



European
Commission



© European Union, 2018 (photographer: Ezequiel Scagnetti)

Last updated: 18/11/2022

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. It 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 9 additional participating states, the affected country, and civil protection and humanitarian experts.

The ERCC 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 human-induced disasters and natural hazards at European level can avoid duplication of relief efforts. It can also 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. The centre 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 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 and participating states 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 to cover these gaps through financial support from the EU.

Under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the Commission can co-finance operational costs, including transport costs. This enables the 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 2021, the EU strengthened the centre with enhanced operational, analytical, monitoring, information management and communication capabilities.

Coordination platform for civil protection and humanitarian aid

The Emergency Response Coordination 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 a real-time exchange of information.

The centre 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.

The ERCC also acts as the central 24/7 contact point when the solidarity clause is invoked. It provides emergency communications and monitoring tools through the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS), a web-based alert and notification application enabling a real-time exchange of information.

Coordinating operations during the coronavirus pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic brought about new challenges, such as the lack of sufficient availability on the market of personal protective equipment, the need for medical supplies and equipment, doctors and medical teams.

In 2021, more than 60% of the requests for assistance received were related to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 200 million items of medical supplies and equipment were distributed.

Response to marine pollution

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

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 600 times** in response to activations of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.