly faced to address the challenge of a sharp increase in severe weather events. Annual costs for wildfires in the EU are estimated to amount to an average of approximately € 2 billion with annual costs of river floodings in Europe exceeding more than € 5 billion every year on average. As an example of this, last year, on 6 August 2023, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) was activated for the first time within the same day for both flood and wildfire disasters within the EU, when flooding affected two thirds of Slovenia and wildfires raged in Cyprus. In addition to these impacts, newly emerging security risks are being identified in an increasing number of national risk assessments.

Against this background, it becomes paramount to further upscale preparedness and response arrangements under the UCPM. However, this alone will not be enough. To better adapt to climate change impacts and Europe's new security risk landscape, we need more and better prevention investments - and once more within an all-hazard approach. Europe's disaster risk landscape is getting more complex. Consequently, disaster risk management also needs to reflect this complexity and potential interactions between different risks. Furthermore, civil protection needs to increasingly reach out to other policy areas and better mainstream disaster risk management into funding instruments of other policy areas. In this context, DG ECHO also welcomes the Belgian Presidency's survey among Member States gathering views on how to strengthen the cross-sectoral approach to risk assessments.

2. Cross-sectoral disaster risk management

On 12 March 2024, the Commission adopted the first progress report¹ on preventing and managing disaster risk in Europe under the UCPM legislative framework (article 6 of Decision 1313/2013/EU), alongside a supporting Commission staff working document². This report was adopted together with the Communication "Managing climate risk - protecting people and prosperity"³, which sets out how the EU can effectively get ahead of the growing climate-related risks and build greater resilience to the impacts of climate change in response to the first ever EU Climate Risk Assessment⁴.

¹ COM(2024)130 - [EUR-Lex - 52024DC0130 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

² SWD(2024)130 - [swd_preventing_and_managing_disaster_risks_in_europe.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

³ COM(2024)91 - [EUR-Lex - 52024DC0091 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴ [European Climate Risk Assessment — European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](#)

The progress report provides an analysis of national reports on disaster risk management from a comparative European perspective and takes stock of the state of play on implementation of related UCPM instruments, such as Peer Reviews and the Union disaster resilience goals. Based on this analysis, it proposes recommendations for future actions by the Commission alongside Member and Participating States, among others to better reflect the cross sectoral aspects of risk as well as the identification of new risk categories and emerging threats, such as in the area of security. This agenda point will therefore build on the exchange on mainstreaming disaster prevention during the informal Directors-General meeting under the Spanish Council Presidency and will present key recommendations from the recent prevention progress report. This should facilitate an exchange on how to further improve disaster risk management under the UCPM as well as in other policy sectors increasingly affected by disaster impacts.

Directors-General are invited to discuss the following questions:

1. How can the UCPM support national civil protection authorities to bring together risk information from different actors and sectors for a better integrated cross-sectoral disaster risk assessment?
2. To what extent are newly emerging security threats already included in most recent national analysis and assessments?
3. In view of Europe's new risk landscape, how can risk awareness with the population be further improved and particularly bring the needs of vulnerable people more systematically into risk management and communication?