



## THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE

The **Emergency Response Centre** (ERC) is the operational heart of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. It enables the European Union to respond to overwhelming natural and man-made disasters quickly and efficiently, both inside and outside Europe.

The ERC can deal with several major emergencies in different time zones simultaneously. The 24/7 duty system ensures real-time monitoring and immediate reaction to new emergencies. It acts as a communication hub between participating states, the affected countries and civil protection experts dispatched to crises areas. It also ensures that European humanitarian assistance and civil protection operations are well coordinated and focused on the needs of the affected populations.

The ERC is staffed with experts and equipped with enhanced **monitoring and analytical capacity**, technologies for satellite images, early warning systems and state of the art crisis management tools. It can monitor hazards globally in real time and **respond immediately** with the most appropriate means, whenever needed and requested by the affected country.

## PRE-PLANNED RESPONSES

The ERC is responsible for planning joint European assistance in emergencies.

For the different types of disasters, appropriate scenarios and response plans are pre-established in cooperation with the participating countries. These plans are based on the states' pre-committed emergency assets that can be used in the **joint EU disaster response** and on agreed contingency plans.

Modules (civil protection assets on stand-by) are composed of experts and equipment that can be mobilised at very short notice on a voluntary basis. They provide experts and technical capacity for forest fire fighting, urban search and rescue, high-capacity pumping, water purification, and emergency temporary shelters among other things.

Good planning together with ensured pre-committed emergency assets increase efficiency and enable the participating countries to complement their assistance in a **coordinated manner**. This increases the appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the EU's response.

## A ONE-STOP SHOP

Primary responsibility for dealing with the immediate effects of disasters lies with the country in which it has occurred. However, the affected country can ask for assistance when the scale of the emergency overwhelms its response capabilities.

The assistance can take the form of in-kind assistance or teams with equipment and experts for assessment and coordination. If civil protection assistance is required outside Europe, it usually works in close cooperation with the European humanitarian aid.

The ERC acts as a one-stop shop for European emergency response: monitoring and assessing the disasters, collecting requests for assistance and gathering all the incoming offers, looking for the necessary means of transportation of assistance to the country affected, coordinating delivery of aid with partners on the ground and with the country struck by a disaster.

The ERC also acts as a **communication hub** between the European countries participating in the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism, the affected country and deployed field experts. It matches offers of assistance by participating states to the needs of the disaster-stricken country. Furthermore, the ERC acts as a coordination hub within EU institutions in order to ensure efficient and coherent disaster response at the EU level.





## ERC IN ACTION

## A REINFORCED DISASTER RESPONSE CAPACITY

- 1) A country overwhelmed by a disaster and/or by a humanitarian crisis asks the EU for help (ERC).
- 2) All countries participating in the Mechanism are immediately informed of the request via the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS).
- 3) Pre-agreed contingency plans are triggered and pre-committed states' experts and emergency modules are mobilised.
- 4) Pooled transport of the assets is organised for more rapidity and better cost efficiency.
- 5) Permanent monitoring, information and coordination is ensured by the ERC.
- 6) On-site, experts continuously assess the situation. They liaise with the local authorities and coordinate the delivery/distribution of assistance.
- 7) Debriefing and feedback upon the return of the EU Civil Protection team allow for the fine tuning of procedures.

There has been a marked increase in natural, man-made disasters and humanitarian crises on a global level in recent years. Consequently, the EU's disaster response capacity needed to be reinforced. The EU aims at providing better protection for Europe's 500 million citizens against disasters and supporting a more effective response to catastrophes and humanitarian crisis around the world.

The EU's disaster response relies on the assets pulled together by 32 participating countries (the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Croatia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

The European Commission addresses the whole disaster management cycle, from prevention and preparedness to fast and cost-efficient response, with the ambition to build a **safer and more resilient Europe and World**.

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE

HELPING PEOPLE IN NEED  
IN EUROPE AND WORLDWIDE

Humanitarian Aid  
and Civil Protection

- Better protection for all
- Better training and preparation
- Better coordination
- Better and faster response to disasters



Humanitarian  
Aid and Civil  
Protection