



European
Commission



Civil protection *at a glance*

Civil Protection
and Humanitarian
Aid

RESPONDING TO DISASTERS, GLOBALLY



Mission: prevent, prepare and respond

The severity and frequency of natural hazards and human-induced disasters are on the rise. To help people caught up in crises, the European Union supports a rapid and coordinated disaster response as well as disaster prevention and preparedness activities, both in Europe and globally. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism thus helps provide a coordinated response to better protect people, their environment, property and cultural heritage in the event of major disasters.

A cooperative approach

The EU Civil Protection mechanism brings together all EU Member States, in addition to Iceland, Norway, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia and Turkey. These countries work together at national, regional and local levels. They assess risks, train their civil protection personnel together, pool and share resources, and jointly respond to the needs of the populations affected by disasters, both inside Europe and worldwide.

Response

The mechanism coordinates the provision of civil protection assistance, based on resources made available by EU Member States and Participating States. Such assistance may include search and rescue actions, firefighting, medical teams, shelter, water purification units and other relief items, as required. The mechanism can, for example, be activated to fight forest fires, to assist communities hit by flooding and storms, to rescue survivors of earthquakes, to help in the aftermath of industrial disasters or to provide personal protective equipment during medical emergencies, including pandemics.

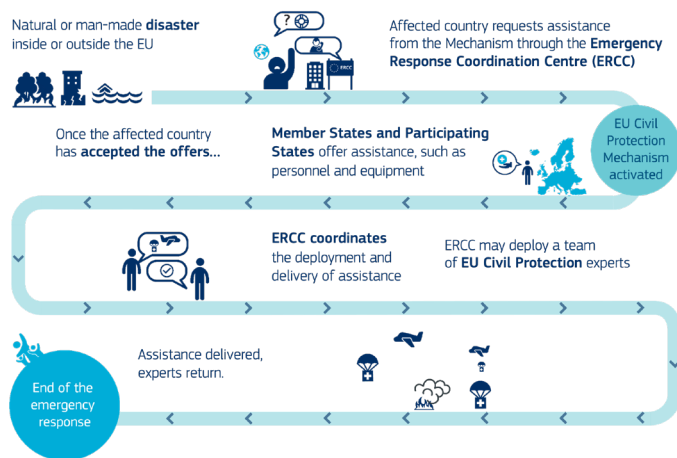
Bringing it all together: ERCC

The operational heart of the mechanism is the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) in Brussels, which operates on a 24/7 basis. The ERCC monitors the evolution of disasters, matches offers of assistance to the needs of the disaster-affected people and coordinates the transport and delivery of aid. It also acts as a communication hub between the countries offering assistance, the affected country and the deployed field experts.

An extra layer of protection: rescEU

The EU reinforced and strengthened all components of its disaster risk management by upgrading the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The result was rescEU to improve both the protection of citizens from disasters and the management of emerging risks. rescEU entails a new European reserve of capacities which includes a fleet

EU Civil Protection Mechanism



Since its establishment in 2001, the mechanism has reacted to more than 600 disasters worldwide. Most recently, the mechanism has channeled lifesaving support in response to the Haiti earthquake, the floods in Belgium, forest fires in southern Europe, the global COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

of firefighting planes and helicopters, medical evacuation planes, as well as stockpiles to respond to medical emergencies or chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents.

Prevention and preparedness

Investing in risk prevention and preparedness before a disaster strikes pays off significantly compared to facing the costs of relief, recovery and reconstruction afterwards. The EU complements national efforts by focusing on areas where common European action is more effective than separate national approaches. Under the EU Civil Protection Knowledge Network, numerous prevention and preparedness activities are being co-financed by the EU. Training helps to improve the skills

and knowledge of experts, while EU-supported field exercises simulate crises and realistically test the compatibility of teams from different countries.

Awareness-raising is key to preventing disasters or minimising their impact and are often carried out through cooperation projects involving several EU Member States.

EU support for the development of **innovative technologies and early warning tools** further strengthens European civil protection.

The EU responds to disasters worldwide by deploying its two main tools designed for this purpose: humanitarian aid and civil protection. In humanitarian aid, its unrivalled international network of field-based experts and humanitarian partner organisations enables the European Commission's Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations to channel emergency assistance and relief to victims of disasters stemming from natural hazards or armed conflicts globally. In complex disasters, which require the mobilisation of both instruments, the Emergency Response Coordination Centre acts as a global hub for effective and rapid action.

Assisting Ukraine: EU emergency relief in action

Since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU has been working around the clock to provide emergency relief to those in need. Following an initial request for EU assistance from the Government of Ukraine in February 2022, the EU started coordinating the delivery of supplies via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. In the weeks that followed, all 27 EU Member States and Norway and Turkey have rallied together in solidarity with Ukrainian people, offering an unprecedented amount of civil protection assistance in record time. EU Civil Protection logistics hubs were set up in neighbouring countries to coordinate and channel the assistance delivered from European countries to Ukraine.



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For further information:

Website:

<https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu>



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EU Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid



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