



**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

**By**

**Mr. Thomas Ramopoulos, Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union to  
the United Nations**

**at the Sixth Committee**

**on the Agenda item 86:  
"Protection of Persons in the event of disasters"**

**United Nations**

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**– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –**

Mr./Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Montenegro\*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia, as well as Monaco align themselves with this statement.

We would like to commend the International Law Commission for its work on the draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters as well as on the commentaries thereto. They are an important and timely contribution.

We welcome the discussion of the current item in the Committee to be followed by further substantive exchanges in the Working Group for a second year in a row. The EU and its Member States will engage constructively on the draft articles these coming days and look forward to deepening yet further our understanding of the draft articles as well as of the views of all delegations.

Our interventions will be informed, **first**, by the fact that instances of natural disasters keep increasing in frequency and intensity. Suffice it to recall here that the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) reports a 5-fold increase in medium-to-large-scale disasters per year over the last 20 years in comparison with the previous 30 years.<sup>1</sup> Only since 2023 and without attempting to be exhaustive, wildfires in Indonesia and Canada, drought in Central America, cyclones in Southern Africa, heavy floods in Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Mali and Cameroon and Lebanon, and only these past weeks floods in Central Europe and a hurricane in the US show that no country alone can respond adequately to the magnitude of such events. International cooperation is necessary to reduce the risk of disaster, prevent and prepare for and eventually respond to it.

The EU and its Member States have been practicing cooperation in this area both internally and externally in accordance with the EU disaster relief framework. The one pillar of the EU disaster relief framework comprises EU humanitarian aid, which seeks to provide assistance, relief and protection to persons affected by natural or man-made disasters, with a focus on those in the most vulnerable situation. Under the latter pillar that covers civil protection, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism pools together response capacities from all EU countries and 10 Participating States<sup>2</sup> with the aim to deliver assistance as effectively as possible across the globe.<sup>3</sup> The EU disaster relief framework has been developed in accordance with the founding principles and objectives of the EU Treaties. The latter require, among others, ‘assist[ing]

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\* *Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

<sup>1</sup> UNDRR, Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine. Please note that Moldova will sign the Agreement to join the UCPM on 29 September and so will be considered as the tenth Participating State. However, the Agreement will only have full effect and enter into force on 1 January 2024, once ratified by Moldova.

<sup>3</sup> European Council, EU civil protection, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/civil-protection/>.

populations, countries and regions confronting natural or man-made disasters; and [...] promot[ing] an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance.<sup>4</sup> Thus, our interventions in the debate on these draft articles will **also** be squarely based on the EU Treaties as well as the EU disaster relief framework.

Zooming in on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism specifically, it provides that assistance must be (i) needs-based; (ii) directed at people in distress, regardless of nationality, religion, gender, age, ethnic origin or political affiliation; and (iii) based **on international humanitarian principles** and the **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid**. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism is premised on the **principle of solidarity**. It has a wide scope covering the **protection primarily of persons but also of the environment and property, including cultural heritage**, against **all kinds of natural and man-made disasters**, including the consequences of acts of terrorism and technological, radiological or environmental disasters, occurring inside or outside the European Union. It covers the phases of **disaster prevention, preparedness** and **response**. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated more than 700 times since 2001 to respond to emergencies around the world.

**Thirdly**, our interventions will have due regard for existing international frameworks in this area, in particular the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**. We recall in this regard that the recent Mid Term Review of the Sendai Framework called upon States to “[e]nsur[e] that disaster risk governance is supported by legal and regulatory frameworks, policies and plans at all levels”.<sup>5</sup> The European Union and its Member States also underline the value and direct relevance of General Assembly resolutions 78/119,<sup>6</sup> 78/120<sup>7</sup> and 78/152,<sup>8</sup> which were adopted last year by consensus.

On the basis of the above, we will provide our substantive comments on the draft articles during the discussion in the Working Group.

Thank you.

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<sup>4</sup> Article 21(2)(g) & (h) TEU; see in this regard also Article 196(1)(c) TFEU and 214 TFEU.

<sup>5</sup> Resolution 77/289, Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, para. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution 78/119 Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

<sup>7</sup> Resolution 78/120 International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution 78/152 on Disaster risk reduction.