



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

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Subject : Council Conclusions on an EU Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction
in Developing Countries

At the meeting on 18 May 2009, the General Affairs and External Relations Council adopted the Conclusions set out in the Annex to this note.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS
ON AN EU STRATEGY FOR SUPPORTING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

1. The Council recognizes the importance of effective disaster risk reduction (DRR) in saving lives and protecting livelihoods. Disasters undermine development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Council believes that investing in risk prevention, mitigation and preparedness before a disaster takes place pays significant dividends compared to paying for relief, recovery and reconstruction after the event.
2. The Council reiterates its support for the implementation of the 2005 Hyogo Framework for Action, which provides the agreed international framework on DRR, and stresses the need to link DRR efforts with those for tackling climate change.
3. Both the 2005 European Consensus on Development and the 2007 European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid commit the EU to supporting DRR policy and action. The 2008 Council Conclusions on reinforcing the Union's disaster response capacity¹ invited the Commission to present a proposal for an EU strategy for DRR in developing countries.

EU Strategy for supporting disaster risk reduction in developing countries

4. The Council welcomes the Commission's Communications on an EU Strategy supporting DRR in developing countries² and on a Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters³, and underlines their timeliness in view of the second Global Platform on DRR due to take place in Geneva in June 2009.

¹ Doc. 10128/08.

² Doc. 6891/1/09 REV 1 + 6891/09 ADD 1 + ADD 2 + ADD 3 - COM(2009) 84 final.

³ Doc. 7075/1/09 REV 1 + 7075/09 ADD 1 + ADD 2 - COM(2009) 82 final.

5. The Council endorses the proposed overall objective for the Strategy of using DRR to contribute to saving lives and reducing human suffering and to sustainable development and poverty eradication by reducing the burden of disasters on the poorest and most vulnerable countries and population groups, while underlining the importance of community participation. The Strategy should support the following areas:
- The integration of DRR into partner countries' development policies, strategies and sectoral plans, particularly in coherence with integration of adaptation to climate change;
 - Specific targeted action on disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness.
- The Strategy will further facilitate the integration of DRR in the EU's development and humanitarian aid policies and programming, in relevant UN programmes as well as in response to disasters and in support of recovery.
6. The Strategy covers all developing countries and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs), but particular attention will be given to disaster-prone regions, the least developed and most vulnerable countries and areas, as well as the most vulnerable groups of people. In the context of regional approaches, the EU's outermost regions⁴ will also be given due consideration within the Strategy. The Council underlines the importance of action at regional level since disasters do not stop at the border.
7. With regard to scope, the Council wishes to target disasters that are caused by natural⁵ and technological hazards, but not those caused by conflict or war because they would require a wholly different strategy. Consideration will be given to both slow- and rapid-onset disasters; and to large-scale as well as localised but frequent disasters, all of which may require differentiated approaches.

⁴ The French overseas departments, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands (Article 299(2) of the EC Treaty).

⁵ Biological, geophysical and hydro-meteorological.

Areas for intervention

8. The Council endorses the Strategy's areas for intervention, which are fully in line with the five priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action⁶. Main interventions will include:
- Promoting DRR as a priority at national, regional and local level, as well as in relevant UN fora;
 - Supporting the integration of DRR into policies and planning, in particular into national development and poverty reduction strategies;
 - Promoting the identification, assessment and monitoring of disaster risks, including by enhancing early warning and its effective linkage with early reaction⁷;
 - Promoting the reduction of risk factors, including through adaptation to climate change;
 - Providing institutional support to national and local authorities and stakeholders;
 - Supporting the improvement of analytical tools (data monitoring stations, vulnerability assessment), including joint analysis with partner countries;
 - Supporting capacity building, education, training, as well as dissemination of risk information to the relevant authorities and communities.
9. The Council underlines the importance of:
- Integrating DRR in EU humanitarian aid and further implementing Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) from a DRR perspective;
 - Supporting mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction from the outset in project/programme planning and implementation, notably in EU supported programmes and in relevant UN activities, in countries and regions at risk;
 - Using a gender-sensitive approach to disaster risk reduction.

⁶ (i) Ensure that DRR is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation; (ii) Identify, assess, and monitor disaster risks – and enhance early warning; (iii) Use knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels; (iv) Reduce the underlying risk factors; and (v) Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

⁷ In this context, see also the Council Conclusions of December 2007 on the establishment of an Early Warning System for tsunamis in the North East Atlantic and the Mediterranean region (doc. 15479/07).

Implementation priorities

10. In order to ensure a prompt and focused start of implementation, the following areas will be addressed as priorities:
- *Dialogue on DRR* with all developing regions and countries in existing fora, including in support of advancing climate change negotiations on a UNFCCC post-2012 arrangement. The EU further agrees to present a coordinated approach to DRR at the 2nd Global Platform for DRR in June 2009.
 - *Regional Action Plans on DRR*, supporting DRR action in disaster-prone regions⁸. These could be implemented partly by up-scaling existing EU DRR projects and programmes, and should complement adaptation initiatives, such as EU bilateral actions and the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA), as well as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Adaptation Fund and the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience. Regional initiatives should be linked to existing relevant EC tools and instruments.
 - *Integration of DRR into the EU's external action, including in the framework of the UN, and partners' development strategies*. Mid-Term Reviews of country and regional strategy papers should be an entry point for having DRR fully integrated in the EU's assistance and partners' development strategies in the programming cycle starting in 2012.
 - *Coordination of EU support* for key DRR investment already identified and planned for in national frameworks, without prejudice to Member States' competences.

⁸ This could start with an Action Plan for the Caribbean region to be followed by other priority regions.

Coordination and policy coherence

11. The Council calls on the Commission and the Member States to commit to implementing this Strategy in full respect of the principles of aid effectiveness, ensuring strong in-country and regional coordination on DRR, while supporting national and local ownership and building synergies with Member States' initiatives.
12. The Council also recognizes the necessity for the EU to work closely with other donors and stakeholders, including the UN and its International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) system, the World Bank, as well as the Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the private sector and civil society.
13. The Council underlines the need to ensure policy coordination and coherence with other major EU policy areas, in particular climate change, and instruments (such as the Community Civil Protection Mechanism), as well as with existing global initiatives like the World Bank led Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

Mobilising Resources

14. The Council recognises the need to mobilize resources for DRR, along with a more efficient use of existing funds. It welcomes the current scaling-up of funding for DRR within existing financial frameworks by the Commission and several Member States. However, it invites Member States to consider allocating more resources to DRR, taking into account the principles of division of labour, and in the context of their agreed commitments for Official Development Assistance (ODA).

15. The Council notes the allocation by the Commission of €180 million for DRR under the 10th EDF intra-ACP resources. It also notes that DRR allocations are set out in some Country and Regional Strategy Papers, in Drought Preparedness and DIPECHO programmes, in thematic programmes on food security and environment/natural resources, as well as under the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7) and the Commission's Joint Research Centre. The Council further invites the Commission to efficiently use these instruments and, if necessary, to explore possibilities for mobilising adequate, predictable and sustainable resources to address both DRR and climate change adaptation.

Follow up on the EU DRR Strategy

16. To prepare and monitor the implementation of the Strategy and foster coordination and alignment of EU DRR support, the Council invites the Commission to set up without delay an appropriate framework, including the Commission and the Member States.
17. The Council requests from the Commission the preparation, by June 2009 and in close cooperation with Member States, of an Implementation Plan clarifying key actions, responsibilities, main instruments and sequencing of implementation for the priorities mentioned in paragraphs 8 to 10 above. In 2011, the Implementation Plan will be reviewed and adapted as appropriate.
