



## EU CIVIL PROTECTION

### ECHO FACTSHEET

#### Facts & Figures

Coordinated, effective and efficient response to disasters

Pooling of response capacities from participating states

Deployments inside the EU and throughout the world

Avoiding duplication of efforts and ensuring that the assistance meets the needs of the affected country

Joint disaster preparedness and prevention:

- Training
- Exchange of experts
- Exercises
- Awareness

Since 2001, following requests for assistance, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated more than 230 times.

*European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations*

*B-1049 Brussels, Belgium*

*Tel.: (+32 2) 295 44 00*

*Fax: (+32 2) 295 45 72*

*email:*

*[echo-info@ec.europa.eu](mailto:echo-info@ec.europa.eu)*

*Website:*

*<http://ec.europa.eu/echo>*



\* All the latest ECHO  
Factsheets:  
[bit.ly/echo-fs](http://bit.ly/echo-fs)



Photo credit: EU/ECHO/Pierre Prakash

#### The EU Civil Protection Mechanism

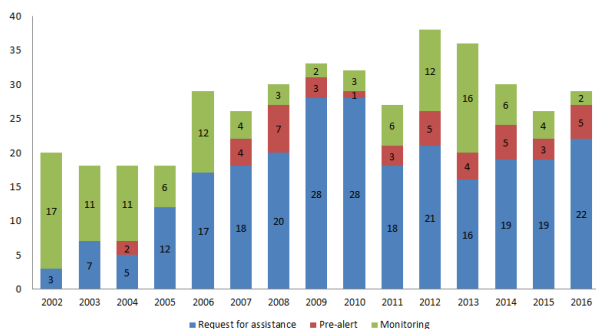
- Whenever the scale of an emergency overwhelms the response capabilities of a country, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism enables coordinated assistance from its participating states.
- The EU Civil Protection Mechanism can be activated for all types of disasters. Recent examples include the Ebola outbreak in West Africa (2014), the flooding in Western Balkans (2014), conflict in Eastern Ukraine (2015) and the European refugee crisis (2015). The Mechanism can also be activated to respond to marine pollution emergencies, in which case it works closely with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).
- All 28 EU Member States participate in the Mechanism, as well as Iceland, Norway, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey.
- Any country in the world, as well as the UN and its agencies and certain international organisations, can make requests for assistance through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.
- Civil protection assistance to countries affected by disasters consists of capacities of the participating states, such as relief items, expertise, intervention teams and specific equipment. Experts are also deployed under the Mechanism for needs assessment and coordination with the local authorities and international organisations, as well as to advise the requesting country on prevention and preparedness measures. When civil protection assistance is requested by third countries, it is often combined with humanitarian aid.
- The 2013 EU Civil Protection legislation places a greater emphasis on disaster prevention and preparedness with particular focus on national risk assessments and risk management planning.
- To allow for a faster and more predictable EU response to disasters, the [European Emergency Response Capacity](#) (EERC) was created - a voluntary pool of pre-committed resources from the countries participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The European Medical Corps is part of the EERC.

## The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)

The [ERCC](#) is the operational heart of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. It provides a full 24/7 capacity to monitor and coordinate response to disasters. The ERCC collects real-time and early warning information on disasters, monitors hazards, prepares plans for the deployment of resources (experts, teams and equipment) from the voluntary pool, works with participating states to map available assets and coordinates EU's disaster response efforts. The ERCC is directly linked with the civil protection and humanitarian aid authorities in the participating states, ensuring a coherent European response to disasters. The ERCC also acts as the central 24/7 contact point in case an EU country activates the Solidarity Clause (Article 222 of the TFEU) or when the EU Presidency activates the Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements, and ensures coordination with other EU services and bodies for the EU's response.

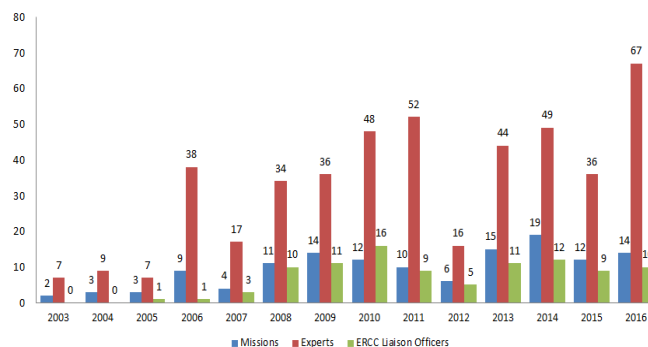
## EU Civil Protection Mechanism Operations

Number of operations\* of the EUCP Mechanism



\*Operations = any event open in CECIS (request for assistance, early warning (pre-alert), monitoring)

Number of missions and experts deployed



Since its establishment in 2001, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has monitored over 300 disasters and has received well over 200 requests for assistance.

In 2015, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated for 26 emergencies including the earthquake in [Nepal](#), forest fires in Greece and the European refugee crisis.

In response to the Nepal earthquake in April 2015, an EU Civil Protection team was deployed for assessment and coordination in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. 17 participating states delivered assistance to Nepal through the Mechanism, including medical teams, search and rescue teams and emergency supplies such as shelters, beds, blankets, clothes, medical equipment and medicines. In July 2015, [Greece](#) requested assistance through the Mechanism in fighting dozens of forest fires. In response, forest fighting aircraft were sent to help Greece extinguish the fires. The EU co-financed the transport of assistance to Greece.

During the second half of 2015, Hungary, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia and Greece requested assistance through the Mechanism in response to the increased influx of migrants and refugees. The delivery of aid is coordinated by the ERCC. Many participating states responded by providing winterised family tents, accommodation containers, beds, blankets and sleeping bags as well as sanitary containers, raincoats, first aid kits and other much-needed material to respond to the basic needs of the most vulnerable. The EU is also co-financing the transport and delivery to the affected countries.

In May 2014, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated in response to the devastating floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, the largest EU response operation to date, with assistance offered by 23 participating countries.

In July 2014, the Mechanism was called to action by the World Health Organization to help contain the outbreak of the [Ebola virus](#) disease (EVD). This enabled a rapid and coordinated deployment of emergency supplies and experts offered by the participating states. The ERCC also managed a system of medical evacuations for international health professionals working in the affected countries.



## Strengthening the European Emergency Response Capacity

The European Emergency Response Capacity in the form of a voluntary pool is a major innovation in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Interested countries can pre-commit different types of response capacities for participation in EU Civil Protection deployments. When a disaster strikes, the ERCC will facilitate a coordinated deployment of these assets, in close cooperation with participating states. This enhances the immediate availability of response capacities, offers more predictability of assistance and significantly reduces deployment times. Participating states and the Commission are working closely together to develop quality criteria and a certification process for the different teams, thus ensuring that all teams meet high quality and interoperability standards and can effectively work together in the field. Trainings and exercises are available to test and further improve performance and coordination. Costs to upgrade existing national response capacities and certification costs, trainings and workshops can be financed by the EU. Once certified and part of the voluntary pool, the transport costs of teams in response to emergencies is eligible for EU co-financing of up to 85%.

The European Medical Corps (EMC) has been established as part of the voluntary pool for mobilising medical and public health experts and teams for preparedness or response operations inside and outside the EU. The EMC will be Europe's contribution to the Global Health Emergency Workforce set up under the helm of the World Health Organization. It will significantly increase the availability of doctors and medical equipment in response to emergencies, and will also allow for better planning and preparations for response to emergencies with health consequences. It will create a European Medical assistance capacity that meets requisite levels of quality.



### Risk management planning

Under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, participating states share their national risk assessments, develop disaster risk management planning, and share assessments of their national risk management capability. The European Commission provides guidance to participating states in carrying out assessments and facilitates the dissemination and exchange of information of good practices. Voluntary peer reviews are organised as an essential element to improve the systems of participating states for managing risks. An understanding of risks is the starting point for developing contingency plans for a collective European response to major disasters. These plans will also facilitate the exchange of best practice and will help identify where additional investment is needed in disaster prevention.



### Filling the gaps

Through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, EU funding is made available also for addressing gaps and temporary shortcomings in response capacities in order to enhance disaster preparedness and improve planning for EU disaster response.

### Supporting the transport of assistance

The EU is financially supporting the transport of assistance offered by the participating states and facilitates the overall transport and logistics coordination. In 2015, the total EU transport co-financing surpassed €14 million.



### Prevention and Preparedness

Prevention and preparedness reduce the worst impacts of disasters. EU-level disaster prevention activities include improving the quality of and accessibility to disaster information, implementation of prevention measures, raising public awareness of risks and disaster management, supporting participating states in risk assessment and hazard mapping based on guidelines, encouraging research to promote disaster resilience, and reinforcing early warning tools. For better preparedness, the European Commission organises a programme of training, exercises, exchanges of experts, and lessons learned.

