

The European Community Civil Protection Mechanism Training Programme



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The European Community's Civil Protection Mechanism

Introduction

The European Community Civil Protection Mechanism (hereafter the Community Mechanism) was established in 2001 to support the mobilisation of emergency assistance from Participating States in the event of major emergencies.

EU and neighbouring countries are periodically affected by natural and manmade disasters, such as earth quakes, floods, forest fires and terrorist attacks. The primary responsibility for dealing with the immediate effects of a disaster lies with the country where it has occurred. Nevertheless, when the scale of the emergency overwhelms national response capacities, a disaster-stricken country can benefit from civil protection means or teams in other EU countries.

The 31 Participating States of the Community Mechanism are: all Member States, the European Economic Area countries (Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland), and Croatia in its capacity as a candidate country. By pooling the civil protection capabilities of the participating countries, the Community Mechanism can ensure even greater protection of people, property and the environment.

To ensure an efficient, rapid and flexible response, an extensive training programme is available for national technical, coordination and assessment experts, as well as for personnel involved in the civil protection modules.

The Training Programme

The training programme is an essential part of the Community Mechanism. It is crucial in preparing experts for international civil protection assistance interventions inside, as well as outside the European Union. It also provides an excellent platform for experience-sharing and networking between national experts from participating countries. The programme involves training courses, joint simulation exercises and an exchange programme, where experts can learn first-hand about similar responsibilities under different national systems.

Training courses

Since it was launched in 2004, the training programme has developed and expanded significantly and now includes 11 courses.

The target group is wide, which opens the training programme to many different categories of experts. These can range from assessment and coordination experts to specialists within a certain field of work, such as marine pollution experts, environmental experts (landslides waste management, dam stability etc), experts in geo-hazards or logistics in emergency operations, and medical staff.

All courses combine theory and field experience, as well as international guidelines and standard operating procedures. They all contain practical exercises (field and table-top) based on different emergency scenarios where participants get the opportunity to practise their skills in a realistic setting.



Community Mechanism Induction Course (CMI)

INTRODUCTION

The Community Mechanism Induction Course (CMI) is a six-day introductory course and the entry point to all courses offered within the Community Mechanism training programme. The course is aimed at team leaders, deputy team leaders, managers, experts and administrators who are likely to be involved in international civil protection assistance interventions.

The overall objective of the CMI is to introduce participants to the Community Mechanism and provide them with the basic knowledge and skills to prepare themselves for international civil protection missions, both within and outside the Community Mechanism's geographical area.

DESCRIPTION

Particular focus is put on the scope, mandate, components and functions of the Community Mechanism but the course also covers a wide variety of other areas to familiarise participants with the international emergency environment and commonly applied working procedures.

The course looks at the different civil protection systems within the geographical area covered by the Community Mechanism, as well as international partners and actors European teams are likely to encounter. Topics covered include information management, use of communication and IT equipment, safety and security and cultural awareness, as well as humanitarian principles and how to organise work in an emergency situation.

This is an intensive course, based on a combination of theory, group work and discussion which requires a high degree of active participation. The course ends with a simulation exercise, where participants are divided into teams and given the opportunity to experience what it is like to work on a civil protection assistance intervention.

Completing the introductory course is a prerequisite for attending the next course, the Operational Management Course (OPM).

Operational Management Course (OPM)

The Operational Management Course (OPM) is the second course in the training programme and is open to those who have previously followed the Community Mechanism Induction Course (CMI). The six-day course targets national experts and European Commission officials who have been selected as potential team members or liaison officers of an assessment or coordination team sent by the European Commission to facilitate assistance support and coordination in the field.

Teams of experts are often deployed to emergencies outside the EU and the course focuses on these disaster situations.

While on mission, experts are assigned by the European Commission to facilitate field coordination by assisting local authorities in close cooperation with the United Nations and other international organisations on site. The core objective of the course is not only to improve the individual capabilities of experts and teams, but also to enhance their ability to function within a wider international framework.

The focus of the course is on coordination and course topics include internationally agreed guidelines and procedures, planning, information management and how key partners work on an operational level, as well as ethics and code of conduct.

Training is carried out within the context of an emergency situation scenario, enabling participants to practice the above described topics in a realistic setting. The course ends with a one-day practical field exercise.



The High Level Coordination Course (HLC)

The High Level Coordination course (HLC) is the third general course in the training programme and is aimed at experts who have been selected as managers of a team deployed by the European Commission to facilitate coordination assistance in emergencies.

HLC participants should have followed the Community Mechanism Induction (CMI) course and the Operational Management Course (OPM), before attending this course.

The course focuses on emergencies outside the Community Mechanism's geographical area and how to work within a wider international framework. Since the course is aimed at managers, topics also focus on managerial and political aspects of civil protection assistance interventions such as mission management, negotiation, international coordination policy and media relations.

Group work, based on case studies, is an important part of the course where the participants can discuss experiences, alternatives and best practice for managing the team and the mission itself during complex situations.

The five-day course concludes with a one and a half day field exercise where participants can practice the role of Coordination Head in a realistic setting.



Operational Management Refresher Course (OPMR) and High Level Coordination Refresher Course (HLCR)

The field of emergency response is a constantly changing environment. No two emergencies are exactly the same. New actors enter the field or existing ones have their mandate changed. Changing situations and the development of new techniques and equipment mean experts need to learn about the latest developments, as well as refresh knowledge gained on earlier courses.

The training programme offers two such courses: the Operational Management Refresher Course (OPMR) and the High Level Coordination Refresher Course (HLCR). These courses are open to participants who have attended either the OPM or HLC.

Both courses are conducted over three days and are organised as seminars. The Operational Management Refresher course focuses on lessons learned from recent deployments of expert teams. The participants are divided into groups and meet with experienced trainers who take them through all the steps of a mission from pre-deployment to post-mission debriefings.

The High Level Coordination Refresher course changes topic every training cycle, which means that participants can attend one every year and always experience new content. Examples of recent topics include how terrorist attacks influence civil protection assistance interventions and the impact of climate change on natural disasters.

The Assessment Mission Course (AMC)

INTRODUCTION

The Assessment Mission Course (AMC) is a five-day specialised course for those who have previously followed the Community Mechanism Induction (CMI) and the Operational Management Course (OPM). The intended target group is national experts and managers in the field of coordination, European Commission officials and experts from partner organisations likely to be involved in international civil protection interventions.

DESCRIPTION

The experts attending the Assessment Mission Course will be trained to carry out needs assessment in emergencies. As teams of experts can be deployed both inside and outside the European Union the course combines training on two types of emergencies. While on mission, experts are engaged by the European Commission to carry out their tasks by assisting local authorities in close cooperation with the UN and other international organisations on site. The core objective of the course is not only to improve the individual capabilities of experts and teams, but also to enhance their ability to function within a wider international framework. The course includes sessions on how to prepare and perform a field assessment, negotiation skills and information management. The main focus of the course is a three-day field exercise where participants get to test their new skills performing needs assessments on a wide variety of location settings and meeting local officials who are experienced in working in real emergency situations

Staff Management Course (SMC)

The Staff Management Course (SMC) is one of the specialised courses open to participants who have completed the Operational Management Course (OPM). However, since this course is closely related to the Assessment Mission Course (AMC) and the Media and Security Strategy Course (MSC), it is recommended that participants who plan to attend all three courses do so in the following sequence: AMC, SMC, MSC.

The six-day Staff Management Course builds on the same scenario used during the Assessment Mission Course combining two types of emergencies unfolding in a highly complex industrialised state. While the Assessment Mission Course focuses on needs assessment, the SMC focuses on coordination and aims at improving the ability of participants to manage the set up and running of an on-site coordination structure.

The main topics of the course are team management procedures, information management, planning coordination, team psychology and mission handover and takeover procedures.

The course is conducted as a coordinated exercise, starting at the airport when participants arrive and continuing until the final day of training. Training involves theory as well as practical exercises. Self evaluation of achievements and challenges are an important part of the course and participants are asked to do this on a daily basis.



Media and Security Strategy Course (MSC)

The six-day Media and Security Strategy Course (MSC) is one of the specialised courses open to participants who have completed the Operational Management Course (OPM). However, since this course is closely linked to the Assessment Mission Course (AMC) and the Staff Management Course (SMC), it is recommended that those who plan to attend all three courses should try to do so in the following sequence: AMC, SMC, MSC.

Relations with the media and team security are essential elements of field work during a civil protection assistance intervention. Disaster operations attract media attention and alongside their main task, staff of relief organisations must also meet the information needs of journalists. In addition, interventions often encompass the element of providing security advice and services to team members and partners. The core objective of the Media and Security Strategy Course is to enhance participants' understanding, knowledge and skills in terms of media and security management at operational and strategic levels so they can act as media and security advisors within the team.

The course is made up of theory and group work sessions, where participants learn about different aspects of media and security management (international security systems, security assessments) and how to prepare press releases and press conferences. The course also includes a one-day field exercise providing participants with an opportunity to put this into practice in an emergency setting.

International Coordination Course (ICC)

The six-day International Coordination Course (ICC) is the latest addition to the training programme and is open to participants who have completed the Operational Management Course (OPM).

Even though all courses in the training programme contain elements of international coordination mechanisms and procedures, the growing complexity of disaster response requires experts to have in-depth knowledge of these mechanisms and procedures. This is particularly necessary in large-scale emergencies where many organisations are involved or in situations with additional challenges, such as a difficult political environment.

The overall objective of the course is to increase participants' knowledge of, and ability to work with, other international response systems. International coordination mechanisms and the approach of other organisations to disaster management are covered by the course, which is composed of theory, case study-based group work sessions and practical exercises.



Technical Experts Course (TEC)

Experience from previous civil protection assistance interventions has shown that, as well as training assessment and coordination experts, there is also a need to train technical specialists for expert missions. The Technical Experts Course (TEC) is a six-day course designed specifically for technical experts such as marine pollution and water management experts, environmental experts (landslides, waste management, dam stability etc), geo-hazard or logistics experts, medical staff and infrastructure engineers.

The course combines the most essential topics from the Community Mechanism Induction (CMI) and the Operational Management Course (OPM) to give participants a solid base for participating in future civil protection assistance missions. The main objective is to introduce technical experts to the Community Mechanism and the mission cycle of operations. It also aims to increase their knowledge of international response systems and coordination mechanisms and their teamwork capability in a multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary team. Experiences from previous civil protection assistance interventions, particularly those where special expertise was required and/or used, will also be discussed.

The course is composed of theory, group work sessions and a practical exercise based on disaster scenarios. After completing the Technical Experts Course, participants are invited to attend other courses in the training programme on the same basis as experts who have completed the Operational Management Programme (OPM).



Modules Basic Course (MBC)

The Modules Basic Course (MBC) is a new course within the training programme. The target group is key staff from participating countries that would be deployed with their civil protection module to an emergency within or outside the European Union. Key staff can include team leaders, deputy team leaders, liaison officers or communications officers. It is recommended (but not compulsory) that participants attend the Community Mechanism Induction (CMI) course before going on to the Modules Basic Course (MBC).

The course runs for six days and includes theory, group sessions and case study work, as well as an exercise. The main purpose of the course is to increase participants' capability to manage the civil protection modules in a multi-task and multi-stakeholder operation and to integrate them into existing national and international coordination arrangements in a disaster-affected country. The course focuses on the crucial issue of interoperability when teams are deployed alongside units from other countries.

How to participate

Each Participating State has appointed a national training coordinator who is responsible for identifying and nominating experts to attend the training courses. It is therefore not possible for national experts to sign up for a course directly. A list of national training coordinators can be found on the virtual On-site Operations Coordinator Centre (OSOCC), which is a virtual platform developed by the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) in the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) in Geneva, Switzerland

To increase collaboration with other international actors and facilitate cooperation in the field, partners such as other European Commission services, the United Nations and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement are invited to participate in relevant courses.

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VOSOCC website: [http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/\(j3qg5rextnv2v045nexwssej\)/VOLogin.aspx](http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/(j3qg5rextnv2v045nexwssej)/VOLogin.aspx)

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