



Crises and emerging threats. The Commission launches the Preparedness Union Strategy

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📌 EU LAW, DEFENSE, PERSPECTIVE

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On 26 March 2025, the Commission launched the Preparedness Union Strategy¹, a new Plan meant to create a secure and resilient EU with the capabilities required to anticipate and manage threats and hazards, independently of their nature or origin, and to ensure that European citizens have adequate protection.

In line with the ReArm Europe Plan², the Strategy finds its rationale in the increasingly complex and unstable security landscape the EU is actually facing, including rising geopolitical tensions, cyberattacks, sabotage targeting critical assets and foreign interference adding up to the still ongoing

consequences of the *coronavirus* pandemic, which showed that the Union's health services and supply chains can be profoundly disrupted. Despite the EU has developed and reinforced over time its multiple tools to build structural resilience to tackle some types of risks and to respond to crises in a number of sectors, the European preparedness framework is still experiencing shortcomings like, amongst the others, i) a mostly reactive rather than pro-active crisis management system, ii) a fragmented toolbox, and iii) limits of scale and resources within the existing structures and mechanisms at EU level. The Strategy, therefore, includes 30 key actions distributed along seven areas of focus to advance towards a real Preparedness Union and to

¹ Joint Com. JOIN(2025) 130 final of 26.03.2025, *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Preparedness Union Strategy*.

² For further information see our previous article, available at the following [LINK](#).



preserve the vital functions of the society in all circumstances.

First, the Strategy highlights the need for EU capabilities to include fully interoperable, end-to-end and multi-hazard early-warning systems based on timely and reliable data to better inform decision-makers on risks and potential interrelated effects. To ensure such approach, the Commission will, on the one hand, develop a comprehensive EU risk and threat assessment integrating insights from multiple policy areas and, on the other hand, develop a crisis dashboard bringing together sectoral rapid alert systems and improving coordination for decision-makers. Furthermore, the Commission will ensure that the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) is adequately equipped to produce regular briefings on cross-sectoral risks as well as to identify and analyze their effects.

Second, the Strategy clarifies that, in order to maintain vital societal functions under all circumstances, the EU must adopt minimum preparedness requirements by fully transposing and implementing the Union legal framework, in particular the CER³ and NIS2⁴ Directives, and by revising the legislative framework of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)⁵ to further improve the effectiveness and efficiency in high-impact emergencies requiring a robust response and coordination at European level. Moreover, the Commission will propose a EU-wide stockpiling strategy integrating all existing national efforts, thereby strengthening access to critical resources across the EU.

Third, the Strategy focuses, on the one hand, on enhancing population preparedness by working with Member

States, with a particular emphasis on fostering a culture of resilience at national and local level and, on the other hand, on empowering citizens to take proactive measures to prepare for crises by ensuring they can access quality and reliable information and have the necessary skills to evaluate it.

Fourth, the strategy reiterates the importance of public-private cooperation for the EU's preparedness, ensuring that resources and expertise from all sectors are used effectively and efficiently. Therefore, the Commission will create a Preparedness Task Force drawing on the existing structures in order to gather key stakeholders from, amongst the others, public authorities, business, the scientific community and the civil society and to cooperate on strengthening the continuity management of vital functions and essential services, exchange information on supply-chain vulnerabilities and disruptions and provide frameworks and incentives to help private entities to ensure minimum preparedness requirements.

Fifth, bearing in mind that, in an increasing number of scenarios, civilian authorities need military support, the Strategy encourages Member States to improve the interaction between civilian and military actors without calling into question their respective competences. More particularly, the EU should, on the one hand, further operationalize the

³ 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 of 27.12.2022.

⁴ 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, and repealing Directive (EU) 2016/1148, OJ L 333 of 27.12.2022.

⁵ Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 17 December 2013, on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, OJ L 347 of 20.12.2013.

Mutual Assistance⁶ and Solidarity⁷ clauses as well as strengthen its cooperation with NATO and, on the other hand, develop arrangements for civil-military preparedness, which will clarify roles, responsibilities and priorities of EU institutions as well as Member States for preparing for and responding to incidents and crises.

Sixth, the EU needs to reinforce its crisis coordination, building on existing structures such as the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR)⁸ and the ERCC, and to strengthen its response capabilities and strategic crisis reserves to address critical shortages and ensure a rapid response. In this regard, the

Commission will create an EU crisis coordination hub, with a focus on anticipating and managing the consequences of crises at all levels by working towards a common understanding of their implications and providing support to the lead services.

Finally, Member States should continue to develop bilateral and plurilateral partnerships with EU candidates and neighboring countries and strengthen their cooperation with NATO, integrating preparedness and resilience into their initiatives.

⁶ Article 42 TEU at paragraph 7 states : “... If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in

accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.

Commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation...”.

⁷ Article 22 TFEU states: “... The Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster. The Union shall mobilize all the instruments at its disposal, including the military resources made available by the

Member States, to:

(a) - prevent the terrorist threat in the territory of the Member States;
- protect democratic institutions and the civilian population from any terrorist attack;
- assist a Member State in its territory, at the request of its political authorities, in the event of a terrorist attack;

(b) assist a Member State in its territory, at the request of its political authorities, in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

Should a Member State be the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster, the other Member States shall assist it at the request of its political authorities. To that end, the Member States shall coordinate between themselves in the Council.

The arrangements for the implementation by the Union of the solidarity clause shall be defined by a decision adopted by the Council acting on a joint proposal by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The Council shall act in accordance with Article 31(1) of the Treaty on European Union where this decision has defence implications. The European Parliament shall be informed.

For the purposes of this paragraph and without prejudice to Article 240, the Council shall be assisted by the Political and Security Committee with the support of the structures developed in the context of the common security and defence policy and by the Committee referred to in Article 71; the two committees shall, if necessary, submit joint opinions.

The European Council shall regularly assess the threats facing the Union in order to enable the Union and its Member States to take effective action...”.

⁸ For further information see the following [LINK](#).



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