



## Polish Political Science Yearbook

ISSN: 0208-7375

Journal homepage:

<https://czasopisma.marszalek.com.pl/10-15804/ppsy>

wydawnictwo  
**adam marszałek**



FUNDACJA WSPIERANIA  
WSPÓŁPRACY MIĘDZYNARODOWEJ  
IMIENIA PROFESORA  
CZESŁAWA MOJSIEWICZA



Ministerstwo  
Edukacji i Nauki



Rozwój  
Czasopism  
Naukowych

## Union Civil Protection Mechanism as an International Policy Tool Supporting Ukraine

**Mariusz Feltynowski**

ORCID: 0000-0001-5614-8387

To cite this article please include the following information:

- Journal title: Polish Political Science Yearbook
- Volume number: 52
- Year of publication: 2023
- Published ahead-of-print

Example styles:

[APA Style]: Feltynowski, M. (2023). Union Civil Protection Mechanism as an International Policy Tool Supporting Ukraine. *Polish Political Science Yearbook*, 52(issue number). <https://doi.org/10.15804/ppsy202304>

[Chicago Style]: Mariusz Feltynowski, "Union Civil Protection Mechanism as an International Policy Tool Supporting Ukraine," *Polish Political Science Yearbook* 52, (2023).

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.15804/ppsy202304>

Published ahead-of-print



Final submission: 30 December 2022

Published online: 31 January 2023

Printed issue: 2023



Submit your article to PPSY



Periodical „Polish Political Science Yearbook” – task co-financed within „Rozwój Czasopism Naukowych”

programme under agreement no. RCN/SN/0418/2021/1 from the fund of the Minister of Education and Science

**Mariusz Feltynowski**

Main School of Fire Service (Poland)

ORCID: 0000-0001-5614-8387

e-mail: [mfeltynowski@gmail.com](mailto:mfeltynowski@gmail.com)

## Union Civil Protection Mechanism as an International Policy Tool Supporting Ukraine<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** As a long-term researcher and active participant in the rescue and humanitarian international aid coordination action, the author undertakes the analysis of changes that have occurred since the inception of the legal basis and international crisis coordination structures, focusing on the increasing role of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism. The material contains not only the analysis of normative documents and a comprehensive description of the pillars of European civil protection but also practical examples of the European mechanism's increasing involvement in actions outside the Union over two decades and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The article contains examples of material and hardware-based humanitarian aid implemented for Ukraine and a comprehensive systemic approach to Polish civil protection represented by the State Fire Service in preparation for Ukrainian representatives to be familiar with the European Civil Protection mechanism. Numerous examples of activating the mechanism from the Polish perspective are shown both from the perspective of the aid recipient (fire in Biebrza National Park in 2020) and the donor (Lebanon blast in 2020, earthquake in Nepal 2015, forest fires in France 2022 or support to Ukraine).

**Keywords:** *coordination, new technologies, crisis management, civil protection, humanitarian assistance, internal safety*

### Problem Situation and Methodology

The subject of civil protection is a man. Protecting the population for its citizens and building resources to provide foreign rescue or humanitarian assistance is an individual task of a given state. It is a part of internal security. When we are dealing with an emergency that causes a threat to the sense of security and ensuring the protection of the population of its citizens exceeds the capabilities of a given country, rescue or bilateral humanitarian assistance is

---

<sup>1</sup> The topic was presented by the author during IX International Asian Congress in 2022 in Toruń.

launched under previously concluded intergovernmental agreements. However, in the case of more complex, sudden events requiring the participation of correlated cooperation of many countries and entities, multilateral assistance coordination systems are activated, such as the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism, created to strengthen civil protection in the EU countries, but along with its development and increasing scope operating increasingly in non-member countries. Sending, receiving and coordinating the provision of international aid in the field of rescue, civil protection, or humanitarian aid is a complex process, a kind of building the state's resilience, for which it is necessary to prepare accordingly. It applies to both the assisting and receiving countries for the requested assistance. The problematic situation prompted the author to conduct scientific research in this area.

The research methods used by the author are the analysis and review of legal acts, literature, scientific research results, and the synthesis used in concluding the review of the literature and legal acts. The author carefully examined the source documents, applied analysis and synthesis, and the method of generalisation and inference. Thanks to this, he indicated repetitive features, eliminated irrelevant ones and found dependencies in the scope of the studied problem. The author also used the experience gained from specific case studies: experiments from practical exercises simulating the real operation of the civil protection mechanism in Poland and Ukraine, as well as decision-making staff games with the participation of the commanding staff of the civil protection structures of Ukraine.

## **Evolution from Bilateral into Multinational Coordination of Assistance**

Providing international humanitarian or rescue assistance and its efficient coordination is not a very old issue. In the United States of America, crisis management received much attention earlier than in Europe, as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was established in 1978. In Europe, crisis management has been continuously improved. Two important facts undoubtedly contributed to the acceleration of work in this area: the Chernobyl disaster (1986) and the collapse of the Berlin Wall three years later. These two events made the international community aware that there are different types of catastrophes, disasters and crises that we should be prepared for to keep our citizens safe. We know well that no single country can prepare its resources for any possible situation, so solidarity in action is always essential. Fundamental experience in building and improving the operation of systems enabling the coordination of international rescue and humanitarian aid is, in practice, only the last two or three decades<sup>2</sup>. The adoption of United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 44/236 of 22 December 1989 had an important role in establishing the first bilateral legal framework for providing and accepting mutual assistance and multilateral solutions. The 90's announced as International Decade for Natural Disaster

---

<sup>2</sup> In 1991 the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group – INSARAG was established as result of Armenian earthquake operation under umbrella of the United Nations.

Reduction was the beginning. The primary goal was to take international action to reduce human losses, property damage, and social and economic disruptions caused by natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, droughts and other natural disasters. At that time, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) was responsible for supporting the decade's activities<sup>3</sup>.

The resolution resulted in intensive preparing and signing bilateral agreements in Europe in the 1990s, regulating the issues of mutual bilateral rescue aid near the border and throughout the country in the event of a natural disaster. First, as a rule, agreements were signed with directly neighbouring countries and then with selected countries of the region. Poland has signed with all its neighbours bilateral agreements on mutual assistance during disasters and natural disasters – the first is with the Russian Federation in 1993<sup>4</sup>. Based on its provisions, in 2010 during the flood in our country, we received equipment assistance from the Russian Federation, and then the State Fire Service of Poland provided rescue aid in Russia during forest fires. According to the law, sending or receiving international rescue assistance is always a political decision. In Poland it is the competence of the Minister of Interior<sup>5</sup>, in Ukraine governmental one. Steps for sending rescue unit from the State Fire Service abroad are described in the Standard Operational Procedure dated 2013 in the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service called P4 – an international assistance organisation for rescue operations.

According to UN Resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002, the United Nations has a global mandate to coordinate humanitarian action through its Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) with its political headquarters in New York and operational one in Geneva, but the European Union it has also created its regional disaster response mechanism, which is still evolving and, in many respects, surpasses that of the United Nations. The potential of this European mechanism is permanently growing up. When bilateral assistance according to legal agreements is not enough, multilateral coordination and mechanisms like the EU CPM or coordination by UN OCHA are necessary (for example floods, earthquakes, forest fires, COVID-19 or war in Ukraine).

---

<sup>3</sup> UNDRO operated from 1971 to 1992. It was converted into DHA in 1992, and DHA then became OCHA in 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Agreement made in Warsaw on August 25, 1993 between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Russian Federation on cooperation in the field of preventing industrial failures, natural disasters and liquidation of their effects (Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 185, item 1536).

<sup>5</sup> Article 49c, chapter 5a. Performing tasks outside the country. Act of 24 August 1991 on the State Fire Service.

## Strengthening European Civil Protection

By the decision of the EU Council of 23 October 2001, the Community Mechanism for Civil Protection was initially created. The current Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) is a visible expression of European solidarity as it provides a practical and rapid contribution to disaster prevention and preparedness, as well as being able to respond to disasters and the threat of their occurrence without prejudice for appropriate principles and guiding arrangements in the field of civil protection. During the two decades of operation, the mechanism has already responded to more than 420 requests for help<sup>6</sup>.

According to the provisions of the implementing decision in this regard, the mechanism is invariably aimed at “strengthening cooperation between the Union and the Member States and facilitating coordination in the field of civil protection in order to increase the effectiveness of the systems of preventing natural and man-made disasters, ensuring preparedness for their occurrence and respond to them”. According to the provisions of the decision on the mechanism, it should facilitate mobilisation during aid interventions and their coordination.

The mechanism is based on a structure composed of several pillars, the most important of which are:

- the Crisis Response Coordination Centre (ERCC established in 2013), operating 24 hours a day (originally it was the Information Monitoring Centre – MIC established in 2003);
- Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS), hosted by the Member States’ contact points 24/7<sup>7</sup>;
- European Crisis Response Capabilities (EERC) in the form of a voluntary pool of previously reported capacities of the Member States (European Civil Protection Pool, 2014) – the so-called civil protection intervention modules and, in the future, rescEU;
- Experts trained on several levels of the Mechanism Courses of the Training Programme, who support disaster prevention and preparedness in the Member States, and can act as liaison officers if aid is accepted;
- modular, full-scale and staff exercises, also with the use of augmented and virtual reality;
- transport support and financing mechanisms for civil protection modules, humanitarian resources, and experts<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism\\_en-acces](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en-acces)

<sup>7</sup> In Poland located in National Headquarters of the State Fire Service.

<sup>8</sup> Poland used this procedure, among others during the Nepal 2015 and Lebanon 2020 actions or in 2022.

If the mechanism is activated, experts nominated by individual countries, finally selected by ERCC in Brussel forming the European Union Civil Protection Team – EU CPT. They are sent to the scene to coordinate the aid from the associated countries or to support the activities of the country's authorities activating the mechanism – it concerns expert, humanitarian and rescue aid. During the flood in Poland in 2010, there was one liaison officer of the mechanism on site as well.

## **European Civil Protection Support for Ukraine**

Achieving a high level of internal security is one of the priorities of the European Union. In the face of the migration crisis, which has been going on for many years and now has a new face, the EU faces new challenges. The EU must strengthen cooperation at many levels to ensure the highest possible level of security (Jakubczak, 2021, p. 229).

The EU stands in solidarity with Ukraine and its people and will continue to strongly support Ukraine's economy, society and armed forces and its future reconstruction. EU activities for Ukraine include accepting refugees, humanitarian relief or civil protection<sup>9</sup>.

Currently, in 2022, to support the process of coordinating humanitarian aid flowing to and for Ukraine, according to information from DG ECHO of 09/03/2022, from 29 countries (aid was declared by all 27 countries, Norway and Turkey) to our country there is a whole team of EU CPT experts, each time consisting of Poles. Similar teams are working in Moldova and Slovakia, and a liaison officer has been dispatched to Romania. On March 22, the EU opened a field office in Lviv, where 8 humanitarian experts work. In 2022, Poland activated the mechanism by asking for medical supplies. France responded positively to the appeal.

According to the ECHO Annual Report 2012, the EU was the second most important humanitarian aid donor every year since 2002, and together with the EU Member States it was the largest humanitarian aid donor. In 2010, worldwide humanitarian aid amounted to EUR 9.8 billion, of which around 41% came from the EU, and nearly EUR 1 billion was pledged in the 2014 humanitarian aid and civil protection budget. Equipment worth more than EUR 10 million was shipped to Ukraine from the medical warehouses of the mechanism itself, built under the rescEU medical stockpile concept. On February 28, 2022, the European Commission announced an additional EUR 85 million for aid and humanitarian programmes for Ukraine and EUR 5 million for Moldova. Based on the information contained in the social media of the Directorate General of the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (accessed on 02/04/2022), Poland has become a logistic hub for the largest aid operation mechanism in the twenty-year history so far,

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/policies/eastern-partnership/ukraine>

in which currently as many as 29 countries send aid to 24 militarily attacked countries. February 2022 by the Russian Federation of Ukraine<sup>10</sup>.

On the Ukrainian side, representatives of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement work from international aid organisations. The war in Ukraine caused over 10 million Ukrainians to leave their homes, of which over 4 million fled to Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary<sup>11</sup>.

The first three shifts of the EUCPT expert team worked at the headquarters of Frontex or Rzeszów, support activities carried out by the countries of the mechanism in Poland related to the organisation of humanitarian aid for Ukraine, and cooperate with the UN OCHA logistics cluster, which was to be activated in Krakow. EU CPT experts meet, inter alia, with representatives of the Ukrainian embassy in Poland, and the Department of Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which, under article 13 paragraph 7 of the Development Aid Act, grants humanitarian aid through other entities participating in the implementation of development cooperation or cooperation with these entities.

In general, the activities of Poland, including the Volunteer and State Fire Service, related to aid for Ukraine in the spring of 2022 in connection with the armed invasion of Russia on February 24, 2022, fully comply with the tasks of the EU civil protection mechanism and are compatible with it. The possibility of rescue assistance on the Ukrainian side is regulated by the Agreement signed in Warsaw on July 19, 2002 between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on cooperation and mutual assistance in the field of preventing catastrophes, natural disasters and other extraordinary events and removing their consequences (Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 166, item 1737). It does not regulate the direct assistance of firefighters in a war zone, therefore the Chief Commander of the State Fire Service, at the request of the commander-in-chief of Ukrainian firefighters general Sergiej Kruk, issued an appeal regarding the transfer of equipment and fire trucks. The Rector, Chief of SGSP, by the decision of February 28, 2022, appointed staff at the University to coordinate activities carried out by SGSP in connection with the situation in Ukraine. In addition to the equipment provided to the headquarters of the Ukrainian fire brigade, at the appeal of their counterparts – the rectors of Ukrainian firefighters universities, dedicated humanitarian aid was prepared, which was transferred to SGSP partners to the Lviv State University for Life Safety (heavy chemical rescue vehicle, two power generators each with a capacity of 82 kVA) and 25 pallets of equipment), the Cherkassy Institute of Fire Safety named after the heroes of Chernobyl and an analogous partner of SGSP in Vinnitsa (additional 38 pallets of fire-fighting and medical equipment). The equipment donated by SGSP came from a collection from TSO, PSP, private persons, and companies.

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://ec.humanitarian.aid>

<sup>11</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/europe/ukraine\\_en#ecl-inpage-1179](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/europe/ukraine_en#ecl-inpage-1179)





Donation of heavy chemical rescue vehicle to LSULS – Lviv State University of Live Saving  
Packing equipment for Ukraine by cadets at SGSP

Polish NGO PCPM, which certified civil protection modules Emergency Medical Team – Type 1 since September 1, 2022 supported as one of the organisation’s places, “Medevac Hub Jasionka”, is designated for medical evacuation of Ukrainian injured patients with a special place twice a week to Polish hospitals and other EU countries.

## Growing Role of European Civil Protection and Other Current Examples

In recent years and at present, the Mechanism is dynamically developing the rescEU concept, under which fire-fighting planes and helicopters will be purchased, among others. COVID-19 has additionally shown that the risk of one country may also affect its immediate neighbours, and sometimes even the entire European Union<sup>12</sup>.

In 2020, the mechanism had to adapt to the new expectations related to this threat and the resources located in warehouses in several Member States. As part of rescEU, the necessary resources (masks, disinfectants, gloves, respirators, etc.) were distributed to other countries to fight COVID-19. Additionally, in the summer of 2020 alone, there have been a variety of other emergencies, including major floods in Western Europe, forest fires in the Mediterranean, the Haiti earthquake, and evacuations and repatriations from Afghanistan that were covered by multidimensional activities within the UCPM. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Director Hans Das, the ‘heart of the mechanism’, the ERCC, has coordinated the repatriation of more than 100,000 EU citizens worldwide and

<sup>12</sup> Director Emergency Management and rescEU (ECHO, part A) Mr Hans Das opening speech was titled “The EU Civil Protection Mechanism taking into account the role of Poland”. XIII National Scientific Conference – Digital security: from global to local problems. State, society and man – the organization of WSGE and SGSP, Warsaw, November 22, 2021.





Contribution to help for fire schools in Cherkassy and Vinnitsa collected by the Volunteer Fire Department Józefów and partners, Source OSP Józefów

supported hundreds of rescue operations in response to over 80 COVID-19-related assistance requests. In addition, the ERCC oversees the deployment of essential medical equipment and materials, including vaccines, in EU countries and beyond.

The European mechanism is still developing and improving (Marszałek-Kawa & Plecka, 2017; 2019). Formerly limited to the narrowly understood protection of the population, it now covers a wider range of humanitarian aid and crisis management. After each big event, called activation of the mechanism, meetings are organised – workshops on analysing previous actions/interventions, and conclusions are drawn. In the countries of the mechanism, it has a superior role, UN agencies help, as in the case of the humanitarian crisis related to the war in Ukraine. There are more and more activations of the mechanism outside the EU territory, so knowledge of the principles of cooperation and the role of the United Nations is crucial here.

The assistance of the European Mechanism should be coordinated with the United Nations to maximise the use of available resources and avoid any unnecessary duplication of efforts. To this end, appropriate means of transport have been made more affordable to support the immediate development of a rapid response capacity at the Union level<sup>13</sup>. It is experience from the Polish State Fire Service modules activation from Nepal 2015, Lebanon 2020, Greece 2021, or France 2022.

The mechanism is very practical. Undoubtedly, apart from the ERCC, its most important element are compatible and interoperable rescue groups called civil protection modules. They are self-sufficient, task-specific mobile operational response teams of individual Member States. They include forces and means (people and equipment) and can be defined as

<sup>13</sup> Modules submitted to the voluntary pool of resources can count on refinancing up to 75% of transport and operating costs, and resources created under rescEU at 100%.

the minimum ability to act or perform tasks that the module can undertake. Currently, thirty-four countries, including all 28 EU Member States, participate in the European Civil Protection Mechanism of the Union, at its disposal mainly various intervention modules (17 types), including search and rescue groups certified externally within the framework of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group INSARAG or medical modules certified by the World Health Organization (WHO). All civil protection modules (including the pump HCP for extinguishing GFFV forest fires) are self-sufficient resources, ready for immediate use at the request of the affected country. The provision of assistance is part of the achievement of one of the strategic objectives of the EU's external action, as defined in Art. 21 of the Treaty on European Union, which also lists among its many objectives: helping nations, countries and regions affected by natural or man-made disasters<sup>14</sup>.

Annex 2 to the Mechanism Decision parameterises the minimum requirements for 17 different types of intervention modules and the Technical Assistance Support Team (TAST), created by the Member States voluntarily, which could be made available for international operations in a short time in the country in need.

Since the beginning of 2015, numerous response capacities from Poland have been registered in the resource pool of the ECPP mechanism. There are 7 rescue modules such as: ground forest fire extinguishing modules using vehicles (GFFFV), high-efficiency pump modules (HCP), a search and rescue group (USAR) and a type 1 medical rescue team (EMT)



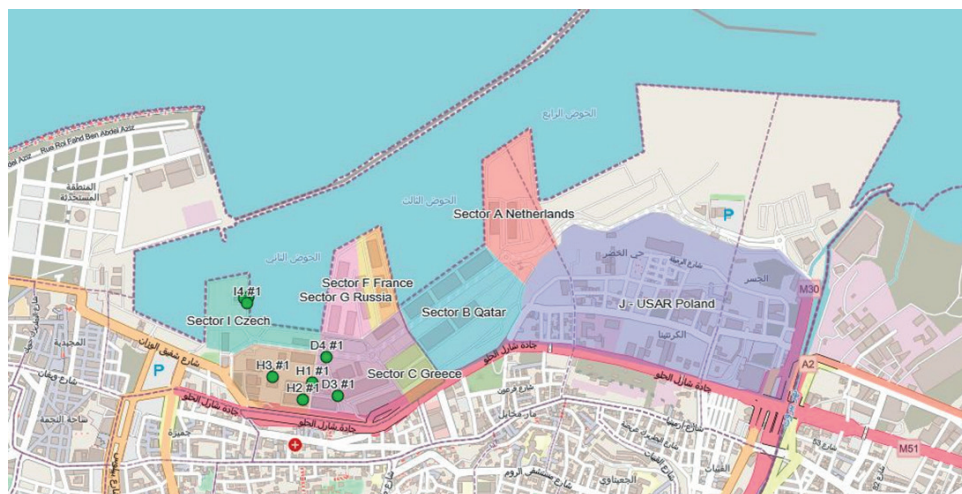
UCPT member with polish USAR module Liaison Officer during the mission in Lebanon in 2020, source USAR Poland archive

<sup>14</sup> Official Journal of the EU C326/123 Treaty on European Union – consolidated version.

from PCPM, Polish NGO – the only one created so far not by professional fire service in Poland.

Poland has already participated in over a dozen rescue operations under the UCPM, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic, forest fires in Sweden in 2018, Greece in 2021 or France in 2022, and the explosion in Beirut in 2020. or earlier earthquakes in Nepal in 2015 and Haiti in 2010.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the visibility of membership in a given organisation is important, therefore, during the activities of the flag not only of your country, but also of the coordinating organisation, it is a mandatory set on the flagpole in the camp. The role of social media and the promotion of the mechanism's activities is also growing. In Poland, the actions of firefighters during the action of extinguishing fires "Sweden 2018" or actions after the saltpetre explosion in Beirut "Lebanon 2020" had, according to the spokesman of the State Fire Service, more than 200,000 views, therefore the so-called "Media and press officer" is a conclusion of the Nepal 2015 action already in each group/travel module, such as the action Greece 2021 or France 2022. The relief trips of our firefighters-rescuers to rescue and humanitarian actions have become a *de facto* tool for implementing the policy of foreign state.



Lebanon 2020 – sectorisation of USAR modules, source USAR Poland archive

The European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP) and rescEU capacity at the end of 2020 are 115 assets and a response capacity from 25 Member States and participating countries, deployable quickly in case of a disaster, including 68 certified capacities of various types. The next step in solidarity after the modules and the voluntary pool is the rescEU concept – the European Reserve of Civil Protection Resources. It is a strategic reserve, a kind of safety net,

financed entirely from EU funds, which can be activated in case of overloading a country's response capacity. In close cooperation with the Member States, the Commission identifies the type and amount of dedicated rescEU capacities and then finances 100% of the cost of their development and maintenance, assuming they remain owned and located in each Member State.

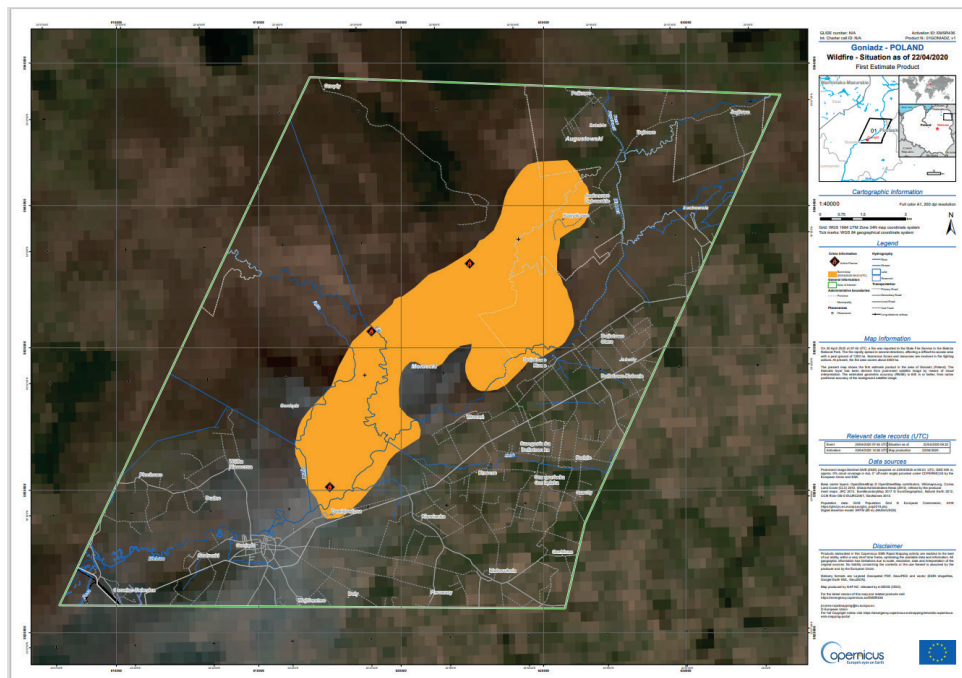
The mechanism is activated by the Emergency Response Coordination Centre in Brussels, located in the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Affairs – DG ECHO, transformed in May 2013 from the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC). In each country participating in the mechanism, a 24-hour coordination centre, the so-called national contact point in the rescue and civil protection field, enables coordination of international cooperation during the intervention. A country in a serious situation shall formally request assistance from the ERCC. ERCC collects and verifies information about the threat and distributes it to other contact points using a dedicated and secure electronic communication system CECIS (Common Emergency Communication and Information System), dedicated only to 24/7 contact points. Since Poland's accession to the European Union, the role of such an international contact point for submitting and accepting requests for rescue and humanitarian aid is fulfilled by the commandant-in-chief of the State Fire Service, also when activating the mechanism in connection with the mass influx of refugees from Ukraine in March 2022 or fires in France in August 2022.

After receiving aid offers, the ERCC adjusts the offer to the needs of the affected country and sends collective information with the support potential of the entire mechanism to the country concerned. Ultimately, the affected country makes the final decision whether or not to accept a given offer. Assistance under the Union Mechanism may also be provided to third countries that are not in the Mechanism.

Currently, there is one EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which has accumulated all the previous issues of the previous versions of the mechanism and includes crisis management, humanitarian aid and civil protection in its area of responsibility. The Mechanism's tools and products, e.g., satellite images from the Copernicus Emergency Management Service, are used as support during the action (satellite images obtained during the flood in Poland in 2010, the fire in the Biebrza National Park in 2020) or planning the security of mass events (Euro, 2012; Fellner et al., 2021, p. 56).

The mechanism also emphasizes increasing investments in forecasting threats and preventing the occurrence of disasters, which is justified from an economic point of view and, as a result, cheaper than covering the costs of rescue aid and removing the consequences after the occurrence of an incident. The mechanism also undertakes to support projects that help prepare local communities. For this purpose, training programmes, exercises using disaster simulations, expert exchange programmes are organised, and the civil protection modules prepared by the Member States are made available voluntarily by the ERCC depending on the type of occurrence. Apart from improving the mechanisms of prevention, monitoring and ongoing response, the future of the mechanism also means the necessity to adapt to





Copernicus satellite reconnaissance image with the marked area covered by a fire in the Biebrza National Park. Source: [https://emergency.copernicus.eu/mapping/system/files/components/EMSR436\\_AOI01\\_FEP\\_PRODUCT\\_r1\\_RTP01\\_v1.jpg](https://emergency.copernicus.eu/mapping/system/files/components/EMSR436_AOI01_FEP_PRODUCT_r1_RTP01_v1.jpg)

emerging new threats and crises. Therefore, what was discussed in December 2021 at the SGSP conference by Director Hans Das from DG ECHO, the idea of building a solid scientific and technical support and advice centre (STAF) was born. The planned centre will operate based on institutions supporting the ERCC so far, such as the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the European Scientific Partnership on Natural Hazards (ENHSP-ARISTOTLE), but also future structures, such as the European Scientific Partnership on Anthropogenic Hazards (EAHSP). STAF is to be used for strategic forecasting, to identify future threats caused by climate change or other global trends affecting the specificity of future natural disasters.

## Summary and Conclusions

1. International civil protection and humanitarian aid have evolved over the last two to three decades from bilateral aid (the domain of the 1990s) to specialised multinational and multi-institutional aid coordination mechanisms, especially the UN-coordinated by UN OCHA in Geneva and the EU coordinated by ERCC in Brussel. The civil protection mechanism, created two decades ago to build individual state resources (civil protection modules) to support Member States' Civil Protection activities, is, for the most part, activated in increasingly

complex situations (COVID-19, humanitarian aid for refugees from Ukraine) mostly in third countries, not belonging to the EU and the mechanism. Climate changes, the number and size of natural and man-made disasters as well as new emerging threats suggest that more and more countries will not be able to deal with the effects of every potential event and will seek the help of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which has been activated for more than two decades 420 times, lastly by France for forest fire intervention (till August 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, medical stockpiles from EU countries as part of the rescEU concept supported other countries with needed equipment (masks, disinfectants, gloves, respirators), and dedicated it to refugees from Ukraine in EU countries.

2. The action of accepting international rescue aid (flood 2010) or coordinating humanitarian aid from the EU mechanism in Poland for Ukraine in 2022 shows that the Polish fire brigade, the experience gained and the procedures used over the years, methods and procedures developed in this respect operate correctly. Participation in foreign actions of the civil protection mechanism means gaining the experience necessary for developing the civil protection national structures like the State Fire Service in Poland is doing and at the same time promoting the whole of Poland in the international arena. Missions of Polish rescue modules exceed 200,000 in social media views (mission Lebanon 2020). In 2021, during the final gala organised by KGHM Polska Miedź S.A. of the plebiscite in the Audience Award category, the title of the Polish Ambassador was awarded to Polish firefighters fighting fires in Greece in 2021. It means that society supports several firefighters of the State Fire Service (the author also), and so far, two chief commanders of the State Fire Service have been awarded the Ministry of Foreign Affairs “Bene Merito” badge for promoting and enhancing the image of Poland in the international arena.

3. At the same time, it is important and in the direct interest of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism itself to build intervention modules and the capacity of candidate countries to efficiently accept assistance as an obligation of their Host Nation Support via national operational centres called national focal points (Mobile Rescue Centre of Ukraine, 2014). Therefore, full-scale or staff exercises carried out as part of the EU-Carpathex or EU-Chemreact projects, financed from the funds of the mechanism and preparing the activation of the mechanism in Ukraine in conditions close to real, supporting cooperation of all levels of the Ukrainian administration responsible for civil protection with coordination teams of European Union experts Civil Protection Team (EU CPT) and modules of other countries were and still are valid. Based on the acquired knowledge and experience in the implementation among others of projects by the Polish State Fire Service from the Union Community mechanism for civil protection or from the Polish Development Aid of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (like AmbeGran), a properly educated staff was built in Ukraine before, which currently, due to the war on its territory, coordinate sending from Ukraine over 120 requests for assistance to the Civil Protection Mechanism to Brussel. It is the effect of a decade of practical cooperation that started with joint preparations for EURO 2012.

4. Ukraine sent liaison officers from its civil protection service familiar with the mechanism to the Polish territory to simplify the process of donation hundreds of fire fighters' trucks, ambulances and tons of equipment from Poland and other European countries. The creation of "Medical Hub Jasionka" is an example of possible cooperation between many UN and EU institutions, both state (ministry of health from Poland and Ukraine) and European, as well as non-governmental organisations (PCPM). Here patients from Ukraine can wait for proper transport for further treatment in the destination county.

5. Bearing in mind the fact that on June 23, 2022, at the European Council summit, EU leaders granted Ukraine the status of an EU candidate country, i.e., there is a political will to bring Ukraine closer to the EU, so author believes that the next step for Ukraine in order to use the EU mechanism's civil protection resources even better should be to join the EU CPM, as other countries have recently done (Albania November 2022, Bosnia and Herzegovina in September 2022).

## References:

- Act of 24 August 1991 on the State Fire Service (Dz.U.2022.0.1969).
- Agreement made in Warsaw on August 25, 1993 between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Russian Federation on cooperation in the field of preventing industrial failures, natural disasters and liquidation of their effects (Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 185, item 1536).
- Agreement signed in Warsaw on July 19, 2002 between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on cooperation and mutual assistance in the field of preventing catastrophes, natural disasters and other extraordinary events and removing their consequences (Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 166, item 1737).
- Cieślarczyk, M. (2009). *Teoretyczne i metodologiczne podstawy badania problemów bezpieczeństwa i obronności*. Wydawnictwo Akademii Podlaskiej.
- Commission Implementing Decision of 16 October 2014 laying down rules for the implementation of Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism and repealing Commission Decisions 2004/277/EC, Euratom – [ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/mechanism\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/mechanism_en) of 2007/606/EC, Euratom, p. 1.
- Decyzja Komisji z dnia 29 lipca 2010 r. zmieniająca decyzję Komisji 2004/277/WE, Euratom w odniesieniu do zasad wykonania decyzji Rady 2007/779/WE, Euratom ustanawiającej wspólnotowy mechanizm ochrony ludności (2010/481/UE, Euratom).
- EU Council Decision 2001/792/EC establishing a Community mechanism to facilitate enhanced cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions of 23.10.2001.
- Fellner, A., Feltynowski, M., & Fellner, R. (2021). Navigation preparation of UAV to the operational activities of fire services – Przygotowanie nawigacyjne Bezzałogowych Statków Powietrznych do operacyjnych działań straży pożarnej. *Zeszyty Naukowe SGSP, Szkoła Główna Służby Pożarniczej*, 79(3). DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0015.2888
- General Assembly Resolution No. 57/150 of 16 December 2002 on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International Assistance in Urban Search and Rescue.



- Górski, S. (2016). *Współczesna ochrona ludności. Aspekty prawne i organizacyjne*. Szkoła Główna Służby Pożarniczej.
- [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism\\_en-access](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en-access)
- [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/europe/ukraine\\_en#ecl-inpage-1179](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/europe/ukraine_en#ecl-inpage-1179)
- <https://ec.humanitarian.aid>
- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/policies/eastern-partnership/ukraine>
- Jakubczak, W. (2021). Kryzys migracyjny na wschodniej granicy UE- rola Europolu we współpracy w bezpieczeństwie wewnętrznym. *Athenaeum. Polskie Studia Politologiczne*, 70(2). DOI: 10.15804/athena.2021.70.14
- Journal of Laws 2021.0.1425 i.e. – Act of 16 September 2011 on development cooperation.
- Marszałek-Kawa, J., & Plecka, D. (2017). Social Security as a Factor Contributing to the Evolution of the Political System in Poland after the Parliamentary Elections of 2015. *Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne*, 4, 79–94.
- Marszałek-Kawa, J., & Plecka, D. (2019). *The State Security Policy in National Security Strategies of the Republic of Poland in the Years 2002–2014*. Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.
- Mobile Rescue Centre of Ukraine. (2014). *Portfolio of evidence MRC Ukraine HUSAR Team*.
- Official Journal of the EU C326/123 Treaty on European Union – consolidated version.
- Pajkiert Vela, P. (Ed.) (2014). *Pomoc międzynarodowa w sytuacji klęsk i katastrof – wytyczne w zakresie wsparcia przez państwo gospodarza*. Wrocławskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe Alta 2.
- Procedura P 21 Organizacja działania sił i środków międzynarodowych na terenie Polski podczas przyjmowanie zagranicznej pomocy ratowniczej, KG PSP, 2012.
- Procedure P 4 of the International Assistance Organization for Rescue Operations, National Headquarters of the State Fire Service of Poland, Warsaw, 2013.
- Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 11 października 2005 r. w sprawie warunków i trybu delegowania strażaków Państwowej Straży Pożarnej do pełnienia służby poza granicą państwa oraz sposobu i organizacji działania grupy ratowniczej (Dz. U. Nr 212, poz. 1765).
- United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 44/236 of 22 December 1989.