



## Questions and answers on the EU Preparedness Union Strategy

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### Why is the Preparedness Union Strategy needed?

The European Union is facing an increasingly complex and volatile security landscape including rising geopolitical tensions, state-sponsored hybrid and cyberattacks, and foreign interference. Climate change and environmental degradation are exacerbating extreme weather events, and the COVID-19 pandemic revealed vulnerabilities in critical supply chains and health services. The pandemic and Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine showed also the clear added value that the EU can bring to preparedness and crisis planning in such scenarios.

First, we need to better understand what to prepare for. The interconnected risks and threats Europe is facing today and in the future require a coordinated approach to preparedness, moving from reactive to proactive crisis management and ensuring a culture of resilience across society.

Second, the EU has significantly upscaled its crisis management toolbox over the last years while recent large-scale and long-lasting crisis. However, this toolbox remains fragmented across different institutions, services and agencies. With the Preparedness Union we will bring these capabilities together within a coordinated umbrella.

Third, to be ready for all worst-case scenarios, we need upscale our preparedness and bring all hands on board. Businesses, civil society organisations and citizens have valuable expertise and skills to support societal preparedness and resilience. The Preparedness Strategy offers support to better integrate them into our collective civilian preparedness.

### What type of crises is the EU preparing for?

The EU is preparing for a broad spectrum of risks and threats, encompassing both natural and human-induced disasters. This includes:

- Natural disasters: floods, wildfires, earthquakes, and extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change.
- Human-induced disasters: industrial accidents, technological failures, and pandemics.
- Hybrid threats: cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), and sabotage of critical infrastructure.
- Geopolitical crises: armed conflicts, including the possibility of armed aggression against Member States.

### What are the key areas of the Strategy?

The strategy outlines seven key areas of focus:

- Foresight and anticipation: Strengthening the EU's ability to identify and analyse emerging risks and threats. For example, this Strategy aims to improve the way Early Warning Systems work and increase capacity around horizon scanning on risks and threats. These in turn would help inform Member States and the Commission.
- Resilience of vital societal functions: Ensuring the continuity of essential services and infrastructure, including healthcare, transport, drinking water, telecommunications or public administration services, among others, even in the event of a crisis. Population preparedness and societal resilience: Empowering citizens and communities to prepare for and respond to crises.
- Public-private cooperation: Fostering collaboration between government and industry to

enhance preparedness.

- Civil-military cooperation: Strengthening coordination between civilian and military authorities.
- Crisis response coordination and effective decision-making: Improving the EU's ability to manage and respond to emergencies.
- Resilience through external partnerships: Collaborating with international partners to address cross-border threats.

### **In which areas will the EU focus its efforts to enhance population preparedness?**

The EU will focus its efforts on enhancing population preparedness working with Member States, with a particular emphasis on fostering a culture of resilience at national and local level. This includes improving public awareness of risks through targeted information campaigns, educational programs, and accessible online resources.

Efforts will also concentrate on empowering citizens to take proactive measures to prepare for crises, such as developing household emergency plans and stockpiling essential supplies. The EU will also support the development of effective public warning and crisis communication systems by Member States to reach all citizens, regardless of their location, language, or circumstances.

### **Which areas will the EU prioritise in its stockpiling strategy?**

EU's stockpiling strategy will integrate all existing stockpiling actions focus on securing access to critical resources across the Union, working closer with Member States. This includes:

- Emergency and disaster response supplies: essential equipment, materials, and resources needed to respond to natural and human-made disasters.
- Medical countermeasures: vaccines, medicines, and medical equipment to address public health emergencies.
- Critical raw materials: resources essential for industrial production and strategic autonomy.
- Energy equipment: components and technologies needed to maintain energy security.
- Potentially, agri-food products and water security: to insure against shortages in times of crisis.

### **Why is enhanced civil-military cooperation essential for the EU's Preparedness Union strategy?**

To effectively address modern, complex threats like hybrid warfare, cyberattacks, and potential armed aggression, the EU needs seamless cooperation between civilian and military authorities.

Key actions include:

- Establishing a comprehensive civil-military preparedness framework with clear roles and responsibilities.
- Facilitating dual-use planning and investment across member states, identifying key infrastructure and equipment.
- Conducting regular EU-wide comprehensive preparedness exercises to test decision-making and coordination.
- Enhancing cooperation with strategic partners, such as NATO, in countering this broad range of threats.

### **How does the Preparedness Union Strategy address the challenge of cross-border crises?**

The strategy acknowledges that many modern crises, such as pandemics, cyberattacks, hybrid actions and climate-related disasters, by their very nature - transcend national borders. It develops a framework for coordinated EU risk and threat assessments by:

- Strengthening EU-level early-warning systems and information sharing mechanisms.
- Enhancing the capabilities of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and rescEU to facilitate rapid assistance across borders.
- Promoting cross-border public-private partnerships to ensure the resilience of critical infrastructure and supply chains.

- Fostering external partnerships to address common threats.

### **When will new EU proposals and reviews of legislation be subject to security, preparedness, and resilience checks?**

Preparedness and security considerations will be 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. This will be underpinned with regular training for policy makers in the Commission.

### **Why is a comprehensive EU risk and threat assessment needed?**

To be well-prepared, we need to know what to prepare for. As the risk landscape grows more complex, we need stronger risk insight and assessment tools. While efforts to detect and analyse risks and threats have expanded across the EU, they have predominantly been approached from sectoral or national angles. This limits our ability to see the full picture, understand interconnections, anticipate cascading effects or cross-border implications. Scientific knowledge also remains underused. The new EU risk and threat assessment will aim to close these gaps by offering a cross-sectoral, cross-hazard perspective — providing a more comprehensive understanding of risks and threats across Europe.

According to the Strategy, the Commission and the High Representative, with support from relevant EU agencies, will finalise the first comprehensive EU risk and threat assessment by the end of 2026. This assessment will be based on a newly developed framework for coordinated risk and threat evaluations across various policy areas.

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Press contacts:

[Eva HRNCIROVA](#) (+32 2 29 88433)

[Daniel PUGLISI](#) (+32 2 29 69140)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)