EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 8.2.2023
COM(2023) 61 final

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

European Union Disaster Resilience Goals: Acting together to deal with future emergencies

I. The European Union in a changing risk landscape: preparing for the unknown

The EU is confronted by multiple, simultaneous challenges and threats, some of which would have been considered unthinkable until very recently. It needs to anticipate these challenges and be better prepared. Russia's **war of aggression against Ukraine** has rocked the continent and shows our responsibility to strengthen civilian emergency preparedness for multiple threats, both man-made and natural, in the increasingly unsettled global security context. Nuclear risk, disruption of energy, transport and food supplies, interruption of medical treatment, destruction of health infrastructure and mass population movements within Europe highlight the importance of maintaining the essential services that underpin our society.

While a war is raging on our Eastern border, the EU continues to deal with the consequences of the **COVID-19 pandemic**. Pandemics featured among the top identified risks in the national risk assessments of several European countries prior to the emergence of COVID-19. Yet, risk identification had not translated into specific emergency planning and disaster prevention efforts that could have better protected our citizens. Based on this lesson learned, the Union strengthened its health security framework, notably through the EU Health Union.

While we are dealing with these crises, the heavy impact of **climate change** is increasingly apparent in our daily lives and further exacerbates Europe's vulnerability to crises[1]. Temperatures in Europe have increased by more than twice the global average over the past 30 years – the highest of any continent in the world[2]. This warming trend has serious consequences. In 2022, **drought** affected nearly two thirds of the EU territory[3], which reduced river flows, water reservoirs and ground water, impacting health, energy, water supplies, transport and agricultural production. **Heatwaves** pose a serious risk to life and human health. Repeated prolonged periods of drought are increasing the geographical scope, frequency and intensity of **wildfires** across the entire EU. The 2022 fire season was the second worst in the EU and recorded a 250% increase over the average burnt area in the past 15 years[4]. The devastating **floods** that hit several European countries in July 2021 are an equally stark reminder that extreme weather events claim lives, damage homes and cause significant economic losses. **Environmental degradation** caused by pollution, deforestation, and other human activities increases ecosystems' vulnerability and amplifies the impacts of climate change. Over half of the EU Member States consider **earthquakes** to be a main risk. Extreme weather aggravates the seismic vulnerability of Europe's ageing infrastructure, including transport infrastructure, hospitals, fire stations, and energy production and distribution facilities.

In the aftermath of a disaster, **civil protection**[5] is the lifeline for affected populations. Through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism ('Union Mechanism')[6] the EU has been stepping up its emergency readiness at all levels. When a crisis overwhelms the capacity of a

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[1] The State of the Climate in Europe report, World Meteorological Organization 2022.
[2] European Environmental Agency, *Global and European temperatures,* 2022,
https://www.eea.europa.eu/ims/global-and-european-temperatures
[3] JRC, *Drought in Europe August 2022*, https://edo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/news/GDO-EDODroughtNews202208_Europe.pdf
[4] Since satellite-based EU-level recording of fires started in 2006.
[5] Civil protection consists of emergency assistance provided under the auspices of government authorities in preparation for, or immediate aftermath of, a disaster in Europe and worldwide.
[6] The 27 Member States and 8 third countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, and Türkiye) are part of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. In 2022, Ukraine and Moldova formally requested to become Participating States of the Union Mechanism.

single country, the Union Mechanism provides the operational backbone for Europe's collective response both within the Union (including the EU outermost regions), and outside the Union. Between 2020 and 2022, the Union Mechanism was activated over 320[7] times, including more than 100 times by the Member States. This is five times more than the average of the previous 10 years.

In the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the Union Mechanism has provided life-saving assistance with the largest and most complex EU civil protection operation since its establishment. It has delivered over 80,000 tonnes of in-kind assistance to Ukraine and its neighbouring countries, worth some EUR 500 million.

Delivery of rescEU power generators to Ukraine
© Departamentul pentru Situații de Urgență, 2022

At the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union Mechanism established the first strategic rescEU[8] stockpile of medical countermeasures which contributed to saving thousands of lives across Europe. It facilitated the repatriation of over 100,000 EU citizens stranded abroad during the pandemic and the distribution of 40 million vaccine doses to 49 countries worldwide in line with the EU Vaccine strategy.

The Union Mechanism channelled collective European solidarity that enabled a strong response to massive wildfires during the summer of 2022: airplanes and helicopters were mobilised for 38 EU firefighting operations, in addition to nearly 400 firefighters and 100 vehicles deployed under the EU flag to save lives and prevent European forests from burning.

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[7] While the activation from Ukraine in 2022 related to the war was counted only once, this includes more than 120 updated requests for assistance.
[8] European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, *rescEU Factsheet*, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/resceu_en

For over two decades the Union Mechanism has also supported and complemented Member States' efforts for disaster prevention and preparedness. In the face of the evolving risk landscape, such efforts have to be reinforced. Effective prevention and preparedness need to be based on forward-looking scenarios that reach beyond the civil protection system, across different socio-economic sectors and include our cultural heritage. The complexity and interdependency of risks the EU faces shows the importance of identifying vulnerabilities in critical sectors, anticipating hazards and threats and reinforcing collective action to **better prevent and prepare for disasters**.

II.   Five disaster resilience goals to strengthen the EU overall resilience

The convergence of multiple, simultaneous risks that ripple across national borders calls for a **change of mindset at all levels.** National disaster risk identification and planning quickly reaches its limits when threats, vulnerabilities and interdependencies are cross-border and Europe-wide. While acknowledging sector-specific measures, prevention and preparedness need to adapt accordingly and become multisector, multi-layered and pan-European.

Therefore, as required by the legal framework establishing the Union Mechanism[9], the EU and the Member States have collectively identified five **disaster resilience goals** which address the areas where the need to strengthen Europe's resilience to disasters and crises is the greatest. Such goals are a common baseline to support prevention and preparedness actions for disasters capable of causing multi-country transboundary effects. They are set out in a Commission **recommendation**[10] accompanying this Communication. Each with specific objectives, the goals set a common agenda to strengthen the EU's collective capacity to withstand the impacts of future disasters, and to protect citizens, livelihoods and the environment.

The five goals are as follows:
1. *Anticipate* - Improving risk assessment, anticipation and disaster risk management planning;
2. *Prepare* - Increasing risk awareness and preparedness of the population;
3. *Alert* - Enhancing early warning;
4. *Respond* - Enhancing the Union Civil Protection Mechanism response capacity;
5. *Secure* - Ensuring a robust civil protection system.

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[9] Article 6(5) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU.
[10] Commission Recommendation on European Union disaster resilience goals, C(2023) 400.

Figure 1: The goals strengthen the disaster prevention-preparedness-response cycle

Anticipate

Improving risk assessment, anticipation and disaster risk management planning

Secure

Ensuring a robust civil protection system

Prepare

Increasing risk awareness and preparedness of the population

Respond

Enhancing the Union Civil Protection Mechanism response capacity

Alert

Enhancing early warning

The disaster resilience goals strengthen the EU's efforts to make resilience a new compass for EU policymaking.[11] The **Commission's Strategic Foresight Agenda** and the disaster resilience goals share a common objective, namely placing resilience at the heart of EU policymaking. Both look at the future to inform present decisions, drawing upon research, scenarios, trends analysis and other tools to increase Europe's resilience. The disaster

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[11] The Commission has developed the resilience dashboards to provide a holistic assessment of resilience in the EU and its Member States. The indicators in the dashboards span across four dimensions: social and economic, green, digital, and geopolitical. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/strategic-planning/strategic-foresight/2020-strategic-foresight-report/resilience-dashboards_en

resilience goals will therefore support the implementation of the Commission's Strategic Foresight Agenda by translating an anticipatory approach to emergency management into concrete actions. While the primary responsibility lies with Member States, all layers of decision-making and society need to be involved to support resilience action.

Societal resilience depends on the cooperation of a number of actors with civil protection. In some cases, such as terrorism, war and other intentional threats, the mandate for prevention and preparedness measures lies with the wider emergency management system of each Member State. This includes the security forces and the military. While remaining specific to the area of civil protection, the disaster resilience goals complement and strengthen the EU's toolbox for resilience in several domains.

Essential services such as energy, water and health provision, transport[12] and telecommunications are key to ensuring the well-being of people, as well as to the emergency response itself. These services need to remain operational during and after a disaster. Therefore, civil protection authorities should be closely engaged with efforts to strengthen the resilience for entities that operate **critical infrastructure** to deliver essential services.[13] Preparedness efforts must also take into account the increasing incidence of **cyber-attacks,** including emergency scenarios where cyber-attacks disrupt essential services.

Preparedness for future pandemics and other **health** threats requiring attention at Union level has increased with the adoption of the EU Health Union and the establishment of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA). The disaster resilience goals will contribute to strengthening the identification of serious cross-border **threats to health**. This includes measures to enhance surveillance and early warning, as well as stockpiling of medical countermeasures.[14]

In the event of trade restrictions or any other crisis impacting the **free movement of goods, services and persons**, as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposed Single Market Emergency Instrument (SMEI),[15] includes a specific focus on disaster resilience. The new instrument would ensure the free flow and availability of crisis-relevant goods and services during an emergency impacting the Single Market, hence also supporting civil protection workers.

Investing in resilience unlocks social, economic and environmental benefits that outweigh the cost regardless of whether and when a disaster materialises. When investments integrate **"smart" prevention** features, the return on investment is highest. Such features include for

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[12] To strengthen the resilience of EU transport in times of crisis, the Commission adopted a Communication on Contingency Plan for Transport (COM/2022/211 final). See also the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/action-plan-military-mobility-20_en

[13] In line with Directive (EU) 2022/2557 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on the resilience of critical entities and repealing Council Directive 2008/114/EC (OJ L 333, 27.12.2022, p. 164), Directive (EU) 2022/2555 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union, amending Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 and Directive (EU) 2018/1972, repealing Directive 2016/1148 (OJ L 333, 27.12.2022, p. 80), and Council Recommendation on a coordinated approach by the Union to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure (OJ C 20, 20.1.2023, p. 1–11).

[14] For an overview of the EU's preparedness for health emergencies, please see https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/state-health-preparedness-report_en

[15] COM (2022) 459 final, COM (2022) 461 final, COM (2022) 462 final.

instance multi-hazard early warning systems or nature-based solutions (green roofs, ponds, wetlands) to prevent heat islands, forest fires, and floods. For example, in Europe, extreme heat early warning systems save lives and are proven to bring more than 130 EUR in benefits for every 1 EUR spent[16]. Stronger synergies among the climate, environmental and civil protection communities can foster better prevention and yield benefits for both the population and the planet. The disaster resilience goals will facilitate such synergies and will contribute to the objectives of the **European Green Deal**, particularly on climate adaptation and biodiversity protection and restoration.

To promote investments that support resilience, the Member States should seize the wide support available from EU financing such as: the Resilience and Recovery Facility, Cohesion Policy Funds, Agriculture and Rural Development Fund, the LIFE programme, the Technical Support Instrument (TSI), and the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change. Technical assistance support from the Union Mechanism is available to design "smart" prevention investments that will help protect citizens from disasters, adapt to climate change, avoid environmental degradation and advance the green transition. Private citizens and business in the EU are exposed to losses from climate-related disasters. The Climate Resilience Dialogue[17] identifies ways, for example through insurance, to cover climate-related risks. In addition, the EU's classification system for sustainable investments (EU Taxonomy) helps channel private investment into economic activities that contribute to climate change adaptation and will include criteria for disaster risk management by emergency services.

Disaster resilience also depends on effective **crisis management**. The EU has been instrumental in ensuring that cross-sector and transboundary impacts from COVID-19, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and other large-scale crises and emergencies are addressed. The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) has developed into the EU's operational crisis management hub. It now operates with enhanced anticipatory and analytical capacity, coordinating amongst sectors, and linking demand with response from Member States, third countries and private sector actors. Moreover, it works in coordination with the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) in the Council and, when facing security and consular crises outside the EU, also with the European External Action Service (EEAS) Crisis Response Centre. To deal with possible future crises, the ERCC will further strengthen its role as a central hub in a network linking all crisis management actors, respecting existing competencies and in line with the recommendations of the "Scientific Opinion on Crisis Management[18]".

Disasters may require the adoption of extraordinary emergency measures. While being a legitimate instrument, they need to be justified, limited in time, and proportionate. They need to have a solid legal foundation and allow for checks and balances to uphold the rule of law.

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[16] The World Bank, *Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness. Investments in Disaster Risk Management in Europe Makes Economic Sense*, 2021, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/06/04/economics-for-disaster-prevention-and-preparedness-in-europe

[17] https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/adaptation-climate-change/climate-resilience-dialogue_en

[18] Scientific Advice Mechanism, Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, Strategic crisis management in the EU : improving EU crisis prevention, preparedness, response and resilience, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/517560
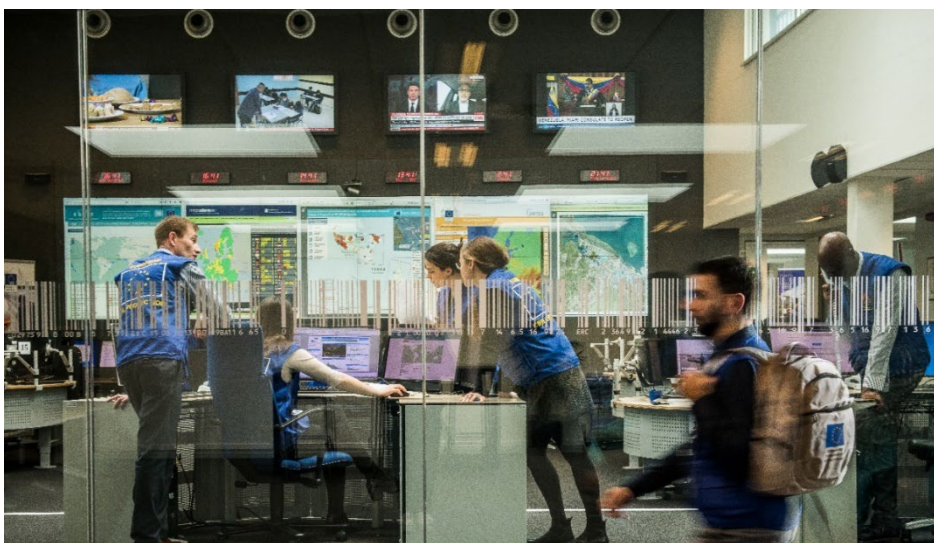
Emergency Response Coordination Centre in Brussels

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III. The Union disaster resilience goals

Goal 1: *Anticipate* - Improving risk assessment, anticipation and disaster risk management planning

Good decisions need reliable and timely information. Current prevention and preparedness measures under the Union Mechanism need to be based on Union-wide assumptions used to prioritise capacity and investments, at both national and European level. In particular, this concerns disasters and crises of a cross-sectoral and transboundary nature, which are becoming increasingly common. Both the Union and the Member States need to keep abreast of new and emerging threats and improve the understanding of their potential impacts. A regional approach can complement national and European level anticipation of the risks and their possible transboundary impacts. To turn the assessment of future risks into information that can trigger early action, the Commission intends to further improve the Union-wide **scenario-building** capability, the **assessment of risk**, the **anticipatory capability**, **risk management planning**, with a view to developing **preventative actions.**

Flagship: Europe-wide disaster scenarios
By the end of 2023, the Commission intends to finalise the development of key transboundary, cross-sectoral scenarios covering 16 main hazards and possible cascading effects to which Europe is exposed, as set out in Figure 2. Such initiative aims at improving Europe's collective capability to anticipate future crises, prioritise prevention measures and adapt risk management planning accordingly.

As the impact of large-scale disasters goes beyond national borders, Member States should contribute fully to ensure that national scenario planning feeds into Europe-wide disaster

scenarios and informs subsequent disaster preparedness. Beyond 2023, scenarios will be updated and expanded as needed, following a continuous dialogue with the Member States.

Figure 2: the 16 hazards upon which the disaster scenarios will be developed

Earthquake	Flood	Heatwave / cold wave	Major storm
Health threats including pandemics	Tsunami	Volcanic eruption	Wildfire
Blackout and energy disruption	Effects of an armed conflict	Effects of a cybersecurity incident	Effects of a terrorist attack
Industrial emergencies	Marine pollution	Nuclear emergencies	Population displacement in emergencies

Goal 2: *Prepare* - Increasing risk awareness and preparedness of the population

When a disaster strikes, people in the affected area need to know how to react to protect their own lives and assets as well as those of other community members. As disaster response is always local at first, adequate knowledge of how to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters must reach all segments of the population.

Today, although the risks and impacts of disasters can be high, about 60% of the EU population is aware of the risks in their region, with large variations observed between Member States[19]. All members of a community, including people with specific vulnerabilities, should be actively engaged in preparedness and prevention efforts, helping authorities map risks and complement scientific knowledge with their everyday experience of the territories where they live. Ensuring that no one is left behind when promoting risk awareness and disaster prevention measures is key to making all citizens active actors in a resilient society.

To make EU citizens risk-aware and prepared, the Commission will support Member States to increase the **overall level of risk awareness**, improve **public access to disaster risk**

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[19] European Union, *Special Eurobarometer 511b: EU Civil Protection,* 2021, https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2264

information in an accessible format[20], increase **adoption of risk prevention and preparedness measures** and enhance the **culture of risk prevention** amongst the EU population.

Flagship: "preparEU", a pan-European awareness programme for disaster resilience

Knowing what the main risks are and the actions to take during disasters that may occur in areas where people live or travel to, can help save lives. Member States, with support from the Commission, should embark on a public communication effort to bring disaster prevention and preparedness awareness to the everyday life of EU citizens, promoting civic engagement and volunteer-based initiatives for disaster prevention and preparedness, as encouraged by the European Parliament.[21]

The tools to be developed could include:
- **disaster risk "icons" and visuals** for schools, public places (including transport hubs) and tourist hotspots that communicate safe and resilient behaviours and which can be easily understood across all Member States, languages, cultures and by people with disabilities.
- a **"European Risk Atlas"** to make EU citizens aware of what their main risks are on the basis of sound scientific evidence[22], dispelling fake news and disinformation.
- a **"month of disaster preparedness"**, during which activities at Union level are linked with similar initiatives of the Member States to sensitise people about resilience at the household level and in everyday decisions, promoting risk-aware behaviour and disaster preparedness checklists and drills.

The Commission and Member States should harness the potential of Artificial Intelligence, new technologies, user friendly applications and augmented reality to support awareness, preparedness and training.

Goal 3: *Alert* - Enhancing early warning

Recent disasters have shown that warning local populations in due time remains a challenge. Establishing an effective institutional setup that ensures the timely transmission of warning messages across the national, regional and local levels is critical. The Commission intends to support Member States to identify and address the weak links of their national early warning systems. Moving rapidly towards so-called "impact-based forecasting", a type of weather

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[20] Member States should provide accessible disaster risk information in line with the Union's and Member States' obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Council Decision of 26 November 2009 concerning the conclusion, by the European Community, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (OJ L 23, 27.1.2010, p. 35).

[21] European Parliament Resolution of 15 September 2022 on the consequences of drought, fire, and other extreme weather phenomena: increasing the EU's efforts to fight climate change (2022/2829 [RSP]).

[22] Including from, among others, the upcoming "Drought Risk Atlas" to be released in 2023 by the European Drought Observatory for Resilience and Adaptation (EDORA).

forecasting messages that already point to the potential impact of a severe weather event, would also help those at risk to take action more quickly.

When crafting warning messages, Member States should take the specific needs of people in vulnerable situations, those with disabilities and children into account. Warning messages should be accessible, clear and actionable and, to the extent possible, should be provided in several languages to make sure they reach all segments of the population including tourists, seasonal residents and migrants. Finally, complex transboundary disasters highlight the need for a wide-spectrum early warning system at Union level. The Commission intends to explore with Member States how national early warnings could be made more accessible to all citizens of the Union, including travellers, tourists and communities in cross-border areas, across the territory of the Union.

To enhance early warning systems in the EU, the Commission intends to improve **forecasting**, **detection** and **monitoring** capability and enhance **public warning** systems.

Flagship: **Linking global early warning to local action in Europe**

The ERCC has developed a range of automated European and global early warning and detection systems through which it monitors events in and outside the Union territory. To translate warnings and alerts from those systems into user-targeted information for emergency response, the Union Mechanism supports European scientific partnerships[23] that provide a 24/7 service for rapid impact assessments for detected or forecast events.

To better support Member States in rapidly interpreting warnings of local events, the ERCC will expand such early warning and analytical capacity into a specific programme for national authorities offering a pro-active and on-demand early assessment service. The ERCC will also develop a multi-hazard "dashboard" that provides European situational awareness to emergency managers. Interoperability with other sectoral systems and civil/military authorities will be promoted to enhance the situational awareness and consequently products of the ERCC[24].

For Europe-wide early warning to be truly effective, Member States are encouraged to review the early warning chain, making sure key information gets to disaster-prone areas at the right time to save lives and assets. Whilst Member States are responsible for national early warning, targeted technical support can be made available under the Union Mechanism to help identify gaps in their early warning systems and build capacity to strengthen the dissemination of warnings to the local level.

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[23] Including the European Natural Hazard Scientific Partnership. See: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/early-warning-and-information-systems_en

[24] An example of that is, in the maritime domain, the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) which is currently under development.

Goal 4: *Respond* - Enhancing the Union Civil Protection Mechanism response capacity

In a crisis situation, the emergency services of Member States must be ready to respond to the needs of the population. When the capacity of a country is overwhelmed, EU response assets and teams can intervene to fill critical gaps and avoid a further deterioration of the situation. Emergency situations are becoming more frequent, more complex and of increasing scale. That in turn means that the Commission will have to mobilise more frequently EU capacities from the rescEU strategic reserve. Therefore, this disaster resilience goal sets concrete targets to strengthen the EU's ability to respond to a request for assistance under the Union Mechanism and help Member States respond to future emergencies. The EU response capacity needs will be regularly reviewed through "capacity gap" reports.

The type and number of response capacities will build on evidence and scenarios, drawn from Goal 1 – *Anticipate*, that will allow the EU to define collective minimum response capacity needs. Goal 4 – *Respond* - defines a first set of concrete, qualitative and quantitative performance targets for capacities – including transport and logistics capacities – under the Union Mechanism to respond to disasters and crises involving floods, search and rescue operations, wildfires, emergency health needs, as well as radiological and nuclear events. In turn, Member States are encouraged to provide up-to-date information related to their National Emergency Plans that should integrate specific provisions to respond to identified EU-wide risks. This disaster resilience goal sets concrete targets to ensure Europe's ability to respond to a request for assistance under the Union Mechanism in the following emergencies: **wildfire**, **flood**, **search and rescue**, **Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN)**, and **health**.

Flagship: Scaling up the rescEU strategic reserve

rescEU has become a cornerstone of the EU's response to large-scale emergencies that overwhelm Member States and their direct neighbours. Europe's forest fires, the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine have instigated the rapid development and mobilisation of rescEU emergency capacities in the area of aerial firefighting, medical aid, shelter, energy supplies and countermeasures to CBRN emergencies. Today's crises show the importance of enhancing that strategic reserve, including through EU policies that address the broader question of EU's open strategic autonomy for essential supplies used in emergencies response, to ensure the safety of EU and its citizens. Under the Union Mechanism, the Commission intends therefore to continue to build up the rescEU reserve with Member States and to regularly review overall capacity at the European level. For example, the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and other crises have demonstrated that a strategic reserve of medical capacities is essential not only in response to a pandemic.

Following the 2022 State of the Union Speech of the President of the Commission[25], the Commission intends to double the rescEU aerial firefighting fleet by 2023 with up to 3 helicopters and 12 light aircrafts in addition to fill the identified gap. Together with enhanced prevention measures and pre-positioning of fire-fighters, this increase should help face the next forest fire season in Europe, including areas in Central and Northern territories of the Union which now face large wildfires more frequently. Wildfire response capacities are expected to considerably increase with the procurement of 9 helicopters between 2023-26 and 12 airplanes as of 2026 under the rescEU's permanent fleet. Whilst rescEU provides a bigger safety net, Member States must also continue to invest at the national level in their response capacities, in trained-personnel and in wildfire prevention measures.

Goal 5: *Secure* - Ensuring a robust civil protection system

Civil protection authorities need to remain operational during and after a disaster, when society needs them the most. This goal aims to ensure that the ERCC and the emergency operation centres of the civil protection authorities in Member States remain operational at all times. Actions to be taken include the periodic revision of business continuity plans and procedures, and the systematic identification and implementation of lessons-learnt in the aftermath of disasters.

In the current landscape of risk, civil protection authorities cannot work in isolation. The Commission and the Member States are increasing their collaboration across borders and with multiple stakeholders in emergency management, including essential services operators. To secure business continuity of emergency operation centres in the Member States and at EU-level, the Commission intends to improve **plans and procedures**, cross-sectoral and cross-border **coordination**, **communication and information** management and the implementation of **lessons learnt.**

Flagship: **Stress-testing the emergency operation centres across Europe**
A pilot pan-European civil protection disaster preparedness 'stress test' will check the business continuity of emergency operation centres in a simulated black-out scenario that could simultaneously affect several sub-regions of Europe. Such a simulation should be coherent with the ongoing critical infrastructure stress-test activities at EU-level. All Member States should commit to participating in the civil protection disaster preparedness stress test and to ensuring follow-up on its recommendations. This pilot, to be planned in the course of 2023, will provide results and lessons to feed into future editions.

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[25] European Commission, *2022 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen*, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_22_5493

IV. Disaster resilience goals in the global resilience context

Disasters do not stop at the EU borders. Achieving disasters resilience also requires broad partnerships with decision-makers and stakeholders at the global level. Strengthened cooperation on resilience with key partners, neighbouring and other third countries is therefore essential. The resilience of entities operating critical infrastructure as well as the ability to counter hybrid threats and cyber-attacks, including by promoting synergies with the **NATO seven baseline requirements for civil preparedness,**[26] will help preserve European core values. Further, the disaster resilience goals complement the EU's commitment under the **Strategic Compass for Security and Defence**[27] to improve the civil-military cooperation in support of the civilian disaster relief efforts.

Regional cooperation can promote the disaster resilience goals as the "**EU model**" for cross-border risk management, disaster preparedness and collective response in other parts of the world. With the Union Mechanism membership expanding into the Western Balkans and the Neighbourhood, the disaster resilience goals should become a reference point to steer and advance policy dialogue on disaster risk management, climate adaptation and environmental protection. Extending early warning systems globally[28] and promoting disaster risk finance strategies alongside financial and technical assistance for strengthening civil protection systems in partner countries will increase resilience beyond the EU.

The disaster resilience goals can also strengthen the EU's role as a **reliable and responsible global actor**. They will contribute towards the priorities and targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The high-level meeting of the General Assembly in New York on 18-19 May 2023 on the mid-term review of the Sendai Framework will be an occasion to present the goals and promote them at the global level. They will also contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals and to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

V. An evolving approach - conclusions and next steps

The disaster risk landscape will continue to evolve as its components are shaped by human activities, global trends and multiple shocks. Therefore, **the disaster resilience goals should also stay dynamic, undergo a periodic fitness check and evolve over time.** These goals also need significant sustained commitment by Member States to ensure they leverage the necessary investments for strengthened disaster prevention and preparedness. It is therefore critical that the Commission and Member States regularly review together the disaster resilience goals and assess the progress made.

In 2023, the work to operationalise the recommendations should start at both EU and national levels. This will include taking concrete steps for the implementation of the proposed flagships but also disseminating the disaster resilience goals, with outreach to key

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[26] Roepke, W-D., Thankey, H., *Resilience, the first line of defence*, NATO Review, 2019, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2019/02/27/resilience-the-first-line-of-defence/index.html

[27] A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence - For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security, adopted by the General Affairs Council on 21 March 2022 (7371/22).

[28] In line with the objectives of the UN Secretary General's "Early Warnings for All" initiative.

stakeholders in Member States, and building effective linkages with EU and global resilience initiatives.

During 2024, the evidence provided by the new disaster scenarios and orientations provided by the upcoming European climate risk assessment[29] will be reflected in a disaster resilience goals recommendation. **A comprehensive exercise for peer reviewing the implementation of the disaster resilience goals** at country level should be launched. Finally, the progress of goals implementation will also be reviewed during the next Civil Protection Forum in 2024.

In its broader efforts to strengthen resilience, the Commission intends to support capacity building and sharing of good practices in the areas covered by the disaster resilience goals among Member States, including through peer reviews, financial and technical assistance and with the support of European and global partners. The Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network[30] will provide the one-stop-shop for practitioners, researchers and civil society actors to connect, share knowledge and together engage on the disaster resilience goals.

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[29] https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/eu-adaptation-policy/key-eu-actions/climate_risk_assessment
[30] European Union, *Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network,* https://civil-protection-knowledge-network.europa.eu/