



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID
OPERATIONS (ECHO)
Strategy and Policy
Prevention and Preparedness Capacity Building

9TH EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION FORUM

BRUSSELS | 3 – 4 NOVEMBER 2026

CONCEPT NOTE

The 9th European Civil Protection Forum will take place on 3-4 November 2026 in Brussels, examining how preparedness needs to be shaped today, so that collectively we are ready for the challenges of tomorrow.

The next edition of the European Civil Protection Forum will take place at a pivotal moment for the Union's resilience architecture. The adoption of the European Preparedness Union Strategy in March 2025 marks a major milestone in the EU's shift from reactive crisis management towards a proactive, anticipatory and integrated approach to preparedness and response. This new strategic framework comes at a time when the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) is undergoing a legislative revision to further improve the coordination and effectiveness of assistance during major emergencies.

Building on the foundations laid by the 2024 edition — which emphasised knowledge exchange, innovation and cross-sectoral cooperation — the 2026 Forum will provide an opportunity for stakeholders from across the disaster risk management community to take stock of progress, explore the implications of the Preparedness Union Strategy in enlarging the narrow understanding of civil protection, and jointly shape the next phase of European civil protection.

The Forum becomes an ideal platform to reflect on how the Union can best translate these strategic ambitions into concrete action. As Europe prepares for a rapidly evolving risk landscape, the Forum will aim to strengthen cooperation, reinforce preparedness and build a truly disaster-resilient Union capable of protecting its citizens in the face of future crises.

The objectives of the Forum 2026 are the following:

- To reflect on progress made in building a *Preparedness Union* and embedding *preparedness by design* across EU and national legislation, policies, and programmes.
- To provide a space for knowledge exchange and innovation among UCPM stakeholders around key policy and operational questions to inspire future developments of the UCPM,
- To encourage networking, reciprocal learning and cooperation for a broader disaster risk management community that includes closely linked sectors and goes beyond the traditional European civil protection constituency.

Structure and agenda

Two high-level plenary sessions will open each day by setting the scene and bringing a strategic steer to the subsequent discussions in the breakout sessions (see *Annex A* for an agenda sketch).

Breakout sessions will be organised along three axes: **partnership and financing; evolving risks and emerging threats; and research and innovation**. See *Annex B* for more detailed information on the potential topics and themes for individual sessions. The breakout sessions will be organised as **panel discussions or participatory interactive workshops**. UCPM member and participating states, other EU services, institutions, UN agencies and other relevant partners are invited to propose topics and to engage in the organisation of some sessions.

The Forum will place a strong emphasis on the **engagement of young people** active in disaster preparedness and resilience. A dedicated youth agenda will be developed to create space for young professionals, volunteers, researchers and civil society actors working in the field of disaster risk management to exchange experiences, share ideas and contribute to the broader policy discussion. Young representatives will not only attend the Forum as participants, but will be actively integrated into the programme, including as speakers in selected sessions.

A central part of the Forum experience will be the **Civil Protection Village**, an opportunity to find out about projects, innovative solutions, and activities in the field of disaster risk management from Europe and beyond. EU member states and UCPM participating states, UCPM partners, EU-funded projects, and the private sector will have the opportunity to showcase new solutions, build networks and identify end-users interested in supporting the uptake of innovative technologies. A **photo exhibition** will showcase inspiring and impactful stories linked to the overall theme of the event. At the event, a high-level keynote speaker will award the **UCPM medals** to celebrate longstanding commitment and extraordinary contributions to the UCPM among the Union civil protection community.

Target audience

The European Civil Protection Forum will welcome up to 1600 participants directly or indirectly involved in shaping and implementing the EU civil protection policy. In addition to the traditional UCPM constituency of national authorities, the two-day event will be open to representatives of science and academia, civil society, local and regional organisations, other sectors (e.g. media, private sector, energy, health), other EU institutions/services (e.g. Committee of the Regions, EEAS, EIB), other Commission services and international partners (e.g., UNDRR, WB, NATO) to reflect the broadening of the scope from narrow civil protection to preparedness.

Enclosures: Annex A - Draft agenda of the European Civil Protection Forum 2026
 Annex B – Breakout sessions’ axes

Annex A - Draft agenda of the European Civil Protection Forum 2026

Tuesday 3 November 2026

Time	Schedule: Panel Sessions			Schedule: Workshops	
	Plenary Room	Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4
08:30 - 09:30	Registration and Welcome Coffee				
09:30 - 09:45	Opening Remarks				
09:45 - 10:45	High-level Plenary Session				
10:45 - 11:15	Coffee Break				
11:15 - 12:45	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Workshop 1	Workshop 2
12:45 - 14:15		UCPM Foosball Championship		Lunch	
14:15 - 15:45	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6	Workshop 3	Workshop 4
15:45 - 16:15	Coffee Break				
16:15 - 17:45	Session 7	Session 8	Session 9	Workshop 5	Workshop 6
17:45 - 18:15	Coffee Break				
18:30 - 19:00	UCPM Medals Award Ceremony				
19:15 - 22:00	Networking Dinner and Concert				

Wednesday 4 November 2026

Time	Schedule: Panel Sessions			Schedule: Workshops	
	Plenary Room	Breakout Room 1	Breakout Room 2	Breakout Room 3	Breakout Room 4
08:00 - 09:00	Registration and Welcome Coffee				
09:00 - 09:45	Keynote Speeches				
09:45 - 10:45	High-level Plenary Session				
10:45 - 11:15	Coffee Break				
11:15 - 12:45	Session 10	Session 11	Session 12	Workshop 7	Workshop 8
12:45 - 14:15		UCPM Foosball Championship		Lunch	
14:15 - 15:45	Session 13	Session 14	Session 15	Workshop 9	Workshop 10
15:55 - 16:00	UCPM Foosball Championship Award Ceremony				
16:00 - 16:15	Closing Remarks				

Annex B - Breakout sessions' axes

The **breakout sessions** will be structured around **three axes** and will encompass key policy questions from the prevention, preparedness, and response fields:

1. PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING

The Forum will serve as a key platform to strengthen cooperation between the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and other crisis management frameworks at European and global level. It will enable dialogue on how to deepen coordination with humanitarian actors, align with complementary EU instruments, and engage with new and prospective participating states.

Discussions under this first axis will explore how to enhance collaboration with external partners, the private sector, social partners, and the military community, ensuring a coherent and mutually reinforcing approach to preparedness and response. The axis will also look into how to invest in preparedness through sufficient and targeted financing in critical sectors.

Echoing the Preparedness Union Strategy, this axis will emphasise the need to embed the principles of diversity, accessibility, and inclusion into all aspects of disaster resilience — ensuring that preparedness and response systems are effective, equitable, and inclusive for all.

Topics for discussion under the “partnerships and financing” axis *could* include:

- Dual-use capacities and civil-military interoperability for crisis management, including in mission critical communication.
- Ensuring complementarity and synergies between the various funding opportunities available for civil protection and prevention (UCPM, REGIO, Cohesion Funds, Agri, Horizon, etc.).
- Private-public cooperation in civil protection: shared responsibility for resilience.
- Disability and inclusion in civil protection: from principle to practice.
- Risk communication in schools: how to prepare for the next disaster.
- Integration of Western Balkans into the UCPM and strengthening of their disaster risk management.
- Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection: combining UCPM tools and reliefEU for synergy.

2. EVOLVING RISKS AND EMERGING THREATS

Europe today faces a dual challenge: traditional disasters such as wildfires, floods, and droughts are becoming more frequent and intense due to climate change, while different forms of crises — cyberattacks, hybrid threats, and armed conflicts — are reshaping the very notion of risk. These overlapping pressures demand that the Union continuously adapts and strengthens its tools for prevention, preparedness, and response. Beyond reacting to emergencies, Europe must also improve its capacity to anticipate them. This

includes investing in strategic foresight, developing cross-sectoral scenarios, and integrating the analysis of cascading effects into planning processes.

This axis will explore how to improve and expand the mechanisms already in place to ensure they remain fit for purpose in the face of rapidly evolving challenges. It will look at how scenario-building exercises, stress tests, and forward-looking risk assessments can better inform decision-making and long-term planning. Sessions under this theme will focus on translating lessons from recent crises, such as the intensifying wildfire seasons, into forward-looking reforms.

Topics for discussion under the “evolving risks and emerging threats” axis *could* include:

- Taking stock of the 2026 wildfire season: lessons for future anticipatory planning.
- Early warning systems and public warning: from science to operations.
- Getting ready for the next pandemic: foresight and cross-sectoral preparedness.
- Boosting rescEU: expanding and sustaining EU-level response capacities.
- From Civil Protection to Crisis Management: The Role of the Crisis Coordination Hub
- Reforms and institutional preparedness – how do we transform systems and organisations in a way that makes them agile enough?
- From data to decisions: making foresight and risk assessments work to anticipate the unthinkable.

3. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Building the Union’s preparedness requires more than data and analysis — it demands that knowledge be transformed into concrete decisions, actions and new and more effective technologies. This axis will explore how to strengthen the connection between scientific research, innovation, and operational practice in disaster risk management.

It will examine how Europe can leverage research to enhance its foresight, improve risk assessment and planning, and turn projections of future threats into actionable intelligence across the prevention–preparedness–response continuum. Special attention will be given to the use of artificial intelligence to process vast datasets, identify emerging risks, and support real-time decision-making during crises. Participants will discuss how to make the most of the scientific and technological assets already developed within the Union and how to make them more interoperable, targeted, and globally connected.

The Forum will also provide a space for researchers, operational actors, and policymakers to exchange on practical ways to apply research outcomes in the field. The discussions will highlight how to align Horizon Europe research programming with civil protection and disaster resilience priorities, ensuring that innovation directly strengthens Europe’s capacity to anticipate and manage crises.

Topics for discussion under the “research and innovation” axis *could* include:

- Leveraging AI in disaster management for better prediction, rapid response and effective recovery.
- Bridging research and practice: aligning Horizon Europe with UCPM priorities.

- Science behind the multi-hazard risk to early warning pipeline: Successful use cases.
- Integrating preparedness into tertiary education and research programmes and leveraging behavioural science as a whole-of-society approach.
- From prototype to operations: Innovation partnerships and technology uptake.
- The Union Disaster Resilience Goals: translating risk assessments into preparedness objectives.
- Comprehensive Risk and Threat Assessment (CRTA) as a basis for integrated preparedness.