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Third EU Emergency and Crisis Coordination Arrangements Exercise (CCAEX08)

A third exercise to test the functioning of the EU's Emergency and Crisis Coordination Arrangements in Brussels (CCA) was conducted successfully on Tuesday 23 September 2008¹.

The main aim of the exercise, conducted by the Presidency, with the support of the Council Secretariat and the Commission, was to verify the ability of the arrangements to respond quickly and efficiently to a major crisis at EU level and the capacity of the Council Secretariat and the Commission to support effectively Member States' crisis response efforts. The results confirmed that the arrangements work well, and the lessons learned will allow them to be improved further.

The exercise was based on a totally fictitious scenario. It assumed a major natural disaster, a twin storm affecting a large number of Member States and causing damage to private and public infrastructures, disruption of transport and communication lines, power cuts and environmental consequences. It focused on the key political issues requiring political coordination at EU level.

The theme chosen this year reflects the fact that EU response to climate change is one of the French presidency's priorities.

¹ The exercise was conducted from 22 to 24 September, with an active phase on 23 September.

Background

On 1 June 2006, the Council (Justice and Home Affairs) approved Crisis Coordination Arrangements in Brussels (CCA). The arrangements are part of the EU's crisis management mechanisms.

The CCA provides Member States' Permanent Representatives in Brussels with a platform for exchanging information and coordinating action, in the context of an emergency or crisis whose nature is deemed to be sufficiently serious (e.g. simultaneously affecting several Member States and the interests of the Union as a whole) to require an exceptional response at EU level.

The arrangements are triggered in the framework of the Council by the Member State holding the Presidency, assisted by the Council Secretariat and the Commission, in consultation with the directly affected Member States.

In setting up these arrangements, the Council invited the Council Secretariat, in full collaboration with the European Commission, to hold regular exercises to test the adequacy and efficiency of the CCA internal procedures.

This year's exercise scenario involved recourse to a range of EU instruments such as the Civil Protection Mechanism, humanitarian aid, the Instrument for Stability and the European Solidarity Fund.

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