

## Briefing

9th February 2018

### EIN joint seminar with Instituto Francisco Sá Carneiro and the PSD Parliamentary Group in the Portuguese Parliament on: “EU Civil Protection Mechanism”

The environmental issues remain a matter of great concern on a European level. Last year has been flagged by countless catastrophes, with irredeemable concerns, regarding immeasurable heavy human casualties and serious structural consequences. The heat waves and wildfires that swept in the southern part of Europe during Summer 2017, as well as the intense snow, torrential rains, strong winds and floods across Eastern Europe, are an alarming situation that has to be tackled due to the impact of the consequences. This scenario leads us to decide over the action plan in place, in order to create an accurate and transparent European Civil Protection Mechanism that can unravel the European strength.

Such cataclysms know no borders, going from a national to a European problem in a short period of time. On that note, it is necessary to recognise the problems that have been encountered in solving these crisis. No doubt that the first failure is in the prevention system, since the measures are weak or practically non-existent. The second limitation occurs lately, in a crisis-fighting situation, giving thought to the organisational skills and the availability of resources that can assure a quick and efficient response to the needs of countries in distress. To this effect, countries are forced to resort to foreign aid in an attempt to save themselves from these crisis.

Since 2001, the European Civil Protection Mechanism has been providing assistance in situations of disaster. In addition, its creation has opened the possibility of training the civil protection teams of each European country, in order to ensure effective measures. However, it is essential to recognise that a simple coordination of the civil protection mechanisms of each country is not enough to fight such situations and it is imperative to create an accurate European Civil Protection Mechanism endowed with its own means of rapid response to crisis situations, rather than being a financial aid mechanism for countries in distress.

Recently, some MEPs, particularly those from countries that were directly affected by these calamities, showed a willingness to take up the 2006 Barnier Report, which precisely promoted the creation of this European Force. Chrystos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, claimed this is a matter of shared responsibility.

On 23 November 2017, the European Commission proposed to create a new system for a stronger collective European response to disasters, structured on two complementary pillars: Increasing disaster response capacities by creating *rescEU* (a reserve of new civil protection capabilities managed by the EU); better prevention and preparation for disasters.

Security has always been a matter of great concern, and it is also being threatened by these calamities that, hopefully, will not happen again. Nevertheless, it is necessary to adopt new templates. Are countries available to help on the creation of a new action plan? What are the problems related to its financing? Are we finally talking about the embryo for the Union of defence?