



# **Evaluation of the Civil Protection Mechanism**

## **Case study report - Floods in Poland 2010**

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## List of acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBRN	<i>Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (experts)</i>
CP	Civil Protection
CPM	Civil Protection Mechanism
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	<i>UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</i>
PS	Participating States (of the Civil Protection Mechanism)
RSO	Regional Support Officer (ECHO Field Office in Bangkok)
TAST	Technical Assistance Team
TL	Team Leader
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Context

As a consequence of heavy rainfalls, large floods occurred in Poland during the month of May 2010. On May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, responsible Polish civil protection officers began exchanging information with the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) in Brussels. The floods of 2010 caused 19 fatalities, affected more than 100,000 people and resulted in economic losses of around € 2.5 billion<sup>1</sup>. Overall, the floods were one of the most damaging hydrological disasters ever to hit Poland.

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 05:30 CET, Poland activated the Civil Protection Mechanism (“the Mechanism”) and requested ten high-capacity pumps with a minimum capacity of 600 m<sup>3</sup> per hour to complement national operations. Shortly thereafter, France, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Spain responded to the Polish request. Poland accepted most of the offers for assistance from Participating States.

### Civil Protection Mechanism contribution

In general, the Civil Protection Mechanism contributed to the disaster response in two ways. On one hand, the Mechanism served as a platform for information exchange (through MIC). On the other hand, the BaltFloodCombat (BFC) Module, which was the rescue module composed of firemen and logistic experts (in total 19 civil protection personnel deployed in Poland) from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, was co-financed and deployed by the Mechanism during the response operations.

During the 2010 floods, only BFC was financed under the Mechanism. Specifically 75% of the total costs of the mission (excluding the salary of module members) were financed by the mechanism. BFC module was deployed for the first time in Poland in 2010. In addition, the MIC dispatched a Liaison Officer to the Polish State Fire Service headquarters, to facilitate the work of the BFC and to contribute to the preparation of flood forecast maps.

### Evaluation of the performance of the Mechanism

All of the respondents stated that the MIC played its role well during the 2010 Polish floods. All major actions, especially at the initial stage, were reported to the MIC. It is important to note that the information on Poland’s situation was also transferred to countries such as Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands and France, whose civil protection activities in Poland were not directly funded by the Mechanism, unlike the response activities undertaken by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were under the BFC module. The MIC coordination function appeared to bring EU added value. It reduced the risk of duplicating efforts and relieved the burden of the Polish Civil Protection Authorities in setting an appropriate framework and procedures to coordinate the foreign assistance and its effective deployment on an ad-hoc basis.

Another important contribution of the Mechanism was the co-financing of the BFC mission in Poland. This was done swiftly with limited administrative procedures and with the level of co-financing of the BFC operation that was deemed adequate. If co-financing had not taken place, the scale of assistance from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania would likely have been smaller.

The only challenges expressed by the interviewees were related to the information flow from national authorities to civil protection teams on the ground. However, it should be noted that this was not under the control of the Mechanism. Despite MIC’s forecasts and predictions of intense rainfalls, national authorities did not directly relay this information to the civil protection teams working in the field (i.e. the information did not reach the local Fire Services).

All interviewees expressed a positive view about the MIC as a source of information. The MIC was considered a useful information instrument, especially prior to planning and deployment, when participating States were alerted about the details of the situation in Poland.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: CRED data, “International Disaster Database”, July 2014. Available at: <http://www.emdat.be/country-profile>

### Counterfactual scenarios

The BFC module was the only module co-financed and deployed under the Mechanism during the 2010 events in Poland. Members of the BFC team emphasised that, without the Mechanism, they would have almost certainly not been deployed in Poland as a unified team, but that they might have otherwise been sent on the basis of bilateral agreements, as was the case with teams from other countries. Other countries contributed to the flood relief efforts on the basis of bilateral agreements.

## 1 Country context

Poland's population is impacted by a comparatively small range of natural disaster types. However, severe weather-related events are relatively frequent. According to the International Disaster Database of University of Louvain's Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), the most damaging types of disasters in Poland are floods and the most deadly are extreme low temperatures in the winter months<sup>2</sup>. For instance, the floods of July 1997 affected 224,500 people and caused around € 3.0 billion in damages. The extreme cold during the entire 2009-2010 winter killed 298 people in total. Storms have also caused substantial damage to property and affect a significant portion of the Polish population. Since 1970, there have been 46 cases of serious emergencies (an average of one per year), of which 34% were caused by extreme temperatures, 30% by storms and 28% by floods<sup>3</sup>.

At national level, the Council of Ministers, together with the Prime Minister form the Polish government, is responsible for internal security and is empowered to declare a state of emergency. In urgent cases, crisis management is executed by the Minister of Home Affairs, who reports to the Prime Minister. Crisis management systems and emergency tasks are conducted by authorities, ministries, state administration, and regional and local governments. These systems and tasks are defined by the Crisis Management Act of 2007. In case of an emergency, a Government Crisis Management Team (GCMT) is set up to support the Council of Ministers by providing advice, and initiating and coordinating activities. In addition, Defence Response Plans, which provide guidance and facilitate procedures during a crisis, are also available.

At each administrative level, Crisis Management Teams (CMT) are established to support the heads of authorities. The provinces are led by representatives of the government who coordinate the prevention of all types of hazards and support efforts across all levels of government if resources are found to be inadequate. The head of a municipality defines civil protection tasks for all institutions that are operational within the municipality.

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<sup>2</sup> CRED EM-DAT, "Country Profile Poland", July 2014. Available at: <http://www.emdat.be/country-profile>

<sup>3</sup> CRED EM-DAT, "International Disaster Database", July 2014. Available at: <http://www.emdat.be/country-profile>

## 2 Background and impact of the disaster studied

As a consequence of heavy rainfalls in May 2010, Poland was affected by large floods starting from 16 May. The following day, Polish civil protection officers began exchanging information with the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) in Brussels. The most affected areas were in the country's south, reaching the following regions: Slaskie, Lubelskie, Dolnoślaskie, Podkarpackie, Opolskie, Swietokrzyskie and Malopolskie. However, the floods progressed further, impacting the central and northern parts of Poland (to a much lesser degree). A map highlighting the most affected areas is shown in Figure 1. The flooded rivers included the Vistula, Odra, Warta and their tributaries.

According to the State Fire Service in Poland, 'it was one of the worst floods since 250 years'<sup>4</sup>, comparable in scale with the great flood that hit the country in 1997. In 2010, there were two flooding peaks. The first peak occurred between 21 and 23 May, and the second in early June. In total, around 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land mass had been flooded, accounting for about 0.8% of the total Polish geographical area.

**Figure 1. Polish provinces most affected by floods in 2010**

National response was coordinated by the State Fire Service of Poland and included professional and voluntary firefighters, soldiers, Polish Red Cross members, and volunteers from the general public. Responders were engaged in more than 46,000 flood related interventions. On average, over 4,700 professionals and 13,500 volunteer firefighters with more than 4,000 fire engines were dealing with the floods every day. The intervention peak was reached on 21 May when 15,200 professionals and 60,000 volunteers steering 16,000 fire engines were deployed to the affected areas. The main



response operations included evacuating and relocating the population from high-risk areas, pumping out water from flooded areas back to the river streams, and monitoring, repairing and reinforcing river banks. Many neighbouring European countries, such as Germany, Czech Republic and the Baltic states, sent equipment and technical experts, and joined Polish civil protection operations.

In the end, the 2010 floods caused 19 fatalities, affected more than 100,000 people and resulted in economic losses of around € 2.5 billion<sup>5</sup>. The 2010 floods were the second most damaging hydrological disaster to affect Poland (the 1997 floods being the most severe<sup>6</sup>).

<sup>4</sup> DG ECHO, 2010. Mission Report – Floods in Poland.

<sup>5</sup> Source: CRED Data, "International Disaster Database", July 2014. Available at: <http://www.emdat.be/country-profile>

<sup>6</sup> According to "Three decades of floods in Europe: a preliminary analysis of EMDAT data" report in 1997 there were 55 deaths in Poland during the flood. [www.cred.be/sites/default/files/FLOOD-EUR.pdf](http://www.cred.be/sites/default/files/FLOOD-EUR.pdf)



### 3 The role and effects of the operational elements of the Civil Protection Mechanism in responding to the emergency

#### 3.1 General description of the assistance provided

Due to a high probability of significant flooding, Poland started to exchange information on the flooding situation on May 16th with the DG ECHO's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) and the Participating States of the European Civil Protection Mechanism. The MIC increased its readiness and preparedness for an eventual request for assistance<sup>7</sup>.

On May 19th, 2010 at 05:30 CET, Poland activated the Civil Protection Mechanism and requested ten high-capacity pumps with a minimum capacity of 600 m<sup>3</sup>/hour to complement national operations. Shortly thereafter, several Participating States responded and offered assistance. The Mechanism contributed to the disaster in two ways. On one hand, the Mechanism served as a platform for information exchange through MIC. On the other hand, BaltFloodCombat (BFC) Module, which was the rescue module composed of firemen and logistic experts (in total 19 personnel deployed in Poland) from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, also received direct financing covering 75% of the mission costs (excluding the member staff salaries). A complete overview of the foreign assistance provided over the course of the operation can be found in the table below<sup>8</sup>:

**Table 3.1 Assistance offered by Participating States**

Country	Offer	Source of financing	Acceptance
France	1 pump of 700 m <sup>3</sup> /hour 3 pumps of 850 m <sup>3</sup> /hour 40 technical experts	Own	Poland accepted
Germany	12 modules each consisting of: - 2 pumps of 5 m <sup>3</sup> /min - 1 pump of 15 m <sup>3</sup> /min - additional medium pumps 150 technical experts	Own	Poland accepted
Spain	6 motor pumps of 24 m <sup>3</sup> /hour 6 electric pumps of 30 m <sup>3</sup> /hour 4 electric pumps of 22 m <sup>3</sup> /hour	Own	Offer was not accepted due to the large distance between ES and PL and potential logistical challenges and time constraint.
Netherlands	1 high capacity pump 5 technical experts	Own	Poland accepted
Denmark	1 HCP module 10 technical experts	Own	Poland accepted
Czech Republic	5 high capacity pumps 40 technical experts	Not identified	Poland accepted
BFC Module (Estonia, Latvia & Lithuania)	3 high capacity pumps of 1,000 m <sup>3</sup> /h 19 technical experts	Financed 75% through the CPM	Poland accepted
MIC	Liaison Officer	DG ECHO	Poland accepted

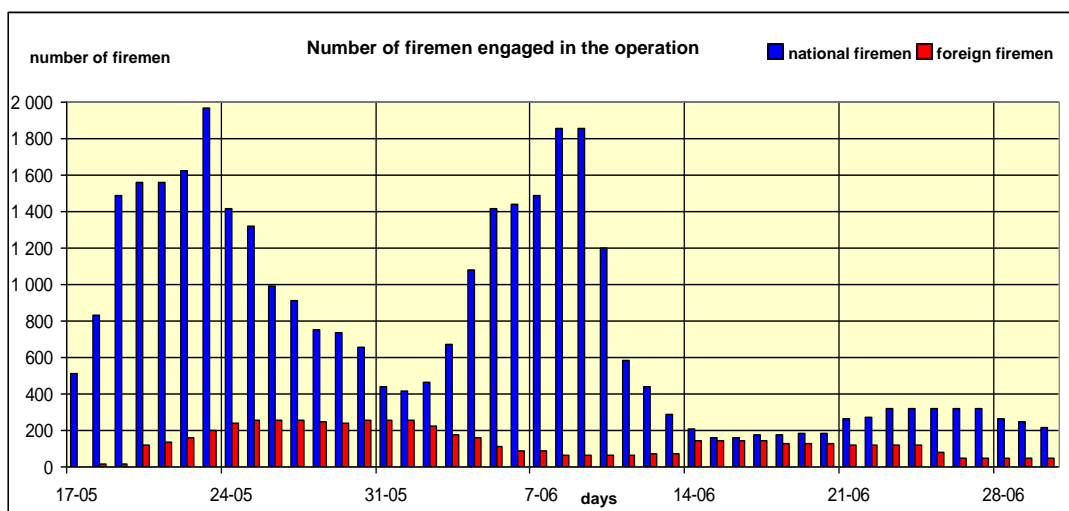
<sup>7</sup> DG ECHO, 2010. Mission Report – Floods in Poland.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem.

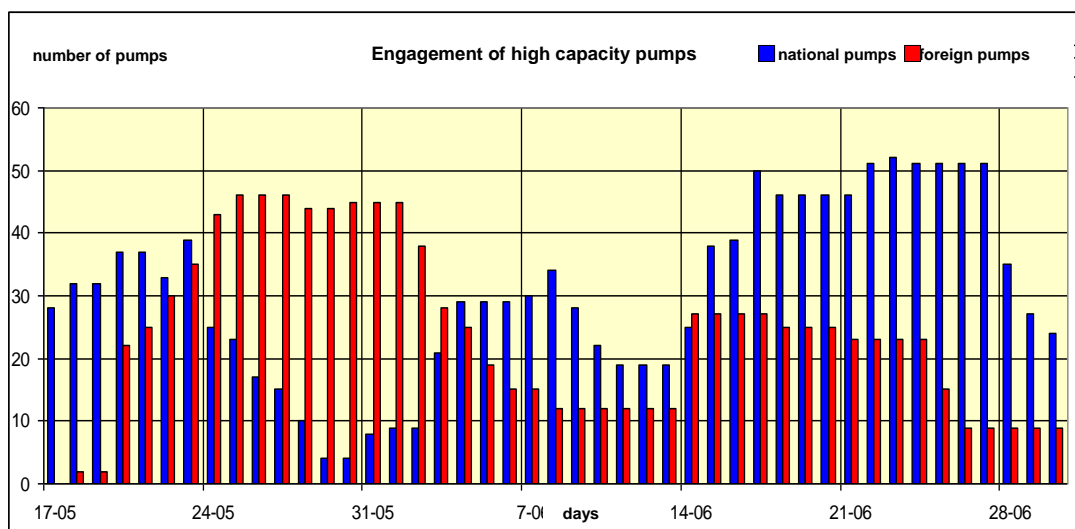
In addition, Russia, Ukraine and the United States also provided assistance. This was, however, outside the coordination and facilitation undertaken by the Mechanism and based on bilateral agreements.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 provide a comparison between the number of foreign and Polish firemen and high capacity pumps involved in the operation. It can be clearly seen that although foreign personnel resources were relatively small (with a few exceptions at the end of May), specialised high capacity pumps provided by foreign partners were absolutely essential, particularly in the second half of May.

**Figure 3.1 Polish and foreign firemen engaged in the operation**



**Figure 3.2 Polish and foreign pumps engaged in the operation**



The MIC dispatched a Liaison Officer to the Polish State Fire Service headquarters to facilitate the work of the international teams and contribute to the preparation of flood forecast maps. Without coordination or assistance obtained through the Mechanism, Polish State Fire Services also managed to provide English speaking liaison officers assigned to each foreign team. Several web-based mapping applications and situational assessment tools developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) were used. A 'Field Reporting Tool' (FRT) designed by the DG JRC was deployed in the Swietokrzyskie Region to assess the extent of the flooding<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> DG ECHO, 2010. Mission Report – Floods in Poland.

The MIC requested the deployment of the multinational High Capacity Pumping Module BFC of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which has been mobilised in the course of the Preparatory Action on EU Rapid Response Capability.

The BFC arrived near Polaniec in the evening of 20 May. The three high capacity pumps were assigned and became operational in the early morning of 22 May. It was the first time in history of the Mechanism that a multinational module was deployed to a real-time emergency situation. Interestingly, the module was initially meant to take part in module exercise. Its deployment to the mission in Poland was decided unexpectedly and shortly before the departure. The box below presents more details on the characteristics of the BFC.

### **BaltFloodCombat Module (BFC)**

BaltFloodCombat was a project jointly carried out by the Estonian Rescue Board, Latvian Fire and Rescue Service and Lithuanian Fire and Rescue Department under the Ministry of the Interior of Lithuania within the framework of Preparatory Action on EU Rapid Response Capability, funded by the European Parliament in 2008. The European Commission financed 80% (circa € 655,151) of the costs of the project. The remaining funds came from national budgets<sup>10</sup>. The module was established in 2009 with the aim of creating reliable and efficient national flood response capacity in the three Baltic States, and to establish and register in CECIS a multinational High Capacity Pumping (HCP) module, consisting of commonly trained personnel and up-to-date equipment. The main objectives of the module were:<sup>11</sup>

- to enhance national flood response capacity;
- to strengthen European rapid response capacity in one of the most common types of disasters;
- to show, using an innovative approach, possibilities and ways of multilateral civil protection capacity building; and
- to contribute to furthering the development of civil protection modules.

The entire module is composed of 75 persons (25 from each country). Yet the number of staff deployed on missions has been always smaller. The typical size of a deployed team was 15 persons (five persons from each country). In the case of the Polish operation, the team was composed of 19 people: five Latvians, five Lithuanians and nine Estonians. The team provided three high capacity pumps and seven vehicles in total. Each country assigned one lead manager. The logistic support of the deployed module (camp, kitchen, office and communication) was generally provided by the Estonian Disaster Relief Team.

The European Commission financed 75% of the costs (excluding salaries of member staff) for the mission in Poland. The remaining funds came from national budgets.

Following the deployment in 2010 to combat floods in Poland, the module had been sent on two further missions in Moldova (2010) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014).

The three BFC high capacity pumps operated in various severely affected sites along Vistula River. Initially, the mission was planned to last for eleven days until 28 May but, due to the difficult situation on site, Poland requested a mission extension of another six days. Overall, the BFC pumps were running for 738 hours and pumped out about 246,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water. On 3 June, the module accomplished its mission and departed on the next day.

The Liaison Officer ended his mission on 27 May (national liaison officers remained on site). The same day, Poland requested dryers through the Mechanism, which were designed to dry the walls of flooded buildings. However, no offers were received from Participating States and solutions were explored on the commercial market.

<sup>10</sup> BaltFloodCombat, 2010. Available at:

[http://www.baltfloodcombat.eu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=28](http://www.baltfloodcombat.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=28)

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem.

## 3.2 General evaluation context

### 3.2.1 MIC (currently ERCC)

Among the respondents, there was a consensus that during the 2010 floods, MIC played its role well. It provided immediate assistance and coordinated the communication between Member States in a swift and effective way. It is likely that without the MIC, the risk of duplicating efforts and ineffective communication would have materialised. No interviewee has made any remarks about areas of MIC functioning where improvement was needed. All interviewees expressed a positive view of MIC as a source of information. MIC was considered as a useful information source, especially in the initial stage of a disaster response, i.e. when EU MS learned about the details of the situation in Poland.

Interviewed stakeholders saw some room for improvement in the information flow, but not from/to the MIC. Although accurate forecasts of intense rainfalls were provided by MIC to the Polish authorities, these were not directly transferred to the people working in the field. In this case, MIC transmitted data to the Polish authorities but the information did not reach the local Fire Services.

### 3.2.2 Experts selection and deployment (e.g. CECIS)

In total 260 experts from nine countries were present during the 2010 flood, and 19 of them were financed under the Mechanism.

As BFC was established in 2009, the 2010 floods in Poland was their first task carried out with the support of the Civil Protection Mechanism. Since the completion of their mission in 2010, staff from BFC was taking part in trainings provided through the Mechanism.

### 3.2.3 Modules

The table below presents the key views regarding the context and the functioning of the BFC Module expressed in the brief evaluation report prepared by DG ECHO as well as interviewees consulted during the case study (including BFC staff itself). In general, the assessment was very positive. The BFC team demonstrated high expertise and was adequately equipped (much needed high capacity pumps), self-sufficient and flexible in terms logistical support, ability to change location and the time spent on the operation (the initial duration of the mission was extended).

**Table 3.2 Stakeholder views on the BaltFloodCombat Module**

Area	DG ECHO post-mission report	Key insights extracted during case study interviews
General interaction	Very good interaction and cohesion among the team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 'It was our first mission as a Module so the learning curve was steep but the cooperation was very good<sup>12</sup>'.</li> </ul>
Language capacities	No language barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 'There were some occasional problems in communication but they were really minor'</li> <li>■ 'Language was sometimes a barrier but again, in principle, that was not a big problem<sup>13</sup>'</li> <li>■ 'It was one at first when Poland received support. (...) They assigned English-speaking Liaison Officers to all teams who were keeping contact with local commanders but also with the headquarters. It worked very well<sup>14</sup>'.</li> </ul>
Equipment / interoperability	Excellent equipment, versatile, fully inter-connectable	N/A

<sup>12</sup> Team Leader within BFC

<sup>13</sup> Team Leader within BFC

<sup>14</sup> Liaison Officer from DG ECHO

Area	DG ECHO post-mission report	Key insights extracted during case study interviews
Planning	Weather forecasts produced by the EFAS could not be disseminated among Polish authorities and other Participating States	N/A
Local support	Excellent reception of BFC by the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 'We received phenomenal support from the local community. We were very often offered food and drinks<sup>15</sup>'.</li> <li>■ 'Support from the local community was very positive. We were also appreciated by Polish authorities. On our way back, we stopped in Bialystok where local authorities offered us medals. I was also invited to the Polish Embassy in Riga where I received the Golden Cross from the Polish President<sup>16</sup>'.</li> </ul>
Local support	Appointment of a Project Leader and Liaison Officer for each team was a great asset, ensuring an uninterrupted flow of information with LEMA and prompt resolutions to operational challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 'Cooperation with local authorities was excellent. There was always somebody with us to liaise with local authorities. Local authorities provided us with accommodation in the local school as well as constant access to the Internet<sup>17</sup>'.</li> </ul>
Logistics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 'It was our first mission, we did not have any real experience in terms of logistics<sup>18</sup>'.</li> <li>■ 'The most difficult part was the travelling. We had heavy pumps, several vehicles and the routes leading to the place of deployment were not very well prepared<sup>19</sup>'.</li> <li>■ 'There were some problems with tracks and pumps, we had two car accidents (not serious though). But again, this is normal in the operation<sup>20</sup>'.</li> <li>■ 'We were quite impressed by the composition and also the way how BFC operated. They were very well organised, practically fully independent. They had high capacity pumps and excellent organisational skills. They were even more impressive considering that it was their first common mission<sup>21</sup>'.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.4 Transport facility

During the 2010 floods, only BFC was deployed under the Mechanism. 75% of mission costs, including transport costs, were financed by the mechanism. Assistance from other countries was provided through bilateral agreements and not co-financed through the Mechanism.

<sup>15</sup> Liaison Officer from BFC.

<sup>16</sup> Team Leader within BFC.

<sup>17</sup> Liaison Officer from BFC.

<sup>18</sup> Liaison Officer from BFC.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem

<sup>20</sup> Team Leader within BFC.

<sup>21</sup> Liaison Officer assisting BaltFloodCombat.

### 3.2.5 Other aspects

As part of the lessons learned from the exercises, DG ECHO<sup>22</sup> confirmed that additional modules were created more or less as a consequence of conclusions drawn from the 2010 flooding event in Poland: second High Capacity Pump Module in Poland (2011), High Capacity Modules in Italy (2011) and Austria (2012) as well as Flood Containment Modules in Sweden (2010) and France (2011). In addition, some other countries upgraded the equipment of existing modules. Besides, respondents pointed out that a well-functioning MIC was, however, not enough for the information to reach all the right places. During the interviews, two issues surrounding rising water levels were raised. First, it was noted that the use of pumps made sense only when the level of the river does not rise and the situation remains stable. Second, it was mentioned that information about rising water levels was circulated by the Mechanism, but it did not always reach the people operating in the field.

As a result of the 2010 floods, those who took part in rescue actions had the opportunity to better understand the functioning of the Mechanism. One of the respondents from the central office of Polish Fire Services said: 'We have different types of working groups and periodic meetings for coordinators. The system is evolving all the time - it is a living organism. For example ERCC (previously MIC), operates 24 hours a day and has a well-organised management centre'<sup>23</sup>.

The 2010 BFC operation in Poland was the first rescue mission of a multinational module and therefore all the improvements that were introduced since then were largely a consequence of this first operation. One of the participants from the BFC stated: 'The biggest unexpected risk was traveling from Estonia, Latvia and/or Lithuania to Poland, especially because it was the first mission. Now we have more experience'<sup>24</sup>.

Although without coordination or assistance through the Mechanism, Polish State Fire Services also provided English-speaking liaison officers who were assigned to each foreign team. This was greatly appreciated by the participants and was indicated to be a very useful arrangement.

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<sup>22</sup> Liaison Officer from DG ECHO

<sup>23</sup> Central Office of Polish Fire Brigade

<sup>24</sup> Liaison Officer from BFC.

## **4 Contribution of other Mechanism elements to the effective response to the emergency**

### **4.1 Training programme**

Some of the BFC team members had undertaken several courses before carrying out their operation in Poland. These courses included:

- CMI – Community Mechanism Induction course (1<sup>st</sup> level);
- OPM – Operational Management course (2<sup>nd</sup> level), and;
- HLC – High Level Coordination course (3<sup>rd</sup> and highest level).

The interviews confirmed that these courses were useful, also in the sense that they gave members a better understanding of the Mechanism.

Simulation exercises also helped but only to some degree. As stated by one BFC member: ‘In fact the mission in Poland was quite exceptional. Some colleagues were on different kind of exercises in Finland, Sweden and Ukraine (prior to the mission in Poland), however, exercises mostly related to search and rescue or chemicals-related operations, but not pumping specifically, and we relied heavily on our previous experience and common sense<sup>25</sup>’.

### **4.2 Module Exercises**

No BFC module exercises were carried out before 2010.

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<sup>25</sup> Team Leader within BFC

## 5 Counterfactual scenarios

BFC was the only Civil Protection Mechanism module deployed in Poland in 2010. According to the stakeholders interviewed, the experts who were deployed would have taken part in the 2010 rescue operations without funding from Mechanism. It is, however, difficult to estimate the scale of their involvement had the Mechanism not been in place. Members of the BFC team emphasised that, without the Mechanism, they would have almost certainly not been deployed in Poland as a unified team, but that they might have otherwise been sent on the basis of bilateral agreements, as was the case with teams from other countries.<sup>26</sup>

Interviewees also highlighted that the Mechanism contributed to the management of the Polish floods by collecting and distributing situational analyses. According to the respondents, the assistance from MIC was crucial for obtaining preliminary information on the status of the emergency and the development of the situation. Without MIC's coordination, it is likely that the whole operation would have suffered as various groups operating in different areas would not have had sources providing reliable and timely information<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Liaison Officer from BFC: 'Most of the pumping capacity would have been deployed via bilateral agreements. However, I do not think that our unit would have been deployed.'

<sup>27</sup> Also without the MIC, the awareness about the flood and the deployment of the bilateral assistance would have been probably much less coordinated and hence smaller. This "awareness" among international actors delivered through the MIC was extremely useful in this respect. So it should not be seen that the deployment and funding of the BaltFloodCombat is the only outcome of this case. On the contrary, there was much more than that.'



## 6 Conclusions and lessons learned

### 6.1 Conclusions and lessons learned on Relevance

When requesting assistance, Polish authorities emphasised the particular need for high capacity pumps. The importance of overall foreign assistance provided for disaster response was reflected in the number of pumps provided (see Figure 3.2) rather than human resources, which were adequately available on the ground. In this respect, the assistance provided by the Mechanism was tailored very well.

In addition, interviews did not reveal presence of any communication bottlenecks. The arrangement and deployment of foreign assistance was smooth. Effective coordination of communication by the MIC could therefore be said to have helped avoid duplication of efforts.

There was consensus among interviewed stakeholders about the usefulness and relevance of the Mechanism instrument in the context of the Polish operation.

### 6.2 Conclusions and lessons learned on Effectiveness

As already indicated, the effectiveness of the assistance coordinated through MIC was also reflected in its composition – the emphasis on the provision of high capacity pumps rather than large numbers of staff.

Information exchange between MIC, the Fire Services Headquarters, Local authorities, Local Fire Services and Foreign Units deployed on the ground regarding the weather forecast and possible rainfall could have been more effective. In particular, it was indicated that although MIC was providing accurate weather/rainfall forecasts to the Polish partners at the central level, this information sometimes did not reach the foreign units and local fire brigades operating on the ground.

There was no module exercise undertaken by the BFC module prior to deployment. However, it was acknowledged that procedures used by the BFC in their routine work combined with ad hoc measures proved effective. BFC staff also took part in individual training courses organised by the Mechanism (CMI, OPM, and HLC).

One key challenge indicated by the BFC was transport. Moving heavy trucks and trailers implied the need for major coordination efforts. It was pointed out that assistance from local Police on the way to and from the operation areas was vital.

Indirectly relevant to the Mechanism, one of the main lessons learned was that Liaison Officers deployed by the Polish side, possessing a good command of English and assisting all foreign units during their stay in Poland, proved very helpful.

### 6.3 Conclusions and lessons learned on Efficiency

Financial support covering 75% of the BFC deployment costs was instrumental to the success of the operations. Stakeholders noted that if funding had not been available, the BFC would not have been deployed. In addition, the flexibility of the financing was appreciated. When the BFC was requested to stay longer in Poland, coverage of additional costs was promptly ensured.

In addition, MIC proved to be a very efficient way of coordinating the communication between the Polish side and countries providing assistance. It is possible that the coordination reduced costs by avoiding duplication of efforts and miscommunication. It is highly unlikely that Poland would have been able to set up a system offering functionalities on par with the MIC.

### 6.4 Conclusions and lessons learned on coherence and EU Added Value

In the specific case of BFC, whose deployment was almost entirely financed through the Mechanism, some interviewees argued that the assistance from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania would have been smaller. It is also possible to assume that without the MIC support in the

coordination of foreign assistance, its scale and effectiveness would have been weaker. Positive externalities for the future operations were also indicated by the some interviewees<sup>28</sup>. For instance, the experience gained from the BFC operation in Poland<sup>29</sup> has helped during the recent operations coordinated and financed by the Mechanism in Bosnia and Herzegovina during floods.

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<sup>28</sup> For instance: the Liaison Officer in BFC

<sup>29</sup> For instance: arrangements of the logistics, aspects related to the communication between team members and local authorities, knowledge about key CPM procedures.

## 7 Methodology

As part of the case study, seven in-depth phone interviews were carried out. These interviews were conducted with different groups of actors involved in the 2010 emergency operations in Poland.

The consultations were conducted with the Polish Liaison Officers from the National Fire Services coordinating with the foreign teams deployed in Poland, a representative of the Polish Fire Services from the Headquarters in Warsaw, one Team Leader from the German contingent and two members of the BFC. In addition, an interview with the DG ECHO representative was also conducted.

In select cases, follow-up clarification questions were sent by email.

**Table 7.1 On-site visits**

Name	Role	Location	Date
Rafal Solowin	Coordinator of CPM trainings in Polish Fire Services	Warsaw	Wednesday, August 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2014

**Table 7.2 Telephone interviews**

Name	Role	Institution	Date
Jevgeni Jutkevitch	Liaison Officer	BaltFloodCombat	Friday, August 1 <sup>st</sup>
Kriostas Eklons	Deputy Team Leader - EE/LT/LV	BaltFloodCombat	Wednesday, August 13 <sup>th</sup>
Marcin Janowski	Liaison for Estonian Team	Polish Fire Services	Monday, August 17 <sup>th</sup>
Aleksander Kucharczyk	Vice commander of the Fire Brigade -	Polish Fire Services	Tuesday, August 5 <sup>th</sup>
Markus Obel	Team Leader	German Unit	Wednesday, August 6 <sup>th</sup>
Ionut Lucian Homeag	Liaison Officer	DG ECHO, European Commission	Friday, August 22 <sup>nd</sup>

**Table 7.3 Other stakeholders contacted**

Name	Institution	Date of contact	Reason for refusal
Thorsten Muench	DG ECHO	Early August	No response
Johannes Wachter	DG Regio	Early August	No response
Kestutis Kirsnauskas	BaltFloodCombat	Early August	No response
Lech Lewandowski	Polish Fire Services	Early August	No response
Beška Mazurek	Polish Fire Services	Early August	Personal reasons
Jaroslawn Lecki	Polish Fire State Services	Early August	No response

**Table 7.4 Documents reviewed**

Reference	Description
CRED EM-DAT, "Country Profile Poland", July 2014	Natural disaster database for Poland
CRED EM-DAT, "International Disaster Database", July 2014	Natural disaster database
DG ECHO, 2010. Mission Report – Floods in Poland.	Annual activity report for the Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO)
"Three decades of floods in Europe : a preliminary analysis of EMDAT data"	Draft report for the WHO on flood disasters
BaltFloodCombat, <i>Our 2<sup>nd</sup> task is a huge challenge for us in Moldova</i> <sup>30</sup> .	Description of the BaltFloodCombat Module
MIC messages	Two MIC message reports from 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2010
One week with BaltFloodCombat	Report by Ionut Lucian Homeag after a visit to Poland in 2010
NATO – Floods in Poland Situation Report	EADRCC Situation Report from 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2010

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.baltfloodcombat.eu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=28](http://www.baltfloodcombat.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=28)