

### ECHO Factsheet - EU Civil Protection Mechanism



A search team managed to rescue an earthquake survivor who needs to be brought to hospital immediately (exercise in Bulgaria).  
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#### Why is this important?

Civil protection assistance consists of governmental aid delivered in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. It can take the form of in-kind assistance, deployment of specially-equipped teams, or assessment and coordination by experts sent to the field.

Yet, disasters know no borders. A well-coordinated response at a European level is necessary to avoid duplication of relief efforts and ensure that assistance meets the real needs of the affected region.

#### What are we doing?

In 2001, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was established, fostering cooperation among national civil protection authorities across Europe. The Mechanism currently includes all 28 EU Member States in addition to Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

The Mechanism was set up to enable coordinated assistance from the participating states to victims of natural and man-made disasters in Europe and elsewhere.

#### Operational centre

The operational hub of the Mechanism is the [Emergency Response Coordination Centre \(ERCC\)](#) [1] which [monitors](#) [2] emergencies around the globe 24/7, and coordinates the response of the participating countries in case of a crisis. Thanks to the participating states' pre-positioned and self-sufficient civil protection modules, civil protection teams are ready to intervene at short notice both within and outside the EU. They undertake specialised tasks such as search and rescue, aerial forest fire fighting, advanced medical posts and more.

#### Recipient countries

*Any country in the world can call on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism for help.* Since its launch in 2001, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has monitored over 300 disasters and has received more than 200 requests for assistance. It intervened in some of the most devastating disasters the world has faced, like the earthquake in [Haiti](#) [3] (2010), the triple-disaster in [Japan](#) [4] (2011), typhoon Haiyan that hit the [Philippines](#) [5] (2013), the floods in [Serbia](#) [6] and [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) [7] (2014), the [Ebola outbreak](#) [8](2014), the conflict in [Ukraine](#) [9] (2014), the [earthquake in Nepal](#) [10] (2015), and the [refugee crisis in Europe](#) [11].

## European Emergency Response Capacity

The [European Emergency Response Capacity](#) [12] consists of a voluntary pool of resources to be used to respond to emergencies, which are pre-committed by the countries participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The voluntary pool allows for a more predictable, faster and reliable EU response to disasters. It is also intended to facilitate better planning and coordination at European and national levels. The European Medical Corps is part of the EERC.

## Prevention and preparedness

The Mechanism helps in [marine pollution emergencies](#) [13], where it works closely with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). When the crisis occurs in developing countries, civil protection assistance typically goes hand in hand with EU [humanitarian aid](#) [14].

The Mechanism also provides participating countries with the opportunity to [train](#) [15] their civil protection teams. By exchanging best practices and learning, teams increase their ability and effectiveness in responding to disasters. Additionally, the Mechanism provides emergency communications and [monitoring tools](#) [2], overseen by the ERCC through the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS), a web-based alert and notification application enabling real time exchange of information between participating states and the ERCC.

Finally, the European Commission supports and complements the prevention and preparedness efforts of participating states, focusing on areas where a joint European approach is more effective than separate national actions. These include improving the quality of and accessibility to disaster information, encouraging research to promote disaster resilience, and reinforcing early warning tools.

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## Links

- [1] <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/node/402>
- [2] <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/node/830>
- [3] [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-10-1594\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-10-1594_en.htm)
- [4] [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-11-261\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-261_en.htm)
- [5] <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/node/922>
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- [11] [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis_en)

[12] [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what-we-do/civil-protection/european-emergency-response-capacity\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what-we-do/civil-protection/european-emergency-response-capacity_en)

[13] <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/node/421>

[14] <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/node/2137>

[15] <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/node/1087>