



ECHO's Next

Newsletter for Civil Protection national experts

N°5–December 2012

Useful links

- [List of national training coordinators](#)
- [European Commission civil protection training contact](#)
- [European Commission civil protection website, including latest emergencies and training programme](#)
- [General overview training](#)
- [EUCP Mechanism training programme brochure](#)
- [Calendar of courses](#)
- [MIC Portal, including lessons learnt documents and details on emergencies](#)

Welcome

Dear Experts,

The end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013 are approaching, bringing a number of important new elements with a direct impact for you as Mechanism trained experts.

Firstly, the new European civil protection training programme started in May 2012 under framework contracts valid until 2016. Secondly, a new cycle of module exercises has already started

Finally, the new Emergency Response Centre (ERC) will be launched in 2013. The ERC will ensure a more coherent, effective and visible EU response in the early stages of disasters. It will significantly strengthen the EU's capacity to respond to major disasters, both inside and outside the EU. The ERC will also help better coordinate with the humanitarian side and better link civil protection with actions of other Commission services and EU bodies in case of multi sectorial crises (e.g. health, consular, energy). The ERC's core functions, however, will remain devoted to civil protection.

Keep on following us for the latest news about the ERC and much more. And send your feedback and suggestions to echo-next@ec.europa.eu!

Juha Auvinen and Hans Das
Heads of Unit
DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
European Commission

Civil Protection Forum

The Fourth Civil Protection Forum entitled "Towards a Europe of responsible solidarity" will take place in Brussels on 15 and 16 May 2013.

Pencil the date in your calendars and come to discuss how governments and civil society can work together to create stronger, better and more efficient disaster prevention, preparedness and response policies in the EU and beyond.

Join the official opening of the Emergency Response Centre, and visit exhibitions showing innovative technologies, training centres and international partners.

More information will be available shortly. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the Forum, please contact: ECHO-CIVIL-PROTECTION-FORUM@ec.europa.eu

Contact details

Please keep us informed of any changes in your contact details by emailing echo-next@ec.europa.eu.

If you wish to unsubscribe, please email echo-next@ec.europa.eu, citing 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

Latest emergencies

In April, in response to a request from Turkey concerning the influx of refugees from Syria, apart from financial assistance, in-kind assistance was provided through the Mechanism from several Participating States.

Following a request for assistance in September from Jordan concerning Syrian refugees, the EU CP Mechanism was activated. Participating States responded with in-kind assistance of ambulances, camp support, blankets, hygiene kits, heaters, kitchen sets. An EUCP Team and a MIC liaison officer were deployed to coordinate the arrival of the assistance.

Over the 2012 forest fire season the Mechanism received 9 requests for assistance. Bulgaria, Montenegro, Albania, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece and Portugal requested aerial means. Wherever possible assistance was provided either through resources from fellow Participating States (airplanes, helicopters) or by activating EU-co-financed assets (EU ACR5 project).



*French Canadair fighting forest fires in Portugal.
Copyright José GF Leite*

Expert's experiences

Report from EUCPT Mission in Jordan

Following the request for international assistance by Jordan, the European Civil Protection Mechanism was activated on 14 September 2012. A European Civil Protection Team (EUCPT) was deployed to identify and assess the situation with the main stakeholders, provide recommendations via the MIC to Participating States and facilitate incoming in-kind assistance.

The team of 5 was well composed with different levels of experience and training which allowed the EUCPT to fulfill all given tasks. Many useful things learned during Mechanism training together with personal expertise can create the base for a skilled team member.

The assistance provided by the EU Delegation and the ECHO RSO in Amman made possible a smooth mission for the EUCPT. It would be advisable for future missions, where such assistance is not available, to be equipped with proper IT field devices in order to keep close contact with the MIC and others. There was also very good cooperation with all involved agencies and partners.

EU visibility via the EUCPT presence on the spot was very important, especially at Za'atri camp and during the meetings with Jordanian authorities and other counter partners.

From a logistical point of view it was a good decision to extend the mission for a MIC liaison officer to assist and cooperate with EU Delegation and ECHO RSO during the later handover of assistance.



Pekka Tianen (MIC LO) and Vladimir Vlcek at Za'atri camp

A recommendation for the future is that logistics training should be added to the training courses (logistic hub, airport logistics, harbour logistics, custom procedures, etc.) with the aim to be prepared for "door to door" in-kind assistance.

The presence of a TAST member within the team should be taken into consideration for the future as the standard for team composition (team logistics, IT, communication,...). Finally, the importance of "humanitarian missions" is still not known in many Participating States. It is of high added value that the importance of Civil Protection assets and assistance in humanitarian missions is integrated in training and exercises to reinforce cooperation between Mechanism experts and ECHO field staff.

Vladimir VLCEK, Czech Republic Expert

Report from the Spanish Scientific Team in Emilia Romagna (Italy), Earthquake 2012 TEC – Lessons Learnt

On 20 May 2012 an earthquake of magnitude 6.1 struck Emilia Romagna (Northern Italy), affecting 8 villages, causing surface rupture, ground cracks, liquefaction and damage to buildings. The Geological Survey of Spain immediately gathered earthquake experts and activated the Geological Emergency Team to offer help to the Italian authorities. Dr. Miguel A. Rodríguez and I, Earthquake Geologists and TEC's Members were charged to lead a multidisciplinary Spanish scientific team which was deployed seven days after the earthquake.

The objectives of the mission were: to collect relevant information about the damage to the medieval edifices and churches of architectural value and to provide geological assessment about secondary effects of earthquakes (ground cracking and liquefaction).



Dr. Miguel A. Rodríguez collecting data at Sant Agostino

The TEC had taught us important lessons to bear in mind during missions: **Quality of training:** The TEC trains experts to deal with different disaster scenarios: earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, forest fires, etc. **Planning:** How to arrange a mission, assign roles to the team members, logistics, and official passes to reach the area. **Visibility:** all members of the Spanish Team wore the Orange Vest, with ID card, EU flag and Official Pass provided by the Italian authorities. **Safety:** all members carried the individual emergency kit for earthquakes; were trained in "how to walk in a destroyed city" and wore helmets, boots and safety clothes. And remember, when you leave the Red Zone you always have to inform the local authorities. Otherwise, should a strong aftershock occur, a SAR Team may be organized for your search and rescue. **Local authorities:** Who is managing the emergency? Each village was managed by different agencies and firefighters were deployed in all cities. **Information:** local maps, closed roads and local restrictions.

We learnt that real tragedy is always worse than training. Nevertheless, the TEC taught us how to work with empathy, efficiency and professionalism. The data gathered are being used for the study and the analysis of the damaged buildings. Preservation of the cultural heritage of a people is as important as saving lives.

Dr. Raul PEREZ LOPEZ, IGME –Geological Survey of Spain, 2011 TEC member

Forest fires 2012 challenged Portuguese authorities

The forest fire season 2012 started already in February. An average of 166 forest fires per day over 6 weeks led to an extraordinary mobilization of terrestrial and aerial means and burnt 33.889 ha – 32 % of the total burnt area registered until the 15 October. July, August and September, were quite typical, with long periods of high temperatures, low humidity levels and moderate winds leading to 10.316 registered forest fires.

On 3rd September all available means were engaged in ongoing operations. Therefore, the Portuguese National Authority for Civil Protection activated the European Mechanism for Civil Protection, requesting the mobilization of 2 modules for aerial forest fire-fighting using airplanes.



French aerial forest fire fighting module using planes. Copyright José GF Leite

Due to the forest fires situation in the majority of the Mediterranean countries the MIC, in the framework of ACR5 (Additional Capacity Response) under the Preparatory Action project, requested France to mobilize and deploy one module. Portugal accepted the offer and the module operated in Portugal for 4 days starting on 4 September. Spain – already intervening in Portugal bilaterally – made one module available which operated under the Mechanism for 2 days.

The French airplanes were based in a military airbase in Monte Real. A liaison team from the Portuguese Civil Protection was deployed in order to facilitate the operation according to the Host Nation Support standards. On board of the leading airplane, a Portuguese liaison officer ensured the permanent connection with the ground operations.

The assistance was crucial for the ongoing operations and contributed greatly to the extinction of several large fires across five districts. The operation was a success and a proof of the added value of the Mechanism and of projects like the ACR5. Portugal is grateful to the European Commission, Spain and France for all the support provided in this complex situation.

Patricia GASPAR, National Command for Relief Operations, National Authority for Civil Protection

Training news

[Calendar of courses](#) for the second half of the 10th cycle and the 11th cycle.

Exercises

BALEX DELTA 2012



*Ice breaker Kontio with sweeping arms (EMSA) and support vessels.
Copyright SYKE/Tahvonen*

On 28 – 30 August BALEX DELTA 2012, a full scale marine pollution exercise based on a scenario of a major oil spill (result of a two ship collision), took place in the Gulf of Finland (an area of high vessel traffic). The Finnish Environmental Institute (SYKE) planned, organised and conducted the exercise. Due to the oil spill scale the European CP Mechanism and the HELCOM Agreement were activated for assistance from the Baltic Countries and EMSA. 18 oil recovery vessels supported by 50 other ships participated. This first time funding of a marine pollution exercise through the Civil Protection Financial Instrument, made possible that both offshore and onshore (including oiled wildlife protection) response operations were exercised. Panos Katsikopoulos (the project's desk officer at ECHO.B1) adds that "an EU CP team of technical experts was deployed, also for the first time, to explore how such teams could support operations in future major marine pollution disasters. It is hoped that other regional agreements will follow with similar exercises".

Full scale exercises 2013

URBAN CREATS, a full scale exercise, will be organised in May 2013 by the French General Directorate for Civil Protection and Crisis Management. Specific invitations will be sent in due time.

EU TARANIS 2013 will be organised on 26-29 June 2013 by the Austrian Red Cross, Regional Branch of Salzburg. The exercise will trigger the European Civil Protection Mechanism and the Red Cross internal mechanism to request support from IFRC and from neighbouring Red Cross Federations. Being determined by dramatic weather conditions causing floods, landslides and other "sweet and quiet" interesting scenarios, EU TARANIS 2013 will be an excellent place to be if you wish to train, question yourself, enhance your skills and, enlarge your network.

TWIST 2013 – October 2013. Italy is very used to designing and managing exercises, but dealing with a tsunami scenario is not something common. If you want to enlist as a EUCP team member, you must have solid notions of SAR, diving and CBRN operations, or at least have the ability to understand quickly what they are about. This exercise will be very realistic, involving for the first time diving teams and will be an excellent opportunity to prepare better for future real operations.

Should you be interested to participate in one of these exercises, contact your national point of contact.

A list of full scale exercises in 2013 with information about scenario, location and participating organisations can be found [on our website](#)

Module exercises

A new cycle of Modules Exercises has started. During 2012-2013 the Contractor Falck will organize 3 exercises for High Capacity Pumping, Water Purification, and Advanced Medical Post with or without Surgery, CBRN Detection and Sampling, TAST and EUCPT in the Netherlands, France and Estonia. Furthermore, Falck will organize 3 exercises for Medium/Heavy Urban Search and Rescue, Advanced Medical Post with or without Surgery and EUCPT in Denmark, Bulgaria and the Netherlands.



EUCPT in the VOSOCC at 1st first modules exercise. Credit Falck

In total 18 civil protection modules, 3 Technical Assistance and Support Teams (TAST) and 6 EUCPT have already or will participate. The exercises will focus on the specific training needs for modules being deployed through the Mechanism. The task is among others to test procedures, cooperation with the European Civil Protection team (EUCPT), improve interoperability and to offer a platform for networking and to exchange information about the different modules.

The first Modules Exercise was organised in the Netherlands on 1-5 November. High capacity pumping modules from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Italy, a Polish CBRN module, a Danish TAST and five civil protection experts participated in the exercise.

More information is available at [Modules Exercise home page](#)

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