

rescEU, the European Union Civil Protection System UCPM and the future role of Geosciences in natural disaster reduction

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On February 12, 2019, the European Parliament in Strassbourg adopted the decision* for a substantial enhancement of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism which includes the 28 EU Member States plus a major number of affiliated nations. The actual legislative move had been directly instigated by the very serious impact of large wildfires in Europe with many fatalities in Portugal, Greece, Spain, Sweden, among others. It became clear in a dramatic way that sufficient technical resources for fire fighting, in particular aircraft, were neither available on a national nor an international base. The new and financially strengthened Mechanism embraces a large number of disaster types where geology based disasters like earthquakes, tsunami, volcanic eruptions including volcanic ash clouds and gravitational movements are among the most prominent. Expressis verbis, the decision calls for substantial foresight for the early discovery of future disasters which even may be not known to us today. While this without doubt means a great chance for broad geosciences to actively contribute from the start, the integration of more nations into the system and a possible globalisation constitute next stage challenges.

*Official text is expected to be published by the European Commission in due time.

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