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**EAPC POLICY ON ENHANCED PRACTICAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF**

1. Introduction

1.1 Within the member countries of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) the average number of people affected on an annual basis by natural and technological disasters is far greater than those affected by other emergencies. Although, during the last decade, the number of floods and major forest fires has decreased slightly with improvements in flood control and forestry management, other natural disasters, such as earthquakes, flash floods, major storms, etc. show no sign of declining.

1.2 Through a number of demographic and technological factors within the EAPC area, such as increasing urbanization and increasing proximity of industries to those areas, the number of people at risk to natural and technological disasters will increase dramatically over the next two decades.

1.3 Although the responsibility for effective disaster response rests with a stricken country, where the magnitude of the disaster exceeds the national response capability, there may be a need for international assistance. It is recognized that the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) remains the prime focal point for the coordination of international disaster relief operations. In accordance with its mandate (General Assembly Resolution 46/182), the OCHA advocates the strengthening of regional arrangements to enhance disaster response capabilities on the understanding that such arrangements will work in tandem with the OCHA's own response system. Therefore, it is for the countries participating in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council a major cooperative challenge to ensure, within the limited resources available for international disaster relief, the most effective and efficient disaster response in the EAPC region.

1.4 Recognizing the importance of enhanced international cooperation in the field of disaster relief, on 17th December 1997, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in Ministerial Session endorsed a proposal to create, as a support and complement to the United Nations, a Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Capability, and noted that the SCEPC with Cooperation Partners would finalize a more detailed report for the May 1998 EAPC Ministerial.

1.5 This paper, which provides the detailed report as called for by Ministers, builds upon the original proposal of the Russian Federation for Enhanced Practical Cooperation in the Field of International Disaster Relief as well as the current NATO Policy on Co-operation for Disaster Assistance in Peacetime.

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### 2. The Enhanced Disaster Response Capability

#### 2.1 EAPC Ministers have agreed in principle:

2.1.1 to establish at NATO Headquarters, within the Alliance's Civil Emergency Planning Directorate, a small Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC); and

2.1.2 to activate, where appropriate in the event of an emergency in an EAPC member country, a non-standing Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit (EADRU), comprising a mix of national elements provided by EAPC members.

2.2 In developing this concept, the SCEPC (EAPC) has been guided by the following basic principles:

2.2.1 the stricken country remains the responsible party for disaster management;

2.2.2 the United Nations retains the primary rôle in the coordination of international disaster relief operations. Therefore, the EADRCC is intended to complement and provide additional support to the United Nations rôle within the EAPC area, not to duplicate it; and

2.2.3 the EADRCC rôle within the EAPC area be one of coordination rather than direction. In the case of a disaster requiring international assistance, it will remain for individual nations to decide whether to provide assistance and, if so, whether to do so through the EADRU or by providing assistance direct to the stricken country.

### 3. The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre

3.1 Upon request for assistance from a stricken country and/or the UN-OCHA, the EADRCC will be responsible for:

3.1.1 informing the Secretary General and, through him, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council for political guidance as appropriate, as well as the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC) in EAPC format and the NATO Military Authorities (NMAs), of such requests for disaster assistance. In addition, the Secretary General will be informed of any special political and operational implications.

3.1.2 coordinating, in close consultation with the UN-OCHA, the response of EAPC Countries to a disaster occurring within the EAPC geographical area;

3.1.3 acting as the focal point for information-sharing on disaster assistance requests among EAPC member countries; and

3.1.4 maintaining close liaison with both UN-OCHA and the European Union as well as other organizations involved in international disaster response.

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3.2 The main functions of the EADRCC can be described as follows:

### *Day to day functions*

3.2.1 in close cooperation with the United Nations OCHA in Geneva, to exchange information on disaster situations within the geographical area of the EAPC;

3.2.2 to develop appropriate plans and procedures for the use of the EADRU, taking into account national risk assessments, existing multi- and bilateral agreements and response capabilities;

3.2.3 in close coordination with the United Nations Military and Civil Defence Unit (MCDU), to maintain a list of national civil and military elements, for which EAPC members have indicated potential availability as well as conditions for their participation in the EADRU. In doing so, the scope for cooperation and harmonization between MCDU and EADRCC in collecting data for their respective databases needs to be explored fully;

3.2.4 to facilitate the speedy deployment of the EADRU in an actual disaster, taking into account existing and developing bilateral and/or multilateral arrangements (this could include issues such as visas, border crossing, transit agreements, custom clearance, status of personnel, etc.);

3.2.5 to promote and contribute to interoperability through joint training and exercises, taking into account existing United Nations programmes;

3.2.6 to coordinate with the EAPC members and other relevant international organizations the time and agenda of international exercises and to prepare for approval by the EAPC an international exercise programme for the EADRU;

3.2.7 The Director, Civil Emergency Planning will regularly report to the North Atlantic Council and EAPC as well as the SCEPC Plenary and the SCEPC Plenary in EAPC format on the activities of the EADRCC and on the results of the operations, the lessons learned and the eventual consequences to be taken in the field of responsibilities, procedures and coordination, as established in this document;

### *Upon the Receipt of a Request for Assistance*

3.2.8 to contact the Single Point of Contact in the stricken country to confirm receipt of the message and to clarify, where necessary, the requirements for assistance;

3.2.9 to consult with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations on the action to be taken by the EADRCC in the response to the disaster;

3.2.10 to re-transmit to all EAPC capitals, the request for assistance and other available information on the disaster;

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3.2.11 to take the necessary preliminary action aimed at coordinating international assistance with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations in order to avoid duplication of efforts;

3.2.12 to request political guidance from the EAPC, as appropriate, for follow-on action;

3.2.13 to participate with (a) qualified EADRCC member(s) in a UN-led Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Team, when appropriate. Exceptionally, when no UNDAC team is deployed, the EADRCC can conduct its own disaster assessment;

3.2.14 to communicate as soon as possible to EAPC capitals the results of the above mentioned assessment team;

### *Upon Activation of the EADRU*

3.2.15 to communicate in the fastest possible way to EAPC capitals a report identifying the national elements required for international assistance;

3.2.16 to receive offers of assistance from EAPC countries;

3.2.17 to notify the stricken country of the national elements which EAPC member countries have decided to deploy;

3.2.18 to assist in making arrangements for reconnaissance missions for nations sending national elements; and

3.2.19 to monitor the disaster assistance provided by the EADRU and to prepare for additional EADRU deployment if required.

3.3 The Director, Civil Emergency Planning, acting on behalf of the NATO Secretary General, will serve as the head of the EADRCC. Other participants of the EADRCC may include:

3.3.1 a small number of representatives of interested EAPC member countries; should it be necessary, the EADRCC can be augmented during an actual disaster;

3.3.2 a United Nations liaison officer; and

3.3.3 a representative of the NATO Military Authorities (as necessary).

3.4 In the event of a major disaster EADRCC capabilities might need to be reinforced. Normally, this would be accomplished by temporarily augmenting the EADRCC with additional personnel coming from EAPC delegations to NATO, the International Staff and the NATO Military Authorities (NMA's), or possibly designated CECC experts. However, should the magnitude of the disaster demand a large response from EAPC countries or be of prolonged duration, the EADRCC might

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require further assistance. In such a case, consideration could be given to a request being made to the North Atlantic Council for the possible use of Alliance military capabilities to support and complement the disaster response coordination efforts of the EADRCC.

### **4. The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit**

4.1 The EADRU will be a non-standing, multi-national mix of national civil and military elements (qualified personnel of rescue, medical and other units; equipment and materials; assets and transport), which have been volunteered by EAPC countries, acting in cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations in disaster response. The composition and the size of this multinational EADRU will be determined by the requirements based on an international assessment of each particular disaster.

4.2 The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit (EADRU) can be deployed in case of a major natural and technological disaster in an EAPC country upon request from the stricken country or in support of a relevant international organization (see also paragraph).

#### *Management of the EADRU*

4.3 National elements will remain under their national control while deployed in the stricken country as an asset of the Local Emergency Management Agency (LEMA). The EADRCC will assist in the coordination activities of the various national elements in close cooperation with the LEMA and with any UNDAC team or On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) which may be deployed.

#### *Deployment of the EADRU*

4.4 Upon receipt of a request for assistance individual EAPC countries, taking into account the requirements identified by the assessment, may decide on the deployment of their capabilities in coordination with the EADRCC. The EADRU will be considered to have been activated whenever one or more EAPC member countries deploy capabilities in response to the initiative of the EADRCC.

4.5 Once deployed, and in accordance with the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief, national elements of the EADRU will be available to the stricken country's Local Emergency Management Agency (LEMA), who is in charge of the overall disaster management operation, for the duration of the deployment unless assets are recalled by nations making deployment.

4.6 The area of deployment of the EADRU will be limited to the EAPC member countries. In exceptional circumstances, should there be a request for assistance for a stricken non-EAPC country, after consultation with the UN OCHA, the EADRCC may circulate this information to EAPC capitals. Should the request be for an EADRCC rôle, political guidance from the EAPC will be obtained as a matter of urgency before initiating any disaster response action via the EADRCC.

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4.7 In any circumstance in which the involvement of the EADRU might be regarded as contentious, prior EAPC political guidance will be obtained before initiating any disaster response action via the EADRCC.

4.8 Upon any deployment of the EADRU, the EADRCC will keep the Secretary General and, as appropriate, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, and the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC) in EAPC format informed.

### **5. Training And Exercises**

5.1 To ensure the effective functioning of both the EADRCC and the EADRU and in order to maximize Interoperability among national elements, appropriate training and exercises (both command post and field exercises) will need to be conducted on a regular basis. National action in this area will need to be supplemented by measures of international activity in order to exercise the various elements of the EADRU in working together.

5.2 Emphasis should be placed on incorporating EADRCC training requirements into existing activities, such as the NATO Crisis Management Exercise (CMX). In order to facilitate complementary doctrinal approaches in the realm of civil-military cooperation and Interoperability, EADRCC coordinated training and exercises will be developed in consultation with military authorities. The EADRCC should facilitate close and continuing cooperation for training and exercises among voluntary groupings of EAPC member countries.

5.3 To enhance cooperation and synergy, UN-developed programmes and projects covering procedures on mission guidelines, regulations, training and exercises (INSARAG and MCDA), etc. should be taken into account.

### **6. Financial And Statutory Implications**

6.1 The EADRCC and the EADRU will be established and will operate on the principle that costs will lie where they will fall.

6.2 This means that EAPC members contributing to the Unit will be responsible for its provision, training, insurance, servicing and transport and for any costs which are incurring in respect of such contributions in the course of international training, exercises and deployment.

6.3 Similarly, EAPC members assigning staff to the EADRCC will be responsible for all associated costs such as salaries, insurance, social security, etc. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization responsibility will be limited to the overhead costs of hosting the EADRCC.

6.4 National representatives from EAPC States to the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre at NATO Headquarters can be part of their respective Missions to NATO and, consequently, enjoy the status as foreseen by the Brussels Agreement. National representatives from EAPC States temporarily

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augmenting the EADRCC who are not members of their respective Missions will be entitled to the customary privileges under the Brussels Agreement. National representatives from NATO Member states will remain covered by the appropriate provisions of the Ottawa Agreement.

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