

Q1.

In terms of the Civil Protection Mechanism does the EU add value or deliver impact or not on behalf of the UK?

A1.

Yes - the exposure to other country's systems and procedures ensures a broad outlook towards all areas of CP but with a common message from the EU.

However, if the UN ran similar easily accessible training and other events based on perceived global needs then it is arguable whether the additional EU facility would be of such benefit.

That would presume that agreement on method could be achieved as the difference in approach from different countries is great and based on varying priorities.

Q2.

What are the comparative advantages/disadvantages of working through the EU in Civil Protection, rather than the UK working independently?

A2.

Advantages:

A greater familiarity of other member state's personnel and CP solutions.

A common EU wide approach to CP.

Economies of scale in the cost of training personnel.

Solutions are based on wider pool of skill and experience.

A certain level of interoperability in respect of generic attitude and response towards CP

Disadvantages:

An EU centric solution that may not suit some areas of the world or be seen as self-serving and conflict with local expectations or the work of other CP organisations.

A dilution of individual member state's ideas and methods that may be too generic to work in practice.

Additional and more complex bureaucracy that can slow down response or over-complicate potential solutions.

Conflict caused by political differences in the expectations of the UK and the EU.

Q3.

How effective are the EU civil protection policy instruments to deliver best effect in foreign policy? What, if anything, should it do differently?

A3.

As alluded to above, the generic response that an EU solution may provide will almost certainly be a best fit answer as the response has to be acceptable to all member states to a degree that may be counter-productive to the affected country. It would be advantageous if a way could be adopted of incorporating individual member state's potential responses that gave the best solution irrespective of the possible disagreement that may cause within the EU.

Q4.

How effective are the EU's delivery mechanisms? Would any changes make them more effective, and if so, which ones and why?

A4.

IN CP the effectiveness of the delivery mechanism is shown by how fast appropriate aid can be resourced and delivered.

Any simplification of the processes associated with the identification of required assistance and that assistance being effectual in the affected country would be of benefit

Whilst any response can be relatively slow due to the involvement of all member states, unless there were to be a small number of topic specific personnel permanently on-call and made available at immediate notice for EU operations it is difficult to see how response could be much quicker in the present format. This can be another disadvantage of responding on behalf of such a larger organisation that represents the interests of so many member states.

Q5.

Would a different division of EU and Member State competence in a particular area produce more effective policies? If so, how and why?

A5.

I am struggling with the meaning of this question.

If the question is 'would the policies be better if each member state had responsibility on behalf of the EU for a specific area' then I believe that the answer would likely be yes. However, I do not believe that every member state would accept this structure as each member state would naturally respond within their area of responsibility in a way that best suits that state first and the EU second.

To subdivide responsibilities to a smaller group of EU member states would not provide any benefit over the entire EU having representation.

Q6.

How might the national interest be served by action being taken in this field at a different level e.g. regional, national, UN, NATO, OECD, G20 - either in addition or as an alternative to action at EU level?

A6.

This highlights some of the issues already detailed. For example; the UK might individually respond differently to a request from a Commonwealth country than it would as part of an EU response. I believe that where an individual member state has a particular interest the response will be more specific and a better fit than that of the EU as a whole. Accepting and accommodating these differences to provide the best response should be the goal.

However, in serving the UK national interest, any actions the UK takes or is involved in should show the UK as efficient and effective and of benefit to the affected country. If this means acting alone and outside of EU policy then there should not be a fear of doing so.

Q7.

Are there any general points you wish to make, which are not captured above?

A7.

The EU has a well-respected CP structure that, arguably, has only been able to be developed due to the varied attitudes and approaches that the many member states bring to CP. The UK should stay within this structure as there is great benefit to being part of a organisation that can view issues with such a broad outlook. However, that does not mean the UK should not act individually where doing so would provide a more appropriate solution or in situations that the EU does not wish to or is not capable of becoming involved.

Phil Crook

Section Leader - Urban Search and Rescue Team Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service