EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 16.7.2025
SWD(2025) 545 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Accompanying the document

Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on a framework of measures for the establishment of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and for health preparedness and response repealing Decision 1313/2013 (Union Civil Protection Mechanism).

{COM(2025) 548 final} - {SEC(2025) 545 final} - {SWD(2025) 546 final}

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List of acronyms

Term or acronym	Meaning or definition
ARGUS	Corporate coordination mechanism
ATHINA	Advanced Technology for Health Intelligence and Action IT system
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CRC	EEAS Crisis Response Centre
CRII and CRII+	Coronavirus response investment initiatives
CRM	Crisis Response Mechanism (EEAS)
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DRGs	Disaster Resilience Goals
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
ECPP	European Civil Protection Pool
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFSCM	European Food Security Crisis preparedness and response Mechanism
EMA	European Medicines Agency
EMFAF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EP	European Parliament
Erasmus+	Erasmus+ is a European Union program that supports education, training, youth, and sport
ERCC	European Response Coordination Centre
ESI	Emergency Support Instrument
EU4Health	The EU's programme for the Union's action in the field of health established by Regulation (EU) 2021/522, aiming to improve and foster health, protect people, ensure access to medical

	countermeasures and strengthen response to COVID-19's impact on medical and healthcare staff, patients and health systems in Europe.
European Solidarity Corps	EU funding programme for young people wishing to engage in solidary activities in a variety of areas
EUSF	The European Union Solidarity Fund
EWRS	Early Warning and Response System
FIMI	Foreign information manipulation and interference
HSC	Health Security Committee
Horizon Europe	EU's key funding programme for research and innovation
IHI	Innovative Health Initiative
IMERA	Internal Market Emergency and Resilience Act
IMI	Innovative Medicines Initiative
IPA III	The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPCR	Integrated Political Crisis Response
IRIS	Infrastructure for Resilience, Interconnectivity and Security by Satellite
JRC	Joint Research Centre (European Commission)
KAPP	Knowledge for Action in Prevention and Preparedness
MCM	Medical Countermeasures
MEDEVAC	Medical Evacuations in Emergencies
MFA	Macro-financial assistance
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MODEX	EU Module Exercises
NDICI- GE	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe

NGEU	Next Generation EU (Economic recovery package)
ProtectEU	Aims to increase the capabilities of EU Member States to protect societies and democracies from online and offline threats. It will guarantee that security implications are considered in all future EU policies.
REACT-EU	Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe
RescEU	Strategic reserve of European disaster response capabilities and stockpiles, fully funded by the EU
RRF	Recovery and Resilience Facility
SEAR	Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve
SG	Secretariat-General (European Commission)
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TAFF	Technical Assistance Financing Facility for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism

Glossary of key terms

Term	Brief explanation
All-hazards approach	An approach that covers the full spectrum of natural and human-induced risks and threats and brings together all the available tools.
Preparedness	In line with Decision 1313, 'preparedness' means a state of readiness and capability of human and material means, structures, communities and organisations enabling them to ensure an effective rapid response to a disaster, obtained as a result of action taken in advance.
Preparedness-by-design	A concept whereby preparedness and security considerations are integrated and mainstreamed across EU legislation, policies, and programmes. New policies, legislation, and programmes will be prepared or reviewed with a preparedness and security perspective in mind, consistently identifying potential impacts of the preferred policy option on preparedness and security.
Whole-of-government approach	An approach that brings together all relevant actors, across all levels of government (local, regional, national, and EU), promotes collaboration, policy coherence, and sharing of resources. It aims to address in a comprehensive manner increased risks and threats, their interaction, and their cascading effects. It includes effective cooperation between the civilian and defence authorities, and the coherent integration of internal and external dimensions.
Whole-of-society approach	An approach which fosters an inclusive culture of preparedness and resilience involving citizens, local communities and civil society, businesses and social partners as well as the scientific and academic communities.
Civil-military cooperation	In the context of this Impact Assessment, civil military cooperation refers to the cooperation arrangements between civilian authorities and military actors under various scenarios, primarily within the EU. For example, in an

	increasing number of scenarios (e.g. health emergencies, extreme weather events, hybrid and cyberattacks), civilian authorities need military support. In case of armed aggression, armed forces would require civilian support to ensure the continuous operation of the state and society.

1. INTRODUCTION: POLITICAL AND LEGAL CONTEXT

The implementation of the current and previous EU programmes, as also demonstrated by the relevant programme evaluations, has shown that the complexity of the funding architecture is the major factor hindering the impact of the EU budget. Currently, many programmes may finance the same activities, but without the same rules and conditions and there is insufficient flexibility to respond to unforeseen needs. This leads to inefficiencies and administrative burden for beneficiaries, Member States and the Commission. In addition, a difficult budgetary situation (with the start of NextGenerationEU repayments, the increasing number of EU priorities, and the tight fiscal situation of Member States) reinforces the need to reduce identified inefficiencies and administrative burden.

The Political Guidelines acknowledge that 'our spending is spread over too many overlapping programmes – many of which fund the same things but with different requirements and difficulties to combine funding effectively'. The Guidelines set out that the new long-term budget needs to be more focused, simpler, with fewer programmes, and more impactful.

In line with the Political Guidelines, the College adopted on 11 February 2025 the Communication 'The road to the next Multiannual Financial Framework', which states that 'the next long-term budget will have to address the complexities, weaknesses and rigidities that are currently present and maximise the impact of every euro it spends'. The Communication also underlines that flexibility is key in guaranteeing the budget's ability to respond to a changing reality.

In this political context, impact assessments for programmes under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) focus on how to streamline the architecture of the EU budget, thereby assessing the most important policy choices underpinning the legislative proposals for the future EU programmes. Policy aspects are considered in the analysis of the context, the problem definition, and the objectives, which inform the choices on the programme architecture. Given that the architecture of the new MFF will be significantly different from the current structure, assumptions on the budget of each programme would be unreliable at this stage. Therefore, the impact assessment does not include funding scenarios and, consequently, only qualitative cost benefit analysis is possible.

This reflects the specificities of this exercise, as clearly acknowledged in the Commission's better regulation rules, which this impact assessment follows. Tool #9 of the better regulation toolbox states that 'the special case of preparing a new MFF is a unique process requiring a specific approach as regards scope and depth of analysis'.

1.1 Political context

The EU is confronted by crises that are increasingly frequent and severe. Ranging from climate-related disasters to health crises and security threats, these crises have shown how vulnerable and

interdependent our societies have become. The causes of crises within our borders and beyond are increasingly interconnected, resulting in a dynamic and complex landscape of risks with combined effects. The Union's policy framework reflects a strong political will to meet these challenges.

For example, the European Council addressed cross-border resilience in its Conclusions in 2023[1] and 2024[2], acknowledging the persistent threats posed by climate change and security challenges in Europe and globally.[3] It also noted the importance of strengthening resilience in strategic areas through an **all-hazards and whole-of-society approach** to preparedness and response, including through the **Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)**[4] and underlined the need for enhanced and coordinated **military and civilian preparedness** and **strategic crisis management**.

All the above were echoed in the **Political Guidelines for the next European Commission (2024 – 2029)**[5 6], in which the Commission President called for a **whole-of-government** and a **whole-of-society** approach in crisis management, including a closer integration between civil and military capabilities.

In support of these ambitions, the October 2024 report of former Finnish President Sauli Niinistö **Safer together, Strengthening Europe´s Civilian and Military Preparedness and Readiness**[7] advocates for a proactive, comprehensive approach to preparedness, urging policymakers to embed preparedness across all policy areas and at all levels of society.

This political vision is captured in the **Preparedness Union Strategy of March 2025**[8], which underpins the commitment to robust crisis resilience, emphasising a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and laying out an ambitious roadmap for enhancing the Union's capacity to withstand and respond to future crises. It stresses the importance of anticipatory action, strategic foresight, improved early-warning, situational analysis and cross-sectoral coordination systems, EU wide integrated risk assessments (all-hazards), the use of lessons learnt, and improved civil-military and public-private collaboration. The Preparedness Union Strategy is complemented by the **European Internal Security Strategy**[9] and the **White Paper for European Defence**[10] to form a comprehensive framework to reinforce the Union's preparedness and resilience to crises.

Additional political context can be found in Annex 6.

1.2 Legal context

[1] European Council Conclusions of 29-30 June 2023.
[2] European Council Conclusions of 21-22 March 2024.
[3] This assessment was also shared by participants during the Open Public Consultation where the most common answer to which risks and threats respondents are considered as most threatening were disasters caused by climate change (874), followed by disinformation (464) and threats to biodiversity and animal/plant health (410). *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* European Commission, 2025, Annex 2.
[4] Established by Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism.
[5] *Political Guidelines for the Next European Commission 2024-2029.* European Commission, 2024.
[6] Council Conclusions of 21 September 2021, 21-22 October 2021, 16 December 2021, 23-24 June 2022, 18 July 2022, 17-18 April 2024, and 27 June 2024.
[7] *Niinistö Report - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.* European Commission, 2024.
[8] *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Preparedness Union Strategy.* European Commission, 2025.
[9] *European Internal Security Strategy – Press release.* European Commission, 2025.
[10] *Introducing the White Paper for European Defence and the ReArm Europe Plan- Readiness 2030.* European Commission, 2025.

In the area of crisis management coordination, the Union's action relies on a fragmented legal framework composed of both sectoral and cross-sectoral instruments[11]. This fragmentation necessitates broad coordination to achieve effective responses to increasingly complex crises. To support this, key cross-sectoral crisis coordination mechanisms include ARGUS for the Commission, the Crisis Response Mechanism (CRM) for the EEAS, and the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) for the Council. ARGUS facilitates information-sharing and coordination of the Commission's response, while the Crisis Response Centre (CRC) is the 24/7 crisis response capability for crises affecting EU citizens abroad and/or emergencies threatening the safety of the staff in EU Delegations. The IPCR paves the way for political response by bringing together Member States, EU institutions, and other essential stakeholders. Sector-specific strategies reflect this wide approach to crisis management, each designed to support the Union's crisis preparedness (see 1.1. Political context).

In the area of cross-sectoral and transboundary disaster and crisis response, one of the first instruments to be activated in times of crises is the UCPM. It is designed to prevent, prepare for, and respond to disasters both within and outside the EU. Article 1(2) of the UCPM Decision 1313 captures the cross-sectoral nature of the UCPM.[12] At the centre of this mechanism is the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which acts as a central hub where resource requests from participating countries are matched with capacities offered by Member States and Participating States, through the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP), as well as the rescEU strategic reserve.

In the area of health security preparedness and response, Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health creates a more robust mandate for coordination and cooperation as regards prevention and preparedness and for a more effective response to serious cross-border health threats, at both the EU and EU Member State levels. It strengthens prevention, preparedness and response planning; reinforces epidemiological surveillance and monitoring and established EU reference laboratories for public health; improves data reporting for early warning; and strengthens EU intervention. In addition, the Regulation 2022/2372 provides a framework of measures for ensuring the supply of crisis-relevant medical countermeasures in the event of a public health emergency at Union level. The EU4Health programme, established in the current MFF, provides support in the area of public health, including the area of pandemic preparedness and response (e.g. pandemic avian flu, biotoxin attack, COVID-19, Mpox), cancer treatment, global health challenges, and to improve healthcare for Ukrainian refugees, and displaced persons. This regulatory umbrella framework is further supported by the Commission's Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), which plays a central role within the European Health Union to bolster the EU's ability to promote research for, development and accessibility of innovative, safe, and affordable medical countermeasures. The European Medicines Agency (EMA)[13] and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)[14] have been empowered with reinforced mandates to ensure preparedness and support response

[11] In the **area of civil protection**, the Union acts under **Article 196 TFEU**, which designates civil protection as a supporting competence. Article 214 governs the Union's operations in the field of humanitarian aid. **Article 222 TFEU** obliges Member States to act jointly in a spirit of solidarity during terrorist attacks or natural or man-made disasters. Combating cross-border health threats is governed by Article 6, point (a), and Article 168(1) TFEU.

[12] "The protection to be ensured by the Union Mechanism shall cover primarily people, but also the environment and property, including cultural heritage, against all kinds of natural and man-made disasters, including the consequences of acts of terrorism, technological, radiological or environmental disasters, marine pollution, hydrogeological instability and acute health emergencies, occurring inside or outside the Union."

[13] Regulation (EU) 2022/123 on a reinforced role for the European Medicines Agency in crisis preparedness and management for medicinal products and medical devices.

[14] Regulation (EU) 2022/2370 amending Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 establishing a European centre for disease prevention and Control.

and manage medical supply chains effectively during crises.

Additional information on the legal context can be found in Annex 6.

1.3 Funding instruments

Under the current MFF, the Union's crisis management relies on programmes and instruments to reinforce and fund its efforts. While these play a relevant role in different policy areas, most of them were not designed specifically for crisis management and are funding the EU response to today's threat landscape in a patchwork approach.

Crisis response and recovery

The UCPM finances response and preparedness to disasters and crises. This includes the operational response to emergencies (e.g. transport, deployment of teams, and in-kind assistance), as well as the establishment and maintenance of the ECPP and the rescEU strategic reserve. Further, the UCPM supports capacity building activities and projects in EU Member States and UCPM Participating States leading to improved disaster prevention and preparedness, shared knowledge and expertise, good practices and networking, and research and innovation in disaster risk management.

The Emergency Support Instrument (ESI)[15] can be activated in response to disasters of exceptional scale and impact. The ESI was notably mobilised following the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure swift resource allocation to the Member States most in need.

The European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF)[16] supports Member States and accession countries by offering financial support after severe disasters. Support to neighbouring countries and beyond is important, as crises may originate outside of the EU and have spillover effects on Member States.

Cohesion Policy Funds are also crucial in supporting prevention and preparedness measures, with a particular focus on those most vulnerable and exposed regions. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cohesion Policy Funds have been used to support healthcare spending and address the economic consequences of the crisis.

The Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) programme extends the coronavirus response investment initiatives (CRII and CRII+) and constitutes a bridge to the long-term recovery plan. It supports investment projects that foster crisis-repair capacities and contribute to a green, digital, and resilient recovery of the economy.

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is the cornerstone of the NextGenerationEU package, supporting Member States' economic recovery post COVID-19, while also improving resilience and accelerating the green and digital transitions. RRF provides direct financial support to Member States, tied to legislative reforms across a wide range of policy areas, including crisis prevention, preparedness, and response.

The Internal Security Fund supports the strengthening of Member States capabilities, including in relation to managing security-related incidents, risks, and crises.

Health security preparedness

The EU4Health programme strengthens the EU and Member States' capacities for health threat preparedness and response and as such is partially overlapping with some areas of work of the UCPM. It financially supports the implementation of the EU's legislative and non-legislative initiatives through

[15] Council Regulation (EU) 2016/369 on the provision of emergency support within the Union.
[16] *European Union Solidarity Fund – Performance.* European Commission.

five strands of action, including one for health crisis preparedness. Additionally, EU health response capacities have also been bolstered through the development of rescEU strategic reserves of medical countermeasures.

Research, innovation and digital resilience

Horizon Europe, the EU's 9th framework programme for research and innovation, focuses on societal challenges, including health and civil security. With over EUR 8.2 billion and EUR 1.5 billion for the health and civil security clusters, respectively, it allocates funds for civil security such as measures to reinforce preparedness for CBRN incidents as well as funds for pandemic preparedness and response such as coronavirus research, climate change and impact on health, antimicrobial resistance research, and other areas critical to resilience and preparedness. Through established financing mechanisms and in cooperation with Member-States and international organisations (such as CEPI and EDCTP3), Horizon Europe's actions have supported critical clinical trials in e.g. coronaviruses or Mpox.

The Cyber Solidarity Act, as well as the Digital Europe Programme funding it, are designed to strengthen preparedness and incident response across the Union.

The EU Space Programme also supports EU and Members States' preparedness and crisis response by funding programmes like Copernicus, Galileo, GOVSATCOM (and in the future IRIS2) and the Space Situational Awareness (SSA) components. These initiatives respectively provide essential geo-spatial analysis, positioning, navigational and timing services, secure connectivity and in-space safety services, thus contributing to crisis monitoring and response.

Additional context on financial instruments can be found in Annex 6.

2. PROBLEM DEFINITION

It is important to note that the issues and objectives described in chapters 2, 3, and 4 are broad in scope and will be addressed through different instruments, in line with the Preparedness Union Strategy's principle of preparedness-by-design. Indeed, preparedness is not something that can be addressed by a single instrument or programme alone. As a result, the instrument linked to this impact assessment will *contribute* to resolving the issues and addressing the objectives. How exactly it will contribute is covered in subsequent chapters, especially Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Nevertheless, it is important to touch on the wider topic of preparedness, in order to provide a comprehensive picture that will need to be reflected across the next MFF architecture.[17]

Overall risk and threat landscape

The EU has been exposed to a series of crises over the last two decades. This ***polycrisis***[18], in its diversity, has a common denominator: **a strong transboundary and cross-sectoral dimension**.[19] The unprecedented multitude of health, climate, technological, and geopolitical risks confronting Europe, as well the important security implications of the many conflicts and crises raging around the EU, was highlighted by Niinistö in his report on civilian and military preparedness and readiness and reflect the challenges outlined in this problem definition.

Pandemics are one of the most impactful events for societies. While devastating, they are not unprecedented or rare events. In the past they were a "once-in-a-century" occurrence, but recent developments like globalisation and climate change are fast increasing their probability, frequency and severity.

The problem tree below provides an overview of the identified problems and their drivers, showing how risk factors cascade and combine, impacting the EU's ability to prepare for and respond to crises effectively.

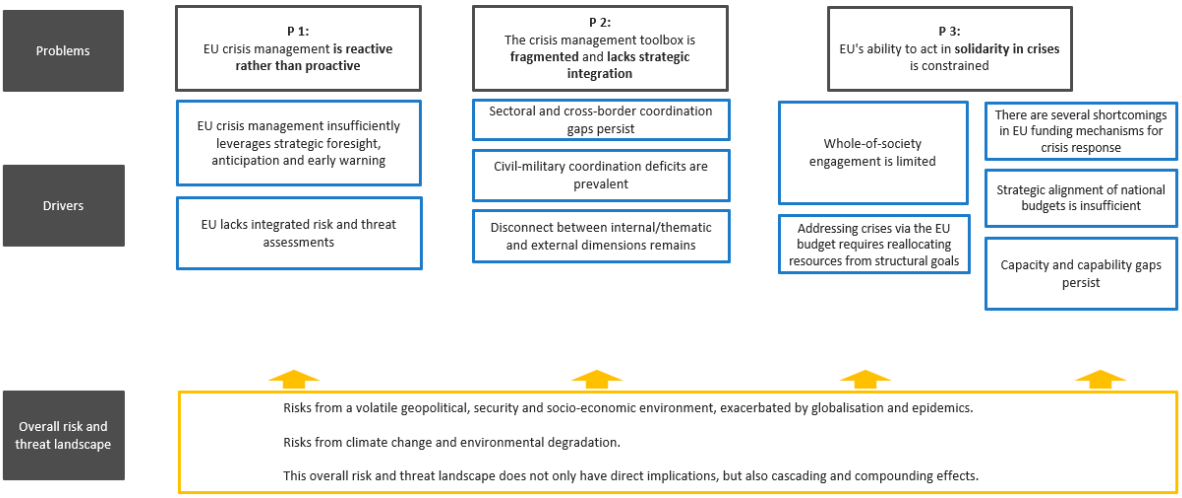

Figure 1- Simplified display of problem tree (see Annex 7 for larger version)

[17] Efforts to ensure this is reflected across the next MFF are ongoing, including on adding specific objectives and/or recitals in other relevant funding instruments and programmes.
[18] A polycrisis involves **overlapping and interdependent issues**, making it a more pervasive and enduring state of instability.
[19] *2023 Strategic Foresight Report*. European Commission, 2023.

Annex 6 provides useful contextual information on risks and threats stemming from (i) a volatile geopolitical, security, and socio-economic environment and (ii) climate change and environmental degradation, as well as corresponding cascading and compounding[20] effects.

Main problems for EU preparedness and response to crises

P1: EU crisis management is reactive rather than proactive

The EU is facing a risk landscape that affects all sectors, including public health, critical infrastructure, environmental systems, food security, cybersecurity, civil protection, transport, and energy, at all levels. While individual instruments at both the EU and national levels increasingly apply a multi-hazards approach, significant gaps remain in anticipating new risks and hazards and in consolidating relevant data across sectors. One of the key problems identified in the Commission evaluation of the UCPM (2017-2022) is the system's insufficient ability to anticipate crises[21].

Europe's evolving risk landscape often involves crises that occur simultaneously, some originated beyond its borders, and exacerbate one another, as illustrated by the cascading and compounding risks above.

Looking back, **none of the major crises during the last years were sufficiently anticipated and prepared for.**[22] Too often, the EU is preparing for the past crises rather than the future ones. While after every crisis, the Union adapted, developing new instruments and reinforcing the legal framework (e.g. European Health Union), before the Niinistö report brought attention to the concept, the EU lacked a preparedness-by-design approach in the development of its policy and financial instruments. For example, financial tools like REACT-EU are mobilised reactively in response to crises rather than being structured to anticipate and address risks proactively. The Recovery and Resilience Facility was created to mitigate the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19, aiming to make EU economies more resilient and sustainable so they can better withstand future shocks.

<u>EU crisis management lacks an integrated foresight, anticipation, and early warning</u>

While numerous risk- and sector-specific assessments and **early warning** systems exist[23], their insights are not brought together into a comprehensive all-hazards perspective required by the complex risk landscape. Indeed, the Commission's evaluation of the UCPM (2017-2022) highlighted persistent fragmentation among early warning systems and the need to improve the integration of data and information flows across Member States. This hampers the ability to understand how risks within and outside the EU interact, including their cascading effects and systemic vulnerabilities. **Scientific research, foresight, and technological advancements remain underused** in enhancing risk understanding, detecting emerging risks, and anticipating future crises. A key driver of this situation is the linear perspective on crises, which often begins with sectoral assessments (e.g. human life, infrastructure, or economic impacts) at the EU and national levels. This approach fails to adequately address non-linear risks, such as tipping points[24]. Supporting the above, according to the UCPM evaluation, the effectiveness of the UCPM was primarily hindered by the changing threat and risk

[20] Cascading effects are understood as spill-over effects; compounding effects are understood as simultaneous effects.
[21] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, p. 151-152. The study includes further references to lessons learnt and reports.
[22] *<u>Niinistö Report - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.</u>* European Commission, 2024, p.6.
[23]Including the Early Warning and Response System for human health, the Animal Disease Information System and the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed.
[24]Critical thresholds that, when crossed, lead to large, accelerating and often irreversible changes in complex systems, exemplary but not exclusively in the climate system.

landscape, as well as limitations to the scientific evidence base for disaster risk management.[25] More generally, and underpinned by the Draghi report, there is a lack of investment in research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in sectors supporting anticipation, prevention, preparedness, and crisis response. This could have a negative impact on competitiveness of the EU industry and strategic autonomy.[26] Addressing these challenges requires substantial adjustments to the EU's crisis management functioning, including improved resource allocation, legal framework adaptations, and strengthened cross-sectoral coordination.

The still limited use of **strategic foresight** at the EU level widens the gap in anticipating future crises in a systematic way and leveraging opportunities to improve preparedness. While there have been improvements at EU and national level in recent years, further efforts are needed to strengthen future-oriented intelligence, structures and mechanisms, including dedicated resources (see problem 3), to integrate strategic foresight more effectively into policymaking. These gaps at EU level in using strategic foresight and early warning systems were also pointed out during the Open Public Consultation with participants recommending to improve risk forecasting and support early warning systems.[27]

EU lacks integrated risk assessments

Despite the increasing efforts to strengthen the all-hazards approach to risk management and crisis preparedness, such as improving risk and threat assessments, promoting cross-sectoral coordination, and enhancing early-warning systems, obstacles remain.

Integrated risk and threat assessments are critical to ensuring that all potential hazards are identified, quantified, and their interconnections analysed, enabling a comprehensive strategy for anticipation, prevention, preparedness, and response. However, risk and threat assessments at both the EU and national levels are fragmented and do not leverage synergies across various sectoral evaluations.[28] This can lead to gaps and underestimation of risks and the potential benefits of investing in structural preparedness.

The Commission evaluation of the UCPM (2017-2022) emphasises the need to map and consolidate existing early warning tools and risk and threat assessments across the EU.[29] This would ensure that critical information is less fragmented and is better integrated into a strategic, pragmatic approach to crisis anticipation and response, both within and beyond the EU.

P2: Fragmented EU crisis management hinders the preparedness for and response to the new complexity of risks and threats

Coordination is a central component of effective and efficient crises preparedness and response. Over the last years, numerous crisis-related policy developments and legislative initiatives have been launched at EU level (see chapter 1).

While it can be argued that these efforts have enhanced the EU's capacity to address an evolving risk landscape, the absence of a strategic and systemic approach has resulted in an **increasingly fragmented EU crisis management architecture** (fragmentation in terms of financing instruments is covered under

[25] *Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (2017-2022).* European Commission, 2024.
[26] *Draghi Report*. European Commission, 2024.
[27] *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* European Commission, 2025, Annex 2.
[28] While we state the problem, we also need to look at the practical feasibility of it, due to particularities of hazards that require different datasets, models, and assets. As a reference, the MYRIAD and PARATUS are two project for multi-hazard risk assessments.
[29] *Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (2017-2022)*. European Commission, 2024, p.24.

Problem 3). In line with this, the World Bank highlighted in 2021 the need for an integrated approach to make the EU's resilience robust enough to handle simultaneous environmental, security, and technological risks.[30]

The risk of overlapping mandates and unclear roles and responsibilities within the EU's crisis management architecture is materialising with the proliferation of crisis management structures, mechanisms and instruments over the last years[31] and hinders the EU's crisis management capacity[32]. Such fast-paced and often ad-hoc expansion of sectoral capabilities contributes to the inefficient use of scarce resources, while also creating unnecessary administrative burden for the Commission, Member States' authorities, and other public and private partner entities. Moreover, this could obstruct critical information-sharing, coordination, and decision-making in times of crisis. The different information-sharing practices among EU institutions and Member States, as well as the limitations of the role and functioning of cross-sectoral, horizontal crisis management arrangements, such as the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) at Council-level, might further contribute to delaying crucial horizontal coordination to respond, as evidenced in the framework of conducted crisis-simulated exercises.[33]

Sectoral and cross-border coordination gaps persist

An inventory of the EU's crisis management mechanisms, tools, and instruments lists 56 entries, each with a defined scope and mandate, covering areas such as natural disasters, agriculture, health, cyber, or funding instruments. Despite efforts to mainstream crisis management across sectors, such as the UCPM's all-hazards approach and multi-hazard monitoring platforms, significant gaps remain.[34]

Many crises have a cross-border dimension and thus require cross-border cooperation. But significant obstacles to effective cross-border collaboration still persist, in particular in risk prevention. The 2024 REGIO-commissioned study, *Strengthening the Resilience of EU Border Regions,*[35] identifies hurdles such as administrative and regulatory barriers, lack of coordination and communication,[36] disparities in funding, resources, and institutional capacity, limited data sharing, cultural and language differences, legal and liability issues, and uneven public engagement. For instance, in public health, many EU Member States have concluded regional cooperation agreements including the possibility for medical evacuation of patients, the sharing of human resources and of medical countermeasures. These agreements often lack the necessary legal framework or operationalisation to ensure their applicability. Several reports from the Committee of the Regions,[37] the Commission,[38] as well as the Council[39] in 2024, highlight these issues but reveal the need for deeper structural reforms to streamline collaboration.

In terms of cross-border crisis communication between first responders, the current (national) critical communication systems used by Member States do not allow for interoperability, i.e. today, communication equipment used by civil protection, law enforcement, and medical responders cannot

[30] *Investment in disaster risk management in Europe makes economic sense.* World Bank, 2021.
[31] SG Analytical Note: Cross-sectoral mapping of European Commission's new crisis management capabilities (2020-2023), October 2024.
[32] https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SR-2024-12/SR-2024-12_EN.pdf.
[33] *Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (2017-2022).* European Commission 2024, p.32.
[34] *Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (2017-2022).* European Commission 2024, p.27.
[35] *Strengthening the Resilience of EU Border Region*s. European Commission, March 2024.
[36] Example: Communication equipment used by civil protection, law enforcement, cyber incident responders and medical responders cannot be used in the territory of other Member States.
[37] *Cross-border dimension in disaster risk reduction*. Committee of the Regions, June 2019.
[38] *Strengthening the resilience of EU border regions*. European Commission, March 2024.
[39] Roadmap to strengthen cross-border cooperation in crisis preparedness and response in 2024 (No. 11191/24).

be used in the territory of other Member States. This significantly reduces their capacity to efficiently cooperate and support each other, not only in case of major incidents or crises, but also during daily missions. The EU would need an updated secured information exchange system to allow for full inter-operability of Member States' critical communication systems and increase resilience of critical communication infrastructure.

Equally important to cross-border cooperation is cross-sectoral cooperation in terms of agencies. Law enforcement and other internal security authorities can function effectively only if they cooperate with others, notably in the areas of police and judicial cooperation, civil protection and emergency services. This is true for managing major internal security threats, hybrid threats, critical infrastructure incidents and for critical communication, among others.

Similarly, sectoral coordination is constrained by a lack of integration between policy instruments and processes, falling short of ensuring structural resilience of assets and societal systems at national and EU level.[40] A systems-based approach is needed to set clear requirements and incentives that account for co-benefits or negative impacts on other systems, beyond the immediate scope of decision.[41]

While the UCPM and humanitarian aid instruments aim to complement one another, their effectiveness is often hindered by fragmented responsibilities. Humanitarian aid typically falls under different ministries at the national level, complicating responses to transboundary and large-scale external risks and threats with internal implications. With regards to health-related crises, the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the importance of clear and coordinated approaches to public health and social measures, rapid scientific advice to facilitate policy decisions, or the need for a pan-European approach for faster and more effective research and development framework, enabled by a pipeline approach.[42] The lack of updated integrated response plans, insufficient coordination between environmental, animal and human health sectors, insufficient stockpiling mechanisms, and delayed detection and response have underscored the importance of strengthening EU – Member States' collaboration.

Civil-military coordination deficits are prevalent

Although civil and military actors would mutually benefit from increased cooperation, this remains limited both strategically and operationally. Civilian and military programmes often operate under distinct legal bases with differing funding requirements, and not all Member States support closer collaboration. Also in this domain, lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic should be considered. Despite the significant support provided across the Union by the military services to the civilian health response, further coordination and operationalisation of civil – military cooperation is needed. The lack of coordination reduces the EU's capacity to address complex crises that require multi-dimensional responses, such as hybrid threats, combined physical and digital attacks, armed attacks, or the disruption of critical infrastructure.

Disconnect between internal/thematic and external dimensions remains

Events outside the EU, including in the enlargement region, can have spill-over effects on the EU's internal security. As a result, addressing challenges within the EU, including with regards to climate, cyber, hybrid, health, migration, and critical infrastructure, amongst others, also comprises an external dimension. Despite this reality, the policies and activities of the EU's external action and internal security and resilience are insufficiently coordinated, leading to gaps in information sharing and

[40] *2024 European Climate Risk Assessment*. EEA, 2024.
[41] Example: Building a flood barrier that shifts waters to downriver residents making their risk exposure higher than before.
[42] A pipeline approach refers to a structured, sequential process designed to ensure continuous progress from initial concept or discovery to final delivery or implementation. In this context, the pipeline starts with risk identification and leads to prioritised procurement, stockpiling of materials, and rapid distribution during emergencies.

fragmented situational awareness[43]. The resulting inconsistencies in intelligence-sharing and analysis mean that the EU struggles to anticipate the impacts of external developments on its institutions and Member States.

P3: EU's ability to act in solidarity in crises is constrained

While the EU has been instrumental in fostering solidarity among Member States and citizens[44], the evolving risk landscape exposes existing and anticipated gaps in the EU's crisis management system. Concerning budgetary matters, the EU has mobilised its financial instruments during crises. However, most of these tools were designed under more optimistic circumstances and face structural limitations that reduce their overall effectiveness and efficiency in addressing today's challenges.

Whole-of-society engagement is limited

Successful crisis prevention, preparedness, and response to crises require the mobilisation of all levels of society, including individuals, local communities, non-governmental organisations, businesses, critical infrastructure operators, etc. Despite this, a whole-of-government approach remains underdeveloped.

Regarding population preparedness, according to a special Eurobarometer on population risk awareness and disaster preparedness,[45] 58% of EU citizens feel poorly prepared for disasters, and almost half would be unable to power their homes beyond a single day in the event of an electricity outage.

In addition, considering the cross-border nature of health emergencies, the Union's preparedness is uneven and insufficiently coordinated across Member States and globally. At global level, overlapping roles also result in lack of clarity and inefficiencies. This situation leads to ineffective risk communication and community engagement alongside insufficient population preparedness, uncoordinated patient transfer arrangements and limited capacity of the (public) health sector workforce.

The private sector's integration into crisis management policies is similarly limited, despite the crucial role that it plays in ensuring day-to-day life and continuity during emergency operations (i.e. logistics, communication, etc.). Between the start of the war against Ukraine and April 2025, the UCPM was able to channel close to EUR 15 million in goods from private companies and third countries to Ukraine and the region affected by the war[46]. Despite these success stories, cooperation with the private sector faces challenges due to the absence of a unified approach to engaging external stakeholders and the limited availability of coordination platforms to effectively integrate diverse resources and sectors into EU-level planning.[47]

Moreover, strategic investments in preparedness infrastructure and stockpiling remain equally underdeveloped.[48] [49]A comprehensive approach to strategic stockpiling involving both public and private actors can help mitigate risks of unexpected supply chain disruptions and price fluctuations thus

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[43] Example: The EU has lately increased its civil and military support to third countries, notably through the European Peace Facility, however this has not been sufficiently leveraged to enhance intra EU-security.

[44] *Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (2017-2022)*. European Commission, 2024, p.38.

[45] *Eurobarometer on disaster risk awareness and preparedness of the EU population*. European Commission, 2024.

[46] *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Capacity Progress Report on the Response Capacities of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism*. European Commission, 2025, p. 16.

[47] *Public-Private Partnerships in Disaster Risk Management: A European Policy Perspective.* European Commission, 2021; *The Role of the Military in Disaster Response: Global Trends and Challenges*. RAND Corporation, 2020; *Boosting Resilience through Innovative Partnerships: The Role of the Private Sector in Emergency Preparedness*. OECD, 2022.

[48] *Niinistö Report - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.* European Commission, 2024, p. 159.

[49] Acknowledging this shortcoming, the Commission currently prepares EU stockpiling and MCM strategies.

enhancing the preparedness for man-made or natural crises.[50]

Addressing crises via the EU budget requires reallocating resources from structural goals

In recent years, the response to crises has often required reallocating resources from budgets originally intended for achieving structural goals, in particular from cohesion policy. While these ad hoc solutions have contributed to a strong European response, they were time-demanding, and provided a piecemeal response to repeated, large and symmetric shocks, while weighing on other objectives under cohesion policy.[51]

There are several shortcomings in EU funding instruments for structural preparedness and crisis response

The EU's funding instruments reveal significant shortcomings[52] over the entire crisis management cycle. The need to coordinate diverse funding sources and varied eligibility rules complicates the pursuit of a coherent investment strategy for risk prevention, preparedness, and recovery. For example, actions related to health emergency response are financed under both EU4Health (for example emergency purchase of mpox vaccines), as well as the UCPM instrument (for example stockpiling of medical countermeasures).

In addressing long-term crises, such as energy supply needs in Ukraine or prolonged public health emergencies the EU lacks anticipatory budgeting mechanisms, while relying instead on programming and ad-hoc top-ups[53] that delay critical responses. Similarly, the time to effectively implement funds such as Next Generation EU[54] together with Member States in crisis preparedness measure was at times not sufficient. Another example of gaps in the current financial instruments concerns the lack of allocated funding for repatriation efforts e.g. medical evacuations. In 2022, there was a delay of about six months while seeking funding to assist Ukrainian nationals returning home after treatment in the EU. These specific challenges exemplify the rigidity and fragmentation problems within the EU crisis management system, limiting its ability to respond efficiently to evolving and long-term crises[55].

The EU Solidarity Fund's annual allocation for the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (SEAR) had to be increased for the years 2024-2027 given the increase in frequency and severity of natural disasters. Budgetary shortfalls in 2021, 2022, and 2023 necessitated proportionate reductions in allocated EUSF assistance to Member States, highlighting how financial needs have increased compared to the expectations at the time of MFF adoption.

EU funding for neighbouring countries and less developed regions within the Union is hampered by low institutional capacities, delaying critical investments in preparedness and response (see the below absorption challenges at national level). Moreover, fast allocation schemes for emergency research funding could be further defined to reinforce the facilitation of rapid support for crisis related research

[50] For example, in Finland the private sector is engaged through the Finnish National Emergency Supply Fund and National Emergency Supply Agency (NESA) to maintain compulsory stockpiles across different sectors which are owned and managed by private businesses.

[51] *Communication of the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – "The road to the next Multiannual Financial Framework"*. European Commission, 2025.

[52] *Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (2017-2022)*. European Commission, 2024, pp.46-47.

[53] *Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (2017-2022)*. European Commission, 2024, pp.46-7.

[54] *Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (2017-2022)*. European Commission, 2024, p.43.

[55] *Niinistö Report - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.* European Commission, 2024, p.17.

and innovation.[56]

In foreign policy, the EU's ability to react to new crises through the NDICI funding framework has become critical amidst the simultaneous crises in Ukraine, Middle East, and Sahel. The NDICI 'cushion' has already been largely mobilised for global and geo-political crises (COVID-19, Ukraine and Syrian refugee crises), raising concerns that the EU cannot react adequately any more to the increasing number of crises in different regions of the world.[57]

Strategic alignment of national budgets is insufficient

Strategic alignment of national budgets ensures public spending is coordinated with EU priorities, effectively addressing risks while avoiding funding gaps and leveraging synergies. Conversely, misalignment causes inefficiencies, such as uncoordinated projects that fail to comprehensively tackle vulnerabilities. At the same time, EU and Member States' budgets are fragmented, with limited mechanisms to support long-terms strategic investments or aligned priorities across sectors.

In the area of crisis management, including on disaster risk management and climate adaptation, the EU is not the sole, nor the largest source of investments, although it has been a key incentive and support to invest in crises preparedness and response. National reports on disaster risk management, submitted to the Commission under the UCPM legislation, provide limited information on the funding sources and volumes used to implement risk management measures.[58]

Scaling up investments in risk prevention, mitigation, and preparedness is challenging. Evidence points to under-investment at the national level, as outlined for instance in the 2023 review of climate adaptation progress in Member States[59] and in the European Court of Auditors' 2018 review of flood risk management plans[60]. Feedback from national civil protection authorities highlights three main categories: (i) issues with the financial and institutional frameworks, coordination, and awareness of risks/their impact; (ii) limitations in the human and technical capacity of civil protection agencies; and (iii) difficulties accessing and using EU financing sources.[61] Cross-border investments are further hindered by limited administrative capacity and complex institutional setups.[62] Additionally, investing in disaster resilience is often disincentivised by mismatch between those who pay for the investment versus those who benefit.

In its 2024 report on preventing and managing disaster risk, the Commission recommended that Member States increase funding for disaster risk management and climate adaptation, develop national disaster risk financing options, and focus more on prevention measures.[63]

Moreover, the capacity to 'absorb' the impact of disasters across the Member States is limited. Insurance coverage for public and residential assets are low, reserve funds are limited, and other types of risk transfer and contingency funding are lacking. The World Bank estimates that, on average, the combined total of the EU Solidarity Fund, reserve, and contingency funds available to Member States covers less

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[56] *The 'Scientific Opinion on Strategic Crisis Management'*. European Commission, 2022.
[57] *Evaluation of the European Union's External Financing Instruments (2014-2020 and 2021-2027)*. European Commission, 2024.
[58] *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council – On implementation of article 6 of the UCPM*. European Commission, 2024.
[59] *Commission staff working document – Assessment of progress on climate adaptation in the individual Member States according to the European Climate Law*. European Commission, 2023.
[60] *Is Europe on track towards climate resilience?* EEA, 2023.
[61] *Understanding the needs of civil protection agencies and opportunities for scaling up disaster risk management investments*. World Bank, 2021.
[62] *Strengthening the Resilience of EU Border Regions*. European Commission, March 2024.
[63] *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council – On implementation of article 6 of the UCPM*. European Commission, 2024.

than 4% of total government liabilities each year, considering worst-case flood and earthquake scenarios.[64]

Capacity and capability gaps persist

The current MFF and NGEU allowed to reinforce capacities, including stockpiles, at EU level (through the EU strategic reserve, rescEU). Nevertheless, there is no comprehensive overview of existing capacities and capabilities at national level, thus undermining EU efforts to effectively complement national efforts. Even the availability capacities in specific sectors, such as energy, medical, and CBRN stockpiles, are difficult to assess. Experience from the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war against Ukraine highlights the strategic importance of such coordinated capacities. Uneven capacity to address health threats could lead to ever more severe outbreaks and health emergencies, with dire consequences in morbidity and mortality, and important impact on our societies and economies.

At the same time, capacity and capability gaps are evident. This is underscored in the 10 Union-wide disaster scenarios[65] developed by DG ECHO and by a mapping of crisis management capabilities, tools, and instruments of the SG. To better assess the nature of the gaps in the area of civil protection, the EU conducts capacity gap analyses at EU level (no EU overview of existing other national capacities across the MS and Participating States exists). The same can be said in the area of serious cross-border threats to health, in particular regarding medical countermeasures, as robust preparedness planning, including estimation of needs, provisions on stockpiling, manufacturing, supply chain management, and research and innovation are lacking in many EU Member States.

However, all assessments depend heavily on Member States' reporting, which can leave blind spots in various sectors[66]. Governance and institutional capacity, particularly in less developed regions, remain key factors affecting the ability to implement prevention, preparedness, and reconstruction measures effectively.

Significant capability gaps remain in the areas of situational awareness and secured communication systems. For example, EU space services, including data and infrastructure, are not yet fully aligned with the Union's strategic needs for preparedness and response. This shortfall limits the EU's ability to address crises efficiently and proactively. Further, the different information-sharing practices among services as explained under above Problem 2, including between Council and Commission services, further contribute to delaying coordination capabilities.[67] There is no available information whether such sectoral and thematic exchanges take place at national level.

In terms of stockpiling of medical countermeasures – primarily handled by Member States and complemented by EU stockpiling under rescEU through grants – efforts lack coordination, particularly regarding the identification of priority threats and procurement processes, as well as the inclusion of innovative products.[68] Finally, response capabilities for medical and CBRN emergencies are continuously challenged by the rapid pace of innovation, and the emergence of novel threats, such as new viruses, pandemics, or low-cost "dirty bombs".

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[64] *Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness: Financial Risk and Opportunities to Build Resilience in Europe.* World Bank Group, 2021.

[65] The scenarios are: 1. Severe nuclear accident 2. Extreme winter weather with a cyber component 3. Extreme heatwave 4. Severe pandemic 5. Armed conflict 6. Terrorist attack 7. Energy crisis within the EU 8. Inland water and coastal pollution 9. Earthquake induced tsunami 10. Volcanic eruption.

[66] In specific instances an overview on specific national capacities can play a significant role in increasing the overall efficiency of the UCPM (such as for intensive care beds or burn ward availability).

[67] SG Analytical Note: Cross-sectoral mapping of European Commission's new crisis management capabilities (2020-2023), October 2024.

[68] EU's Stockpiling Strategy; Joint Action on stockpiling (starting in 2025), included in the *Commission work programme 2025*. European Commission, 2025.

3. WHY SHOULD THE EU ACT?

3.1 On which basis may the Union act?

The growing impacts of climate change, the emergence of health crises, and the increasingly complex global security landscape illustrate how threats and crises can severely disrupt key sectors across Member States and the Union. Addressing the problems identified in chapter 2, which challenge the EU crisis management architecture, necessitates examining whether Union-level action is required and to what extent.

The EU has a **supporting role in the areas of crisis management and civil protection**, which are primary competences of the Member States. The interplay of these Union competences reflects the interconnected nature of crises and the need for a Union level coordinated response when Member States' capacities prove insufficient. Firstly, **Article 122 TFEU** provides a flexible legal basis for swift Union action during crises, allowing exceptional measures to address severe difficulties, such as supply shortages or emergencies. This provision complements other Union competences, ensuring that the EU can effectively address situations where solidarity and collective responses are paramount, and has proven vital in crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and energy disruptions, supporting timely and effective EU action to protect citizens and critical systems.

In the area of civil protection, the Union acts under **Article 196 TFEU**, which designates civil protection as a supporting competence. Union level action and coordination becomes indispensable when the complexity or scale of a crisis overwhelms national capacities. Crises are increasingly transnational by nature, making anticipation, prevention, preparedness, and response efforts more effective when coordinated at Union level. This is further reinforced by **Article 222 TFEU,** which obliges Member States to act jointly in a spirit of solidarity during terrorist attacks or natural or man-made disasters, and **Article 42(7) TEU**, which mandates mutual defence among EU nations against armed aggression.

In the area of health security preparedness and response, the Union is empowered to complement national policies in combating serious cross-border health threats (Article 6, point (a), and Article 168(1) and (5) TFEU).

3.2 What makes EU action necessary? – Subsidiarity of Union action

Chapter 2 has identified three main roadblocks to a more efficient functioning of the Union's crisis management framework: It is often more reactive than proactive, overly fragmented, and constrained in its ability to act in solidarity during crises.[69] Addressing these challenges requires answering two fundamental questions: (1) can the identified problems be resolved effectively by Member States acting individually at national, regional, and local levels, and (2) can these problems be better addressed through coordinated action at Union level due to their scale or complexity?

The EU faces a wide range of crises and security challenges of transnational nature that demand a high degree of coordinated action to protect its citizens, resources, and infrastructure. These challenges are highly dependent on the Union's level of preparedness, which, as seen in recent years, remains insufficient. For this reason, Union action is necessary to build capacity for crisis response through strategic foresight, integrated risk management, enhancing capabilities for cross-border emergency response, cross sectorial integration and the elimination of knowledge gaps. For example, with regards to the persistent fragmentation among early warning systems and the need to improve the integration

[69] Chapter 2, figure 1.

of data and information flows across Member States, Member States individually would not be able to address this matter, as the cause of the fragmentation among early warning systems is their isolated development on a national level. Addressing these gaps at Union level would ensure a more consistent and effective approach to strategic foresight, planning and knowledge-based decision making.

As crises grow more multi-dimensional and cross-border, capability gaps must be addressed at EU level - either through EU-owned capacities or coordinated efforts among Member States. This would not only allow for better coordination of crisis response mechanisms operated at Union and national level but also ensure that EU assistance can reach all EU citizens in need, while having a longer-term positive impact to EU societies and economies. Critical capabilities, such as offered by the Galileo and Copernicus programmes, are sustainable only through collective action, creating strategic infrastructures that no Member State can achieve on its own.

Recent crises have illustrated the fact that action at national or regional level proved insufficient, thus highlighting the need for EU-level action, from COVID-19 (especially with regards to joint procurement), to the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine (logistics hubs), prepositioning of firefighters across Europe, and more.

Indeed, by definition, every activation of the UCPM indicates an overburden of a single Member State. The significant increase in the number of UCPM activations in recent years, as well as the growing number of countries that are activating the UCPM for the first time, thus evidence the necessity of EU action.Further information to section **3.2: What makes EU action necessary? – Subsidiarity of Union action** is included in Annex 6.

3.3 To which extent is EU action necessary? – Proportionality of Union action

As demonstrated in chapter 1, there is significant evidence and recent experience pointing at the need to strengthen EU preparedness and crisis management. Faced with increasingly severe crises and security threats, it has become clear that the Union must act not only to reinforce crisis preparedness but also to do so timely and intensively. Achieving this requires an all-hazard, a whole-of-government, and whole-of-society approach, including stronger synergies between sectors and between civil and military capabilities, which must be enshrined within an EU framework to ensure the necessary oversight, resources, and coherent investment.

In many sectors, the speed of progress remains insufficient, necessitating Union action to accelerate change. For example, as shown in the European Climate Risk Assessment, the current rate of adaptation lags behind the speed of climate change. The implementation of specific measures often depends on national and local authorities, whose capacities vary widely. Adjusting policy and decision-making processes to account for complex, multi-layer, and interacting risks, requires an investment that is not equally affordable to all Member States. Without EU level action, progress will continue to be uneven, potentially aggravating national and regional disparities within the Union. EU level intervention can ensure a common baseline, help to overcome structural barriers, and ensure that adverse risk environments are met with proactive and consistent responses.

Considering the above, the EU's crisis management framework must not only address the challenges posed by emerging crises but also adapt continuously to their intensifying scale and complexity. Strengthening this framework requires addressing the problems identified in chapter 2, while also reinforcing Union's investments and commitments to align with the subsidiarity principle. These actions are both proportionate and necessary to achieve the EU's political objectives and treaty obligations effectively.

Further information to section **3.3 To which extent is EU action necessary? – Proportionality of Union action** is included in Annex 6.

4. OBJECTIVES: WHAT IS TO BE ACHIEVED?

In order to address the issues identified in chapter 2, the EU crisis management system[70] must be equipped to meet four general objectives. **These all contribute to the overarching goal to protect people in the Union against crises.**

The General Objectives are reflective of the principles enshrined in the Preparedness Union Strategy. As such, they are not only ways of achieving the overarching goal to protect people in the Union against crises but are also objectives in and of themselves.

- **General Objective 1 (GO1)**: implement an integrated all-hazards, anticipatory, and proactive approach to threat and risk management;
- **General Objective 2 (GO2)**: implement an efficient and effective cross-sectoral coordination framework for various crises in a whole-of-government approach;
- **General Objective 3 (GO3)**: ensure a whole-of-society approach to preparedness and response to crises;
- **General Objective 4 (GO4):** ensure the Union is equipped to act timely, flexibly and in solidarity, to protect people in the Union against crises, including health.

The below figure provides a holistic overview of the problems and its drivers with the general (GOs) and specific objectives (SOs).

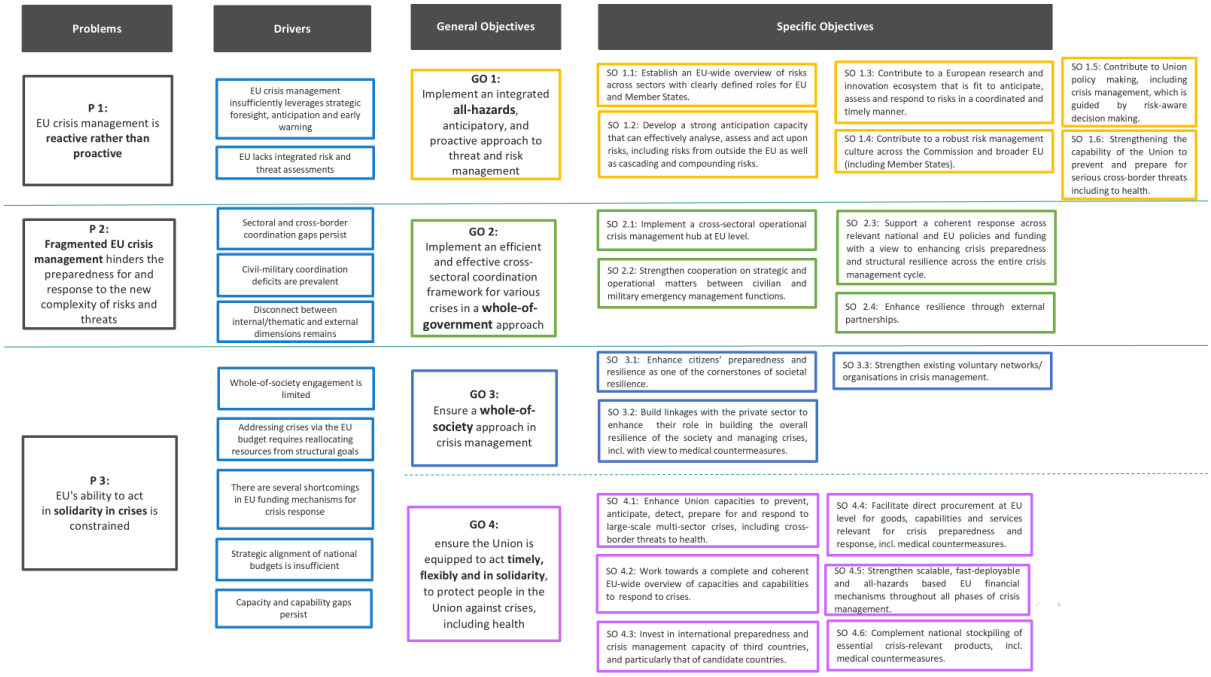

Figure 2 - Problem tree with the general (GOs) and specific objectives (SOs) (for larger version see Annex 7)

GO 1: Implement an integrated all-hazards, anticipatory, and proactive approach to threat and risk management

SO 1.1: Establish an EU-wide overview of hazards and risks across sectors with clearly defined

[70] Throughout this text, crisis management refers to the whole cycle that includes risk awareness, preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery.

roles for EU and Member States.

SO 1.2: Develop a strong anticipation capacity that can effectively analyse, assess and act upon threats and risks, including external, cascading, and compounding risks.

SO 1.3: Contribute to a European research and innovation ecosystem that is fit to anticipate, assess, and respond to risks in a coordinated and timely manner.

SO 1.4: Contribute to a robust risk management culture across the Commission and broader EU (including Member States).

SO 1.5: Contribute to Union policy making, including crisis management, which is guided by risk aware decision making.

SO 1.6: Strengthening the capability of the Union to prevent and prepare for serious cross-border threats, including to health, by supporting data and intelligence gathering, and information exchange, including on medical countermeasures.

Overview

Foresight and early identification of potential risks are essential tools for preventing crises or minimising their impact. Scientific and anticipatory analysis provide valuable time to take appropriate action to prevent crises. Where prevention is not possible, foresight, early identification, and warning allow for robust preparation, early action and mitigation of consequences.

The objective is to implement an integrated all-hazards approach across the EU and Member States. This approach encompasses threats to life, health, food supply, the Single Market, supply chains, natural resources, or critical infrastructure, and is meant to inform all relevant actors both at Union and Member States levels. It would also inform international partners of the cascading risks from global challenges. To succeed, strong partnership between the Union, Member States, scientific institutions, and private entities is necessary, fostering the application of state-of-the-art methodologies.

Future reform and investment needs at EU level

The changing threat landscape demands the strengthening of capacities in foresight, anticipation, and early warning at both EU and national level. To realise this vision, the EU needs to be able to connect all competent institutions and information relevant for anticipatory and foresight activities. Better consistency and comparability between the Union and Member States approaches is critical and can be achieved by pooling analytical capacities, harmonising risk assessment parameters, and strengthening data-sharing across actors and borders.

An EU-wide integrated and shared overview of threats and risks across sectors and levels of governance should guide investments in prevention and preparedness. This comprehensive risk understanding would support decision-making during crises, ensuring resources are allocated efficiently and effectively.

In order to enhance the science-policy interface, investments in Research and Innovation (R&I) should prioritise areas with significance to the EU's resilience, including public health, artificial intelligence, and cyber-security.[71] It is estimated that an additional overall investment needs of EUR 10 billion per

[71] This view was further supported by participants during the Open Public Consultation: The strongest call for a single action was related to digital innovation and cyber defence with multiple position papers calling for the establishment of a sovereign

year, is needed for preparedness and response to pandemics at a global scale, with surveillance and early warning identified as priority pillars.[72] [73] Furthermore, the adoption of new legislation, the review of regulatory frameworks or the creation of new funding instruments envisage a preparedness-by-design approach, as also suggested in the Niinistö report. This involves ensuring that all future legal frameworks and funding instruments prioritise preparedness as a core objective, while embedding resilience and risk mitigation at every level of Union action. Member States can use derogations from certain provisions when needed to mitigate risk to human lives during large-scale life-threatening disasters, whether natural or man-made.

GO 2: Implement an efficient and effective cross-sectoral coordination framework for various crises in a whole-of-government approach

SO.2.1: Implement a cross-sectoral, operational, crisis management hub at EU level.

SO.2.2: Strengthen cooperation on strategic and operational matters between civilian and military emergency management functions.

SO.2.3: Support a coherent response across relevant national and EU policies and funding with a view for crisis preparedness and structural resilience across the entire crisis management cycle.

SO.2.4: Enhance resilience through external partnerships.

Overview

Coordination is fundamental component of a comprehensive, all-hazards approach to crisis preparedness and of an effective crisis response. Over the last years, numerous crisis-related policy developments and legislative initiatives have been introduced (see chapter 1&2), strengthening the EU's capacity to respond to the changing risk landscape. This progress, in particular in sectoral approaches, has enhanced early detection capabilities and crisis preparedness in key policy areas. However, this has also led to fragmented and overlapping efforts within the EU crisis management architecture. Parallel initiatives, insufficient integration across sectors and lack of interoperability of instruments create inefficiencies and hinder opportunities for synergies.

The objective is to establish an effective and efficient cross-sectoral coordination framework in an all-hazards approach. Embedding all relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral EU crisis management instruments in a coherent framework will maximise synergies and ensure a swift and efficient response.

Moreover, the EU must better align the internal and external dimensions of risks and crisis management, particularly as transboundary and global crises increasingly blur these distinctions. The COVID-19 pandemic and aftermath of the economic crisis of 2008-09, among others, showed that the multilateral system and international organisations contribute to avoiding, reducing, sharing, and preparing for risks and minimising impacts.

Future reform and investment needs at EU level

To achieve a cross-sectoral crisis coordination framework, in a whole-of-government approach, requires targeted reforms and investments. Firstly, information sharing and coordination mechanisms within the EU Institutions and between Member States must be adapted to improve synergies and avoid

or "freedom-themed" tech fund modelled after Germany's Sovereign Tech Fund. *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* European Commission, 2025, Annex 2.

[72] *Analysis of Pandemic Preparedness and Response (PPR) architecture, financing needs, gaps and mechanisms.* World Health Organization and the World Bank, 2022.

[73] *Draghi Report*. European Commission, 2024.

duplications. Instruments and policies should work seamlessly together across various scenarios, including those requiring civil-military cooperation. This would involve creating an EU hub for crisis coordination, to connect all sectoral instruments and ensure a coherent response. Secondly, the EU must review decision-making procedures in times of crises (including the existing IPCR arrangements), to ensure they are fit for purpose within the existing Treaties.

Finally, investments are needed to align regulatory frameworks, harmonise technical parameters and modernise communication structures across EU institutions and Member States (as listed in chapter 1). Establishing a whole-of-government approach to crisis management also includes bolstering administrative and technical capacities at national level to ensure that Member States can effectively implement EU funded projects that aim to prevent, prepare for or respond to crises. These investments will enable additional analytical and operational capacities, essential for a truly integrated crisis coordination framework.

GO 3: Ensuring a whole-of-society approach to preparedness and response to crises

SO.3.1: Enhance citizens' preparedness and resilience as one of the cornerstones of societal resilience.

SO.3.2: Build linkages with the private sector to enhance their roles in building the overall resilience of society and managing crises, including with regards to medical countermeasures.

SO.3.3: Strengthen existing voluntary networks/organisations in crisis management.

Overview

Effective crisis management requires everyone – citizens, civil society, businesses, research institutions, investors, and governments – to understand their roles and act cohesively in the face of crises such as natural disasters, pandemics, or armed conflict. Enhancing societal resilience not only ensures more optimal outcomes during crises but also reduces the costs of response and recovery[74].

While preparing citizens for crises is a Member States' prerogative, perceived more and more as an obligation, the EU plays an active role in promoting a whole-of-society approach though projects like PreparEU or financing instruments like the Recovery and Resilience Facility, cohesion funds, and research and innovation programmes. However, the adoption of whole-of-society thinking and action must be coherent at both national and EU level. This includes fostering citizens' trust through effective communication based on scientific evidence and empowering their skills, media literacy, employability, and social inclusion, which is necessary to better cope with and recover from crises.

As highlighted in the Niinistö report[75], citizens' preparedness is cornerstones of societal resilience, which increases effectiveness and reduces the cost of managing crisis. Engaging citizens as active participants in their own resilience through risk awareness, preparedness training, and direct involvement in crisis prevention (through the participation in designing measures) and response is vital. Vulnerable populations, often the hardest hit by crises, face additional challenges due to economic disparities, such as high poverty levels and low employment rates.

The private sector has a major role in crisis preparedness and response in critical sectors such as food, energy, health, natural resources, transportation, and telecommunication. This potential must be maximised at the EU, national, regional, and local levels.

[74] See also: outcome of the *Eurobarometer on disaster risk awareness and preparedness of the EU population*. European Commission, 2024.
[75] *Niinistö Report - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.* European Commission, 2024, pp.19-21.

Future reform and investment needs at EU level

Adopting a whole-of-society approach in crisis preparedness and response requires streamlined implementation across all available EU and national funds and programmes, alongside cross-sectoral risk assessments.

The involvement of the private sector is key across prevention, preparedness and response, including in terms of leveraging technology and artificial intelligence. Private and public investments can guarantee financing and research and innovation, and ensure the resilience of key private infrastructure and services, such as energy, water, food, and communications.

GO 4: Ensure the Union is equipped to act timely and in solidarity

SO.4.1: Enhance Union capacities to prevent, anticipate, detect, prepare for and respond to large-scale, multi-sector crises, including cross-border threats to health.

SO.4.2: Work towards a complete and coherent overview of capacities and capabilities to respond to crises.

SO.4.3: Invest in international preparedness and crisis management capacity, particularly that of candidate countries.

SO.4.4: Ensure access at EU level for goods, capabilities and services relevant for crisis preparedness and response, including medical countermeasures.

SO.4.5: Strengthen scalable, fast-deployable, and all-hazards based EU financial mechanisms throughout all phases of crisis management.

SO.4.6: Complement national stockpiling of essential crisis-relevant products, including for medical countermeasures.

Overview

The ability of the Union to act promptly and in solidarity during crises is critical to protect lives, sustain livelihoods, and maintain societal resilience. Achieving this goal requires a combination of enhanced capacities, better use of resource, and innovative financing solutions. The Commission and the EEAS must work closely with Member States and other stakeholders to optimise the use of existing resources, while exploring innovative solutions to support preparedness and resilience initiatives.

Efforts to include preparedness by design across EU instruments and policies should be intensified. Such initiatives can significantly reduce the human and economic toll of crises, while promoting an efficient use of resources. Budgetary flexibility and financial preparedness are essential for effective crisis management, supporting rapid mobilisation of funds for immediate crisis response and long-term prevention and preparedness initiatives.

Existing funds and policies must complement one another throughout the entire crisis management cycle. For example, future funding, particularly under cohesion policy, needs to continue fostering a culture of preparedness both within Member States and across the EU. This has to be complemented by funds for post-disaster emergency and recovery operations as a tangible expression of EU solidarity.

Based on threat and hazard scenario (see also Objective 1), centralised capacities at EU level (e.g. stockpiles, response capacities, etc.) must be adequately equipped to act in solidarity when Member States' resources fall short, particularly in addressing the transboundary impacts of crises. Furthermore, the EU institutions must ensure the coordination of response activities across sectors and Member States for both shot and long-lasting crises, inside and outside the EU.

Future reform and investment needs at EU level

Investment needs across sectors highlight the scale of the challenge. Pandemic preparedness alone requires an additional USD 10.5 billion annually, according to the World Health Organization and the World Bank.[76] Climate adaptation costs for the EU Member States are estimated to range between EUR 15–64 billion per year through 2030[77], while the defence sector faces an investment gap of EUR 500 billion over the next decade.[78] These significant gaps underscore the need for structural reforms to ensure crisis resilience. Geopolitical shifts must also be considered, while investment gaps in dual-purpose initiatives like military mobility need to be further explored to maximise value for both civilian and military infrastructure.

Preparedness-by-design must become an integral part of EU funding, incentivising an all-hazard approach, which reduces reliance on reactive crisis management. By acting as a major co-financing source, EU funds set standards for preparedness, by embedding it structurally, thus helping national authorities, the private sector and project promoters to adopt good/best practices, including in non-EU-funded projects.

EU-level capacities, such as rescEU stockpiles and capabilities managed by the Commission, have proven crucial in addressing major crises, offering an indispensable complement to Member State capacities.[79] EU level investments will continue to be necessary, including to maintain health emergency capacities such as surveillance, emergency medical and public health teams, medical evacuation and repatriation of severely wounded or sick patients but also to maintain supply of medical countermeasures. This should be done by harnessing all tools such as joint and direct procurement, stockpiling or using innovative financial instruments like capacity reservation contracts or loans.

Maintaining and expanding these capabilities is estimated to cost at minimum of EUR 13 billion until 2034[80]. Further investments are needed also for EU space assets and services, including satellite communication, earth-observation, positioning, navigation, timing services, and space situational awareness, which contribute to preparedness and efficient crisis management[81]. Moreover, capacities and capabilities in the areas including critical infrastructure, energy, cyber and hybrid threats, will need to be further developed at Member States and EU level. This should also make use of direct and joint procurement, as well as innovative funding, including incentivising private sector investments[82].

[76] *The WHO Council on the Economic of Health for All*. June 2024.
[77] *Climate Adaptation Costing in a Changing World*. World Bank, 2024.
[78] *Remarks by President Charles Michel following the European Council meeting of 27 June 2024*. European Council, 2024.
[79] *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Capacity Progress Report on the Response Capacities of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism*. European Commission, 2025.
[80] Combined internal HERA and ECHO calculation on rescEU needs.
[81] See defence and space impact assessment for further details.
[82] Further lists funding options can be found in *Niinistö Report - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.* European Commission, 2024, chapter 9.

5. WHAT ARE THE AVAILABLE POLICY OPTIONS?

The first four chapters of the impact assessment took on a broad scope covering "civil protection, preparedness and response to crises" across all relevant sectors, including but not limited to civil protection, including elements of health security preparedness. Keeping this broader context in mind, the following chapters discuss several policy options that each address the previously identified problems and objectives, albeit to varying degrees and from different angles. The scope of the policy options is in line with the legal proposal associated with this impact assessment.

Before delving into the description of the policy options, a fundamental difference in the budget architecture between policy options 1 and 2, on the one hand, and policy option 3, on the other, needs to be highlighted (see also figure 3):

- Policy options 1 and 2 propose a "complementary" approach to preparedness as horizontal priority integrated in both the UCPM/UCPM 2.0 in synergy with other programmes.[83] The success of the activities of UCPM/UCPM 2.0 is complementary with but not dependent on the preparedness-by-design approach in the rest of the MFF.
- Policy option 3 proposes to centralise all preparedness elements under a single Preparedness Fund. In contrast to options 1 and 2, option 3 would thus disconnect preparedness from the other relevant policies, thus creating silos and would be difficult to implement politically.

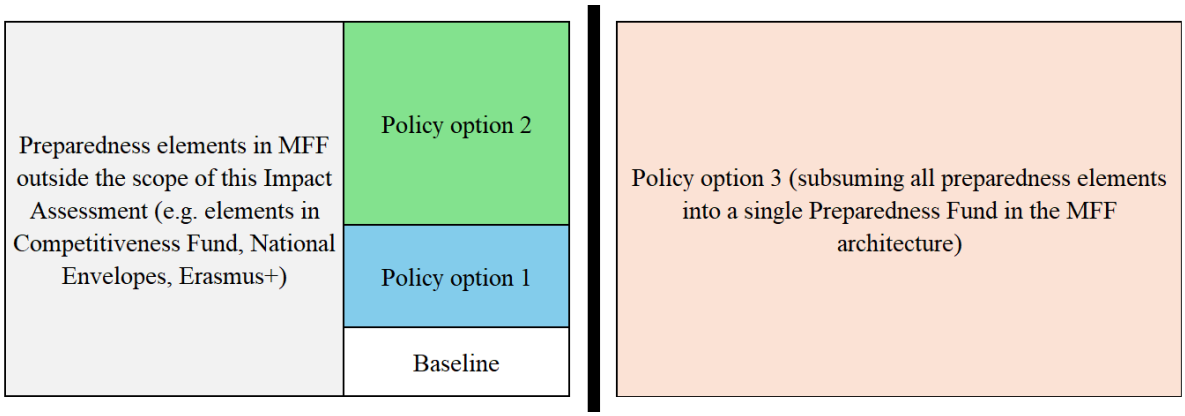

Figure 3 - Preparedness in MFF architecture under the different options (indicative, the size of the fields does not resemble the share of the MFF portfolio)

Finally, an element that spans all three policy options is the need for a simple, flexible, and integrated budget structure given that the instrument will be by definition a crisis instrument which needs to be able to support Member States and third countries with a minimum level of constraints. Nevertheless, this need for flexibility and responsiveness will need to be balanced with the need for prevention and preparedness-related activities, such as anticipation, foresight, and capacity development. All policy options seek to address the latter in varying degrees.

[83] For example: Competitiveness Fund, including specialised research and innovation; National Envelopes, including forestry and floods management, energy, and critical infrastructure; Erasmus+ especially regarding population preparedness; or the Connecting Europe Facility, including cross-border critical infrastructure projects, satellite imagery.

What is the baseline from which options are assessed?

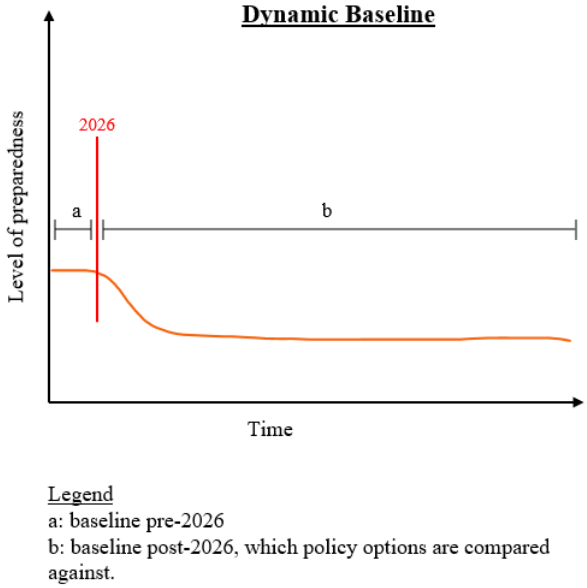

Figure 4 - Visualisation of dynamic baseline

The baseline entails no legal or policy change to the current situation and the existing EU framework. It is dynamic in so far as that, in addition to socio-economic developments, funds from NGEU are temporary to the instrument as they will not be extended post-2026. While constituting a simplification, it is thus nevertheless useful to conceptualise this dynamic baseline in two parts: a) pre-2026 and b) post-2026.

Pre-2026 dynamic baseline

For the activities under the UCPM, the independent support study established a comprehensive baseline description[84]. Figure 5 visualises the different UCPM actions forming part of the baseline.

[84] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF.

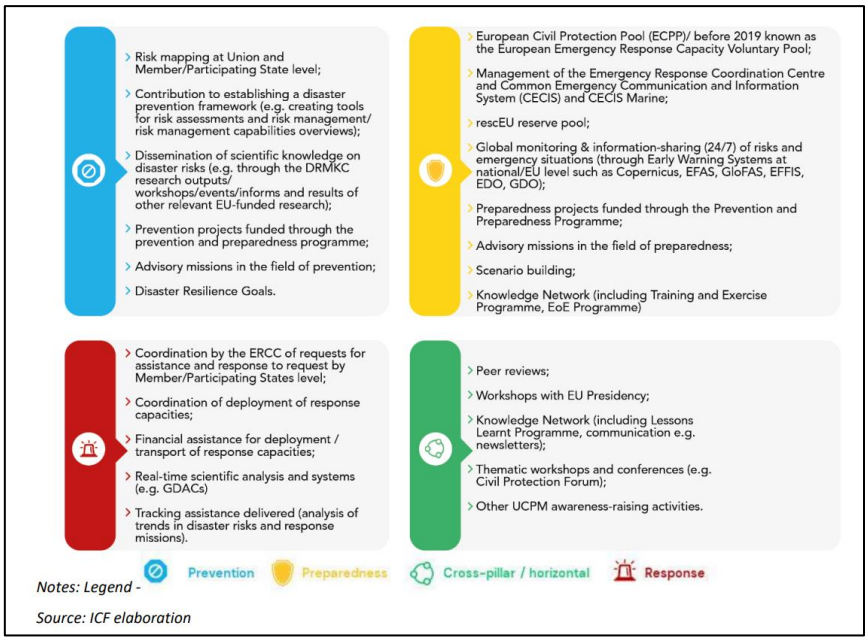

Figure 5 - UCPM activities, pre-2026 (source: Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF). See Annex 7 for larger version

In this baseline, risk assessments for civil protection and health-related activities are conducted strictly along sectoral lines at EU-level (e.g. European Climate Risk Assessment). Anticipation, strategic foresight, and early warning activities are undertaken at EU-level (including through basic analysis, anticipatory, foresight, and early warning work by JRC, ERCC, ECDC, EFSA, HERA, EEAS Crisis Response Mechanism and EEAS/INTPA/NEAR/FPI toolset for EU Conflict Analysis and Conflict Early Warning) but in a largely disconnected way among the actors, including for intelligence on health threats requiring medical countermeasures.

Partnerships with actors in research and innovation are primarily established and maintained at national level. Knowledge sharing in the area of civil protection is implemented through the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network[85], in cooperation with other services like the JRC.

Capacity building at EU level is implemented through project funding to authorities and stakeholders (for example through grants, peer reviews, advisory missions, exchange of experts), as well as through trainings and exercises.

Response capacities at EU-level are being established and maintained both under the ECPP and rescEU, including stockpiles for a wide range of risks, including for health-related risks. As part of the baseline, there are already efforts to close capacity gaps, including in terms of increasing medical stockpiling, as well as the rescEU firefighting fleet, which was doubled from 2022 to 2023.[86] Nevertheless, despite these efforts, the external support study also highlights persisting capacity gaps and noted that it is "highly relevant" to ensure furthering the development of rescEU capacities to increase its preparedness

[85] The Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network, established in 2021, is a collaborative platform connecting first responders, disaster risk managers, scientists, and decision-makers to find resources, expertise and opportunities for exchange. For more information, see https://civil-protection-knowledge-network.europa.eu/.
[86] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, p. 23.

capacities.[87] In order to achieve the latter, there is a clear need for more comprehensive needs assessment.[88]

Sectoral emergency response coordination is implemented through the ERCC, which exclusively focuses on civil protection and humanitarian emergency response. Cross-sectoral crisis coordination at EU-level occurs only in a – largely reactive - ad-hoc manner based on cooperation between different DGs and Member States. In this area of operation, the ERCC already plays a critical role in enhancing coordination between Member States, Participating States and third countries – one of the main elements of the UCPM's EU added value.[89] However, complex procedures and decision-making processes minimised this impact and thus hindered the effective and efficient use of resources at national and EU level.[90]

Crisis coordination for cross-border health threats is implemented through different fora, such as the Health Security Committee, coordinating prevention, preparedness and response planning and implementation following an alert[91], risk and crisis communication, the HERA Board, assisting the Commission to ensure access and availability of medical countermeasures, as well as the Health Crisis Board coordinating action by the Council, the Commission, the relevant Union bodies, offices and agencies, and Member States to ensure the supply of and access to crisis-relevant medical countermeasures in a public health emergency.

Population preparedness is organised at national level and is complemented by EU-level projects in targeted areas. Private sector engagement occurs primarily at national level, including with view to capacity building, stockpiling of essential goods, resilience of critical entities, and resilience of critical supply chains. In response to the arising needs for closer engagement, the first rescEU stockpile for specialised private sector donations was set up following Russia's attack on Ukraine was considered "particularly successful" but is limited to a very narrow aspect of cooperation with the private sector, namely the area of donations. As a result, the UCPM evaluation noted a large untapped potential for UCPM cooperation with the private sector.[92]

As part of the pre-2026 baseline, health preparedness related activities address serious cross-border health threats by continuing prevention, preparedness, epidemiological surveillance, emergency research, and regular reporting and assessment of the state of preparedness at both the EU and Member State levels, as well as the supply of crisis-relevant medical countermeasures. Response activities, including for EU4Health, are conducted predominantly in complementarity under with the UCPM and other crisis instruments umbrella, while coordination takes place in the Health Security Committee (e.g. issuing an opinion with recommendations for response such as for the vaccination against mpox[93]) and the HERA Board and the Health Crisis Board where activated.

[87] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, p.39.
[88] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, p.22.
[89] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, p.37.
[90] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, p.46.
[91] Criteria for alerting are defined in Article 19 (1) of Regulation 2022/2371.
[92] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, p.28.
[93] *HSC Recommendations for a common EU approach regarding vaccination policies for monkeypox outbreak - response 2022*. European Commission, 2022.

Post-2026 dynamic baseline

Under the post-2026 dynamic baseline, it is assumed that the NEGU funds are not extended beyond 2026 and thus rescEU capacities purchased under these funds, including CBRN-related and health security-related, will be phased out (in line with the budget availability for maintenance and replenishment under the current MFF[94]). This includes rescEU stockpiles under all EU instruments. Concretely, this means that only Aerial Fire Fighting (AFF) capacities continue to be maintained at basic levels. This situation poses additional demands on the national level (including through increasing demands of the ECPP) to close the gaps for response capacities for long-lasting, "high impact – low probability", and specialised situations and risks.

The very limited response capacities at EU level will over time imply as indirect consequences (i) a duplication of efforts on the national level; (ii) failure to make use of economies of scale by leveraging the EU's purchasing power; (iii) capacity gaps with view to low probability, high impact risks, such as those related to nuclear events[95]; (iv) overall capacity gaps with view to complex and long-lasting crises, due to a lack of a reliable EU-level reserve of response capacities.

Another characteristic of the post-2026 baseline is that it will be impossible to uphold even the current limited-in-scope cooperation between the UCPM and the private sector, particularly the rescEU warehouses that host private sector donations.

Given the evolving risk landscape outlined in chapter 2, the post-2026 ERCC set-up will likely be unable to uphold the current hight response rate to activations due to a lack of sufficient EU-level response capacities.[96] In combination with reduces EU-level capacities (stockpiles and ECPP) this situation would require the national levels to step up its (bilateral) coordination capabilities and provide additional response capacities.

The lack of a coordination on population preparedness and the consequent mismatch in national levels of preparedness will over time lead to an overall lower preparedness across the Union, negatively impacting citizens. Linked to this, EU citizens will experience limited EU solidarity first-hand, a crucial contributor to the EU's positive image. Furthermore, vulnerable communities may experience varying levels of contingency planning and preparedness depending on their Member State, potentially exacerbating existing vulnerabilities based on national contexts. Lastly, learning from best practices in population preparedness will be more challenging.

From a policy perspective, synergies and complementarities between the UCPM and other EU activities (e.g. cross-border health threat response, consular support activities, critical infrastructure, and internal security), and with national authorities (on stockpiles, warehousing, and pre-positioning of essential items), are achieved to a very small extent. The EU4Health programme will phase out after 2027.

[94] Especially given that the MFF-part of the UCPM budget was reduced as a response to the temporary NGEU funds.
[95] No such capacities would exist on the EU level. On national level, it may not be feasible for smaller and medium-sized Member States to acquire such assets. Even larger Member States may find it impractical to invest in capacities for low probability, high impact risks.
[96] The added value of coordination provided by the ERCC relies on both the Member State-owned capacities of the ECPP, as well as importantly the rescEU capacities. Without the latter, this added value diminishes.

Description of the policy options

The below policy options build on each other. Elements, that are described in option 1 and remain unchanged in options 2 and 3, are not repeated and should be considered as a given. All actions described below are complementary to and in support of efforts on the national level (the support competence underlines the selection of policy options). A simplified, overall intervention logic, including the policy options, is depicted in figure 6.

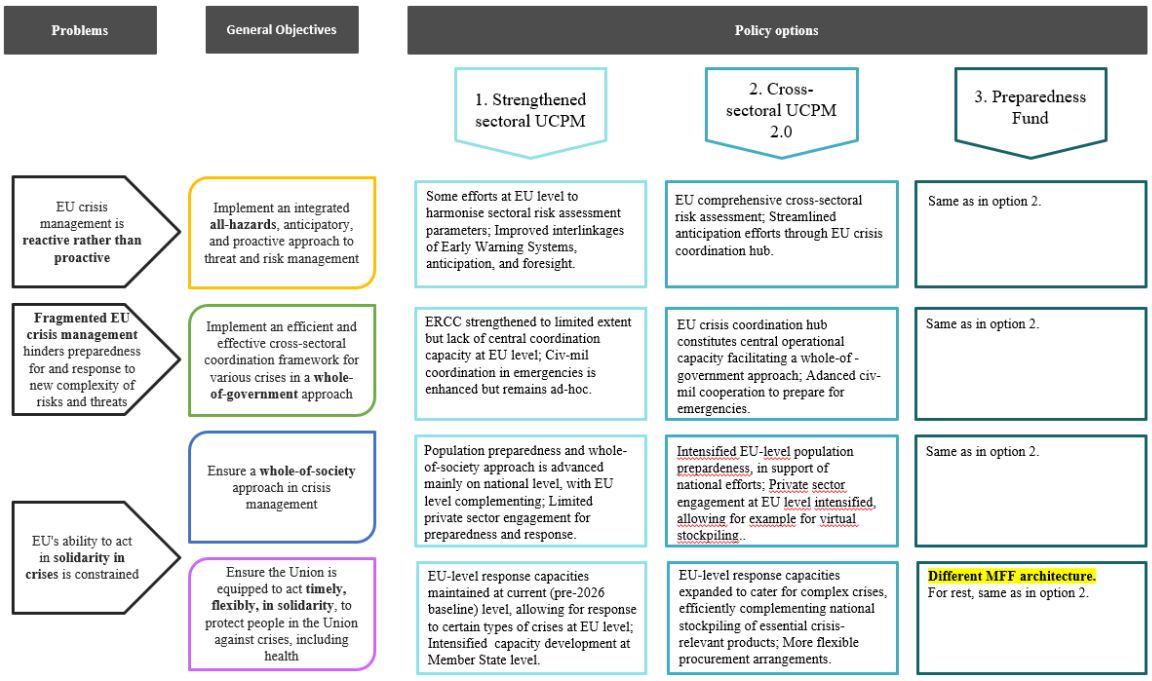

Figure 6 - Overview of intervention logic (see Annex 7 for larger version)

<u>Policy Option 1: Strengthened sectoral UCPM</u>

Policy option 1 partially incorporates the recommendations of the 2024 UCPM Evaluation[97] (and the recommendation/ opinion of the EESC[98]). Actions proposed under policy option 1 contribute to the Preparedness Union Strategy and its three principles – all hazards, whole-of-government, whole-of-society – though not comprehensively. Key actions, such as the implementation of the Stockpiling Strategy, will need to be undertaken at national level. Flagships like the establishment of the EU crisis coordination hub will not be feasible through the EU budget. Preparedness actions for public health security would only be supported through medical stockpiling, in other words, actions beyond stockpiling, such as capacity building (e.g. trainings for the management of medical countermeasures etc.) fall away under option 1.

Budget and budget architecture:

Under option 1, the UCPM remains as one sectoral instrument. Further, some actions linked to health emergency response, such as procurement of mpox vaccines and virtual stockpiles[99], continue to be

[97] For example, the 2024 UCPM evaluation underscores the importance of including the private sector in the European Crisis Management seen which is implemented insofar under policy option 1 as private sector cooperation is maintained.
[98] Incorporated recommendations include, among others, a stronger involvement in the alert and prevention process of the UCPM (point 1.18 of the opinion). . EESC, 2022.
[99] DG HERA's capacity reservation contracts ensuring ever-warm production capacities in case of emergency (EU FAB) constitute one example.

financed through a separate programme. Despite this non-integrated budget structure, [100] the budget architecture allows for a flexible and fast access to reserves in case of unexpected emergencies. Nevertheless, due to overlaps in the activities and scope of UCPM and EU4Health, inefficiencies remain.

Policy approach

Concretely, under policy option 1:

Risk assessments are executed along sectoral lines on EU and national levels. This includes the intelligence gathering on health threats requiring medical countermeasures. However, coordination efforts are undertaken to harmonise parameters.

The role of the ERCC is strengthened in a targeted manner in quantity and quality of operational coordination. This includes some improved interlinkages of Early Warning Systems (incl. the currently developed ECMP) and strengthened analysis and anticipation, and foresight of disasters and crises. Further the collaboration with relevant stakeholders (e.g. UN, scientific organisations) is expanded.

Response capacities and stockpiles at EU level (especially rescEU) are composed of medical stockpiles (including medical countermeasures); CBRN stockpiles; Aerial Forest Firefighting (AFF); medical evacuation; emergency medical teams, specialised cells and the EU Health Taskforce[101]; CBRN decontamination; CBRN detection, sampling and monitoring; shelter; transport; and energy. In other words, option 1 foresees traditional response capacities.

Partnerships with actors in research and innovation are conducted predominantly at national level to provide information and are complemented through EU tools.

Capacity building at EU level is conducted through both the UCPM instrument by direct funding to authorities and stakeholders (for example through grants, peer reviews, advisory missions, and exchange of experts), as well as trainings and exercises, such as MODEX or JADE. The partnerships with external partners (especially EU neighbourhood countries) focus on capacity building activities and – in case of disasters - response.

Civil-military cooperation (i.e. cooperation between civilian authorities and military entities) in crisis situations is largely conducted on ad-hoc basis and predominantly for logistics support (e.g. transportation capacities owned by military which are used for civilian operations). This work focuses on crises within the EU and is thus not in contradiction to the civil-military work under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EEAS.

Population preparedness is organised at national level and is complemented by limited EU-level projects like preparEU for transboundary approaches and the exchange of best practices, thus contributing to a targeted whole-of-society approach.

Private sector integration remains at the current[102] level (for example, the rescEU warehouses hosting donations from the private sector are maintained), in contrast to the post-2026 baseline.

[100] I.e. a budget structure in which the two partially overlapping programmes of UCPM and EU4Health remain distinct.
[101] *EU Health Task Force (EUHTF).* European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.
[102] I.e. the level it is in May 2025.

The **exchange of sensitive/ classified information** between EU institutions and Member States is handled through existing workflows.

Procurement arrangements, including for emergency procurements of rescEU capacities and medical countermeasures, remain unchanged compared to the baseline. Direct and joint procurements as well as virtual stockpiles[103] are not standard practice.

Policy Option 2: Cross-sectoral UCPM 2.0

Policy option 2 brings together UCPM and relevant activities for public health security preparedness. It fully integrates the recommendations of the 2024 UCPM Evaluation[104] as well as the forthcoming evaluation of the implementation of Regulation 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health and responds to the recommendations from the European Court of Auditors[105] at a policy and structural level. Under policy option 2, a full alignment with the Preparedness Union Strategy can be achieved. Flagships like the establishment of the EU crisis coordination hub will be achieved through the EU budget.

No fundamental change in the governance mechanisms is expected for the UCPM 2.0, compared to the current instrument. In other words, in the context of the supporting competence, the EU level complements national efforts. Moreover, budget decisions taken by Comitology on the basis of yearly work programmes.

Budget and budget architecture:

The UCPM 2.0 will be a cross-sectoral instrument, which incorporates relevant elements of the EU4Health crisis preparedness strand and becomes the central EU programme for crisis prevention, preparedness and response activities, including stockpiling. Pre-existing synergies and complementarities between civil protection and health preparedness activities are leveraged through a single instrument under the UCPM 2.0 (see assessment of external coherence). The integrated budget structure increases efficiency and ensures flexibility and agility in the management of the instrument.

Moreover, to respond fast and efficiently to a wide range of crises, broad flexibility rules are embedded in the instrument which allows for different financial means[106] to be used. Further, the instrument has access to reserves in case of unexpected emergencies or crises. Nevertheless, to allow a balancing of crisis reaction with long-term preparedness, long term predictability will be ensured through the below described prevention and preparedness actions.

[103] In this context, the concept of virtual stockpiling refers to stocks procured under rescEU but held by the industry and only delivered/deployed in case of need, thus reducing stockpiling inventory costs.
[104] The 2024 UCPM evaluation calls for an improvement of foresight activities and a dedicated budget reserve for emergency response to ensure greater flexibility to adapt to emerging needs and cross-sectoral coordination all of which is implemented under policy option 2.
[105] In its analysis of the EU's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Court of Auditors advocated for the streamlining of procedures as well as the standardisation and comparability of risk assessments to guarantee an effective response to health emergencies at EU level. *The EU's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.* European Court of Auditors, 2024.
[106] Including projects, joint actions, direct grants, operating grants, direct procurement, joint procurement, virtual stockpiles.

Policy approach

Under policy option 2:

An **EU comprehensive cross-sectoral risk and threat assessment** is regularly produced. This comprehensive assessment draws on existing EU-level and national assessments (without replacing them), scientific analysis, foresight, EU-funded research and innovation, early-warning systems, satellite and geospatial data (e.g. Copernicus Emergency Management Service), and business insights. Risks cover several domains, including space, cyber and hybrid, health threats requiring medical countermeasures, critical infrastructure, economic security, energy, environment, and climate. This EU overview of risks reflects interactions between risks, including of non-linear nature. The comprehensive risks and threat assessment inform all phases of the decision-making process at political and operational levels. It utilises modern AI-based intelligence gathering tools, including for health threats.

The **ERCC** is strengthened, similarly as in option 1.

In addition, an **EU crisis coordination hub** is established to continue and further upscale support to Member States in managing the cross-sectoral consequences of crises, based on reinforced planning and more comprehensive analysis and situational awareness. In order to link external action with internal crisis response more effectively, the EU crisis coordination hub will closely coordinate with the EEAS, and in particular with its Crisis Response Centre. While fully respecting subsidiarity, national competences, and the specificities of Member States and without prejudice to the role of the EEAS, the crisis coordination hub will: (i) work towards a common understanding at all levels of crises and their implications for various sectors and the entire population; (ii) facilitate work across the sectors by providing crisis-management support to the lead services without taking over sectoral responsibilities; and (iii) monitor the overall response to crises while ensuring constant feedback to the Council, including through the IPCR. The creation and operationalisation of the Hub will not affect the current role of the ERCC, as the heart of the UCPM. To better connect the Hub with the national beneficiaries, the Member States will be invited to identify national contact points for the Hub.

Linked to the strengthened ERCC and the EU crisis coordination hub, a standalone programme focusing on the **UCPM 2.0** is created, allowing for prevention, preparedness, response to cross-sectoral, large-scale and long-term crises. The UCPM 2.0 is characterised by two working modalities, a regular emergency working modality and an exceptional crisis working modality.

Response capacities, including stockpiles, are developed and maintained at EU level, in supporting fashion to national efforts, across all relevant sectors, and with increased intensity.

Example: ***Potential*** additional (compared to option 1) response capacities to be financed under the UCPM 2.0 (policy option 2). The below example links to the UCPM capacity gaps report referenced throughout this impact assessment.

New rescEU capacities to face emergencies induced by climate change:

a. Mobile/pontoon bridges
b. Water purification/wastewater treatment
c. Mobile cooling and hydration (shelters for heatwaves)
d. High-capacity pumping modules

New rescEU capacities to face the changing security landscape:

e. Broad band telecoms and secured connectivity
f. Satellite systems, drones for air and underwater monitoring and/or remote piloted aircraft

g. Demining
h. Availability of cable repair vessels or modules

New rescEU capacities to face the changing health landscape and cross-border health threats

i. Medical countermeasures (including through virtual stockpiles)

Reinforcement of existing capacities (in rescEU reserve or as part of the ECPP):

a. Further investments in forest-fire fighting assets, by financing the procurement of additional helicopters and/or light planes to boost preparedness in Central Europe and also by adding light planes to the array of tools to also equip Northern Europe. The experience in recent years shows that a hazard that was considered to be limited to the Southern Member States is increasing its geographical scope towards other European regions.
b. Further investments in medical and CBRN stockpiles: new vaccines, devices, medical countermeasures, as well as water and food stocks, to counter threats posed both by climate change and the changing security landscape. Additional hospital modules and enhanced medical rescEU assets could help address risks posed by zoonotic diseases (transmitted from animals to humans like avian flu, Zika, Dengue or Chikungunya), burns and infectious diseases, as well as offering a modular and more flexible approach to support the national health care systems in case of collapse of hospital infrastructures in one or more Member States. In addition, enhanced preparedness against CBRN threats would include new specialised equipment, as well as food and water stocks for possible high-impact low-probability CBRN scenarios.
c. Purchase of a first large medical evacuation plane, to address an evident structural gap of the UCPM, as experienced in the context of the 2021 Afghanistan repatriation, as well as during COVID and - more recently - in the context of the war in Ukraine. This could also be accompanied by investments in Medevac modules, which would allow for rapid conversion of commercial planes to be used in those scenarios which require additional Medevac capacity, such as volcano eruption, earthquake, tsunami, armed conflict, etc.
d. Significant reinforcement of the shelter reserves, considering the existing large needs stemming from the war in Ukraine, migration flows and natural disasters inducing a displacement of the population; these reserves would also cater for the needs of vulnerable groups disproportionally exposed to the effects of armed conflicts, energy crisis, pandemics and/or extreme weather events scenarios.
e. Purchasing a first dedicated capacity for emergency operations (e.g. cargo transport, transport of persons or medical evacuation), thus leveraging the possibility to further develop strategic multi-purpose transport and logistics capacities. This would also be in line with relevant lessons learnt from previous emergencies (see above).

Relations with external stakeholders (especially EU neighbouring countries and UCPM Participating States) will be intensified with regards to capacity building as well as for prevention, preparedness, and response activities, to adhere to the new risk environment surrounding the EU.

EU-level **capacity building** across relevant sectors and incorporating the cross-border dimension supports Member States and, where relevant, third countries. This includes training activities, including for civil protection and health security specialists.

Civil-military coordination (i.e. cooperation between civilian authorities and military entities) is enhanced at EU level through a civil-military preparedness framework, preparedness exercises and training programmes, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), expert working groups, amongst others. This work focuses on crises within the EU and is thus not in contradiction to the civil-military work under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EEAS.

Partnerships with actors in research and innovation are strategically expanded at EU level (especially through the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network) and nationally to provide for additional information and operational base for prevention, preparedness, and response activities.

A strongly intensified realm under policy option 2, compared to option 1, is **population preparedness**, which is achieved through EU-coordinated projects: Where such a need is identified by Member States, the EU could complement national efforts in areas such as population risk awareness, individual/household self-sufficiency, volunteering, public risk and crisis communication, disinformation, and crisis relevant professional skills. The use of existing programmes, such as Erasmus+ could incentivise these goals.

Private sector engagement with view to capacity development of essential goods, resilience of critical entities, and resilience of critical supply chains is strengthened.

The **exchange of sensitive/classified information** between EU institutions and Member States is strengthened through the establishment of an updated, secured information exchange system, implemented by EU services and Member States.

To adhere to the need for fast and effective action at EU level, **procurement**, as well as virtual stockpiling, including "ever-warm" facilities, for preparedness- relevant goods and services at EU level could be commonly used.

Further pertinent **health emergency activities** are encompassed to combat cross-border threats to health in line with the general cross-sectoral nature of the initiative.

Policy Option 3: Preparedness Fund

Option 3 entails as its main element the creation of a single funding instrument (Preparedness Fund) at EU level comprising all preparedness-relevant mechanisms and activities for the entire MFF. This fund will subsume all preparedness- related mechanisms and funding elements of the current MFF, including but not limited to UCPM, the EU4Health crisis preparedness strand, and preparedness-relevant elements in the National Envelopes, the Competitiveness Fund, and Erasmus+ (see figure 3). In terms of structure, this would imply that the various management modes of the programmes are all used within this single fund: direct (implemented by the Commission), shared (e.g. structural funds) and indirect (e.g. different organisations of the UN system such as WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF). This would constitute a fundamental change of approach compared to the current MFF. This option would bring about inherent fundamental challenges, including in the management of the budget allocations for all funding programmes and instruments.

Currently, the Union funding instruments lack flexibility also entailing reallocation of resources from structural goals. This policy option also aims to address EU crisis management fragmentation in national budget alignment.

Option 3 adopts the same policy approach as option 2.

Options discarded at an early stage

While theoretically possible, policy option 3 would be sub-optimal due to:

(i) inconsistency with the Preparedness Union Strategy.

With the creation of a preparedness fund, the MFF would disconnect preparedness from the other relevant policies. This silo structure would be in contrast to the Preparedness Union Strategy, in which a whole-of-government approach with links in all policy fields and the preparedness-by-design approach across all policies are identified as crucial for the success of overall preparedness action.

(ii) increased complexity in the financial management systems, due to the combination of direct, indirect and shared management which would not be suited for this instrument.

This option would inevitably increase budgetary complexity in managing indirect (e.g. in cooperation with WHO), direct (e.g. stockpiling or response operation), and shared (together with MS) funds.

(iii) an amalgamation of different types of competences, both supporting and shared.

In addition to these inherent limitations of the instrument, due to its complexity it is very unlikely that Member States would support it during the negotiation process.

As a result, this policy option is considered non-viable and is thus discarded. Consequently, it does not feature in the following chapters.

6. WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF THE POLICY OPTIONS?

The policy options are compared against the post-2026 baseline.

Impacts of Policy Option 1

Overall, policy option 1 implies significant additional efforts at national level to achieve the general objectives. While all objectives are largely reached, the steering role of the EU in this process, even with clear earmarking in the national envelopes, is lower.[107] Thus, the EU added value is not capitalised on. Indeed, as an overarching remark, policy option 1 causes indirect negative impacts by not fully utilising the potential of EU action in the prevention, preparedness, and response to crises. In other words, policy option 1 misses out on important positive impacts across the environmental, economic, and social dimensions. Similarly, a study by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction notes that the 'cost of inaction' is not only the disaster losses but also the lack of economic, social, and environmental benefits that are generated by having a community or an asset better prepared, and that enhance overall well-being and resilience [108,109].

This being said, the targeted strengthening of the ERCC under policy option 1, compared to the post-2026 baseline, will allow for better prevention of (through strengthened anticipation and foresight capabilities) and preparedness for (through improved interlinkages of Early Warning Systems) and response to (through improved sectoral coordination of the ERCC) disasters with a civil protection angle. In the context of these kinds of crises, option 1 thus results in positive impacts across the environmental, social and economic dimensions. For example, the improved use of Early Warning Systems tends to have a high cost-benefit ratio: 1 EUR invested in early warning systems returns 2.8-130+ EUR.[110]

However, with view to the growing number of complex crises, for example of security and hybrid nature, EU-level response capacities will be limited and thus reliance on national level would increase. Indeed, this policy option would allow for European-level response capacities only in the traditional civil protection sector.[111] For capacities beyond the latter sector, this would have negative economic impact due the inability to make use of economies of scale and due to duplications of capacities at national levels and thus inefficiencies, including with view to stockpiles. Moreover, at the national level, it may not be feasible for smaller or medium-sized Member States to acquire such capacities due to

[107] Moreover, the earmarking would add complexity to the management of other EU instruments.

[108] *Business case for DRR: Why investing in DRR makes sense.* United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2024.

[109] Similarly, a study of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2024) revealed that every $1 invested in disaster preparedness can save communities up to $13 in economic impact, damages, and cleanup costs. Notably, $6 of the $13 saved comes from reduced damages, while $7 represents preserved jobs, income, and economic output. *Unpacking the ROI of Disaster Preparedness.* U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2024.

[110] *Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness: Financial Risk and Opportunities to Build Resilience in Europe.* World Bank Group, 2021.

[111] Policy Option 1 would not create strong links to non-traditional civil protection actions welcomed in the Open Public Consultation as main areas in which the EU can create added value, such as fighting disinformation and securing innovation in the digital space to combat authoritarianism. *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* European Commission, 2025, Annex 2.

budget limitations. Even larger Member States might find it impractical to invest in capacities for low probability, high impact risks, such as nuclear accidents or attacks.[112]

In addition, under option 1 the operational coordination of such complex crises would occur in a disconnected way on the European level, due to lack of an EU crisis coordination hub. Efforts to implement a whole-of-government approach would need to be made on the national level, thus once again failing to reap the benefits of the EU added value. To give one example, in this option synergies between civil protection and health security are missing, despite being essential. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown that coordination and collaborative response is needed at EU level e.g. by making interoperable IT tools available such as the contact tracing apps, connected through the Federated Gateway and the digital COVID-19 certificate.[113] These could be made available in case of another pandemic. However, the policy option 1 does not fully consider better coordination, including with civil protection and risk communication regarding public health and social measures that may be taking in respond to a serious cross-border threat to health. This can result – like in the COVID-19 pandemic – in loss of trust in authorities and fuelling of dis- and misinformation.

Finally, a mismatch in national levels of preparedness under policy option 1 due to limited EU-level coordination results in overall lower population preparedness across the Union, negatively impacting communities[114]. Vulnerable communities in particular may encounter varying degrees of contingency planning and preparedness depending on their Member State, potentially exacerbating existing vulnerabilities[115]. Lastly, a more limited EU role in population preparedness will mean that EU citizens will experience limited EU solidarity first-hand, which is essential for upholding a positive EU image.

Impacts of Policy Option 2

Policy option 2 fully utilises the EU added value and, in doing so, comprehensively achieves the objectives. While having both positive and negative impacts, it is characterised by large and outweighing positive impacts across economic, environmental, and social dimensions, as outlined below.

The approach and activities foreseen under option 2 address the objectives at EU-level for all types of crises, ranging from large-scale natural hazards to complex cross-sectoral threats. Given the effective response to complex threats, including of hybrid nature, this policy option has a positive impact on the essential security interests of the EU.

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[112] Indeed, the Capacity Progress Report on the Response Capacities of the UCPM (2025) identified the need to pursue on the EU level the identification and development of key specialised capacities which are not cost-effective to develop in the necessary quantities at national level. *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Capacity Progress Report on the Response Capacities of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism*. European Commission, 2025.

[113] This assessment was also supported by EU citizens in the Eurobarometer survey where medical emergencies were named as the second highest response to the question which crisis the EU should prioritise. This was further supported in the Open Public Consultation with respondents favouring EU Stockpiling, in particular medicine and medical equipment. *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* European Commission, 2025, Annex 2.

[114] Papers submitted to the Open Public Consultation noted concern about the lack of coordination both between Member States as well as between EU Member States, reflecting a "broad consensus on the need for a more integrated and proactive approach to crisis preparedness and response". *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* European Commission, 2025, Annex 2.

[115] *Sixth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2022 – Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. IPCC, 2023, Summary for Policymakers.

In terms of economic impact, although the initial costs linked to implementing this option are higher on EU level than in other options, the proposed streamlined processes enhance crisis prevention, preparedness, response across sectors, bringing significant economic benefits by optimising the use of resources.[116] Policy option 2 foresees a complementary use of national and European capacities, coordinated through the ERCC and an EU crisis coordination hub. For example, by joining the stockpiling elements of EU4Health with the UCPM 2.0, policy option 2 increases the overall preparedness to pandemics, for which there is a clear economic case: Investing in pandemic preparedness pays off, with EUR 1 invested in pandemic preparedness returning EUR 13.3 [117]. Moreover, expanded collaborative, joint and direct procurement under option 2 enables the efficient procurement of goods, reduces costs, and ensures EU-wide interoperability.

Given the more prominent EU coordination role in population preparedness under policy option 2, socially, this option 2 allows for a higher common denominator in population preparedness across the Union, resulting in better-prepared citizens and, consequently, lives and assets saved.[118] In doing, so it fosters a common EU culture of preparedness and resilience. Notably, vulnerable communities – who are often disproportionately affected by crises[119] – benefit from equitable contingency planning and preparedness coverage Union-wide.[120] EU efforts to enhance population preparedness in support of national government measures, as citizen volunteers and ad-hoc reinforcements are structured for rapid, organised action across the Union. For example, civil society organisations in the field of public health preparedness could be supported to further population preparedness e.g. through training in first aid. Lastly, recent crises, including floods in Central Europe and Spain, have showcased a higher threat awareness among citizens and consequently higher public scrutiny and accountability expectation from national authorities when responding to a disaster[121]. In light of this, policy option 2 would have an important positive social impact, as a more prevalent EU action would allow citizens to experience European solidarity firsthand, aligning with fundamental values and strengthening the European cause through direct action. Lastly, option 2 would support Member State's obligation to act in a spirit of solidarity in line with Article 222 of TFEU.

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[116] This view was also underlined by participants of the Open Public Consultation who welcomed further investment into preparedness and crisis management at EU level. Participants of the Open Public Consultation generally reported a positive experience with the EU's preparedness and crisis management, calling for its improvement and thus further investments rather than requesting reduced EU capacities or investments in preparedness and crisis management at EU level. *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* European Commission, 2025, Annex 2.

[117] *Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness: Financial Risk and Opportunities to Build Resilience in Europe*. World Bank Group, 2021.

[118] The added value of EU action, complementary to national activities, is highlighted throughout the Preparedness Union Strategy.

[119] For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on the elderly, women, low-income communities, and racial and ethnic minorities (see: Liu, E., Dean, C.A., Elder, K.T., Editorial: The impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, Frontiers, vol. 11, 2023).

[120] Strengthening actions to meet the needs of vulnerable person would meet the request voiced by EU citizens, government authorities, businesses etc. who called for more efforts of the EU to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable populations during the Open Public Consultation, with only 28.46% of the respondents considering the needs of vulnerable population to have been met 'somewhat'. *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* European Commission, 2025, Annex 2.

[121] Even though the 2024 Climate Survey commission by the EIB revealed that 80% of Europeans have experiences at least one extreme weather event in the past five years and 94% of Europeans support measures to adapt to climate change, the EEA still categorises Europe's societal preparedness as low. The floods in Spain in November 2024, showed critical gaps in early warning systems leading to higher awareness amongst citizens of threats and the importance of preparedness with over 100.000 people protesting in Valencia against the authorities' handling of the floods. See: *94% of Europeans support measures to adapt to climate change, according to EIB survey*. European Investment Bank, 2025; *Spain floods expose flaws in Europe's early warning systems.* Context, 2024.European Investment Bank, 2025; https://www.eib.org/en/surveys/climate-survey/7th-climate-survey/eu-27

Moreover, by ensuring successful crisis management, this policy option results in significant positive environmental impacts, including by preserving natural spaces and biodiversity. This expected impact aligns with the feedback received by citizens in the Open Public Consultation[122], in which "mitigating consequences of climate change and threats to biodiversity" was named as the main area in which the EU can created added value.

[122] *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* European Commission, 2025, Annex 2.

7. HOW DO THE OPTIONS COMPARE?

The different options are compared with the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, external coherence, simplification, synergies, and the "ability to act".

Effectiveness

In line with the scope of the policy options (UCPM/UCPM 2.0), the below table assesses the effectiveness of each policy option vis-a-vis the specific objectives. In other words, the below analysis does not include the impacts that other instruments in the MFF (for example preparedness-relevant activities under the Competitiveness Fund) might have on the specific objectives (see figure 3 placing the scope of this impact assessment in the context of the wider MFF).

General Objective 1: Implement an integrated all-hazards, anticipatory, and proactive approach to threat and risk management

Both policy options move the EU and its Member States closer to a more proactive all-hazard approach to threat and risk management. In the case of **option 1**, the effectiveness depends on Member States' efforts in harmonising risk assessment parameters, as well as on the quality and quantity of data that is shared with the EU level. This is especially the case for transboundary and regional risks, as Member States tend to approach threat and risk management through the national lens. This has been identified as one of the three key operational gaps in EU Disaster Risk Management by the JRC based on an evaluation of nine different reports from the European Committee of the Regions, DG REGIO, DG ECHO and the JRC: While risks are increasingly interconnected, Member States have disparate levels of governance hindering an integrated EU-wide approach to threat and risk management.[123] **Option 2** would be very effective as it includes an EU comprehensive cross-sectoral risk and threat assessment, which connects the dots between existing national and EU-level assessments. In doing so, option 2 entails a streamlining of risk assessment reporting obligations and double reporting is minimised. The added value of the activities proposed under option 2 is more than the sum of its parts: for example, the added value of the EU integrated risk assessment is not only the centralising of sectoral risk assessments but also the additional insights on the interactions, including non-linear, between risks. An EU integrated risk assessment would close the gap in data availability, consistency, comparability and accuracy, as highlighted by the JRC[124]. The fragmentation and lack of standardisation of methods, models, tools and data standards in current risk assessments limits a comprehensive understanding of cross-border and cross-sectoral risks that is essential for informed decision making to effectively limit their short- and long-term consequences. As the risk and threat landscape becomes increasingly interconnected and complex so need risk assessments.

General Objective 2: Implement an efficient and effective cross-sectoral coordination framework for various crises in a whole-of-government approach

The extent to which **option 1** contributes to a whole-of-government approach (across prevention, preparedness, and response) depends on Member States' action in bringing together the relevant actors at EU and Member State level. For example, Member States could use different fora including in the Council (for example IPCR), or bilaterally, if considered sufficient by Member States. This will mean

[123] *Analysis of Risks Europe is facing: An analysis of current and emerging risk.* Joint Research Centre (JRC), 2025.
[124] *Analysis of Risks Europe is facing: An analysis of current and emerging risk.* Joint Research Centre (JRC), p. 129ff.

that the approach to managing crises depends on the particular crisis at hand. In practice, this means that for each crisis that occurs, Member States will need to assess whether operational crisis coordination at EU level is needed and, if so, what structure is best placed to do so (e.g., ERCC or other). In contrast to this, **option 2** offers a pre-existing structure, with associated processes and responsibilities (including with regards to civilian and military actors), namely the EU crisis coordination hub. Given this, option 2 offers reliability, timesaving, and allows for optimisation of the pre-existing structure and processes over time. In a nutshell, option 2 offers a smoother and more reliable whole-of-government approach.

General Objective 3: Ensure a whole-of-society approach in crisis management

While both options advance a whole-of-society approach, the actions proposed under option 1 fall short of fully leveraging such an approach at the EU and national levels. In **option** 1, the implementation of actions on population preparedness on the national level, with some supporting EU projects, will raise the overall preparedness of societies and thus allow crisis response authorities to prioritise other areas (for example reinstalling vital societal functions, if they have been compromised). However, a comprehensive whole-of-society approach is only partially achieved, as stark differences between national population preparedness levels will exist. **Option 2** avoids the latter as EU-level action and financing increases the EU-wide common denominator in population preparedness. This is, among others, because the EU will enhance visibility for relevant topics, as was seen with the strong public reaction to the Commission's messaging on a 72h preparedness kit.[125] On cooperation with the private sector, **option 1** entails limited actions, including warehouses that host private sector donations. **Option 2** expands such cooperation to include, among others, regular use of virtual stockpiling, thus fully leveraging the opportunities presented by private sector entities.

General Objective 4: Ensure the Union is equipped to act timely, flexibly, and in solidarity, to protect people in the Union against crises, including health

Option 1 ensures the Union's timely acting to the extent that EU-level response capacities (rescEU) are developed and maintained in the traditional civil protection sectors (e.g. Medical Counter Measures, Aerial Firefighting, etc.) but the remaining capacity gaps must be filled by Member States to ensure response to complex and/or security scenarios (e.g. high capacity pumping modules to face large-scale flooding, demining capacities, etc.). This causes inefficiencies and duplications (see sections on impacts of policy options and efficiency) in the best of cases and lack of response capacities in the worst of cases (where response capacities are not available or insufficient). The latter is avoided under **option 2**, which ensures EU-level response capacities across the risk spectrum thus much more effectively ensuring the Union is equipped to act timely, flexibly and in solidarity. Moreover, under option 2, procurement on EU level could be common practice, meaning that the time between needs identification and the deployment of capacities is shortened, thus further achieving General Objective 4.

The **table on "Effectiveness"** in Annex 6 depicts the extent to which each option addresses the specific objectives. This analysis of the policy options 1 and 2 show that both achieve the specific objectives indicated in chapter 4. Nevertheless, compared to the baseline, policy option 1 has a limited positive effect on all objectives, option 2 can be expected to have an much higher positive effect in the level of

[125] *The EU Commission's survival kits - fearmongering or necessary preparedness?* Euronews, 2025.

achievement of the specific objectives. This is notably because option 2 leverages the added value of EU-level action much more.

Efficiency

Estimation of costs and benefits – main assumptions and limitations

The assessment of efficiency **is largely qualitative**, given the difficulty to calculate quantitative impacts, as was already stressed in the Evaluation of the UCPM. [126] Conducting a cost-benefit analysis for **specific, single actions** for saving/ protecting a certain number of lives (directly or indirectly) linked to EU emergency **response,** as well as counter-factual assessments (for example comparing a situation in which the ERCC did not coordinate emergency response vs. the situation where it did), is not possible (if a Member State requests assistance, the Mechanism must be activated (with little exceptions). Humanitarian principles must be followed). Similarly, with operations in a complex crisis environment the identification of causations and direct impacts of specific actions is not possible.

Due to the **nature of this initiative as support competence to Member States,** the overall additional administrative costs (see Annex 3) are largely not quantifiable or negligible. The initiative will not impose obligations on Member States, businesses or citizens. Moreover, not pre-empting the budget negotiations of the coming MFF, additional costs linked to the achievement of the initiative (e.g. the physical establishment of the EU Crisis Management Hub) are not eligible for this analysis.

Compared to policy option 1, the scope and range of EU-level activities proposed under policy option 2 is broader and thus requires a higher *initial* investment. However, long-term, policy option 2 is much less costly, and generally more efficient, than option 1 for a number of reasons.

First, the cost-benefit ratio of prevention and preparedness, coupled with the increasingly volatile risk landscape, make option 2 more cost efficient. Policy option 2 foresees the establishment of an EU crisis coordination hub, which will build on the structures and expertise of the ERCC to create synergies and avoid duplications, inefficiencies and further fragmentation of the crisis response framework at EU level. This would partly address the inefficiencies in the Early Warning Systems highlighted in the forthcoming independent study evaluating the implementation of the Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health. In line with this, the Evaluation of the UCPM already pointed out that "benefits in cost-efficiency, knowledge-exchange, pooling of resources and improved coordination at EU level are tangible and clear for all countries involved, whether on the receiving or giving end, in civil protection activities."[127] The gains in efficiency are demonstrated by a World Bank study, according to which the review of more than 70 investments across Europe showed that investing in disaster prevention and preparedness makes economic sense (benefit-cost ratios typically ranging between EUR 2-10 for every Euro spent). Importantly, many benefits materialise regardless of whether a disaster happens or not.[128]

The cost efficiency of more intensified prevention and preparedness – as proposed under policy option 2 – is particularly evident when looking at health threats: The cost of managing and responding to pandemics and health threats is estimated to be as much as 1000 times higher than the costs of preventing them. For instance, the cumulative losses from the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2024

[126] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, p. 45 & Annex 6
[127] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF
[128] *Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness: Financial Risk and Opportunities to Build Resilience in Europe*. World Bank Group, 2021.

are estimated to be about USD 13.8 trillion,[129] whereas the global estimate of prevention costs ranges from USD 10.3 to USD 11.5 billion per year.[130] According to the forthcoming evaluation of the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2022/2371[131], for a COVID-19-like threat in five to seven years from now, the discounted total benefits are roughly estimated to range from EUR 176 billion to EUR 566 billion. For an mpox-like threat (outbreak in Europe on 2022), the benefits are estimated to range from EUR 0 to EUR 8 million. Net present value of the costs of Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 are estimated to be EUR 104 million during the regular situation without threat, EUR 26 million additional costs during an mpox-like threat, and EUR 84 million addition costs during a COVID-19 like threat.

Second, policy option 1 would bring both direct and indirect costs at EU and Member State levels for response capacities. With the limitation of rescEU capacities to the traditional civil protection sector, already made investments in certain response capacities will be lost due to inability to maintain them. Simultaneously, the new risk landscape requires capacities to respond to complex and security risks, thus forcing Member States to establish such capacities at national level. As a result, policy option 1 is inefficient due to (i) the underutilisation of economies of scale (buying certain response capacities at EU level) and (ii) duplications of capacities at national levels. Indeed, in support of policy option 2, Member States have recognised the significant added value of strategic level capacities at EU level that can provide assistance on a scale that surpasses reasonable national preparedness measures. The fact that every rescEU capacity created was deployed within one year of its establishment highlights the needs for EU-level capacities for strategic needs and underscores that Member States see its usage as an efficient way to respond to crises.[132]

Third, under policy option 2 important efficiency gains are made through the integrated budget structure. Figure 7 displays the increasing importance of health-related emergencies in the UCPM framework over the past decade. Option 2 would address one of the factors identified as hindering the efficiency of the UCPM in the independent support study, namely "instances of suboptimal coordination, overlaps, and unexplored synergies […] with other EU entities (e.g. epidemic response)"[133]. Indeed, under option 2, particular gains in efficiency can be made with view to a merging of stockpiling activities. This would amongst others address a factor influencing efficiency mentioned by the forthcoming independent study evaluating the implementation of the Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health: budget limitations hindering the maintenance of strategic stockpiles. Lastly, the integrated budget structure under option 2 contributes to addressing need for a streamlining of the EU health security architecture, as pointed out in the HERA Review[134].

[129] *A Disrupted Global Recovery*. IMF, 2022.
[130] *One Health Approach - Prevent the Next Pandemic*. World Bank, 2022.
[131] Adoption process ongoing.
[132] This view was further supported in the Open Public Consultation, where participants favoured stockpiling and pre-positioning of resources at EU level as an action the EU should undertake to ensure Europe's safety and security. *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* European Commission, 2025, Annex 2.
[133] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, p.213
[134] *HERA review: Taking stock to reinforce health security in the EU*. European Commission, 2025.

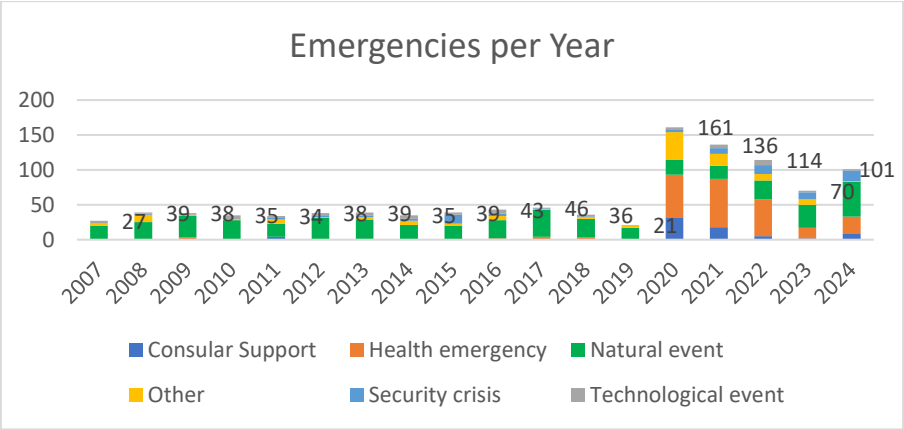

Figure 7 7 - Emergencies per year measured by number of requests for assistance made to the UCPM 2007-2024

External Coherence

The independent study on the UCPM provided a comprehensive overview of the internal and external coherence of the instrument[135] which serves as basis for this analysis. Further, the Commission issued three relevant strategies for the crisis management, namely the Preparedness Union Strategy[136], the Internal Security Strategy[137] (ProtectEU) and – to a lesser extend relevant - the White Paper for European Defence and the Readiness 2030 Plan[138], in March 2025. These strategies will have an impact on the future work of Member States and the EU in the area of "civil protection, preparedness and response to crises" and, thus, will be reflected.

The policy options differ in their external coherence with relevant policies and strategies, with the policy option 2 being the most coherent. The policy option 1 is to a large extent coherent with EU initiatives across several policy fields, including humanitarian aid, EU health security, home affairs and consular support. However, the independent support study pointed out important areas and scope for increased synergies and coherence with EU and international interventions and policy fields. Examples of the support study include:

In the domain of health, the policy option 1 is not fully coherent with other policies and actors. Although more synergies were established after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the support study identified "room for improvement and further coherence". Option 2 addresses this gap with the integration of the health security preparedness framework and civil protection domains under one instrument.

Case study: Response to Covid-19
On response to health emergencies, evidence shows the importance of facilitating the mobilisation and deployment of medical experts in UCPM missions or within the ERCC, with ongoing discussions on how to best make use of this expertise in a structured way. As a good practice, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ERCC was reinforced with an epidemiologist from the JRC. Similarly, in the context of the UCPM activation in Ukraine, HERA deployed a Liaison Officer to assess needs in the field of health. DG ECHO also cooperated

[135] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF,, 2017-2022, chapter 5.4, coherence.
[136] *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Preparedness Union Strategy.* European Commission, 2025.
[137] *European Internal Security Strategy – Press release.* European Commission, 2025.
[138] *Introducing the White Paper for European Defence and the ReArm Europe Plan- Readiness 2030.* European Commission, 2025.

with DG SANTE and ECDC, with the latter sending epidemiological experts to DG ECHO. Overall, coordination with health actors was crucial to ensuring an effective response at EU and national level.

Source: independent support study of the UCPM, ICF.

Both options are coherent with the EU environmental policy instruments, such as the Floods Directive, the Water Framework Directive, and the Seveso Directive, with room for improved synergies in the policy option 1. As example, under policy option 1 the sectoral instruments like the Floods Directive are complementing each other in the assessment and management of flood risks across the EU. Policy option 2, however, would use data of the environmental (and other domains) in its overall EU risk assessments and, thus, increase the coherence with this sector. Additionally, this increasing synergies at EU level under policy option 2 are likely to have a positive effect on coherence at national level as well.

Policy option 1 is coherent with regards to the newly stated need to improve civil-military coordination as stated in the Preparedness Union Strategy and linked to the White Paper on Defence. As per analysis of the independent support study, the policy option 1 leaves **"**unexploited synergies in civil-military coordination during emergencies". While this is largely aimed at transportation capacities, there are further areas like the closer link of civilian planning (e.g. Disaster Resilience Goals; EU exercises) and military planning (resilience baselines; NATO exercises). While there would still be a clear separation, the policy option 2 has a more holistic approach to the coordination of civilian preparedness and response to the military, providing for a more coherent understanding of risks and threats as well as resulting needs for response activities. Coherence with the work of the EEAS and its crisis coordination structures is ensured through the different geographic scope (the EEAS focusing on crises outside the EU and the EU crisis coordination hub focusing on EU-internal scenarios). In order to link external action with internal crisis response more effectively, the EU crisis coordination hub will closely coordinate with the EEAS, and in particular with the Crisis Response Centre.

In the area of research and innovation, only policy option 2 is fully aligned with the needed level of integration to respond in an all-hazards approach. Nevertheless, policy option 1 is coherent with an overall need to improve operational links with the scientific community. Under policy option 1 the current set-up of sectoral approaches will continue and ensure "complementarities and strengthen not only the prevention and preparedness pillar, but also response, leading to better tools to face emergencies and better knowledge of risks among the civil protection community and beyond"[139]. With the creation of the EU crisis hub and the all-hazards approach under policy option 2, the recommended stronger links with relevant Directorate Generals (e.g. JRC, RTD, HOME) will be established, while sustaining their strong independent research and innovation pillars.

Case study: R&I in emergency teams

"Recent complex emergencies (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) have shown the importance of embedding specialised scientific expertise during crises, and the need to improve operational links with the scientific community for response activities (e.g. involvement of technical experts). In addition to the work with the JRC, stakeholders reported that DG ECHO could work more closely with other DGs (such as DG RTD or DG CLIMA) to promote relevant research, mobilise the academic sector, and fund specific or joint projects. "

[139] Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, chapter 5.4

Source: independent support study of the UCPM, ICF.

Another important EU policy with regards to crisis management is the CER Directive. For all three options the distinction of tasks and responsibilities are clear. The policy options will for the response part be only active in consequence management as stated in the Directive[140]. Nevertheless, given that an attack on or incident around critical infrastructure would have consequences for a variety of sectors and services (health, energy, transport), policy option 1 has a less well-established cross-sectoral approach to effectively respond and mitigate its impacts is necessary. Moreover, only policy option 2 would make additional analytical value of the two separate reporting obligations of Member States, making this option most coherent.

Lastly, disaster risk management considerations are integrated into EU-level financial instruments. Most of the EU funds supporting disaster prevention and management activities are programmed through the Cohesion Policy funds and the Common Agricultural Policy. These include specific funds contributing to prevention and preparedness efforts, including the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the Cohesion Fund, and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). While not in the scope of this Impact Assessment, the inclusion of **preparedness objective** into other EU funding instruments is paramount. This integration is coherent with all options.

Coherence with Preparedness Union Strategy, ProtectEU, and the White Paper for European Defence

Concerning the ProtectEU Strategy, policy option 1 is partially aligned with the assessment of new and increasing threats at EU level. This is partly due to the maintained traditional civil protection response capacities, which contribute to the principle of "boosting security [related] investments". However, the engagement of citizens, a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is only partly implemented at EU level and largely relies on the implementation by Member States. Having all above principles embedded, policy option 2 is very coherent with the ProtectEU Strategy in its implementation. Moreover, policy option 2 can contribute to the Strategy with additional analytical input.

With regards to the seven headings of the Preparedness Union Strategy, the policy options are varying in their coherence, with only policy option 2 being fully aligned. Examples include the 'foresight and anticipation' pillar, which is coherent and a focus in both policy options. However, only policy option 2 includes a more comprehensive, cross-sectoral anticipation approach at EU level. Same applies for the 'crisis response' in which policy option 1 has a core ERCC set-up (which is slightly strengthened). Only policy option 2 entails the extra layer of the EU crisis hub. Further, policy option 1 only maintains the status quo of the rescEU and ECPP capacities and, thus, only policy option 2 is fully in line with a possible strengthening of the rescEU and ECPP instruments. For population preparedness, policy option 1 can support national efforts through the Knowledge Network funding tool (with a very limited budget). Policy option 2 takes this approach structurally into consideration across different sectors and in the full support of Member States. Additionally, the public-private cooperation is possible under

[140] 'When providing support to Member States and critical entities in the implementation of obligations under this Directive, the Commission should build on existing structures and tools, such as the UCPM'

policy option 1 for in-kind donations (see box above). This cooperation is more advanced and multi-faced in policy option 2.

Case study: private sector

The purpose of the EU-level private donation initiative was to fill gaps in assistance, easing the burden on Member and Participating States by supplementing national offers of assistance with the involvement of private sector actors. It allowed private donations to complement national offers and reinforced EU solidarity in channelling assistance to Ukraine. In collaboration with Belgian and Polish authorities, two hubs were established: i) a rescEU medical, shelter and CBRN hub in Belgium (managed by the Federal Public Service Health), and ii) a rescEU energy hub in Poland (managed by the Governmental Strategic Reserves Agency, RARS). DG ECHO, supported by HERA in the initial phases of the initiative, was responsible for evaluating the offers received by the private sector and ensuring that the offers matched the needs identified by the Ukrainian authorities. The hubs oversaw the logistics, quality checks and transport, once the donation agreement was signed.

Source: ICF elaboration, based on Minutes from Lessons Learnt Annual Meeting 24/25 April 2023.

While the White Paper on Defence is largely out of the scope for this impact assessment, both options are coherent in the definition of actions and in the clear distinction of tasks. Only policy option 2 will engage more strategically in the coordination with military actors, however, this is not a main focus of the White Paper. The areas of dual-use investments and research and innovation as well as the strengthening of the overall resilience of the EU against outside actors and hybrid threats is possible under all options. Nevertheless, policy option 2 would establish a better cross-sectorial coordination and analysis platform (including with SIAC) which would add operational value to the strategy from a "civil protection, preparedness and response to crises" point of view.

Coherence with other preparedness-relevant funding programmes

The reinforced UCPM will build synergies with other EU programmes, notably the **national and regional partnership plans**, the **European Competitiveness Fund**, and **Global Europe Fund**:

- The **national and regional partnership plans** will support reforms and investments to enhance preparedness in the Member States' plans and will integrate an unallocated thematic reserve to respond to unexpected events.
- The **European Competitiveness Fund** will enhance the EU's preparedness and strategic autonomy in key sectors and technologies. It will support building up industrial capacities and cutting-edge technologies (e.g. Copernicus crisis tools; health innovation and manufacturing, etc.). It will therefore contribute to strengthen the resilience of the EU industry alongside its global competitiveness.
- The **Global Europe Fund will** support the management and response of EU preparedness action in third countries via humanitarian aid and other tools (e.g. macro-financial assistance).

Simplification, Synergies and "being able to deliver"

Overall, policy option 1 has a limited positive impact on simplification, synergies, and the ability to deliver, policy option 2 has a vastly bigger positive impact. Looking at the different characteristics of the options demonstrates this.

The integration of the two spending programmes under option 2 constitutes a natural development as it merges two areas with pre-existing overlaps, as also pointed out in the UCPM evaluation. Indeed, in general health has been a central element of civil protection work under the UCPM, as seen with activities, such as medical evacuations. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic and lessons learnt further highlighted these links and synergies. As a result, policy option 2 is in line with simplification principle in the next MFF and in doing so it reduces the overall administrative burden. This means that the risk of gaps and overlaps is reduced, thus increasing effectiveness of EU funding.

However, policy option 1 in its budget structure implies a higher reliance on MS for efforts, such as implementing the Preparedness Union Strategy.

Further, policy option 2 – through a stronger adoption of the whole-of-government approach (e.g. option 2 involving more structured and intense civil-military cooperation, involving the establishment of an EU crisis coordination hub spanning sectors) – better leverages synergies in terms of better coordination within and between EU institutions.

To give another example, regarding risk assessments, the fact that under policy option 1 a mere harmonisation of risk assessment parameters is foreseen, whereas under policy option 2 a common EU risk assessment is produced, means that policy option 2 has a much bigger positive impact on simplification and synergies, and thus being able to deliver. Indeed, the process of producing the EU comprehensive risk assessment will provide opportunities to identify overlaps and duplication of efforts in reporting obligations. In this way, the exercise will streamline reporting obligations, avoiding unnecessary administrative burdens while improving efficiency. The Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity' (SIAC) role as the single point of entry for Member States' intelligence will be essential.

Another example for simplification under policy option 1 and policy option 2 is the foreseen reduction of administrative burden for response activities like the currently complex co-financing rates and arrangements for deployment of assets and teams[141]. Member States have voiced the administrative burden on reporting and co-financing in lessons learnt workshops repeatedly.

[141] Stressed in the independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF, p.213

8. PREFERRED OPTION

Presentation of the preferred option

On the basis of the identified impacts of the policy options, as well as their respective 'performance' in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, external coherence and simplification, synergies and "being able to deliver", **the preferred policy option is policy option 2.**

Policy option 2 achieves the outlined General and Specific Objectives to a much more fundamental and successful degree than option 1 thanks to a more comprehensive leveraging of EU added value. Concretely, in the context of a crisis landscape that is becoming more multi-dimensional and cross-border, opting for policy option 2 brings about important social, environmental, as well as economic benefits. Indeed, while policy option 1 is associated with a lower initial budget, it would result in exponentially larger costs of various natures in the medium to long-term. To give just one example, policy option 2 provides much more appropriate response capacities in the face of complex security risks, which – if left unaddressed at EU level - could cause disruptions in trade routes and global supply chains. Overall, policy option 2 will result in much more successful prevention, preparedness and response efforts, including for health emergencies. This will ultimately result in a much higher cost-efficiency compared to policy option 1: Work on quantifying the benefits of investing in prevention and preparedness demonstrates that these investments always make economic sense. The 'cost of inaction' is thus not only the disaster losses but also the lack of economic, social, and environmental benefits that are generated by having a community or an asset better prepared and that enhance overall well-being and resilience.[142] Under policy option 2, the aforementioned benefits will be successfully leveraged.

As demonstrated in chapter 1, the political momentum for strengthening EU preparedness and crisis management is significant. Faced with increasingly severe crises and security threats, it has become clear that the Union must act not only to reinforce crisis preparedness but also to do so timely and intensively. This, coupled with the need for a "paradigm shift […] to create a mindset that fosters a culture of preparedness and resilience"[143], evidence that the actions proposed under policy option 1, while addressing the objectives to a certain extent, nevertheless fall short of providing a proportionate response to the crises of today and tomorrow. Policy option 2, on the other hand, offers a proportionate response to such a complex risk landscape, and does so in full respect of subsidiarity and national competences. Indeed, all actions proposed under policy option 2 bring added value to Member States' actions, namely by complementing national efforts, enhancing coordination and efficiency and fostering a culture of preparedness and resilience.

Lastly, policy option 2 proposes a much more important EU support to national efforts in population preparedness compared to option 1, which is likely to be received positively by the general population. Indeed, according to the April 2024 Flash Eurobarometer on Perceptions of EU crisis management[144] more than 80% of respondents agree that the EU should be more involved in preparedness efforts for future crises, through actions such as raising awareness, organising training, and crisis simulation exercises.

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[142] *Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness: Financial Risk and Opportunities to Build Resilience in Europe*. World Bank Group, 2021.

[143] *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Preparedness Union Strategy.* European Commission, 2025.

[144] *Eurobarometer on perceptions of EU crisis management*. Publications Office of the EU, 2024.

REFIT (simplification and improved efficiency)

Many of the operational rules set out in the current legal framework governing the UCPM and EU4Health's crisis preparedness strand lack the clarity and detail needed for effective implementation in fast-moving crises. The new framework shall therefore codify and clarify rules on operationalising many response actions, such as the establishment of logistical hubs and medical evacuation hubs, medical evacuations, prepositioning of response capacities and intervention teams, incorporate private sector donations, etc., and thereby, making them clear and simple to apply as well as adapt the respective co-financing rates.

Also, an option was considered to extend the possibility to request future EU assistance via regional organisations. It has not been pursued as recent examples demonstrated that the primary issue hindering effective assistance delivery was not the ability to submit a request for assistance, but rather the absence of a well-defined chain of command and distribution mechanism within the affected country.

Lastly, the readability of the text is currently hampered by the mix of substantial provisions with rules on Union financial assistance and eligible actions. This shall be remedied by separating from the body of the Regulation a list of actions eligible for Union financial assistance in an annex.

9. How will actual impacts be monitored and evaluated?

As with any new initiative, if the preferred option is implemented, there will be periodic evaluation and monitoring. As part of the current review programme, set out in the Union Protection Mechanism Decision 1313/2013, the Commission and Member States share data, information, and assessments necessary for them to monitor, analyse, and evaluate all the relevant civil protection actions within the Union Mechanism. In widening the scope of EU preparedness and response, monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken by the Commission in conjunction with national competent authorities as civil protection is a Member State capacity.

Moving forward, this initiative will be monitored through the performance framework for the post-2027 budget, which is examined in a separate impact assessment. The performance framework provides for an implementation report during the implementation phase of the programme, as well as a retrospective evaluation to be carried out in accordance with Article 34(3) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. The evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines and will be based on indicators relevant to the objectives of the programme.

The table below contains a number of suggested headline indicators in line with and presented to the performance framework for the post-2027 budget under the policy area (level 1): crisis management. The performance framework provides for an implementation report during the implementation phase of the programme, as well as a retrospective evaluation to be carried out in accordance with Article 34(3) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. The evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines and will be based on indicators relevant to the objectives of the programme.

In order to adequately monitor "preparedness by design", it will be suggested as a horizontal principle, alongside the existing principles on "do no significant harm" and gender equality. Mainstreaming requires a deliberate and upstream consideration of preparedness factors in planning and decision-making—not only ex post categorisation. Following the gender equality model to ensure consistency: for the purposes of mainstreaming preparedness, Union budget activities or implementation through plans by Member States or third countries shall fall into one of three categories and corresponding preparedness scores: a) Activities with crisis and disaster preparedness as a principal objective

(‘preparedness score 2’); b) Activities with crisis and disaster preparedness as an important and deliberate objective, but not as the main objective (‘preparedness score 1’); c) Activities anticipated to have no substantial contribution to preparedness (‘preparedness score 0’). This would allow for ex ante analysis of the Union’s state of preparedness.

Monitoring and evaluation are part of the life cycle of strategic foresight and anticipatory approaches and will not only measure the accuracy and value of information output but also be measured as a process of coherence. Data from Copernicus Emergency Management Service (CEMS) and Copernicus Support to EU External and Security Actions (SESA) will continue to lie at the heart of the Commission situational awareness and analytical support. Continuous information exchange via partnerships such as European Anthropogenic Hazard Scientific Partnership (EAHSP) and the close collaboration the EEAS and decentralised agencies (Satellite Center, Frontex, European Centre for Disease Control) will inform outcomes under General Objective 1 and 4.

The Commission will establish an appropriate integrated framework which will benefit from and inform a cross-sectoral, all-hazard approach to risks and response. In the context of such monitoring, the Commission will pay special attention to the potential need of review of design parameters, such as notification thresholds or milestones reached. Should such a need arise, the parameters could potentially be modified.

Lastly, a data plan will be developed to ensure data are available for the evaluation of effectiveness, efficiency and EU added value. Work on this has already commenced: In the beginning of 2025, DG ECHO implemented the Civil Protection Data Repository, following the UCPM evaluation, which collects operational data like deployments of capacities or stockpiling locations.

Indicator Title	Source	Target	Methodology
General Objective 1: Implement an integrated all-hazards, anticipatory, and proactive approach to threat and risk management.			
Number of scientific and technical assessments and advice provided to the ERCC in support of UCPM operations	European Commission, Member States, Participating States, European scientific partnerships (e.g. the European Natural Hazard Scientific Partnership ENHSP).	>436	Scientific and technical assessments and advice are needed for an evidence-based decision-making. The ERCC, while dealing with natural and man-made disasters, needs to make use of the latest scientific and technical knowledge and expertise to support emergency management activities under the UCPM.
The Member States and UCPM Participating States use the UCP Knowledge Network to share knowledge and strengthen a community of civil protection experts	UCP Knowledge Network	50,000 page views per month. 50% of content contributed by community. 2,500 community members.	Growth (number of community members), reach (page views), engagement (number of groups and number of participants in knowledge sharing events) and knowledge sharing (number of library publications uploaded).
General Objective 2: Implement an efficient and effective cross-sectoral coordination framework for various crises in a whole-of-government approach			
Response to Requests for Assistance by all countries	Common Emergency Communication and Information System. (CECIS)	80%	Overall percentage of Requests for Assistance (from EU MS, UCPM PS and Third Countries) that resulted in the acceptance of at least one offer of assistance by EU MS and UCPM PS and/or rescEU.
Response to Requests for Assistance by EU Member States	CECIS	100%	Percentage of Requests for Assistance by EU MS that resulted in the acceptance of at least one offer of assistance by EU MS and UCPM PS and/or rescEU.
Number of exercises aiming to strengthen civil - military cooperation to which ECHO contributes in a significant way	Internal reporting from DG ECHO Dir A.	15	Number of exercises involving both civilian and military stakeholders are crucial to strengthening civil – military cooperation and interoperability in times of major and complex crises.
General Objective 3: Ensuring a whole-of-society approach to preparedness and response to crises			
Level of awareness of Union citizens of the risk of their region	Eurobarometer	>64% in the 2024 Eurobarometer	Percentage of the population of the Union aware of disaster risks in their region. The Eurobarometer is run

			with a frequency of every three years.
Financing of disaster prevention and preparedness projects (inside and outside the EU)	Internal reporting from DG ECHO Dir B.	15	Number of financed disaster prevention and preparedness projects inside and outside the EU.
General Objective 4: Ensure the Union is equipped to act timely and in solidarity			
Capacities available for deployment	Internal reporting from DG ECHO Dir A.	30	Number of capacities available for deployment, including RescEU operational capacities and response capacities, registered in the European Civil Protection Pool.
Acceptance of Offers	CECIS	tbd	Percentage of accepted assistance for in-kind assistance and modules compared with offered assistance.

ANNEX 1: PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Lead DG, Decide Planning/CWP references

The lead services of the Impact Assessment were SG and DG ECHO, with close collaboration of DG HERA and DG SANTE. After instruction by central services no Decide planning entry for the Open Public Consultation was initiated.

Organisation and timing

The external support study was supervised by an Inter-service Steering Group (ISG), composed of representatives of the EEAS and the following European Commission (EC) DGs: AGRI, BUDG, CNECT, CLIMA, DEFIS, ECHO, EMPL, ENER, ENV, FPI, GROW, HERA, HOME, INTPA, JRC, REGIO, RTD, MARE, MOVE, REFORM, SANTE, SG, SJ.

Six ISG meeting were held on 23 July 2024, 25 September 2024, 18 October 2024, 27 January 2025, 24 March 2025 and 16 May 2025.

Consultation of the RSB

An upstream RSB meeting was conducted on 31 March 2025.

The regular RSB meeting was conducted on 18 June 2025.

- Following RSB meeting on 18 June, the suggested changes and/or additions were implemented throughout the Impact Assessment, including but not limited to:On scope and coherence:

- clarification on the rationale behind merging elements of EU4Health with UCPM 2.0 instrument (sub-chapter "Simplification, Synergies and "being able to deliver"");
- further explanation on how the new instrument is proposed to interact with other funding programmes (sub-chapter "Coherence with other preparedness-relevant funding programmes");
- clarification on coherence of the proposed Hub with existing crisis and civilian military coordination structures (sub chapters on "Description of policy options" and "External coherence");

➢ <u>On intervention logic and objectives:</u>
  - Added section on monitoring and evaluation of new instrument's activities under Chapter 9 "How will actual impacts be monitored and evaluated"

➢ <u>On comparison of options and impacts:</u>
  - Added evidence from different reports on impacts and comparisons of options (Chapter 6 "What are the impacts of the policy options" and "sub-chapter "Effectiveness")
  - Additional explanation on the comprehensive EU risk and threat assessment added (sub-chapters on "Description of policy options" and "Effectiveness")

➢ <u>On governance:</u>
  - Clarification was added that the fundamental governance mechanism of the new instrument will not be different to the current one (Chapter 5 "What are the available policy options?")

➢ <u>On future monitoring and evaluation:</u>
  - Added section on monitoring and evaluation of new instrument's activities, including the interaction with the Performance Framework Regulation (Chapter 9 "How will actual impacts be monitored and evaluated")

Evidence, sources, and quality

The evidence basis stems from the 2024 UCPM Evaluation as well as the evaluation of the implementation of Regulation 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health, as well as the responds to the recommendations from the European Court of Auditors.

The evidence stemming from these reports was supplemented by relevant studies and reports like the European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA) or the Niinistö report. These are references throughout the analysis.

Nevertheless, deficits with regards to the cost-benefit analysis of interventions due to the volatile response environment and the impossibility of counter-factual analyses persist. This includes the analysis of the assessment of impacts. Moreover, the UCPM capacity gaps report will be adopted only on 5 June 2025. Nevertheless, important preliminary findings were included in the analysis (as shared in the inter-service consultation). The same applies for the findings of the "mid-term evaluation of the Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health".

ANNEX 2: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION (SYNOPSIS REPORT)

Civil protection, preparedness and response to disasters

Report - Open Public Consultation

1. Introduction

This report forms part of the outcome of the Open Public Consultation informing the Impact Assessment for civil protection, preparedness and response to disasters in preparation of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2027. The main body of text is divided into three sections; a note on data and method, the main presentation of results, and come final conclusions. The main conclusion is that investment into preparedness and crisis management at EU level is welcomed and that the main area in which the EU can create added value is in mitigating and responding to natural hazards as a consequence of **climate change and threats to biodiversity**, in fighting **disinformation** and **securing civic space as well as innovation in the digital space to combat authoritarianism,** and to ensure the EU is overall **prepared** in the event of an **armed conflict**.

2. Note on data and method

The data for this report is the responses to the *Public Consultation – EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises.* The survey was open to all EU citizens, businesses, associations, government bodies etc. in Europe and has **received 1187 responses** of which had attachments for a total of **139 position papers**. Considering the relatively low number of responses, there is **no inferential statistics nor conclusion drawn at population level in this report.** The respondents will be treated as the whole rather than as a statistical sample. It is to note that a Eurobarometer on Civil Protection was published in February 2024, thus the demographic expected to engage with the subject matter may experience some survey fatigue, main descriptive statistical results have been compared to the outcomes of the Eurobarometer where appropriate.

The free text and the position papers have both primarily been treated as qualitative data. The free text has been analysed by a **Large Language Model (LLM)** based on the two following inputs: the Executive Summary of the Niinistö Report, which acted as a baseline understanding of concepts such as 'preparedness', 'crisis' and 'risks', and a list of ten questions, (see annex 2) developed to extract relevant data. The list of ten questions were also used to (manually) analyse the position papers.

To contextualise the free text, language from the main survey was used as a compliment, and to gain additional insight into the free text JRC provided a sentiment analysis, utilising a new version of the state-of-the-art sentiment model called XLM-RLnews-8. The sentiment analysis, which is specifically designed for (short-)document-level sentiment analysis across multiple

languages, was first adapted it to the news domain, using a multilingual news dataset extracted via the European Media Monitor (EMM) pipeline**. This dataset includes 20 000 news headlines and descriptions per each of the 24 official languages of the European Union.** JRC further employed the Unified Multilingual Sentiment Analysis Benchmark (UMSAB) dataset for sentiment fine-tuning, which consists of eight datasets in eight languages, each annotated using three classes: negative, neutral, and positive. As the original model trained on the complete UMSAB dataset proved to be biased towards neutrality when predicting a sentiment class for German texts, they fine-tuned a new version of it with the same architecture and domain adaptation but for data in English, Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese.

3. Results and analysis

3.1 Descriptive statistics

More than half of all respondents, **776 are individual EU citizens (65.3%)**, the other 411 responses are comprised of government authorities, businesses and companies, non-governmental organisations, academia, associations and trade unions. The largest share is from **France (324),** followed by **Belgium (298)** and **Germany (126).** There **are no major division between responses from organisations, authorities, businesses, and individual EU citizens**. They follow a similar pattern, with generally harmonized responses between the four groups. With the most popular response being largely the same between groups in all comparative questions.

The few discrepancies are on *question 2* where *local conflict* stands out as a reply from EU citizens, when asked what they consider the worst 'spill-over' risk to be compared to other entities who indicates that *disruptions of supply chains* would cause the biggest risk for 'spill-over'. On *question 6* EU citizens organisations show a preference for health stockpiling more pronounced than do public authorities and businesses. The latter would prefer stockpiling of *energy and energy equipment* to a higher degree. The finding among EU citizens is supported by the Eurobarometer where medical emergencies score second highest response when asked which crisis respondent think EU should prioritise. Further, as shown by *question7* organisations are more likely to support civil protection action outside Europe than any other group. A final notable division appears in *question 9.2* where EU Citizens believe that public-private cooperation is most important in *agriculture and food production, processing and distribution* whereas businesses, organisations and public authorities have selected *security of supply chains* as their preferred area for private-public cooperation.

When asked which three risks and threats respondents consider most threatening, the three most common answers were *disasters caused by climate change* (874), *disinformation* (464) and *threats to biodiversity and animal/plant health* (410). As Europe is heating up, the frequency, severity and visibility of climate change related natural hazards have become a main threat to life and economic situation. *Disasters caused by climate change* was not only the overwhelmingly most popular answer to the question, but of the survey with it being the selected option more times than any other suggested answer in any comparable question.

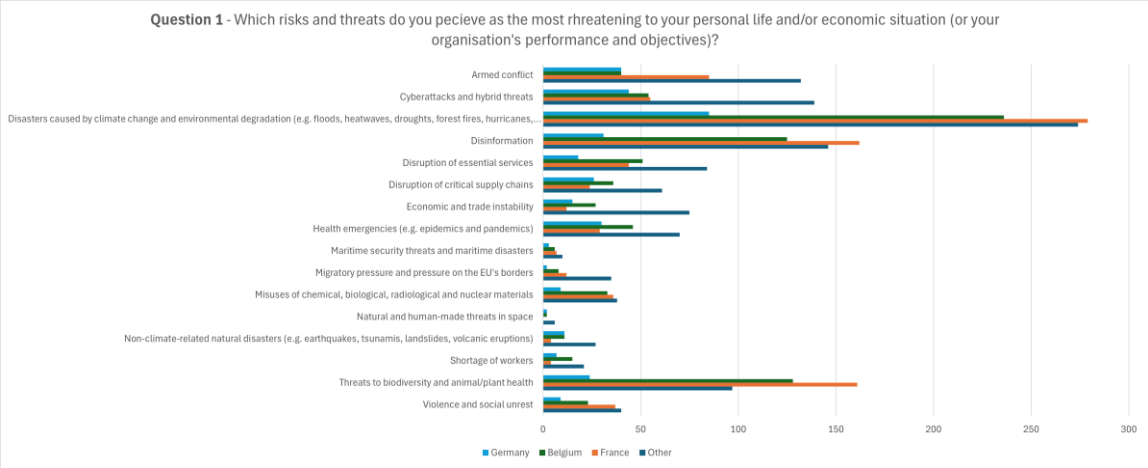

Figure 9: Result of question 1) Which risks and threats do you perceive as the most threatening to your personal life and/or economic situation (or your organisation's performance?) Grouped by category of respondents.

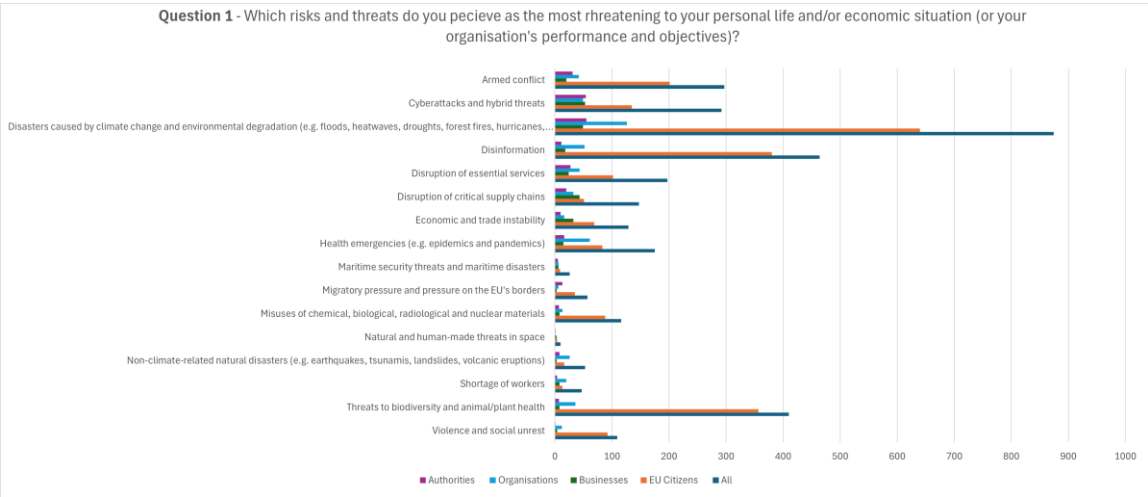

Figure 8: Result of question 1) Which risks and threats do you perceive as the most threatening to your personal life and/or economic situation (or your organisation's performance?) Grouped by country.

No other comparable question had any outliers, as seen in the graph (Figure 3) below, comparing the variance in responses of question 1, 2, 3 and 6. This is also followed up in *question 5* where it is indicated that 73.38% of respondents indicate that EU investment would have a higher added value than Member State investment, making it the most popular response. Similarly, in *question 3, coordinated responses to the impacts of climate change* is the most popular answer overall. Combined with *threats to biodiversity and animal/plant health* ([145]) **77.6% of respondents to this survey showed concern for Europe's natural environment.** Climate change is also the most common answer regardless of

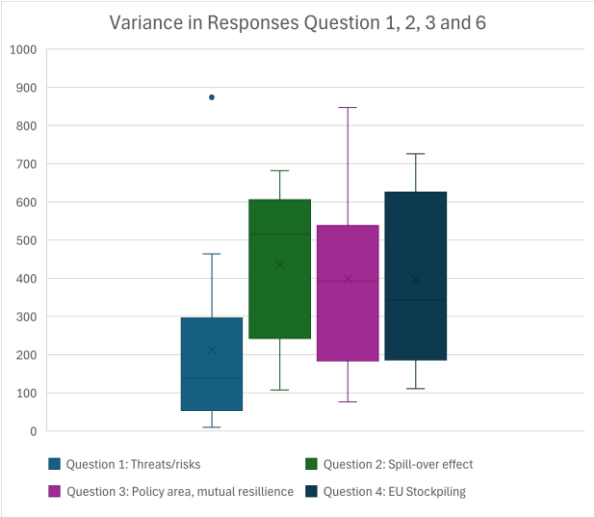

Figure 3: Mean, quartiles and variance of responses to questions 1-3 and 6. The blue dot above question one represents the outlier disasters caused by climate change.

([145]) The figure controlled for respondents that had chosen both *threats to biodiversity and animal/plant health* and *disasters caused by climate change* which was a total of 367 respondents.

region (North, South, East or West Europe ([146])) However, there is a skew towards armed conflict, disinformation, cyberattacks and hybrid threats in Eastern Europe, and to a lesser extent also in Northern Europe. This light skew is present in both *question 1, 2* and in *question 3.* The shadow of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine looms in the combined answers from respondents based in Eastern Europe. While respondents in Western and Southern Europe, where forest fires and floods are becoming more frequent and extreme, show a high degree of unanimity in climate change being the main threat/risk, and subsequently also the issue in need of the most EU attention, respondents in Easter Europe have spread answers pertaining to armed conflict, disinformation, and cyberattacks and hybrid warfare more evenly next to climate change.

Q 1: Which risks and threats do you perceive as the most threatening to your personal life and/or economic situation (or your organisation's performance?)	North	West	South	East
Violence and social unrest	4	80	17	7
Threats to biodiversity and animal/plant health	20	334	42	11
Shortage of workers	3	33	4	3
Non-climate-related natural disasters	2	30	15	3
Natural and human-made threats in space	1	4	4	0
Misuses of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials	4	88	13	6
Migratory pressure and pressure on the EU's borders	7	27	14	9
Maritime security threats and maritime disasters	4	18	3	1
Health emergencies (e.g. epidemics and pandemics)	7	117	32	10
Economic and trade instability	20	58	30	17
Disruption of critical supply chains	12	103	14	7
Disruption of essential services	17	129	29	12
Disinformation	22	343	60	33
Disasters caused by climate change and environmental degradation	35	655	122	49
Cyberattacks and hybrid threats	31	177	42	31
Armed conflict	24	180	42	43

Figure 4: The gradient of colour shows the frequency of answers, the spread of green in columns 1 and 4 show the more varied response of threats and risks.

Q 2: Which risks from outside the EU do you believe are most likely to have a spill-over effect on the EU?	North	West	South	East
Terrorism and cross-border organised crime, such as drug trafficking	11	170	33	21
Local conflicts or political instability in neighbouring regions	41	416	87	46
Irregular migration	12	44	27	20
Infectious disease outbreaks	17	276	49	18
Disruption of global supply chains due to natural and human-made causes	53	467	102	44
Disruption of essential services (e.g. underwater cables for energy or data)	42	355	85	31
Cyberthreats resulting from weak cybersecurity standards in interconnected in non-EU countries with whom the EU works	28	360	70	45

Q 3: Which policy areas should the EU prioritise when working with non-EU countries to strenghten their resilience to crises that may also affect the EU (a concept called 'mutual resilience')?	North	West	South	East
Strengthening non-EU countries' border controls	10	30	18	13
Using of space-based services and applications for crisis management (including prevention, public alerts, preparedness and recovery efforts)	5	81	33	12
Health systems: strengthening and supporting responses to health emergencies (e.g. infectious disease outbreaks)	27	335	55	18
Economic security and protection of global supply chains	38	194	56	33
Cybersecurity and protection of essential services	22	230	45	31
Coordinated responses to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation	45	643	111	38
Conflict early warning, conflict prevention, stabilisation and peacebuilding	33	398	82	46
Assistance for a coordinated response to crises, including at land and sea	27	299	70	36

Figure 5: The fourth column in both tables containing the responses to question 2 and three respectively, show the skew towards conflict as a larger perceived issue in Eastern Europe.

Disinformation is a common response alongside climate change and since today most disinformation campaigns are made possible through digital means, either as the source or as a

([146]) **Northern Europe:** Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden. **Western Europe:** Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, **Southern Europe:** Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, **Eastern Europe:** Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

means of distribution, a combined (cyberattack and disinformation) **56.10% of respondents are concerned with the digital health of Europe in some form.**

Another issue that appears throughout the survey results, having a strong presence but not taking the centre stage is the *risk/threat of disruption to global supply chains*. It is seen as an area ripe for public-private cooperation in *question 9.2* (596) and, in *question 2*, indicated as the main threat from the outside which could cause spill-over effects inside the EU both when looking at all responses in total.

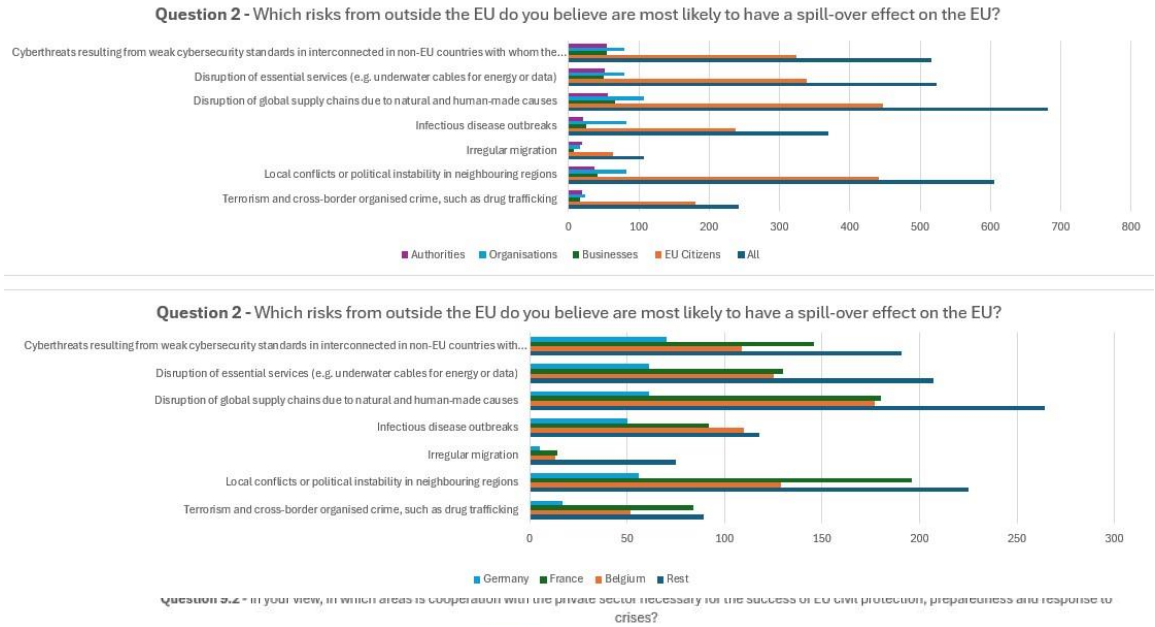

Figure 6: Responses to question 2, divided by category of respondents (top) and countries (bottom).

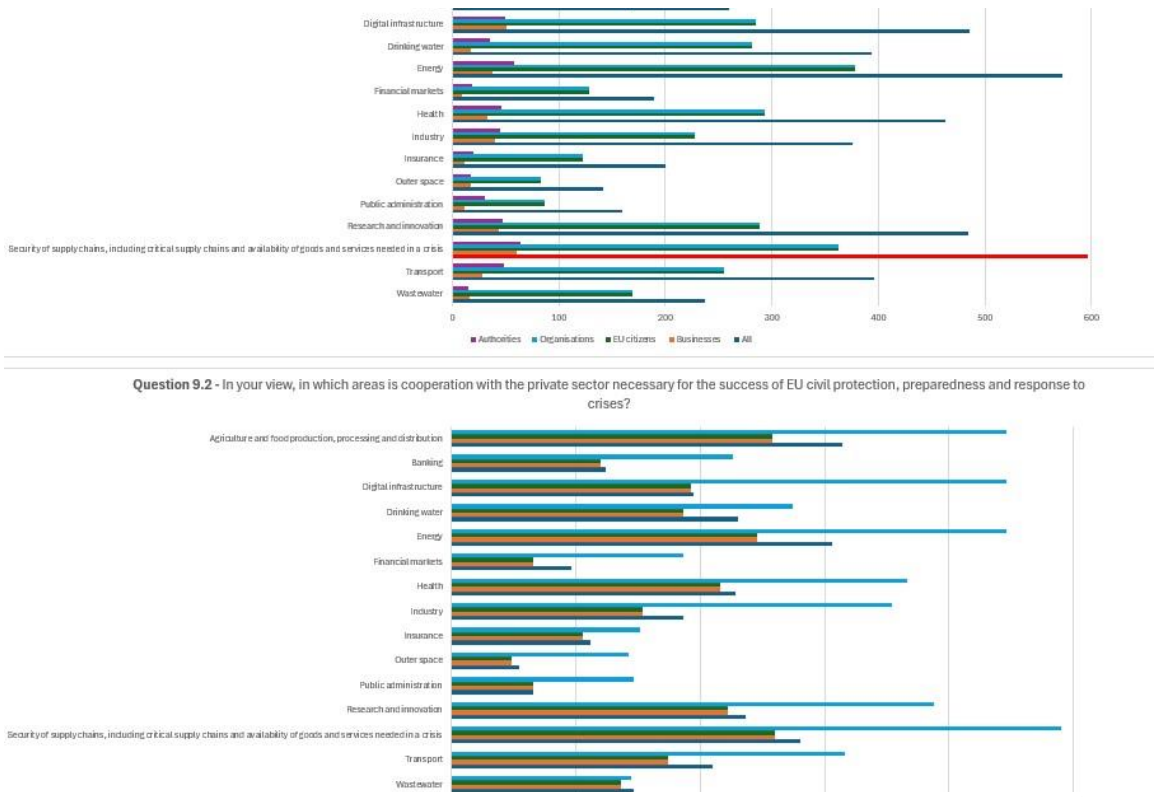

Figure 7: Responses to question 9.2. The red bar shows all responses on 'supply chain'.

It is evident that responders to this survey believe **EU should make investments** into preparedness, and that it brings added value in certain areas. Such position is supported by responses to *question 5*. Half or more of respondents have answered that EU investments would have more added value than individual Member States, **to a large extent** across 5 out of 14 policy field, including in response to *armed conflict* (238), *climate change* (277) *disruption of supply chains* (242), *Economic and trade instability* (226), and in response to *health emergencies* (221).

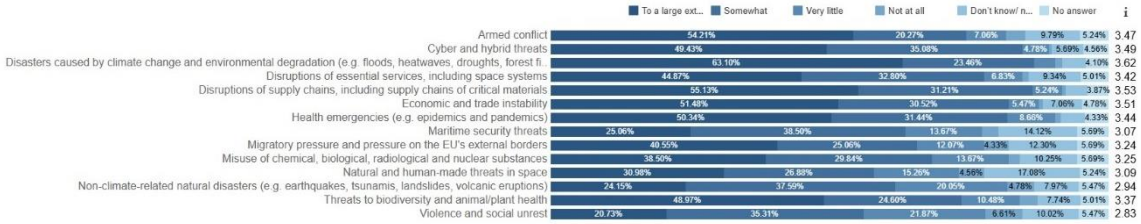

Figure 8: Result of question 5) to what extent do you agree that the EU budget should support the following objectives?

The survey follows up *question 5* with responses to *question 6* showing that respondents look generally favourably on **EU Stockpiling,** especially *medicine, medical* (257) and *energy equipment* (238) and *food/drinking water* (193). Stockpiling preferences show coherence with the supported policy fields and the impact of Russias war of agression against Ukraine. Only a total of 13 responses indicate that there are no areas in which EU should stockpile. A total of 13 responses is equivalent to 0.4% of responses or aproximately 4 responents.

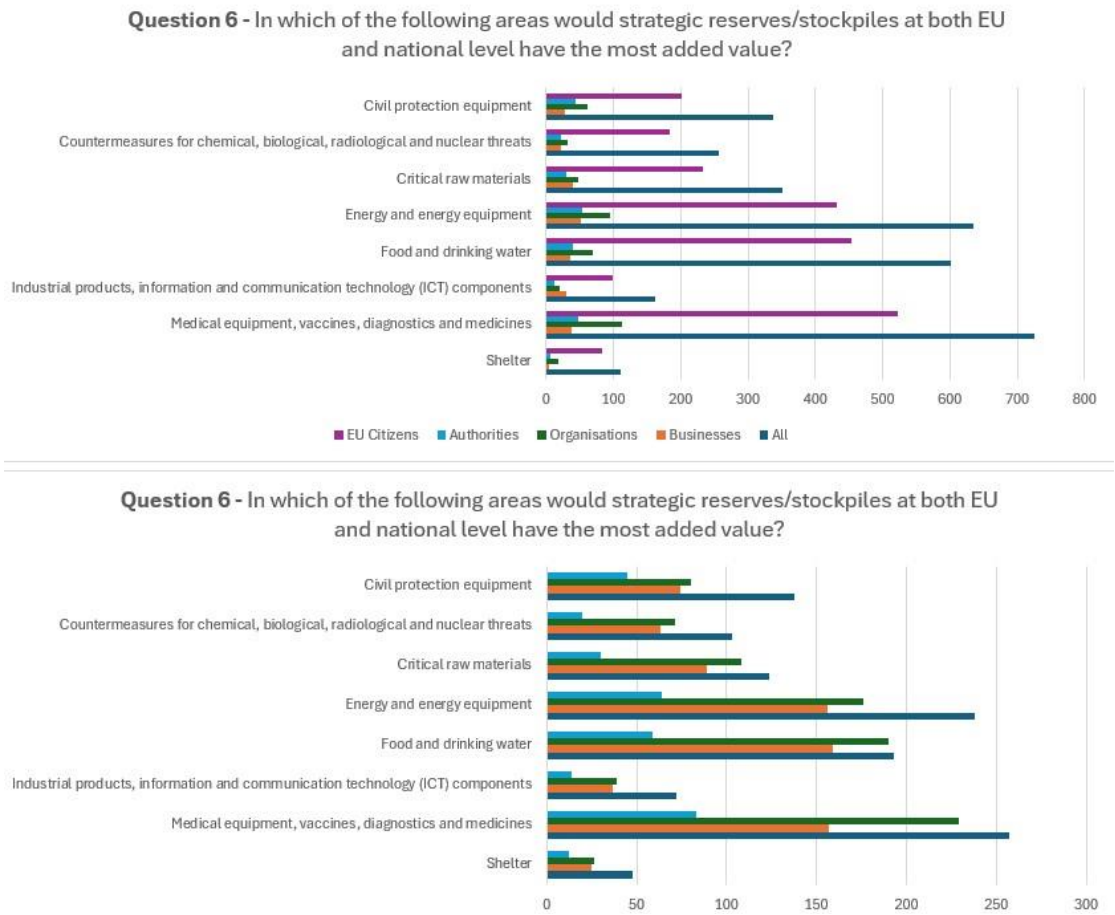

Figure 9: Result of question 6, divided by category of respondents (top) and countries (bottom).

This positive outlook on EU investment into preparedness is further backed up in *question 7* where 61.75% of respondents (733 responses) strongly agree that EU *should minimise risk and threats and prevent crises in the EU*. Further, 56.87% of respondents (657 responses) strongly agree that EU budget should *support preparedness for crises in the EU*. Only 19.12% (227 responses) strongly agree that the same efforts should be undertaken outside the EU, yet in *question 4* to agree strongly with the statement *"Support preparedness and ensure the EU can react to unexpected events to act in solidarity with its citizens and beyond"* was the most common answer at (635) responses, indicating that preparedness and crisis management beyond European borders are still important.

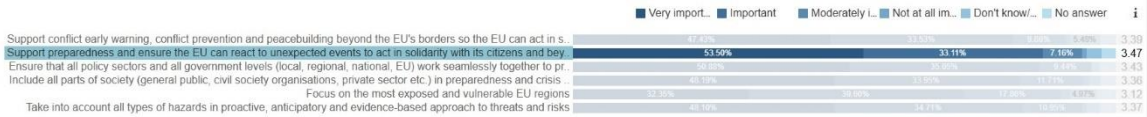

Figure 10: Result of question 4) In your view, how important are the following objectives?

The only questions where respondents did not generally agree with the statement of the survey is *question 10.2.* Among respondents, 37.85% seem to indicate that the EU should step up its efforts to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable populations. This sentiment is especially true among respondents identifying as either EU citizens or organisations. Additionally, 28.64% only consider needs of vulnerable populations to have been met 'somewhat'.

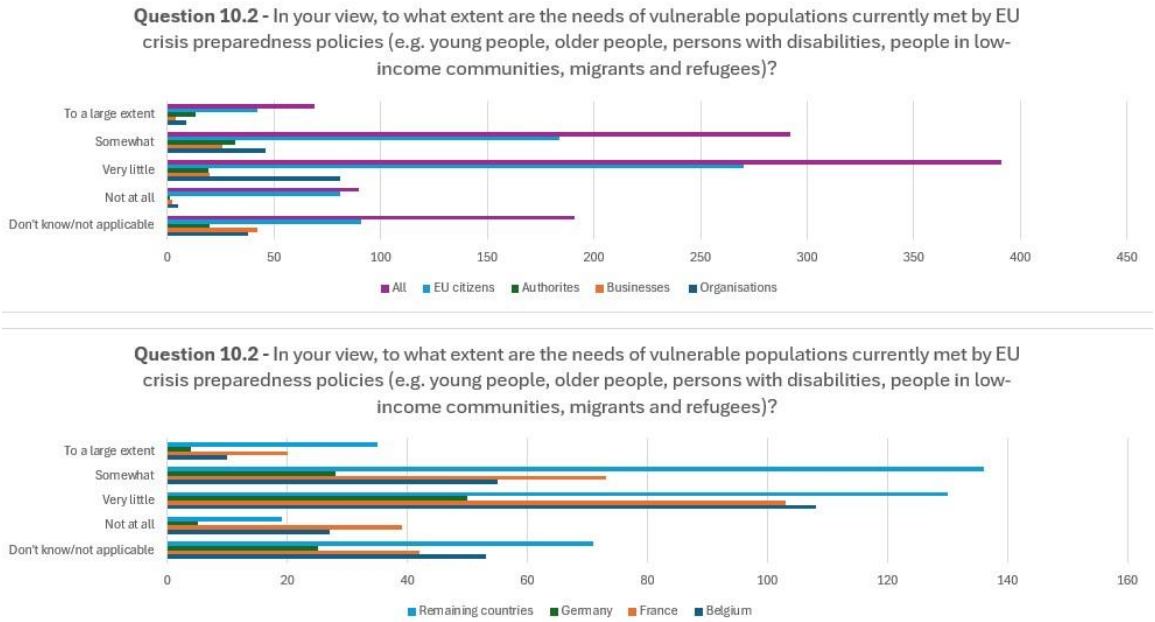

Figure 11: Result of question 10.2.

3.2 Free text

The free text question *"Do you have any feedback or comments EU's work on civil protection, preparedness and crisis response?"* received a total of 376 submissions (consisting of more than 50 characters) across the survey which were analysed by an LLM. 179 EU citizens had provided free text, sharing their perspectives and another 180 entities had done the same. Respondents covered various areas of competence including academia and research institutions specialising in environmental sciences and life sciences, NGO's and human rights groups, private sector associations, involved in areas such as infrastructure, logistics, health, and supply-chain security.

Based on the free text, the main areas where improvement of EU policy and engagement is suggested is in *climate change adaptation and biodiversity and resilience.* More than half of all free text submitted by EU citizens requested a **higher focus on climate change** as the main risk facing Europe, including *"dedicating significant budget to preparing for the impacts of climate change"* and to invest in *"environmental democracy"* noting that most of the threats facing Europe today have a climate change component and will be exacerbated by climate change.

Another issue raised alongside climate change is he **rise in defence spending** impacting spending in other areas of crisis management. This sentiment was shared with multiple other contributors with variation including ensuring that the power remains squarely with civilian authorities and to safeguard democracy against the rise of fascism in a post-truth era. As a Slovenian contributor phrased it:

> *"As an EU citizen, I am concerned at the notion that armed response is seen as the answer to today's challenges. Redirecting funds toward military build-up contradicts our core EU values. We should invest in diplomacy, innovation, and resilience-not feed an arms industry that profits from conflict." ([147])*

Finally, among EU citizens there was **a clear opposition against how the survey had framed migration as a critical issue** on par with climate change, epidemic or armed conflict. Several contributors noted that they see **migration is a symptom** of the former issues not a cause itself, and therefore suggested a focus on resilience and long-term solutions. The point of view was summarised by a contributor from the Netherlands:

> *"Please focus on prevention instead of mitigation. Look at the long-term issues, take (climate) scientists seriously, and remember that only non-violence can stop violence." ([148])*

Among entities (businesses, public authorities, and organisations) main areas for improvement of EU policy included *cybersecurity collaboration, proactive EU resilience measures* and *infrastructure enhancement and resilience.* Cybersecurity is a recurring topic, especially the need to **cooperate across country borders** as part of the defence of democracy and from authoritarianism. It is stressed that cyber defence alongside civil protection need to transition from what is considered reactive processes to proactive **resilience-building actions** is stressed, with an emphasis on **stockpiling resources, proactive campaigns, and significant investments in resilience measures**. Investments and systems strengthening should occur at local, national, and EU levels for effective civil protection and crisis response.

Further, highlighted by lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, the free text indicates a wish to strengthening of resilient and **localized manufacturing** networks to enhance preparedness to ensure that disruptions to supply chains do not decimate European **healthcare, food systems** and **critical industries.** Closely connected is the advocacy for coordinated European action to modernize and improve **transport infrastructure** for **dual-use mobility**, to remove bottlenecks, and maintain supply chain sovereignty, which is crucial as climate change and geopolitical tensions rise.

([147]) Quote from contributor F3549854.
([148]) Quote from contributor F3541625.

The tone of the free text and the position papers is balanced with a clear skew towards positivity indicating that whilst the subject matter may be of a serious nature, the outlook is bright, thus signalling that respondents have an already good overall experience with EU preparedness and crisis management and are looking forward to its betterment rather than it being a policy area causing negative public opinion. It also indicates that there is a broader political (left-right scale) consensus, and the policy area does not stir controversy among respondents.

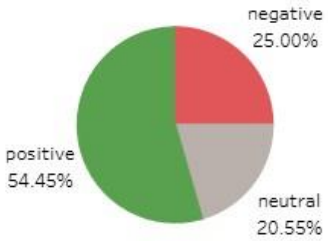

Figure 12: Share of sentiment in the free text.

Stockpiling and pre-positioning of resources are favoured as a **means of action from the EU**. It was both seen as part of the meaning of "preparedness" (including trainings, SOPs and implementation of early warning systems and risk anticipation strategies) and as an explicit action the EU should undertake to ensure Europe's safety and security. Specifically mentioned stockpiles includes **energy and health resources, critical raw materials and food.** Other notable recommendations for EU action includes continually strengthened cross-border cooperation on civil protection, in which the EU has a coordinating role, and in supporting early warning systems and improving risk forecasting. The responses overall support an **increase in EU spending on preparedness** and crisis management.

3.3 Position papers

To complement the free text results, 139 position paper attachments were submitted. 53 papers were submitted by non-governmental organisations, 45 by businesses, business associations and trade unions; another 22 by various associations and organisations; and 14 by public authorities. The position papers (139) can be categorised in the following categories: 1. Civil society representation and democracy (32); 2. Healthcare (23); 3. Infrastructure and transportation (19); 4. Climate adaptation (17); 5. Policy and public authority (16); 6. Digital innovation and cyber defence (15); and 7. Civil protection and early warning (12). These categorisations are broad and within each group, the subject matter varies. The main outlier is the 'Digital innovation and cyber defence' category, displaying nearly complete internal coherence.

The strongest call for a single action comes from position papers focusing on digital innovation and cyber defence. Ten out of fifteen papers explicitly call for the **establishment of a sovereign or 'freedom-themed' tech fund** modelled after **Germany's Sovereign Tech Fund.** The aim of this proposed fund is to secure Europe's digital infrastructure against cyber threats, ensure safe civic space online (thus combat authoritarianism), boost an economic competitive digital Europe. The main risk identified is that **of cyberattacks and hybrid threats** and **attack on democracy** by authoritarian actors. This aligns well with the secondary result of *question 1*, confirming **cyberattacks and hybrid threats** as a concern for both EU citizens and organised bodies. The main framing of the request for an EU sovereign tech fund is in defence of democracy, pointing out the importance of a secure and free internet during the Arab Spring or Iran's Women, Life, Freedom protests. The main target suggested for funding is development of Open-Source Code and Software, which is **foundational for nearly all Europe's digital infrastructure**, but is often overlooked as it does not promise the same economic reward as proprietary systems.

The focus on a **free and safe civic space** in Europe carries on in papers submitted by civil society, thus invertedly the identified risk of shrinking civic space. *Culture Action Europe* notes

the role of cultural content and participation in defence against disinformation, hybrid threats, and psychological warfare from authoritarian regimes and *The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)* notes that the cost of violence was EUR 18.2 trillion in 2023, equivalent to 13,5% of the world's economic activity, thus making an economic argument for the support to strengthened democracy. *Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)* makes a similar argument for the **support of free media** in the face of disinformation and low confidence in professional journalism, noting that quality journalism has also led to over €5 billion in recovered assets by EU governments, exposing dark-money flows, political corruption, and funding of extremism.

Echoing the free text above, a number of papers, from several kinds of entities expresses concerns that the growing importance of defence spending will come at an (expected) cost of declining funds in other areas. The umbrella organisation for the *Swedish Trade Unions* points to resilience being the result of both social and military investments, and the *Government of Ireland*, while recognising the increasing opportunities for cross-fertilisation of civilian and defence research, requests that the new MFF retains the civilian focus of the R&I framework programmes.

Several organisations representing first responders and volunteers contributing to the civil protection of EU Member States have been submitted. A notable contribution comes from *Federation Nationale Sapeurs Pompiers de France* who highlights the vital role of **volunteering** in European civil protection and that the renewed interest in civil defence cannot come at the expense of civil protection. The paper further proposes an **Erasmus exchange programme** for civil protection professionals, a request echoed by *The International Association of Fire Services (CTIF)*. The development of cross-border training programs and the promotion of a whole-of-society approach to resilience are seen as crucial steps in building cohesive and effective crisis management systems.

There are two issues that stands out among papers submitted on **health preparedness**: support to staffing and inequalities in health care during crisis. **The EU stockpiling strategy is welcomed among many respondents**, but there are calls to ensure that the EU does not fall deeper into the current shortage of health care professionals – **especially nurses**. The papers argue a need for comprehensive staffing plans and coordination with patient organisation to ensure healthcare workers are safeguarded during crisis. Seven papers from NGOs in the health care sector describe the severe strain on healthcare services experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. A Belgian health NGO detailed how disruptions in diagnosis and treatment negatively impacted cancer patients, thus underscoring the systemic strain on healthcare services and workforce during crisis. Several papers, including papers from organisations such as *Transforming Breast Cancer Together (TBCT)* to *COCIR, the European Trade Association for medical imaging, radiotherapy, health ICT and electromedical industries* raised the need for future funding to support mobile diagnostic units, digital health platforms, and cross-border healthcare cooperation as means to avoid excess mortality during the nest crisis. Additionally, one paper raises the visibility of the pharmaceutical pipeline during crisis, noting that **pharmaceutical wholesale distribution** hubs have been targeted in previous conflicts with malicious intent.

European Disability Forum (EDF) highlights the lessons learned from earthquake in Turkey, flood in Spain, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine exposing gaps in evacuation protocols, access to emergency services for people living with disabilities, who often are among the most vulnerable during disasters. Healthier people have more trust in democracy and

political institutions, thus with growing geopolitical tensions, an overall healthy and resilient population is imperative. This is especially true since **health outcomes are intrinsically linked to equality** and that crisis exacerbate inequalities and that discrimination should be recognised as a determinant of health.

In order to serve the most vulnerable in society, several NGO-penned papers request a more inclusive crisis management system. The involvement of diaconal organizations, churches, and other essential health and social service providers in national and European preparedness frameworks while also providing these organizations with adequate resources and recognition is seen as crucial for strengthening overall crisis preparedness and response systems, particularly in serving marginalized communities. Emergency social services should be part of public authorities' crisis prevention and recovery plans since their role is vital to help people affected by crises recover after adversity, coordinate action with other public services, address social vulnerabilities and promote long-term recovery.

The **infrastructure** category can be divided into two sub-categories: the **preparedness of cities** and **transportation**. Infrastructure stands out as a category where the main theme of the papers is **not reflected in the survey,** but the contribution by the papers is meaningful. (The understanding of 'preparedness' and 'risks' aligns with the baseline, thus making the contribution meaningful.) The associated themes combine the need for climate adaptive measures and the role of infrastructure such as roads and waterways, as a means of military mobility and **civ/mil dual-purpose infrastructure**. *The Voice of European Railways* notes the estimated 94% overlap between civilian and military railway networks, which highlights its dual use and *European Automobile Manufacturers' Association* highlights the need for funding in order for road networks to serve much heavier – military - veichles. Several papers lament the absence of a budget envelope specifically for transportation and calls for the and for safeguarding the TEN-T network. Cities are highlighted as experiencing the effects of climate change in a different way to Europe at large, noting heat hotspots, stormwater management and the precariousness of food pipelines into large cities. The advocacy for preparedness in these separate policy areas makes the case for **mainstreaming preparedness and crisis management** as it is how horizontal themes such as climate change have an impact on the risks and threats to a wide range of policy areas.

Climate change is highlighted as the major threat to Europe both within dedicated papes from NGO's and academia, but also in papers from the **space industry** suggesting **tools for monitoring, forecasting and anticipation** with explicit mentioning of Copernicus. The expansion in use of satellite data and space technologies, particularly the Copernicus system, is highlighted as a key in monitoring extreme weather events, borders, population movements, and responding to potential threats during the next MFF. With more frequent heatwaves, droughts, floods, wildfires and a rising sea level, EU is asked to ensure climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience at all levels. **Nature-based solutions** are suggested as they are crucial for climate adaptation, as they provide climate, environmental, social and economic benefits on top of helping build climate resilience. It is argued that dykes, dams and flood gates are up to ten times more cost-effective than rebuilding after disasters. Interesting to note however is the disconnect between both climate change, but especially biodiversity, as a key identified threat/risk, but the comparative lack of position papers on the topic. Only four papers addressed biohazards or animal health as part of a broader climate change or health narrative despite Climate change increasing the (re)emergence risk for diseases like smallpox by changing animal behaviour and ecology, bringing animals that carry orthopox-viruses into closer contact with domestic animals and humans.

A smaller subsection of papers on climate change and infrastructure, specifically addressed the state of the **agricultural sector** in the EU. Whilst many papers fell beyond the scope of crisis management, civil protection and preparedness, some did highlight the interconnectedness between whole-of-society preparedness and a resilient agricultural sector. The *European Alliance for Regenerative Agriculture (EARA)* suggests agriculture as a core strategic pillar in the European Union's civil preparedness and crisis response strategy as enhancing soil health, water retention, and biodiversity, regenerative systems reduce the frequency and severity of climate-induced shocks such as droughts, floods, and crop failures. Similarly, *Animal Health Europe* commends the **EU Veterinary Emergency Team** and request that they are adequately funded. They also request better support to farmers who choose to invest and be trained in vaccination and other animal health technologies through EU support mechanisms.

A notable omission of topics among position papers that the survey handles is **migration**. Very few position papers had any mention of migration as a risk/threat and the few papers that even discussed the topic shared sentiment with the free text submitted by EU citizens. The inclusion of migration as a threat to Europe is **problematic to the responders of this survey** with one organisation noting that framing migration as a risk stands in contrast to the reality that more than 75% of people fleeing their countries of origin remain in neighbouring countries.

Finally, an issue raised throughout nearly all papers to a variable degree is the **complexity of EU funding mechanisms** and bureaucratic hurdles as significant barrier for many public and private actors. Stakeholders' express concerns about the administrative and procedural complexities that deter engagement and limit the effectiveness of crisis response initiatives. Together with broader concerns about perceived disconnect between EU-level policies and the everyday lives of citizens and **lack of coordination** both bilaterally between Member States and between the EU and Member States, the papers reflect a broad consensus on the need for a more integrated and proactive approach to crisis preparedness and response.

4. Conclusion

The overall result of this survey reveals a 'preparedness landscape' with both challenges and opportunities for strategic advancement. The main risk and threats to Europe as identified by respondents are the consequences of climate change and natural hazards as a result of the former; disinformation and cyberattacks/the resilience of Europe's digital infrastructure; and threats to biodiversity- animal and plant health. The request for response mirrors the perceived threats and respondents of the survey looks favourably to renewed EU investments into civil protection, preparedness and stockpiling. EU Citizens and organisations alike has identified several hurdles to effective European preparedness, including critical outdated infrastructure, democracy in decline, underfunded health systems, technological deficiencies, and gaps in coordination among Member States and Member States and the EU. Throughout all qualitative data, and backed up by the quantitative results, the threat of fascism, authoritarianism and armed conflict also looms large even though less targeted contributions have been made on that topic. Instead, it is found throughout calls for free and safe civic space, health preparedness and in the 'psychological defence' of Europe. The request to include civil society in EU preparedness structures comes out strongly, and so does health preparedness beyond pandemic preparedness. Several practical suggestions have been made including an Erasmus programme for civil protection professionals, and a 'freedom themed tech fund'. Securing innovation in the digital space seen as a vital part in the defence against adverse interference from the outside

and currents from within threatening the European way of life. In conclusion, further investments into Europe's preparedness are welcomed by the respondents to this Open Public Consultation.

ANNEX 3: WHO IS AFFECTED AND HOW?

Summary of costs and benefits

I. Overview of Benefits (total for all provisions) – Preferred Option		
Description	***Amount***	***Comments***
	Direct benefits	
Better preparedness and response to crises, including health related	*The new initiative will have as direct benefit a more comprehensive preparedness for and response to crises. The all-hazards, whole-of-government and whole-of-society dimensions will further contribute to the effective and efficient support of Member States.*	*Overall benefit as described in the chapters 4-9.*
Reduced administrative burden for Member States and COM	*The new framework proposes reductions in administrative burdens for response activities (e.g. transportation co-financing rates and arrangements) and preparedness activities (e.g. reduction of double reporting of Member States).*	*Member States repeatedly voice heavy administrative burden, including on the report on risks.*
Simplified and streamlined reporting obligations	*The new initiative will entail that the obligations on reporting are more clearly listed. These will be given a dedicated article that clarifies WHY exactly they are collected.* *Moreover, the Commission's reporting obligations are foreseen to be consolidated (i.e. which reports the Commission produces and why).* *The timing of MS reporting and the production of COM reports will be made more flexible so as to allow for the gathering of data and the producing of COM reports when they are needed / when there is a policy-related relevance to deliver them;*	
More efficient procurement of goods, reduces costs, and ensures interoperability	*Member State authorities are directly benefitting of a reduced administrative workload for capacities which are urgently needed (e.g. through direct procurement).* *The time between the identification of a capacity gap/need and the availability of capacities is reduced significantly, thereby, helping to protect EU citizens.*	*The calls for proposals with Member States for the current rescEU capacities took up to 12 months. Member State authorities are the only beneficiaries.*
Streamlined processes enhance crisis response, planning, and coordination across sectors (incl. through EU crisis coordination hub)	*This will enable a faster and more comprehensive overview of ongoing crises.* *The currently complex system of co-financing rates and eligible actions and costs will be simplified drastically, reducing the administrative burden both at national as well as European levels.*	*Member States repeatedly voice heavy administrative burden when responding to crises.*
More complementary capacities at EU and national levels	*The more comprehensive analysis of capacity needs at EU and national level will result in a better preparedness for future needs and at the same time reduce costs by avoiding gaps and overlaps at Union level.*	

	This will imply additional costs at EU level. However, the overall costs for the Union will be reduced due to targeted addressing of needs.	
Integration of two spending programmes	*The integration of similar activities of two spending programmes into one will reduce the workload within the Commission. Further, the clear alienation of actions to a programme makes workflows and responsibilities clearer for Member States.*	*Two natural partners are being brought together. The DG HERA stockpiling under rescEU is already executed by DG ECHO.*
Indirect benefits		
Better-prepared citizens and, consequently, lives and assets saved	*The promotion of population preparedness will enhance the knowledge of citizens on risks and how to prepare for these. Consequentially, the citizens will know better how to react in case of a disaster striking.*	*There is no possibility to estimate the number of lives and assets saved solely through population preparedness. There are more factors contributing like a better preparedness of response agencies and preventive measures.*
Citizens experience European solidarity	*A European response to disasters which includes multinational teams and capacities shows the affected and sending communities the value of truly lived and implemented European solidarity. In times of wide criticism of the European idea, these acts of solidarity help to foster a positive idea of the EU.*	*This assumption is based on informal feedback of response teams who were in close contact with affected citizens.*

(1) Estimates are gross values relative to the baseline for the preferred option as a whole (i.e. the impact of individual actions/obligations of the preferred option are aggregated together); (2) Please indicate in the comments column which stakeholder group is the main recipient of the benefit;(3) For reductions in regulatory costs, please describe in the comments column the details as to how the saving arises (e.g. reductions in adjustment costs, administrative costs, regulatory charges, enforcement costs, etc.;).

The new initiative will operate under **supporting competence to Member States**. Thus, there are no direct legal or enforcement obligations for Member States, citizens or business.

Moreover, due to the sensitive topic matter, Member States do not share any information on the administrative set-up or workflows within their administrations with the Commission. It can be assumed that an overall higher priority of preparedness and response to crises will lead to additional human resource and investment costs. However, these are not considered administrative costs under this methodology and cannot be specified.

II. Overview of costs – Preferred option							
		Citizens/Consumers		**Businesses**		**Administrations**	
		One-off	**Recurrent**	**One-off**	**Recurrent**	**One-off**	**Recurrent**
New reporting obligations	Direct adjustment costs						
	Direct administrative costs						
	Direct regulatory fees and charges						
	Direct enforcement costs						
	Indirect costs					The new reporting (e.g. risk assessment) of Member States will have an initial additional administrative burden due to the restructuring of reporting arrangements.	

(1) Estimates (gross values) to be provided with respect to the baseline; (2) costs are provided for each identifiable action/obligation of the preferred option otherwise for all retained options when no preferred option is specified; (3) If relevant and available, please present information on costs according to the standard typology of costs (adjustment costs, administrative costs, regulatory charges, enforcement costs, indirect costs;).

This initiative is not in the scope of the OIOO approach. Therefore, the table III is not populated.

III. Application of the 'one in, one out' approach – Preferred option(s)			
[M€]	**One-off** (annualised total net present value over the relevant period)	**Recurrent** (nominal values per year)	**Total**
Businesses n.a.			
New administrative burdens (INs)			
Removed administrative burdens (OUTs)			
Net administrative burdens*			
Adjustment costs**			
Citizens - n.a			
New administrative burdens (INs)			
Removed administrative burdens (OUTs)			
Net administrative burdens*			
Adjustment costs**			
Total administrative burdens***			

(*) Net administrative burdens = INs – OUTs;
(**) Adjustment costs falling under the scope of the OIOO approach are the same as reported in Table 2 above. Non-annualised values;
(***) Total administrative burdens = Net administrative burdens for businesses + net administrative burdens for citizens.

Relevant Sustainable Development Goals

IV. Overview of relevant Sustainable Development Goals – Preferred Option(s)		
Relevant SDG	**Expected progress towards the Goal**	**Comments**
SDG no. 2 – zero hunger	Facilitation of rapid deployment of food assistance by coordinating with international partners to establish efficient logistics systems. This ensures that food supplies are promptly delivered to areas affected by emergencies, helping to prevent acute hunger and nutritional deficiencies in disaster-stricken populations.	
SDG no. 3 – good health and well-being	Expected increase in coordination for medical team and resource dispatchments to promptly intervene in the case of a disaster.	
SDG no. 6 – clean water and sanitation	Expected progress in deployment of mobile water treatment units and supports the setup of temporary sanitation structures to provide essential clean water access and hygiene solutions during emergencies. This action helps to mitigate public health risks by preventing outbreaks of waterborne diseases, sustaining community health in the immediate response phase.	
SDG no. 11 – sustainable cities and communities	The UCPM's focus on enhancing disaster risk management and preparedness indirectly contributes to the creation of safer and more resilient communities. This aligns with the objectives of SDG 11, which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. The implementation of early warning systems, like the one developed in Latvia, serves as an example of enhancing urban resilience in line with SDG 11.	
SDG no. 13 – climate action	The expansion of UCPM activities to address climate-related emergencies aligns with SDG 13's call for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. The UCPM's role in coordinating responses to such emergencies supports the goal of strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards. The UCPM activities consider the evolving risk landscape due to climate change, emphasising the importance of preparedness and adaptation, which are central themes in SDG 13.	

ANNEX 4: ANALYTICAL METHODS

The Impact Assessment qualitatively analysed a number of relevant documents, including Council Conclusions, evaluations, external studies, and more. Below is a list of the key evidence used:

- *Analysis of Risks Europe is facing: An analysis of current and emerging risk.* Joint Research Centre (JRC), 2025.
- *Business case for DRR: Why investing in DRR makes sense.* United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2024.
- *Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (2017-2022).* European Commission, 2024.
- *Draghi Report. European Commission, 2024.*
- *Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness: Financial Risk and Opportunities to Build Resilience in Europe.* World Bank Group, 2021.
- *Eurobarometer on disaster risk awareness and preparedness of the EU population.* European Commission, 2024.
- *Eurobarometer on perceptions of EU crisis management.* Publications Office of the EU, 2024.
- *Open Public Consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – EU funding for civil protection, preparedness and response to crises*. European Commission, 2025.
- Independent support study, UCPM Evaluation 2017-2022, ICF.
- *Niinistö Report - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.* European Commission, 2024.
- *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European Preparedness Union Strategy.* European Commission, 2025.
- *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Capacity Progress Report on the Response Capacities of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism*. European Commission, 2025.
- *The EU's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.* European Court of Auditors, 2024.

ANNEX 5: COMPETITIVENESS CHECK

Overview of impacts on competitiveness

Dimensions of Competitiveness	Impact of the initiative (++ / + / 0 / - / -- / n.a.)	References to sub-sections of the main report or annexes
Cost and price competitiveness	+	6.2.
International competitiveness	+	2.1; 2.2 (problem definition); 7.1; 7.2; 7.3
Capacity to innovate	+	7.1; 7.3; Annex 3
SME competitiveness	**n.a.**	See below annex on SME

Synthetic assessment

The preferred policy option 2 has almost solely indirect impacts on the competitiveness, especially the one of SME. This situation is based on the in chapter 2, 5 and 8 described supporting competence and the nature of the legal act. The instrument does not (and cannot) impose legal obligations on private companies. Further, when purchasing (e.g. for rescEU or ECPP capacities) under the preferred option, the instrument would act almost exclusively through Member States and their agencies, with the exception of direct procurement in case of major crises.

Cost and price competitiveness

With regard to "cost and price competitiveness" the preferred option has largely indirect impacts by contributing to a prevention and preparedness as well as the response to crisis which may impact the private sector. The "preparedness by design" principle in other EU instruments will likely have a positive impact. Overall, the early warning, anticipation and foresight of crises will benefit all private sector actors in an affected region. Concerning market stability and the impact on costs and prices (for the taxpayer), the establishment of centralised EU capacities will lower the pressure on the market for these goods in case of a crises and, thereby, contribute to stabilise the market. Nevertheless, the exact benefits are highly dependent on the circumstances, goods and type of crises.

International competitiveness

By continuing to standardise response capacities across European Member States (and in Participating States) the preferred option has a positive impact on the competitiveness of SME in other European countries. This, in general, might lead to a more competitive advantage of EU companies outside Europe.

In close cooperation and coordination with other EU instruments (and in supporting role to Member States), the preferred option contributes to the overall resilience of the private sector and the general population to shocks and crises. As described in the above referenced sections, this has a direct positive economic impact.

Capacity to innovate

The preferred option does not provide for access to risk capital funding, direct support to the private sector to carry out research or directly foster process innovation. However, the close integration and coordination with the scientific sector, including through the Knowledge Network, can foster the innovation in the overall sector. Moreover, with more possibilities for direct procurement, the preferred option has a greater leverage to foster innovative solution for disaster response.

SME CHECK

[FOR SME RELEVANT AND HIGHLY RELEVANT INITIATIVES]

Due to the in chapter 3 described nature of this initiative as supporting competence with no legal obligations for SME, as well as the almost exclusive interaction with Member State authorities, this initiative has no relevant influence on SME.

Moreover, the meeting on "simplification initiatives" at DG/DDG level after an invitation of the Secretary-General, on 30 April, came to the conclusion that this "*initiative does not appear to have a significant simplification potential"*.

OVERVIEW OF IMPACTS ON SMES

Relevance for SMEs
(Based on SME filter and the ISG discussion, this initiative is relevant/highly relevant for SMEs[149]) ***No. This initiative is not relevant for SMEs***

(1) IDENTIFICATION OF AFFECTED BUSINESSES AND ASSESSMENT OF RELEVANCE
Are SMEs directly affected? *(Yes/No)* **In which sectors?** The impacts of this initiative on SME are negligible. Single SME may be influenced though direct procurement of goods. However, neither the amounts nor the sectors can be predicted.
(Specify sectors, see also Competitiveness check (Annex 5)) ***n.a.***
Estimated number of directly affected SMEs
n.a.
Estimated number of employees in directly affected SMEs
n.a.
Are SMEs indirectly affected? *(Yes/No)* **In which sectors? What is the estimated number of indirectly affected SMEs and employees?**
No specific numbers can be provided. *SME are indirectly affected through a faster and more coordinated response to crises (including Early Warning). In general, this would have an overall positive impact in SME. Moreover, with an overall better prepared population (including SME staff) further indirect impacts on SME are likely.*

[149] EU SME Envoy – SME filter. European Commission, 2024.

(2) CONSULTATION OF SME STAKEHOLDERS
How has the input from the SME community been taken into consideration?
n.a.
Are SMEs' views different from those of large businesses? *No*
n.a.

(3) ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS ON SMEs[150]
What are the estimated direct costs for SMEs of the preferred policy option? (Fill in only if step 1 *flags direct impacts)* ***n.a.***
Qualitative assessment
n.a.
Quantitative assessment
(Provide numbers. Include size categories for highly relevant initiatives) ***n.a.***
What are the estimated direct benefits/cost savings for SMEs of the preferred policy option[151]?
Qualitative assessment
SME will benefit from an overall better preparedness for and response to crises. As described in the chapter on Impacts, this would likely lead to a better protection of assets (including of SMEs) the protection of lives.
Quantitative assessment
n.a.
What are the indirect impacts of this initiative on SMEs? *(Fill in only if step 1 flags indirect impacts)*
(Summarise the significant indirect impacts qualitatively and, where possible, quantitatively) ***n.a.***

(4) MINIMISING NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON SMEs

[150] The costs and benefits data in this annex are consistent with the data in annex 3. The preferred option includes the mitigating measures listed in section 4.
[151] The direct benefits for SMEs can also be cost savings.

Are SMEs disproportionately affected compared to large companies? *n.a.* **If yes, are there any specific subgroups of SMEs more exposed than others?**
n.a.
Have mitigating measures been included in the preferred option/proposal? *n.a.*
(Specify the mitigating measures, including SME-friendly provisions (e.g. phasing ins, guidance, etc.). Describe the expected benefits/cost savings qualitatively and, where possible, quantitatively) ***n.a.***

CONTRIBUTION TO THE 35% BURDEN REDUCTION TARGET FOR SMES
Are there any administrative cost savings relevant for the 35% burden reduction target for SMEs? *n.a.*
(Provide number from Annex 3) n.a.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

(This section should include key elements of the analysis underpinning the assessment of impacts on SMEs (direct costs, direct benefits, and indirect impacts), mitigating measures, and additional elements that the lead service considers useful for the analysis, if these elements are not presented in other parts of the impact assessment report and its annexes. If already included in other parts, a reference list of where these elements can be found is sufficient.)

ANNEX 6: ADDITIONAL CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

CHAPTER 1: POLITICAL AND LEGAL CONTEXT

Political context

The European Council adopted Council conclusions in May 2021[152], reflecting lessons from both the 2015 migration crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, and calling for measures to improve the Union's resilience and preparedness. The European Parliament (EP) supported these measures[153], advocating for strengthened cross-border cooperation and rapid-response mechanisms that would enable the Union to respond swiftly to crises affecting public health and economic stability. The Council called in November 2021 for the reinforcement of the resilience of the single market, with a focus on securing supply chains and critical economic sectors, particularly industries like pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and semiconductors[154]. In 2022[155], the Council further emphasised the importance of enhancing strategic and crisis communication, of fighting **foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI).**

In February 2022, the Council adopted Council conclusions[156] calling for further adaptation to the consequences of climate change, noting the evident effects of climate-related events, the risk of human, material and natural losses, and the strain on both the Member States and the Union as a whole. The Council also called for civil protection systems to be further integrated into the legal and policy frameworks on both Union and Member State level. In support of these concerns, the European Commission presented its **Communication on Managing Climate Risks[157]**, which recognised that the EU and Member States response and recovery capacities can become exhausted with increasing risks, unless policymakers take urgent anticipatory actions. The Commission urged Member States to clearly define responsibilities in climate risk management, ensure structural preparedness in planning decisions, and use EU solidarity mechanisms to advance anticipatory actions. During this period, the EP reiterated the need for Member States to adopt comprehensive climate adaptation strategies, especially in regions highly susceptible to climate risks.

In 2023, the Council adopted a new set of conclusions and recommendations[158] on the need to strengthen the whole-of-society resilience in the context of civil protection, anti-microbial resistance, as a major cross-border health threat and on cooperation with the private sector. In parallel, the EP advocated for a European Democracy Shield to combat the rising threats from FIMI, aligning with the Council's broader all-hazards approach.

Furthermore, the **Joint Communication on the Climate and Security nexus[159]** acknowledged the risks to peace and security from climate change and environmental degradation, highlighting the impact of these factors on migration, displacement, pandemics, and political stability, and emphasises the importance of the EU's Integrated Approach[160]. Consequently, the need for coordinated EU action

[152] Council Conclusions of 10 May 2021.
[153] For instance, the European Parliament has been involved in discussions and approvals related to the establishment of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) and has engaged in legislative processes concerning the regulation on serious cross-border threats to health.
[154] Council Conclusions of 23 November 2021.
[155] Council Conclusions on foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) of July 2022.
[156] Council Conclusions of 21 February 2022.
[157] *Managing Climate Risks: Protecting People and Prosperity.* European Commission, 2024.
[158] Council Conclusions of 8 June 2023 and 13 June 2023.
[159] *A new Outlook on the Climate and Security Nexus: Addressing the Impact of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation on Peace, Security and Defence.* European Commission, 2023.
[160] Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service

across sectors and for strengthening the resilience and protection of space assets was noted. The Council also adopted conclusions[161] on the use of EU satellite services[162] playing a crucial role in providing secure, resilient, and cost-efficient satellite communications.

Further high-level strategies include the Security Union Strategy (2020)[163], the European Industrial Strategy (2020)[164], the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy (2021)[165], the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (2022)[166], the Space Strategy for Security and Defence (2023)[167], the EU Global Health Strategy (2022)[168], the health security framework of the European Health Union (2021)[169], the European Economic Security Strategy (2023)[170], the European Defence Industrial Strategy (2024)[171], and the European Water Resilience Strategy (2025)[172], among many others.

Legal context

In the area of climate and disaster resilience, the European Climate Law[173] establishes a requirement on the Union and its Member States to make continuous progress in enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change, which are all anticipatory actions meant to reduce the severity and frequency of climate-related disasters across the Union.

In terms of sectoral resilience, specific legislation is dedicated to ensuring resilience against articular risks and supports national responsibilities to reduce hazard pressures at Union level. This includes legal acts on the assessment and management of flood risks[174], on subjecting the TransEuropean Transport Network to climate proofing[175], on the resilience of critical entities[176] and on network and information security[177]. The last two address online and offline risks, from cyberattacks to extreme weather events, mandating cyber incidents reporting and reinforcing Member States' capabilities for cyber crisis coordination, cooperation, and information sharing.

In the area of market and supply chain resilience, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the need for robust supply chain and market resilience in the health sector and the Union's key enabling technologies. In response, the Internal Market Emergency and Resilience Act (IMERA)[178] was introduced to safeguard the free movement of essential goods, services, and people during crises, ensuring continued economic stability across the EU.

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[161] Council Conclusions of 15 November 2023.
[162] Copernicus, Galileo, EGNOS and GOVSATCOM.
[163] *EU Security Union Strategy.* European Commission, 2020.
[164] *European Industrial Strategy.* European Commission, 2021.
[165] *Forging a Climate-Resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change*. European Commission, 2021.
[166] *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence - For a European Union that Protects its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security.* Council of the European Union, 2022.
[167] *European Union Space Strategy for Security and Defence.* European Commission, 2023.
[168] *EU Global Health Strategy – Better Health for all in a Changing World.* European Commission, 2022.
[169]Regulation 2021/123 on a revised mandate for EMA, Regulation 2022/2370 on a revised mandate for ECDC, Regulation 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health and Council Regulation 2022/2372 on an Emergency Framework.
[170] *An EU Approach to Enhance Economic Security.* European Commission, 2023.
[171] Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A new European Defence Industrial Strategy: Achieving EU readiness through a responsive and resilient European Defence Industry.
[172] Forthcoming.
[173] Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality.
[174] Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks.
[175] Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network.
[176] Directive (EU) 2022/2557 on the resilience of critical entities.
[177] Directive (EU) 2022/2555 on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union.
[178] Regulation (EU) 2024/2747 establishing a framework of measures related to an internal market emergency and to the resilience of the internal market.

In the area of food and water security, food supply stability in the EU – an objective of both the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy – is maintained through safeguards in the Union acquis. Key regulations establish a common organisation of the markets in agricultural[179] and fishery and aquaculture products[180], while additional provisions aimed at agricultural resilience[181] are found within the framework for the Common Agricultural Policy and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFAF). The European Food Security Crisis preparedness and response Mechanism[182] (EFSCM) completes this regulatory framework.

In the area of energy, the electricity risk-preparedness regulation, [183] the regulation on measures to safeguard the security of gas supply[184] and the oil stock directive[185] constitute the framework for energy security. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, adjustments were needed and measures to ensure well-filled gas storage in the EU were adopted.[186]

In the area of research and innovation for security, Horizon Europe[187], anticipates and addresses challenges arising from persistent security threats by funding research that supports the EU's crisis preparedness and response capabilities, including innovations in disaster resilience and crisis management technologies.

In the area of security and external action, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union aims to preserve peace, prevent conflicts, and strengthen international security. This policy is integral to the EU's broader crisis management framework, as it encompasses strategic objectives related to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and response to external threats which have direct and indirect impacts on the EU (e.g. conflict, cyber and hybrid, FIMI, intelligence operations).

Funding instruments

Environmental and climate action

The LIFE Programme serves as the EU's primary funding instrument for environment and climate action. It supports projects that address environmental protection, biodiversity, and climate adaptation. Through targeted funding, the programme enhances Member States' capacity to manage climate-related risks and environmental impacts, and work towards the resilience goals, reinforcing the EU's overall resilience framework.

External assistance and neighbouring countries

[179] Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products.
[180] Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products.
[181] Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).
[182] SWD (2021) 317 final - SWD (2021) 318 final, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security in times of crisis.
[183] Regulation (EU) 2019/941 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on risk-preparedness in the electricity sector and repealing Directive 2005/89/EC.
[184] Regulation (Eu) 2017/1938 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2017 concerning measures to safeguard the security of gas supply and repealing Regulation (EU) No 994/2010.
[185] Council Directive 2009/119/EC of 14 September 2009 imposing an obligation on Member States to maintain minimum stocks of crude oil and/or petroleum production.
[186] Regulation (EU) 2022/1032 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 June 2022 amending Regulations (EU) 2017/1938 and (EC) No 715/2009 with regard to gas storage.
[187] Regulation (EU) 2021/695 establishing Horizon Europe.

The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-GE), funds initiatives for security, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and to build resilience in third countries against pressures from natural and manmade disasters and health crises. Other external financial instruments include the macro-financial assistance (MFA) for partner countries facing balance-of-payments crises, the Ukraine Facility in support of Ukraine's resilience and to foster its recovery, or the humanitarian actions (HUMA), providing financial support for disaster risk reduction and response in fragile areas beyond EU borders. The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) aids candidate and potential candidate countries with capacity building in areas such as cyber-security, resilience to disinformation and other forms of hybrid threats, as well as health security and preparedness for public health and other emergencies.

CHAPTER 2 PROBLEM DEFINITION

Risks and threats from a volatile geopolitical, security and socio-economic environment

The next MFF period will unfold amid an increasingly volatile geopolitical, security, and socio-economic environment. This is exemplified by ongoing conflicts, such as the Russian war against Ukraine and escalations in the Middle East.

Conflict, military build-ups, and aggression in the EU's neighbourhood and beyond have led to severe humanitarian crises and widespread displacement. Fragile or conflict-affected areas, already vulnerable to natural hazards and human-induced disasters, may experience triggers that escalate high-risk situations into violent conflicts. Amid a breakdown of international cooperation, multilateral institutions are often unable to prevent large-scale armed conflicts.[188]

Hybrid attacks, including foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) and electronic warfare,[189] have become a permanent feature of today's geopolitical landscape[190], with critical infrastructure being under constant attack.[191] In EU Member States, the number of attacks on critical infrastructure have risen continuously since 2023, with 344 disclosed incidents reported between January 2023 and April 2025.[192]

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated previous inequalities, demonstrating the potential social and economic disruption that threats to health can pose to societies, and how access to life-saving medical countermeasures, food, energy and critical raw material production can be impacted. Over the last 30 years, public health emergencies have been occurring more frequently and with increased severity. The Union's critical supply chains, including those for food, raw materials, and medicines, are increasingly vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions.

These risks majorly contribute to an increased risk for serious cross-border health threats including public health emergencies that will continue to put the health of Europeans at risk and require coordinated actions at EU and global level. Also, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), pathogens with pandemic potential and CBRN threats continue to be major concerns.

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[188] *Risks on the horizon*. Joint Research Centre (JRC), 2024, pp.53-5.
[189] *Global Navigation Satellite System GNSS Radio Frequency Interference Safety Risk Assessment*. The International Air Transport Association (IATA), 2024.
[190] *Niinistö Report - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.* European Commission, 2024, p.42.
[191] *Critical infrastructures under daily attack – ERNCIP head Georg Peter*. Horizon, 2017.
[192] *Critical Infrastructure Tracker*.

Moreover, adequate health preparedness requires a **constant investment** and effort to reinforce the resilience to shocks and health emergencies. Costs linked to preparation stages are far less expensive than the costs required to respond to outbreaks. This is very relevant in most of EU partner countries, which can often not rely on robust health systems.

Cascading and compounding effects

Unaddressed global risks create complex, cascading effects for Member States and EU institutions, as highlighted in the Niinistö report.[193] Transnational and global threats can produce far-reaching cascading effects across the European economy. The COVID-19 pandemic is a stark example of a health crisis that led to the second-largest global recession in recent history. Global stock markets experienced their worst crash since 1987 and G20 economies contracted 3.4% year-on-year in the first three months of 2020. Between April and June 2020, the International Labour Organisation estimated that 400 million full-time jobs were lost worldwide.

Other cascading effects followed from armed conflict and other forms of political violence at and beyond the Union's borders.[194] Russia's aggression against Ukraine has created a sudden influx of displaced persons, the disruption to energy resources and thus EU stability and security. [195]

While some risks can be managed when treated individually, simultaneous and compounding risks have the potential to escalate into "globally-catastrophic or even existential crises".[196] It is thus all the more worrying that to-date, no integrated risk management system at Union level exists.

Risks from climate change and environmental degradation

The EU's risk landscape is becoming structurally more adverse due to continued environmental degradation and the increasing severity and frequency of extreme weather events and associated emergencies driven by climate change. At the same time geological hazards and slower-moving phenomena (e.g. sea-level rise, sea temperature rise, glacier melt, desertification) will continue to impact the EU risk landscape. Climate change and environmental degradation exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and pose major social, environmental, economic, and financial challenges. The European Climate Risk Assessment[197] highlights the growing pressure on societal systems. This is further highlighted by the growing number of UCPM activations for climate-related emergencies, from less than 5 in 2013 to over 20 in 2023 (see figure 2). These numbers are expected to continue to grow due to the role of climate change.

Climate-related disasters cause substantial economic losses. The average annual cost of disasters has doubled from EUR 8 billion in the 1980s to EUR 16 billion in the last decade (see figure 1). Recent years have seen particularly high spikes, with EUR 59 billion in damages recorded in 2021 and EUR 52 billion in 2022.[198] As these losses grow, financial capacity for both long-term structural improvements and immediate disaster management diminishes.

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[193] *Niinistö Report - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness*. European Commission, 2024, p.32.

[194] It is more critical than ever for development partners to focus on the furthest behind: the 1.9 billion people in fragile contexts that account for 24% of the world's population but 73% of the world's extreme poor. *States of fragility*. OECD, 2022.

[195] *Economic impact of Russia's war on Ukraine: European Council response*. European Council, 2024. Between the first quarter of 2022 and 2023, electricity prices for household consumers in the EU rose by 20%. *Electricity price statistics*. Eurostat, 2025.

[196] *Risks on the horizon*. Joint Research Centre (JRC), June 2024, p.5.

[197] *2024 European Climate Risk Assessment*. European Environment Agency EEA, 2024.

[198] *Economic losses from weather- and climate-related extremes in Europe*. EEA, Oct 2024.

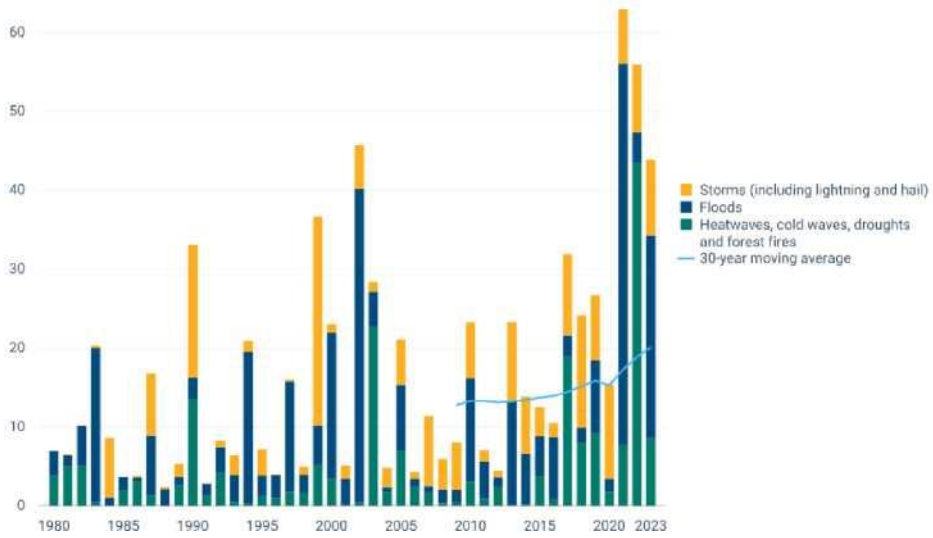


Figure 111 - Annual economic losses (in billion EUR) caused by weather- and climate- related extreme events in the EU. Source: CATDAT, RiskLayer, as published by the European Environment Agency

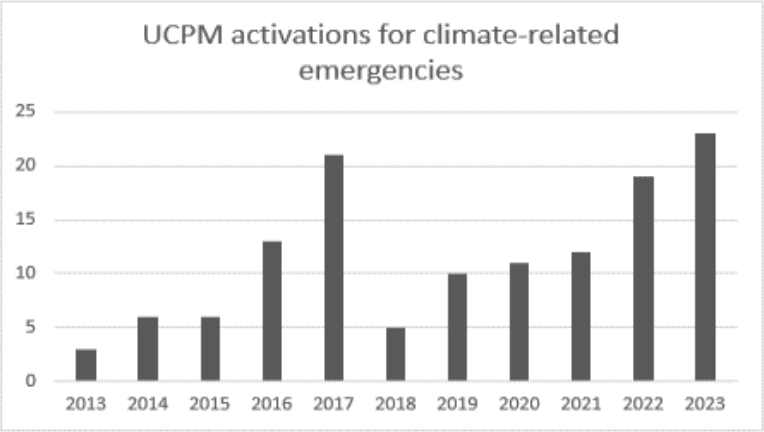


Figure 212- UCPM activations for climate-related emergencies

In the area of transport and energy infrastructure, climate and security-driven risks are a critical concern. The energy sector, in particular, is projected to experience the largest increase in infrastructure damage[199], with a multi-hazard damages projected to rise up to 15-fold by the 2080s, reaching EUR 8.2 billion annually from current baselines.[200]

While climate change affects all Member States, the specific impacts and severity vary widely, contributing to regional disparities between and within countries.[201] Coastal, Mediterranean and south-eastern regions are most affected, with projected GDP losses of 1% to over 6% annually due to climate change.[202]

The vulnerabilities are likely to increase, considering aging infrastructure and underinvestment in

[199] *2024 European Climate Risk Assessment*. EEA, 2024, pp. 227-278.
[200] *Adaptation challenges and opportunities for the energy system*. EEA, 2019, p.46.
[201] *Niinistö Report - Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.* European Commission, 2024, p.34.
[202] JRC PESETA IV estimations, as published in the 9th Cohesion report, see *Ninth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion*. European Commission, 2024.

structural resilience. A recent World Bank study estimates that climate adaptation costs in the EU could range between EUR 15 billion to EUR 64 billion annually through the 2030s, recommending an adaptation financing between 0.1% and 0.4% of the EU GDP.[203] On the other hand, it is also estimated that the macroeconomic risks of extreme weather events[204] could amount to between 10-12% of the EU GDP, potentially reducing it by 7% by 2100.[205]

Chapter 3 - WHY SHOULD THE EU ACT?

Addition to section 3.2: What makes EU action necessary? – Subsidiarity of Union action

As outlined in chapter 1, there is broad consensus on the added value of coordinated Union-level action. Anticipation, scientific decision making, strategic foresight, risk assessment and a whole-of-society and all-hazards approach at Union level are critical to addressing transboundary and cross-sectoral crises. For example, Union action has facilitated significant advancements in research and innovation through programs like Horizon 2020, and investments in mRNA technology and diagnostics before the COVID-19 pandemic made it possible to develop and deploy vaccines and testing capabilities at an unprecedented pace.

Union action is also indispensable for mainstreaming and broadening the use of tools for risk and threat assessment, early warning, and strategic analysis. Furthermore, chapter 2 identified the underuse of scientific research, foresight, and technological advancements as a significant problem in enhancing risk understanding, detecting emerging risks and anticipating future crises. While it is true that this issue persists both at the EU and national levels, the limited use of strategic foresight – particularly at the EU level, widens the gap in anticipating future crises and leveraging opportunities to improve preparedness. This especially given the nature of crises that the EU is faced with – a fragmented foresight and risk assessment landscape, as would be created by Member State action alone, would be insufficient to anticipate and foster preparedness for crises with a transboundary impact.

However, fragmentation is not only a driver of EU's crisis management being more reactive than proactive, but also a significant problem in itself. Given the scale and complexity of crises facing the EU, this fragmentation must be addressed through Union action. Coordination is key – both sectoral and between the EU and the Member States. Greater coordination at EU level ensures appropriate and balanced preparedness across the Member States, increases inclusion of relevant actors, and enables a unified crisis response, addressing many of the drivers linked to the lack of solidarity in Union crisis responses.

In civil protection, two core tasks – the coordination of civil protection activities at national level and the organisation of Union response capacities – require a more holistic overview and the ability to assess Member State's policies and capacities, which no Member State can achieve individually. Similarly, managing natural resources and addressing environmental degradation are, by their very nature, transboundary challenges. While local climate adaptation is possible, climate change, as a driver of natural disasters, requires Union level solutions. Instruments like the Climate Law, the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive are essential to provide guidance for national and local response. The same principle applies as well to other crisis response tools expected to be fit for response to Union-wide crises, such as security threats like cyberattacks, terrorism, and serious and organised

[203] *Climate adaptation costing in a changing world.* World Bank, 2024.
[204] Excluding the consideration of potential critical thresholds.
[205] *Managing climate risks communication*. European Commission, 2024, p.9.

crime, which require coordination beyond individual Member States' capacity. Additionally, disruptions to critical infrastructure sectors, such as energy and transport, often have spillover effects across the EU, further emphasising the necessity of Union-level intervention.

It is also crucial to enhance the EU coordination between civilian bodies and military authorities to prevent duplication of efforts. Civil-Military Coordination in Emergencies is essential to uphold and promote humanitarian principles, prevent competition between civilian and military capabilities, minimise inconsistencies and pursue common objectives when necessary. To achieve this, the Commission closely collaborates with the crisis management structures of the European External Action Service (specifically the EU Military Staff), as part of the EU's integrated approach to external conflicts and crises. However, this cooperation needs to be extended beyond the emergency phase. To effectively respond to CBRN threats, coordinating the response between civil and military authorities requires robust EU communication and planning, part of the whole-of-government approach identified in chapter 1. However, other parts of society remain insufficiently involved in crisis management (chapter 2). While the implementation of a whole-of- society approach to integrating all actors across a society into crisis management can be achieved on the national level, it can only be made fit to respond to Union-level crises through Union-level coordination. As it has repeatedly been identified in chapter 2, a national-only approach to developing preparedness for transboundary crises inevitably results in a fragmentation of systems across the EU.

Additionally, the EU has a vested interest in supporting the preparedness and crisis management capacities of third countries, particularly candidate and neighbouring countries, to mitigate crises with wider repercussions on the Union. This is particularly important as the EU increasingly faces crises originating outside its borders, including health crises, migration, the fallout of conflict in third countries, and other security threats. Since such crises affect Member States differently as a consequence of their geographical origin, no single Member State can be expected to have a comprehensive overview or anticipation structure on all such crises, making Union-level action necessary in order to ensure appropriate foresight and risk assessment, as well as preparedness.

As shown by the COVID-19 pandemic, Union-level coordination and common frameworks are particularly needed to allow for coordinated responses at Member States' level in addressing public health threats, as is currently being ensured by the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS), the Health Security Committee (HSC) and complemented by the HERA Board in the field of medical countermeasures. Declaring a public health emergency at Union level[206] would trigger mechanisms for monitoring shortages of medicines or medical devices, may lead to a mobilisation of the Enhanced Emergency Capacity of the EU Health Task Force, as well as an activation of research, development, stockpiling and procurement of crisis-relevant medical countermeasures, as under the coordination of the Health Crisis Board[207] while the Health Security Committee continues to coordinate overall response measures, including supporting the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response Arrangements (IPCR). Pooling resources at the EU level can lead to economies of scale in procurement, including for vaccines and medical equipment, as well as research and health initiatives, making them more cost-effective than if each Member State acted independently.

Chapter 3 - WHY SHOULD THE EU ACT?

Addition to section 3.3: To which extent is EU action necessary? – Proportionality of Union action

[206] In accordance with the procedure laid down in Art 23 of Regulation 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health.
[207] After adopting a Council Regulation in accordance with Article 3 of Regulation 2022/2372.

Coordination between Member States, as well as Union level capacities and capabilities, are vital for anticipating and responding to transboundary crises. The scale and complexity of such crises often exceeds the ability of individual Member States to act comprehensively and efficiently. The data available on the number and type of **requests for assistance** made to the UCPM reveal a **general upward trend** over the past years, reflecting the growing need for Union level coordination. While the UCPM continues to respond to the types of emergencies it was first primarily established for, the frequency and intensity of these mostly natural events is typically increasing. However, at the same time the UCPM has been confronted with a new set of challenge due to additional longer and more complex emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine[208].

The necessity for more prominent Union action in crisis management is also evident from the increased use of financial instruments such as cohesion funds, to mitigate the negative impact of crises. However, as noted in chapter 1.3, the current crisis management architecture depends on a patchwork of (financial) instruments, many of which were not designed for crisis management specifically. The fragmented approach only exacerbates the problems identified in chapter 2, hindering a proactive response and perpetuating inefficiencies and solidarity during crises. A more cohesive funding would proportionately address these shortcomings.

Achieving the Union's overarching crisis management goals is impossible without concerted action. For instance, more flexibility in the next MFF is necessary to enable faster and scalable responses to unforeseen needs, while ensuring long-term impact of EU investments. Streamlining preparedness across the EU budget and financial instruments, as recommended in the Niinistö Report, will also reinforce the EU's crisis management capacity.

[208] *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Capacity Progress Report on the Response Capacities of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism*. European Commission, 2025, p. 16.

CHAPTER 7 HOW DO THE OPTIONS COMPARE

Effectiveness

The below table depicts the extent to which each policy option addresses the specific objectives.

Legend:

> *(+) indicates that there is a limited positive impact on the achievement of a specific objective, compared to the current baseline.*
>
> *(++) indicates that there is a somewhat positive impact on the achievement of a specific objective, compared to the current baseline.*
>
> *(+++) indicates that there is a major positive impact on the achievement of a specific objective, compared to the current baseline.*

Effectiveness		
Specific Objective	***Option 1***	***Option 2***
SO 1.1: Establish an EU-wide overview of risks across sectors with clearly defined roles for EU and Member States	*(+)*	*(+++)*
SO 1.2: Develop a strong anticipation capacity that can effectively analyse, assess and act upon risks, including risks from outside the EU as well as cascading and compounding risks	*(++)*	*(+++)*
SO 1.3: Contribute to a European research and innovation ecosystem that is fit to assess and address crises in a coordinated and timely manner	*(+)*	*(++)*
SO 1.4: Contribute to a robust risk management culture across the Commission and broader EU (including Member States)	*(+)*	*(++)*
SO 1.5: Contribute to Union policy making, including crisis management, which is guided by risk aware decision making, and EU robust risk management culture.	*(++)*	*(+++)*
SO 1.6: Strengthening the capability of the Union to prevent and prepare for serious cross-border threats, including to health, by supporting data and intelligence gathering, and information exchange, including on medical countermeasures.	*(+)*	*(++)*
SO 2.1: Develop the capacity for a cross-sectoral operational crisis management hub at EU level.	*(+)*	*(+++)*
SO 2.2: Strengthen cooperation on strategic and operational matters between civilian and military emergency management functions	*(+)*	*(+++)*

SO 2.3: Support a coherent response across relevant national and EU policies and funding with a view to enhancing crisis preparedness and structural resilience across the entire crisis management cycle.	*(+)*	*(++)*
SO 2.4: Enhance resilience through external partnerships.	*(+)*	*(++)*
SO 3.1: Enhance citizens' preparedness and resilience as one of the cornerstones of societal resilience	*(+)*	*(+++)*
SO 3.2: Build linkages with the private sector to enhance their roles in building the overall resilience of society and managing crises, including with regards to medical countermeasures.	*(+)*	*(+++)*
SO 3.3: Strengthen existing voluntary networks/ organisations in crisis management.	*(+)*	*(+++)*
SO 4.1: Enhance Union capacities to prevent, anticipate, detect, prepare for and respond to large-scale multi-sector crises, including cross-border threats to health.	*(+)*	*(+++)*
SO 4.2: Work towards a complete and coherent EU-wide overview of capacities and capabilities to respond to crises	*(+)*	*(+++)*
SO 4.3: Invest in international preparedness and crisis management capacity of third countries, and particularly that of candidate countries	*(+)*	*(++)*
SO 4.4: Ensure access at EU level for goods, capabilities and services relevant for crisis preparedness and response, including MCM. This is also done through different procurement procedures, including direct procurement.	*(+)*	*(+++)*
SO 4.5: Strengthen scalable, fast-deployable and all-hazards based EU financial mechanisms throughout all phases of crisis management.	*(+)*	*(++)*
SO 4.6: Complement national stockpiling of essential crisis-relevant products.	*(+)*	*(+++)*
Overall effectiveness (summary of the above Specific Objectives)	*21*	*52*

Efficiency

Example: rescEU budgetary development in the field of civil protection and health security preparedness

The rescEU strategic reserve consists of capacities that have emerged as critical needs different crisis scenarios including, but not limited to wildfires, floods, earthquakes, conflicts, critical infrastructure failures and hybrid threats. As the EUs own capacities to supplement national response capacities, the budget for the establishment of rescEU has been provided exclusively from EU funding sources. Between 2019 and 2024, approximately EUR 3.2 in EU funding has been committed to rescEU capacities.

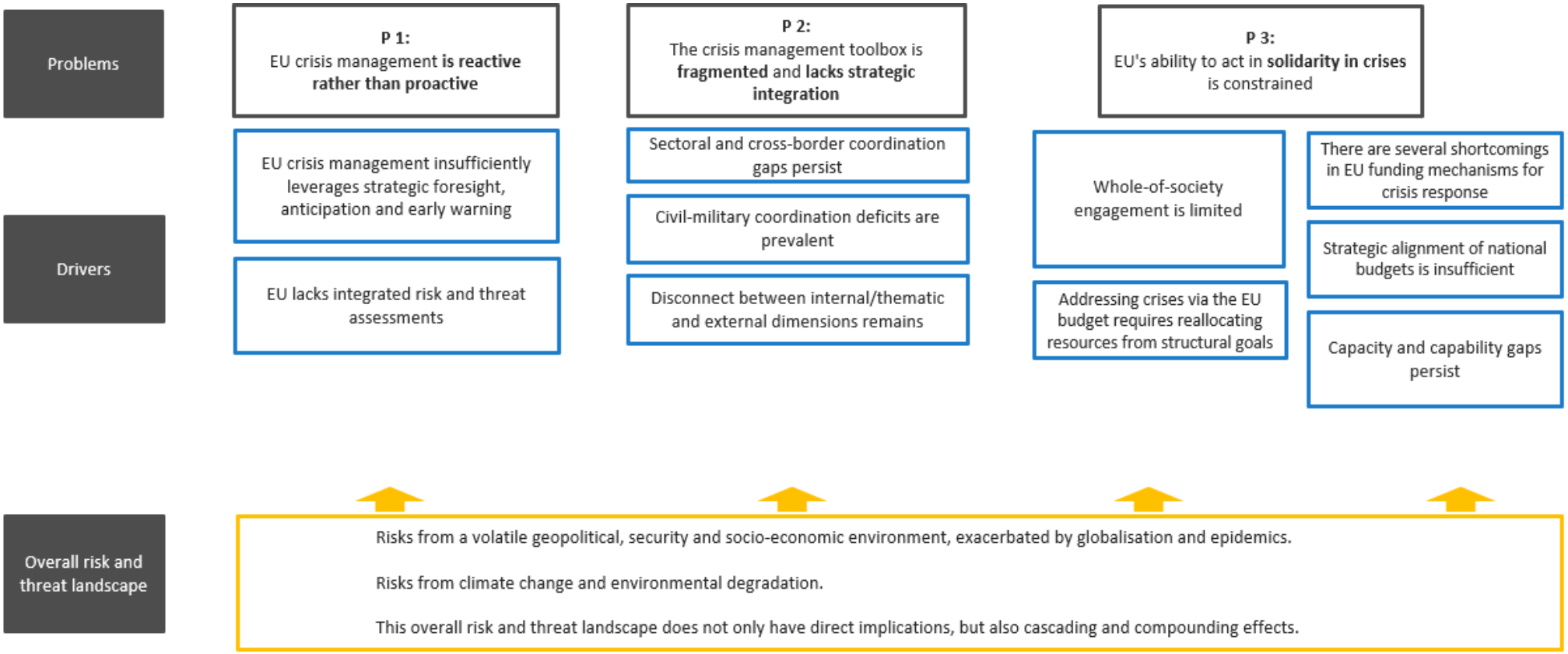
Between 2019- 2024, the MFF provided EUR 807 million in funding that has been committed for the provisions of aerial extinction means. From this budget, approximately EUR 700 million has been committed for the purchase of aircraft; planes, helicopters, for the permanent rescEU fleet, while approximately EUR 100 million has been allotted for the provision of a transitional fleet until the completion of the permanent fleet aircraft.

As the COVID-19 pandemic raged on, it became prevalent that the Union needs a wide range of stockpiles in cross-sectoral response for all kinds of crises, including health. RescEU was provided with a reinforcement of approximately EUR 380 million to establish medical stockpiles for MS and UCPM Participating States to draw on in their efforts to combat the pandemic.

Further capacities were procured using approximately EUR 2 billion of Next Generation EU funding with the intention of increasing Europe's preparedness against future health related crises. The NGEU funding was split between the establishment of further stockpiles including medical devices, therapeutics, shelter items, generators and CBRN stockpiles and the establishment of response capacities that include CBRN detection sampling and monitoring as well as decontamination capacities. Additionally, EMTs and logistical transport support in the form of multipurpose aircraft is being procured with the available NGEU funding.

ANNEX 7: LARGE VERSIONS OF GRAPHS

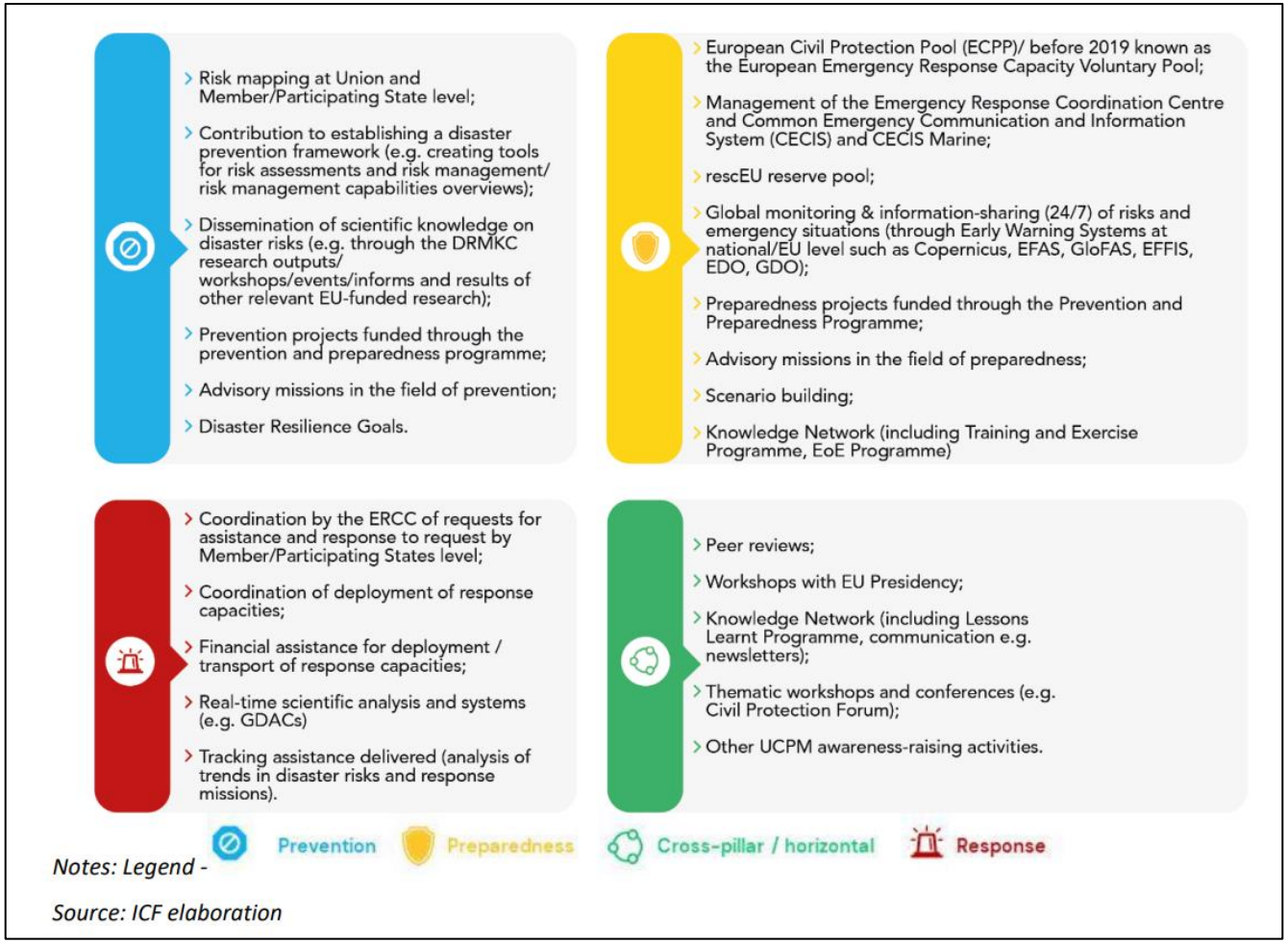
Simplified display of problem tree



Simplified display of problems, drivers, General and Specific Objectives

Problems	Drivers	General Objectives	Specific Objectives		
P 1: EU crisis management is **reactive rather than proactive**	EU crisis management insufficiently leverages strategic foresight, anticipation and early warning EU lacks integrated risk and threat assessments	**GO 1:** Implement an integrated **all-hazards**, anticipatory, and proactive approach to threat and risk management	SO 1.1: Establish an EU-wide overview of risks across sectors with clearly defined roles for EU and Member States. SO 1.2: Develop a strong anticipation capacity that can effectively analyse, assess and act upon risks, including risks from outside the EU as well as cascading and compounding risks.	SO 1.3: Contribute to a European research and innovation ecosystem that is fit to anticipate, assess and respond to risks in a coordinated and timely manner. SO 1.4: Contribute to a robust risk management culture across the Commission and broader EU (including Member States).	SO 1.5: Contribute to Union policy making, including crisis management, which is guided by risk-aware decision making. SO 1.6: Strengthening the capability of the Union to prevent and prepare for serious cross-border threats including to health.
P 2: **Fragmented EU crisis management** hinders the preparedness for and response to the new complexity of risks and threats	Sectoral and cross-border coordination gaps persist Civil-military coordination deficits are prevalent Disconnect between internal/thematic and external dimensions remains	**GO 2:** Implement an efficient and effective cross-sectoral coordination framework for various crises in a **whole-of-government** approach	SO 2.1: Implement a cross-sectoral operational crisis management hub at EU level. SO 2.2: Strengthen cooperation on strategic and operational matters between civilian and military emergency management functions.	SO 2.3: Support a coherent response across relevant national and EU policies and funding with a view to enhancing crisis preparedness and structural resilience across the entire crisis management cycle. SO 2.4: Enhance resilience through external partnerships.	
P 3: EU's ability to act in **solidarity in crises** is constrained	Whole-of-society engagement is limited Addressing crises via the EU budget requires reallocating resources from structural goals There are several shortcomings in EU funding mechanisms for crisis response Strategic alignment of national budgets is insufficient Capacity and capability gaps persist	**GO 3:** Ensure a **whole-of-society** approach in crisis management	SO 3.1: Enhance citizens' preparedness and resilience as one of the cornerstones of societal resilience. SO 3.2: Build linkages with the private sector to enhance their role in building the overall resilience of the society and managing crises, incl. with view to medical countermeasures.	SO 3.3: Strengthen existing voluntary networks/ organisations in crisis management.	
		GO 4: ensure the Union is equipped to act **timely, flexibly and in solidarity**, to protect people in the Union against crises, including health	SO 4.1: Enhance Union capacities to prevent, anticipate, detect, prepare for and respond to large-scale multi-sector crises, including cross-border threats to health. SO 4.2: Work towards a complete and coherent EU-wide overview of capacities and capabilities to respond to crises. SO 4.3: Invest in international preparedness and crisis management capacity of third countries, and particularly that of candidate countries.	SO 4.4: Facilitate direct procurement at EU level for goods, capabilities and services relevant for crisis preparedness and response, incl. medical countermeasures. SO 4.5: Strengthen scalable, fast-deployable and all-hazards based EU financial mechanisms throughout all phases of crisis management. SO 4.6: Complement national stockpiling of essential crisis-relevant products, incl. medical countermeasures.	

Simplified display of General Objectives and Policy Options

Problems	General Objectives	Policy options		
		1. Strengthened sectoral UCPM	2. Cross-sectoral UCPM 2.0	3. Preparedness Fund
EU crisis management is **reactive rather than proactive**	Implement an integrated **all-hazards**, anticipatory, and proactive approach to threat and risk management	Some efforts at EU level to harmonise sectoral risk assessment parameters; Improved interlinkages of Early Warning Systems, anticipation, and foresight.	EU comprehensive cross-sectoral risk assessment; Streamlined anticipation efforts through EU crisis coordination hub.	Same as in option 2.
Fragmented EU crisis management hinders preparedness for and response to new complexity of risks and threats	Implement an efficient and effective cross-sectoral coordination framework for various crises in a **whole-of-government** approach	ERCC strengthened to limited extent but lack of central coordination capacity at EU level; Civ-mil coordination in emergencies is enhanced but remains ad-hoc.	EU crisis coordination hub constitutes central operational capacity facilitating a whole-of-government approach; Adanced civ-mil cooperation to prepare for emergencies.	Same as in option 2.
EU's ability to act in **solidarity in crises** is constrained	Ensure a **whole-of-society** approach in crisis management	Population preparedness and whole-of-society approach is advanced mainly on national level, with EU level complementing; Limited private sector engagement for preparedness and response.	Intensified EU-level population prepardeness, in support of national efforts; Private sector engagement at EU level intensified, allowing for example for virtual stockpiling..	Same as in option 2.
	Ensure the Union is equipped to act **timely, flexibly, in solidarity**, to protect people in the Union against crises, including health	EU-level response capacities maintained at current (pre-2026 baseline) level, allowing for response to certain types of crises at EU level; Intensified capacity development at Member State level.	EU-level response capacities expanded to cater for complex crises, efficiently complementing national stockpiling of essential crisis-relevant products; More flexible procurement arrangements.	**Different MFF architecture.** For rest, same as in option 2.

UCPM activities, pre-2026