



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

ENVIRONMENT

Directorate A - Governance, Communication and Civil Protection

ENV.A.5 - Civil Protection

Head of Unit

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Brussels,

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Mr Claude Coste

President

Association against floods

Defense of UAE and of the environment

5 Rue Mirepoix

FR - 34500 Béziers

Dear Mr Coste,

President Barroso has asked me to reply to your letter dated 9th November 2005, in which you express a number of concerns and request the Commission to draft a directive on flood risks.

The Commission is well aware of the serious implications that floods may have for the citizens and the environment. The Commission is addressing the impacts of floods within an EU Action Programme on Flood Risk Management, and by the EU Action Programme on Civil Protection, with both elements complementing each other.

Firstly, an EU Action Programme on Flood Risk Management will entail a Directive on Flood Risk Management, based on a Commission Communication of July 2004 and positive comments and opinions received; the Proposal for such a Floods Directive is already foreseen in the Commission work programme, and will be presented at the end of 2005 or early 2006. It will inter alia contain obligations to establish comprehensive flood maps in all areas with flood risk, and to develop and implement flood risk management plans for all those areas where the current risk of flooding is too high. Such plans will have to be developed in broad public participation and in coordination across river basins.

Secondly, certain actions at Community level already deal with civil protection aspects linked to flood risks. The EU Action Programme in the field of Civil Protection, for example, since 1999, has been supporting pilot actions aiming at exchanging best

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practice with regard to preparedness and response in the event of major disasters, including floods. The programme is also intended to promote a greater awareness of the interrelations between human activities and nature, which in the future may make it possible to prevent disasters, including floods. The EU Mechanism, set up to facilitate cooperation in civil protection interventions, operates i.a. an information centre in charge of monitoring disasters and of coordinating civil protection assistance interventions. In 2005, the Mechanism has actively coordinated trans-national assistance to Romania and Bulgaria following the recent, dramatic floods in these countries.

The Community tools can thus contribute to a better control and management of flood risks.

Yours sincerely,



Pia BUCELLA