

November 3 - Panels

Day 1 09:30-09:45 Plenary room Webstreamed	Opening remarks • Karin Helmstaedt, Master of Ceremony/Moderator • Hadja Lahbib, Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management
Day 1 09:45-10:45 Plenary room Webstreamed	High-level plenary session – A Stronger Union through Population Preparedness The Preparedness Union Strategy outlines population preparedness as a collective, whole-of-society responsibility. Recent Eurobarometer surveys show that in 2024, almost half of Europeans (49%) did not feel well-informed about disaster risks that could affect them and 65% of them need more information to be able to prepare for disasters or emergencies. The Forum is a timely occasion to look at what has already been achieved in the implementation of key actions on 72-hour population self-sufficiency, promoting preparedness in youth programmes and increasing awareness about risk and threats. The panel will explore how actions of different stakeholders – governments, NGOs, civil society and youth organisations – can form a cohesive approach to population preparedness that will support EU citizens and communities to become active participants in crisis preparedness and response efforts. Population self-sufficiency aims to alleviate the burden on emergency services in the critical timeframe after a disaster, strengthening psychological preparedness, and increasing societal resilience. The panel will discuss how to navigate complex and potentially frightening messages, reach diverse target groups and build a culture of preparedness. The Dutch “Denk vooruit” initiative is one good example of such national campaigns. Of equal importance to governmental population preparedness programs are community-based efforts. Youth involvement and informal education are vital in empowering the next generation of resilient citizens. Panellists will discuss how civil society organisations and NGOs can complement national and EU-level efforts by reaching citizens in their daily lives and through trusted partners. They will look at how to mobilise large volunteer pools and build prepared communities. • David van Weel, Minister of Justice and Security, The Netherlands (tbc) • Xavier Castellanos, Under Secretary General for National Society Development and Operations Coordination, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) • David Berg, Secretary-General, World Scout Movement (tbc) • Giuseppina Sellitto, Member of the Citizens’ Panel on Preparedness • Moderator: Karin Helmstaedt

Day 1 11:15 -12:45 Plenary room Webstreamed	Session 1: Strengthening Risk Communication: Addressing Disinformation and Building Public Today's interconnected risks—from climate change and extreme weather to health emergencies and armed conflicts—can trigger cascading effects, disrupt critical infrastructure and essential services, and test societal resilience. Risk communication is therefore a strategic capability that helps people understand threats, trust official information, and take timely protective action. However, misinformation and disinformation can erode trust, weaken early warnings and delay action. Effective communication requires cooperation among authorities, international organisations, trusted media, civil society and local communities. The panel will explore how to integrate risk communication throughout the disaster risk management cycle, from prevention and preparedness to response and recovery. Drawing on lessons from recent crises, it will focus on strengthening trust, countering false information, improving early warnings and building partnerships capable of turning warnings into early action. • Hanna Jahns, Director for Strategy and Policy, European Commission, DG ECHO • Raed Arafat, State secretary, Chief of Department for Emergency Situations, Ministry of Internal Affairs - Department for Emergency Situations • Natalia Alonso Cano, Chief, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) • Federica Di Sario, Journalist, The Parliament Magazine • Moderator: Ali Al-Jaberi
Day 1 11:15 -12:45	Session 2: Scaling Local Civil Protection through City Networks and EU Partnerships The panel will discuss how city networks and EU partnerships strengthen local civil protection, from earthquake and flood risk to tsunami preparedness. Ahead of World Tsunami Awareness Day (5 November), it shows how coastal and inland communities translate EU frameworks into locally owned action. Speakers bring complementary experience: Portugal's National Network of Resilient Cities and Towns and its MCR2030 Resilience Hub in Matosinhos; DG ECHO's Tsunami Ready Programme, strengthening coastal preparedness in Portugal; and cities in Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia advancing local DRR under MCR2030. The panel will explore what effective local civil protection looks like, including for tsunami risk; how EU tools can better empower cities to lead preparedness; and what lessons from Tsunami Ready and MCR2030 can be scaled across regions and risk types. It closes with reflections on strengthening the local dimension of civil protection, from coastlines to inland cities. • Susana Sousa Gonçalves, Director of Civil Protection Department, Municipality of Matosinhos, Portugal • Denis Chang Seng, Programme Specialist, UNESCO-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) • Adam Banaszak, Member of the European Committee of the Regions, Councillor of Inowrocław County, Poland

	• Moderator: Andrew Mackay Bower, Programme Manager, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
Day 1 11:15 -12:45	Session 3: Advancing Integrated Wildfire Risk Management: Governance and Innovations As wildfire risk across Europe is increasing, implementing inclusive, collaborative, coherent, and cross-sector disaster risk management is increasingly recognised. The recent Communication on Integrated Wildfire Risk Management published by the European Commission in March 2026 recognises the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches towards better societal resilience, in line with the EU Preparedness Union Strategy. The panel will discuss emerging challenges and opportunities on wildfire risk governance, including innovative partnerships, tools on risk education and the role of local authorities for citizen engagement. Moreover, the perspectives of both traditional and newly emerging fire-prone countries will be explored, highlighting the need for enhanced international knowledge exchange to tackle the increasing risk of extreme wildfire events. In light of this, the session aims to share practical ways of connecting practitioners, society and science, to support a more resilient Europe. • Catherine Gamper, Head of Unit, Climate Adaptation and Resilience, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) • Cathelijne Stoof, Associate professor, Wageningen University & Research (WUR) • Zisoula Ntasiou, Fire colonel in the region of Attica, Hellenic Fire Service • Jordi Vendrell, PCF Director, Pau Costa Foundation (PCF) • Tiago da Cunha, President, Paredes de Coura Municipality, Portugal • Moderator: Eduard Plana, Head of Forest Policy and Risk Governance, Forest Science and Technology Centre of Catalonia (CTFC)
Day 1 14:30 – 16:00 Plenary room Webstreamed	Session 4: Operationalising Preparedness and Resilience: Insights from Ukraine The panel will offer practical reflections from Ukraine aligned with the EU Preparedness Union Strategy, focusing on risk anticipation, coordination across actors, operational readiness, long-term system strengthening, and adaptive capacity. Three examples will be highlighted: • Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS) and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) cooperation – discussion on the joint emergency response for winterisation, including “Invincibility Points”, showing how humanitarian aid and civil protection reinforce each other. • Veterans’ reintegration – With up to 5 million veterans and family members needing support, the Government of Ukraine and the URCS will illustrate approaches to medium- and long-term veterans’ integration into economic, social, and community structures, including through civil protection activities.

	• Medevac – Beyond cross-border evacuations, Medevac in Ukraine has also helped strengthen national internal treatment capacity through reinforced local health systems allowing care to continue under wartime conditions. Speakers (tbc): • Hadja Lahbib, Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management • Minister of Veterans Affairs, Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine • Viktor Liashko, Minister of Health, Ukraine • Andrii Danyk, Head of Department, State Emergency Service of Ukraine • Maksym Dotsenko, Director-General, Red Cross of Ukraine • Jarno Habicht, Representative in Ukraine, World Health Organisation (WHO) • Moderator: Karin Helmstaedt
Day 1 14:30 – 16:00	Session 5: Social Partners
Day 1 14:30 – 16:00	Session 6: Advancing Integrated All-Hazards Approaches Across Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Governance This panel aims to generate a dialog around strengthening coherence, coordination, and accountability across Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) governance frameworks. Responding to European frameworks such as the Preparedness Union Strategy, EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, and the upcoming Integrated Framework on European Climate Resilience and Risk Management, this Panel will aim to advance practical pathways for closing persistent integration gaps across DRR and CCA policy priorities at EU, national, and municipal levels. The core objectives of the panel will be to address three interconnected areas: (1) Strengthening coordination and collaboration across governance levels. (2) Aligning policy frameworks, incentives, and accountability mechanisms. (3) Reinforcing adaptive and inclusive governance that enables whole-of-society resilience. • Funda Atun, Associate Professor, ITC Faculty Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation, University of Twente • Pia-Johanna Schweizer, Senior Researcher, Research Institute for Sustainability, GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences in Potsdam • Raffaella Russo, Senior Scientist, Department of Physics, University of Salerno • Nathan Clark, Assistant Professor, Department of Organisation Sciences, Vrije University Amsterdam • Jon Hall, Resilience Advisors Network, CMINE

	• Juha-Pekka Jäpölä, European, Policy Officer, External Action Service • Moderator: Ali Al-Jaberi
Day 1 16:30 – 18.00 Plenary room Webstreamed	Session 7: Launch of the EU Public Private Preparedness Task Force: Essential Goods This session marks the launch of the EU Public-Private Preparedness Task Force, presenting its founding rationale and model, aligned with the Preparedness Union Strategy. The Task Force's first work strand is contributing to the Minimum Preparedness Requirements (MPRs), expected as a Commission Recommendation by end 2026. Access to essential goods during emergencies – under the MPRs' "material preparedness" pillar – illustrates how the Task Force will mobilise sector-specific, industry-led cooperation once MPRs apply. Grounding the launch in practice, the session brings together national initiatives already demonstrating this model: corporate emergency preparedness cooperation and Nordic approaches to emergency stockpiles, alongside a private-sector partner on financing and sustainability. The panel will discuss how these models feed into the EU-level Task Force, what incentives drive private-sector engagement, and how the Task Force can accelerate collective preparedness across Europe. • Moderator: Ali Al-Jaberi
Day 1 16:30 – 18.00	Session 8: Turning Medevac Operations in Europe into Resilient Capacity Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, more than 5200 patients have been medically evacuated through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) to receive specialised treatment in 22 countries. Over the past years, the UCPM Medevac system has proven its adaptability across different contexts and continues to provide vital support to Ukraine's healthcare system, while also responding to other health emergencies, including Gaza and mass-burn casualty incidents in Europe. The panel brings together key stakeholders from Member States and NGO's involved in Medevac operations to combine lessons learned from Ukraine with practical discussions on preparedness for large-scale medical evacuations on national and European level. During the discussions, panellists will discuss the role of the Medevac hub in Poland and examine the concept of Medevac hubs as part of Europe's wider preparedness architecture. The session will also explore how innovative solutions could address gaps in in Medevac transport capacities. • Adam Szyszka, Medevac Hub Team Leader, Polish Center for International Aid / Poland Emergency Medical Team PCPM • Katarzyna Drajek-Laskowska, Director of the Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Health, Poland • Sien Vanlommel, Programme Manager – Medevac, European Commission, DG ECHO • Raed Arafat, State secretary, Chief of Department for Emergency Situations, Ministry of Internal Affairs - Department for Emergency Situations, Romania • representative from the Ministry of Health, Ukraine

	• Moderator: Maria Zuber, Head of Unit, European Commission, DG ECHO
Day 1 16:30 – 18.00	Session 9: Preparedness Education in Schools This session will explore how education can be systematically used as a cornerstone of disaster preparedness, linking schools, civil protection authorities, and communities to strengthen long-term risk awareness and resilience. The session will focus on how preparedness in education can be embedded across formal education systems and will reflect on how to prepare children, teachers and schools to prevent, understand, react to and recover from crisis. The session responds to growing recognition that preparedness is not only a technical or institutional challenge, but also a societal one, requiring early engagement with children and youth, teachers, families, and local communities. Education systems offer a powerful entry point to build risk literacy, promote protective behaviours, and foster a culture of prevention. The session aims to foster cross-sector dialogue between education and civil protection communities and support practical uptake of preparedness education across the Union. • Marjaana Manninen, Senior Adviser, Education, Finnish National Agency for Education • Erwan Marteil, Head of Unit, European Commission, DG ECHO
Day 1 18.15-19.00 Plenary room Webstreamed	Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and the UCPM Medal Ceremony

Workshops

Day 1 11:15 -12:45	Workshop 1: Strengthening Civil-Military Cooperation – From National Examples to EU Support Armed conflict has returned to Europe and its potential spread to EU Member States cannot be excluded. External aggression against EU Member States can take the shape of hybrid attacks, conventional warfare, and attacks on civilian infrastructure aimed at demoralising the population. The Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency and the European Commission, DG ECHO are organising a workshop on how to strengthen civil-military cooperation with a view to confronting the emerging threats. The workshop will share national
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	examples on the use of planning assumptions and analyse what added value the EU can provide to the total resilience of the Union. Discussions will address civil-military cooperation regarding (but not limited to) dual use of infrastructure. • Claes Widén, Desk Officer at the Strategic Policy and Planning Department, Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency • Tomas Ahlberg, Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency • Uffe Wolffhechel, Senior Policy Officer, European Commission, DG ECHO • Facilitator: Anna Dimitrova, Open Space Collective
Day 1 11:15 -12:45	Workshop 2: Artificial Intelligence for DRM
Day 1 14:30-16:00	Workshop 3: Science in Action: UCPM Scientific Partnerships for Preparedness and Response From a pioneering pilot initiative inspired by the European Parliament, the ARISTOTLE partnership has evolved into a unique operational scientific support system serving the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). What began as a single partnership has now grown into four operational partnerships delivering 24/7 scientific support for emergency response operations worldwide, representing an unprecedented collaboration across Europe. This interactive workshop aims to engage the audience on the current and future operational science support. Through a simulation, participants will be immersed in realistic compound and cascading disaster scenarios requiring rapid scientific support and operational coordination. Impersonating the role of emergency managers working in an Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)-type environment, they will explore the type of scientific support that can be requested during emergencies and interact directly with scientists. • Sakis Arnaoutoglou, MEP, European Parliament • Giovanna Forlenza, Technologist, National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology, Italy • Mamadou Abasse Diop, Senior Analyst, ACAPS • Gert Van Bortel, Global Expert Emergency Response, BASF • Johan Camps, Scientific Research, SCK CEN
Day 1 14:30-16:00	Workshop 4: Volunteers on the Ground: Effective and Safe Volunteering in Civil Protection Across Europe, volunteers remain an essential pillar of disaster preparedness and response - from trained emergency response volunteers to spontaneous community responders, to supporting overstretched health, social, and care systems. The workshop

	examines how to enable and strengthen these capacities, ensure safe and effective deployment, and guarantee appropriate protection and insurance for all frontline volunteers. • Magdalena Stefanska, Head of International Relations, Polish Red Cross • Jose Segarra, Director, Low Carbon Economy Foundation • Gregory Allione, MEP, European Parliament • Moderator: Miriam Alba Reina, Disaster Management Officer, Red Cross EU
Day 1 16:30 - 18:00	Workshop 5: From Risk Assessment to Preparedness: Connecting Perspectives As Europe advances toward a more anticipatory and integrated Preparedness Union, this session brings together scientific, policy, and operational perspectives from the Commission, Member States, and the European Environmental Agency (EEA)/European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA) to examine how risks are assessed, understood, and prevented in an increasingly complex landscape. It will cover key frameworks, including the EU Comprehensive Risk and Threat Assessment (CoRTA), National Risk Assessments under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), EUCRA, and sectoral approaches under the Critical Entities Resilience (CER) and Network and Information Security (NIS2) directives. Focusing on practical use rather than methodology, the workshop will explore how European, national, and sectoral assessments can better inform preparedness, resilience planning, and investment, while improving quality, usability, and interoperability. Bringing together different stakeholders from EU and national levels, the session will address how to build a more coherent and actionable EU risk assessment ecosystem. • Veronica Casartelli, Senior associate scientist, Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Climate Change (CMCC) • Hans-Martin Füssel, Scientist, European Environment Agency • Caroline McMullan, Academic (Business and Society), DCU Business School • Azzurra Lentini, Scientific Officer, European Commission, Joint Research Centre
Day 1 16:30 - 18:00	Workshop 6: Preparedness Starts with People: Embedding Mental Health & Psychosocial Support The workshop is based on three key assumptions: people and communities possess knowledge and skills to support those affected by disasters; effective preparedness and response must involve social spaces—families, neighbourhoods, clubs, institutions and media networks; and professional expertise must connect with citizen-led initiatives. The workshop will explore mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) as an essential part of civilian protection before, during and after disasters, with particular attention to young people. It will introduce evidence-based principles for early- and medium-term interventions that strengthen safety, calm, individual and collective efficacy, connectedness and hope (Hobfoll et al., 2007).

	The workshop will share operational examples and invite participants to contribute their experience and ideas. The aim is to strengthen initiatives and develop practical guidance for preparing communities, supporting effective responses and building resilient societies. • Pia Andreatta, Expert for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), Austrian Red Cross • Maria Scordialou, Director, Living Wholeness Institute • Moderator: Laura Grassi, Grassroots Facilitation
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