COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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from :	General Secretariat
to :	Permanent Representatives Committee / Council
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Subject :	Council conclusions on preparedness for decontamination of casualties following chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents – Adoption

1. In the light of the outcome of the Experts Workshop on "*Decontamination of casualties - European inventory and perspectives*" (Ahrweiler, Germany on 22 to 24 February 2007), the Presidency drew up a set of draft Council conclusions on preparedness for decontamination of casualties following CBRN-incidents.

2. These draft conclusions were examined by the Working Party on Civil Protection on 22 and 23 May 2007. The Working Party reached full agreement on the draft Council conclusions as set out in the Annex.

3. On this basis, the Permanent Representatives Committee is asked to invite the Council to:
   - adopt the conclusions set out in the Annex to this note,
   - enter these conclusions in the minutes of the Council.

ANNEX

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON PREPAREDNESS FOR DECONTAMINATION OF CASUALTIES FOLLOWING CBRN-INCIDENTS

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. RECALLS that Council Decision 2001/792/EC, Euratom of 23 October 2001 establishing a Community Mechanism to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions[1] and Council Decision 2007/162/EC, Euratom of 5 March 2007 establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument [2] provide for training programmes, seminars, workshops, pilot projects, exchange of staff and experts, stimulation of the use of new technologies, public information measures etc in order to enhance the preparedness of the countries participating in the Mechanism, and in particular of the teams, experts and modules that will operate under the Mechanism,

2. CONSIDERS that such preparedness should in particular relate to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) disasters as well as CBRN-terrorism, as stressed in the joint Council/Commission CBRN Programme of 20 December 2002 to improve cooperation in the European Union for preventing the consequences of CBRN terrorist threats[3], which recommended action in the areas of risk assessment, vulnerability reduction, quick detection and identification, response, research and international cooperation,

3. NOTES with interest the outcome of the Experts Workshops on "*Decontamination of casualties – European inventory and perspectives*", organised by the Presidency in Ahrweiler, Germany on 22 to 24 February 2007,

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1 OJ L 297, 15.11.2001, p. 7. Decision 2001/792 is currently being revised under the Commission proposal of 26 January 2006 establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism.

2 OJ L 71, 10.3.2007, p. 9.

3 14672/02.

4. TAKES NOTE of the lessons learnt from CBRN incidents and of the progress achieved on improving the EU civil protection cooperation through exercises, such as EURATOX (France, October 2002), COMMON CAUSE (Denmark, October 2002), EU Response/FLORIVAL II (Belgium, February 2003), EUDREX (Austria, October 2004), EURATECH (France, June 2005), EUPOLEX (Poland, June/July 2005), EUROSOT (Italy, October 2005), EU TACOMSEE (Bulgaria, July 2006) EU DANEX (Denmark, September 2006) and EU LUX (Luxembourg, June 2007),

5. UNDERLINES the importance of further enhancing the preparedness in order to limit the consequences of CBRN incidents, in particular the primary decontamination of casualties and the avoidance of secondary contamination of personnel, equipment and institutions such as hospitals,

6. HIGHLIGHTS that training is paramount for all personnel, especially for first responders coping with CBRN incidents,

7. EMPHASISES the usefulness of precautionary measures for the mutual assistance in case of large scale international events,

8. INVITES countries participating in the Mechanism to develop a close cooperation, in particular in cross-border interventions with neighbouring countries, to facilitate mutual assistance and cooperation within the Mechanism. To this end, STRESSES the need for common exercises, in particular for mass decontamination and the decontamination of casualties,

9. INVITES the Commission to:

   a) facilitate meetings of experts focusing on response to CBRN incidents with a view to exchanging experiences, best practices and lessons learnt,
   b) facilitate exercises in that area.