



## EU deploys largest ever wildfire response for 2026 summer

Brussels, 2 June 2026

With wildfire risks rising across Europe, the European Commission is helping finance and coordinate the deployment of a record number of firefighters, aircraft and emergency experts under the Civil Protection Mechanism

777 firefighters from 14 European countries will be strategically pre-positioned in [high-risk areas](#) across Cyprus, Greece, Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal. This is the highest level of participation since the [pre-positioning programme's launch in 2022](#). In parallel, 22 firefighting airplanes and 5 helicopters from the EU fleet are ready to support countries under pressure.

As wildfire seasons become longer, earlier and more destructive, the Commission is making sure additional firefighters, aircraft and expertise are ready to back up national services when and where the risk is highest.

This response is backed by round-the-clock coordination and support. Throughout the wildfire season, experts at the EU's 24/7 [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) will track risks and support deployments using meteorological and scientific analysis. The Centre will reinforce its monitoring with additional wildfire experts from Member States and participating countries, together with specialists from the Commission's [partnerships with scientific institutions](#).

The [European Forest Fire Information System](#) will provide continuous wildfire risk forecasts, while EU satellite services like [Copernicus](#) will deliver emergency mapping and geospatial analysis to support decision-making on the ground.

In addition, the EU will also launch in 2026 a new European regional firefighting station in Cyprus to strengthen wildfire preparedness and response capacities, across Europe and the South Mediterranean region. The Cyprus regional firefighting station will accommodate the pre-positioning of six aircraft and will also host trainings and exercises for civil protection practitioners with the aim of supporting exchange of knowledge and best practices.

### Overview of the 2026 summer fleet supported by the EU Civil Protection Mechanism

- Croatia: Two medium amphibious airplanes.
- Cyprus: Two light airplanes (in addition to four light airplanes funded by other EU instruments).
- Czechia: Two helicopters.
- France: Four medium amphibious airplanes and one helicopter.
- Greece: Four medium amphibious airplanes.
- Italy: Two medium amphibious airplanes.
- North Macedonia: Two light airplanes.
- Portugal: Two light airplanes.
- Romania: One helicopter.
- Slovakia: One helicopter.
- Spain: Two medium amphibious airplanes.
- Sweden: Two light airplanes.

### Background

Through the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#), countries affected by wildfires can request operational assistance when national capacities are overwhelmed. The Emergency Response Coordination Centre

ensures uninterrupted operations by coordinating offers of assistance and supporting the deployment of personnel, equipment, and specialised capacities provided by participating countries.

A key element of Europe's disaster response framework is the [European Civil Protection Pool](#), which brings together pre-committed response resources made available by participating countries for quick deployment. These include firefighting aircraft, ground crews, emergency medical teams, shelter capacities, and specialised experts trained to operate in challenging environments.

To complement these resources, the EU has established [rescEU](#), a strategic reserve of emergency capacities designed to provide additional support during large-scale crises. It includes firefighting planes and helicopters, medical evacuation capacities, field hospitals and strategic stockpiles of essential supplies. rescEU assets are financed by the EU and can be deployed when national and pooled capacities are insufficient.

The EU is also strengthening its approach to integrated wildfire risk management. Presented in March 2026, the Communication recognises wildfires must be addressed through prevention and preparedness to response, and recovery. This includes supporting landscapes through sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration improved wildfire risk assessments and early warning systems, strengthened community preparedness, and stronger cooperation. The approach aims to reduce wildfire risks while increasing Europe's long-term resilience to increasingly frequent and intense fire seasons.

### **For more information**

Map: [Ground teams pre-positioning](#)

Map: [Aircraft pre-positioning](#)

Factsheet: [Wildfires preparedness measures](#)

B-roll: [Wildfires in Europe](#)

Illustration photos: [EU pre-positioning Romanian firefighters in France](#)

Illustration photos: [EU's emergency response coordination centre](#)

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### Quote(s):

*"Firefighters from across our continent share one mission: to protect people, homes and forests. As part of our largest-ever operation, nearly 800 firefighters will be pre-positioned where the risk is highest, with European aircrafts ready to deploy at a moment's notice. This is European solidarity in action."*

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission - 02/06/2026

*"When fires threaten communities, Europe responds as one. I am proud of the firefighters pre-positioned in high risk areas around Europe before disaster strikes, ready to help wherever they are needed, with the support of the EU. Together with our fleet of firefighting planes and helicopters, and experts working around the clock, we are turning European solidarity into action. When every minute counts, being prepared saves lives, protects livelihoods, and preserves our environment."*

Hadja Lahbib, Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management - 02/06/2026

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