



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Cecilia Malmström

EU Commissioner for Home Affairs

The Internal Security Dimension and Perspectives

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

4th European Civil Protection Forum/Brussels
16 May 2013

Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

You know better than anyone the impact of natural disasters in Europe.

Some of you in this room will have been involved in the follow up to the Italian earthquake in L'Aquila in central Italy in 2009; the extreme cold weather early last year which saw hundreds of thousands of people left without water, gas and electricity; and severe flooding such as that which affected central Europe in 2010.

The security challenges are unfortunately no fewer. The most recent Europol report published few weeks ago indicates a worrying upwards trend in the number of failed; foiled; and successful terrorist attacks.

Last year saw terrorist attacks in Bulgaria, where there was the 'Burgas' attack and in Toulouse, France; and the horrific attack by Anders Breivik in Norway in July 2011 is still fresh in our memory.

Further afield, the recent events in Algeria with the hostage taking and the Boston bombings highlight that the threat of terrorism remains a serious concern around the world.

With ever increasing reliance on the Internet, we also have to think about cyber security. For example, where critical infrastructures depend on the Internet we must make sure we have both a good level of resilience and the ability to respond in the event of system failure.

Climate change is another important challenge. When it causes natural disasters, the security implications can be serious, as we have seen in the recent examples of flooding and other severe weather. I am very appreciative of the work done by my colleague Commissioner Connie Hedegaard on that front.

In order to better face these threats, our Internal security strategy sets the ambitious target of establishing a coherent risk management policy by the end of 2014; linking threat and risk assessment to decision making.

There are many important actors needed to set up a coherent risk management policy. The role of civil protection – and the work you all do on prevention, preparedness and response – is however a key element of the Strategy.

I see primarily three areas we have to jointly develop.

The first one is to have a coordinated response capability.

To this end, I would like to congratulate Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva and DG ECHO for the opening of the Emergency Response Centre yesterday. I'm convinced that the centre – with its 24/7 capacity – will be a cornerstone in the EU's crisis response capability.

I look forward to excellent cooperation between the Emergency Response Centre and the "Strategic Assessment and Response" capability in DG HOME Affairs. They will provide two vital pillars of our capability to respond to natural as well as man-made disasters.

In terms of the internal security dimension, just last month we supported the largest EU exercise for Member States anti-terrorist police units ever carried out.

The ATLAS COMMON CHALLENGE exercise was conceived around a scenario in which simultaneous terrorist attacks targeted nine EU Member States.

The special command post of the exercise was set up in DG HOME's secure zone. This enabled processing and coordination of responses to simultaneous reports from the nine different countries that had been attacked.

The ATLAS COMMON CHALLENGE exercise took its name from the EU's ATLAS network. The aim of the network is twofold; to make the Member States anti-terrorist forces better trained, as well as to encourage cooperation between the national forces in case there is an attack where citizens from more than one country are involved.

The second challenge is to better link the assessment of threats and hazards to their potential impact. By looking at the whole process, from threat and hazard assessment, we can develop better tools to steer and support our policies.

In the field of security risks, my services have led the Commission's work to facilitate risk assessment exercises in cooperation with key partners such as the Intelligence Centre, the Counter-terrorism Co-ordinator and Europol.

These exercises have been conducted notably in the field of aviation security, but also more recently on the security implications for the EU resulting from the situation in the Sahel region and Mali in particular.

In the field of disasters, our colleagues in the Commission DG ECHO, together with Member States have – as you know – developed EU risk assessment and mapping guidelines for disaster management, based on a multi-hazard and multi-risk approach.

Based on the risk analysis contributions produced by Member States, the Commission will prepare a cross-sectorial overview of the major natural and man-made risks that the EU may face in the future. I'm confident that, through working together, this exercise will be an important component in building a safer and more secure Europe.

This will also constitute a valuable experience to inform the regular threat and risk assessment report prepared for the European Council as foreseen within the framework of the Solidarity Clause.

The third challenge is to develop cooperation in areas such as CBRN and critical infrastructure protection.

In the field of CBRN, the Resilience Programme for Civil Protection has significantly contributed to the implementation of the EU Action Plan.

We should continue enhancing the EU response capacity by reinforcing the "CBRN modules" within the civil protection mechanism.

On Critical Infrastructure Protection, the Commission will soon present a new proposal on how we can work with European Critical Infrastructures to make them more secure.

To date, the Commission has been effective in promoting awareness of the need for effective critical infrastructure planning. By working together with specific pan-European infrastructures we can ensure that we are making a difference also at a practical level.

As part of that work we will bring together the Critical Infrastructure's operators and those actors who rely upon it - both industry and Member States. By facilitating this cross-sectorial dialogue we will heighten the security of European Citizens.

And so, Ladies and Gentlemen, through these measures; and by bringing them together in a comprehensive risk management policy by the end of 2014; we will all be better prepared to deal with disasters and terrorist attacks.

Thank you