



Evaluation of Civil Protection Mechanism- Case study report- Earthquake Japan 2011

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Prepared by	Mathieu Capdevila and Sheila Maas (senior researchers) and Stephan Zimmermann (junior researcher)
Checked by	Mathieu Capdevila and Camino Mortera-Martinez
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List of acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (experts)
CP	Civil Protection
DG ECHO	Directorate General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EC	European Commission
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre
EU	European Union
EUCPT	European Civil Protection Team
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MIC	Monitoring and Information Centre
MS	Member States (of the European Union)
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PS	Participating States (of the Civil Protection Mechanism)
RSO	Regional Support Officer (ECHO Field Office in Bangkok)
TAST	Technical Assistance Team
TL	Team Leader
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination

Executive summary

On 11 March 2011 a 9.0 magnitude earthquake occurred east of the Japanese coast and Miyagi Prefecture. The earthquake caused an up to 30 metres high tsunami that flooded 110km coastline and destroyed countless cities and villages¹. Nearly 16,000 people were killed and more than 400,000 buildings collapsed. The aftermath of the tsunami caused furthermore a nuclear accident that prompted 100,000 people to be evacuated from their homes. The total economic damage was estimated by the World Bank to over US\$ 200 billion².

The European Union's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) offered immediate support and financial and in-kind assistance to Japanese authorities. After the official request for assistance, the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) deployed the largest team since the establishment of the European Civil Protection Mechanism ("the Mechanism") to Japan in order to facilitate the distribution of in-kind assistance to the affected population. The team included two CBRN experts that assessed the radiological situation and provided advice for the EU's Civil Protection Team (EUCPT) and Member States' (MS) embassies. The deployment lasted for 21 days; the team was however down-sized twice during that time.

Many interviewed stakeholders confirmed that the mission was unique for a number of reasons. Not only was the team the biggest in terms of number of team members ever deployed but the pre-conditions from the Japanese government urged the team to operate in a completely **self-sustained and autonomous** way. As a result the cooperation of the EUCPT with EU Delegation's personnel was essential in order to identify beneficiaries on the ground. After start-up difficulties, the team managed to deliver **in-kind assistance from twelve MS** where it was most needed. In total seven airplanes loaded with relief items were channelled through the MIC.

Considering the large-scale impact of the disaster, the delivered in-kind and financial assistance did not make a relevant contribution to the total demand. Japan is however a very disaster resilient country and experienced in this type of disasters, and Japanese authorities appreciated the support. Many stakeholders agreed that the EUCPT could have been deployed much quicker but this was due to the rather late request from Japanese side, for which the MIC already had to push for.

Overall, the mission was considered a success by stakeholders as the **EUCPT fully achieved the specified objectives and provided effective assistance** to Japanese people in need. Stakeholders agreed that transport assistance of European relief items was coordinated very efficiently and quickly. The main findings of interviewees were to make the MIC and intervention teams better prepared for deployments to developed countries and for autonomous, self-sustained missions. The case study showed that team members might have underestimated the implications of a mission to a highly developed and disaster resilient country. The fact that the EUCPT had to work more or less without formal guidance from Japanese authorities meant that adaptation to the 'conventional' intervention approach was necessary.

¹ OCHA, April 2011, "Japan Earthquake & Tsunami – Situational Report No. 16", <http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/documents/6609.html>

² World Bank (Olivier Mahul & Emily White), 24 September 2012, "Earthquake Risk Insurance". http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/Data/wbi/wbicms/files/drupal-acquia/wbi/drm_kn6-2.pdf

1 Country context

Japan's islands and their specific topography and geographical location in the North Pacific Ocean make them highly prone to a variety of disasters. Located along the Pacific Ring of Fire, the nation is highly susceptible to volcano eruptions, earthquakes and water-related disasters. There are many dormant and active volcanoes in close proximity to densely populated areas and about 1,500 seismic activities occur every year. Furthermore, the Japanese archipelago faces frequent occurrences of extreme weather conditions such as rainy-season cloudbursts and typhoons, and large amounts of snow in winter. As a result, Japan ranks among the countries with the highest number of natural disasters in the world.

The average population density in Japan is one of the world's highest, with 336 people per square kilometre. About half of the population lives near the coast on low-lying land with relatively soft volcanic soil and therefore a large number of people is highly vulnerable to storms, floods, landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis. The frequent occurrence of the latter two can cause substantial injury, loss of life and damage to property and infrastructure; sometimes disastrous events can reach tragically high figures: in 1896 more than 20,000 people died due to a tsunami induced by the Sanriku Earthquake; the Kanto earthquake in 1923, which also hit Tokyo, killed more than 100,000 people; and in 1995 about 6,000 people lost their lives by a 6.8 magnitude earthquake in Kobe and the Hyogo Prefecture.

Japan faces a high risk of disaster in regions where large parts of the population and economic activities concentrate (e.g. Tokyo or along the Pacific Coast); furthermore, possible loss created by a severely disastrous event potentially exceeds the annual budget of the Japanese central government. These two factors have strongly influenced the policy of Japanese disaster management, which is highly self-sufficient and particularly focused on damage mitigation. Decision makers concentrate on implementing policies that encourage the construction of earthquake- and fire-proof buildings, and promote the good use of land. Over time, engineering has become the main tool for disaster reduction in Japan.

2 Background and impact of the disaster studied

For decades nuclear energy was a national strategic priority in Japan, generating about 30% of the nation's energy demand. Construction of new plants continued through the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Several minor accidents and cover-ups at nuclear power plants starting in the mid-1990s eroded public confidence in the industry and resulted in protests and resistance to new plants. Many critics were also concerned about the ability of Japan's nuclear plants to withstand seismic activity. These concerns proved to be justified in 2011, when a very severe tsunami damaged the nuclear power plant of Fukushima, in the East of the country.

On 11 March 2011 at 2.46 pm local time, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake occurred around 130km east of the coast of Miyagi Prefecture at a depth of 24km. The biggest seismic event ever recorded in Japan – and 4th worldwide – induced a tsunami that reached on average around 9.3 m in height – some sources mention up to 30m³, causing widespread destruction. It was a rare and complex double quake with duration of around three minutes, eventually moving the coast of Honshu up to 2.4 m to the East and subsiding parts of the coastline up to 1.2 metres⁴. The forces of the earthquake were so powerful that even the Earth's axis shifted a few centimetres and shortened the Earth's day by a few microseconds⁵.

For Japan, it was the first time, since World War II, that a disaster affected more than one prefecture. The tsunami was especially devastating to three prefectures near the epicentre: Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima. The wave reached five kilometres inland and submerged about 110km of coastline⁶. The most affected areas were near the coastal city of Sendai which has a population of one million people and is roughly 300km northeast of Tokyo. In total there were 227 municipalities affected by the tsunami and simultaneously engaged in disaster response and recovery. To make matters worse, the tsunami disabled the power supply and cooling of three reactors of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, causing a nuclear accident where all three cores largely melted in the following days, ultimately releasing highly radioactive material. Over 100,000 people had to be evacuated from their homes to avoid radiation sickness or death.

According to a recent official report of the National Policy Agency of Japan⁷, nearly 16,000 people have died, over 6,000 have been injured and 2,600 are still missing across twenty different prefectures. Immediately after the disaster, 5.57 million households were disconnected from electricity and 600,000 were cut off from their water supply in the Tohoku district and other regions. It was estimated that around 700,000 people were homeless the day after the earthquake struck and thus thousands of emergency shelters were established. About 400,000 buildings collapsed either partially or completely, and more than 740,000 houses were damaged; also public key infrastructure such as roads, railroad tracks, ports, dams, airports, bridges, electric facilities, etc. were severely impaired. The World Bank quantified the estimated direct economic loss with US\$ 225 billion which represented about 4% of the country's GDP⁸.

The earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident had also severe consequences on the national economy and global supply chain. Not only were many premises destroyed, countless manufactories had to stop or suspend business operations for at least a couple of days – if not weeks – due to the lack in supply of energy, stocks and other resources. The situation

³ OCHA, April 2011, "Japan Earthquake & Tsunami – Situational Report No. 16", <http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/documents/6609.html>

⁴ World Nuclear Association, July 2014, "Fukushima Accident", <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/fukushima-accident/>

⁵ Nanyang Technological University Singapore, 28 March 2011, "The great East Japan (Tohoku) 2011 earthquake: Important lessons from old dirt", http://des.spms.ntu.edu.sg/news/great-east-japan-tohoku-2011-earthquake-important-lessons-old-dirt#.U_3g1mPex8E

⁶ OCHA, April 2011, "Japan Earthquake & Tsunami – Situational Report No. 16", <http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/documents/6609.html>

⁷ National Policy Agency of Japan - Emergency Disaster Countermeasures Headquarters, 10 July 2014, "Damage Situation and Police Countermeasures associated with 2011 Tohoku district - off the Pacific Ocean Earthquake", https://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/higaijokyo_e.pdf

⁸ World Bank (Olivier Mahul & Emily White), 24 September 2012, "Earthquake Risk Insurance". http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/Data/wbi/wbicms/files/drupal-acquia/wbi/drm_kn6-2.pdf

eventually also impaired global markets due to non-availability of certain Japanese high-quality goods.

Due to the large-scale nature of the event, disaster response coordination in affected areas was crucial, and the role of the national government became very important. The Japanese government established an Emergency Response Team and thousands of troops were mobilised for rescue efforts. According to Japan's Foreign Ministry, 131 countries and 33 international organizations offered assistance. In addition to the coordinated European response organised by DG ECHO, the following EU Member States provided financial, technical or in-kind assistance on bilateral basis: Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

3 The role of the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism in addressing the consequences of the disaster studied

3.1 General description of the assistance provided

On the day of the earthquake DG ECHO established contact with the Japanese Mission to the European Union in Brussels and the EU Delegation in Tokyo, to receive first-hand information and to offer its support in dealing with the disaster. The Mechanism was immediately activated in order to monitor the situation. The MIC reached out to Participating States (PS) and offered Japanese authorities various types of relief items in case Japan would formally request assistance.

It took however a relatively long time for Japan to react to the EU's and other international offers for assistance. The reasons explaining this situation are manifold: (1) Japan is one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world and thus very resilient to disasters, (2) the country experiences strong earthquakes on a frequent basis and has learned to cope with this type of events, (3) culturally Japanese communication is rather indirect and it is not considered appropriate to directly ask for help which conflicts with the procedures of activating the Mechanism, (4) in the past Japan had never sought for international assistance and thus had no experience in coordinating incoming support on this matter, and (5) the provision of both EU-coordinated and Member State bilateral assistance caused confusion among Japanese officials and a clear distinction could long not been identified.

The green light eventually came from the Japanese Foreign Minister when it was clear that Japan would not have to provide food, water and energy to rescue teams and that international teams were able to bring everything with them. The Japanese pre-condition to operate autonomously and self-sufficiently without guidance and support from Japanese authorities constituted a unique situation for the EUCPT.

The MIC planned to deploy a Coordination and Assessment Team one day after the formal request on Wednesday, 16 March. Unfortunately, the tsunami triggered by the earthquake caused a nuclear accident in the Fukushima power plant. Consequently, there was a need for additional personal protective equipment and medical checks of team members. It took two days to solve these issues and a team consisting of nine multinational experts and a six-person Technical Assistance Team (TAST) from Denmark departed on Friday, 18 March.

Upon arrival in Japan, the EUCPT immediately made phone contact with international humanitarian actors and met with the EU Ambassador to Japan and representatives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On Sunday the team established its office within EU Delegation premises. Due to the lack of information from Japanese authorities, the team had to gather essential information about affected areas, needs on the ground and potential beneficiaries. As soon this was done, they carried out their actual role of facilitating logistical arrangements, establishing a bridge hub, and monitoring the distribution of assistance to prefecture hubs.

The main responsibilities of the EUCPT were to maintain continuous contact with the MIC and the EU Delegation; to analyse and monitor the radiological situation; to participate in meetings with Japanese authorities, EU and Participating States representatives, officials of the International Federation of the Red Cross, and logistical partners; to discuss the radiological situation and logistical issues; and to facilitate the transportation and distribution of in-kind assistance.

For operational reasons and due to the large volume of incoming assistance from Europe, the MIC decided to extend the mission of some team members beyond the initially planned return duration of ten days. The EUCPT was downscaled from 15 to six experts on 27 March – including the TAST which was not as much needed, and from six to three experts on 1 April. The remaining team members returned to Europe on 9 April. On 24 March the first of seven shipments of in-kind assistance reached Japan; five of which were coordinated by the EUCPT during their stay. In total around 400 tons – made available by 19 Participating States – were channelled through the MIC through flights offered free of charge by Lufthansa. Upon arrival

the relief items were distributed to Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Tochigi and Yamagata Prefectures with the help of local brokers DHL and Kuehne + Nagel. A detailed list of assistance provided by Participating States and coordinated by the MIC can be found in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 Financial & In-kind Assistance provided by Participating States

Participating State	Total value of financial and in-kind assistance	In-kind assistance
Austria	€ 1,200,000	Food, bottled water and medication
Bulgaria	n/a	Blankets, food and bottled water
Czech Republic	€ 205,000	
Denmark	€ 110,435	23,310 blankets
Estonia	€ 200,000	
Finland	€ 500,000	50 dose rate devices
France	€ 54,549	100,000 paper masks 10t food Hydro-alcoholic antiseptic gel 8,000 blankets Dosimeters Radiological detectors Protective suits, gloves & masks 100t boron 100,000 bottled water
Germany	€ 630,000	
Greece	€ 100,000	
Hungary	€ 33,345	16.7t food
Ireland	€ 1,000,000	
Latvia	€ 142,288	
Lithuania	€ 67,707	2,000 blankets 300 sleeping bags
Luxembourg	€ 150,000	
Netherlands	€ 1,008,391	1,998 sleeping mattresses
Slovakia	€ 150,000	14 tents 112 sleeping bags 4,000 clothes 1,000 shoes
Slovenia	€ 137,900	
Sweden	€ 25,458	10,000 gloves 296 rubber boots
United Kingdom	n/a	103t bottled water
DG ECHO	€ 10,000,000	Identification of free-of-cost flights
TOTAL	ca. € 15.8 million	ca. 400t

Source: DG ECHO, "EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation Japan", April 2011

3.2 General evaluation context

3.2.1 MIC/ERCC

Generally speaking, the first tasks MIC Duty Officers undertake after a disaster strikes are to follow Standard Operating Procedures, inform management and start contacting colleagues

at EU Delegations in affected countries. In the case of Japan, the MIC officers immediately contacted Delegations in Japan and those ASEAN countries that might be affected by a potential tsunami in order to assess the situation and to determine what kind of assistance might be required. One of the interviewees remembered that there was a lot of confusing information available and that he had to filter this substantially to understand what was correct and relevant.

After receiving the formal request, the MIC asked through CECIS for availability of experts and created a short-list. The final selection was made on Head of Unit level and/or by his/her Deputy⁹. One interviewee attested that technically it would not be easy to task the team leader with the composition of the EUCPT even though it would make sense to some extent as he/she is the one who has to directly lead the team.

Some interviewees commented though that the MIC/ERCC could only select those experts who were nominated by Participating States. In the interviewees' opinion this was not the right approach since some difficulties had arisen in the past due to the mismatch between the nominated experts and the actual needs of the deployment. The nomination by Participating States and the inability of the MIC/ERCC to make amendments may have had an impact on the quality of the team, although admittedly in rare cases.

According to interviewed members of the EUCPT, the rather vague request from the Japanese authorities was the main obstacle for offering an effective response: while the Participating States were asking what they should provide, Japanese officials did not directly communicate what they needed. After receiving an overview from the MIC, it was apparently hard for team members to understand who the beneficiaries in Japan were and consequently, they found it difficult to organise the resources and coordinate the operation. According to the interviewees, the difficulties in communication could mainly be attributed to cultural differences.

3.2.1.1 Effectiveness

One interviewee explained that EU Civil Protection missions generally have two main goals:

- Coordinating European emergency assistance, and
- Assessing the situation and needs in affected areas.

The mission in Japan mainly aimed at coordinating the incoming in-kind assistance from Participating States. Search and Rescue teams were not required (Japan relied on its own resources). As such, the assessment of the radiological situation primarily served to guarantee the safety of team members rather than to assess the extent of the damages caused by the disaster.

EUCPT **fully met the Japanese** request which asked for blankets, mattresses, water bottles/tanks and water purification units, and later also added food, tents and radiological devices. Table 3.1 above shows that the EUCPT provided and distributed these items. Despite a relatively large team, all members still managed to operate effectively. According to stakeholders the team quickly adapted to situational changes and provided additional advice to local authorities.

Taking the above into consideration, all stakeholders confirmed that DG ECHO, the MIC and the EUCPT on the ground succeeded in achieving their goals; the coordination of relief items was well handled and was as effective as it could be. One stakeholder highlighted the key role that the EU Delegation and its personnel had played: by accessing their regional political networks and business contacts in affected areas, the **Delegation's staff enabled the identification of needs and beneficiaries** before the first European plane landed in Japan. Such support had facilitated rapid dissemination of the material assistance by identification of the affected population. In this respect, one stakeholder underlined that despite many skilled experts, there is a **lack of high level governmental communicators** in the pool of European experts for the Mechanism.

⁹ This is the normal procedure as the EUCP team leader does normally not play a determining role in the selection of the team being deployed.

3.2.1.2 Efficiency

Despite reaching the mission's objectives, the team encountered several obstacles which may have reduced the mission's efficiency. The most important obstacle related to the **lack of information on Japanese needs**: the EU did not receive a detailed request listing the necessary relief items but instead had to gather this information autonomously. It was also not clear in the different lines of communication what Japan wanted and what the Participating States had to offer. One team member noted that according to representatives of the Japanese Foreign Ministry there was no need for certain goods but by contacting regional and local authorities the team realised that there was indeed a need for relief items.

Furthermore, some stakeholders highlighted shortcomings which had little impact on the success of this mission but are worth mentioning. On the logistical side, one interviewee reported the **dimension of pallets** which had created a problem at Frankfurt airport as some did not fit on the ramps. The goods needed to be reloaded and thus could only be sent to Japan with the next plane. The interviewee considered that the standardisation of the size of the pallets could help avoiding such losses of time in the future.

Another stakeholder stated that the Commission was not in a position to equip EU CP team members with necessary tools and gear as this is usually the remit of the sending state of the respective expert. He further explained that the Liaison Officer would usually be equipped by the lead sending state. For this particular mission, the Czech Republic, which dispatched the Team Leader of the EUCPT, exceptionally equipped all team members with protective gear to save time. The interviewee recommended that **DG ECHO should at least equip its own staff for all cases**, if not the entire team. By doing so, safety and security concerns – especially for deployments to countries where the risk of radiation exists – and the potential of loss time can be mitigated.

Another issue mentioned related to health related procedures. It was argued that the EUCPT had to do medical checks before deployment to Japan but after return no additional check-ups were carried out. It was recommended that every team member should undergo a **mandatory psychological test or interview after each mission** in order to have a more detailed follow-up on the psychological mind-set of team members returning from deployment missions.

3.2.1.3 Relevance

A general outcome across all stakeholder groups was that Japanese authorities very much appreciated the help and solidarity provided by the EU. However, the **EU's assistance was marginal** if compared with the total international financial assistance provided. The EU provided 400 tons relief items and financial assistance of over €15 million, whereas according to a report of the International Development Centre of Japan, the total international financial assistance provided by 143 governments and international organisations amounted to ¥ 55.93 billion or roughly €480 million (the Mechanism's share accounts for around 3% or 4.5 times the average); and the total amount of domestic donations amounted to about ¥ 397 billion or more than €3 billion¹⁰.

In view of the enormous scale of the assistance received by Japan, some stakeholders mentioned that the request for assistance by the Japanese government could be seen as a **political gesture** as opposed to responding to an explicit need. However, a majority of stakeholders took the view that EU assistance was beneficial and necessary as many affected regions were in need of the assistance provided through the Mechanism.

In reference to the actual in-kind assistance, it was stated that the **sizes of some clothes and boots** donated by Participating States were too big for Japanese people and that such an obvious mistake should be avoided in the future.

¹⁰ International Development Centre of Japan, March 2014, "Comprehensive Review of Assistance from Overseas for the Great East Japan Earthquake", <http://www.idcj.or.jp/pdf/idcjr20140304E.pdf>

3.2.1.4 *Coherence and European added value*

Amongst stakeholders it was generally agreed that the mission to Japan was coherent in terms of the services that both DG ECHO and the EUCPT provide in emergency situations. On the other hand, the mission was also considered as somehow challenging as it was the **first time a team had to work independently without governmental support**.

Nevertheless, certain practical problems in terms of coherence were experienced. Some stakeholders highlighted that the first plane in Europe was loaded before the EUCPT in the field knew what kind of assistance was needed. One stakeholder indicated that European political leaders decided to send goods before needs were assessed. As a result the team was under pressure to find beneficiaries before the goods arrived but with the help of EU Delegation staff eventually managed to find recipients. In the aftermath of a disaster with such a wide impact, it is considered that, although this approach might have proven effective in this case, it is not recommended to make it a norm in terms of procedures.

Overall, all stakeholders agreed that the mission was well integrated and coordinated with other international players on the ground, such as the Red Cross, embassies of Participating States, UN Agencies, etc. with whom many meetings were organised.

3.2.2 *Coordination of transport*

In-kind assistance from eleven Participating States was channelled through the MIC by in total seven flights from Frankfurt; five of which during the presence of the EUCPT in Japan. The biggest bulk included blankets, bottled water, food, sleeping bags and mattresses; but also protective equipment such as dosimeters, radiological detectors and protective suits, boots and masks. In total it was estimated that around 400 tons of goods were transported to Japan.

According to many interviewees, coordination of transport in Japan was one of the better working aspects of the mission. Transport coordination was highly regarded by Japanese authorities, as it was seen as a **real added value to the emergency response**. Stakeholders agreed that the coordination was carried out as effectively as it could have been. Minor issues such as the size of pallets and custom clearance were encountered but had however had no major impact on the assistance provided. The cooperation with transport brokers worked also very well.

One interviewee, with long-term experience in the Mechanism, reported that the old MIC was already good at coordinating transport assistance but not able to do it automatically; today the ERCC would be able to provide even better services. The interviewee estimated that this improvement was due to the fact that Liaison Officers were becoming increasingly used to this type of work and because transport coordination was far more streamlined into ECHO response operations than before.

4 Other relevant issues

4.1 Training courses and exercises

Overall, stakeholders agreed that training courses and exercises served as a good preparation for interventions in emergency situations, although field exercises were considered a better preparation than class- room training. Training courses, it was argued, provided a good basis for self-learning and self-preparation. However, real interventions require adaptation and flexibility; qualities which can be practiced during simulation. One stakeholder suggested that **training courses should include both humanitarian and civil protection elements**, referring to UNDAC training courses which integrate both fields.

A large number of respondents would welcome **testing the Mechanism's training programme participants** at the end of a course. Up till now course participants only self-assess their learning outcomes. In order to build trust and guarantee that a host nation can expect the best quality of support in the event of an emergency, it would make sense to certify in any way the capability of the deployed team members. By introducing a potential certification system, it would also be guaranteed that resources are used effectively.

Others also criticised that the **nomination of experts** for training programmes, exercises or deployment was done by Participating States only and that the Commission had no right to question the nomination. One interviewee noted that as part of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system, Participating States did not object to the selection by OCHA but in the Mechanism they would. His suggestion was that any objections could easily be solved with a veto right for Participating States, but in his opinion the ERCC needed also to make sure that the quality of the team was at least adequate, as the Commission could not refuse the deployment or cancel a mission due to lack of quality of the team.

In terms of coordination and assessment, interviewees with experience in the EUCP training programmes and exercises mentioned that operational skills were of the essence, however, some experts lack communication skills to effectively communicate with diplomats and bureaucrats. These skills are important and impact on the success of the mission.

According to one interviewee, a recurrent problem was the lack of **interconnection between Civil Protection expertise and logistical skills**: it is not always the case that trained Civil Protection professionals are good at logistical organisation and vice versa. The interviewee admitted that it was an issue which was hard to overcome because one would have needed to train either Civil Protection people on logistics or logisticians on Civil Protection issues; people with proficiencies in both areas were basically non-existent. His suggestion was to enhance training of CP experts on logistics as they usually have the necessary mind-set to work in hostile environments.

5 Counterfactual scenarios

Not life-saving but needed

One general observation from the interviews was that if the EUCPT had not been sent to provide assistance, it would not necessarily have meant that more people would have died, but it did provide added value for the affected Japanese population. A simple example: Assistance was used to provide additional rice cookers and water boilers for shelter centres where people lived for months. Many stakeholders acknowledged it was not a life-saving response but well needed by Japanese citizens.

Easing the organisational burden and saving resources

All interviewees agreed that in operational terms, the lack of MIC/ERCC would make a big difference to beneficiaries in hosting countries and for local authorities. Without the MIC each Participating States would have had to contact the Japanese individually, which for the Japanese authorities may have proven burdensome and complicated (particularly in terms of responding and coordinating assistance from different Participating States). According to interviewees, some of the potential consequences that the absence of MIC would have entailed are: the duplication or the lack of assistance; the lack of tasks for some of the deployed teams; and the danger of wasting resources, efforts and money. Moreover, interviewees mentioned that there was also a more political aspect to it, as assistance would be perceived as a national, bilateral action, rather than a European response. Many mentioned that there were still a few hiccups – for instance the response can always be quicker in terms of assessing what is needed; however the system would be as good as it can be at the moment.

More difficult coordination with other international responders

According to the majority of stakeholders, the Mechanism also facilitated the coordination with UN organisations. Without the Mechanism, each Participating States would have had to send their own representatives to each cluster. A logical consequence would be a regionalisation of Europe (Northern, Southern, etc.) which in the end would have the effect of creating the need for a Mechanism-like institution. The main challenge is to expand the good relationships with the UN and referring to bigger organisation like Red Cross to have an even better response, especially for developing countries.

Quicker and better response thanks to the neutrality of DG ECHO

Another benefit that was appreciated by interviewees is that today the ERCC can count on assets which can be deployed; before it was all voluntary assistance from MS. Interviewees mentioned that, before the ERCC was operational, some countries were not too keen on helping other countries; today, however, the assistance can be pooled without any political link. Some experts argued that in Humanitarian Aid and in terms of neutrality only the EC should take decisions in order to respond better and quicker to emergency rather than depending on the goodwill of Participating States. The interviewee added that one should however not reinvent the system but continue cooperating with Participating States.

Stakeholders agree that the Mechanism is an excellent system and through it the EU has more power in order to push for assistance; big players like Germany, France and the United Kingdom for instance do as well, but small countries would not be able to contribute otherwise. A coordinated approach is also seen as more effective and efficient with one interviewee reporting that the Mechanism had become a role model for other regions in the world; internationally it would be a very well appreciated model. Some of the interviewees claimed that it may lack a bit of commitment from Participating States. A mechanism like this could only be successful when all parties use and support it and do not undermine it; if all Participating States commit and support the Mechanism fully it can have a huge impact for responding to emergencies worldwide.

6 Conclusions and lessons learned

6.1 Conclusions and lessons learned on Relevance

A main achievement was the **cooperation with the EU Delegation and embassies from Participating States** in the country. Team members stated that the EU ambassador was forthcoming and very cooperative and the personnel very much facilitated organisational tasks due to their networks and contacts. And likewise, according to the majority of respondents the Delegations and embassies from Participating States benefited from the assistance and advice provided by the EUCPT; especially radiological experts were considered as an asset in this difficult situation. Ultimately, stakeholders confirmed that Japanese authorities very much appreciated the assistance provided through the Mechanism.

6.2 Conclusions and lessons learned on Effectiveness

In retrospect, some interviewees acknowledged the EUCPT could have been smaller in size but as one can never predict the demands in advance, especially when a host nation provides only little information and support, it was considered **better to bring more people** and then retire some of the resources than to have too little capacities available for emergency activities.

Another recommendation which was often touched upon was that it would have been better to deploy someone within the first 24 hours in order to gather information and to provide more details on the scope before the departure of the actual team. The responses were nearly in unison: it is most important to **achieve a match between the needs of the host country and the capabilities of the EUCPT**, without losing sight of the political dimension involved in a disaster like this one.

6.3 Conclusions and lessons learned on Efficiency

For many team members, the main lesson learned is to **exercise more pressure when it comes to the actual request for assistance** and get precise information before deployment, in order to save time and avoid surprises. At the same time, there is an urgent need to **better communicate on international and also bilateral high level**, especially with non-traditional receiving states like Japan, what the Mechanism is and what benefits it can bring along for disaster prone countries.

In terms of training programme content, a further suggestion was to **include diplomatic communication with high-level, governmental officials in the receiving states** taking cultural aspects into account, as to some respondents it seemed that there was a lack of this in the context of the mission to Japan.

6.4 Conclusions and lessons learned on Coherence and EU Added Value

A couple of interviewees suggested to **make the Mechanism better prepared for any kind of crisis in a developed or high-income country** (i.e. hurricane Katharina in the USA, earthquake in Japan, floods in the Balkans) and to simulate self-sustained and autonomous scenarios in training and large-scale exercises. This autonomy would ultimately have an added value for Participating States that currently do not make use of the Mechanism during certain disasters due to their own strong capacities and the additional coordination efforts it would bring along (i.e. floods in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic in 2013).

7 Methodology

For the purpose of the case study eight in-depth phone interviews were carried out. These interviews were conducted with different groups of actors involved in the emergency in Japan in 2011.

Consultation process covered interviews with two members and the Team Leader of the EUCPT, the MIC Liaison Officer, one MIC Duty Officer who was based in Brussels, the Regional Support Officer (RSO) in Bangkok, and each one representative of the EU Delegation and the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo.

Table 7.1 Stakeholders contacted

Name	Position	Date of contact	Reason for refusal (if applicable)	Date of interview (if applicable)
Ørjan KARLSSON	EUCP Team member	22 July 2014		28 July 2014
Ruben SANCHEZ VILLA	MIC Duty Officer	29 July 2014		4 August 2014
Antonin PETR	MIC Liaison Officer	22 July 2014		7 August 2014
Vladimir VLCEK	EUCP Team Leader	22 & 29 July 2014		7 August 2014
David VERBOOM	ECHO RSO	7 August 2014		11 August 2014
Gijs BERENDS	EU Delegation to Japan	7 August 2014		12 August 2014
Stephane DRENNE	EUCP CBRN Expert	29 July 2014		14 August 2014
Jiro TAKAMOTO	Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs	7 August 2014		14 August 2014
Per GRIM	EUCP CBRN Expert	22 July 2014	Not available; we interviewed Stephane Drenne instead	
Julia COLEMAN	MIC Duty Officer	29 July 2014	Not available; we interviewed Ruben Sanchez Villa instead	

Table 7.2 Documents reviewed

Reference	Description
ECHO Monitoring & Information Centre (MIC)	Japan Earthquake MIC message no. 1 – early warning message
ECHO Monitoring & Information Centre (MIC)	Japan Earthquake MIC message no. 20 – request for assistance
ECHO Monitoring & Information Centre (MIC)	EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation Japan - Update: 06/04/2011
ECHO Monitoring & Information Centre (MIC)	PowerPoint presentation: EU Civil Protection Mission in Japan - March 18th – April 9th 2011
ECHO Monitoring & Information Centre (MIC)	EUCPT in Japan – for Final Report - Daily activity
European Commission	Background Elements – Post tsunami situation, facts on damage and EU assistance

Reference	Description
European Commission	Briefing: Earthquake in Japan - impact on nuclear power plants - update 12 March 2011
European Commission	Briefing: Earthquake/Tsunami Japan – EU Civil Protection Response
European Commission	Japan Earthquake – European Union Civil Protection Team and Technical Assistance and Support Team – Mission Final Report
European Commission	LTT pour RV de MIDI - EU assistance for Japan after the earthquake & tsunami wave
European Commission	Press release: The European Union's response to the earthquake and nuclear power accident in Japan, 13 March 2011
European Commission Joint Research Centre	Tsunami Alert, Japan, 11 March 2011 (Update 1)
European Commission Secretariat General	14th C3M Inter-service Group Meeting Japan Lessons Learnt 27-Sep-2011
International Development Centre of Japan	Comprehensive Review of Assistance from Overseas for the Great East Japan Earthquake March 2014
The World Bank	The Great East Japan Earthquake – Learning from mega disasters