



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on Host Nation Support¹

*3051st JUSTICE and HOME AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 2 and 3 December 2010*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. Recalling that Member States facing emergencies that overwhelm their national response capability can, at any time, request the activation of the Community Civil Protection Mechanism² (hereinafter referred to as the "the Mechanism") to pool immediate civil protection and medical assistance available in Member States;
2. Recognising that the facilitation of receiving assistance in the European Union is essential for improving the effectiveness of the Mechanism and thereby overall solidarity, and therefore acknowledging the importance of Host Nation Support in national and EU disaster management prior to, during and after emergencies which call for an activation of the Mechanism;
3. Recalling that the primary responsibility for preparedness for disasters occurring on their territory lies with the Member States and acknowledging that emergency planning, mainly in the preparedness phase, should be based on a comprehensive risk analysis;

¹ Considering the following working definition for the purpose of these Council conclusions :
"Host Nation Support" implies all actions undertaken in the preparedness phase and the disaster response management by a Participating State in the Civil Protection Mechanism (PS) receiving or sending assistance, or the Commission, in order to remove as much as possible any foreseeable obstacle to international assistance so as to ensure that disaster response operations proceed smoothly.

It also includes the support that Participating States can provide to facilitate international assistance transiting their territory by land, sea, or air.

² Council Decision of 8 November 2007 establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism (recast), OJ L 314, 1.12.2007, p. 9.

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4. Recognising that the following requirements and their procedural and practical implementation may constitute a barrier to the timely and efficient flow of emergency assistance within the European Union and from third countries:
 - legal and administrative requirements (e.g. recognition of professional qualifications, authorisation to perform medical acts, regulations at border crossing);
 - issues of liability;
 - logistical difficulties related to transportation or storage of in-kind assistance;
5. Recalling the Commission Decision of 29 December 2003 laying down rules for the implementation of Council Decision 2001/792/EC, Euratom establishing a Community mechanism to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions³, Article 35 of which states that while, if not agreed otherwise, the State requesting assistance shall bear the costs of assistance provided by the Participating States, the Participating State providing assistance may offer its assistance entirely or partially free of charge and may also waive all or part of the reimbursement of its costs at any time;
6. Considering the need for **clarity on the conditions (including costs) of offers and acceptance of international assistance at an early stage of the process;**
7. Acknowledging the importance of the work already carried out in this respect by Member States, at EU level and by relevant international organisations and underlining that further initiatives designed to improve Member States' capabilities to receive and organise assistance should take this work into account;
8. Having regard to the Council Decision of 8 November 2007 establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism (Recast);
9. Having regard to the Council Decision of 5 March 2007 establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument⁴;
10. Having regard to the Resolution of the Council and of representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 8 July 1991 on improving mutual aid between Member States in the event of natural or technological disaster⁵;
11. Taking note of the outcome of the Presidency's Seminar on Host Nation Support, held in Florival, Belgium, on 15 - 17 September 2010;

³ OJ L 87, 25.3.2004, p. 20.

⁴ OJ L 71, 10.3.2007, p. 9.

⁵ OJ C 198, 27.7.1991, p. 1.

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- 12.** Calls on the Member States and the Commission to step up structured work in the field of Host Nation Support;
- 13.** Invites the Member States to:
 - a)** integrate relevant aspects of Host Nation Support into their emergency planning, mainly in the preparedness phase, at the national, regional or local level and in particular :
 - identify relevant legal issues that may constitute obstacles to the overall objective of facilitating the provision of international assistance and, if appropriate, modify their legislation with a view to facilitating the provision of assistance; in particular, consider legal exemptions from certain requirements against the overall objective of facilitating the provision of international assistance during emergencies or the imminent threat thereof;
 - assess whether appropriate procedures are in place for the financial management of offering and accepting international assistance in emergency situations;
 - integrate information on the Mechanism into national disaster management training as a means of raising awareness of how the Mechanism functions;
 - b)** make the necessary arrangements in the existing organizational structure in order to either receive assistance or facilitate the transit of assistance, having regard to the resources and infrastructure needed at local level to achieve this objective, and in particular:
 - investigate whether their existing operational structures anticipate in an appropriate manner the possible co-ordination of incoming assistance at local, regional or national level and address any gaps that may be identified;
 - establish where appropriate within their disaster management system a dedicated organisational structure for Host Nation Support as a link between the affected Member State and the incoming assistance, both prior to, during and after an emergency and during the transit of assistance through the country;
 - pre-identify liaison officers able to facilitate appropriate support for incoming assistance and ensure that this assistance is made available on the site of the disaster;
 - c)** actively participate in the work organised by the Commission with a view to the establishment of guidelines on Host Nation Support;

14. Invites the Commission to:

- a) develop, before the end of 2011, in cooperation with the Member States, guidelines on Host Nation Support, including a checklist on coordination of incoming assistance and a glossary of common terminology, and identify appropriate measures to support the Member States in **applying** these guidelines and sharing best practices;
- b) assess whether emergency operations are sufficiently taken into account in the relevant existing EU legislation (e.g. internal market, recognition of professional qualifications) and consider legal exemptions from certain requirements against the overall objective of facilitating the provision of international assistance during emergencies or the imminent threat thereof;
- c) include all relevant aspects of Host Nation Support in training, exercises and lessons-learned programmes and studies within the framework of the Mechanism;
- d) facilitate the exchange of information concerning the conditions of the provision of assistance within the Mechanism between the affected State and the State providing assistance, before, during and after an emergency;
- e) consider whether the use of agreed standards and certificates regarding the quality of assistance and personnel offered could facilitate overcoming existing legal issues/barriers and step up work on Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) for modules so as to improve the overall Host Nation Support;
- f) continue its efforts in facilitating the expeditious transit of incoming assistance, in close cooperation with the Member States concerned;

15. Invites the Commission to:

- explore the need to address the concept of Host Nation Support in future proposals;
- report to the Council every two years, and for the first time before the end of 2011, on progress made in the field of Host Nation Support."
