



EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATION CENTRE

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

- Operates 24/7
- Faster and more efficient response to disasters in Europe and beyond
- Improved coordination between the Brussels-based European Institutions, national authorities in EU Member States, and other international partners
- Enhanced monitoring and analytical capacity ensures better preparedness and a coherent European response corresponding to the needs



Photo credit: EU/ECHO/Ezequiel Scagnetti

Key messages

- When a disaster strikes, every minute counts. An immediate, coordinated and pre-planned response saves lives. The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) enables the EU and its Member States to respond to overwhelming natural and man-made disasters in a timely and efficient manner.
- The ERCC collects and analyses real-time information on disasters, monitors hazards, prepares plans for the deployment of experts, teams and equipment, works with Member States to map available assets and coordinates the EU's disaster response efforts.
- The ERCC can deal simultaneously with several emergencies in different time zones, around-the-clock (24/7).
- The ERCC is the operational heart of the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#). It plays a key role as a coordination hub to facilitate a coherent European response during emergencies inside and outside Europe. In case of invocation of the Solidarity Clause, the ERCC shall act as the central 24/7 contact point whereby it would coordinate with other EU services and bodies in ensuring the EU's response (Article 222 of the TFEU).
- The ERCC and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism improve joint planning and response coordination in Europe, complementing the role of the Member States.
- The ERCC enables better advanced planning of joint European assistance, i.e. to move from an ad-hoc response to a pre-planned response.

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Background

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) was established in 2013. Its predecessor, the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) was created in 2001 as the main operational tool of the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#). The main goal of the Mechanism is to facilitate co-operation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major emergencies. Apart from the 28 EU Member States, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia and Turkey participate in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The participating states pool resources that can be made available to disaster-hit countries and share best practices in disaster management.

The ERCC provides a one-stop-shop of civil protection means made available by the participating states. It acts as a coordination hub between participating states, the affected country and dispatched field experts. Any country inside or outside the EU affected by a major disaster can make an appeal for assistance through the ERCC. In response, the ERCC matches offers of assistance with the needs of the disaster-stricken country.

Main tasks of the ERCC

Civil protection cooperation and development of EU emergency response capacity

The ERCC has established a fully staffed and trained 24/7 duty system. 24/7 presence ensures real time monitoring and immediate reaction day and night, no matter where.

The ERCC manages a pre-identified pool of participating states' response assets - "civil protection intervention modules" - that can immediately be deployed to any large scale emergency. The countries participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism may commit resources on standby in a voluntary pool – ready to be instantly set in motion as part of a faster and more coherent European response when the need arises. The quality of the response capacities is ensured through the establishment of quality criteria and a certification process.



Better planning and preparation of a set of typical disaster scenarios enhance the ERCC's capacity for rapid response. The ERCC can initiate a process of identification of eventual gaps in the panoply of European assistance and of proposals on how these gaps can be covered, through financial support from the EU. Under the Mechanism, the Commission can co-finance transport costs, thus enabling delivery of assistance to the country affected within a few hours with lesser budgetary impact on the participating states offering the assistance. Pooling and consolidating shipments from various countries to the affected country boosts the efficiency of the European response.

Coordination platform for civil protection and humanitarian aid

The ERCC fosters increased coordination between the civil protection and humanitarian aid operations. The ERCC keeps direct links to the civil protection and humanitarian aid authorities in Member States which enables a smooth and real-time exchange of information. It ensures deployment of coordination and assessment teams composed of humanitarian aid and civil protection experts to conduct joint needs assessments.



Enhancing crisis response coordination at European level

The ERCC ensures cooperation and coherence of EU action at an inter-institutional level, focusing on coordination mechanisms with the European External Action Service, the Council and Member States. It shall also act as the central 24/7 contact point upon invocation of the Solidarity Clause.



Examples of ERCC response

Balkans floods: from complex operation to European cooperation



Photo credit: EC/ECHO

In May 2014 devastating floods hit Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the worst in over a century. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their livelihoods and were evacuated from their homes. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated, resulting in offers from 23 participating states. The ERCC facilitated the coordination of the incoming assistance, which included rescue and evacuation helicopters, motor boats, generators, sandbags, tents, blankets and humanitarian aid kits, along with more than 800 relief workers deployed to the two countries. In addition, two EU Civil Protection teams were sent via the ERCC to Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to help with the coordination of relief efforts and assist rescue operations. More than 1 700 people were rescued in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone. The European Commission also co-financed the transportation of relief material and personnel. In addition,

more than 80 satellite maps were produced to support both the affected countries and those providing assistance.

Nepal: EU mobilises all emergency response means for Nepal

A devastating earthquake struck Nepal in April 2015 followed by several strong aftershocks. Over 8 500 people were reported dead and many more injured. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated upon request from the Nepali authorities. A large number of participating states offered search and rescue teams, as well as water purification systems and other technical assistance. The coordinated delivery of assistance was facilitated through the ERCC. The Copernicus Emergency Management Service was also activated for the provision of satellite images/maps of the disaster area to support the ongoing operations. An EU Civil Protection team, composed of 10 experts and 3 liaison officers, was deployed for more than 20 days through the ERCC. In close cooperation with the national authorities and the UNDAC team, the EUCP team coordinated the delivery of European incoming assistance and the deployment of 18 UCP modules, mainly involved in medical, search and rescue and logistical support.



Photo credit: EC/ECHO/Pierre Prakash

Ebola response: EU acting as one



Photo credit: EC/ECHO/Jan Eijkenaar

Following the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014 and upon request from the World Health Organization (WHO), the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated. This enabled the rapid, coordinated deployment of emergency supplies and experts offered by the participating states through the ERCC. In this way, participating states provided mobile laboratories, treatment centres, ambulances and field hospitals as well as food aid, medical kits, clean blankets and chlorine for sanitation. ERCC also organised the logistical support including multiple airlifting operations and supported the deployment of navy ships to transport the

emergency supplies provided by the participating states. Additionally, the European Commission facilitated 12 Ebola-related medical evacuations for 16 patients who were all engaged in the fight against the epidemic in West Africa.

