



ECHO's Next

Newsletter for Civil Protection national experts

N°6–July 2013

Useful links

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Welcome

Dear Experts,

We are proud present to you the Emergency Response Centre (ERC) that will enable us to better plan joint European assistance in advance and to boost even further our cooperation with you.

Inaugurated by President Barroso on 15 May 2013, the ERC is the new "operational heart" of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. It replaces and upgrades the functions of the previous Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC). Beyond that it will play a key role as a coordination hub to facilitate a coherent European response during emergencies inside and outside Europe. The ERC and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism will improve joint planning and response coordination in Europe and therefore complement the role of the Member States.

Detailed information about the new functions of the ERC can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/about/ERC_en.htm

When a disaster strikes, every minute counts: in order to save lives, immediate, co-ordinated and pre-planned response is essential, even more so as natural and man-made disasters are on the rise due to climate change, population growth, urbanisation and increased industrial activity.

In the spirit of solidarity, the European Union supports disaster response in a timely and efficient manner and ensures European assistance meets the real needs in the population affected, whether in Europe or beyond. Any country inside or outside the EU affected by a major disaster can make an appeal for assistance directly to the ERC.

Stay tuned and keep sending us your feedback and suggestions to echo-next@ec.europa.eu



President Barroso and Commissioner Georgieva at the ERC opening

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

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.

4th European Civil Protection Forum

The 4th European Civil Protection Forum, that took place in Brussels on 15-16 May 2013, gathered more than 700 participants from politics, academia, civil protection services and international organizations under the slogan "Disasters – Protecting and responding together".

Participants exchanged ideas on the European and international framework for disaster management, with the conference programme offering six panel discussions on different issues in disaster prevention, preparedness and response, a panel discussion with several Directors-General of Civil Protection, as well as speeches by EU Commissioners Kristalina Georgieva, Connie Hedegaard, and Cecilia Malmström. Members of the European Parliament as well as international partners from the United States, Russia, Japan, and ASEAN also featured prominently on the panels. The sessions were web-streamed and can still be accessed at www.cpforum2013.eu.

An outdoor exhibition simulated the work of an On-Site Operation and Coordination Centre after severe floods affecting large areas of EU Member States and third countries. Experts participating in this exercise also connected live, via satellite, to the ERC.

Latest emergencies

In June the Government of Lebanon requested assistance following the large influx of refugees from Syria. The EU Civil Protection Team (EUCPT) met all the main actors dealing with the refugee crisis including the Prime Minister's Office, international organisations and NGOs. The EUCPT made recommendations on the need for capacity building support, in-kind assistance (shelter, WASH, health, food, education) and financial support.

Continuous heavy rainfalls since 31 May caused major floods in several EU Member States, in particular Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic. The ERC closely monitored the situation and was in constant contact with all affected countries. The ERC served as an information hub and provided an up-to-date overview of developments across Europe. All affected countries were able to cope with the effects of the floods. In some instances, national capacities were complemented by additional support of neighbouring countries. The ERC also provided high resolution satellite images of affected areas upon request.

Expert's experiences

Report from Nepal

The mission to Nepal in April 2013 was the first joint mission of the European External Action Service (EEAS), ECHO and member states. The objective was to explore EU's preparedness in the event of a major earthquake to assist up to 30 000 Europeans that can be present in the country during peak season. The EU delegation and ECHO office in Kathmandu provided comprehensive support through their knowledge of the country, meeting arrangements, preparation and participation and logistic support.



L. de Pierrefeu (ECHO), F. Migani (EEAS), M. Hagelsteen (SE), R. Rasijeff (FI) and head of the National Emergency Operation Centre

It was a very interesting mission on a strategic level with both consular and civil protection issues. A challenge was the many meetings (Ministry of Home Affairs, international organisations, EU embassies, European consular authorities, US embassy) in a very short time period and understanding the local context. For this type of mission, good experience and relations with the international aid community are important.

A major earthquake in Nepal would lead to similar challenges as the Haiti earthquake in 2010, but with the added complication of poor accessibility. Most likely, anticipated landslides will block the three roads to the Kathmandu valley and the only international airport is likely to be damaged and temporarily out of operation. One of the recommendations from this mission is to establish a joint EU Member States preparedness/emergency plan.

Another recommendation for the future is to arrange similar missions to other disaster hot spots in the world. This would give an overview of the situation and the capacity of a country to manage a major disaster, even if it is just a snapshot. The information obtained could be used to plan and send international aid to a country both from a consular emergency and Civil Protection perspective and to identify further capacity development projects in disaster risk reduction.

Magnus Hagelsteen, MSB/Lund University

Responding to humanitarian crises – a joint effort

'Missions to the field in crisis areas by our colleagues from Civil Protection are very important', says Carlos Afonso, the Technical Assistant responsible for EU humanitarian aid in Jordan, 'especially in a crisis which evolves as quickly and is as complex as the one in Syria. The in-kind contributions that Civil Protection can deliver are often crucial.' Although basic needs are similar, they vary from region to region when it comes to specificities of the items, sometimes even quantity and quality depending on standards of living. *'And this, one needs to see first-hand to avoid spending scarce resources on items which may already be in stock but will never be distributed because there are too few. This would create tensions and perhaps items would never be used by the people they are supposed to help due to the differences in customs, culture or quality.'*

Carlos Afonso is one of the 140 experts ECHO has posted around the world in crisis areas to monitor the evolution of humanitarian needs, the use of funds provided by ECHO to its implementing partners (UN agencies, INGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent families) and to ensure field coordination with other donors. Afonso is based in the Regional Support Office in Amman, Jordan. In addition to about 40 country offices in crisis areas, ECHO has 6 such regional support offices staffed by specialists in the key sectors: health, water/sanitation/hygiene, food assistance and logistics, as well as a strong administrative team.

'After several deployments, we have now developed a modus operandi which allows a smooth mission for the CP teams' explains Afonso. *'Our country and sector-specific expertise on a crisis is available for the Civil Protection teams, and should be used in order to deliver the most appropriate type of in-kind assistance.'*



Carlos Afonso, Pekka Tiainen (ECHO), Vladimir Vlcek (CZ), UNHCR Representative Andrew Harper and recently arrived refugees

Cooperation with UNEP, Madagascar Mission

In April 2013 the EU Civil Protection Mechanism nominated Pierre Seguin, a French EUCP trained expert, to join a United Nations assessment mission to Madagascar.

The mission followed the tropical cyclone Haruna which made landfall in February on the south-western coast of the island significantly affecting the infrastructure of the country.

The development of the country's mining and industrial sectors have increased the risks from potential chemical or industrial accidents as well as the risk of secondary spills in case of natural disasters. For this reason the Government of Madagascar requested the support of the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (JEU) to assess the situation and to improve prevention and preparedness measures for such risks. Considering the cooperation framework developed in recent years between JEU and the European Civil Protection Mechanism, a European expert joined the team as an associated expert.

The assessment mission focussed on the situation in Toamasina -the second largest city, and the most important seaport of Madagascar- where a major industrial site is located and where the presence and transport of chemical products seriously threaten the population. The objective of the mission was twofold: to present a global overview and report of the situation of the region and to develop a prevention, preparedness and response plan.

The expert team, on the basis of meetings with all relevant stakeholders and field assessment, produced a report highlighting main challenges and proposing the development of an action plan to improve the prevention and preparedness for industrial hazard in the area of Toamasina.

The mission was a success and the report outcomes will be used by local authorities and international donor community for future activities. Moreover this mission further reinforced the cooperation between EUCP and JEU.

New ECHO Information Products

In May 2013 some of the ECHO information products distributed via the ERC have been adjusted. The following information products – beside the Next – are of relevance also for CP experts:

- **ECHO Daily Flash:** Daily snapshot on new natural disaster events and main humanitarian developments in major on-going crises (see: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/echo-flash/index_en.htm). It also includes new **ECHO factsheets** with information on ECHO-funded crises, ECHO policies or horizontal themes (see: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/factsheets_en.htm).
- **ECHO Crisis Flash:** Immediate key information on new/major sudden onset crisis/disaster in or outside the EU.
- **ECHO Civil Protection Message:** Main information product for all civil protection and Marine Pollution operations inside or outside the EU. CP messages are uploaded to the MIC-portal (soon: ERC-portal)
- **ECHO Crisis Report:** Up-to-date specialised operational information on significant developments in humanitarian crises.
- From July to September also the ECHO Forest Fire Bulletin will be issued.

Exercises

Full scale exercises 2013

TARANIS was organized by the Salzburg Regional branch of the Austrian Red Cross in June 2013. Seven countries and around 1500 personnel participated. Module and EUCPT concepts in Europe were tested, with a comprehensive and consistent evaluation programme from which we expect to improve our efficiency. A creative observation programme using the latest technologies and a VIP session put the exercise in the spotlight of the Austrian media, showing also our decision makers what we do on the field. An extraordinary social event at the end contributed to reinforce links and motivation of all the actors.

2013 is a very busy year for exercises. After EU URBAN CREATS & EU TARANIS in June there will be three exercises: **TRIPLEX** IHP exercise funded under the Civil Protection Financial Instrument, will run from 29 September to 4 October, for a better cooperation between the CP Mechanism and the humanitarian world

TWIST in mid-October, as described in NextT5, will be an exercise in the region of Salerno (Italy) on the consequences of a tsunami

CURIEX is organised by Spain around a nuclear plant in Extremadura, 22-24 October

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

Module exercises



Triglev

The participating states of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism were very interested in the 3rd cycle of Modules Exercises which has just ended. 26 countries participated with 571 modules, TAST personnel and civil protection experts. There was strong commitment of the partner countries with more than 900 persons from hosting countries participating in the exercises. Participants gave positive evaluation of the exercises, mentioning that they were realistic and not directed. Also the participation of MIC Liaison Officers was of added value to the EUCP team.

During the 4th cycle (2013 – 2014) of Modules Exercises there will be five Table Top Exercises for key personnel of civil protection modules / TAST and EUCP Team, three field exercises for at least three modules composed of high capacity pumping, water purification, CBRNDT and EUCP Team and three field exercises for at least three modules composed of MUSAR/HUSAR, TAST and EUCP Team. The exercises will be held in ten different locations throughout Europe. More information is available at [Modules Exercise home page](#)

Full-scale and modules exercises are an opportunity for experts to be involved as EUCP team members or observers. Make sure your National Training Coordinator and your operational focal point are aware of your availability.

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