

**By**

**Mr. Thomas Ramopoulos, Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union to  
the United Nations**

**at the Sixth Committee**

**on the Agenda item 86:  
"Protection of Persons in the event of disasters"**

**United Nations**

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Mr./Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Montenegro , Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia, as well as Monaco align themselves with this statement.

We would like to commend the International Law Commission for its work on the draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters as well as on the commentaries thereto. They are an important and timely contribution.

We welcome the discussion of the current item in the Committee to be followed by further substantive exchanges in the Working Group

populations, countries and regions confronting natural or man-made disasters; and [...] promot[ing] an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance.<sup>4</sup> Thus, our interventions in the debate on these draft articles will **also** be squarely based on the EU Treaties as well as the EU disaster relief framework.

Zooming in on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism specifically, it provides that assistance must be (i) needs-based; (ii) directed at people in distress, regardless of nationality, religion, gender, age, ethnic origin or political affiliation; and (iii) based **on international humanitarian principles** and the **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid**. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism is premised on the **principle of solidarity**. It has a wide scope covering the **protection primarily of persons but also of the environment and property, including cultural heritage**, against **all kinds of natural and man-made disasters**, including the consequences of acts of terrorism and technological, radiological or environmental disasters, occurring inside or outside the European Union. It covers the phases of **disaster prevention, preparedness** and **response**. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated more than 700 times since 2001 to respond to emergencies around the world.

**Thirdly**, our interventions will have due regard for existing international frameworks in this area, in particular the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**. We recall in this regard that the recent Mid Term Review of the Sendai Framework called upon States to “[e]nsur[e] that disaster risk governance is supported by legal and regulatory frameworks, policies and plans at all levels”.<sup>5</sup> The European Union and its Member States also underline the value and direct relevance of General Assembly resolutions 78/119,<sup>6</sup> 78/120<sup>7</sup> and 78/152,<sup>8</sup> which were adopted last year by consensus.

On the basis of the above, we will provide our substantive comments on the draft articles during the discussion in the Working Group.

Thank you.

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<sup>4</sup> Article 21(2)(g) & (h) TEU; see in this regard also Article 196(1)(c) TFEU and 214 TFEU.

Resolution 77/289, Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, para. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution 78/119 Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

<sup>7</sup> Resolution 78/120 International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution 78/152 on Disaster risk reduction.