

[www.ein.eu](http://www.ein.eu)

EIN-A4

(9-02-2018)

**EIN joint seminar with Instituto Francisco Sá Carneiro on: "EU Civil Protection Mechanism"**

*Portuguese Assembly of the Republic, Lisbon, Portugal*

Chair:

**Elisabetta GARDINI MEP**, Rapporteur of the report on the 'Union Civil Protection Mechanism for the period 2014-2020' and Head of the EPP Italian delegation in the European Parliament (Forza Italia)

Keynote speaker:

**Christos STYLIANIDES**, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management

Speaker:

**Prof. Domingos Xavier VIEGAS**, Rapporteur of 2017 Portuguese fires report from the Centro de Estudos sobre Incêndios Florestais, University of Coimbra

Closing Remarks:

**Paulo RANGEL MEP**, Vice-Chairman of the EPP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, EIN Chairman

**Hugo SOARES MP**, Chairman of the PSD Parliamentary Group in the Portuguese Parliament

- > 2017 was marked by several natural disasters across Europe. In Portugal, more than 100 lives were lost due to forest fires. These tragedies made European politicians aware of the urgency to reform the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM).
- > The EP has been showing its strong commitment towards this reform and the article 196 of the Lisbon Treaty, for which MEP Elisabetta Gardini is the rapporteur.
- > Forest fires can be categorised according to three different risk levels: low, high, and extremely high. At the last level, fire suppression is virtually impossible, and the entire priority must be on protecting human lives.
- > These environmental tragedies, and the human lives they have taken, prove that there are several limitations with regards to the civil protection system in Portugal, but also the incapability of the European Civil Protection Mechanism to respond immediately after being activated by the countries in need.
- > Moreover, one should not ignore that climate changes demand all of us to adapt our capabilities as soon as possible: extreme weather phenomenon will increase, and natural disasters will intensify not only in frequency, but also in magnitude.
- > Europe is a project of solidarity that we must effectively put into practice. These calamities can affect all European countries, thus the new mechanism would benefit all Member States, meaning that this is not an exclusive obligation of the southern countries.
- > In fact, the time to adapt and upgrade the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM) is now. Since its creation, in 2001, the amount of times the mechanism has been activated grew exponentially (232 only in 2017), which clearly shows that countries cannot fight these adversities alone.
- > Thus, the European Commission has promoted an upgrade on the EUCPM in place, proposing *rescEU*.
- > *RescEU* is about establishing new operational capacities and its assets should be decentralised in countries considered to be in risk areas. By sharing this costly assets, Member States achieve economies of scale.
- > The upgrade of EUCPM is what the European citizens demand from Europe: Europe needs to be a union that protects. This is why the Commission proposed a new EUCPM framework, based not only in coordination and preparation, but also in preparedness by having the means to fight and help, assuring that all EU countries get proper help when in situation of distress.
- > However it is important to stress that the reformed EUCPM is complementary, thus it does not replace national responsibilities and capabilities.
- > It is important not only to discuss preparedness but also prevention, which is also one of the pillars of this reform.

*The 'EIN-A4' represents a summary of EIN seminar initiatives. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the EPP Group political line.*