Date

28/05/2024

Guideline for duty officers: Activation of and requests for assistance via the EU civil protection mechanism

Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made disasters in Eastern Partnership countries - phase 3 (PPRD East 3)

Aim

The purpose is to establish a solid institutional foundation of basic Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for contacts with the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (hereafter: UCPM), in particular for duty officer functions and 24/7 centres at the national level civil protection authorities in the partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). Therefore, this document serves as a general overview of what to consider when requesting international assistance via the UCPM.

A focus for the PPRD East 3 programme is to support improvement of the inter-institutional communication flow involving the duty officer(s) through the development of procedures to support early warning measures as well as to promote regional cooperation with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

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Work package D – Civil protection Agency Development

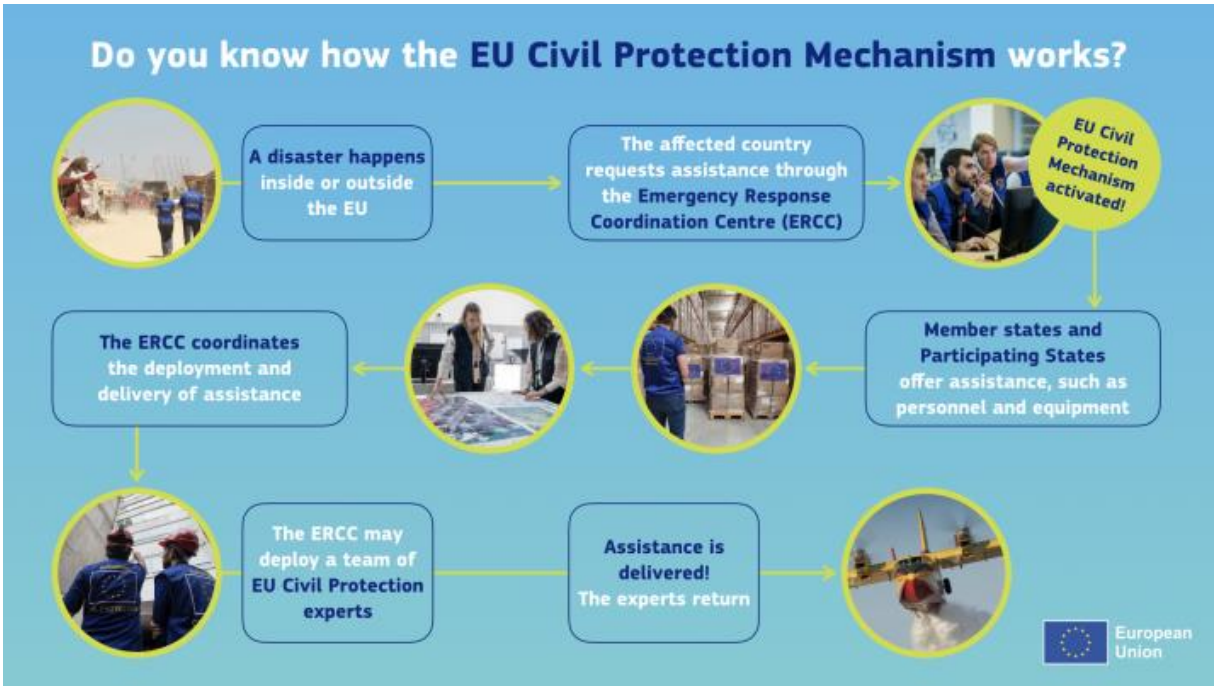
Funded by the European Union

Facts about the EU civil protection mechanism

The core purpose of the UCPM is to "strengthen cooperation between the EU countries and participating states on civil protection to improve prevention, preparedness, and response to disasters[1]". A request for assistance can be made through the mechanism when an emergency overwhelms the response capabilities of a country in or outside European borders. The mechanism aims at easing the process for member states and participating states (hereafter: MS/PS) to swiftly and effectively assist each other when large-scale accidents or crisis occur and to assist MS/PS to perform joint and coordinated operations outside of Europe.

A request for assistance to the UCPM is always facilitated through a national point of contact.

How does the mechanism work?



[1] https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en

The picture above is borrowed from the same link as reference (1).

What is the Emergency Response Coordination Centre?

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (hereafter: ERCC) is the main contact point of the UCPM. At ERCC, the delivery of assistance to disaster-stricken countries is coordinated. The centre ensures the rapid deployment of emergency support and acts as a coordination hub between all EU Member States, the participating states, the affected country, and civil protection and humanitarian experts. The ERCC operates a 24/7 duty system. It can help any country inside or outside the EU affected by a major disaster upon request from the national authorities or a UN body.[2]

Contact details to ERCC
Email: echo-ercc@ec.europa.eu

What is the European civil protection pool?

The European Civil Protection Pool (hereafter: ECPP) was established in 2013. The aim of the ECPP is to allow for a more predictable, pre-planned and quality checked European response. To reach this goal, the ECPP constitutes a reserve of emergency response teams and equipment, known as capacities, which are committed and maintained by the European states. For the time being, 25 European countries have contributed more than 100 resources to the ECPP.[3]

What is rescEU?

The rescEU reserve was established in 2019 to, by consisting of an extra layer of citizen protection in Europe, guarantee an even more effective response to disasters. The rescEU is integrated into the UCPM, and boosts capacities to respond to crises such as wildfires, medical emergencies, lack of electricity supplies and CBRN incidents as well as when there is a need of mobile shelters or emergency transportation. The rescEU reserves consists of different types of stockpiles and equipment as well as vehicles (airplanes for firefighting). The rescEU resources are developed, maintained and deployed by the assigned member states, but the resources are almost fully financed by the EU (including costs for purchase, maintenance and operations) and the EU decides when and where the capacities are deployed.[4]

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[2] https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/emergency-response-coordination-centre-ercc_en

[3] https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/european-civil-protection-pool_en

[4] https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/resceu_en

What is the Common Emergency Communication and Information System?

The ERCC provides emergency communications and monitoring tools through the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (hereafter: CECIS), a web-based alert and notification platform enabling a real-time exchange of information.[5] Only EU member states and some participating states to the mechanism have access to the system and can handle their own information gathering and sharing with the other system users. If the country asking for assistance is not a MS/PS, and therefore does not have access to CECIS, the information exchange with the ERCC is done via email and telephone. The ERCC then opens an emergency in CECIS on the affected country's behalf where the system users can get information about the needs of the requesting country, offer assistance and coordinate their efforts.

The communication in CECIS can be started with different statuses depending on the operational context and the urgency. The respective status is communicated with MS/PS when the new exchange of information is started. Not all communication threads are related to ongoing emergencies with outstanding requests for assistance, therefore, do not mean a full activation of the mechanism. Rather, the communication is started to provide a platform for the ERCC and MS/PS to exchange information about an event or possible UCPM activation.

When an emergency with a request for assistance under the UCPM is started in CECIS, the status of the emergency will be indicated by the MS/PS requesting assistance, or the ERCC, as a Request for Assistance. The status of the communication is decided by the MS/PS or the ERCC, it can be upgraded or downgraded to be finally closed depending on the situation development.

[5] https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/emergency-response-coordination-centre-ercc_en

Disposition

The target group of this guideline is the duty officers or 24/7 centres of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. It is a general guideline and some of the tasks might not be applicable within every given context in every country.

The duty officer (or similar) holds the important role to know what steps might need to be taken, to highlight needs and next steps and to raise questions to the right executor or decision maker. Therefore, not all tasks within this guideline might be carried out by the duty officer, but the duty officer needs to have knowledge of them and delegate to the correct stakeholder.

This guideline refers to the preparedness and response phases of an activation of the UCPM. It is divided into five different phases as per the figure below.

In which of these phases the operation starts, will vary depending on the nature of the disaster or crisis and on the country response capacity. In some instances, the operation can start in stage 1, Preparedness, with a mere hint of something arriving that might hold the potential of growing into something much larger. However, in some cases, the operation starts in stage 4, Response, and immediate response and activation is needed with no prior indication. Some of the measures described might need to be taken during a different phase than where they are categorised in this guideline. Independent of the stages involved in the incident response process, this guideline aims at being a tool and reminder of the different steps needed to ease the coordination with the ERCC. Another aim is to increase the knowledge of when and how to take different steps throughout the process – may it be one step immediately followed by the other or with several days in between.

This guideline does not aim at assigning the tasks to the correct stakeholder, since who is responsible for what will depend on the specific situational development, concerned stakeholders' ability to handle the situation and what kind of legal and institutional frameworks are applicable in the specific situation. It is important that relevant stakeholders at an early stage clarify who is responsible for what.

No matter the phase – **communication is key**. In all kinds of crisis management, time is always lacking. It is however important to keep in mind that in order for the ERCC to start their processes, and in turn for the MS/PS to start their respective processes, the earlier everyone can be provided with a heads up and some initial information the better.

Preparedness

The work done here has mostly to do with getting ready.

During this phase, it is important to start dividing tasks between different authorities, to exercise and prepare. In case of a request for assistance to the UCPM by a MS/PS, the communication needs to be channelled via assigned civil protection 24/7 national point/points of contact. For non-member states, any governmental organisation can request for assistance.

Usually, for UCPM MS/PS, the formal point of contact with the UCPM is a civil protection related ministry at national level. This ministry can however choose to delegate the responsibilities for operational communication with the ERCC to another national point of contact (for example a duty officer function at national level). In other words, even though the formal point of contact for the ERCC is a ministry at the political level, the communications can go through another dedicated point of contact. This is to be decided at national level in respective country.

The operational point of contact needs to keep up the communication flow with the ERCC as well as channelling the messages and information and tasks to other national stakeholders. This task is most conveniently given to a duty officer function at the national level, to ensure availability 24/7 and secure the information flow when there is a shortage of time. The ERCC works 24/7, hence why the operational point of contact at national level in the affected country needs to be available 24/7 as well. **Remember, in case needed, to update the ERCC on the contact details of the national point/points of contact.**

The national point of contact needs to be informed by other stakeholders about the details of the emergency and the needs within the country, but it is important that one function at national level is responsible for the contacts with the ERCC and not someone in the field handling the emergency hands on. **It is important that this function is manned by persons who speak and write well in English**.

To build national and international cooperation within the country and between countries is something that needs to be explored during this phase. Since bordering countries share the similar climate, nature and geographical challenges, it is important to keep an active dialogue going and especially during seasonal events (for example wildfire season). Neighbouring countries might play an important role if a request for international assistance would be effectuated, since they might need to act as transit countries. It is therefore important and beneficial for the duty officer to uphold an active communication and information sharing with the authorities in neighbouring countries, to ease the process in case of an activation.

Nationally, it is during this phase that the cooperation between different stakeholders needs to be explored and developed. Contact lists need to be prepared and updated. Communication tests need to be carried out. During an activation of the UCPM and reception of international assistance, the civil protection authorities, the rescue services, the armed forces, the customs/toll, the police and

others will have to work together and provide different kinds of assistance in the host nation support (hereafter: HNS) efforts. Of course, this is dependent on the different set ups in the countries, but the duty officer needs to make sure that everyone can talk to each other and know what is expected in case of a request for international assistance. It is important that stakeholders know what roles and functions might need to be activated in case of international assistance. This is mostly applicable at national and regional level, and therefore will affect the duty officers at the civil protection authority. Remember, that large-scale emergencies, regardless of international assistance or not, will most certainly be long-drawn events and the endurance of the organisations is a vital part of the planning. Therefore, the duty officers hold an important role in making sure that there are plans in place to uphold endurance and 24/7 activity if needed.

Early and continuous communication and information sharing is also an effective way of testing the national contact lists and make sure they are up to date, as well as to establish a joint comprehension of what is the normal picture in the country. This is important in order to be able to detect divergences at an early stage.

One way of creating a national common picture is to arrange coordination meetings or conferences, preferably digital and regular. During these meetings the aim can be to create and share a common operational picture or situation report, to ease information sharing and coordination of resources, to create a foundation for coordinating objectives etc. One reason why this is highlighted in this guideline is because the country requesting assistance needs to know what the needs are at the national level. At the local and regional level, assets, personnel and equipment can be moved and loaned to the place where they are most needed, but at the national level there needs to be an understanding of the capacity of the whole country and when the capacity is at risk of running out – hence, when international assistance might be needed.

When and why the UCPM might be activated is different for each country, based on that country's resources, risk assessment and the impact of the disaster. Each country has different thresholds for when the situation is enough large-scale for national resources to be insufficient. It might also be situations with low probability where preparedness more often is less elaborated. The thresholds for activation of the UCPM is something developed in each country and is a matter for high level decision makers, but needs to be clarified on beforehand to shorten the timeframe when crisis strikes.

A well-performed national resource inventory is a vital precondition before moving on to requesting assistance from other countries. Responsible stakeholders at the national level need to be prepared to handle incidents identified in the national risk assessments. The resources which run a risk of shortage needs to be mapped and possible alternatives to these resources needs to be identified. This kind of mapping can also indicate specific situations when the national resources are not enough and international assistance might be needed. This kind of situation is not unlikely. Therefore, for the kinds of international assistance deemed most likely to be needed sometime in the future, appropriate "Point of entry" can be identified and mapped on beforehand.

As stated above, the framework for point of entries, HNS, transit, reception and departure centre (hereafter: RDC) etc. needs to be prepared. It is important to have the framework ready on beforehand, and only tweak some of the aspects to be fit for purpose in the specific emergency setting. For the duty officer, this also means to plan templates for situation reports, adapted to an international audience (in case of an activation of the UCPM, incoming aid and their origin countries are going to want to receive situation reports and updates). Of course, the duty officer as an every-day-task needs to establish common operational pictures for the own organisation, depending on the scope of the specific agency. The duty officer needs to have access to the tools in the tool box, e.g., needs to know where to find information and scientific bases for situational awareness. This can either be a task for the duty officer or something being delivered from a back office.

Some platforms and tools:

Glofas: https://www.globalfloods.eu/ EFAS: https://www.efas.eu/en

EFFIS: https://effis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ GDACS: https://www.gdacs.org/

USGS: https://www.usgs.gov/ EDO: https://edo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/

It is important during this phase that the duty officer keeps up to date with any changes in the communication with the ERCC in case of an activation of the UCPM. To internally practice the SOPs regularly, discuss different scenarios and thresholds as well as simulate activations on a small-scale level could also be fruitful during this phase.

Summary
Tasks, preparedness phase

- ✓ Appoint a national point of contact (function-based, not person dependant)
- ✓ Prepare contact lists nationally and test them regularly
- ✓ Identify what stakeholders would be affected by a request for international assistance
- ✓ Coordinate, communicate and share information with relevant stakeholders nationally and internationally
- ✓ Divide tasks between national stakeholders
- ✓ National resource inventories and common operational pictures have to be established and continuously updated
- ✓ Prepare tools for the duty officer: data collecting systems, scientific bases for situational awareness, templates for situation reports etc.

Indication

Scenario 1

Wildfire season

It has been a very dry summer. The rescue services have been working hard for a rather long time to extinguish fires throughout the country. There are indications of exhaustion and scarcity of resources within the fire and rescue services. The weather prognosis for the coming week shows no sign of relief in the drought, the temperatures are expected to rise slightly and the winds are going to increase in strength. The fair weather makes a lot of people head out in nature.

The wildfire bulletins produced at national level indicates a couple of orange-red alerts for the risk of wildfires starting and spreading in different parts of the country.

RISICO THRESHOLDS	COLOUR CODING	MINIMUM ACTIVATION OF OPERATIVE PHASES	IN CASE OF WILDFIRE EVENT
From Very Low to Low	Green	No operative phases needed to be activated/monitoring the situation	Alarm phase **must be activated***
From Medium to Medium – High	Yellow	Attention phase	
High	Orange	Pre-alarm phase	
From Very High to Extreme	Red		

Table: Process to ink hazard information (Risico Thresholds and alert levels) to preparedness and response actions (operational phases)

In this type of scenario, the neighbouring countries are probably facing the same type of weather conditions and risks. Therefore, communication with neighbouring countries and sharing information would be beneficial to all involved. A wildfire starting close to the border can affect more than one country, why sending information and resources to each other at an early stage could help decrease the chance of a fire ever reaching your country. Therefore, the duty officer needs to coordinate and communicate with neighbouring countries daily and closely when the risk of wildfires is high regionally.

There needs to be a clarity on beforehand who can make the formal decision to activate the UCPM and to accept or decline assistance. The duty officer probably does the administrative work and the communication with the ERCC, but the formal decision on activation and what assistance to accept is a high-level decision. It needs to be detailed and clarified who does this, and at national level it need to be arranged on beforehand what needs to be part of the decision of activation and acceptance of offers, and what information that needs to be available to be able to make such a decision. To provide the information needed will probably be a task for the duty officer, but the formal decision will be made somewhere else nationally.

Before the emergency can be opened, make sure that all necessary decisions are made internally/nationally. Depending on the organisation in the affected country, this can be a rather lengthy process and when the emergency is a fact and an activation needs to be made, this is the last thing that should delay the process. Time is of the essence and the faster a formal decision can be made to give the duty officer the mandate to activate the mechanism, the better. After that, the decision only needs to be effectuated if needed.

Consider to open an emergency in CECIS (via the ERCC). Member states and some participating states in the mechanism have access to CECIS and can open the emergency in the system by themselves. Without access to CECIS, the ERCC can be contacted and they will assist in opening the emergency and act in CECIS on the affected country's behalf.

Since the situation is not out of hand yet (as per the scenario) and no major fires have started, the the emergency to the UCPM could be focused on information sharing. To open an emergency in CECIS is not the same as activating the mechanism, but an emergency can be opened with the sole purpose of sharing information with MS/PS and the ERCC and raise awareness of the risk situation in your country. Communicate with the ERCC and they will assist on the best way forward. If opening an emergency for information transmission, no regular updates are needed or expected from the affected country. It is appreciated from the MS/PS side to get some kind of indication about how the situation is developing, but it is not needed on a regular basis. Therefore, starting this kind of emergency could shorten the time needed in case the situation would deteriorate, since the affected country only needs to update an existing emergency instead of starting a new one. Also, the affected country has successfully given the MS/PS a heads up and a chance to prepare which lays the groundwork for an effective response.

There are different ways to ask for assistance via the UCPM. Depending on what kind of request a country makes, the request needs to be differently formulated and include different kind of information.

- Assistance to one specific, large event. The location of the event and the specific needs have to be highlighted.
- Assistance to a number of large-scale events reaching over large parts of the country. The locations of the events could be highlighted in the request, but the important part is to describe briefly how the international assistance would be used (e.g., "*The assistance will reach this RDC via this Point of entry and thereafter be assigned to the area where they are the most needed. Information about final destination will be shared via CECIS*").
- Prepositioning of European resources due to a general high level of risk in the country and in exceptional situations a request for prepositioning of proper response capacities (e.g. firefighting airplanes) could be considered. Prepositioning is only possible within UCPM MS/PS.

In this phase, even if you decide that there is no need to ask the ERCC to open an emergency in CECIS, it could be fruitful to reach out to the ERCC anyway and inform in an email about the risk situation in the country and possible future needs.

At this stage, the proper documentation can be prepared. Global monitoring and situation reports, as well as the different types of documents that are needed for a potential activation of the UCPM. When requesting airborne assistance to fight a wildfire, there are different templates to use (annexes to this guideline):

- Request for Assistance form (annex 1 to this guideline)
- Preliminary operational form (annex 2 to this guideline)

All relevant documents can also be provided from the ERCC Duty Officers. Email or call them and they will assist in the process. If you have access to CECIS, the documents can be found and downloaded from there.

In case of an activation of the mechanism, part of the host nation support is to provide incoming international teams with information about the crisis management system in the country to which they are arriving. This information is typically collected in a country fact sheet. The basic information in such a fact sheet can be prepared by the duty officer or the duty officer back office long before an emergency is starting, but it needs to be updated with specific information about the actual situation.

At this early stage (without any active fires out of control), preparations can be made and the forms can be started but not finalised.

Another thing to consider during this early phase is to activate the Copernicus EMS. Copernicus is an EU programme aimed at developing European information services based on satellite Earth Observation and in situ (non space) data. Copernicus is a user driven programme and the information services provided will be freely and openly accessible to its users, mostly public authorities[6]. There is always the possibility to use the open databases provided by Copernicus, but the service can also be activated on-demand to map specific events. Note that current weather situation and positioning of the satellites can affect the possibility and speed in which satellite imagery can be received, why it is important to activate it rather sooner than later. CEMS on-demand mapping services can be directly activated through Authorised Users. Each MS/PS has a nominated Authorised User. Entities of the EU Member States who are not Authorised Users and who wish to activate the CEMS Mapping service must identify their National Contact Point.[7] Non MS/PS can request to activate the CEMS via the ERCC – it is not possible for non MS/PS to activate the CEMS directly but only through an Authorized user (e.g. EEAS/EUDELs, EC Services – ERCC included). The Service request form (SRF) is found online[8] and can be filled out

[6] https://emergency.copernicus.eu/

[7] https://emergency.copernicus.eu/faq.html

[8] https://emergency.copernicus.eu/mapping/ems/how-to-use-service

online or downloaded in Word or PDF format. It is available for preparedness/pre-events, emergency response and recovery/post-events. Note that filling out the online form will enable the quickest response, using the downloaded forms might delay the process slightly.

Summary
Tasks, indication phase

- ✓ Active communication to neighbouring countries
- ✓ Make sure that the national mandates to activate the mechanism and decide to accept offers is clear and detailed. The responsible decision maker needs to be closely informed of the processes and kept up to date of any developments. Clarify what information is needed for the decisions to be made
- ✓ Consider opening an emergency in CECIS yourself (if you have access to CECIS), or ask the ERCC to open a request in CECIS on your behalf
- ✓ Inform the ERCC regularly
- ✓ Prepare relevant documents
- ✓ Consider activating Copernicus EMS

Pre alert

Scenario 2

Wildfire season

The dry weather continues. Small fires are starting every day in different parts of the country. Thunderstorms with lightning are occurring, resulting in many, small fires in remote areas without accessible roads. Information is coming in about three fires whom have started in a mountainous area. The fires are climbing down the mountain and increasing in strength and size by the hour. For the time being, the rescue services have the fires somewhat under control, but the lengthy period of dry weather conditions and pressure on the rescue services has resulted in exhaustion in both personnel and equipment. The weather forecast for the coming time period shows increased winds in the area of the fires and no rainfall in sight. All three fires have potential of growing out of control if not swiftly contained.

At this stage, when the situation is deteriorating but it is not yet completely out of control, a pre alert (early warning) via the UCPM could be considered. When the status pre alert is chosen, the UCPM starts coordinating but no formal activation is being made. The pre alert status is the second most serious stage of alarm through the UCPM, and implies that a formal request for assistance (activation) might be needed in the next couple of days.

UCPM MS/PS with access to CECIS can open the pre alert in the system by themselves, or change the status to pre alert if the emergency is already opened. Without access to CECIS, the ERCC can be contacted and they will assist in opening the emergency with the correct status or changing the status (chosen by the affected country) and thereby informing all other MS/PS.

A pre alert to the UCPM comes with an expectation from the ERCC and the MS/PS to be continuously updated about the development of the situation. Since many countries have resources registered in the ECPP and rescEU, which means certain demands on swift action and deployment in case of activation, it is important to keep the information flow going once starting an emergency in CECIS with this kind of status. It is also important to not keep the pre alert status for too long – a couple of days should be enough to assess the situation and either request for assistance or decrease the level of alert, or even closing the emergency if the situation calms down.

In addition to the status of the emergency in CECIS, the duty officer needs to prepare a brief situational overview in English and provide it to the ERCC when opening the emergency. If the affected country has access to CECIS, the explanation of opening the emergency can be put either in the description of the emergency or as an attached file. If the affected country does not have access to CECIS, the information needs to be provided to the ERCC via email so that they can post it in CECIS. Remember to include a timeframe in the situation overview, e.g. *"If the situation deteriorates further, a formal request for assistance will be effectuated in approx. 24-48 hrs".*

At this stage it is also important to start planning the HNS or transit, RDC, situation reports and overviews and start scanning for liaison officers or contact points for the possibly incoming assistance.

At this stage (and the next stage, the formal request for assistance) it is important to keep the information flow going nationally to the stakeholders that might get affected by a request for assistance; the armed forces, the customs, the police authorities etc. – every relevant stakeholder identified in your country's national stakeholder analysis.

Summary
Tasks, pre alert phase

- ✓ Communicate and share information with ERCC
- ✓ Open an emergency in CECIS or ask the ERCC to open an emergency on your behalf, with status Pre alert
- ✓ Active communication nationally and with the ERCC (and MS/PS of the UCPM via CECIS)
- ✓ Prepare or finalise relevant documents

Response

Scenario 3

Wildfire season

The three fires have grown exponentially during the last couple of days. The rescue services are working day and night but are running out of personnel and resources. All three fires have spread uncontrollably and the smoke is reaching the big cities in the nearby area. There are areas being evacuated.

The resource inventory at the national level indicates that there is a shortage of ground firefighting teams and fire hoses. The resources that can be shared at the local and regional level have already been shared but there is still a shortage in equipment and rested personnel. The fires are spreading with such a fast rate that excessive water bombing from the air is urgently needed to subdue the fires.

The common operational picture and the analysis made now shows that international assistance is needed. The emergency in CECIS needs to be updated to a Request for assistance. This is the highest level of alert in the UCPM, it activates the mechanism immediately and offers can start being made from the MS/PS. If the requesting country has a user login in CECIS, the status change and activation is made directly in the system by the affected country. Inform the ERCC via telephone before changing the status. If the requesting country does not have login credentials in the system, email the ERCC and they will assist with updating in CECIS. In the email, include a situational update and explanation to the activation, and send it to the ERCC Duty Officer. Follow up with a phone call to make sure that there are no misunderstandings on either side. The ERCC Duty officer can thereafter update CECIS with the information provided.

Include in the Request for assistance:

Host nation authority and contact details
General description of the situation
General description of requested assistance
Type of requested assistance (specify as far as possible)
Estimated duration of deployment
Location of entry points (GPS coordinates)
Separated by land transport, air transport, sea transport
Name, location and GPS coordinates of base of operation (BoO) if already available
Avaliability of Host nation support
Additional remarks

(EU Host Nation Support Guidelines, 2012)

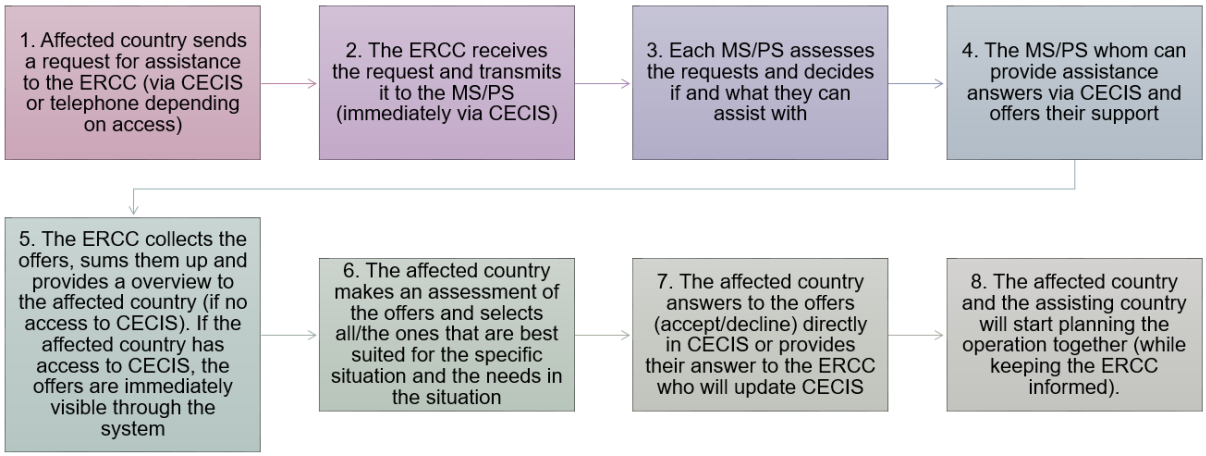
Everyone involved nationally needs to be informed, that once the RFA is in the system things will move very quickly and there are high demands on availability in the requesting country (hence – the duty officer). Make sure there are more persons on duty and on call to step in if the duty officer function gets overwhelmed. As previously mentioned: only the national point or points of contact (duty officer at national level or similar) should communicate with the ERCC and then inform and

coordinate with national authorities. There should not be several lines of communication with the ERCC from different stakeholders. Ideally, communication should be established using official, function email addresses with signatures for identification – it is highly recommended to not use personal email addresses.

The requesting country needs to finalise all the documentation needed to make the request for assistance. In case of a wildfire, the Request for assistance form (annex 1 to this guideline) now needs to be provided to the ERCC.

Once the activation has been made, the needs have to be clarified. Each request needs to be entered as a separate post in CECIS (e.g., in the example with wildfires; one request is needed for water bombing aircrafts, one request/line for ground forest fire fighting teams with vehicles etc.), based on your country's needs. If the requesting country has access to CECIS, the information can be entered there. If the requesting country does not have access to the system, contact the ERCC and communicate your exact needs and they will put it in the system and communicate on your behalf. In the first step, it is vital to communicate a detailed situation overview and clearly indicated needs – the logistical aspects of receiving the assistance can be communicated at a later stage. The detailed and explicit overview eases the MS/PS possibilities to assess the needs and offer the proper assistance, and will in the long run create a better situation for the duty officer since it will not raise the same number of questions from the international contact points.

The process for requesting for assistance via the UCPM can briefly be described as follows:



There are different aspects to keep in mind in each of the steps described in the flowchart.

Number (1), Affected country sends a request for assistance

- The earlier the ERCC can be provided with information about the situation, the better
- Provide the ERCC with a situation report at national level, the more details the better but important to keep the information relevant

- Based on the assessment of capacity at national level, make a list of the specific resources that are requested.
    - Any specific demands the requesting country has on the incoming aid needs to be clearly specified at this stage; e.g., connections to the hoses, demands on the equipment, how the assets are expected to work on site, to what extent you expect the assistance to be self-sufficient, for how long you wish the assistance to stay in the country and any other pre-conditions.
    - Note that the term "self-sufficient" might mean different things to different people and at different levels. Make sure to clarify what it means in this instance. Maybe the incoming team is self-sufficient in accommodation, food and WASH, but will need support with waste management and petrol/diesel. It is an important task for the duty officer to clarify these things so that everyone involved has the right expectations.
    - Be as clear as possible whether there are any other specifics to take into account: e.g., demands on work in extremely hot or cold conditions, inaccessible terrain, specific risks, pandemics or vaccine demands, legislation about dopants in water or other forbidden substances in the country, etc.

SE	EERC Modules (Voluntary Pool)	GFFF-V (Ground forest fire fighting using vehicles)	6	-	-	-

[Creation Date:2018/07/19 13:54:00 UTC]
07/19 13:54 UTC - Dear colleagues,

As you already know, this long period of drought and forest fires have resulted in a lack of national firefighting resources in Sweden. We therefore send you a formal request for modules – this means self-sufficient modules with equipment for firefighting (e.g. hoses and connections) including personnel (firefighters) and vehicles necessary to transport the equipment and personnel – which can be operational in Sweden during at least four days and preferably be large enough to cover entire fire sectors by themselves. We have received this kind of support from Denmark, which we use as an example in our attached request.

With hope for your continuous support.
Best regards
Duty Officer, MSB Sweden

Picture: example request in CECIS, for GFFF-V modules, during the forest fires in Sweden July-August 2018.

    - Here you can also add what type of HNS will be provided, it does not have to be very detailed but for example point of entry, liaison officer etc. If you can, provide information whether you can support with accommodation for incoming aid or other specifics. If this kind of information is not yet accessible, it can be provided at a later stage.
    - Remember to be very clear about the priorities in your request, what are the most urgent needs right now. This is especially important if your needs are many and the list of your requested resources is long.
- **All of this aims towards making it as easy as possible for the UCPM MS/PS to assess the request and provide offers best fit for purpose.**
- NOTE: sometimes a country knows exactly what they need, and then of course the request can be very detailed in what kind of assets are requested. However, sometimes it is more fruitful to request for a task to be done and a goal to be fulfilled, and the MS/PS who are experts on their own resources can assess whether their resources are fit for purpose or not. For example, if you know that you want Canadair aircrafts, you can request Canadair aircrafts. But if you formulate the request as "we need aerial forest fire fighting capacities

who can scoop water and have a capacity of at least 3000 litres per drop", there are more possibilities to receive support since more countries have resources that are fit for purpose.

- Remember to talk to the ERCC about how to request for assistance and how you formulate your request so that you receive what you are looking for. For example, if you are requesting firefighting airplanes, these often prefer to fly in pairs (both due to efficiency and safety reasons). The aircrafts registered in CECIS are registered as one module = two aircrafts. Therefore, if you formulate your request as only "request for Canadair" and put the requested amount to two, this might either be interpreted as a request for two aircrafts (which means one module) or two modules (which means four aircrafts). Therefore, always formulate your request so that possible misunderstandings are minimised. If you realise that the offer is not what you asked for, the request can always be updated but try to be as clear as possible from the start.
- Add contact details to the requesting authority/duty officer in the request, in case the assisting countries or ERCC have any questions. **It is very important that the contact persons have good knowledge in English.**
- Do not ask for too many resources at once. Of course, ask for the number of resources that you assess are needed, but keep in mind that more assistance requires more host nation support, more coordination, more information sharing and more briefings. The assisting country of course wishes to provide the best help possible, so it is important to make sure that you have the capacity to receive all the assistance and put them to work properly and safely. Sometimes a more limited assistance gives better output if supported properly from the host nation, than a large assistance that the receiving country lacks the capacity to incorporate into their own emergency structures. If assessments show that you have requested too little, you can always update your request with more needs.

Number (4), the MS/PS who can provide assistance answers via CECIS and offers their support

- The offering country needs to be very clear with what they can support with, on what terms, what HNS they are going to need, within what timeframe they can deliver the assistance, for how long they can operate on site, and any other preconditions.
- It is important that the requesting country receives a clear overview of the incoming aid's capacity and possible expert competencies. If the MS/PS offer a capacity registered in CECIS, for example in the ECPP or the rescEU, a lot of information can be found in the fact sheets in CECIS. This is only available for CECIS users, if you do not have access to CECIS this information needs to be provided to you via the offering country or via the ERCC upon request. Keep the dialogue going and find out as much information as possible about the offers, in order to make a good assessment.
- It is important that the country sending assistance does not overload the receiving capacity in the affected country. There needs to be a mutual understanding that the country stricken by disaster or crisis has an overwhelming situation on their hands and the country sending assistance needs to be present throughout the process, act as a "mentor" in regards to their

own capacity, and put time and resources into the operation and the hand-over phase (if there is one).

- A fact to keep in mind is that all offers are made on a voluntary basis. That means that any country can request any type of assistance and the request can be fully met, partially met or fully unmet.

Number (6), The affected country makes an assessment of the offers and selects the ones/all that are suitable for the specific situation

- It is okay to delay offers and not respond immediately. If a couple of extra hours are needed to arrange everything nationally to properly receive the assistance, that is perfectly alright. If, however, the requesting country needs more than a couple of hours, remember the importance of information sharing. You can postpone an acceptance to an offer for a couple of days, but it is vital to inform the offering country and the ERCC about why and when they can expect an answer. Remember that the offering states are on "stand-by" until an offer is accepted or rejected. This is particularly applicable when it comes to swift teams and ECPP/rescEU capacities, but is true in other instances as well. The offering countries will especially need updates close to the weekend, since they might need to keep their personnel in high readiness.
- Remember to read incoming offers carefully.

Number (7), The affected country answers to the offers (reject or accept)

- There needs to be a clarity on beforehand who makes the formal decision to accept or decline assistance. The duty officer probably does the administrative work and the communication with the ERCC, but the formal decision on what assistance to accept or not is a high-level decision. The mandate to make the decision to accept assistance needs to be detailed and clarified, and at national level it needs to be arranged on beforehand what needs to be part of the decision of acceptance and what information that needs to be available to be able to make such a decision. To provide the information needed will probably be a task for the duty officer, but the formal decision will be made somewhere else nationally.
- There needs to be a clarity around the financial aspects of the assistance before formal acceptance. The information about costs related to the assistance is often provided in fact sheets or by the offering country. Praxis might sometimes be that the assistance is offered without cost, but this is not always the case and needs to be sorted out before acceptance to avoid misunderstandings. Read more about financial procedures in section *Union financial assistance in response actions* on page 23 of this guideline.
- The assisting country may ask for Union financial assistance in order to cover costs related to the mobilisation of the assistance offered. Then, it is necessary that the request for co-financing (by filling out a form called "Part A") is sent to the ERCC before the start of any action related to the deployment of the assistance takes place. This is however the responsibility of the assisting county. After assessment, the ERCC will notify this request

in CECIS to all MS. This is important, as costs occurred before this notification are not eligible.

- Clarify as soon as possible who is doing what nationally. To appoint a project manager or alike at national or regional level (or local, depending on the specific situation in the country) could be beneficial to coordinate the assistance to the right destination and during the operation. Try, to the extent possible, not to accept an offer until there is at least one contact person (not the duty officer or a first responder) appointed to that specific team. *There will be questions from the international teams and contact points immediately after acceptance.*
- Depending on the organisation in the affected country, there needs to be an appointed contact person responsible at the local, regional and national levels. **Preferably this "person" is a function and not person dependant.** The contact person/function needs to be accessible at all levels, from the tactical to the strategic. The function handling the contacts with the ERCC and the incoming assistance initially (the duty officer at the national level) should not be the same person leading the emergency at local level (a first responder/head of rescue services), since this person/function will immediately be overwhelmed.
- A liaison officer for the incoming team needs to be appointed, who can act as a bridge between the project manager (back office), the international assistance and the rescue services/responsible authority in the requesting country.
- Think twice before accepting an offer. Make sure there are contact persons provided for the incoming aid on beforehand (to the extent possible) and that the assistance is needed. Once offers are accepted, the offering country will start mobilising their support and especially resources within the ECPP and rescEU can possibly start moving in a matter of hours. The offering country may also formally request co-financing support from the Commission, in order to cover (partially or fully) transport or operational costs, depending on the offered assistance. Therefore, it is not appreciated from the assisting county if an accepted offer is withdrawn. It is possible if it is well-communicated, but it is not appreciated. An acceptance means a formal activation of the mobilisation, which will start many actions (many of them cost driving) in the sending countries.

Number (8), The affected country and the assisting country will start planning the operation together

- The requesting country needs to finalise all the documentation needed for the specific operation. For example: a preliminary operation form (annex 2 to this guideline) needs to be provided in case of an activation of airborne capacities to a wildfire, and there are specific demands on documentation in case the country has requested medicines or vaccines.
- It is vital that the contacts and planning starts as soon as possible after acceptance and that there are clear communication channels, preferably one to the duty officer for pressing matters (24/7) and one for the project manager and liaison officer to handle day-to-day business.

- Discuss with incoming assistance what kind of support (HNS) they need in order to be fully operational.
- Provide the incoming assistance with information about destination, RDC, logistics arrangements and situation reports. Like mentioned before – many countries have resources registered in the ECPP and rescEU, which means certain demands on swift action and deployment in case of activation. Therefore, especially if these kinds of resources are accepted, the countries offering the assistance will be in urgent need of information to be able to hold up their part of the contracts.
- The regional/local level needs to be provided with information about the incoming assistance, what to expect and what to prepare. These stakeholders might be invited to take part already in step (6), assessment of the offers, to make sure the incoming assistance will be fit for purpose in the local context. When to invite the local/regional level depends on the structures in the specific country, but they need to be reached by the relevant information as soon as possible to be able to prepare. The recipient at national, regional and local level also needs to understand what commitments need to be undertaken over time, to maximise the use of the provided support. Sometimes information gets stuck on the way between the central authorities at national level to responsible individuals and stakeholders at the scene. Sometimes local stakeholders do not provide others (and the national level) with important information. Once again – contact lists, appointed responsible persons/functions and communication chains are vital in this kind of operation.
- Secure capacity to receive the incoming aid. For example, some resources might need a lot of space and personnel for transportation and interim storage (for example shelter), while others (for example airplanes) need a lockable hangar for their aircrafts. Sort all needs out as early as possible.

Remember to claim ownership of the operation! The stakeholder who has requested the assistance will always remain the owner of the situation. The incoming assistance is exactly what it sounds like – assistance – and will never take ownership of a crisis situation from the requesting country. Be prepared to work together and find creative solutions. You know your land; you are the host.

During the operation

- Remember that the stakeholder who has requested the international assistance is responsible for handling it.
- The duty officer has to continue to update the situation reports and national overviews. Remember to translate the situation reports into English and disseminate them to the ERCC, the liaison officers (who will provide the information to the international teams on the ground) and the responsible agencies at the countries sending assistance. The ERCC can also transmit the situation reports in the CECIS emergency logbook upon request (if you have access to the system, you can do it yourself) and thereby give all MS/PS an overview of the situation in your country and what to expect next. As long as the Request for Assistance is activated, the ERCC will keep scanning the mechanism and MS/PS

capacities and try to find good matches for the affected country's needs. Therefore, an updated situation overview will help them do a more efficient job.

- Keep the emergency description updated or attach situation reports regularly – this can be done by the ERCC upon request.
- Depending on the scale of the disaster, and the needs in the specific situation, the ERCC sometimes decides to deploy a EU Civil Protection Team (hereafter: EUCPT). The team is composed by different experts from the MS/PS and at least one liaison officer from the ERCC. The main task of the team is to, together with the responsible national authorities, assist the requesting country in their interactions with the ERCC and UCPM and help facilitate incoming assistance. The team can also provide different specific expertise, based on the context. However, the EUCPT will never take over any response responsibilities from the requesting country.
- Remember to always, when possible, make clear to the media and the public that assistance is provided via the UCPM. This relates to press releases, photos, news articles, interviews and updates on websites and social media. See attachment 5, *Communication and visibility Manual for European Union-funded Civil Protection Actions,* for more information on this.
- The ERCC creates written situation reports, maps and overviews on daily or weekly basis, many of them fully accessible online and some only accessible to UCPM MS/PS, Commission services and Civil protection authorities. Usually, active emergencies in the mechanism gets dedicated a short chapter. The duty officer at national level in the affected country with the active emergency, might get the possibility to proofread the reports and give feedback to the ERCC before distribution to others. This is a process which often has a very short timeframe and therefore needs to be prioritised to make sure everything is correct.
- The ERCC has regular, digital coordination conferences with the MS/PS – so called Coordination Meetings with Civil Protection Authorities. If you are a MS/PS, and you have an open request for assistance in the UCPM, you will have a possibility to provide your situation report in these meetings. If you are not a MS/PS but your country has an active emergency in the mechanism, and a EUCPT is deployed to your country, the team leader of the EUCPT or the ERCC liaison officer might be invited to join the call and report about the situation on your behalf. The aim of the meetings is to share information, assess needs and discuss specific topics.
- The ERCC also facilitates weekly VTC on wildfires during peak forest fire season (from June to September). This is not a meeting for all MS/PS, but only the ones with wildfire resources in the ECPP or rescEU or who has relevant ongoing fires. If the fire occurs in a non MS/PS, and there is a EUCPT deployed, the ERCC liaison officer might attend the meeting on that affected country's behalf. Any UCPM activation for wildfires would also be mentioned during the regular digital conferences with all MS/PS.
- If there has been a time frame set on how long the assistance is expected to stay in the affected country, make sure to assess this regularly and as early as possible request for an extension of the support if needed. Remember that the assisting country might need to rotate personnel, do maintenance on equipment and take other measures in order to meet a request for extension, why it is very important to continuously assess the situation on the

ground and let the assisting country know about the needs. If an extension is needed, this should be put through CECIS (by the affected country or ERCC in case of no access) and the assisting country should answer via CECIS. It can preferably however be preceded by a discussion person to person between the countries, before the formal request in CECIS.

Summary
Tasks, response phase

- ✓ Update the emergency in CECIS to a Request for Assistance (or open a new emergency with such status if it is a sudden event)
- ✓ Provide as much information as possible at an early stage and update the information continuously
- ✓ Inform stakeholders nationally, when the activation is made and throughout the whole process. Make sure vital information does not get stuck between levels
- ✓ Finalise and provide necessary documentation
- ✓ Clarify exact needs and demands (technical, environmental, etc.) on incoming assistance. This will reduce the workload since it will not create as many questions from offering countries
- ✓ Dedicate assigned functions/contact persons for the ERCC and incoming assistance. The contact persons need to have good English
- ✓ Collect information about the offers – what they can do, what HNS they need, how well they fit the requirements of the situation, financial matters, etc. Provide the decision makers nationally with the information they need in order to make the essential decisions
- ✓ It is better to delay the acceptance slightly, assess the offers carefully and prepare reception, than to accept the offers and then withdraw acceptance. Communication is key
- ✓ Start coordinating immediately with contact points and teams of accepted/incoming assistance. Sort out HNS needs and possibilities, RDC, Points of entry etc. Secure national capacity to properly receive the assistance
- ✓ Claim ownership of the operation
- ✓ Assess the operation and the assistance regularly and highlight as early as possible if there is a need for extension of the assistance
- ✓ **Keep the ERCC informed!** Provide updated situation reports in English to be disseminated to the ERCC, the MS/PS (via CECIS) and the international teams (via the liaison officers)
- ✓ Dedicate time to join the ERCC processes for activations in the mechanism, e.g., proofread bulletins, participate in telephone conferences on information sharing and coordination etc.

Deactivation

When the operation is over and the last international team or capacity has left the country or all in-kind assistance has been delivered to the national authorities, it is important to inform the assisting country's home authority and the ERCC. If the requesting country has access to CECIS, the emergency can now be ***Pre-Closed***. This deactivates the UCPM. Before the emergency is pre

closed, the Situation description should be updated with a short overview of the situation and the help received. Here is also a good opportunity to thank the countries who have supported (in addition to a proper send-off as a thank you to the teams, but that is more of a HNS question than something that is suitable for this guideline). Once the status has been put to pre closed, the ERCC will close the emergency officially.

Remember to perform an AAR (after action review) or lessons learned exercise to collect all new experiences and knowledge of this kind of large-scale emergency and response. Update guidelines, manuals and SOPs in accordance with your experiences.

The ERCC are open to feedback about their work and how the processes are working, and can always provide advice about the specific emergency and what to develop until next time. Communicate with them and they can assist in these matters (of course depending on their availability and workload at that specific moment, if there are operational matters to attend to they will be the top priority).

Summary
Tasks, deactivation phase

- ✓ Communicate with ERCC, the assisting country's home office and international teams
- ✓ Update the situational description in the CECIS emergency overview
- ✓ Close the emergency in CECIS when the last international capacity has left the country
- ✓ Collect experiences and knowledge, update existing SOPs and exercise to be even better prepared for the next time an activation of the UCPM is needed.

Union financial assistance in response actions

All economical questions can be raised before and during the operation as well as afterwards. The financial aspects however need to be sorted out at some time. The sending countries can request co-financing from ECHO for some or all of the costs of the operation, but if there are additional costs the host country can be requested to cover these costs. This is however solved in different ways depending on the situation and there is also sometimes different praxis.

The offering countries can apply for Union financial assistance in order to partially or totally cover costs related to the transport of the assistance or operation.

There are several types of operations that can be covered by Union financial assistance:

- Transport of spontaneous offers (e.g. in-kind assistance, modules, medical evacuations)
- Operations – deployment of ECPP modules, rescEU capacities

- Pooling operations (when member states or participating states pool or share transport capacities)
- Other response actions for taking additional necessary supporting and complementary action in order to facilitate the coordination of response in the most effective way
- Repatriation operations

Union assistance is provided to offering countries in the form of financial assistance, direct grants, to co-finance their own available transport resources, or a transport provider when offering countries do not have their own transport solution. The latter is implemented via the European Commission's transport contractor – broker or other sources, as appropriate.

Depending on the type of assistance sent and whether the assistance is sent inside or outside the territory of the offering country, different procedures and different co-financing rates apply, as shown in the table below.

Overview of (co-)financing rates per type of assistance offered		
Type of offers	Inside MS/PS	Outside EU
Spontaneous offers	75 % transport costs	
Pooled assistance/UCPM Logistics Hubs Article 23 (4) of the Decision No 1313/2013/EU	100 % Transport cost to the Hub 100 % Logistical costs and local transport	
European civil protection pool ECPP modules, other response capacities	75 % operational costs (incl. international and local transport costs)	
rescEU Aerial forest fire fighting capacities	75 % operational 100 % transport	100 % operational
RescEU capacities in LO-HI events Medevac, EMT-2s, medical stockpiling, CBRN Decon, Shelter, Transport and Logistics, Energy	100 % operational costs	
Other response actions Article 22 (c) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU	*A co-financing rate should be applied and is defined on case-by-case basis (example: setting up a medical evacuation hub, prepositioning of firefighting teams etc.)*	

LO-HI = Low probability – High impact[9]

[9] As per the Commission implementing decision (EU) 2020/452, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32020D0452

All costs necessary to facilitate a rapid and effective response to disasters are eligible for Union financial assistance.

- Eligible transport costs include costs related to international transport, including the costs of all services, fees, logistical and handling costs, fuel and possible accommodation costs as well as other costs such as taxes, duties in general and transit costs.
- Eligible operational costs include those costs related to personnel, international and local transport, logistics, consumables and supplies, communications, maintenance and insurance, as well as other costs necessary to ensure the effective use of such capacities, as described in Article 12 of the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/1310.
- Costs related to visibility items/actions and audit (when needed) are also considered as eligible costs.

The aforementioned costs are not eligible for financing where covered by means of Host Nation Support, or where they are financed via other Union financial instruments.

The offering countries can apply for Union financial assistance if the following requirements are met:

- Activation of the UCPM
- Assistance requested and accepted
- Additional transport resources are necessary (for transport support and transport grant)
- Assistance meets vital needs and complements other assistance provided
- Part A needs to be submitted before any action starts, including before the activation of the transport broker, if possible, minimum 3 hours in advance.
- Upon Part A notification, costs become eligible.

Annexes

Annex 1: Request for Assistance Form

Annex 2: Preliminary Operational Form

Annex 3: Template SitRep

Annex 4: 2023 ERCC Request for assistance, AFFF capacities flowchart

Annex 5: CIVIL PROTECTION Communication and Visibility Manual

European Commission

ANNEX TO REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE
FOREST FIRE INFORMATION FORM

FOREST FIRE LOCATION:

Country:_____ Region: _____ Municipality: _____
UTM Coordinates: _____
Fire origin date: _____/_____/2023
Are there any other active fires in the region/country? Yes ◯ No ◯ Number: _____

FIRE CHARACTERISTICS:

Current estimated burnt area	Exposed and potential elements	Weather conditions	Topography
<= 100 hectares ◯ 100 - 500 hectares ◯ 501 - 5000 hectares ◯ > 5000 hectares ◯ Size (if known): _____ ha	Urban settlements ◯ Critical Infrastructures ◯ Natural protected areas ◯ Forest/wildland ◯ description: _____	Temperature: _____ °C Wind speed: _____ km/h Wind direction: _____ Humidity: _____ % Fire danger level: _____ (If known)	Flat ◯ Hilly ◯ Sharply sloped ◯ Inaccessible ◯

COUNTRY RESOURCES ENGAGED/AVAILABLE:

Heavy aircraft: Nb/type: _____
Medium aircraft: Nb/type: _____
Ground forces: _____
Aerial coordination available: Yes ◯ No ◯
Remarks: _____

IMPACT ON POPULATION - Nb of people if known:

Evacuated: Yes ◯ No ◯ No.: _____
Injured: Yes ◯ No ◯ No.: _____
Dead: Yes ◯ No ◯ No.: _____

BILATERAL ASSISTANCE:

Requested: Yes ◯ No ◯ Not yet ◯ Country(ies): _____

Already offered (status)				
On the way ◯	On-site ◯	Country: _____	No. Type: _____
On the way ◯	On-site ◯	Country: _____	No. Type: _____
On the way ◯	On-site ◯	Country: _____	No. Type: _____
On the way ◯	On-site ◯	Country: _____	No. Type: _____

WATER RESOURCES:

Scooping areas available (min. size 2km long*100 m large*2 m deep): sea ◯ lake/dam ◯ river ◯
Distance from affected area: _____ km

Distance from the affected area to the closest airport (for non-scooping planes): _____ km

WEATHER FORECAST/EVOLUTION (trend for next 48 hours):

Temperature:	↗	→	↘	Remarks:
Wind speed:	↗	→	↘	
Humidity:	↗	→	↘	
Fire danger level (if available):	↗	→	↘	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/REMARKS:

VALIDITY OF INFORMATION: ____/____/2023 at ____h ____min

European Commission

PRELIMINARY OPERATIONAL FORM

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Request from (country): _____

Date of request: _____ Hour (Brussels time): _____

Type of Mission: Pre-positioning ☐ Rapid intervention ☐ (1 day mission) Deployment ☐

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION – CONTACT POINT:

		Name	Phone	E-mail
Aircraft Airbase	Airport – Base of Operations			
	Point of contact			
Liaison officer	On site			
	National Contact Point			

COVID 19 specificities (if any) – ADDITIONAL REMARKS

To be filled in by the requesting country and forwarded to the ERCC at ECHO-ERCC@ec.europa.eu

European Commission

SITUATION REPORT

SITREP N°
DD MONTH YEAR

Capacity information:

Capacity deployed (country): To (country): Airbase: Head of mission: Phone number: Email:

Overview of the day:

Daily operational activity:

Aircraft		Flight hours (HH:MM)			Drops	Working area
Number	Type	HH	MM	Type		
	Choose an item.			Choose an item.		
	Choose an item.			Choose an item.		
	Choose an item.			Choose an item.		
	Choose an item.			Choose an item.		
	Choose an item.			Choose an item.		
	Choose an item.			Choose an item.		
	Choose an item.			Choose an item.		
	Choose an item.			Choose an item.		

Remarks/Comments

Operations:

To be filled in during deployment and forwarded daily to the ERCC at: ECHO-ERCC@ec.europa.eu

Technical:

Personnel:

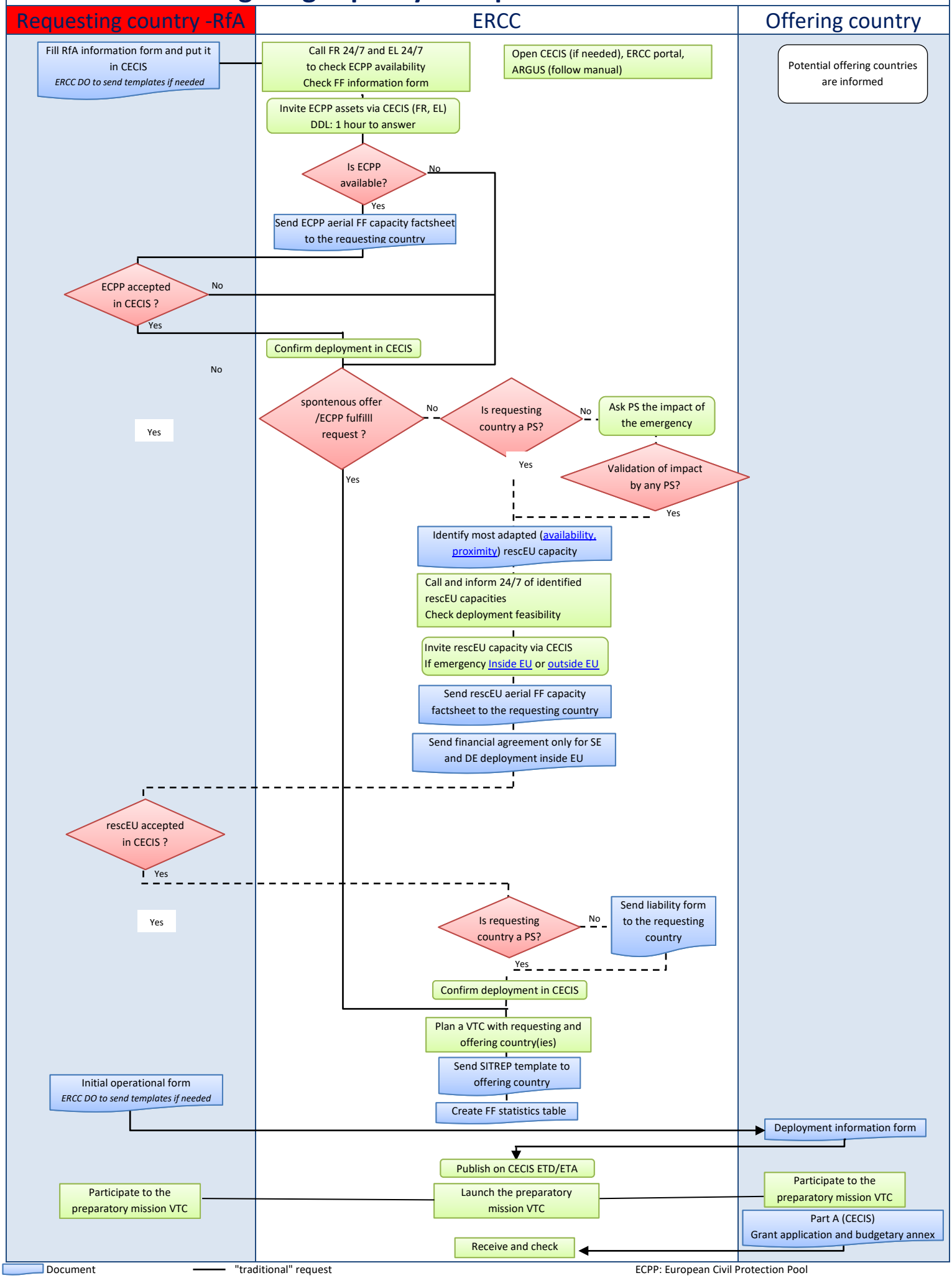
Media Coverage/visits:

Next day scheduled activity:

Others comments:

To be filled in during deployment and forwarded daily to the ERCC at: ECHO-ERCC@ec.europa.eu

Aerial Forest firefighting capacity – Request for assistance - SOPs



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Communication and Visibility Manual

for European Union-funded Civil Protection Actions

June 2022

European Union

*The **Communication and Visibility Manual for European-Union funded Civil Protection Actions** provides general guidance on the implementation of contractual visibility and communication. The concrete application depends on and may be adapted to the specific circumstances of the individual project. Civil protection authorities and stakeholders are invited to consult DG ECHO in case of doubt.*

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1. Why this Manual?

Civil protection stakeholders and bodies from EU Member States and Participating States[1] receiving support from the EU have an obligation to communicate about the EU civil protection assistance they receive.

The **aim** of communication by civil protection stakeholders and bodies on EU-funded actions is to:

- ensure that the public is aware of how the EU is helping;
- provide accountability as to where the assistance is going to; and
- foster continued strong support for civil protection assistance among key stakeholders and the general public.

For communication to be effective, it must be undertaken in close cooperation between civil protection stakeholders and the EU's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department (henceforth, for the purposes of this document, ECHO).

The legal basis (Decision (EU) 1313/2013) provides that civil protections bodies and stakeholders receiving in-kind or financial support from the EU for their disaster management (i.e. preparedness, prevention and response) activities are required to mention the EU contribution and show the EU emblem. The manual at hand reminds stakeholders of these requirements and provides practical guidance on the implementation of these visibility and communication obligations.

The 2021 revised legislation on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (Regulation (EU) 2021/836, Article 20a) has reinforced communication and visibility obligations for both **recipients of Union funding ("EU grants")**, as well as the **beneficiaries of the assistance** delivered.

[1] There are currently 6 Participating States to the Mechanism (Iceland, Norway, Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey).

2. Displaying the European Union emblem

EU Member States, Participating States to the Mechanism and other civil protection stakeholders shall ensure an appropriate public awareness of interventions and actions funded by the European Union and display

- the European flag (EU emblem) and
- the funding statement "Funded by the European Union" or "Co-funded by the European Union" (translated into local languages, where appropriate):

Funded by the European Union

Co-funded by the European Union

The emblem can be downloaded in all EU languages on the DG ECHO visibility page .

Civil protection stakeholders can also display their own logo (e.g. national emblem, civil protection symbol) alongside the EU emblem by following the visibility rules for third party logos.

The format of how the EU emblem and the text are displayed can be adapted to the context in which they are going to be used. However, the emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text.

⚠	**Visibility rule for third party logos** The placement of the EU emblem should not give the impression that the third-party promoter is part of the EU institutions. Therefore, it is required to place the EU emblem well apart from the logo of the third-party organisation.

	EU Civil Protection logo DG ECHO communication **discourages** the sole use of the civil protection triangle combined with the EU stars, often referred to as **EU Civil Protection logo.** However, this civil protection triangle or other emblems or logos can be displayed next to the EU emblem following the visibility rules of third party logos.

2.1 EU visibility during civil protection preparedness, prevention and response activities

Civil protection preparedness, prevention and response activities are diverse and can be highly dynamic. They also provide good opportunity to show EU visibility. The EU emblem with the accompanying funding statement shall be displayed:

- Throughout response activities to a crisis, e.g. through stickers, display panels, banners and plaques, clothing items (EU vests, t-shits, caps etc. worn by civil protection experts);
- On certified response capacities in the European Civil Protection Pool;
- During exercises and training activities;
- On operational publications and materials, such as training manuals, notebooks, notepads and posters;
- During conferences, seminars or on any information or promotional materials; such as brochures, leaflets, posters, banners, presentations in paper or electronic form.

This guidance is in accordance with Article 20a of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, stating that any type of activities by civil protection stakeholders who are involved in crisis preparedness, prevention and response shall display the EU emblem.

2.2 EU visibility in communication material

The EU emblem with the accompanying funding statement "Funded by the European Union" shall be used when producing any type of visibility and communications material for dissemination, for example:

- Websites;
- Audiovisual material for online and offline dissemination;
- Posters and other campaign material;
- Publications.

3. Variations to display the European Union emblem

The visibility guidelines request a consistent use of the EU emblem and funding statement "Funded by the European Union" for all visibility actions.

For grant agreements concluded before 2021, the EU emblem can be shown with the accompanying programme name **European Union Civil Protection.**

Please contact ECHO-COMM-CP@ec.europa.eu for assistance should you deem the use of the EU flag and funding statement "Funded by the European Union" insufficient, e.g. posing security risks for civil protection operations outside the European Union.

By following closely the instructions by European Commission corporate communication, the ECHO communication unit will assess on a case by case basis whether a derogation can be granted.

	Please contact ECHO-COMM-CP@ec.europa.eu for questions related to EU visibility requirements in EU Civil Protection.

4. Communication

The primary target audience of communication actions by civil protection stakeholders should be the general public, both in the European Union and in third countries where EU-funded assistance is carried out. The idea is to give meaning to our actions by explaining in easy language what, how and why we undertake them and emphasise on the added value given by the EU.

Communicating in a meaningful way on EU-funded assistance entails that:

The messages (e.g. in press releases, verbal statements, press articles) are thoughtfully put together and **clearly mention that the project is financially supported by the EU** (by saying, for example, Thanks to EU assistance, XXX people are getting access to clean water… or With support from the EU, XXX is helping…. Or The operation has been (co-)funded by the EU). The EU shall equally be named in tweets and audio-visual products.

Where specified in tender or grant specifications, e.g. in the case of exercises and training activities, contractors prepare a **plan for communication and/or media activities** for the duration of their contracts and submit it to the Commission.

The visibility and communication obligations generally imply that the mentioning of the European Union and/or display of the EU emblem shall be included on an equal footing with that of the civil protection authority or stakeholder. For further details on the use of the EU emblem, please refer to Section 2 of this Manual.

4.1 How to refer to the EU

The European Union (and its acronym "EU") is the preferred term for basic visibility activities, when communicating with the media

etc. The terms "EU Civil Protection"or other programme names may also be used in written products, as appropriate. The stand-alone acronym ECHO needs be avoided.

4.2 Media Outreach

This section explains the application of EU visibility and communication requirements in media-related activity, for example during the deployment of civil protection experts to a third country, or during prevention and preparedness activities organised with the support of the EU.

4.2.1 Press releases

A press release – either at the start or at the conclusion of deployment or action – shall display the EU emblem alongside that of the national civil protection authority and/or other leading partners.

The press release text must clearly state that the action is funded by the European Union. In addition, the text also includes tangible figures / examples of the (expected) impact of the provided assistance, such as the estimated number of people to receive assistance. Technical language has to be avoided at all cost. Press releases can be include a quote by a DG ECHO or EUDEL representative, for example, the DG ECHO field expert, DG ECHO EU Civil Protection team leader and counterparts at the Brussels headquarters).

Civil protection authorities are kindly asked to share a draft of the press release with ECHO before its publication. Quotes by ECHO representatives must always be approved before publication. Press releases may also include the contact details of a relevant ECHO representative for follow-up questions by the media. The contact person must be approved by ECHO.

The URL address of ECHO's website to refer to is https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/index_en

4.2.2 Media Presence during interventions or civil protection exercises

Members of EU Civil Protection Teams and other partners involved in EU civil protection operations are encouraged to communicate on their projects with the media. For the sake of coherence and coordination, teams should organise internally how to deal with media requests. No authorisation from the Commission is required, as long as partners speak on behalf of their own organisation (e.g. a national civil protection authority) and on the technical aspects of the project. When speaking to the media, our stakeholders should acknowledge the assistance by the European Union and explain the tangible results achieved thanks to EU assistance.

In emergencies, if EU funds for humanitarian assistance are foreseen in addition to assistance through EU Civil Protection, this fact should be equally acknowledged in media interview.

Civil protection authorities are encouraged to inform ECHO about their media contacts during the project and share relevant press clippings. This is especially relevant if the EU has invited journalists on-site and EU-funded media visit.

4.2.3 Press Conferences and press visits

DG ECHO organises **joint press conferences** together with civil protection bodies and stakeholders and the national government that requested assistance in the aftermath of a disaster, or that are involved in major EU-funded

initiatives. DG ECHO also organises dedicated **media visits for journalists** to learn about practical results of EU Civil Protection. Both press conference and press visits aim to give further visibility to EU assistance. A relevant number of positive press articles covering this EU assistance serves as indicator for its successful outcomes.

EU civil protection bodies and stakeholders are asked to actively contribute to the success of these press conferences and press visits, for example through logistics, outreach to national media etc.

4.3 Social Media

Social media communication is a **high-impact way of creating visibility** among the general public and specific target audiences.

Civil protection partners are requested to:

- **publish visually attractive content** on EU-funded assistance, targeted at the general public, i.e. EU citizens who are not experts in the civil protection domain. To fulfil the visibility requirements, the social media posts should clearly mention and illustrate the EU's financial support to the mission.
- **refer** to ECHO as the EU or EU Civil Protection, whichever is clearer for the audience;
- use ECHO-related **hashtags**, when relevant: #EUCivilProtection (and/or specific event-related hashtags in co-ordination with ECHO);
- **tag** ECHO in the posts, using the handles indicated below;
- and invited to like/follow/subscribe to ECHO's social media channels:
    - Facebook: http://facebook.com/ec.humanitarian.aid (tag with: @ec.humanitarian.aid)
    - Twitter: https://twitter.com/@eu_echo (tag with: @eu_echo)
    - Instagram: https://instagram.com/eu_echo (tag with: @eu_echo)
    - Flickr: http://www.flickr.com/eu_echo
    - YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/user/HumanitarianAidECHO
    - Blog: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/stories_en

DG ECHO encourages the use of content from our website and social media platforms, provided that DG ECHO is appropriately credited/tagged.

4.4 Photos

Civil protection stakeholders are encouraged to **take and promote photos on the assistance** with a clear acknowledgement of the EU partnership. They are also invited to share the photos with ECHO as soon as possible, ideally during or shortly after the deployment. The link to download the material should be sent to: echo-comm-cp@ec.europa.eu

Photos shared with ECHO for further dissemination should be provided in high resolution (72dpi for web, 300dpi for

print) and accompanied by brief captions and an explanatory sheet with background information (date, country, city/region, project, copyright, name and role of the person in the photo, if applicable). ECHO reserves the right to edit the text of the provided photo captions to fit the editorial style of its website and social media channels.

Kindly note that ECHO may also deploy professional photographers to cover assistance provided under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

Partners must ensure full Intellectual Property Rights and General Data Protection Regulation compliance, as required by law.

4.5 Audio-visual products

Audio-visual products should highlight the tangible impact of EU civil protection assistance provided in close cooperation with its Member States and Participating States. The European Union's role can be emphasised by integrating it into the storyline and by including, for instance:

- footage displaying the EU emblem (on items, stickers, uniforms etc.);
- statements on and references to EU's support, e.g. "Thanks to EU assistance/financial support, xxx has managed to help xxx people affected by xxx".
- interviews with a Commissioner, a senior official or an ECHO expert in the field.

Note: all videos must display the EU emblem with the accompanying text "Funded by European Union" at the end.

The audio-visual material should be produced up to professional broadcast or social media publication standards from a conceptual, editorial and technical point of view. ECHO should always be referred to as **the EU, European Union** or **EU Civil Protection**, as relevant. For more guidance, please refer to the table below.

In addition to ready-made videos, stakeholders are encouraged to share with ECHO clear broadcast footage in 16:9 aspect ratio that can be easily re-edited into a video. In case of interviews, transcripts in the original language and in English should also be provided, whenever available.

Civil protection stakeholders are invited to share the available audio-visual material with ECHO as soon as possible, ideally during or shortly after the deployment. The link to download the material should be sent to: ECHO-COMM-CP@ec.europa.eu

Stakeholders must ensure full Intellectual Property Rights and General Data Protection Regulation compliance, as required by law.

Basic guidance on producing videos for social media:

- Produce the videos in square or vertical format when producing videos for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. It is best to film the videos with this format in mind.
- Produce social media videos to be watched with sound OFF. 85 % of viewers watch without turning the sound on.
- When using text in the video, make the text big, bold, simple and as brief as possible.
- Try to give your video a cinematic look to grab attention.
- Always use subtitles when there is speech. Make the subtitles big and easy to read (and simplify what is said to make it easy to read).
- Make the video edit as short as possible – aim for one-minute productions maximum.
- Tell simple, engaging stories with attractive footage. Try to make them relatable. The video should give people a small idea of what we do, not explain it to them in detail. Never use any jargon or acronyms.
- You only have 2-3 seconds to catch people's attention on social media with your video. Use it well and start with the most exciting part of the story.

5. Reporting and coordination with DG ECHO throughout activations of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism

Unless specified differently, civil protection bodies and stakeholders shall report to DG ECHO on measures taken to fulfil the visibility and communication requirements laid out in this document. When **submitting the final grant request** after the deployment, Civil Protection stakeholders will be invited to share the proofs of their communication and visibility actions. The Commission will take the material into consideration when evaluating the operation.

This material may include

- **photo** and **video material** that showcase how EU visual branding is applied to capacities funded or co-funded under EU Civil Protection;
- **press communication** that includes appropriate references to EU Civil Protection;
- **events** that are organised in the margins of the EU Civil Protection operation;
- **social media communication** that refers and links to EU Civil Protection;
- any other **examples of proactive communication** about the Union support to national media and stakeholders, as well as through their own communication channels; and
- **support to the EU's communication** actions on the operations.

⚠	As a minimum requirement for **all EU-funded operations** throughout activations of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the Commission expects recipients of funding to apply the **visual branding during the delivery of the action**. In addition, recipients of funding are requested to mention the assistance on their **social media channel(s),** as well as to support the Commission's communication actions if they are invited to do so. Derogations to this can be allowed for safety reasons.

The EU places particular importance on jointly coordinated EU Civil protection actions that receive considerable EU funding:
For **medium-value grants**, where the EU contribution is estimated (at the moment of the offer) between € 60,000 and 1 million, recipients are requested to deliver as a minimum one of the following actions in addition to **visual branding during the delivery of the action** and **social media communication**:

- press communication; **or**
- submission of professional photos and/or videos; **or**
- other actions such as ceremonial events.

For **high-value grants**, where the EU contribution is estimated (at the moment of the offer) above € 1 million, recipients are requested to deliver as a minimum the following additional actions in addition to **visual branding during the delivery of the action** and **social media communication**:

- press communication; **and**
- submission of professional photos and/or videos;
- other actions such as ceremonial events are optional.

For all types of grants (low, medium of high value), the recipients *may* also be requested to support the Commission's own communication actions, for instance on content or outreach.

Please find below a summary of the minimum visibility and communication requirements, which are specifically applied during UCPM activations (transportation grants):

EU grant contribution	< € 60 000	€ 60 000 – € 1 million	> € 1 million
Visual branding	x	x	x
Social media	x	x	x
Support to EC communication	x	x	x
Press communication	[optional]	Minimum one	x
Photos / videos	[optional]		x
Other (e.g. events)	[optional]		[optional]

In case certain branding or communication requirements cannot be met, due to the nature of the operation or (outside the EU) because of security concerns, recipients should justify this in the reporting and propose appropriate alternative solutions.

Before and during the deployment of major operations, the Commission will send specific communication guidance to the communication contact points in the relevant Civil Protection authorities, as well as to the contact points in the respective Permanent Representations and Commission Representations. This guidance reminds them of the graphic use of the emblem, the social media handles and hashtags, technical requirements of audio-visual material.

6. Contact Information

You are welcome to contact the ECHO Communication team for questions related to visibility/communication activities at any stage: ECHO-COMM-CP@ec.europa.eu

For major communication projects, you are strongly advised to contact us before the proposal is finalised.

During disaster response activities please do not hesitate to call Emergency Response Coordination Centre and ask for the Communication Officer responsible for your project's country or thematic area:

At headquarters in Brussels Tel: (+32 2) 295 44 00 (Emergency Response Coordination Centre)

E-mail: ECHO-COMM-CP@ec.europa.eu

Website: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/index_en