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WORKING DOCUMENT

From:	Presidency
To:	Ad Hoc Working Party on preparing Council conclusions on enhancing preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on enhancing preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises

Delegations will find in annex the revised draft *Council conclusions on enhancing preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises*, which take into account as far as possible the written comments received from delegates. These will be discussed at the next AHWP Resilience on 28 October 2021, where delegates will be invited to provide their feedback.

For ease of reference both the clean and tracked changes version are in annex.

DRAFT**Council Conclusions****on enhancing preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises**

1. The European Council in June 2021 invited the Presidency to take work forward in the Council to enhance the Union's collective preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises. The Ministers of European Affairs, at their informal meeting in July 2021 in Brdo subsequently supported the efforts of the Presidency towards a more comprehensive response to crises.
2. The European Union has faced numerous crises throughout its history, each one leading to policy and institutional changes designed to enhance its ability to deal with future crises. In a globalised world, crises are becoming increasingly complex, cross-border and multi-faceted. Major crises can therefore have an increasingly adverse effect on the EU, its Member States and their citizens.
3. The creation of the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements in 2013 was already an important step towards supporting comprehensive situational awareness and cohesive decision-making at the EU political level in response to major, cross-sectoral crisis events, for the benefit of the EU and its Member States. The response to crises nonetheless needs to evolve, not least through learning the lessons from successes and shortcomings identified in their aftermath. Enhanced coordination and cooperation between Member States and support at EU level are essential to respond effectively to major crises, in the interest of European citizens and in full respect of national and EU competences.
4. Many recent lessons learned derive from the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite shortcomings, the EU has coped well, thanks to coordination and solidarity. While exposing gaps in terms of preparedness and response to cross-sectoral crises, our response to the pandemic has proven the necessity and added value of working together. The use of EU consular cooperation and coordination for the successful repatriation of EU nationals stranded abroad because of emergency travel restrictions, the successful adoption and roll-out of the EU Digital COVID Certificate, as well as the positive results regarding the production, procurement and the sharing of vaccines, are particularly visible examples of the value of EU cooperation.

5. In the future, the EU must also be ready to face crises linked, for example, to climate change and extreme weather events, uncontrolled migratory flows and illegal migration instrumentalised for political purposes, large-scale cyberattacks, terrorism, or chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents. Future crises could also be multi-faceted, of a hybrid nature or occur simultaneously. This will require improved cross-sectoral crisis management, including risk analysis for better anticipatory action, prevention, preparedness and response, in an all-hazards approach, in order to inform longer-term action to build resilience to challenges. Available mechanisms, including their interaction with global mechanisms, should be regularly reviewed by the Council in order to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Strengthening cross-sectoral crisis response and preparedness

6. In times of crisis, the continued operation of the EU, its institutions and decision-making bodies has to be guaranteed. In this respect, the COVID-19 crisis demonstrated the central role of the Council, supported by COREPER and the IPCR arrangements, in close cooperation with the Commission and the European External Action Service, in particular in ensuring an effective, coherent and horizontal political and strategic coordination between Member States.
7. In the future, cross-sectoral and cross-border crisis response coordination and political steering will gain further in importance. COREPER will continue to have a key role to play in preparing for and responding to such crises. In particular, lessons should be drawn from past crises on how the Council's work could be better organised and made more effective, including establishing a blueprint with flexible and adaptable guidelines on how the EU and its Member States should react in case of a crisis. Importantly, Member States should implement the actions agreed in the Council and coordinated at EU level, taking account of Member States' competences as appropriate.
8. Inter-institutional cooperation and transparency should help to avoid a multiplication of fora and overlapping activity. In that respect, structured information sharing and common situational awareness at Council level through the IPCR arrangements are critical, in close cooperation with the Commission and the European External Action Service. Effective crisis response will also require secure means of communication.

9. Furthermore, enhanced crisis communication and fighting disinformation, information manipulation and interference are of crucial importance to support actions and responses to crises and to ensure public confidence.
10. Proactive crisis-preparedness requires foresight, regular review and anticipation of risks, identifying the impacts that these risks may have across different sectors and individual Member States in the EU, and how these impacts can best be mitigated and addressed. Important steps to enhance foresight and risk anticipation capacities at EU level have already been taken, in particular through the EU-wide Foresight Network, the latest revisions of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) legislation, and the strengthening of the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). Capacities at the EU level supporting and complementing prevention and preparedness efforts of Member States should focus on areas where a joint European approach is more effective than separate national actions. It is also in this light that the Council welcomes the recent establishment of the Network of the Directors-General of European Crisis Centres.

Building and monitoring resilience and reducing dependencies

11. The EU and the Single Market were severely tested by supply and demand restrictions, border closures and controls, and fragmentation following the COVID-19 outbreak. It highlighted the importance of ensuring the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital and the need to work together to strengthen the resilience of the Single Market to disruptions, in particular disruptions to key EU supply chains and cross-border communities. Given the indispensable role of the Single Market for the EU, the Council emphasises that crisis-related measures should be temporary, proportionate and better coordinated.
12. Achieving strategic autonomy while preserving an open economy is a key objective of the Union, which will strengthen its resilience to future crises. The COVID-19 outbreak highlighted the vulnerabilities of supply chains in strategic sectors such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices and semi-conductors. The Commission's 2021 Strategic Foresight Report constitutes a contribution in this regard.

Next steps

13. The General Affairs Council will revert to the issue of enhancing the Union's collective preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises on a regular basis.
14. It looks forward to further input from the Commission on additional lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as EU capacities to respond to non-health related crises.
15. The IPCR arrangements have proven to be a flexible and useful instrument for addressing immediate challenges in times of crisis. With a view to ensuring that the Council's crisis response mechanism remains fit for purpose, the IPCR arrangements should be reviewed and strengthened as appropriate by June 2022, in particular in the areas of prevention and preparedness, taking on the lessons identified from the IPCR activations for the migration crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as past crisis management exercises. This should include how best to involve the Network of the Directors-General of European Crisis Centres into Council crisis management activities.
16. In order to enhance crisis anticipation, preparedness and resilience, the Council *inter alia*:
 - calls for more consistent implementation of the various EU preparedness and exercise policies, including those under the IPCR arrangements;
 - looks forward to the Commission proposal for an annual State of Preparedness Report, which should take into account national competences and include information on available capacities, tools, skills and scenario-building, and feed into policy discussions at strategic level;
 - recognises the importance of an evidence-based approach to the implementation of Union disaster resilience goals by the end of 2022, while taking into account best practices and lessons learned from existing national and international resilience frameworks;
 - welcomes the resilience dashboards developed by the Commission, which should be further refined in close cooperation with Member States, as a new tool to monitor resilience;
 - acknowledges the role of the Emergency Response and Coordination Centre (ERCC) including in supporting effective crisis anticipation and cross-sectoral coordination in response to a broad range of crises, notably in assisting the IPCR and other crisis mechanisms;
 - recalls the need to advance work in the area of enhancing resilience of critical entities and the security of network and information systems;

- underlines the importance of further developing the EU cybersecurity crisis management framework and an efficient EU-level response to large-scale cybersecurity incidents and crises;
- welcomes the intention to launch the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network in December 2021 and invites the Commission, working closely with Member States, to use the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network for the development of the disaster resilience goals, review of risk and scenario building;
- takes note of the work of the Commission on a proposal for a Single Market Emergency Instrument (SMEI) aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of crises on the Single Market, as well as work on a possible revision of the Schengen Borders Code.
- welcomes the efforts undertaken to establish a European Health Union and the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA);
- welcomes the ongoing efforts towards an ambitious and actionable Strategic Compass on Security and Defence.

17. The Council looks forward to the European Council discussion on crisis management and resilience scheduled for December.

DRAFT

Council Conclusions

on enhancing preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises

1. The European Council in June 2021 invited the Presidency to take work forward in the Council to enhance the Union's collective preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises. The Ministers of European Affairs, at their informal meeting in July 2021 in Brdo subsequently supported the efforts of the Presidency towards a more comprehensive response to crises.

1.2. The European Union has faced numerous crises throughout its history, each one leading to policy and institutional changes designed to enhance its ability to deal with future crises. In a globalised world, crises are ~~also~~ becoming increasingly complex, cross-border and multi-faceted. Major crises, ~~including those with an international dimension,~~ can therefore have an increasingly adverse effect on the EU ~~and~~ its Member States ~~and their citizens~~.

2.3. The creation of the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements in 2013 was already an important step towards supporting comprehensive situational awareness and cohesive decision-making at the EU political level in response to major, cross-sectoral crisis events, for the benefit of the EU and its Member States. The response to crises ~~consequently nonetheless~~ needs to evolve, not least through learning the lessons from successes and ~~failures~~ shortcomings identified in their aftermath. Enhanced coordination and cooperation between Member States and support at EU level are essential to respond effectively to major crises, in the interest of European citizens and in full respect of ~~EU and~~ national and EU competences.

3.4. Many recent lessons learned derive from the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite ~~some initial~~ shortcomings, the EU has coped well, thanks to coordination and solidarity. While exposing ~~some~~ gaps in terms of preparedness and response to ~~complex~~ cross-sectoral crises, our response to the pandemic has proven the necessity and added value of working together. The use of EU consular cooperation and coordination for the successful repatriation of EU nationals stranded abroad because of emergency travel restrictions, the successful adoption and roll-out of the EU Digital COVID Certificate, as well as the positive results regarding the

production, procurement and the sharing of vaccines, are particularly visible examples of the value of EU cooperation.

4.5. In the future, the EU must also be ready to face crises ~~of a different nature~~linked, for ~~instance~~ linked example, to climate change and extreme weather events, uncontrolled migratory flows, and illegal migration instrumentalised for political purposes, large-scale ~~rippling~~ cyberattacks, terrorism, or chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear ~~accidents~~incidents. Future crises could also be ~~of a~~ multi-faceted, of a hybrid nature or occur simultaneously. This will require improved cross-sectoral crisis management, ~~addressing crisis~~ anticipation including risk analysis for better anticipatory action, prevention, preparedness, ~~as well as strengthening resilience~~ and response, in an all-hazards approach, in order to inform longer-term action to build resilience to challenges. ~~Such Available~~ mechanisms, including their interaction with global mechanisms, should be regularly reviewed, by the Council in order to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Strengthening cross-sectoral crisis response and preparedness

5.6. In times of crisis, the continued operation of the EU, its institutions and decision-making bodies has to be guaranteed. In this respect, ~~the~~ COVID-19 crisis demonstrated the central role of the Council, supported by COREPER and the IPCR arrangements, in close cooperation with the Commission and the European External Action Service, in particular in ensuring an effective, coherent and horizontal political and strategic coordination between Member States.

6.7. ~~With potentially more complex, simultaneous and widespread crises~~ In the future, cross-sectoral and cross-border crisis response coordination and political ~~steer are likely to steering~~ will gain further in importance. COREPER will continue to have a key role to play in preparing for and responding to such crises. ~~It should~~ In particular ~~draw the~~, lessons should be drawn from past crises on how the ~~Council~~Council's work could be better ~~organized~~ organised and made more effective, ~~and establish~~including establishing a blueprint with flexible and adaptable guidelines on how the EU and its Member States should react in case of a crisis. Importantly, Member States should ~~fully~~ implement the actions agreed in the Council and coordinated at EU level, taking account of Member States' competences as appropriate.

~~7.8.~~ Inter-institutional cooperation and transparency should help to avoid a multiplication of fora and overlapping activity. In that respect, structured information sharing and common situational awareness at Council level through the IPCR arrangements are critical, in close cooperation with the Commission and the European External Action Service. Effective crisis response will also require secure means of communication.

~~9.~~ Furthermore, Enhanced crisis communication and fighting disinformation, information manipulation and interference is also are of crucial importance to support actions and responses to crises and to ensure public confidence.

~~8-10.~~ Proactive crisis-preparedness requires foresight, regular review and anticipation of risks, identifying the impacts that these risks may have across different sectors and ~~across borders~~ individual Member States in the EU, and how these impacts can best be mitigated and addressed. Important steps to enhance foresight and risk anticipation capacities at EU level have already been taken, ~~notably within particular~~ through the EU-wide Foresight Network ~~and,~~ the latest revisions of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) legislation, and the strengthening of the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). Capacities at the EU level supporting and complementing prevention and preparedness efforts of Member States should focus on areas where a joint European approach is more effective than separate national actions. It is also in this light that the Council welcomes the recent establishment of the Network of the Directors-General of European Crisis Centres.

~~9.~~ ~~Better anticipation should lead to a better level of preparedness, and in this regard, the Council welcomes ongoing work, such as:~~

~~— The Commission proposal for an annual State of Preparedness Report to reflect the EU's ability to cope with various types of crises. This report should take into account national competences and include information on available capacities, tools, skills and scenario building, and feed into policy discussions at strategic level.~~

~~— The resilience dashboards developed by the Commission in cooperation with Member States as a new tool to monitor resilience, which can also be useful for assessing vulnerabilities and capacities to face future crises.~~

~~— The EU conflict Early Warning System that identifies third countries at risk of violent conflict with a time horizon of up to four years.~~

~~Regular multi-sectoral crisis management exercises and trainings, including the EU crisis management exercise (EUIR), and those with third countries and international organisations, such as the PACE exercises with NATO, which are crucial to ensure the means and procedures for cooperation are in place.~~

Building and monitoring resilience and reducing dependencies

~~10.11. The EU and the Single Market was/were severely tested by supply and demand restrictions, border closures and controls, and fragmentation following the COVID-19 outbreak. It highlighted the need to uphold importance of ensuring the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital in the Single Market and the need to work together to strengthen itsthe resilience of the Single Market to disruptions, in particular disruptions to key EU supply chains and cross-border communities. Keeping in mind Given the indispensable role of the Single Market for the EU, the Council emphasises that crisis-related measures should be temporary and, proportionate and better coordinated.~~

~~11. In light of lessons learned in the application of the current Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism, including lessons identified during the response to the pandemic as well as the migration crisis, the Council has started its examination of the Commission proposal to revise this mechanism.~~

12. Achieving strategic autonomy while preserving an open economy remainsis a key objective of the Union, which will strengthen its resilience to future crises. The COVID-19 outbreak highlighted the vulnerabilities of supply chains to disruptions, in particular in the pharmaceutical and other strategic sectors such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices and semi-conductors. The Commission's 2021 Strategic Foresight Report underpinsconstitutes a contribution in this regardshared long-term vision of the EU's open strategic autonomy on the path towards 2050.

Next steps

13. The General Affairs Council will revert to these issuesthe issue of enhancing the Union's collective preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises on a regular basis.

14. It looks forward to further input from the Commission on additional lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as EU capacities to respond to non-health related crises.

~~15. The IPCR arrangements have proven to be a flexible and useful instrument for addressing immediate challenges in times of crisis. With a view to ensuring that the Council's crisis response mechanism remains fit for purpose, the IPCR arrangements should be reviewed and strengthened as appropriate by June 2022, in particular in the areas of prevention and preparedness, taking on Drawing the lessons identified from their IPCR activations for the migration crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as past crisis management exercises. This should include how best to involve the Network of the Directors-General of European Crisis Centres into Council crisis management activities. the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements should be strengthened by June 2022.~~

~~15-16.~~ In order to enhance crisis anticipation, preparedness and resilience, the Council *inter alia*:

- ~~–~~ calls for more consistent implementation of the various EU preparedness and exercise policies, including those under the IPCR arrangements;
- ~~–~~ looks forward to the Commission proposal for an annual State of Preparedness Report, which should take into account national competences and include information on available capacities, tools, skills and scenario-building, and feed into policy discussions at strategic level;
- ~~–~~ recognizes~~recognises~~ the importance of ~~a science~~an evidence-based approach to the ~~development~~implementation of Union disaster resilience goals by the end of 2022, while taking into account best practices and lessons learned from existing national and international resilience frameworks;
- ~~–~~ welcomes the resilience dashboards developed by the Commission, which should be further refined in close cooperation with Member States, as a new tool to monitor resilience;
- ~~–~~ acknowledges the role of the Emergency Response and Coordination Centre (ERCC) including in supporting effective crisis anticipation and cross-sectoral coordination in response to a broad range of crises, notably in assisting the IPCR and other crisis mechanisms;
- ~~–~~ recalls the need to advance work in the area of enhancing resilience of critical entities and the security of network and information systems;

- underlines the importance of further developing the EU cybersecurity crisis management framework and an efficient EU-level response to large-scale cybersecurity incidents and crises;
- welcomes the intention to launch the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network in December 2021 and invites the Commission, working closely with Member States, to use the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network for the development of the disaster resilience goals, review of risk and scenario building;
- ~~looks forward to~~ takes note of the ~~presentation by~~ work of the Commission ~~of~~ on a proposal for a Single Market Emergency Instrument (SMEI) aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of crises on the Single Market; as well as work on ~~looks forward to~~ the proposed a possible revision of the Schengen Borders Code, ~~which would need to address in particular situations where a serious threat arises, including to public health;~~
- welcomes the efforts undertaken to establish a European Health Union and ~~takes note of~~ the setting up of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) ~~and the proposal for a Council Regulation, aimed at complementing and supporting Member States' response capacities and access to and availability of medical countermeasures and coordinating measures at Union level in order to address serious cross-border health threats;);~~
- welcomes the ongoing efforts towards an ambitious and actionable Strategic Compass on Security and Defence, ~~setting out policy guidelines for the development of European defence and security over the next decade in the areas of crisis management, capability development, partnerships and resilience.~~

16.17. The Council looks forward to the European Council discussion on crisis management and resilience scheduled for December.