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## FACTS & FIGURES

The Centre operates around-the-clock and can deal with several emergencies in different time zones

It provides **improved coordination** between the Brussels-based European institutions, national authorities in EU Member States, and other international partners

Since 2001, the Centre coordinated assistance **more than 300 times** in response to activations of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism

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## European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

# Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)

### What is it?

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) is the heart of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and coordinates the delivery of assistance to disaster stricken countries, such as relief items, expertise, civil protection teams and specialised equipment. The Centre ensures the rapid deployment of emergency support and acts as a coordination hub between participating states, the affected country, and civil protection and humanitarian experts. The Centre operates 24/7 and can help any country inside or outside the EU affected by a major disaster upon request from the national authorities or a UN body.

### Why is this important?

A well-coordinated response to natural and man-made disasters at European level can avoid duplication of relief efforts and ensure that assistance is tailored to the needs of those affected. To lessen the burden on contributing states, the Emergency Response Coordination Centre can liaise directly with the national civil protection authorities of the country in need and can also financially support the delivery of civil protection teams and assets to the affected country.

## How are we helping?

### Civil protection cooperation and development of EU emergency response capacity

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) has a fully staffed and trained duty system. Around-the-clock presence ensures real time monitoring and immediate reaction day and night.

The centre manages a reserve of pre-committed assistance from participating states that can be immediately deployed. Participating states may commit resources on standby in a pool, ready to be deployed as part of a faster and more coherent European response when the need arises. The quality of the response is ensured through the establishment of quality criteria and a certification process.

The centre can identify eventual gaps in the panoply of European assistance and propose how these gaps can be covered, through financial support from the EU. Under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the Commission can co-finance transport costs, thus enabling delivery of assistance to the country affected within a few hours with lower budgetary impact on those offering the assistance. Pooling shipments to the affected country boosts the efficiency of the European response.

In addition, the EU decided in 2017 to strengthen the collective European response to disasters via the development of a reserve capacity known as rescEU and to be used as last resort when Member States' capacities are already fully used.

### Coordination platform for civil protection and humanitarian aid

The centre improves coordination between civil protection and humanitarian aid operations. It maintains a direct link to civil protection and humanitarian aid authorities in EU Member States enabling real-time exchange of information. It ensures deployment of coordination and assessment teams composed of humanitarian aid and civil protection experts to conduct joint needs assessments.

### Enhancing crisis response coordination at European level

The centre ensures cooperation and coherence of EU action at an inter-institutional level, focusing on coordination mechanisms with the European External Action Service, the Council and EU Member States. It also acts as the central 24/7 contact point when the Solidarity Clause is invoked.

It also provides emergency communications and [monitoring tools](#) through the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS), a web-based alert and notification application enabling real time exchange of information.

### 2018 forest fires in Sweden

Following forest fires in Sweden in July 2018, the centre coordinated the deployment of seven planes, six helicopters, 67 vehicles and over 360 personnel from Italy, France, Germany, Lithuania, Denmark, Portugal and Poland. In addition, the Commission co-funded €1.15 million of transportation costs and the Copernicus programme produced close to 40 satellite maps.

This response was the biggest EU Civil Protection Mechanism forest fire operation of the last decade in Europe. In terms of personnel deployed, it was the single biggest forest fire operation since the creation of the Mechanism back in 2001.

### 2018 forest fires in Greece

In reaction to deadly fires in east Attica, Greece requested assistance on 23 July 2018. The EU response through the Mechanism consisted of one ground forest firefighting module (firefighters and vehicles) from Cyprus, two fire fighting planes from Italy, two from Spain and two planes from Romania. In addition, eight Copernicus satellite maps of affected areas were produced.