

# EUROPEANISATION OF CIVIL PROTECTION: THE CASES OF ITALY AND NORWAY

Claudia Morsut and Bjørn Ivar Kruke

## ABSTRACT

*National civil protection systems have been developed and implemented each time a crisis has unfolded, with different degrees of success in responding to and solving the crisis. However, crises are increasingly not confined by national borders and challenge states' capacities to adequately respond, thus calling for crisis management governance that goes beyond the nation-state. In this respect, the European Union (EU) has developed its civil protection policy and, through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, established forms of cooperation among the participating states of the Mechanism. In this article, through the lens of Europeanisation, we aim to uncover the influences the Mechanism exercises on the Norwegian and Italian civil protection systems and, at the same time, we seek to point out the kind of influences these states have on the Mechanism's development. Europeanisation has been widely used as an analytical framework to mainly explain how national contexts are shaped by EU developments, but it is also equally important to understand how national context shapes changes within the EU. Our data stem from document analysis, semi-structured interviews with civil protection officers at national and EU levels and participant observation.*

**Keywords** - Civil Protection, Europeanisation, European Union (EU), Italy, Norway.

## INTRODUCTION

In late May/early June 2016, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Romania, Moldova, and the Netherlands faced heavy rain that resulted in floods. In the summer of 2017, Portugal experienced one of the most devastating forest fires in its history. In the summer of 2018, in Sweden, forest fires ranged as far north as the Arctic Circle, putting the national civil protection system under pressure. These are a few examples of the transboundary nature of crises and of crisis responses that required the European Union's (EU) intervention through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Indeed, although states have their own civil protection systems, crises are increasingly not confined by national borders, since most of them have cascading effects and a transboundary character, challenging the states' capacities to adequately respond (Boin and Ekengren 2009). Crisis

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management governance that goes beyond the nation-state is, thus, crucial to limit the consequences of these events in terms of human losses and damage to environment, infrastructures and households. However, this kind of governance succeeds if cooperation is driven by a common understanding of approaches, procedures and tasks; minimum organisational and operational shared standards; and a willingness to work together. In this respect, the EU has introduced several initiatives at the legislative and operative levels to establish common forms of cooperation and understanding of crisis management among member states and associated countries (see Boin, Ekengren and Rhinard 2013). These initiatives have changed the European civil protection landscape in the last decade, since the EU now has the competence to support, coordinate and supplement actions in this field. The EU has shown its engagement through the implementation of the Mechanism, a voluntary system through which the EU coordinates the contributions of the so-called Mechanism's participating states<sup>1</sup> to help a country that has requested assistance, in Europe and worldwide, when a natural or man-made crisis unfolds.

In previous studies about the Mechanism, we concluded that this unique toolbox retains huge potential for improving national civil protection capacities. At the same time, it is beneficial for the whole EU civil protection policy, since all the Mechanism's participating states can share and exchange their own expertise, knowledge and skills. In a study from 2016 (Morsut and Kruke 2016), we pointed out that national authorities' comprehension regarding what the Mechanism is and can offer is crucial for a reliable response, especially in the initial phase of the emergency. In another study from 2015 (Kruke and Morsut 2015), we concluded that, without the activation of the Mechanism, the consequences of the 2014 forest fires in Sweden would have been worse in terms of damage to infrastructures and households. In a study about the 2017 forest fires in Portugal (Morsut and Kruke forthcoming), we underline two mutual influences: on one side, the Portuguese civil protection authority took serious steps to improve the national civil protection system by requesting a Technical Advisory Mission within forest fires prevention and preparedness from the Mechanism. On the other side, shortly after the end of the 2017 Portuguese forest fires, the European Commission promoted the RescEU proposal, since that event showed that the Mechanism required further improvements.

It is, thus, significant to better understand both the kind of influences the Mechanism has on its participating states and how the participating states contribute to changes and, hopefully, improvements in the Mechanism that are, in turn, beneficial for the entirety of European crisis management governance. In this article, we aim to unveil these influences through the lens of Europeanisation, by using official EU and national documents, in addition to semi-structured interviews with EU and national officers and participant observation.

The article is organised as follows. We briefly introduce Europeanisation as our analytical framework and then we describe the Mechanism and the Italian and Norwegian civil protections systems. We continue by applying Europeanisation to the Mechanism's main components, and we seek to define influences according to three dimensions (politics, policies and polity), at both the domestic and EU level. This analysis allows us to conclude by drawing some general considerations and suggestions for further research.

## EUROPEANISATION

The scholarship on Europeanisation is vast and presents various approaches (see Featherstone and Radaelli 2003; Graziano and Vink 2007; Exadaktylos and Radaelli 2012). In addition, the application of the concept has provided more than two decades of studies on the processes of the EU's influence on various domestic policies, actors and institutions. Its frequent application has grown in parallel with some critiques. For instance, in 2002, Olsen argued that Europeanisation was still a “disorderly field of research” (Olsen 2002, 1), despite his attempt to clarify the concept (Olsen 1996). He pointed out five types of Europeanisation to show the breadth of the term and thus the challenges that such breadth implied for research: 1) Europeanisation as changes in external territorial boundaries; 2) Europeanisation as the development of institutions of governance at the European level; 3) Europeanisation as central penetration of national and subnational systems of governance; 4) Europeanisation as exporting forms of political organisation and governance; 5) Europeanisation as a political project, aiming at a unified and politically stronger Europe. In 2012, Exadaktylos and Radaelli defined Europeanisation “one of those bumblebees that seem to defy the laws of aerodynamics, yet they fly” (Exadaktylos and Radaelli 2012, 17). Indeed, the term is popular and constantly applied (see Böhm and Landwehr 2014; Özel 2013; de la Porte and Natali 2014; Pedersen 2017; Kröger 2018).

Among the several efforts to precisely describe Europeanisation (in addition to Olsen, see examples in Featherstone and Radaelli 2003, 12-17), we consider the following definition of Europeanisation (Featherstone and Radaelli 2003, 17):

“Processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things', and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU level policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures, and public policies”

This definition succeeds best in encompassing several facades of Europeanisation, since it has the advantage of describing Europeanisation as a process, which may take three phases (construction, diffusion and institutionalisation). However, the definition mainly focuses on EU policies and, to some extent, describes a temporal succession of events: first comes the EU policy, then the domestic one as a consequence of the first one. Indeed, most of the literature on Europeanisation describes various EU processes that affect member states (see Börzel and Risse 2007; Cowles et al. 2001; Featherstone and Radaelli 2003; Radaelli 2000). Börzel and Risse sought to conceptualise the EU impact at the domestic level by considering three dimensions: not only in terms of policy (changes in legal rules) but also in terms of politics (changes in social transactions) and polity (changes in organisational forms) (Börzel and Risse 2003, 57-80; see Table 1 below). Several studies have investigated domestic change, following one or all of the three dimensions. For example, Anderson (2002) focused on polity issues (institutions, procedures and rules of parliamentary democracy in EU member states and the political dynamics that flow from them). Studies on how Europeanisation affects regional governance looked at policy changes in France and Germany (Benz and Eberlein 1999),

while issues of politics were the primary research objective in several studies about the new member states from Eastern and Central Europe (see Bauer et al. 2007; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005; Vachudova 2005). Other studies approach Europeanisation from the three dimensions on a specific topic such as public health (Böhm and Landwehr 2014), the Southern Caucasus (Börzel and Pamuk 2012), Mediterranean countries (Magen 2012; van Hüllen 2012), and the EU's influence on regional organisations such as Mercosur, SADC, and ASEAN (Jetschke and Murray 2012; Lenz 2012). All these studies have in common a conceptualisation of Europeanisation largely as a one-way process, in which countries or institutions are treated as passive recipients of the EU's demands for change. As such, the EU is the independent variable, while the domestic level is considered the dependent variable (cf. Börzel and Risse 2007, 485).

In recent years, studies seeking to reverse the perspective, by looking at national influences on the EU's system, have emerged (see Kröger 2018; Marciacq 2012). These studies describe Europeanisation as a two-way interaction between states and the EU (Bomberg and Peterson 2000, 8) or as a circular and cyclical interaction (Dyson and Goetz 2003, 20), looking for cause and effect dynamics between the EU and its member states (Jordan and Liefferink 2004, 6). We argue that this last approach may have some similarities with the circular effect in planning through consensus building, which is an attempt to address complex controversial public issues where multiple interests are at stake (Innes 1996), or developing some sort of communicative rationale or communicative action, as largely outlined by Habermas (1984), or policymaking as discursive democracy (Dryzek 1990).

This article follows the most recent academic developments on Europeanisation by highlighting Europeanisation as a both top-down and bottom-up process to study the EU and national civil protection policy. Having an EU civil protection policy implicates changes in national and local governance that have not been fully unveiled. At the same time, these changes affect the ways the EU engages in a policy that remains nationally driven. Thus, we argue that Europeanisation fits our purposes well in pinpointing the possible effects of European developments, at both the domestic and EU levels.

We will follow Börzel and Risse's (2003) three dimensions to identify and categorise products of Europeanisation in civil protection as a two-way process. To our knowledge, there is little research on the Europeanisation of civil protection, so we aim to offer a novel viewpoint about this policy and to discuss some implications for the EU and two participating states of the Mechanism, Italy and Norway.

**Table 1: Three dimensions of Europeanisation based on Börzel and Risse (2003, 60)**

Europeanisation	Domestic → EU	EU → domestic
Politics: processes of interest formation, interest aggregation, interest representation, public discourses.  Changes in social transactions		
Polity: political institutions, intergovernmental relations, judicial structures, public administration, state traditions, economic institutions, state-society relations, collective identities.  Changes in organisational forms		
Policy: standards, instruments, problem-solving approaches, policy narratives and discourses  Changes in legal rules		

## METHOD

In this article, we used document analysis, semi-structured interviews and participant observation to obtain data on the Mechanism's components and national viewpoints on the Mechanism. We mainly analysed significant EU documents concerning the Mechanism, such as Reports, Decisions and Communications to understand the EU strategy, political agenda and the goals the EU aims to achieve through the Mechanism. We also used the EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) website for gathering up-to-date information. At the national level, we studied national laws, regulations and strategies, and we relied on the Italian and Norwegian civil protection websites to map the national stances on civil protection. In addition, we conducted six semi-structured interviews with representatives from the Mechanism working at ECHO in Brussels and with national civil protection officers in Italy and Norway. An interview guide was developed, focusing on how the Mechanism works, work processes within its components, lessons learned, operations, and the relationships between the Mechanism and Italy/Norway. Finally, one of the two authors of this article is a trained European Union Civil Protection Team (EUCPT) member within the Mechanism and has participated in several courses and exercises. The other author visited the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) in Brussels to gain first-hand understanding of the Mechanism.

## EU AND NATIONAL CIVIL PROTECTION

The following section offers a brief overview of the EU, Norwegian and Italian civil protection systems. The EU civil protection's description stems from our previous studies, official EU websites and the two authors' experience with the Mechanism. The information about Italy and Norway is mainly collected from the respective websites about civil protection.

### EU civil protection

The Treaty of Lisbon granted the EU supportive competence within civil protection (Article 2E TFEU) and described the EU's role in terms of support, cooperation, effectiveness and consistency in its civil protection activities (Article 196 (1) TFEU). The EU exerts this role through the Mechanism to strengthen the cooperation among participating states in civil protection and to improve effectiveness in preventing, preparing for and responding to disasters in Europe and worldwide. The Mechanism has undergone relatively long institutional development (Morsut 2014), starting in 2001 (Council 2001). Revisions in 2007 (Council 2007) and in 2013 (European Parliament and Council 2013), together with various Commission Decisions (European Commission 2004; 2007; 2010; 2014), contributed to the Mechanism's expansion, with current features. After the Interim Evaluation of the Mechanism in 2017, the European Commission put forward a proposal to amend the 2013 legislation (European Commission 2017) in two areas: the establishment of the EU's civil protection capabilities, by renting or leasing them from the participating states (RescEU); the reinforcement of the European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC) through a coverage of 75% of the costs during the response phase that should incentivise the participating states in pre-committing their capabilities. The RescEU proposal was approved by the European Parliament in May 2018, and the Parliament and Council reached an agreement on its content in December 2018. RescEU was finally launched in March 2019 (European Parliament and Council 2019).

The Mechanism is the responsibility of the ECHO and its main components are the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), with its Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS); the European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC);<sup>2</sup> and the Training Programme. The ERCC is the operational heart of the Mechanism, since it is the single entry point for information and coordination and guarantees 24/7 operational capacity. It deals with several simultaneous emergencies in different time zones; monitors hazards; collects and analyses real-time information on disasters; prepares plans for the deployment of experts, teams and equipment; works with participating states to map available assets and coordinates the Mechanism's crisis response by matching offers of assistance to the needs of the affected country (ECHO 2016; European Commission 2014a).

The CECIS is a web-based alert and notification system, enabling communication between the ERCC and the participating states. Its main tasks are collecting information on a crisis, guaranteeing information sharing between the ERCC and the participating states' contact points, disseminating information to the participating states and sharing

lessons learned from operations (European Commission 2014). The EERC consists of voluntary pool of pre-committed capacities from the participating states in the form of modules, transportation services and teams of experts (both national and the Mechanism's civil protection teams - EUCPT). These capacities have been in existence since 2007, but it is since the implementation of the 2013 legislation that the European Commission has managed to establish the voluntary pool, which was officially launched in October 2014.

As of today, 23 participating states have registered 99 civil protection capacities, which are now available for EU operations worldwide, following a request for assistance through the ERCC (EU Civil Protection 2018). Modules can be made up of resources from one or more participating states, according to the expertise of the national civil protection systems. Examples of modules are HUSAR (Heavy Urban Search and Rescue), WP (Water Purification), HCP (High Capacity Water Pumping), FHOS (Field Hospital) and AFFP (Aerial Forest Fire Fighting using Planes). The European Commission is responsible for defining the types and the number of response capacities required for the EERC (the so-called capacity goals). The national capacities are assessed and certified by the European Commission and peers nominated by the participating states. The certification follows international standards: for example, the Search and Rescue teams are certified according to the United Nation's International Search and Rescue Advisory Group Guidelines (INSARAG 2019).

The Training Programme consists of (a) training courses, (b) simulation exercises and (c) exchange of experts among the participating states, covering crisis management in its prevention, preparedness and response phases to increase the professionalization of civil protection assistance (MTP 2019). It is also a platform for experience sharing and networking between national civil protection experts from the Mechanism's participating states, where they can learn first-hand about similar responsibilities under different national systems (Training Programme 2016). The training courses have been offered by the European Commission since 2004 through the Network of European Centres for Civil Protection Training. Courses offer theoretical and practical lessons on joint crisis response and are meant as a supplement to the national training. More than 8000 civil protection personnel have attended these courses.

Simulation exercises on the ground allow skills, competence and knowledge to be improved both inside the EERC (Training Programme 2016). The exercises are fundamental to preparing the Mechanism's civil protection teams to react fast and in a coordinated manner when disasters occur. Exercises involve several countries at a time and contribute to enhancing collaboration in disaster preparedness across borders. The main exercise scenarios are earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, hurricanes, forest fires and radioactive/CBRN incidents. An important part of the exercises is the assessment of the effectiveness and validity of intervention models (plans, procedures, decisions and information) to respond to major emergencies. Usually, the European Commission promotes a call for proposals, and the participating state whose proposal is accepted organises the exercise, supported by an economic contribution from the European Commission.

The outcome of these exercises is valuable, in the sense that they identify further training needs and lessons learned, while workshops are organised in parallel, to identify how response and related activities can be improved (CPE 2019). The exchange of experts allows qualified civil protection personnel to share experiences and knowledge and strengthen operational skills in another participating state by temporarily working there. The exchange is a unique opportunity to learn across borders and between similar organisations. At the end of the stay, an evaluation of lessons learned is provided (EEP 2019).

### **Italian civil protection**

Italian civil protection is the result of a series of laws driven by several disasters that struck the country. Italy has widespread risks throughout its territory and has therefore developed a response system based on the principle of subsidiarity: the action starts from the local level and involves the relevant administrations upwards. Disasters are classified into three different types, based on the extension, intensity and responsiveness of civil protection: type a (municipal level), type b (provincial and regional) and type c (national).

We mention here the content of the three main laws. Law 225/92 established the National Civil Protection Service, with the task of protecting the integrity of life, property, settlements and the environment from damage or risk provoked by natural disasters, catastrophes and other devastating events. This law established a civil protection structure as follows: the Prime Minister is at the top of the coordination system. The Chief of the Department of Civil Protection, with its two main agencies – the National Commission for the Forecasting and Prevention of Great Risks and the Civil Protection Operating Committee – responds directly to the Prime Minister and has the responsibility to coordinate all phases of a crisis (prevention/preparedness, response, recovery), together with the operational organisations that intervene in the case of a crisis (fire brigades, Red Cross, police, Carabinieri, national army, civil protection volunteers' service), the scientific community (for technical and scientific support), and the Italian levels of governance (state, regions, prefectures, provinces and municipalities). The first response to the emergency must come from the municipality level, the institution closest to the citizen.

The mayor has the power to issue ordinances (government decrees with the status of law) and leads the Centro Operativo Comunale (COC). If the municipality does not have enough means to intervene, the higher levels are mobilised. At the provincial/regional level, the Centro Operativo Misto (COM) is the link between the Department of Civil Protection and the COC. For a few years, the Minister of the Interior was at the top of the system, with political, administrative and control functions, while the functions of the Department of Civil Protection were transferred to the newly established Civil Protection Agency (Legislative Degree 300/1999). This decision was overshadowed by Law 401/2001, which abolished the Civil Protection Agency and restored the Department of Civil Protection within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The latest Law 1/2018 introduced the new Civil Protection Code, which systematised and organised all the previous legislative acts into one document. While the structure of Law 225/92 is maintained, several changes have been introduced, for example the separation

of responsibility for political and technical functions and new provisions for more effective emergency operations. In addition, new categories of emergencies are included, and a better involvement of citizens is foreseen through dissemination of civil protection culture and knowledge, information about risk scenarios, exercises, and risk-mitigation activities.

### **Norwegian civil protection**

Civil protection in Norway is defined as “protecting the lives, health and safety of the civilian population, and protecting key social functions and important infrastructure from attack and other damage” (NMJ 2015, 14). While the government retains the supreme authority, the responsibility for handling the actual crisis rests with individual ministries, their subordinate agencies, counties and municipalities. The Norwegian civil protection system has a decentralised operative force spread across the country. Each year, this force is called out to participate in around 300 interventions, including forest fires, other natural catastrophes, oil-spill protection, search and rescue, evacuation, and so on.

The system is based on four principles (Meld. St. 29 2012): The principle of responsibility (the authority or the organisation responsible for day-to-day basic civil protection is also responsible in the event of a crisis); the principle of similarity (the authority or the organisation should be as similar as possible during a crisis as the day-to-day organisation); the principle of proximity (crises should be handled at the lowest possible level); and the principle of cooperation (the authority or the organisation has the responsibility for the best possible cooperation among the actors involved in civil protection).

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security has the role of promoting civil protection and emergency preparedness work through the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB 2019), established in 2005. DSB tasks are several: To support the ministry’s coordinating role in civil protection and emergency preparedness; to coordinate the follow-up of activities related to the potential for major accidents, included those related to chemical hazards; to keep up with activities related to information, research, analysis, advice, guidance for crisis management; to supervise industry, local electrical inspectorates, municipal fire services in crisis management; to provide a complete overview of various national risks and vulnerabilities; to coordinate the national civil emergency preparedness system, which comprises the Emergency Planning College (NUSB), the Norwegian Fire Academy, the Civil Defence Academy, and the Norwegian Support Team (NST) (NMJ 2015).

At regional level, county governors are responsible for coordinating, maintaining an overview of and reporting on civil protection and emergency preparedness work. They support the municipalities in their work on civil protection and emergency preparedness and cooperate across borders on civil protection in their geographical area of responsibility. Municipalities are the core of the civil protection system in Norway, since all accidents, crises and emergencies happen at a local level. They are, therefore, the first to respond (principle of proximity). They are also responsible for identifying risks, preparing risk assessment and contingency plans and carrying out exercises in their geographical area.

## **EUROPEANISATION OF CIVIL PROTECTION: VERY MUCH AN INTERTWINED PROCESS**

In this section, we highlight Europeanisation processes of civil protection in terms of politics, polity and policy seeking to show the extent to which the EU affects Italy and Norway and, vice versa, Italian and Norwegian influences on the Mechanism and its development. These processes are discussed within the Mechanism's main components and by taking into account two elements at national level, such as the civil protection public administration and the Host Nation Support Guidelines.

### **Organisation of national civil protection public administration**

Both Italy and Norway have established their own international offices, which liaise with international organisations (primarily the UN and the EU) and single states (bilateral civil protection agreements) for emergency and humanitarian interventions abroad. Inside the Italian international office, a Task Force for the Mechanism maintains the relationship with the ERCC and the various initiatives that the European Commission undertakes in the field of civil protection. The Task Force has the mandate to coordinate, plan and participate in the exercises and training organised at EU level. In addition, it prepares an ex post evaluation on the exercises and training in which Italy participates (Italian Civil Protection 2019). Finally, it guarantees the participation of the Italian department in civil protection meetings at the European and international levels, connecting involved boards and offices (Interview 1 2019). The main link between Norwegian civil protection and the Mechanism is the international office in the headquarters of the Norwegian Civil Protection Directorate. Here, a national contact point is in charge of organising Norwegian participation in the Training Programme and offering Norwegian support whenever the Mechanism is activated (Interview 2 2019).

The Mechanism has influenced the polity of national civil protection by inducing the establishment of a new structure in the civil protection public administration: the Task Force in the case of Italy and the national contact point in Norway. This new administrative structure was added, since there was the necessity to establish a permanent group able to communicate with the Mechanism and coordinate the several activities in a coherent way (Interview 4 2018; Interview 2 2019).

### **EU Host Nation Support Guidelines – HNSG**

The EU HNSG were adopted by the Council in December 2010. Although they are a non-binding document, they identify the procedures that a state hit by a disaster should adopt when receiving international assistance, in terms of managing the emergency, coordinating the aid, in addition to logistics, transport and legal and financial issues. The EU HNSG are complementary to other international relief-operation documents, like the International Disaster Response Law Guidelines (European Commission 2012). The European Commission included the EU HNSG in the Training Programme of the Mechanism (European Commission 2012). This document is the result of a series of seminars organised by the Council, together with national experts from the Mechanism's participating states. The initiative to draw up the HNSG came from a group of national experts, mainly working within the EERC, who outlined some concerns about the importance of having the same procedures in place during an emergency that requires

international help (Interview 1 2019). National experts from both Italy (VA 2015; Interview 1 2019) and Norway (DSB 2014; Interview 2 2019) were actively involved in writing the Guidelines.

Italian law is mostly consistent with the Guidelines, so there was no need to make substantial changes after the introduction of the EU HNSG in the recent Law 1/2018 (Italian Civil Protection 2019; Interview 1 2019). Norway actively worked to ensure that Norway can benefit from the work that has been carried out by the EU to promote the EU HNSG (DSB 2014). Host nation support in Norway is understood as “the civil sector system that ensures good, efficient and effective reception of assistance to Norway in the form of equipment or personnel from abroad in a situation where the responsible authority does not have the necessary resources available to manage a major incident and therefore requests these from other countries” (DSB 2014, np). Norway undertook a review of its national regulations at the 30th International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference in 2010. A comprehensive EU HNSG project has been conducted in Norway since then (ibid.).

This is an example of policy change, since it required national jurisdiction changes in order to accommodate an international framework such as the HNSG. However, the process leading to the EU HNSG stemmed from the participating states’ need to obtain clearer guidelines. The EU mainly offered material and ideational resources to formulate the Guidelines. The contribution of the participating states was crucial, since the Guidelines are based on their experiences and lessons learned in past civil protection operations. This policy change has implications for national polity, as it influences the national organisation of host nation support.

### **Emergency Response Coordination Centre – ERCC**

The ERCC’s various tasks produce a varied and vast amount of information that needs to be scrutinised generally after each Mechanism’s activation, in order to understand possible faults and improve the response and the general operation’s coordination. This amount of information is gathered by the actors involved in an operation (usually participating states, ECHO experts, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid UNOCHA representative or ECHO human aid representative, NGOs and so on) and one or two ERCC experts (Interview 2 and Interview 3 2018). This information is then organised in an assessment report that underlines the lessons learned from the operation according to certain categories, such as the time of the response, the coordination internally and with the requesting state, and the amount of resources deployed (modules and EUCPT). These reports are the basis for lessons learned and interest formation for

- Those states, which took part in the operation: They possess first-hand information since their national representatives were on the ground;
- The ERCC, which uses the assessment reports for subsequent improvements in the Mechanism’s components;
- The requesting state: Lessons learned are particularly relevant due to the interface between incoming assistance and local emergency management;

- The rest of the participating states: They can learn from these reports for future participation in operations, as well as for a subsequent request of assistance.

The ERCC, as the operational heart of the Mechanism, aggregates actors' specific interests and, as a forum for interest formation within civil protection, may provide a common ground of understanding and identity formation. Thus, the mutual engagement between the Mechanism and the participating states within the ERCC can be described in terms of changes in social transactions (politics), as well as of changes in organisational forms (polity). On one side, the information produced within the ERCC greatly helps ERCC officers to better understand how to improve the Mechanism (Interview 2 and Interview 3 2018). On the other side, national experts aggregate, discuss and share knowledge in a concrete meeting place. This would not be possible without the ERCC. This opens a window of opportunity to disseminate knowledge and lessons learned from the ERCC to the national context, resulting in potential changes at policy level.

### **European Emergency Response Capacity – EERC**

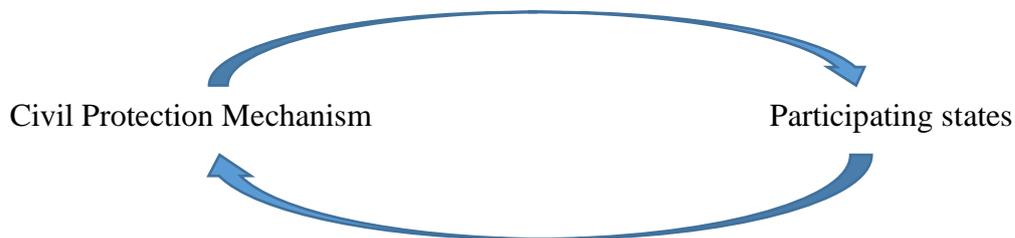
These capacities are nationally based, so the participating states retain ownership and can redeploy them for their own purposes, although they must keep these capacities available for a period of at least two years inside the voluntary pool. Norway has registered an Emergency Medical Team (DSB 2018), while Italy has registered seven modules (Forest Fire Fighting with Planes, CBRN Detection and Sampling, Emergency Medical Team, Extreme High Capacity Pumping, Structural Assessment Capacity, Medium Urban Search and Rescue and an extra Forest Fire Fighting with Planes – as buffer capacity) (EU Civil Protection 2018). Italy has put at the disposal of the EERC modules that mirror the expertise gained by Italy on the ground due to the several risks and disasters to which the country is prone, particularly earthquakes, floods and forest fires. They represent Italian excellence in the field of Italian civil protection and come from all the parts of the Italian civil protection system, from the local to the national. In return, Italy receives resources for training and adapting national modules and experts to the European Commission's requests (Italian Civil Protection 2019; Interview 1 2019).

In addition to the Emergency Medical Team, Norway deploys Norwegian Support Teams (NST) when a crisis occurs. An NST establishes and operates complete camps for relief workers in disaster areas. NSTs are further developed through close cooperation with the United Nations, the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) and Norwegian humanitarian organizations, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Norwegian Red Cross. Various UN organizations have been the greatest users of the camps from the Norwegian Support Teams, more than the Mechanism, actually. Based on requests, Norwegian personnel and equipment may also be deployed in a broad spectrum of international operations (NORCAP 2019).

The EERC highlights a Europeanisation process that touches upon the three dimensions (policy, polity and politics), as very much a circular process, in which tangible and material influences from both sides may lead to medium-/long-term changes in legal rules, organizational forms and social transactions both of the Italian and Norwegian civil protection and the Mechanism itself. The EERC organisation is framed by the European Commission, but the participating states are part of the process of (re)framing it through

their national peers and experts: firstly, the modules have to fulfil certain criteria to receive the European Commission's certification, although they are nationally based. In addition, results from training and exercises (see below) can lead to changes to these capacities in terms of the interoperability and preparation of those involved. Thirdly, national peers and experts contribute with their own knowledge and expertise both in terms of assessment and establishment of common standards.

**Figure 1: The mutual influence between the participating state and the Mechanism inside the EERC**



### **Mechanism's Training Programme**

The Training Programme would not be possible without the financial and organisational support of the European Commission. On the other side, without national engagement and involvement, it would be just an empty box of good intentions. For instance, both Italy and Norway hosted exercises. The Italian Civil Protection Department coordinated the 2010 exercise, TEREX, in Tuscany, which simulated an earthquake scenario. The 2013 exercise TWIST was about a tidal wave in the Southern Tyrrhenian Sea. NEIFLEX was a North Eastern Italy Flood Exercise. In Norway, 2016 TRIPLEX scenario was a hurricane, while HARBOREX15 was a multidimensional disaster in Oslo harbour.

As much as the EERC, the Training Programme involves the three dimensions of Europeanisation: participating states have the opportunity to change their planning and decision-making in ways that are more effective and that improve their national response to crises by taking into account lessons learned from courses and exercises (Interview 1 2016; Interview 4 2018). At the same time, the feedback that the European Commission receives from the participants to the courses and exercises is as useful for the Mechanism's development as for improving its components. In terms of polity, the Training Programme influences changes in organisational terms: for example, in 2009 Italy established the Joint Italian Civil Protection Training Centre consisting of the Civil Protection Department, the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna at the University in Pisa, the Fire Emergency Services and Civil Defence Department. Consequently, the Centre started to offer courses in Rome at the Fire Service's Istituto Superiore Antincendi (fire-fighting high school) and at the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna (Italian Civil Protection 2019). In policy terms, the Training Programme shapes standardised forms of cooperation, since

the overall goal is to establish the same conditions and understandings in working together during an emergency. In terms of politics, the Training Programme, as much as the ERCC, is a tool for national experts to aggregate, discuss and share knowledge.

**The three Europeanisation dimensions in civil protection**

The following table is based on Table 1 and summarizes the analysis above.

**Table 2: Top-down and bottom up influences within civil protection**

Europeanisation	National → EU	EU → national
Politics: changes in social transactions	ERCC uses knowledge from participating states, in the form of assessment reports, for subsequent improvements to the Mechanism's components	ERCC and the Training Programme aggregate actors' specific interests and is a forum for interest formation within civil protection
	Constant feedback from participating states on the ERCC, EERC and Training Programme improves the quality of the Mechanism	
Polity: changes in organisational forms	National influences on the Mechanism's identity through the ERCC, EERC and Training Programme	Establishment of a special administrative unit within the civil protection international offices of the two countries, liaising with the Mechanism
		Changes in national host nation support following the EU Host Nation Support Guidelines' introduction
		ERCC may use post operations' lessons learned through assessment reports, to shape a collective identity in civil protection
		New Italian Training Centre in civil protection
Policy: changes in legal rules	Participating states manifested the need to have EU Host Nation Support Guidelines, which were elaborated according to national experiences in cross-border emergency management	Inclusion of EU Host Nation Support Guidelines in national legal frameworks
		The modules within the EERC have to respond to the certification of European Commission
	National peers and experts contribute to assessment and establishment of common standards	Standardised forms of cooperation within the Training Programme

## CONCLUSIONS

While proceeding through the analysis of the Mechanism's components, we realised that tracking the products of Europeanisation in civil protection is quite complex according to Börzel and Risse's (2003) three dimensions. The three dimensions are not always immediately visible, as previous studies on other topics indicate. In addition, disentangling the process in terms of top-down and bottom-up influences resulted in a quite challenging endeavour. Two-way influences are mutually interdependent and intertwined in such ways that induce changes at both levels, the national and the EU level.

Applying Europeanisation as a two-way process in the case of civil protection has rendered Europeanisation a more dynamic analytical framework. We can describe national responses to the EU's solicitations in civil protection in terms of adaptability and redefinition, while the national level is able to contribute with expertise, knowledge and practice to the improvement of the Mechanism. In broad terms, the EU civil protection policy is characterised by a sort of feedback loops, loops that may follow two trends: consensus building and communicative non-binding planning. In general, planning through consensus building becomes a necessity for the European Commission in dealing with 34 participating states and their varied national civil protections. In addition, the EU has supportive competence in civil protection and cannot replace the national level. Up to now, the national support from Italy and Norway has been positive. On the other side, national footprints inside the Mechanism, in particular within the EERC and the Training Programme, may be signs of communicative planning in terms of communicative rationale or communicative action, as largely outlined by Habermas (1984).

To study the influence of Europeanisation through the three dimensions (politics, policies and polity) seems a promising research field. We would suggest further research on other participating states and on comparative perspectives in analysing the data. In addition, the circular or cyclical process of Europeanisation could be studied according to communicative planning and consensus building, to better grasp the mutual influences within the Mechanism.

## NOTES

- 1 The 28 member states and Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey, giving a total of 34.
- 2 European Parliament and Council Decision 2019/420 renamed the EERC European Civil Protection Pool.

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