



COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION



Council Conclusions on on the development and establishment of Early Warning Systems in the EU

*2838th JUSTICE and HOME AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 6 and 7 December 2007*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. RECALLING that the Council in its Conclusions of 18 July 2005 on improving the European Civil Protection Capabilities invited the Commission to enhance detection and early warning systems in general¹,
2. RECALLING that Council Decision [...] of [...] ² establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism (recast) and Council Decision 2007/162/EC, Euratom of 5 March 2007 establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument³ stated that the Mechanism consists, *inter alia*, of activities contributing to the further development of detection and early warning systems, for disasters, which may affect the territory of the Member States, as well as to their establishment through studies and assessments on the need for and feasibility of those systems and through actions to promote their interlinkage and their linkage to the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) and to the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS),

¹ O.J.C 304, 1.12.2005, P.1

² OJ [...], [...2007], p. [...] - Document 11163/1/07 REV 1

³ OJ L 71, 10.3.2007, p. 9.

P R E S S

3. RECALLING that the Council in its Conclusions of 12 June 2007⁴ on enhancing the coordination capacity of the MIC within the Community Civil Protection Mechanism invited the Commission to reinforce MIC's analytical capacities for gathering, analyzing and evaluating information in order to facilitate decisions of countries participating in the Mechanism,
4. RECALLING that the conclusions of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, January 2005) identified early warning systems as a key factor for building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters,
5. HIGHLIGHTS the primary responsibility of Member States to protect the people and property on their territory from hazards, in particular with regard to the timely and effective provision of information to citizens in danger,
6. UNDERLINES that early warning systems have to be adapted to the changing nature of risks, characterized by population growth, the effects of climate change and increased mobility, all of which increase the vulnerability of modern societies,
7. EMPHASISES that the development of Early Warning Systems in the EU should:
 - avoid duplication, building upon and adding value to existing systems and capabilities,
 - respect Member States responsibilities and encourage national capability building,
 - promote interlinkage between capacities of Member States,
 - encourage the continued development of resilient systems, active on a 24/7 basis,
 - be cost-efficient and cost-effective,
 - support the conversion of scientific knowledge into new or improved products and services,
 - reflect the fact that Member States are affected by different hazards and in different ways,
8. NOTES with interest the outcomes of the seminar on Early Warning Systems co-organised by the Presidency and the Commission in Albufeira (PT) on 15-18 July 2007,
9. WELCOMES the progress made by the Commission and the Member States on the development and establishment of early warning systems built in order to shorten the lead time to respond to natural, technological and environmental disasters and in alerting EU citizens,
10. CONSIDERS however that there are still some gaps and shortcomings in relation to specific hazards that may not be covered at this stage,
11. EMPHASISES the need to overcome the existing gaps in warning methods, mainly in relation to warning signals that may not reach, not be understood, nor induce the appropriate behaviour in all persons at risk, in particular foreigners, tourists or citizens who are hard of hearing or visually impaired
12. EMPHASISES the importance of intensifying the debate on standard approaches for warning EU citizens, taking into consideration existing systems, best practices at international level or systems under development by the Member States,
13. ENCOURAGES Member States to raise awareness on early warning systems and associated alert signals, in particular by establishing education programmes for local communities in risk areas and by launching awareness raising campaigns for population and tourists to avoid

⁴ Document 10014/07

panic in case of false alarms,

14. ENCOURAGES neighbouring Member States to develop close cooperation in order to facilitate the interoperability and the possible interlinkage of early warning systems for emergencies with cross-border effects and to explore ways of establishing commonly agreed methods of warning population in the border areas,
 15. INVITES the Commission to commit to a multi-hazard approach in this field by presenting proposals to strengthen early warning systems for both natural and man-made risks,
 16. INVITES the Commission to further explore possibilities to the development and establishment of early warning systems by:
 - (a) contributing to identification of high risk areas through, where appropriate, its GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) initiative;
 - (b) promoting real time data sharing through specific Memorandums of Understanding, or through the appropriate use of outcomes from research programmes, expert meetings and scientific projects;
 - (c) upgrading IT equipment of the MIC to enable more rapid dissemination and sharing of alert messages through the civil protection network;
 - (d) exploring possibilities for the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction measures into its bilateral cooperation programmes with third countries and international organizations,
 17. INVITES the Presidency and the Commission to continue the successful process begun by the Albufeira seminar and to intensify the debate on early warning systems, through the promotion of seminars, workshops, and/or conferences in order to enhance the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practices, as well as to reconvene the experts on a regular basis."
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