

Project „Information Exchange with the Candidate Countries“

Final Report

1. Introduction

Austria with co-financing from the European Commission has initiated a **project** entitled «**Information Exchange with the Candidate Countries**». The objective was to make appropriate proposals in view of strengthening co-operation in the field of Civil Protection between the Community and the Candidate Countries.

On the basis of Council Resolution of 9 December 1999 on co-operation with Candidate Central and Eastern European Countries and Cyprus on Civil Protection and in order to integrate the Candidate Countries more closely the project should identify the areas that require a structured information exchange between EU and Candidate Countries and establish a strategy for improving information exchange in the future.

The follow-up of the project which was led by Austria was ensured by a Core Group, which consisted of representatives of Germany, Greece, Finland, France, The Netherlands, Sweden and of the European Commission.

2. Aim of the Project

The main purpose of the Project was

- a closer integration of the Candidate Countries
- the identification of areas that require a structured information exchange between European Union and Candidate Countries in order to
- to establish a strategy for improving the information exchange in the future

and with a view to strengthen the co-operation between the European Commission, the EU Member States, the EEA Countries and Candidate Countries

- an assessment of the extent and nature of current cooperation has to be done.

Regarding the Resolution mentioned above this project should help the European Commission to fulfill its tasks and to be able to

- assess the extent and nature of current co-operation
- improve the exchange of information between the Community and the Candidate CEECs and Cyprus, including as regards operational manuals,
- make appropriate proposals

3. Historical remarks

This project had its origin in some activities of Austria in this area.

In **June 1996** Austria initiated a Workshop in Vienna concerning the co-operation between the European Union and the associated Central and Eastern European and Baltic Countries in the field of Civil Protection

This was the first time of a common information exchange between the European Commission, the EU Member States, the EEA Countries and the Candidate Countries.

In **July 1999** the meeting of the Directors General of Civil Protection was hosted by Finland. Due to a initiative of Austria to integrate the Candidate Countries more closely in the Community in the field of Civil Protection Finland kindly invited these Countries to this conference. This was the very first meeting of Directors General of the Member States, the EEA Countries and the Candidate Countries. In the meantime that way of proceeding has become usual. The last two common Director General meetings took place in Knokke/Belgium and Madrid/Spain. The next meeting is planned to be organized by Denmark.

In this context Austria would like to stress again that representatives of the Candidate Countries also should be invited to the regular expert meetings of the European Commission (e.g. Management Committee for the Community Mechanism and the Action Programme).

The Vienna Workshop 1996 revealed that the associated CEECs as they were called in this time considered their participation in every activity of Community co-operation in Civil Protection as being helpful to them. A list of priorities and of medium and long term actions was elaborated.

The following first steps were envisaged:

- the inclusion of the associated CEECs in the Operational Manual and distribution of it to each country (realized)
- setting up an exchange of information with the associated CEECs in order to provide them with information e.g. about self-tuition workshops, exercises, pilot projects and nuclear risks (realized)
- activities of bi- and multilateral co-operation involving Member States and CEECs such as workshops or exercises should be organized to improve the contacts and understanding between the countries involved (realized/e.g. COMPROTEX 99)
- representatives of the associated CEECs could already be invited to participate in some activities (realized).
- defining common directions in the field of operational communication system development on the basis of the European norms (e.g. 112) (partly realized)
- defining nation-wide 24-hours Contact Points (realized)

4. Main Areas covered by the project

The areas covered by the project include

- Seveso II Directive and especially aspects concerning the preparedness, response and information to the Public.
- Single European emergency call number (112).
- Community mechanism for the co-ordination of Civil Protection intervention in the event of emergencies
- Emergency arrangements in the context of a series of international commitments of the European Communities such as the UNECE Conventions on the transboundary effects of industrial accidents, and the protection and use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes.
- Other areas such as bilateral agreements in the field of disaster relief and radiation protection as well as forms of regional co-operation.

It is also very important to cover the structured information exchanges and co-operation activities such as the existence of formal networks, the organization of regular seminars, workshops, exercises, etc. and not the occasional meetings, visits or exchanges that certainly take place but are not followed by sustained activities.

5. Phases of the project

The project comprised three phases as follows:

First step has been an assessment of the current structured bilateral co-operation and information exchange of the European Commission, the EU Member States and the EEA Countries with the Candidate Countries. Further on the Member States and the EEA Countries had to define what they can offer to the Candidate Countries and what they expect in return. This has been done by a Questionnaire which was sent to all Member States.

After all replies of the Member States had been received a second meeting of the Core Group took place to discuss the first results. A first intermediary report was drafted (Interim Report 1).

Second step: After finishing this intermediary report it was sent to the Candidate Countries (a Questionnaire was attached) to give them the opportunity to express their views and define their priorities.

Third step: Having the answers of the Candidate Countries Austria has drafted a second intermediary report (Interim Report 2) and organized the Workshop in Vienna

looking forward to a participation of representatives of Member States and Candidate Countries to formulate appropriate proposals for future exchange of information and co-operation.

6. Timetable

- 20th and 21st September 2001: First meeting of the Core Group (to finalize the Questionnaire)
- October 2001 : Distribution of the Questionnaire to the Member States
- 13th and 14th December 2001 : Second meeting of the Core Group (to structure the report concerning the results of the Questionnaire)
- End of January 2002 : The Report was submitted to the Candidate Countries
- **2nd to 4th April 2002 : Workshop in Vienna** with all Member States and Candidate Countries (to discuss the main results of the project)
- End of May/Begin of June 2002 : Third meeting of the Core Group
- July 2002 : Final Report

7. Results of the Project

The results are based on the answers to Questionnaires that were sent to all Member States of the European Union, the EEA Countries and further on to the Candidate Countries and on the discussions and conclusions of the Workshop in Vienna which took place from 2nd to 4th April 2002 and last not least on the work during several Core Group Meetings.

7.1 Areas of current Information Exchange and Co-operation

Until now there is a information exchange and Co-operation between the EU-Member States/EEA-Countries and the Candidate Countries in the fields of

- Airport Emergency Management
- Avalanches (e.g. warning services)
- Chemical Accidents
- Chimney Sweepers Training
- Civil-Military Emergency Planning
- Communication Systems
- Creating of Operational Structures
- Crisis Management and Civil Protection
- Disaster Preparedness and Prevention
- Disaster Relief and Protection
- Diving

- Early Warning System concerning Floods
- Equipment Modernization
- Exchange of Experts/Observers
- Fire Fighting
- Fire Security in Buildings
- Floods
- Forest Fires
- Information of the Public
- Joint Standby Disaster Response Unit
- Landslides
- Language Courses
- Language Studies
- Legal Affairs
- Legislation
- Medical Affairs
- Mountain Rescue Service
- Nuclear Safety (e.g. radiation monitoring networks/early warning data)
- Oil-Spill
- Population Preparedness
- Prevention and Mitigation of the Consequences of Natural and Technological Disasters
- Psychological Aspects of Disasters
- Radiation Monitoring (e.g. ARGOS NT which is preferred by HUNGARY)
- Recuperation
- Rescue/Medical Services
- Research Projects
- Research Work
- Risk Assessment
- Road/Tunnel and Train Accidents
- Seismology/Earthquakes (e.g. monitoring networks, seismic sounding, topography, subduction related magmatism, geodynamics, kinematics, vulnerability analysis of existing structures...)
- Seveso II Directive
- Smoke-Diving/Smoke Ventilation
- Social Affairs
- Training/Education
- Training of dog trainers in SAR operations
- Transboundary Effects of Disasters or Accidents
- Transportation of hazardous materials
- UNDAC
- Warning of the Population
- Water Pollution
- Water Rescue
- Water Rescue Service
- Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

7.2 Ways

Basically the Member States of the European Union/EEA Countries and the Candidate Countries chose the following procedures for the Information Exchange and Co-operation:

- Common Alarm Plans
- Conferences
- Consultations
- Courses
- Discussions
- Documentary Film Shooting and other Documentations
- Exchange of Early Warning Data, Measurements of Air Contamination by Aerosol-Monitors, Observers, Research Projects....)
- Exchange of Methodologies
- Excursions
- Exercises
- Help Programmes
- Informations (letters, fax, e-mail, telephone conversations....)
- Interventions
- Letters, Fax, E-Mails...
- Meetings
- Mutual Assistance in case of Emergencies
- Networks (e.g. between Contact Points)
- Presentations
- Programme of Joint Activities
- Programmes concerning Information to the Public
- Projects
- Regular Tests of Communications Systems of the Notification Centres
- Seminars
- Study Visits
- Swedish-Baltic nuclear emergency preparedness project
- Training of Experts
- Twinning Programme (European Union), e.g. HUNGARY/DENMARK
- Work Programmes
- Workshops

7.3 Importance of Activities (e.g. financial resources)

During the investigation of this matter the following – different – levels of importance could be seen:

- Annual Budgets of low and high levels (e.g. € 30.000,- up to € 300.000,-)
- Cost sharing between involved Countries
- Fulltime Senior Staff Member dealing with Candidate Countries
- General Policy Document of a Minister of Interior to the Parliament

- Integration into normal daily operations
- Priority of Activities with Neighbouring Countries
- Within Duties

7.4 Legal Basis of Co-operation

- International Agreements
- Multilateral Agreements
- Bilateral Agreements
- Council Decisions and Resolutions
- Joint Statements
- Memoranda of Understanding
- Regional Arrangements

7.5 Level of Implementation

In principle all these levels are depending on the area of Co-operation:

- Close-Border
- Cross-Border (e.g. mutual assistance)
- Exchange between National Points of Contact
- International (e.g. UN-OCHA)
- Local/Municipal (e.g. contacts between local services)
- Multinational (e.g. NATO/PfP)
- National (e.g. exchange of scientific and technical information, conferences)
- Provincial Level
- Regional (e.g. contacts between regional boards, meetings, Interreg, Pannon West Euroregion)

7.6 Assessment of mutual benefits

- Awareness of major problems
- Development
- Development and Application of Strategies for risk mitigation
- Early and automatically transmitted Information in case of nuclear events, disasters or serious accidents, seismic data
- Equipment support *and donations*
- Establishment of a Civil Protection Department
- Experience, especially
- Experience in Assistance
- Facilitation of Co-operation
- Higher level of mutual understanding
- Improvement of Crisis Management Operations and Emergency Preparedness
- Improving of Communication means and Computer Technologies
- Improving of Flood Management and Reconstruction

- More knowledge and expertise (e.g. concerning other strategies or equipment)
- Mutual knowledge of specific features and structures
- New Ideas
- Obtaining of Training Fields
- Open minded attitude concerning new solutions
- Reciprocal Benefits
- Reconsidering of internal procedures
- Special Help of experienced Experts
- Structural Changes
- Upgrading of International Security
- Using of Training Facilities of the other Country

7.7 Compilation of Bilateral/Multilateral Agreements with Candidate Countries

Basically all these Agreements can be found in the web (please see under:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/prote/cp11_en.htm

and follow link [Multilateral and bilateral agreements on disaster management](#)

In addition the following modifications (amendments) are necessary:

AUSTRIA/CZECH REPUBLIC – Agreement on the Co-operation in the field of Disaster Protection and Crisis Management between the responsible authorities of the capital cities Vienna and Prague

AUSTRIA/HUNGARY – Bilateral Agreement concerning questions of mutual interest in the area of nuclear power installations; Alarm Plan concerning mutual information of the responsible emergency authorities of the capital cities of Vienna and Budapest; *Bilateral Agreement on mutual assistance in case of disasters or serious accidents, signed on 26th April 1996, entered into force on 1st July 1998.*

THE NETHERLANDS/POLAND – On 14th January 2002 a Joint Statement between The Netherlands and Poland on Co-operation between the two countries in the field of disaster has been signed in Warsaw. Simultaneously a Joint Committee was installed that agreed on the main items for a workplan for 2002-2004.

AUSTRIA/SLOVAK REPUBLIC – Agreement on disaster relief between the capital city of the Slovak Republic – Bratislava – and the the capital city of Austria – Vienna.

SWEDEN/LITHUANIA – Bilateral Agreement is to be signed: Co-operation including mutual cross-border assistance in major accidents.

As an example for a Multilateral Co-operation THE NETHERLANDS stressed the activities in the framework of the Euro Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Barcelona/27th and 28th November 1995) between the Member States of the European Union and 12 Partners of the Southern Mediterranean. Three of the 12 Partners are Candidate Countries (Cyprus, Malta and Turkey).

POLAND reported about an Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Kingdom of DENMARK on Exchange of information and co-operation in the field of nuclear and radiation control signed in Warsaw on 22nd December 1987. Further on POLAND referred to an Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Republic of FRANCE on the co-operation in the field of Internal Affairs, signed in Warsaw on 12th September 1996. POLAND also has an Agreement with GERMANY on mutual assistance in the case of technological and natural disasters and other major accidents signed in Warsaw on 10th April 1997 (entered into force on 1st March 1999). On the basis of that Document, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg and Fore-Pomerania and Saxony are planning an Agreement with POLAND (agreed between the parties but not yet signed).

HUNGARY noted that there is an Agreement between the Governments of the Republic of GREECE and the Republic of Hungary on co-operation in the field of prevention of natural and technological disasters and serious accidents and the liquidation of their consequences and on mutual assistance that was signed in Budapest on 13th September 2000 (not yet published).

The SLOVAK REPUBLIC informed about being recognised as an official member of the CEI-Agreement (co-operation on the forecast, prevention and mitigation of natural and technological disasters) on 19th January 2000.

7.8 Table of Agreements (see attachements)

7.9 Requests that could not be satisfied

Only a few requests of Candidate Countries could not be satisfied or are still under examination (e.g. structural co-operation in disaster relief issues, training and visits) *and there are also only singular cases concerning requests of Member States or EEA Countries that are not satisfied but taken into consideration.*

7.10 Concrete Plans concerning structured Information Exchange or Co-operation in the future

SWEDEN has expressed a will to meet the request for giving support to BULGARIA in developing the Training for fire fighters at the Bulgarian Training Centre. Germany is planning a Memorandum of Understanding on mutual assistance in the case of Disasters or Serious Accidents.

AUSTRIA intends a closer Co-operation with the CZECH REPUBLIC (e.g. bilingual information forms) and a strenghtening of the Co-operation between the provinces of Lower and Upper Austria with South Bohemia County and South Moravia County. This could be reached by expert meetings on national and regional level and regular information exchange between the Points of Contact on national and regional level. Further on a strenghtening of co-operation between the Austrian province of Burgenland

and the bordering counties of Hungary and the Slovak Republic and between Lower Austria and the bordering counties of the Slovak Republic is planned.

AUSTRIA is also intending to exchange early warning data and aerosol measurements and to co-operate in the area of training the Fire Brigades of HUNGARY and AUSTRIA in the field of disaster relief. In this context the establishment of an International Fire Brigade Centre for training in this area in Eisenstadt (Burgenland) is foreseen. The provinces of Burgenland, Carinthia and Styria intend to strengthen the Co-operation with the neighbouring regions of Slovenia. Last not least an exchange of experiences in the field of regional Crisis Management and a Co-operation concerning the training of fire brigade units of Slovenia and Austria is planned. HUNGARY also would like to initiate a regional co-operation with AUSTRIA and SLOVAK REPUBLIC on a legal basis (trilateral regional co-operation).

THE NETHERLANDS intend to contact the CZECH REPUBLIC formally with the purpose of signing a Joint Statement on Disaster Relief in 2002.

FINLAND and SWEDEN have some Co-operation with THE BALTIC STATES like Exchange of Experts and informations in the field of rescue services/civil security and mutual assistance in major Accidents. Moreover, SWEDEN plans a similar co-operation with LATVIA and LITHUANIA also in the field of international SAR and support missions.

A closer co-operation with POLAND is planned by AUSTRIA (Bilateral Agreement on Mutual Assistance in the case of Disasters or Serious Accidents), GERMANY (Civil and Disaster Protection; Brandenburg would like a continuation and strengthening of the existing Co-operation) and SWEDEN (continuation of the exchange of teachers, observers and experts). POLAND is planning some activities with AUSTRIA in the area of Crisis Management and Civil Protection which should be based on a future bilateral agreement on mutual assistance in the case of natural or technological disasters and other major accidents. AUSTRIA is very interested in such an agreement.

THE NETHERLANDS received a draft of a Joint Statement on disaster relief from the SLOVAK REPUBLIC. The final Statement will be signed in July 2002. The co-operation will take place in the area of warning and detection, training and exercises, expert assistance and the implementation of Seveso II Directive and the Single European Emergency Call Number 112.

GREECE is planning a Co-operation with TURKEY mainly in the fields of Earthquakes, Floods and Landslides.

PORTUGAL is interested in the exchange of experiences mainly in the fields of Seismic Risk, Floods and Forest Fires for which it is receptive to any request that may be done by a Candidate Country.

SLOVENIA is planning a co-operation with AUSTRIA in the fields of Transboundary Effects of Disasters or Accidents, Prevention and Mitigation of the Consequences of Natural and Technological Disasters, Psychological Aspects of Disasters, Training/Education in Mountain Rescue activities and – further on – Exercises. A similar

co-operation is envisaged with ITALY (in addition: communication systems/exchange of early warning data and early warning system concerning floods) and SWEDEN.

Some co-operation with SWEDEN is also planned in the fields of cross border rescue operations (ESTONIA), nuclear emergency preparedness (LATVIA) and training of intervention teams (ROMANIA).

BELGIUM will be contacted by HUNGARY concerning a general information exchange system (methodologies, experiences) and also by ROMANIA with regards to a support for implementation of the European Emergency Call Number 112 (connection to the European Network). HUNGARY is also planning activities with DENMARK in the area of SEVESO II and radiation monitoring (RODOS System) on the basis of an official statement and also referred to the PHARE Programme.

POLAND intends to co-operate with FRANCE in the area of Disaster Preparedness and Prevention and exchange of experts/observers (Conferences, Work Programmes, Consultations).

HUNGARY is considering a co-operation with ITALY in the area of disaster management, legal basis and radiation monitoring system. Concerning RODOS (Radiation Monitoring System) HUNGARY also intends a co-operation with FINLAND and GERMANY. HUNGARY further on plans to involve ITALY in the Trilateral co-operation between SLOVENIA, CROATIA and HUNGARY. In the field of rescue operations, fire fighting and authoritative affairs HUNGARY would also like to co-operate with GERMANY.

ESTONIA informed about the fact of having made definite progress in implementing of single emergency number 112, developing its system of alarm centres, establishing and developing the system of explosive ordnance disposal and is ready to share information and experience in these subjects.

The CZECH REPUBLIC is planning a co-operation with AUSTRIA and GERMANY in the areas of chemical accidents, communication systems, crisis management and civil protection, creating of operational structures, disaster preparedness and prevention, disaster relief and protection, fire fighting, floods, oil-spill, forest fires, prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural and technological disasters, Seveso II Directive, training/education, transboundary effects of disasters or accidents, water pollution and water rescue. Further on the CZECH REPUBLIC intends a co-operation with SWEDEN, FRANCE and DENMARK concerning crisis management and civil protection, creating of operational structures, disaster preparedness and prevention, disaster relief and protection and training/education.

Mostly the Co-operation and Information Exchange activities were done by Conferences, Meetings, Seminars, Working Groups, Workshops, Trainings and Exercises or different forms of direct contacts (telephone, e-mail). Preferred are – beside of native languages – English and sometimes French.

Basically the Information Exchange or Co-operation is to be developed by Bilateral Agreements on national or regional level, Conventions or a Memorandum of Understanding (Letter of Intent – e.g. Sweden and Latvia). Germany for instance informed about an Agreement in the areas of state administration and communal self administration, including Fire Protection, between the MOI of Saxony and the MOI of the Czech Republic, further on about a common alert plan for the mitigation of damages resulting from incidents and dangers to public health with possible trans-border effects (Regional Governments of Niederbayern, Oberpfalz and Oberfranken on the one hand and the Civil Protection Agencies of the regional authorities of the bordering regions of the Czech Republic on the other hand) and last not least about Conventions on the International Commission for the Protection of the Oder (EU, Czech Republic, Poland and Germany), Protection of the river Elbe (EU, Czech Republic and Germany) and Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (EU, Poland, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation, Sweden and Germany). A Bilateral Agreement between the capital cities of Slovenia (Ljubljana) and Austria (Vienna) concerning Co-operation in the field of Civil Protection and Crisis Management is in preparation. Some planned co-operation forms have to be seen from the practical side like „Children Olympic Games (Safety Tour 2002)“ which are youth competitions planned by AUSTRIA and SLOVENIA. In the context of future co-operation SLOVENIA also referred to EUREGIO and the Multilateral Convention on Protection and Sustainable Use of River Danube.

Most Member States expressed their willingness to offer assistance in the case of a disaster and also workshops, table top exercises, training, early information, know-how, meetings, *study visits* and Information Exchange between emergency authorities what they also expect in return.

7.11 Other forms of structured information exchange or co-operation with the Candidate Countries

GERMANY reported some activities with ESTONIA concerning the disposal of ammunition and other military waste (information exchange and technical assistance).

HUNGARY was referring to the humanitarian assistance of AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, ITALY and GERMANY in the area of flood protection as a form of multilateral co-operation. Further on HUNGARY mentioned a workshop with GERMANY on Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) within the framework of UN and NATO and a joint research and education project with THE NETHERLANDS.

The SLOVAK REPUBLIC is ready to conduct courses focused on the population protection in the case of using of chemical weapons including the excursion to chemical laboratories of Civil Protection.

7.12 Additional areas of civil protection that are of main interest for the Candidate Countries and were a need for cooperation is seen:

Area 1:	<p>SAR Training</p> <p>Financing issues/generally</p> <p>Implementation of Seveso II directive</p> <p>no additional areas</p> <p>Implementation of 112</p> <p>Specialised training in chemical disasters</p> <p>Closer co-operation in Disaster Response Units registered for SAR operation by the UN OCHA.</p> <p>Improvement of the population protection against terrorist attacks with the stress on the protection against biological and chemical agents</p>
Area 2:	<p>Command and Control</p> <p>Information of the Public after 11th September 2001/Seveso II and public information (sensitive data), education and training of public according to NBC threats</p> <p>Development of regional co-operation</p> <p>Oil Pollution of Baltic Sea</p> <p>Specialised training in case of Radiological disasters</p> <p>Joint training programmes and exercises for rescue teams on regional level</p>
Area 3:	<p>Emergency Planning</p> <p>NBC agents/Exchange of knowledge and methodologies</p> <p>Training of personnel</p> <p>Information</p> <p>Training programmes for citizens' self protection</p>

7.13 Co-operation in the field of SEVESO II and Emergency Call Number 112 from the Point of View of the Candidate Countries:

Concerning 112 the Candidate Countries stated that

- the using of experience and lessons learnt concerning legal, technical and organizational aspects of 112 implementation of EU Member States is preferred
- there is a need for a closer cooperation with EU MS in this field
- there is an interest in sharing experience from the implementation Emergency call 112, particularly in the field of increasing public awareness of this issue.

Regarding SEVESO II the Candidate Countries mentioned that

- co-operation in the area of providing population protection in the surroundings of production/storage of dangerous chemical agents is welcomed and there is an interest in expert visits to the proper plants/storages in EU MS
- a closer co-operation in the area of SEVESO II and information to the public is needed
- there is an interest in continuing and developing international co-operation regarding practical aspects of SEVESO II Directive implementation including methods and rules of examination of safety reports, accident prevention programmes, rescue plans, risk assessment methods, data bases and public information process

7.14 Additional Comments or suggestions given by the Candidate Countries

One of the Candidate Countries stated that the project launched and developed by Austria, especially the workshop with Member States and Candidate Countries, provided a valuable chance to discuss the way how to shape and integrate actual occasional and system-less co-operation activities and exchange of information between MS and CCs. The opportunity to try to outline more systematic and directed co-operative process and first and foremost to agree on the priorities within these efforts should not be missed. Furtheron the idea to invite the representatives from other international organisations with similar missions as for example UN, NATO or OECD in view of better information sharing, duplicity avoiding and enhanced co-ordination of disaster response on international level was supported.

7.15 The Vienna Workshop from 2nd to 4th April 2002

- provided a unique opportunity to bring the Candidate Countries closer to the Civil Protection structures and activities in the European Union
- proved to be effective in enlarging the common European Union Member States communication and co-operation platform and the existing network to the participation Candidate Countries
- offered a chance to discuss open questions and to clarify Civil Protection aspects and to define further items of interest for the future co-operation

- showed that many bi- and multilateral agreements are existing and a lot of co-operative work is done by the Member States and the Candidate Countries
- helped to present the current status of the ongoing co-operation and to develop plans for the future
- gave an overview about many common actions and examples of successful co-operation with the Candidate Countries

In the introduction AUSTRIA gave an overview about the Project especially concerning the historical background (Vienna Workshop 1996), Aim of the Project and Areas covered by it, Phases and Timetable. This introduction was followed by a presentation of the Interim Report No. 2 which showed the results of the project up to this meeting (see items 1. To 14.).

In a first discussion it was stated by FINLAND that there are different approaches regarding the co-operation between Member States and Candidate Countries because a bilateral co-operation happens more often and is therefore usual. Some Candidate Countries stressed their interests in SAR concerning Earthquakes but also in NBC threats. In general the audience realized that NBC threats will bring new tasks for knowledge and experience in this very sensitive area and that financing is sometimes a problem.

The COMMISSION representative stated that the Candidate Countries will be integrated in the Community Mechanism as soon as possible, but still some questions concerning the rules of procedure are open. Some Candidate Countries expressed their wish for special information meetings concerning the participation in the Community Mechanism.

The UNITED KINGDOM stressed that some reports within the European Union e.g. concerning Weapons of Mass Destruction are confidential and therefore not further distributed. Nevertheless there should be information exchange between the Member States and the Candidate Countries in general.

After an Interim Summary of AUSTRIA the Candidate Countries were again invited cordially to use the chance to discuss open questions and define main areas of interest in the field of Civil Protection which was underlined by the COMMISSION representative.

7.16 Conclusions

AUSTRIA announced that each Country would be asked in the final discussion the following questions:

- in which area there should be a structured information exchange and
- by which strategies could this be reached

In the final discussion it came out that there is a need for closer co-operation in the field of Civil Protection. In this context common meetings and personal contacts should be

encouraged. Moreover, a structured information exchange in the following special topics is of main interest:

- National and Community Legislation (coherence)
- Implementation of Seveso II Directive
- Implementation of 112
- Participation of the Candidate Countries in the Community Mechanism and the Community Action Programme
- NRBC threats
- Disaster Relief and Management
- Early Warning and Information
- Information of the Public
- Training of Rescue Teams
- Points of Contact in the Candidate Countries
- Communication

In order to achieve this improvement of a structured information exchange in the areas mentioned above the following strategies were suggested:

- Exercises
- Courses, Workshops, Seminars
- Early Warning Systems
- Exchange of Experts
- Bilateral Contacts with EU-Member States
- Integration of the Candidate Countries in the Commission Communication System (CIRCA)
- More Internet applications (e.g. Website of the European Commission)
- Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements

The COMMISSION representative mentioned that personal and bilateral contacts with Member States and information distribution by e-mail would be a good approach and also called the audience's attention to the homepage of the Commission. He also recalled in mind the fields where Candidate Countries are already fully involved (SEVESO II Directive, Operational Manual, NRBC-List of Experts, Director General Meetings, Joint Research Centre Expert Groups, Research at Union level etc.). Concerning SEVESO II the Candidate Countries were and are invited to all working groups and also have the possibility to participate in research projects.

Lastly the Vienna Workshop stressed the need for

- continuous efforts in the areas mentioned above
- providing all necessary informations to the Candidate Countries
- upgrading the network with the Candidate Countries (Points of Contacts)
- sharing new common initiatives with the Candidate Countries

The COMMISSION representative and AUSTRIA concluded that an integration of the Candidate Countries in the Committee for the Action Programme and for the Mechanism in the field of Civil Protection according to Article 7 of the Council Decision of 23rd October 2001 establishing a Community mechanism to facilitate reinforced co-

operation in civil protection interventions (2001/792/EC, Euratom) and Article 8 of the Rules of Procedure for this Committee would be a real improvement of the current information exchange. Therefore this integration should be realized as soon as possible.

P.S. As a result of the Project the Commission Services organized a meeting with the Candidate Countries in Brussels which took place on 17th May 2002. The Candidate Countries were informed about the next steps concerning their possible participation in the Mechanism. The conclusions of the last Director Generals Meeting in Madrid (23rd and 24th May 2002) are also dealing with this matter (see Annex).

Helmut Kaser/05.07.2002