



## Coronavirus: EU Civil Protection Mechanism activated for the repatriation of EU citizens

Brussels, 28 January 2020

As the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus intensifies, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated following a request for assistance from France to provide consular support to EU citizens in Wuhan, China.

Janez **Lenarčič**, Commissioner for Crisis Management, said: *"The EU does not forget its citizens in need, wherever they are in the world. Two aircraft will be mobilised through our EU Civil Protection Mechanism to repatriate EU citizens from the Wuhan area to Europe. Our EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre is working 24/7 and is in constant contact with Member States, the EU Delegations in the region and the Chinese embassy in Brussels. Further EU support can be mobilised if requested."*

Stella **Kyriakides**, Commissioner responsible for Health and Food Security, said: *"We stand ready to support Member States and ensure a strong and coordinated EU response to the developing situation of the coronavirus, outside and within the Union. We will continue to monitor the situation closely with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and remain in close contact with our Member States."*

The EU will co-finance the transport costs of the aircraft. The first aircraft is scheduled to depart from France tomorrow morning, while the second one will leave later in the week. EU citizens present in the region and who wish to be repatriated can still request it, no matter their nationality.

Initial numbers indicate that around 250 French citizens will be transported in the first aircraft and over 100 EU citizens from other countries will join the second aircraft. This is a first request for assistance and others may follow in the coming days.

At this stage, only healthy or asymptomatic citizens will be authorised to travel. The EU Emergency Response Centre is in constant contact with Member States' governments in order to coordinate the arrivals and subsequent possible quarantine periods.

The European Commission is in regular contact with Member States, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the World Health Organisation on all aspects of the Coronavirus outbreak.

### Background

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism strengthens cooperation between Member States/Participating States in the field of civil protection, with a view to improving prevention, preparedness and response to disasters. Through the Mechanism, the European Commission plays a key role in coordinating the response to disasters in Europe and beyond.

When the scale of an emergency overwhelms the response capabilities of a country, it can request assistance via the Mechanism. Once activated, the Mechanism coordinates assistance made available by its Member States/Participating States through spontaneous offers. In addition, the EU has created the European Civil Protection Pool to have a critical number of readily available civil protection capacities allowing for a stronger and coherent collective response.

To date, all EU Member States participate in the Mechanism, as well as Iceland, Norway, Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Turkey. Since its inception in 2001, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has responded to more than 300 requests for assistance inside and outside the EU.

### For More Information

[EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#)

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#### Press contacts:

[Balazs UJVARI](#) (+32 2 295 45 78)  
[Stefan DE KEERSMAECKER](#) (+32 2 298 46 80)  
[Daniel PUGLISI](#) (+32 2 296 91 40)  
[Darragh CASSIDY](#) (+32 2 298 39 78)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)