

Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network

Dear Reader,



The Swedish Presidency of the European Council starts in a troubled time, when Europe faces more frequent and severe disasters and crises of both natural and man-made origin. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to challenge European preparedness and response. Climate change is happening here and now, with an increasing number of extreme weather events as a consequence, and the COVID-19 pandemic is still a reality. Both citizens and responsible authorities may experience 'crisis fatigue'. Against this backdrop, there is a need to emphasise and strengthen resilience at both Union and member state level.

One of the distinguishing features of these parallel long-lasting, cross-sectoral and cross-border crises is that they all require a truly whole-of-society approach in order for them to be managed effectively. While civil protection authorities in member states, participating states, and at EU level are at the forefront of the response to such crises, there is a need to broaden the perspective in our work on prevention, preparedness and response, and to involve more actors in society. To strengthen overall societal resilience, actors including individuals, civil society organisations, and the private sector need to be brought more fully into our civil protection systems.

This is well in line with the overall priorities of the current Presidency trio (France, Czech Republic and Sweden), which has placed considerable emphasis on various aspects of resilience, solidarity and effective disaster preparedness and response, with a particular focus on cross-border interdependencies and vulnerabilities, the impact of climate change, preparedness and response to long-term emergencies.

We will kick-start our Presidency with the Civil Protection workshop on 17-18 January in Stockholm under the theme 'Whole-of-society resilience', investigating the role of the individual as well as the private sector. Both of these have tremendous potential to be strong partners in crises and preparedness. It is clear that populations need to be increasingly engaged in crisis preparedness efforts. In order to be prepared for and handle long-term crises, individuals need to consider their own preparedness. For instance, this might involve having access to basic supplies and equipment at home to cope in situations where vital societal functions are disrupted.

Let me also take this opportunity to share some activities under the framework of the Knowledge Network. First of all, the project NEMAUSUS will present its final conclusions in April. The project aims to make a blueprint for centres of expertise in various types of risks under the motto 'connect, share and grow'. MSB will also host the second meeting of directors of civil protection and firefighting schools. I look forward to meeting you in Sweden!



Charlotte Petri Gornitzka
Director General
Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)

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Happy first anniversary Knowledge Network!



Julia Stewart-David speaking at the EU Civil Protection Forum in June 2022, © EU

The Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network has just turned one! Launched in December 2021, the Network took its first steps in a global context where knowledge-sharing between civil protection and disaster risk management policymakers, scientists, and practitioners is more important than ever. We spoke with **Julia Stewart-David**, acting Director for Disaster Preparedness and Prevention at ECHO, to reflect on the first year of the Knowledge Network and anticipate the many more yet to come.

Julia, the Knowledge Network's first year has been a busy one. Has it been as you expected?

Well, professionals in civil protection and disaster risk management know the dangers of defining the expression 'as expected'! Little did we know when we launched the Network formally last year that we would be facing one of the largest, most complex and multi-sectoral set of activations under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) ever in 2022. The interdependencies of our societies are all the more reason to make sure that we have systems that operate well together at all levels, especially by ensuring that the vital ingredient of shared expertise and knowledge exchange is well supported.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and while the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine is still raging, the Network is being shaped around serious challenges facing European civil protection. We, as the Commission and the UCPM participating countries, have set our ambition together and put in place strong foundations for the years ahead. The Network has boosted core activities – for example, the new civil protection training programme with its increased offer of accessible online courses; new visibility tools for projects; and bridging the gap between the civil protection first response and scientific expertise, each with the common purpose of strengthening disaster risk management.

What else can I say? ... I am proud to celebrate the Network's first anniversary!

So what has the Knowledge Network been working on concretely?

First of all, my recognition goes to the Knowledge Network Board Members. Since its initiation, the Board, made up of representatives from the UCPM member and participating states, has been able to facilitate positive cooperation, exemplified by the approved Knowledge Network [Strategic Plan 2022–2026](#). We decided on concrete activities – ranging from workshops to a knowledge library – bringing science and research even closer to the UCPM. The Network's in-person and online events, project support, training, exercises, and other community-focused activities are all strengthening the UCPM at the grassroots level. It is important to me that the Network flourishes as a dynamic space to connect, based on active participation from the grassroots up.

These closer relationships and close cooperation between the UCPM countries allow us to boost information sharing between national platforms and websites, as well as the Knowledge Network [platform](#). We have strengthened our relationship with key stakeholders throughout the year – projects, training partners, the science base, and of course the individual members of the civil protection and disaster risk management community, including the youngest and newest professionals!

What else have we done in 2022? The ongoing Knowledge Network partnership projects were busy. They brought together 80 different organisations from 32 countries to take part in activities ranging from strengthening regional cooperation in facing floods, to protecting cultural heritage when disasters occur. I am also very much looking forward to the gathering of several working groups of the Knowledge Network, such as those under the capacity development and science pillars, which will begin their work early this year.



The Knowledge Network stand at the exhibition accompanying the 2022 European Civil Protection Forum, © EU

Where has the Knowledge Network community been focusing its efforts in 2022?

Our community has been busier than ever these past 12 months. Efforts have been focused on capacity-building projects, UCPM exercises, tested capacities, and systems to be prepared for crises. An impressive range of scenarios have been exercised, like the full-scale exercise [DOMINO](#) on chemical risks and marine pollution and the EU MODEX [search and rescue](#) field exercise in Austria, that focused on rescue following a major earthquake. A peer review mission also took place in Romania, the results of which will be available early this year.

UCPM training got back to face-to-face delivery this year, with major added value for participants, and specialist training like the burns assessment teams [training](#) course supported the essential work taking place when a major incident strikes.

What about sharing our news and opportunities to meet and make connections?



Participants of the workshop on digitalisation of civil protection training at the 2022 European Civil Protection Forum, © EU

On the communication front, our online platform and newsletter are sharing the news and stories that matter most to the Knowledge Network community. I am always very interested to learn the experiences of experts and colleagues that make up our vibrant community, like [Captain Laurent Alfonso](#), a civil protection expert seconded to the Union for the Mediterranean from the French Ministry of Interior. It is also good that we can use the various 'International Days' to share information from and with the community via the Knowledge Network. This gives us a chance to put the spotlight on specific topics like [firefighting](#), [marine pollution](#), [tsunamis](#), and [volunteering](#).

New developments are coming to the online platform, too. Discussion spaces and thematic groups will be available at the start of 2023, and the knowledge library will arrive later in the year. The online platform and newsletter are built around readers' needs. It is a pleasure to see how they are gradually changing from information tools to collaborative spaces, with community members taking more and more ownership and sharing their news with peers.

2022 allowed us to finally get back to what we treasure most, meeting in-person. The European Civil Protection Forum allowed us to do just that, with a Knowledge Network exhibition stand and two workshops on expert training (the focus of which was, ironically, back in the digital sphere!) and on the use of data and science for understanding and reducing risks. The exhibition stand was a hub to meet, share information, and build contacts – exactly what our platform aims to replicate in the online space.

As part of the European Year of Youth, we organised a study visit for representatives of the next generation in civil protection. 47 young people from 25 countries who are interested or already working in civil protection and disaster risk management came together in Brussels for an intensive two days of learning, and left with a deeper knowledge base and all-important new connections.

The scale of the challenges will be just as big in 2023. How is the Knowledge Network going to respond?

What are our plans for next year, and the year after that? It is all hands on-deck to make sure that our vision is put into action. In short, our capacity-building and prevention work will be boosted. We have put closer links in place through our funding between existing Knowledge Network partnerships and [prevention and preparedness](#) projects. We also plan to publish an integrated call, making funding opportunities more coherent, accessible, and open to a broader community.

There's major news on the training front: the new UCPM training programme will be launched in 2023, with targeted training pathways for experts aiming to be deployed under the UCPM and those working on a national level. More online training will also be on offer. Keep an eye on the UCPM training [page](#) for news as we roll out the new programme.



Julia Stewart-David addressing participants of the UCPKN Youth Event held in Brussels in October 2022, © EU

We will also bring back the summer school on evidence-based policy making in disaster risk management, where we'll be bringing together scientists and technical and political decision makers, and aiming to draw them out of their comfort zones to work on solving specific and pertinent problems.

Our biggest ambition for the Knowledge Network is to ensure that it is truly built both for and by the community: to make it clear that it belongs to you. This means the continuity of successful training, projects, and science and knowledge-sharing activities to enhance stability and sustainability, and new knowledge-sharing activities to come. The limits are only set by you, the Knowledge Network community. I know that we are up to the task ahead and can't wait to continue our journey together as the Knowledge Network grows.

Lastly, 2022 ended in the best way possible with our EU civil protection mechanism "family" gaining two new members. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania have joined us in the UCPM as participating countries. A huge welcome to both countries from the Knowledge Network!

Spotlight on the Science Pillar



Dan Chirondojan, © EU

In the interview below, **Dan Chirondojan**, the Joint Research Centre's (JRC) Director for Space, Security and Migration shares his views on how the Science Pillar of the Knowledge Network has been developing and what the future holds.

It has been one year since the Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (DRMKC) was designated as the cornerstone of the Science Pillar of the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network. What has changed since then, and how has this impacted the work of the DRMKC?

Indeed, in November 2021, the Commission formally established the Knowledge Network and referenced the [DRMKC](#) as the core building block of the [Network's Science Pillar](#). Throughout 2022, the Science Pillar mainly integrated and consolidated the knowledge and services already available in the DRMKC suite.

With the establishment of the Knowledge Network, the DRMKC – the first Knowledge Centre of the European Commission – became a Knowledge Centre for the member states and participating states. This was an important step for a Commission Knowledge Centre, the full recognition and trust of member states and setting the model for a science-policy interface at the EU level.

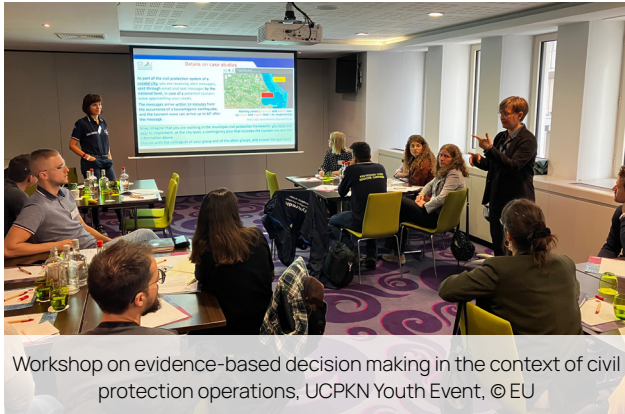
Can you give examples of specific initiatives developed as part of the Science Pillar action plan?

Of course. Major developments and new features were implemented in 2022, among them the [Risk Data Hub](#), which is now a cornerstone of the Science Pillar roadmap. Other products like a new user interface, new disaster loss and risk dashboards, and a user corner to support member states with their climate adaptation actions and risk assessment needs were developed too. There is also now a prototype for shared [terminology on Disaster Risk Management](#), which has been developed with various European Commission departments such as ECHO, RTD, HOME, as well as UN agencies like the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and World Health Organization (WHO). Good progress was made in supporting the development of the Union Disaster Resilience Goals. And building on the DRMKC's experience with the [Project Explorer](#) and [Gaps Explorer](#), a collaboration between the JRC, ECHO, and DIGIT will very soon give rise to the Knowledge Library on the Knowledge Network online platform.



JRC employee using the Risk Data Hub, © EU

Many of the Knowledge Network initiatives you mentioned involve cross-sector collaboration. JRC and ECHO seem to have several common projects.



Workshop on evidence-based decision making in the context of civil protection operations, UCPKN Youth Event, © EU

That's right. The Knowledge Network is a joint effort between all the members of its Community of Practice, and everyone plays a critical role. We are pleased to work regularly with ECHO, often on implementing events and capacity-building initiatives. The Knowledge Network stand at the Civil Protection Forum, or the workshop on science advice to policy making at the 'Youth in Civil Protection and Disaster Risk Management' study visit are good examples.

Last year's DRMKC Annual Seminar in Paris (hybrid), co-hosted with the French Ministry of Interior and co-organised by ECHO and the JRC, is another good example. Participants shared best practices and challenges across areas like risk communication, disaster resilience goals monitoring, and

DRM science operationalisation. This was one of the highlights of the year for the Science Pillar.

I must highlight, too, that the JRC will be teaming up with ECHO in drafting the Knowledge Network newsletter, whose science section will include, from now on, content we used to share in the DRMKC newsletter. As our communications will also align for this purpose, I foresee more chances for cooperation and, as a result, a stronger EU arising from the intersection between civil protection and disaster risk science.

What can we expect from the Knowledge Network and its Science Pillar for 2023?

The Plan of Action of the Knowledge Network Science Pillar foresees two phases. In 2022, it integrated and consolidated existing knowledge from the DRMKC. Now, we are transitioning to the second phase – identifying and integrating scientific activities and knowledge available within member states and participating states.

For instance, we will look at how to better and more closely engage with Horizon Europe projects working on multi-hazard risk assessment, cross-border risks, societal resilience or risk communication. This will require plenty of engagement of the scientific and disaster risk management communities, and I look forward to the interactions and opportunities this period will bring!



Participants of the workshop on the use of data and science in disaster risk management, European Civil Protection Forum, © EU



Participants of the workshop on the use of data and science in disaster risk management, European Civil Protection Forum, © EU

Views on the UCPM from Bosnia and Herzegovina



Samir Agić, © EU

Bosnia and Herzegovina [joined the Union Civil Protection Mechanism](#) on 6 September, becoming its 7th Participating State. We met Bosnia and Herzegovina's Director-General for civil protection, Dr. Samir Agić, at the Ministry of Security in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

What are your first thoughts after joining the Mechanism?

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of the individuals and institutions who participated in the process of accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the UCPM, as a fully-fledged member.

Since this process took us several years to complete, I want to use this opportunity to thank all the colleagues in ECHO, headed by the previous Director-General Paraskevi Michou, the current acting Director-General Michael Köhler, and Commissioner Janez Lenarčič for their unconditional support throughout this process.

What does membership of the UCPM mean for Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Thanks to membership of the UCPM, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to increase its capacities in prevention, preparedness and response to natural disasters and emergencies. Our participation will also allow us to contribute to the joint response of the EU Civil Protection structure to any challenges that lay ahead.

This also reinforces opportunities for our commitment to the EU path of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By joining the UCPM, Bosnia and Herzegovina will use this opportunity to align with the rules and procedures of the EU in the area of civil protection, and to build political and institutional credibility and capacity for participation in the multilateral framework for civil protection. This will also further strengthen Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitment to full membership of the European Union, which is recognised as a strategic goal in the Foreign Policy Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018–2023.

In your opinion, how can Bosnia and Herzegovina contribute to the UCPM now or in the future in terms of capacities, knowledge and expertise?

Bosnia and Herzegovina started preparations for membership of the UCPM in 2014. In this regard, significant efforts have been made with the aim of strengthening the capacity of civil protection. This is particularly reflected in the preparation of planning documents in accordance with the methodology and directives of the European Union. Various teams were trained thanks to projects financed by the UCPM.

In the coming period, Bosnia and Herzegovina will do its best to justify the trust given to us by the UCPM members, to demonstrate that it is a reliable partner and that it will actively participate in the segments of the Mechanism's work.

In your opinion, in which area can the Mechanism support Bosnia and Herzegovina the most?

Over the years, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been affected by various different types of disasters. Several times, based on a Decision of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have requested international assistance through the UCPM. The existence of the policy framework and procedures for offering assistance and the necessary resources within the UCPM ensured successful coordination and operational support to Bosnia and Herzegovina while dealing with disasters.

In addition, having the possibility to participate in UCPM training and international exercise programme is of great importance, to increase the interoperability of our teams.

Membership of the UCPM will provide significant resources for natural or other disasters, the possibility to participate in the calls for application for prevention and preparedness projects, reimbursement of transport costs or other types of costs incurred when deploying civil protection forces to another country to respond to requests for international assistance, access to the Exchange of Experts programme, and more.

Views on the UCPM from Albania

Albania joined the [Union Civil Protection Mechanism](#) on 18 November, becoming its 8th Participating State. We met Director-General of the national civil protection agency, **Haki Çako**, to talk about what's next for Albania and the UCPM.

What does membership of the UCPM mean for Albania?

With membership of the Mechanism, we will be better positioned to receive international assistance in cases of natural disasters, and Albania will also play an active role in the European civil protection system.

It is my belief that through applications for projects, we will have the possibility of strengthening the capacities and achieving the appropriate standards in technology, modern tools and equipment, training and certification of the Albanian teams that will interact with the European teams in cases of natural disasters and those caused by the human hand.

Last but not least, this will enable us to raise interaction and cooperation between the National Operational Centre and the Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre, based on European best practices.

In your opinion, how can Albania contribute to the UCPM now or in the future in terms of capacities, knowledge, and expertise?

My answer is related to exchanging experience from previous years, such as the earthquake of 2019 with the four different phases of emergencies, looking at the good recovery phase and gaps in the reaction phase as well as the comparison of the situation of the pandemic that happened only a few months after the earthquake.

The second contribution that I would see from Albania is exchanging experience deriving from drafting the national Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy, as well as national Law 45/2019, which includes innovations like the 4% that the central government makes available to municipalities to support them with prevention activities, as well as local government initiatives in the field of civil protection.



Albania can also share engineering and research expertise in various fields, such as landslides, weather events, geographic information systems (GIS), seismology, health matters, and hydro expertise. We could also make available to the Mechanism some Operational Structures that can help countries in case of disaster.

What are three main lessons learned for Albania after the earthquake in 2019 and how can membership of the Mechanism help?

We had gaps in several areas, just to mention a few: Standard Operating Procedures for all structures as well as for the different phases of the emergency; necessary equipment and tools for this type of disaster; lack of trained and certified teams for urban search and rescue (USAR) and for other support and responsive structures; lack of a central coordinating and well-organised structure as National Civil Protection Agency, that currently exists and is active.

I would see the main benefits of membership as gaining access to support and EU expertise for the fulfilment of Standard Operating Procedures according to the nature, stages and level of civil emergencies. In addition, we can benefit from strengthening of logistic capacities and contemporary technology, training and certification according to EU standards of USAR and other teams, and consolidation and standardisation according to EU procedures of the National Civil Protection Agency.

Common Agricultural Policy funding in disaster prevention



Silvia Michelini, © EU

Rural development policy, the so-called second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), has an important role to play in disaster prevention. We explore this interesting angle with Silvia Michelini, Director for sustainability in the European Commission department for agriculture and rural development.

It may seem unusual to bring agricultural policy into the Knowledge Network, but we think that it can be very relevant, especially in disaster prevention. So how can agricultural policy support disaster prevention?

You are very right to bring agricultural policy into the Knowledge Network! In fact, agricultural policy can help prevent natural disasters in agriculture and forestry and can support the restoration following such events, so thank you for this opportunity to expand on this!

Since 2000, EU member states have allocated funds to prevention and restoration measures under "Rural Development", the so-called second pillar of the CAP, through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

EU rural development policy is based on a carefully prepared strategic approach that links measures for farmers, and local actions in rural communities, to important priority goals at national and EU levels. The new CAP for 2023–2027 will continue to support the future of agriculture and forestry, as well as achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal. The [budget allocated to EAFRD for the period 2021–27](#) amounts to € 95.5 billion.

Can you give some examples of the types of action that can receive funding, or have already been funded?

We have many interesting examples of measures funded. To mention just a few...

In Slovakia, with rural development we have funded the [restoration](#) of a deteriorating forest road and the construction of a wooden lookout tower in order to protect 1 500 hectares of forest from forest fires and an [anti-flood and fire-fighting](#) reservoir.

In Germany, support was used to help [prevent forest fires](#) in the forest of Brandenburg.

In Greece, a voluntary rescue team used [LEADER](#) support to obtain equipment so that volunteers could [respond to a wider range of incidents](#) and also raise awareness among the local population about volunteering.



Withered sunflower plants due to the drought in the region of Rhône-Alpes near Lyon, © EU

This is very interesting. So funding for disaster prevention is also available from the agricultural budget, not only from the crisis response department ECHO?

Indeed! With the CAP, EU member states can support preventive and restorative actions against natural disasters and catastrophic events, including forest fires, with support covering up to 100% of the costs. Depending on the needs identified in the CAP Strategic Plans, this can include investments in preventive infrastructure and preventive practices as well as risk management tools. In the forestry sector, EU member states also have the opportunity to support investments in preventive infrastructure like forest paths, tracks, water supply points or firebreaks as well as preventive forestry practices like vegetation control, grazing or diversification of vegetation structure.

Let's say I have a project proposal in my region, a rural area – how would I be able to identify funding opportunities?

Firstly, you could identify funding opportunities in the CAP Strategic Plan of the EU member state you are interested in. All the approved CAP Strategic Plans can be found [here](#).

For further information, contact the Managing Authority of the CAP Strategic Plan in the EU member state. A Managing Authority is usually the national or regional government body responsible for implementing the CAP.



Polish firefighters providing support to France as part of UCPM operations, © EU

In the framework of UCPM legislation, EU member states are developing national or regional risk assessments. These should be cross-sectoral processes for risk identification, analysis and evaluation. Are these assessments used to identify priority actions for prevention in rural areas?

When preparing their CAP Strategic Plans, EU member states carried out a comprehensive 'SWOT' analysis, looking at Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This allowed them to assess their needs in line with the objectives of the CAP, including risk management analysis. For the SWOT analysis, member states used the EU common context indicators, as well

as other quantitative and qualitative information like studies, evaluation reports or sectoral analyses.

Can we ask a question about monitoring/follow-up from the Commission to the EU member states? For example, is there an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of the measures? Does AGRI draw a catalogue of good practices in disaster prevention across Member States financed under rural development which could be a source of inspiration for others?

For us, assessing the performance of our policy is key to demonstrate the progress made and assess the impact and efficiency of the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plans. This is why we set up a common performance, monitoring and evaluation framework.

On their side, member states will monitor and report annually to the Commission on the progress made on the achievement of their planned milestones and targets. They also have the obligation to evaluate their CAP Strategic Plans during implementation and afterwards to improve the quality of the design and implementation of their plans. Each member state must set up a national committee to monitor the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plan, including representatives from national, regional and local authorities, economic and social partners and bodies representing civil society.

On the Commission side, we closely monitor implementation, and will carry out evaluations on the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and Union added value of the CAP taking into specific indicators and information provided by the member states.

Finally, I think it's very important to share knowledge and good practices. We have created the EU CAP Network, a forum through which National CAP Networks, organisations, administrations, researchers, entrepreneurs and practitioners can share knowledge and information (like via peer-to-peer learning and good practices) about agriculture and rural policy. Have a look at the website [here](#).



Floods can affect both cities and rural areas - An aerial view of the flooded Fischbeck, near Stendal, eastern Germany, © EU

Study visit for the 'Next Generation' in civil protection

One of ECHO's main activities during the European Year of Youth, a study visit on 'Youth in civil protection and disaster risk management', was aimed at the emerging generation of people working in these areas.



Among the participants were professional and volunteer firefighters, students, medical volunteers, civil protection officers, desk officers, advisors, a marine biologist, IT experts, military staff and police officers. In total, 47 participants representing 25 UCPM member and participating states were there, along with trainees from ECHO.

"It was interesting to see so much diversity in terms of countries, culture, and backgrounds: we are university students, volunteers, civil protection professionals. We all have different perspectives," said Martina Capriotti, a marine biologist and volunteer from Italy.



Participants came from all over the UCPM countries and had many areas of expertise. © EU

The study visit gave the emerging generation of the UCPM community a chance to connect with others to learn about the UCPM, share their experiences of working in civil protection, and grow their networks.

A busy programme included sessions on different elements of the UCPM, such as training and exercises, early warning systems, workshops on inclusion and diversity and on science, and a visit and simulation exercise at the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) – the favourite activity of many of the participants.

For Samuel Jost from the Technical University in Graz, Austria, there was a lot of new information. "I was not familiar with the UCPM before, but I learned so much about it here," he said.

The event was rounded off with a plenary, where UCPM experts shared their reflections and advice for participants as they establish or continue their involvement in the UCPM.

CERIS DRS 'State of Play' event, 7–10 November 2022

The Community of European Research and Innovation for Security (CERIS) Disaster Resilience Societies (DRS) State of Play event was very successful and effective, in terms of networking and project synergy-building. Over 560 participants and more than 30 projects discussed various DRS topics, including disaster resilience and insurance, societal resilience, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats, health risks, technologies for first responders, and standardisation. The event also had 'project-to-policy' sessions, which European Commission departments for crisis management (ECHO), migration and health emergencies preparedness (HOME) and the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) took part in.

The wide range of participants and projects once again represented the great value of this type of event for networking, clustering and synergy-building purposes, and allowed for a lot of different presentations. CERIS will consider the possibility of project clusters that represent different DRS sub-areas organising regular thematic workshops in the future, keeping one major annual CERIS DRS State of Play event in Brussels. CERIS 2023 agendas for the different thematic areas of the Civil Security for Society programme should be established by the end of January 2023.



Events and networking bring a wide range of expertise on resilience together. © EU

To learn more about forthcoming events, visit the [CERIS website](#).
To read the presentations from the event, go [here](#).



FROM THE COMMUNITY

Innovative European project 'ProCultHer' protects heritage in the event of a disaster

The protection of cultural heritage is becoming increasingly important in the framework of disaster resilience. As recently shown by the media, events such as earthquakes and fires can destroy cultural heritage. For example, an earthquake caused the collapse of the Basilica of Saint Benedict in Norcia in 2016, while fires in France destroyed the Notre-Dame Cathedral in 2019 and Nantes Cathedral in 2020, and the eruption of the Cumbre Vieja volcano in 2021 on the island of Palma, Spain destroyed numerous churches. This cross-sectoral theme therefore concerns not only cultural preservation, but also the tourism, economy, education, security and civil protection sectors.

Since 2019, the Italian Civil Protection Department has been coordinating two projects financed by ECHO, 'ProCultHer' (2019–2021) and 'ProCultHer-NET' (2022–2023). Both projects aim to improve the protection of cultural heritage before, during and after a crisis.

The ProCultHer programme has made it possible to:

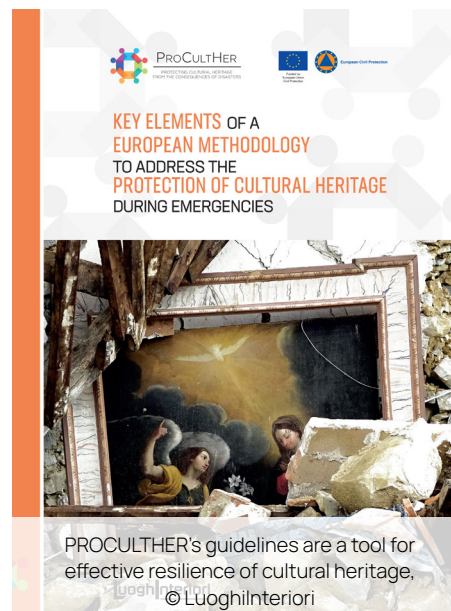
- draft a [manual](#) entitled 'Key elements of a European methodology to address the protection of cultural heritage during emergencies';
- set up a training programme;
- propose a heritage protection module that can be deployed in the event of a disaster.

In a complementary approach, the ProCultHer-NET programme plans to:

- strengthen the various parties involved in this issue (ministries, universities, and research centres, but also associations and non-governmental organisations);
- publish newsletters and information bulletins;
- strengthen the tools available to stakeholders;
- propose a training module for disaster risk managers and cultural heritage protection experts from EU member states and UCPM member and participating states.

In France, this dynamic has strengthened and accelerated cross-ministerial work (e.g. Ministries for the Interior, Culture, and the Armed Forces) at the national level. It has also supported existing work between the regional directorates in charge of cultural affairs, museums, libraries, and the fire and rescue services. Finally, it has valued the work of associations and volunteers. At present, drafting of a national doctrine to reinforce the protection of cultural heritage is planned. This will develop dedicated applications to ensure the traceability of works and innovative equipment, and continue to reflect on and improve the protection of heritage in times of war.

As a result, this relatively new theme has highlighted a European project that was initiated by Italy, but which more and more countries have joined after understanding its significance. The Union for the Mediterranean has also shown interest, and is considering making it an instrument of cooperation.



You can find more information at [ProCultHer](#) and [ProCultHer-NET](#).

Preserving cultural heritage in Ukraine: an urgent need



Different actors are getting involved in the protection of Ukraine's cultural heritage, © ICCROM / MiC / DAI/E. Goetting

In response to the war in Ukraine, the EU has mobilised its largest emergency operation since the creation of the UCPM. Support to protect the country's cultural heritage has highlighted [ProCultHer-NET](#) as a new player in the international chessboard for protection of conflict-prone cultural heritage. ProCultHer-NET partners have longstanding and extensive experience in the protection of cultural heritage in disaster-prone areas, and have decided to respond to the request made by Ukraine for international support through the UCPM.

The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property ([ICCROM](#)) is among the international actors most involved in the country. Actions include a [resolution](#) adopted in May, online training sessions for heritage organisations and professionals, and a joint assessment mission to Ukraine with the International Council for Monuments and Sites ([ICOMOS](#)) and the International Alliance for Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas ([ALIPH](#)) in July.

Italy was the first country to respond to the request sent through the UCPM's Common Emergency Communication and Information System by Ukraine's Ministry of Culture on 24 March 2022. The Italian Civil Protection Department, as UCPM contact point, coordinated the aid and ensured the flow of information among the Mechanism's ERCC, the Italian Ministry of Culture, and the Ukrainian authorities, who were fine-tuning their request for material assistance for the protection and transport of cultural assets.

The logistics network, set up by [KulturGutRetter](#) (KGR), the [German Archaeological Institute](#) (DAI), and the [Federal Agency for Technical Relief](#) (THW), delivered 242 pallets/35 tonnes of material to 13 cultural institutions from Kyiv, the Donetsk region, the Sumy region and Chernihiv through the UCPM, and more shipments are planned.



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In this rapidly changing international context, ProCultHer-NET took up and consolidated the advocacy actions initiated by the [ProCultHer](#) project, and fed into the debate on EU actions in the field of cultural heritage protection in crisis contexts, as witnessed by its participation in the 'Roundtable on the EU's Approach to Cultural Heritage in Conflict and Crises', organised by the EU Institute for Security Studies and [Culture Solutions](#) in Brussels.

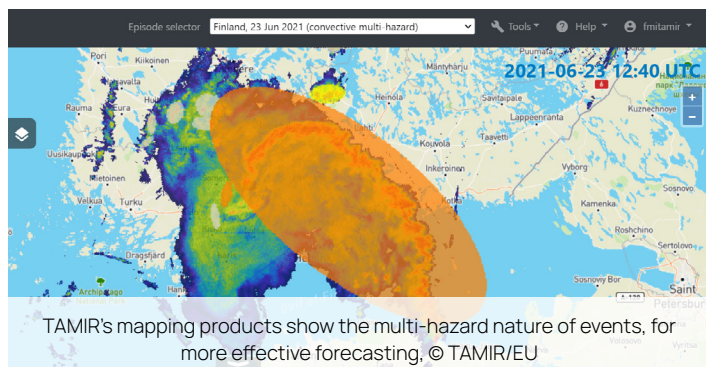


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As stated by Mr Helly, Co-founder/Chair of Culture Solutions, "Ukraine's heartfelt plea for help in protecting the country's heritage has led to the recognition that the safeguarding of cultural heritage, which is often the object of deliberate attacks, is also a form of protection and resilience for affected communities. The actions of ProCultHer-NET partners in support of Ukraine might be perceived from the outside as drops in the ocean compared to the huge needs of this country. However, they are valuable components of the new – and still to be strengthened and better coordinated – EU approach to cultural heritage in conflict and crises."

In this framework, the UCPM and the Knowledge Network could serve as a driver for the expansion and development of international exchange and support practices in this field.

From hazard to impact forecasting with TAMIR



While flash floods and thunderstorm predictions are already available from traditional early warning systems, they don't always provide sufficient information to help emergency response decision-making before and during severe weather events. The 'Advanced Tools for pro-Active Management of Impacts and Risks induced by convective weather, heavy rain and flash floods in Europe' (**TAMIR**) project has created a solution. The project aimed to address three challenges faced by civil protection authorities in relation to severe weather events: high false alarm rates, lack of a multi-hazard forecasting system with

simultaneous risk assessment, and challenges in translating hazard forecasts into impact estimates. It was co-financed by the UCPM's [prevention and preparedness programme](#).

On a pan-European scale, TAMIR developed flash flood hazard and impact forecasting tools based on radar observations, weather forecasts and exposure data combined with hydrological modelling. The forecasts extend from current time to five days ahead, and are updated hourly. Precipitation-type forecasts were used to improve

We need tools, such as those developed by TAMIR, to optimise and better mobilise all our resources.

Maria Fernanda Arbáizar Barrios,
Head of Civil Protection Service,
Autonomous Community of the
Region of Murcia, Spain

the hazard level estimation, effectively reducing false alarms of flash flood events during snowfall episodes. In assessing impact levels, different types of exposure data were applied, including population density and critical infrastructure. These products are delivered as experimental through the [European Flood Awareness System \(EFAS\)](#) platform, a data sharing dissemination mechanism that also enables their visualisation on local platforms.

On a regional scale, the project demonstrated convective storm impact nowcasting (up to 45 minutes ahead) with a five-minute update cycle. This tool is based on radar measurements, other observation sources (such as lightning sensors), and weather forecast parameters,

which are combined with high-resolution vulnerability and exposure data using machine learning techniques. These high-resolution multi-hazard nowcasts enable, for example, a local emergency responder to more easily visualise the potential impact at town level.

The TAMIR products were co-designed with users through workshops, questionnaires and product testing. Prototype products were generated for six case studies suggested by stakeholders, with a tabletop exercise conducted to assess the added value of the TAMIR products compared to existing information systems.

User feedback informed a follow-up project, Early Warning Demonstration of Pan-European Rainfall-Induced Impact Forecasts (EDERA), which will be another UCPM activity. EDERA aims to provide an improved strategy for combined flood impact forecasts across Europe, and to further enhance the service by allowing users to customise the impact forecasts.

TAMIR impact probability nowcasting tools enable us to get better situational awareness a few hours before the storm arrives.

Tero Vanhamaa, Chief Executive
Officer of the Emergency
Services Department,
Kymenlaakso, Finland

Videos [presenting the project](#) and the [TAMIR tools and user experiences](#) are available.

RESILOC project provides new tools to support communities' resilience



Disaster preparedness and societal resilience are of increasing relevance to decision makers. The Resilient Europe and Societies by Innovating Local Communities ([RESILOC](#)) project, funded by Horizon Europe's DRS cluster, identified new strategies to improve preparedness processes in local communities against any kind of hazard. The project brought together the experiences of local communities and the strategies of national and supra-national actors to achieve a tangible impact on the way resilience is understood and increased in the communities. RESILOC completed its activities at the end of November 2022, having developed a holistic framework of studies, methods, and software instruments.

The overall output of RESILOC is a solution that enables communities to assess their local resilience and develop strategies to improve it. The solution is based on:

1. Sustainable civic engagement by organising Local Resilience Teams (LRTs);
2. Assessment of community resilience using a framework of indicators operationalised in innovative cloud tools;
3. Development of local resilience strategies, adopting a holistic and multi-stakeholder approach.

RESILOC developed specific tools, validated in five communities across Europe, for different size, geographic and socio-economic characteristics:

- [A process for civic engagement](#) that organises relevant stakeholders into LRTs. The process provides a method for training local representatives and involving them in local resilience assessment exercises which include the definition of indicators and collection of data. The baseline for this process has been formally approved by the Council of Europe.
- [A framework for the definition and use of Dimensions, Indicators and Proxies \(DIPs\)](#) that helps communities to operationalise resilience based on their locality and circumstances. Localisation is achieved through the definition of local features (such as Relevance and Targets for Proxies) and is supported by community managers, technical experts, and the LRTs themselves.
- [A suite of technical solutions](#) that supports community managers and LRTs to collect data and organise it for running their own local resilience assessments. It includes the RESILOC Inventory, designed to support the communities with storing and organising data related to the [six resilience dimensions used in RESILOC](#) (environmental, disaster risk reduction, infrastructure, governance, economic, and social).

Additional tools developed by RESILOC are a theory-based survey on adaptive behaviour (to assess the less tangible aspects of resilience); an online survey tool that allows LRTs to collect primary data at community level; an app to connect citizens; a tool to scan social media traffic for relevant keywords; and GDPR-compliant sensors to track and record the movement of masses in exposed areas. The collected data is merged into the [RESILOC Platform](#), which supports local managers to assess their own community resilience across the six dimensions. The Platform produces graphical outputs as a baseline for comparing local resilience strategies and for applying 'What if?' scenarios to identify the most effective measures of local risk governance and resilience strategies.

You can find more info on the [RESILOC website](#).

INEGMA-E²: Methodology, tools and an expert pool for evaluation of EU civil protection exercises



Well-designed and comprehensive evaluation plays a crucial role in civil protection exercises. Documenting good practices and shortcomings ensures that training exercises reflect the changing needs and priorities of the civil protection community. By systematically capturing lessons learned during exercises, evaluations become central to the further development of the capabilities of all responders in the UCPM and its neighbouring countries to deal with real disaster scenarios.

The EU International Network of Evaluators and Guideline for a Methodological Approach in Exercise Evaluation (INEGMA-E²) project builds on a new standardised approach to independent evaluation. It aims to reach a new level of exercise evaluation that meets high standards in terms of documentation, replicability and targeting. It does this by:

- developing a strong and versatile evaluation methodology for different types of civil protection exercises;
- exploring the existing tools used for data collection and analysis during exercise evaluation, and developing a new tool;
- creating an international pool of evaluators supported by a training concept.

So far, INEGMA-E² has analysed existing evaluation methodologies, and conducted a literature review and expert interviews. These provided the background on exercise types, evaluation concepts and methodologies. To better understand end user requirements, two workshops with experienced evaluators took place. These activities have guided the design process for the evaluation tools that will be developed. Work to identify evaluator skill sets has started, and will be finalised with the design of a training concept for exercise evaluators and a virtual pool of evaluators. Results from INEGMA-E² are continuously presented through scientific publications in order to contribute to the academic discussion on exercise evaluation.

INEGMA-E² has presented its results to the EU civil protection community at the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week in Geneva, the Disaster Research Days in Austria, and the Nicosia Risk Forum in Cyprus. UCPM exercises in 2022 were also used to present results and collect feedback from practitioners. The INEGMA-E² team took part in the [DOMINO FSX](#) in France, the [BALANCE FSX](#) in Montenegro, and the [PROFOUND](#) exercise in Hungary. The results from workshops and discussions during these events will feed into project activities and deliverables. With this early integration of the project into EU exercises, INEGMA-E² aims to establish itself within the civil protection community to benefit from the experiences of evaluators and bring out added value.

Over the next few months, more work will be done on evaluation tools, a training concept, and establishing an evaluator pool. INEGMA-E² will share further results at the first [Research for Civil Protection Congress](#) in Germany in January 2023 and the [FORMATEX23](#) exercise in Austria in September 2023.

For further information, see [here](#).

The essential role of national experts in ECPP certification

La Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna and the National Red Cross hosted a group of 16 civil protection experts for a training course on 17–18 November 2022. The course objective was to equip them with the skills and knowledge they needed to participate as peer certifiers in the certification of response capacities offered to the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP).

The course was funded by ECHO and organised and delivered by the Civitas Soteria consortium. It focused on soft skills, as well as assessing mock response capacity in simulated and simplified table-top and field exercises. The active involvement of the Italian technical assistance and support team personnel as trainers and players provided strong added value. Before attending the course in-person, participants followed a 'briefing' webinar.

In my capacity as Director of this first Training Workshop for Peer Certifiers, I noticed that this initiative contributed to creating a unique team-spirit among the participants, and the feeling of being part of an important tool through which UCPM activities will become more effective, credible and visible.

Andrea de Guttry, Full Professor of Public International Law, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna

The workshop is a very good opportunity to standardise the methodology of approaching the certification mission and clarifying the different phases in which the certifiers are involved. The participants, over the two days, were encouraged to exchange experiences and to cooperate in problem solving.

Alberto Boanini, ECPP Certifier and Trainer, Italian Technical Assistance and Support Team (TAST)

In total, 50–60 civil protection experts will be trained in three successive training courses like this one, with the next ones held in February and March 2023.

Peer certifiers are all civil protection experts nominated by their national civil protection authority. They must be familiar with the UCPM, and each have field(s) of expertise, be it forest fire-fighting, USAR, water-related events, CBRN, etc.

Peer certifiers are at the core of the certification process because their peer regard on the modules and capacities' procedures and working dynamics allow fruitful and enriching dialogue between civil protection operators from different European teams. Their work and the support they provide to the certifying capacities throughout the whole certification process is a true learning exchange experience on the field. It enriches both the certifying team and the peers, as well as their national systems.

After being heavily disrupted by the COVID-19 crisis, ECPP certification activities have now resumed as normal, and the time has come to train newly-nominated peer certifiers to fulfil their role in ECPP certification. This process entails three successive steps: a consultative visit, participating in a table-top exercise, and participating in a field exercise. A peer certifier is assigned for each response capacity. This peer-to-peer approach has proven essential for the effectiveness and credibility of the ECPP certification, which provides assurance that the response capacity is fit for international deployments under the UCPM.

For Emergency Medical Teams and USAR teams, the ECPP quality assurance relies exclusively on the WHO and International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) classification, respectively.

For more information, contact: ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu

Disaster Research Days 2022: Bridging science, research and practice in civil protection



Science and research play an essential role in disaster prevention and building resilient systems. The transfer of scientific knowledge into practice and continuous collaboration with experts from civil protection authorities, response organisations, and industry are crucial for addressing all stages of disaster risk management and preventing hazards from turning into disasters.

From 13–14 October, 170 researchers, practitioners, and policy makers met at the University of Innsbruck to focus on this vital discussion at the [Disaster Research Days 2022](#). They presented and discussed state of the art knowledge, exchanged their ideas, and aimed to jointly advance all aspects of disaster risk management.

This yearly event, organised by the [Disaster Competence Network Austria \(DCNA\)](#), has become a beacon for disaster research, and aims to transfer knowledge and technology from science to practice, and vice versa. This was also one of the first and most prominently debated topics in the opening panel discussion, which brought together representatives from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, the Regional Government of Tyrol, the Austrian Red Cross, and the Austrian Fire Fighting Association. On 13 October, International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, the event continued with a keynote presentation from the UNDRR.

Overall, more than 50 contributions were presented in seven thematic sessions and an elevator pitch session. These included the latest research results on natural hazards (such as flood, rockfall, avalanche, and earthquake risk), but also the protection of critical infrastructure and use of new technologies in civil protection. Moreover, attendees at the event discussed state of the art science on transboundary risk and infectious diseases, as well as risk and crisis communication. Finally, they also considered scientific scepticism, and the parallels it draws to challenges faced in disaster risk management.

The event once again made it evident that it is indispensable to have translation channels, such as the Disaster Research Days, in which state of the art knowledge can be discussed at the same level of understanding; and, on the other hand, how crucial it is that civil protection organisations continue to expand their innovation literacy, which is only possible through continued cooperation with science and research.

Christian Resch, Managing Director, Disaster Competence Network Austria

The consensus of the event was the importance of continued cooperation between science, research and disaster management professionals; increased education and training activities to support innovation in civil protection; and targeted communication channels to facilitate bridging science, research and practice.

On 12–13 October 2023, the Disaster Competence Network Austria will conduct international Disaster Research Days, focusing on cross-border aspects of civil protection. This will initiate a national conference on 11–12 September 2023, 'Fachtagung Katastrophenforschung', in Leoben, Austria. The conference will aim to strengthen translation of science to practice, and celebrate five years as a national knowledge network.



LEARNING

Training supports burns assessment teams to respond to burn mass casualty events



Teamwork and coordination is essential for effective on-going patient care,
© Shitij Ramkisoen/Visual Artz

Mass casualty incidents resulting in burn injuries present some unique challenges. The burn management of those injured requires specialist skills, expert knowledge, and timely availability of specialist resources. With simple yet effective standardised approaches to burn care in mass casualty incidents, patient outcomes can be improved, and local health system capabilities for burn care strengthened.

Burn Assessment Team development and implementation has been recognised as a priority.

A three-day UCPM-focused Burn Assessment Team training course, delivered by an expert faculty from a consortium led by [Interburns](#), took place in the Netherlands, bringing together five European burn assessment teams. Throughout the training burn assessment teams familiarised themselves with essential EU policies and UCPM procedures and the European Burn Response Plan, and immersed themselves in a full-day mass burn simulation exercise.

Five teams from five countries/regions (Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland/Norway, Italy and Norway) participated in this simulation. Each team had an experienced burn surgeon, nurse, burn anaesthetist or intensivist, and a coordinator. With only a relatively small cohort of clinical and logistical burn expertise globally, these teams are essential in supporting the coordinated up-scaling of such expertise and burn care capacity during a European response.

A very, very impressive course. I really feel that I have gained a lot of understanding of how the European system works, and I feel much better prepared for a potential future mission. I sincerely hope that this course will continue for a long time and be provided to many colleagues throughout Europe.

Burn Assessment Teams training participant



Mannequins were used to simulate differing types and severity of burns for participants, © Shitij Ramkisoen/Visual Artz

The teams were tasked with undertaking a secondary triage assessment of multiple burn victims following a fire disaster, making decisions on the patients' ongoing care and helping local teams to determine the priority of each for transfer to available regional burn beds. Mr Stian Kreken Almeland, Burns Surgeon and European Burns Association Vice President, explained that the training aimed to "get the teams to be able to undertake a secondary assessment of burn patients, and support decision making with local teams regarding onward care and transfer in a mass casualty situation".

The next Burn Assessment Teams training courses will take place in the Netherlands on 27-29 March 2023. Participants in this training are nominated by [National Training Coordinators](#).

Personally, I liked how we kept our morale up. It was really good, and I learned a lot about how people [the teams] interact with everyone, and that's different per country.

Burn Assessment Teams training participant

You can find out more on the [EU Burn Assessment Teams portal](#)

Staff Management Course ends current UCPM training

A cold and snowy Tallinn in Estonia gave a warm welcome to the Staff Management Course (SMC) from 3–9 December, the final training course of the 18th cycle of the UCPM training programme.

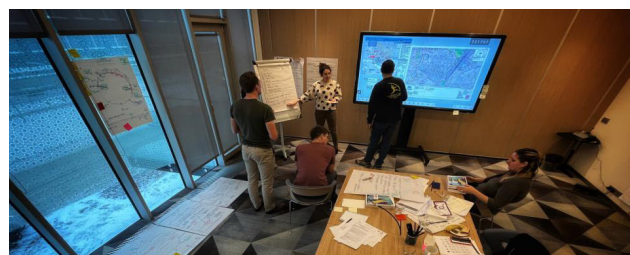
Eighteen participants from fifteen different countries learned how to set up and organise different staff functions and working processes within a team, all with a purpose to create right conditions for effective teamwork and successful UCPM mission.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), together with the Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) and the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (EASS), developed and have delivered the SMC since 2016.

The SMC course trains participants to adapt and apply teamwork and leadership skills in realistic mission scenarios, stimulating participants to make decisions based on their understanding and critical reflection of the context and situation that they would face during a deployment.



Participants in the last Staff Management Course, 3-9 December 2022. © Peter Holmström, MSB



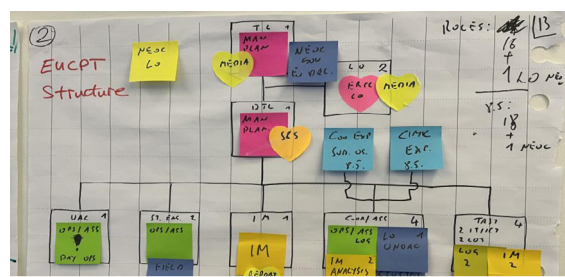
Participants in the SMC learning how to organise different staff functions and working processes within a team, © Peter Holmström, MSB

I found this to be a rather special course, with in-depth work on processes, not only on the outcomes. There was also a refreshing emphasis on questioning the 'why' of things. The focus on soft skills with close personal follow-up and feedback by coaches was most welcome.

Leire Alonso Vicinay, who attended the course as the ERCC Liaison Officer

Peter Holmström from MSB College in Revinge, the SMC Course Director, explains the 'Puzzle' that's applied by learners throughout the course: "mandate, resources, environment and time. This helps training participants to learn and apply 'no one size fits attitude', needed for successful international operations from UCPM teams."

Teamwork and leadership topics will be reinforced in the revamped UCPM training programme when it restarts in 2023. While the SMC will not continue as a stand-alone course, staff management and soft skills will be an integral part of several different courses in the 'deployable' experts training pathway.



The dynamic course had participants working on staff management and soft skills, © Peter Holmström, MSB

Huge congratulations and thanks to all the training centres, course directors and course staff, lecturers, trainers and coaches, National Training Coordinators, and most of all, the thousands of participants who have been part of the UCPM training programme. We're looking forward to continuing our learning together next year with our even bigger and better programme!

Hana Kolić, coordinator of the UCPM training programme at ECHO

You can find more information about the UCPM training programme on [the Knowledge Network platform](#).



'November 12' Earthquake Moment Exercise 'Drop - Cover - Hold on (to life)'

At 18:57 on 12 November 1999, a devastating earthquake struck the town of Düzce in Türkiye. More than 800 people lost their lives, and a huge amount of damage was caused.

To mark the anniversary, the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) of Türkiye organised the 'November 12 Earthquake Moment Exercise', a major public earthquake drill. The drill had the theme 'Drop - Cover - Hold on (to life)'.

Part of Türkiye's 'disaster resilient society' vision, 'Drop - Cover - Hold on (to life)' was announced through phones, TV, and radio on 12 November at 18:57, the exact time of the Düzce earthquake. At that moment, citizens received an alert about the earthquake drill and were invited to join the 'drop, cover, hold on' instructions to learn vital information about what to do if they ever find themselves in an earthquake situation.

As well as phone alerts, TV and radio channels also aired the warning, and announcements were made by municipalities and mosques affiliated to the central warning system. Minister of Interior Affairs Süleyman Soylu, who directed the exercise from the AFAD Disaster and Emergency Management Center, said: "All people including governors and local administrators participated in the exercise which focused on vital right behaviour during earthquakes 'drop, cover, hold on'".

The Minister asked people to spare a moment to take part in the drill. "I request them to take a moment to ask themselves what they would do if an earthquake takes place suddenly, and test their 'drop, cover, hold on' practice," he said.

Türkiye is in a region prone to frequent and intense earthquakes. To reflect this, Türkiye made 2020 the year of preparedness for disasters, 2021 the year of disaster education, and 2022 the year of disaster exercises.



Across schools, workplaces and public spaces, people practiced the earthquake drill of 'drop-cover-hold on'. © Anadolu Agency (AA)



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

Modules Table-Top Exercise in France

The [third Modules Table-Top Exercise](#) took place on 26–30 September 2022 in Valabre, France. Participants practiced in a scenario that combined forest fires with a chemical incident in southern France. The participants tested their knowledge on EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) international response procedures and coordination of deployment with an EU Civil Protection Team (EUCPT), in collaboration with the local authorities of France, who participated as role-players. This style of exercise offered a great opportunity to practice these procedures in an easily observable and assessable environment.



Modules Table-Top Exercise in Croatia

The fourth [Modules Table-Top Exercise](#) took place from 24–28 October 2022 in Divulje, Croatia. It was conducted at the Regional Education Centre for Civil Protection and used a scenario where an earthquake caused forest fires, due to collapsed high-voltage power lines and coinciding weather conditions (dry with the regional strong wind, 'bura'). 27 participants from 12 different countries took part, including 20 Modules, five EUCPTs and two TAST members.

BALANCE full-scale exercise in Montenegro

The full-scale earthquake preparedness exercise [BALANCE](#) was successfully implemented on 10–14 October 2022 in the Boka Kotorska Bay of Montenegro. The scenario involved a high magnitude earthquake that could not be handled by the local and national civil protection forces of Montenegro. The UCPM was activated in the exercise, with European countries deploying rapid response teams to reinforce search and rescue operations in the affected area. The Ministry of the Interior of Montenegro coordinated the exercise and civil protection organisations from nine different European countries participated. In total, more than 600 civil protection stakeholders took part in the numerous multidimensional aspects associated with the scenario.



EU MODEX Cycle 12 call for tenders launched

The 'EU MODEX Cycle 12' call for tenders - Exercises on Civil Protection Modules, Other Response Capacities, Technical Assistance and Support Teams, and European Union Civil Protection Teams - was opened on 28 December 2022.

The purpose of the call for tenders is to select contractors that will design, plan, conduct and self-evaluate specific tabletop and field exercises (EU MODEX) for civil protection modules, other response capacities, Technical Assistance and Support Teams (TAST) and European Union Civil Protection Teams (EUCPT) deployable in missions under the UCPM, deployable in mission under the UCPM, inside or outside the EU.

For details go to [Commission's eTendering Portal](#).

EU MODEX tests seaquake and tsunami rescue capacities



What happens when a seaquake strikes offshore to a heavily-populated coastline? An EU MODEX field exercise tested this scenario in the Setúbal Peninsula of Portugal, to see how USAR teams and equipment work together in an international response situation. In this article, we share a testimonial from a Portuguese participant of the observer's programme.

28 November was a gloomy day in the history of Portugal. The country was hit by a tsunami, caused by a major seaquake of 7.1 magnitude. The majority of the infrastructure in the Setúbal Peninsula was severely damaged: water, gas, electricity, and communications were disrupted. Dozens of people were missing. Overwhelmed by the consequences of this disaster and its cascading effects, the Portuguese Government decided to request international assistance through the UCPM. The last time this West European land witnessed a natural disaster of such dramatic dimensions was in November 1755, leading to the reconstruction of Lisbon as we know it today.

For Portugal, this exercise is important because it allows us not just to receive other teams and be more collaborative and interoperable with other modules, but also to train ourselves as a host nation requesting international assistance.

André Fernandes, National Commander of the Portuguese National Authority for Emergency and Civil Protection, November 2022

The scenario described above was what the international teams and I faced as soon as we arrived in Seixal. Thankfully, there had been no seaquake, nor any real widespread damage to the infrastructure. Everyone was safe – this was a European Module Exercise (EU MODEX) to train USAR modules within the scope of the UCPM. Participating in this EU MODEX in Portugal as an observer, I felt not only like I was faced with a real natural catastrophe, but also like I was able to learn about an international deployment. Most importantly, this turned out to be a real eye-opener for me as a Portuguese citizen, as I experienced first-hand how my national authorities interact with each other and coordinate with international actors in times of crisis. It did not take long for me to feel a strong sense of pride in my country's Guarda Nacional Republicana (GNR), as it outstandingly – and committedly – hosted this exercise.

More than 500 civil protection experts were involved in this EU MODEX from 29 November–2 December, an uninterrupted 48-hour exercise to test the 24/7 capacity of the modules and other response capacities. There were some 'time jumps' to close the loop of some events and cover all the major phases of the simulated intervention. Daily briefings took place to discuss logistics, the last operational period, and the following 12–24 hours.

As in any other EU MODEX, the exercise personnel had different functions: coach/trainers followed the participating modules and were responsible for monitoring their operation; safety officers were in charge of checking the location/venue objects prior to the start of the scenario; an ERCC liaison officer interacted with the international teams to bring in the realism of reporting; role players tested the ability of the participants to engage with operational and tactical level representatives from local authorities and with high-profile personalities; there were also classifiers, evaluators, and – of course – many role players representing the injured. The exercise tested interoperability, coordination, self-sufficiency, ability to communicate and report, and evaluation and improvement of standard operating procedures.

Four modules came together in the exercise: SEEBA Heavy, a German Heavy USAR module; EST MUSAR, an Estonian Medium USAR module; ERICAM, a Spanish Medium USAR module; and an ESP-01 RPAS Spanish Remotely Piloted Aircraft System module.

An important element in this exercise was the reclassification of the Estonian Medium USAR following its classification by INSARAG in 2015. Another highlight was the visit of the Secretary of State for Home Affairs of Portugal, Patricia Gaspar, who received a warm welcome from the staff and participants.

For Bruno Lopes, GNR and Deputy Venue Manager, logistics was the biggest challenge. "Almost 600 people were involved in this exercise. It is complex to arrange accommodation, transport, and meals for everyone," he said. Planning started six months before the exercise, and the local population was informed not to be caught by surprise.

The main purpose of EU MODEX field exercises is to test the performance of the modules in different environments and provide learning opportunities for participants. In light of this, 'injects' (where something unexpected for the teams occurred) happened at different times, in reaction to the progress and response.

We are doing this for our citizens, our population.

Patricia Gaspar, Secretary of State for Home Affairs of Portugal, November 2022



The exercise depicted the destruction caused by a seaquake of 7.1 magnitude, © GNR

Host Nation Support tabletop exercise in Amman, Jordan



Host nation support exercises are a challenging and information-packed introduction to coordinating UCPM support, © Daniel Bointner

More than 60 civil protection experts from 12 countries brought their experience to the EU Host Nation Support tabletop exercise in Amman, Jordan. The exercise was conducted in cooperation with the Jordan Public Security and Civil Defence Directorates and funded by the EU.

Host nation support is about testing the processes and procedures in place to host international teams deployed under the UCPM. When a country requests assistance from the UCPM, host nation support is about their ability to respond to the needs of the EUCPT and modules that will be deployed: from customs procedures and logistics, to water supplies and communications.

There is a special place for host nation support training, as Geir Ellingsen, Project Officer from ECHO explains: "While every deployment is unique and different, host nation support is common to all deployments and is something that we can actually prepare and train for. That's why our preparedness activities are aimed at the neighbourhood countries as well as the UCPM member and participating states. This is a very relevant training opportunity, so we are very happy that Jordan was willing to take this opportunity to train and to host this exercise."

The Host Nation Support tabletop exercise took place over several days. On the first day of the 'disaster' – an earthquake scenario with cascading effects – the participants assessed and analysed the situation. The need for international assistance was identified, and request for assistance under the Mechanism made. Following that, the national response and arrival of response teams from the EU were exercised. The second day of the tabletop exercise focused on what would have been 'disaster day seven'. The longer a mission runs, the more need for local support there is, and host nation support comes into its own.

In this tabletop scenario, three UCPM skeleton modules were on-site: Medium Search and Rescue (MSAR) from the Czech Republic; Water Purification (WP) from Hungary; and an Emergency Medical Team (EMT) from Romania. Mixing types of module like this adds complexity, since they all have their own specific needs under host nation support.

Other 'virtual' modules kept the host nation support cell busy with additional needs.

The implementation of virtual reality together with the online e-learning course were the innovations of the project EU host nation support. Visualisation of complex situations for tabletop training is of great importance to get the 'feeling' of a real mission.

Project Director, Dr Bogdan Pop.

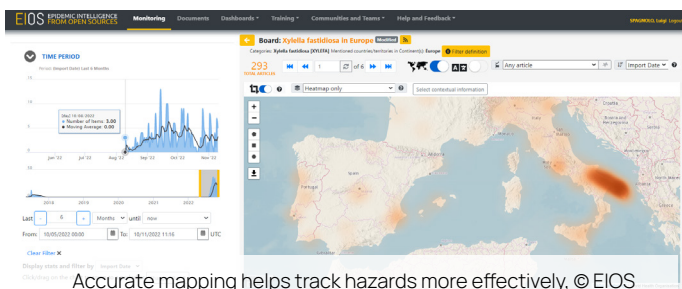
A highlight of the exercise was a visit from Secretary of State, Dr. Raed Arafat, and acting Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Mrs Angela Martini.

"A very successful training – we could offer the participants a new and challenging learning experience. Thanks to our dedicated exercise staff, highly motivated participants, and the massive contribution of the Jordan Civil Defence Directorate, we could conduct a challenging exercise here in Amman successfully," said Project Manager, Josef H. Riener.



SCIENCE

Commission-supported initiative for Epidemic Intelligence at the Paris Peace Forum



We all have recent experience of the devastating and far-reaching effects that a global pandemic can have on our lives and livelihoods. Diseases spread faster than ever due to travel and trade, and a local outbreak can rapidly become an international threat.

Quickly gathering as much intelligence as possible, including from informal web sources, is crucial to plan an effective response. The sooner we can detect a risk, the faster we can act with targeted countermeasures

and get prepared (by stocking medical equipment or vaccines, for example). This will help to eventually reduce the impact on society and economies.

That is what the [Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources \(EIOS\)](#) initiative is about. Led by the [WHO](#), and [supported by the DRMKC](#), the initiative brings together public health authorities worldwide for collaborative early detection and monitoring of public health risks. The aim is to cover human, animal and plant health, according to the '[One Health](#)' principle.

The JRC designed and built a system which scans selected online news sources for potential health threats, and makes the information available through a web platform for health experts to further disseminate and analyse.

This platform currently hosts over 50 organisations and networks and more than 1 000 governmental and non-governmental users from across the Member States, with various mandates and responsibilities.

EIOS at the Paris Peace Forum

The fifth edition of the Forum focused on the theme 'Riding out the Multicrisis', and put forward transnational solutions, initiatives and debates as examples of resilience, solidarity and innovation. In this context, the Forum has recognised the valuable global impact that the EIOS initiative has already had.

EIOS allows public health authorities in all WHO Member States to take advantage of state-of-the-art technology, and helps us move towards a world where we react to identified health threats 'so early and rapidly that they have zero impact on lives and livelihood'. This steadily expanding capacity for Epidemic Intelligence not only benefits the Member States who join the initiative, but also contributes to increased global resilience by leveraging in-country knowledge and experience for the benefit of all.

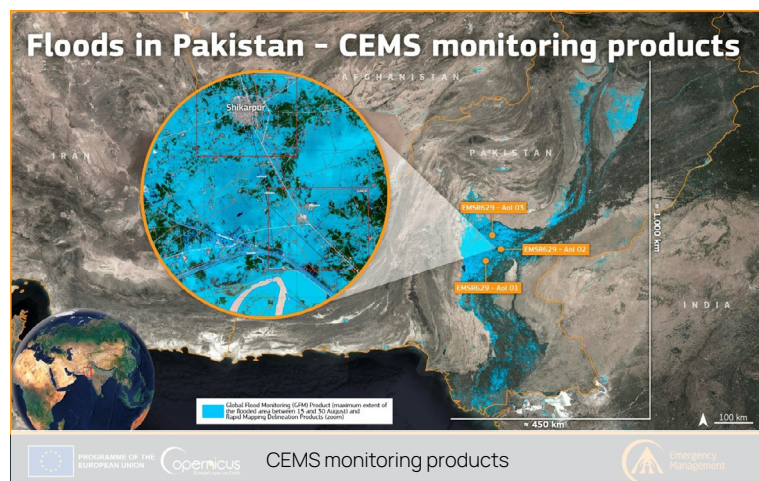
What's next?

The EIOS system is currently used by the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#) to support their Epidemic Intelligence activities. From next year, it will be also part of the arsenal of tools the European [Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority](#) will use to fulfil its mandate to 'prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to health emergencies'.

The JRC will continue to add more capabilities to the EIOS system, especially in artificial intelligence and integration with other platforms, such as the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (HERA) department's own system, and other tools used by the Commission.

- The EIOS initiative at the [Paris Peace Forum](#)
- WHO public webpage on the [EIOS initiative](#)
- [e-Poster](#) on the JRC's development of the EIOS system

2022 Copernicus Emergency Management Service (CEMS) General Assembly: Innovations in the pipeline



The 2022 CEMS General Assembly presented its participants with a comprehensive view on the first 10 years of operations, current status and future of the [Copernicus Emergency Management Service](#), tracing its evolution from precursor research projects to future innovations. A large number of CEMS users, representatives of the JRC and other European Commission Directorates, experts and scientists joined the event.

New functionalities in mapping products

After steady growth in the use of its products and services in recent years (caused in part by a series of very challenging periods in terms of the

number and magnitude of wildfires), the [mapping component](#) of CEMS will make a significant step forward in 2023. The three main innovations in mapping that will be deployed in the coming months are:

- new situational reports for rapid mapping activations;
- a new aerial component (used for the first time in November during the [mudslide](#) in Ischia, Italy);
- the activation process, which will be more user-centric.

Innovations in flood detection systems

On CEMS' early-warning dimension, the new Global Flood Monitoring (GFM) tool has been introduced successfully, and represents a game-changing development in CEMS' capacity to monitor and support flood responses worldwide. Using data from the synthetic aperture radar onboard the Copernicus Sentinel-1 satellites, which is available regardless of cloud cover or time of day, the GFM provides automatic detection of flooded areas, developing maps in less than 8 hours following image acquisition.

Drought assessment updates

A new version of the [Combined Drought Indicator \(CDI v.2.0\)](#) was also introduced in 2022, providing more accurate estimates and a better representation of drought risks and impacts. In light of the [severe drought crisis that has hit Europe](#), the [European and Global Drought Observatory](#) products and reports received – and will likely continue to receive – plenty of media attention.

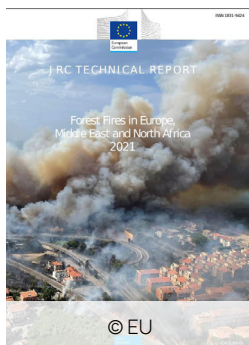
Innovations in forest fire monitoring

Some new European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) features were presented at the CEMS General Assembly, including the continuous evaluation of fire danger trends in the EU and in neighbouring countries, the [estimation of wildfire emissions](#), and the potential soil erosion after wildfires. Additionally, the [Wildfire Risk Viewer](#) has been added to the [EFFIS portal](#).

Exposure mapping: a new product since 2022

In 2022, CEMS witnessed the introduction of its third component (alongside mapping and early-warning) with the roll out of the [Exposure Mapping products](#). The JRC, together with the Directorates-General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS) and Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO), aims to further develop the scope of the Global Human Settlement Layer (GHSL) using Copernicus Sentinel data. GHSL is a dataset that details the breadth and extent of human settlements worldwide in the form of built-up, population density and settlement maps.

European Forest Fire report shows three of the worst fire seasons on record took place in the last six years



In late October 2022, the JRC published the latest edition of its [Annual Report on Forest Fires in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa](#). The report focuses on 2021, and provides harmonised information and an assessment of the effects of forest fires in the pan-European region, based on information gathered at national level and shared with the JRC during the year for data comparison purposes.

The report concludes that, in terms of the burnt area, the 2021 fire season was the second worst in the EU since records began in 2006. More than 5 500 km² of land burned – over twice the size of Luxembourg – and over 1 000 km² burned within protected [Natura 2000](#) areas, the EU's reservoir of biodiversity. The 2017 fire season, with over 10 000 km² burned, was the worst.

According to data from the [European Forest Fire Information System \(EFFIS\)](#), the fires of 2022 have been even more destructive than those of 2021. This report is part of a series of annual reports, which allow having past wildfire seasons as a reference when analysing preliminary data on the impact of wildfires in a given year. With this perspective, 2022 looked even worse, confirming the worrying destructive trend of recent years.

In fact, an area covering over 8 500 km² burned in 2022. This is one of the largest areas scorched by wildfires in Europe, setting new records in nine EU countries. In total, since the worst fire season on record in 2017, 35 340 km² – an area larger than Belgium – has been scorched by wildfires. About 35% of the total area burned (more than 11 600 km²) was in the Natura 2000 network area.

Although in 2022 the area burned by wildfires has been particularly extensive, the number of human casualties has been minimised thanks to prevention measures implemented by EU member states and the [UCPM](#). In 2021, the EU further strengthened the Mechanism by increasing its aerial firefighting capacity to assist countries during the fire season. This stronger capacity is coordinated by the [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) of the [European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Office](#). The JRC offers support by providing timely information on fires in progress, helping to ensure that EU-funded aerial support is deployed where it is most needed. This support was used extensively during the fires that hit the Mediterranean region in 2021 and 2022.

Do you know a good practice for wildfire risk awareness in Europe?

The 2022 wildfire season confirmed a worrying upward trend in intense wildfires, with more wildfire events and more hectares of forest burnt than in previous years. Climate change is expected to further worsen this trend. UCPM member and participating states have recently called on the European Commission to support efforts to prevent wildfires. The European Commission has put forward a [Wildfire Prevention Action Plan](#), composed of ten actions that aim to improve capacity, knowledge and financing opportunities for wildfire prevention actions.

Action 4 of the Wildfire Prevention Action Plan aims to further enhance citizen protection, preparedness and prevention of wildfire risk through **collection of good practices on raising wildfire risk awareness in Europe**.

Do you have any good examples of a wildfire risk awareness initiative, such as a campaign or any other successful activity, that has raised awareness of wildfire risk and/or increased citizens' preparedness?

If so, please share it with us **by 6 February 2023**. Submissions will be reviewed and then showcased via the Knowledge Network, as well as being presented in a dedicated event.

For further information on how to submit best practices in the field of wildfire risk awareness, please complete the online [EUSurvey - Survey \(europa.eu\)](#) or contact ECHO-CP-PREV@ec.europa.eu.

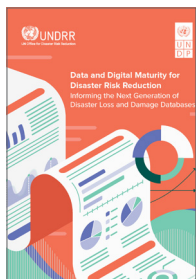
NEW RESOURCES

EU CBRNe Glossary

The [EU CBRNe Glossary](#) is the official EU glossary on chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive risks (CBRNe). It is an information tool developed by the European Commission for practitioners in CBRNe management and response.

Now available: e-learning course on Disaster Prevention

The [on-line eLearning course](#) on disaster prevention, developed by the European Commission (DG ECHO) with support from the World Bank, is now released. The one-hour course focuses on the risk landscape of the EU and the positive effects of disaster prevention and preparedness. It features different self-paced modules and is fully open and available through the UCPM Knowledge Network on the EU Academy.

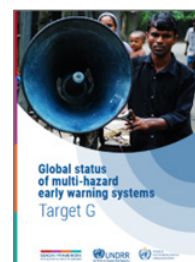


Data and digital maturity for disaster risk reduction: Informing the next generation of disaster loss and damage databases

This [report](#) documents assessment of the status of national disaster loss databases in 13 countries and presents lessons to guide the next generation of disaster loss accounting systems. Monitoring disaster loss and damage is an integral part of risk governance, humanitarian programming, and public and private investments. Disasters of all dimensions, simple or complex, acute or protracted, are all felt at the local level. Tracking disaster losses at this level is therefore of critical importance.

Global status of multi-hazard early warning systems: Target G

This [UNDRR-WMO joint report](#) assesses the current global status of multi-hazard early warning systems against Target G of the Sendai Framework, collating data officially reported by the Member States with data collected through a World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) survey. The findings identify countries' challenges and note good practices in forecasting capabilities, early warning coverage and systems to act on them. The report offers a substantive basis to inform actions in response to the UN Secretary-General's call for 'early warnings for all' while making policy recommendations for the Mid-Term Review of the Sendai Framework.



Would you like to be informed of upcoming events
in the fields of Civil Protection and Disaster Risk Management?
Then check out the [events section](#) on the Knowledge Network online platform.

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network

E-mail: ECHO-CP-Knowledge-Network@ec.europa.eu - Website: <https://civil-protection-knowledge-network.europa.eu>