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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 all EU Member States, the 6 additional Participating States and the UK during the transition period, 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 man-made disasters and natural hazards 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 EU Member States, Participating States and the UK during the transition period, that can be immediately deployed. These countries 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 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 operational costs, including 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 2019 the EU strengthened the collective European response to disasters via the development of a reserve capacity, known as rescEU reserve, 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.

First activation of rescEU reserve in 2019 to fight forest fires in Greece

In August 2019, Greece was confronted with significant forest fires on the island of Evia and requested assistance to the Emergency Response Coordination Centre for additional aerial firefighting assets. Following activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the EU response saw the first ever mobilisation of the rescEU reserve. Three planes, two Italian and one Spanish, were dispatched to the island of Evia. Close cooperation between EU Member States was crucial in battling the fires, saving people, a nearby village and a protected forest in the process.

Response to Marine Pollution

Since 1978, the EU has played a vital role in the response to marine pollution and today its role has become even greater with the response coordination ensured by its Emergency Response Coordination Centre.