



# The Civil Protection policies and legal framework in Europe

Civil Protection Authorities  
in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain



European Civil Protection



Co-funded under the Union Civil  
Protection Mechanism



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# 1. The Union Civil Protection Mechanism

## 1.1 Background - The EU Civil Protection Mechanism from 2001 to 2013 and the Civil Protection Financial Instrument

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism is a relatively new tool that was established by the Council Decision of 23 October 2001 in order to cope better with natural and man made disasters interventions.

All the EU member states have their own civil protection and have cooperated in the past, but the main task of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM) is to enhance a better coordination among member states in case of urgent response actions and major emergencies. By pooling the civil protection capabilities of the participating states, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism can ensure a better protection of people, but also of the natural and cultural environment.

The main role of the Civil Protection Mechanism is to facilitate co-operation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major emergencies which may require urgent response actions. Such cases may arise from a natural, technological, radiological or environmental disaster, including accidental marine pollution, or from a terrorist act, occurring or threatening to occur inside or outside the European Union.

The mechanism is based on a series of elements and actions, including:

- compiling an inventory of assistance and intervention teams available in EU countries;
- establishing a training programme for members of such teams;
- launching workshops, seminars and pilot projects on the main aspects of interventions;
- setting up assessment and coordination teams;
- establishing a Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) and a common communication and information system;
- establishing a Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) between the MIC and EU countries' contact points;
- helping to develop detection and early warning systems;
- facilitating access to equipment and transport by providing information on the resources available from EU countries and identifying resources available from other sources;
- making additional transport resources available.

In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, CPM goal is to provide added-value to European civil protection assistance by making support available upon request of the affected country. This may arise if the affected country's disaster preparedness is not sufficient to provide an adequate response in terms of available resources. By pooling the civil protection capabilities of the participating states, the Community Mechanism can ensure even better protection primarily of people, but also of the natural and cultural environment as well as property.

The Mechanism also:

- develops detection and rapid alert systems for catastrophes that may hit Member States, with a view to enabling rapid response by other countries;
- provides support for accessing equipment and transport resources;
- supports consular assistance to EU citizens in major emergencies in third countries if requested by the consular authorities of the Member States;
- integrates transport provided by Member States by financing additional transport resources necessary for ensuring a rapid response to major emergencies;
- develops civil protection modules, namely specialised operational teams comprising personnel, transport and equipment provided by Member States and “packaged” in accordance with the task in question, in line with specific criteria.

Since its creation, the Mechanism has provided civil protection assistance in a variety of natural and man-made disasters, it has facilitate the cooperation in disaster response, preparedness and prevention among European states, coordinating response at a European level in order to avoid duplication of relief efforts and to ensure that assistance meets the real needs of the affected regions.

The CPM main supporting organizations are:

### **1. The Monitoring and Information Centre (Mic)**

*MIC is the operational heart of the Mechanism , is an operative unit offering 24/7 response for facilitating the mobilisation of civil protection resources from EU countries in the event of an emergency.*

*The centre gives countries access to a community civil protection platform: the CECIS, Common Emergency Communication and Information Centre, for communication and exchange of information between the MIC and National Contact Points in Member States.*

### **2. Common Emergency Communication and Information Centre (Cecis)**

*The Cecis is an IT system run directly by the Mic in Brussels for immediate effective dialogue between 24/7 operations centres in Member States.*

*The requests made by the affected country are matched by the system to offers of assistance from countries that decide to intervene.*

*Cecis provides all the Member States with information and updates on the emergency until it is resolved.*

The Mechanism was originally located in the DG Environment’s Civil Protection Unit, but with the Lisbon Treaty its coordinating role passed to EU Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO).

After 10 years of implementation, increasing activations and a successful string of and emergency responses within and outside the EU, a necessity for better cooperation and levels of protection in domestic, European and international levels emerged.

A Decision for a new Mechanism for the period 2014-2020 was adopted in December 2013 and from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, a new, improved Union Civil Protection Mechanism is in force. *The Article 196 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* constitutes the primary legal basis for the Union Mechanism.

The Mechanism currently includes all 28 EU Member States in addition to Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (the latter currently renewing its membership). Turkey and Serbia have recently signed the agreements to join the Mechanism.

Concerning the **Civil Protection Financial Instrument**, it was established with the Council Decision 2007/162/EC, and through it financial assistance was given to improve the effectiveness of response to major emergencies and to enhance preventive and preparedness measures for all kinds of emergencies.

A total of €189.8 million was committed for the implementation of the Civil Protection Financial Instrument for the period 2007-2013.

Whilst the majority of the Mechanism actions were financed through the Civil Protection Financial Instrument, some actions were financed through additional funds granted by the European Parliament and the Council as well as other EU Instruments. National civil protection authorities also contributed by:

- Providing part of the co-financing required by the Financial Instrument;
- Having civil protection staff participating in the Mechanism actions; and,
- Providing in-kind resources (i.e. civil protection assets and equipment).

The budget for the implementation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism for 2014-2020 is €368.4 million of which €223.7 million shall be used for prevention, preparedness and response actions inside the EU and €144.6 million for actions outside the EU. These amounts are complemented by contributions from non-EU countries that participate in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

## 1.2 The new Civil Protection Mechanism UCPM (Union Civil Protection Mechanism)

A rising trend in natural and man-made disasters over the past decade has demonstrated that coherent, efficient and effective policies on disaster management are needed now more than ever.

The EU Civil Protection legislation was revised at the end of 2013 to better respond to the natural and man-made disasters in a swift, pre-planned and effective manner and thus to increase the security of EU citizens and disaster victims worldwide.

The revised EU Civil Protection legislation (Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism – 1313/2013/EU and the Commission Implementing Decision No 2014/762/EU) builds on an established system that has proven to work well. The primary responsibility for disaster management remains with the Member States.

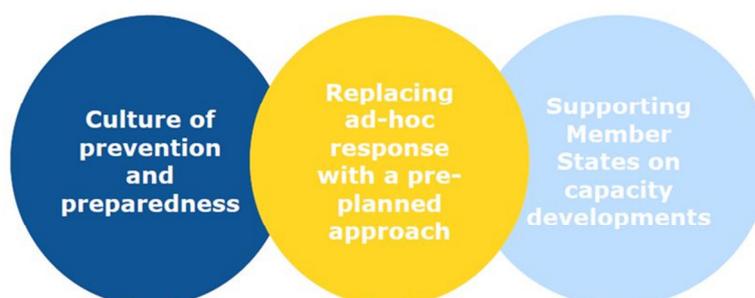
The new Mechanism places a much greater emphasis on disaster prevention, risk management, and disaster preparedness, including the organisation of trainings, simulation exercises and the exchange of experts, but also developing new elements, such as a voluntary pool of pre-committed response capacities by the Member States.

The revised legislation contains new actions to be undertaken in relation to disaster risk reduction and the scope of building a culture of prevention, promoting better preparedness and planning, closer cooperation on disaster prevention and more coordinated and faster response.

For these reasons the legislative basis includes measures that will help to be better prepared for any upcoming disasters and that will ensure closer cooperation among the participating States.

The main focus of the Decision 1313/2013/EU is related to:

- Increasing the culture of prevention and preparedness
- Replacing ad-hoc response with a pre-planned approach
- Supporting the Member States on their capacity development



In this framework, Member States have agreed to regularly share a summary of their risk assessments and best practices, as well as to help each other identify gaps and to refine their risk management planning, in order to reduce disaster risk and to further strengthen the joint collaboration in building resilience to disasters. A better understanding of risk is the basis for more effective disaster management and the Member States favor a coherent and effective approach also through the sharing of non-sensitive information (information whose disclosure would be contrary to the essential interests of the security of the Member States), and the sharing of good practice. Moreover, the countries:

- carry out risk assessments at national or sub-national level and make available to the Commission a summary of the main points contained in them by 22 December 2015 and every three years;
- develop and refine their plans for managing disaster risks at national or sub-national level;
- make available to the Commission's assessment their ability of risk management at national or sub-national level every three years after the development of the relevant guidelines, and whenever there are major changes; and participate, on a voluntary basis, to the so-called "peer review" on the issue of assessing the ability of risk management.

The reform, as well as underlining the importance of prevention, preparedness and response to natural and / or man-made disasters - art. 196 of the **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)** - focuses also on the involvement of regional authorities and of the entire National Service of Civil Protection, in order to ensure interventions and assistance in case of need.

The new mechanism has an operationally enhanced profile: the involvement of the regions meets the need for interoperability and preparation of those involved - with the addition of the need for a civil protection across sectors, as in the case of cooperation in the field of marine pollution.

This commitment is carried out in full respect of the solidarity clause foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty, according to which "*The Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster.*"

In terms of civil protection, there will be more training available for personnel outside their home countries, more response exercises in areas such as search and rescue and field hospitals, more exchanges between experts and closer cooperation with neighboring countries.

A new Emergency Response Coordination Centre (EERC) was inaugurated in May 2013. It reinforces and transforms the Monitoring and Information Centre into an Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and the MIC (monitoring Information Centre) ensuring 24/7 operational capacity and serving the member states and the European Commission in facilitating the coordination of civil protection assistance interventions. It also monitors the situation related to risks and emergencies around the world and provides an information and coordination hub during emergencies.

A voluntary pool of Member States' response capacities and experts on stand-by is going to be established, with partial EU funding support, to enable more effective pre-planning, immediate deployment, and coordinated interventions.

The proposal also includes for the first time a common effort of Member States to assess and address gaps in response capacities with the help of EU seed financing of up to 20 per cent of necessary investment.

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism will also cover:

- provisions relating to risk assessment and risk management planning;
- increased predictability of assistance and better identification and addressing of potentially significant response capacity gaps
- more cost-effective and better coordinated transportation of assistance to the affected countries
- co-financing buffer capacities to address temporary shortcomings

The **types of disasters** covered by EU CP Mechanism are:

*Natural disasters* - Floods, earthquakes, forest fires, cyclones, typhoons

*Manmade disasters* - Environmental disasters (oil spills, Deepwater Horizon, HU alkali sludge accident 2010)  
- Complex emergencies (Georgia 2008, Syria, Ukraine 2014)

*Health emergencies* - Ukraine H1N1 / Ebola crisis 2014, H1N1 crisis (medical support Bulgaria, Ukraine)

*Assistance to consular support* - Terrorist attacks (medical evacuation Mumbai - India) - Evacuation of EU citizens from Libya and TCN from Tunisia/Egypt; Yemen)

The budget for the implementation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism for 2014-2020 is €368.4 million of which €223.7 million shall be used for prevention, preparedness and response actions inside the EU and €144.6 million for actions outside the EU.

The new legislation reinforces the intervention of the Mechanism in the three phases of disaster management cycle:

## **PREVENTION**

Prevention means supporting the Member States in preventing risks or reducing harm to people, the environment or property resulting from emergencies. The new Mechanism is going to improve knowledge methodologies and access to data. In this framework risk assessment guidelines, risk management plans, peer reviews are going to be realized and continuously updated. Other than this the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into sectorial policies is one of the most important priorities.

In relation to the Climate Change adaptation, the Mechanism also

- promotes Member States' risk assessments and mapping through the sharing of good practice;
- establishes and updates a cross-sectoral overview and map of the disaster risks faced by the Union taking into account the likely impacts of climate change
- encourage exchange of good practices on preparing national civil protection systems to cope with the impacts of climate change.

Concerning Prevention the main Commission's actions are

- Promoting Member States' *risk assessments and mapping through the sharing of good practice*;
- Establishing and update a *cross-sectoral overview and map of the disaster risks* faced by the Union taking into account the likely impacts of climate change;
- Encouraging exchange of *good practices on preparing national civil protection systems*.

The main Member States' actions are described below

Develop **risk assessments** and make available to the Commission a summary of the relevant elements thereof within two years and then every three years

Develop and refine their disaster **risk management planning**

Make available to the Commission an **assessment of their risk management capability**

Participate, on a voluntary basis, in **peer reviews**

## PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness means increasing competences for civil protection assistance interventions and responses inside as well as outside Europe. It means also providing countries with the opportunity to train their civil protection teams, increasing their ability and effectiveness in responding to disasters. For these reasons the Mechanism organises training programmes, exercises during simulated emergencies, exchange of

expert's programmes, cooperation projects. Preparedness means also early warning tools and capability assessment and certification.

The new Mechanism is planning some on going key developments such as:

- the development of civil protection response modules;
- the identification of experts and teams for EU missions;
- the development of the training exercises, exchange of experts, also through the lessons learned;
- the facilitation through the Host Nation Support (how to receive assistance); - the use of geo-spatial information /maps derived from satellite remote sensing (Copernicus emergency management service), both in preparedness and in response

## RESPONSE

Response means facilitating the cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major disasters inside and outside the EU.

Assistance may include search and rescue teams, medical teams, shelter, water purification units and other relief specialised experts /items requested, all hazard approaches, including the biological one.

Finally, the new international elements of the Civil Protection Mechanism are related to:



## Supplementary activities of the Mechanism

The Mechanism provides emergency communications and **monitoring tools**, through a system of web-based alert and notification applications enabling real time exchange of information between participating states and the ERCC.

The Mechanism has developed the **disaster forecasting and disaster management tools**: a proper planning, monitoring, and early warning can mitigate damages, sometimes preventing them from turning into humanitarian catastrophes. So the Mechanism has a near real-time alert systems with the aim of improving its rapid analytical capacity.

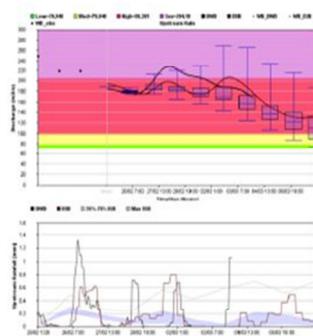
The Institute for Environment and Sustainability (IES) has developed the European Flood Alert System (EFAS) and the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS). EFAS alerts the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) on the most severe flood events and EFFIS provides daily meteorological fire danger maps and forecasts up to six days before, including maps of burnt areas and damage assessment.

The Global Disaster Alerts and Coordination System (GDACS), developed by Joint Reserach Centre and used jointly by the EU and UN, is a fully automatic 24/7 alert system which gathers data about natural events (earthquakes, tsunamis, tropical storms, floods and volcanoes).

Meteoalarm is an online alert platform established by the European meteorological services, which issues European weather warnings.



**GDACS: Global Disaster Alert And Coordination System**



**EFAS - European Flood Awareness System: Floods forecasting and Flood alerts**



**Weather monitoring**



**EFFIS - European Forest Fire Information System: Fires forecasting**

The Mechanism helps in **marine pollution emergencies**, where it works closely with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). Accidental oil spills and cleaning operations are the main source of pollution from ships, placing enormous demands on the national authorities responsible for response and clean-up

operations. Europe is the world's largest market of crude oil imports, transported from and to Europe mainly by sea. Inevitably, some of this makes its way into the sea, whether by accident or resulting from ship operations.

EMSA was established by the European Union in 2002 in the aftermath of the Erika disaster. EMSA assumes the leading role in ensuring a uniform and effective level of maritime safety, maritime security, prevention of and response to pollution caused by ships as well as response to marine pollution caused by oil and gas installations and providing technical and scientific assistance to the European Commission and Member States.

EMSA manages a network of standby at-sea oil spill recovery vessels based in all the regional seas of Europe. These are normal commercial vessels which carry out day-to-day operations but, upon request, cease their normal activities and quickly move to the scene of the oil spill. The Agency also provides satellite imagery for detection and monitoring of oil spills, pollution response experts to give operational and technical assistance, and information service for chemical spills at sea.

When the crisis occurs in developing countries, civil protection assistance typically goes hand in hand with EU humanitarian aid.

Often, cleaning efforts and recovery from an oil spill require costs which go beyond what a single country can bear. Therefore, a number of regional and bilateral cooperation agreements were established between maritime states. The EU participates in these agreements and conventions that cover the regional seas around Europe like the Helsinki and Barcelona conventions, and Lisbon and Bonn Agreements.

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism also intervenes in marine pollution emergencies. When a request for assistance is received following a marine pollution incident, the ERCC can quickly mobilise oil recovery capacity and expertise from the participating states and EMSA, and facilitate the deployment of these assets and the EU Mechanism team.

Preparedness and response mechanisms in the field of marine pollution were reinforced by the Community cooperation framework that ran between 2000 and 2006.

The European Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) is constantly monitoring the **forest fire risk and incidence** across Europe using national monitoring services and tools such EFFIS (the European Forest Fire Information System). Over the summer period, the ERCC also organises weekly video conferences with the countries that are at high risk of forest fires and whose national capacities could get overwhelmed.

When the scale of fire exceeds the country's capacity to extinguish it on its own, the European Union's Civil Protection Mechanism can be activated to coordinate the response from participating states. The EU countries can show solidarity by sending assistance in the form of water bombing aircraft, helicopters, fire-fighting equipment and personnel.

To provide for a joint and coordinated response, they frequently channel the assistance and exchange real-time information through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. In addition, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism can co-finance the transport of assistance to the affected area.

Finally,

- the Mechanism cooperates with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC-UNESCO) on the establishment of a tsunami warning system for the North Atlantic and Mediterranean region
- an agreement with the European Mediterranean Seismological Centre (EMSC) has allowed earthquake detection in the Mediterranean area to be considerably quicker and accurate, by adding sensors in Tunisia
- the Mechanism supports and complements the prevention and preparedness efforts of participating states, focusing on areas where a joint European approach is more effective than separate national actions. These include improving the quality of and accessibility to disaster information, encouraging research to promote disaster resilience, and reinforcing early warning tools.

Ten years ago, the concept of **resilience** was totally absent from the communications of the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO). Since, ECHO has progressively introduced the word in its official documents and seems now to consider resilience as one of the generic concepts needed to summarize its action. By having a close look at how ECHO has spread the concept in its different activities (publications, funding, official events) and the definitions that are associated to it, it appears that the use of the concept of resilience -and the debate that follows it- displays the will of this institution to gain better recognition in the field of the public policies, in which its own legitimacy remains for now weak.

ECHO follows a general trend initiated by the United Nation Office for Disaster Reduction and the NGOs specialized in humanitarian help, that promoted first the concept of resilience in order to gain better recognition of their work, and to advocate for an increase of their role that would be then not only connected to crisis intervention but also to prevention and development policies.

Therefore the value of resilience is a new paradigm and shows a new strategy to be more included in the Mechanism elaboration processes.

### 1.3 Legal Framework of the Mechanism

The Treaty of Lisbon underpins the commitment of the EU to provide assistance, relief, and protection to victims of natural or man-made disasters around the world (art. 214), and to support and coordinate the civil protection systems of its Member States (art. 196). It further mandates the European institutions to define the necessary measures for such actions to be carried out.

The legal basis of the New Mechanism are the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism – 1313/2013/EU and the Commission Implementing Decision No 2014/762/EU laying down rules for the implementation of Decision No 1313/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

There are two main pieces of legislation that cover European civil protection, these being Council Decision 2007/779/EC, Euratom establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism (recast) and Council Decision establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument (2007/162/EC, Euratom). The EU has an instrument that enables it to fund activities aimed at preventive action, preparedness and an effective response, particularly those carried out under the existing mechanism. This financial instrument covered the 2007-13 period and replaced the Community action programme in favor of civil protection, established by Council Decision 1999/847/EC.

Three Commission Decisions have been issued after the adoption of these two main pillars of civil protection legislation, each of them having a specific purpose within the meaning of the Council Decisions. One of these Decisions (2007/606/EC, Euratom) deals with laying down implementing rules for transport; the other two (2008/73/EC, Euratom and 2010/481/EC, Euratom) provide for the implementation of the modules concept.

The Community Civil Protection Mechanism and the Civil Protection Financial Instrument together cover three of the main aspects of the disaster management cycle – prevention, preparedness and response. The Mechanism itself covers response and some preparedness actions, whereas the Financial Instrument enables actions in all three fields. The two pieces of legislation are moreover complementary as the Financial Instrument finances the Mechanism.

There were two other legal texts that were the direct precursors to the current framework. The first dates back to 1999 establishing the Community Action Programme in the field of civil protection. A first two-years Action Programme (1998-1999) was followed by a five-years Action Programme (2000-2004). This was extended till 2006 through the Council Decision of 20 December 2004.

The second major legal text was the Council Decision of 23 October 2001 establishing the original Mechanism. A later Commission Decision of 29 December 2003 laid down the rules for the implementation of the Community Mechanism, defining its duties and the functioning of the various tools made use of in the Mechanism.

The tsunami that hit South Asia in December 2004 however beckoned a major overhaul of system as a whole. Both the Council and the European Parliament called on the Commission to explore areas of improvements to the Mechanism. This resulted in a series of Commission Communications aiming at developing a more robust European civil protection capacity, enabling the Union to react more rapidly and effectively to any type of disaster in the future. As a result, the Commission tabled a recast of Council Decision (2001/792/EC) on January 2006 on 27 January 2006 intended to reshape the Mechanism. The Council Decision 2007/779/EC, Euratom was mainly based on this Communication.

The Commission also adopted a Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing a Rapid Response and Preparedness Instrument for major emergencies on 20 April 2005. This proposal provided the future legal framework for the financing of civil protection operations. The Commission proposed a major increase in the future financing for European civil protection actions, with annual amounts ranging from €16 million in 2007 to €30 million in 2013. In doing so, the Commission recognised the importance of immediate civil protection assistance as a tangible expression of European solidarity in the event of major emergencies. Renamed the Civil Protection financial Instrument this legislation was adopted on 5 March 2007.

The very foundations of civil protection co-operation at a Community level go back as far as May 1985 in the May ministerial meeting (Rome). Six resolutions were consequently adopted over the following 9 years. The results of these resolutions were a number of operational instruments covering both preparedness and response. Activities were organised on the basis of the subsidiarity principle laid down in the Maastricht Treaty. Of importance is the Resolution of 8 July 1991 on improving mutual aid between Member States in the event of technological disasters.

The Commission Communication of 11 June 2002 described progress achieved in preparedness for emergencies, amongst others the set-up of a mutual consultation mechanism to deal with any crisis involving bioterrorist threats. Furthermore a joint Commission - pharmaceutical industry task force was launched, that drew up an inventory of the availability and capacities of production, stockpiles and distribution of serums, vaccines and antibiotics likely to be used to counter any bacteriological attack.

Other important legal basis are:

- Council Resolution of 22 December 2003 on strengthening Community cooperation in the field of civil protection research [Official Journal C 8 of 13.1.2004].

The Council encourages the development of research projects on the reduction of natural and technological risks and on mitigating their consequences. It also encourages research institutes and other relevant entities to establish common objectives for preventing and reacting to natural or technological risks.

- Council Resolution of 19 December 2002 on special civil protection assistance to outermost and isolated regions, to insular regions, to regions which are not easily accessible, and to sparsely populated regions, in the European Union [Official Journal C 24 of 31.1.2003].

The Council considers that outermost, isolated, distant insular and sparsely populated regions should benefit from measures suited to their individual situations. In particular, it encourages joint projects

between regions with similar characteristics and the taking into consideration of these characteristics when planning responses to emergency situations, setting up specialised intervention teams and developing effective, reliable and adapted communication systems.

- Council Resolution of 28 January 2002 on reinforcing cooperation in the field of civil protection training [Official Journal C 43 of 16.2.2002].

The Council invites the Commission to look at any initiatives supporting the creation of a network of schools and training centres active in the field of civil protection and to give financial support to this initiative and involve the candidate countries in its work. The Commission is also invited to consider the possibility of creating a European civil protection college to perpetuate such cooperation.

There are of course other legal texts which are not yet legislative pieces but contain proposals or observations which will have a bearing on civil protection. These include the Commission Communication on Reinforcing the Union' Disaster Response Capacity, the Communication on strengthening Early Warning System in Europe; and by the end of 2008 a document that will encompass a comprehensive prevention initiative.

Finally it must be underlined that Civil protection of course ties in with many other policy initiatives. The link with climate change is inevitable, while chemical accidents and marine pollution incidents have triggered the Mechanism into action. Community initiatives on forestry, soil, water and telecommunications also have links with civil protection. This list is not exhaustive.

## 1.4 EU Civil Protection Mechanism Activations

Any country in the world can call on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism for help.

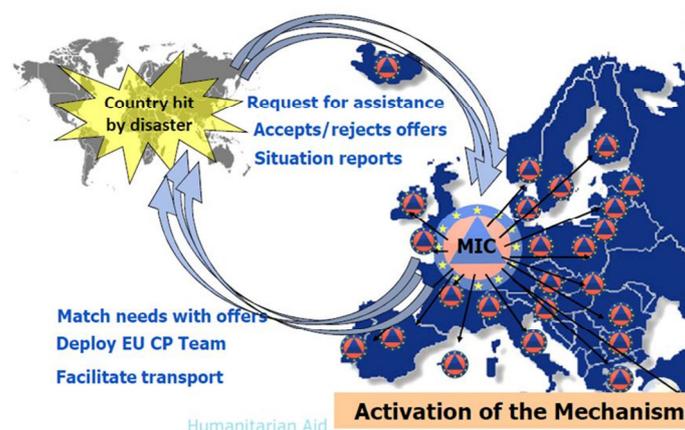
### ***Inside the European Union:***

When a participating state is unable to handle a large national emergency, it may request assistance from the other participating countries through the ERCC, which receives the request and informs all the other countries involved. ERCC is responsible for communicating the request, allowing immediate dialogue between 24-hour operations centres in the various countries. The requests made by the affected country are matched by the system to offers of assistance from countries that decide to intervene. ERCC provides all the countries with information and updates on the emergency until it is resolved. The kind of intervention will vary depending on the event. The ERCC then facilitates dispatch of assessment and/ or coordination teams, experts, civil protection modules and ensures co-funding of assistance transport offered by participating states, but management of aid is the responsibility of the state requesting intervention.

### ***Outside the European Union:***

The Mechanism may be activated by an affected country with a request for assistance to the ERCC. In these cases, the High Representative for foreign affairs and foreign policy together with the Presidency of the European Council coordinates the political response, in collaboration with the Commission. This guarantees links with the affected country, facilitating rapid deployment of community assistance, above all during the initial hours of the emergency.

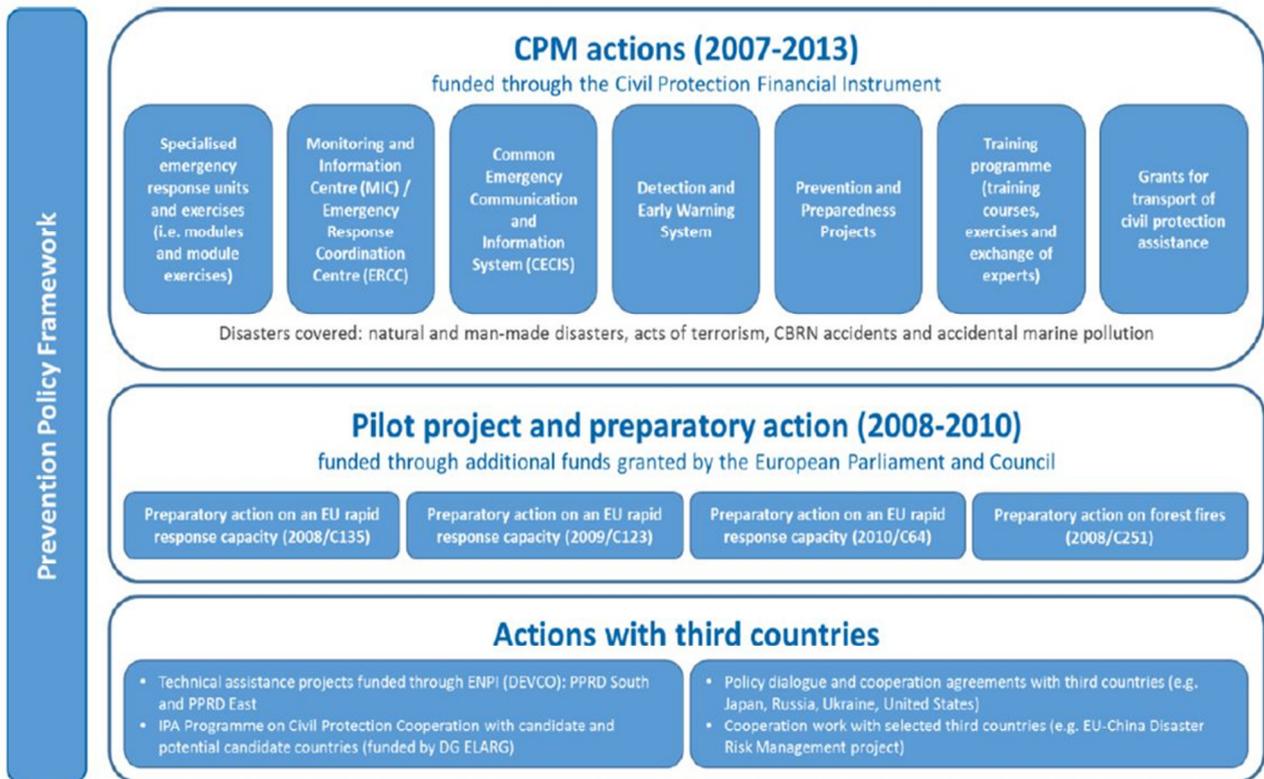
If the United Nations are involved, they will assume management of operations. Activity is carried out by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department – ECHO in close collaboration with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – OCHA.



*Between 2001- March 2015, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has monitored over 300 disasters and has received well over 200 requests for assistance for disasters in Member States and worldwide.*

Some data concerning the total estimated disaster impacts in Europe (2002-2011) can give a clear overview about the delivery of civil protection assistance

- 📄 116 BILLION EUR damage
- 📄 7.3 MILLION people affected
- 📄 146 THOUSANDS people killed



The Mechanism through the **Monitoring & Information Centre / Emergency Response Coordination Centre (MIC/ERCC)** was activated 223 times and oversaw 72 missions, deploying 246 experts and 64 liaison officers. Because the objective of the MIC/ERCC was to facilitate the immediate response efforts in the event of an emergency, it provided Participating States with a single entry point for civil protection information and coordinated the deployment of EU CP teams to affected areas.

The **Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS)** enabled communication and information sharing between the MIC/ERCC and contact points of the Participating States, (1) sending and receiving alerts and details of assistance required; (2) showing available assistance capacities; and (3) tracking the development of ongoing emergencies. 150 modules and ten Technical Assistance Support Teams ('TAST') were registered on CECIS.

Concerning the **Detection and early warning systems**, 13 were developed with the aim to reduce the impact of disasters by ensuring the timely and effective provision of information so that rapid actions could be taken.

The ***Transport of assistance*** was developed in response to a transport deficit for addressing the logistical and financial burden associated with the transport of civil protection assistance by Participating States to a country affected by a disaster. The Financial Instrument co-funded 134 transport operations (122 co-financing through grant, 9 co-financing through the Commission's contractor and 3 combined co-financing).

Some examples of the activations of the Civil Protection Mechanism can give an idea of its degree of response to natural and man-made disasters

*Examples from 2011 include assistance in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan, help in the evacuation effort of European citizens and third country nationals from Libya and facilitating the delivery of the emergency assistance to Turkey following the October earthquake.*

*In 2012 the Mechanism was activated to provide rapid assistance to fight destructive forest fires in Greece, Portugal, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina and Albania.*

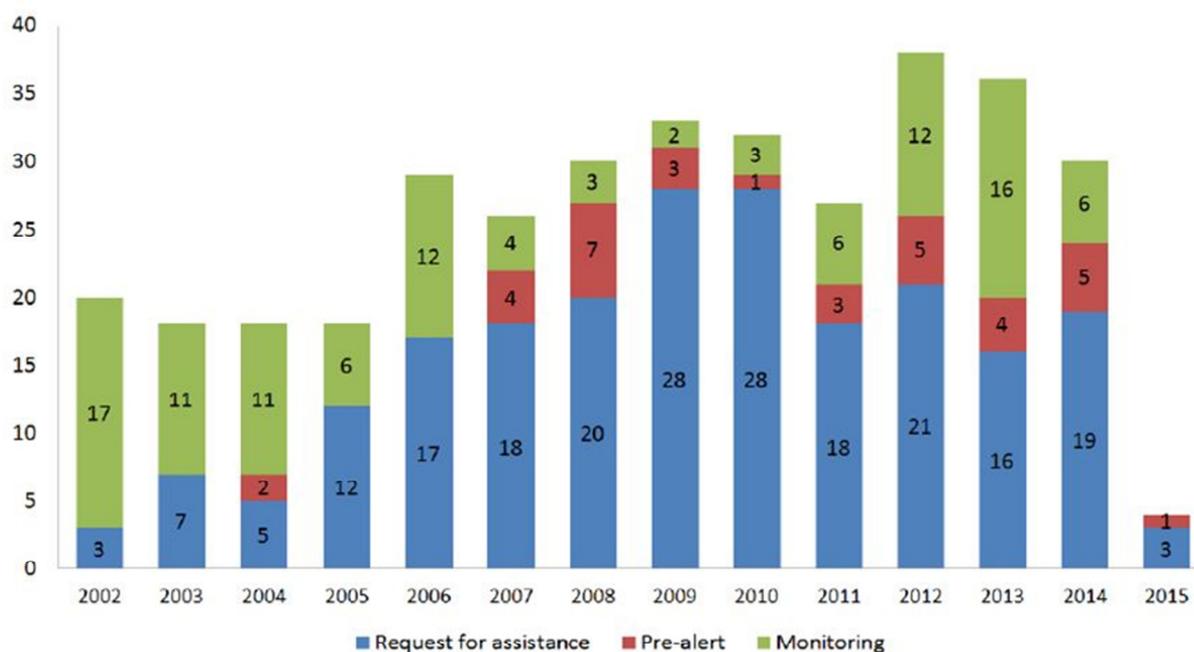
Examples from 2013 include the response to typhoon Haiyan that hit the Philippines in November 2013. The Mechanism also provided support to help Syrian refugees in Jordan (both in 2012 and 2013) through the delivery of material assistance by the participating states such as ambulances, tent heaters, wool blankets, hygiene parcels and kitchen sets, etc.

In 2014, the Mechanism was activated, following requests for assistance, on 19 occasions across the globe. In May 2014, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was mobilised following a request for assistance from both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia after devastating floods\* in the region. This was the largest EU response operation, with 23 participating countries offering teams and equipment. The Mechanism was called to action in July 2014 by the World Health Organisation to help contain the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease (EVD). This has enabled the rapid, coordinated deployment of emergency supplies and experts offered by the participating member states through the ERCC, which also manages the system of medical evacuation for international health professionals working in the affected countries. In total, the European Union, together with its Member States, has made available close to €1.3 billion in financial aid for humanitarian aid, technical expertise, longer-term development assistance and investment in research for a vaccine and evacuation means for international humanitarian workers.

*In response to the crises in Northern Iraq and Ukraine, airlift operations were co-financed and coordinated through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism in 2014 and 2015, whereby several EU Member States sent in-kind assistance to IDPs in those two countries.*

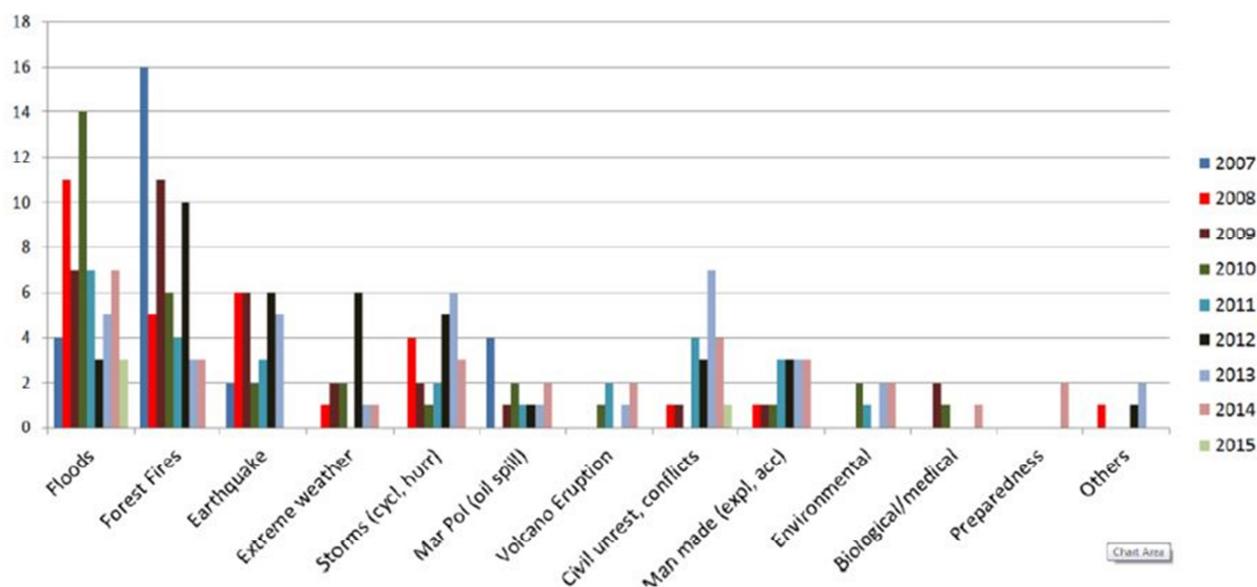
*The following graphs give an overview of the number of activations from 2002 to 2015 and of the evolution of the hazards in relation to the different kind of emergencies.*

## Number of activations\* of the EUCP Mechanism

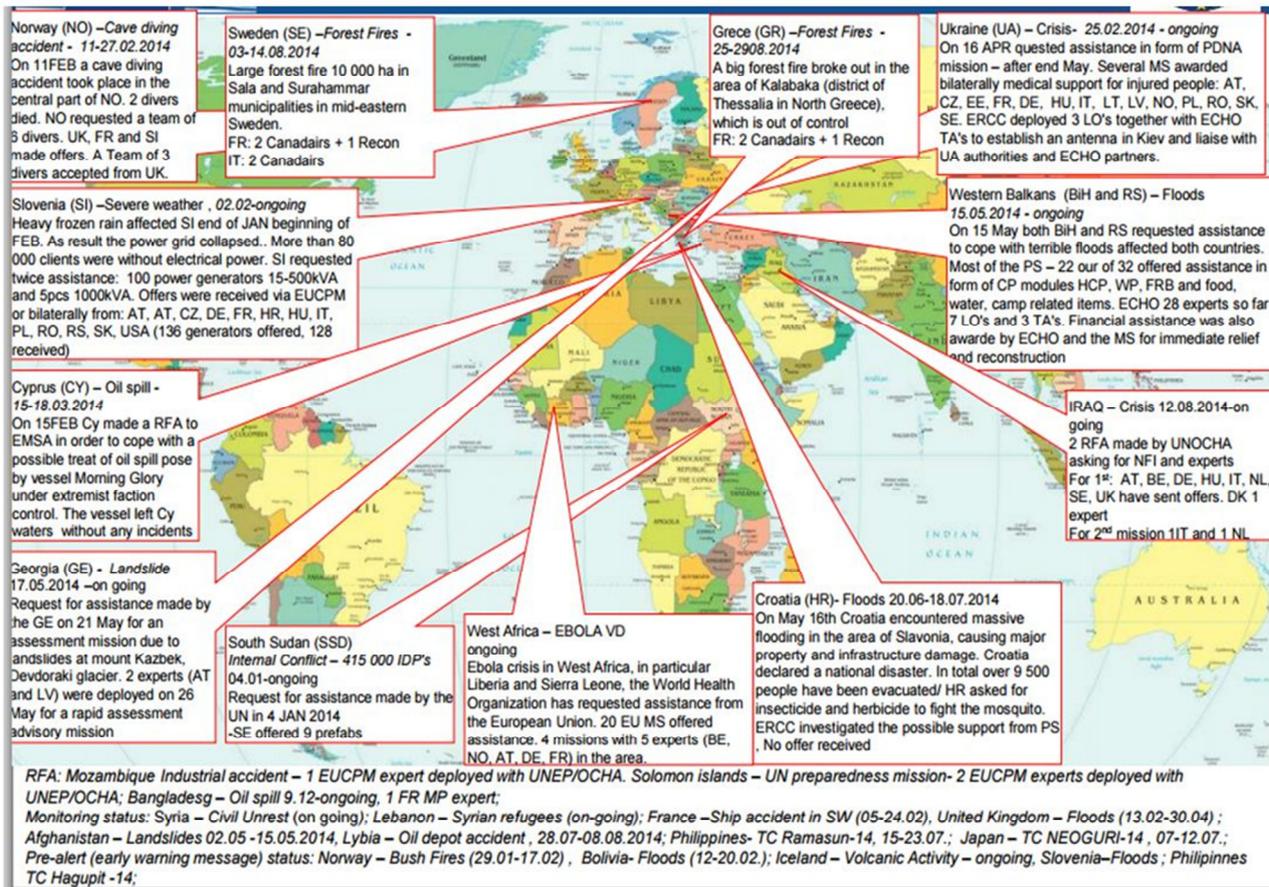


\*Activation = any event open in CECIS (request for assistance, early warning (pre-alert), monitoring)

## Evolution of hazards that lead to an activation



The activation of the New Mechanism (UCPM) in the 2014 are described below



## **1.5 Ex-post evaluation of the Community Civil Protection Mechanism and of the Civil Protection Financial Instrument (2007-2013)**

The evaluation was carried out by ICF International with inputs from four external experts. The main objective of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and EU added value of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the application of the Civil Protection Financial Instrument for the period of 2007 to 2013. The intended outcomes were to:

- Learn lessons from the implementation of the Mechanism and Financial Instrument over the evaluation period; and
- Provide greater accountability of the Commission' budget in the field of civil protection.

The evaluation used a mixed-method approach to collect evidence on the performance of the Mechanism and the Financial Instrument. The methodologies used included online surveys, interviews, document reviews, observations and case studies. Findings were derived from the triangulation of the evidence obtained through the different methodologies.

The evaluation demonstrated that the Mechanism's components were designed to be cost-effective and were in most cases implemented efficiently. The mainstreaming of procedures, coordination of efforts, sharing of practices and capabilities all proved conducive to a swift and economical implementation. Overall, the implementation of the Mechanism was effective in achieving its overarching objectives as well as the objectives of specific actions.

The Mechanism actions were interconnected and complementary. The Mechanism as a whole was found to be relevant and consistent with other EU level actions and programmes in related fields. The importance of a coordinated emergency response at EU level was also recognised.

The Mechanism brought EU added value by strengthening the cooperation between Participating States; addressing gaps in national response capacities; and starting to shift the focus of the Mechanism towards a more prevention-related approach.

The EU added value of the Mechanism in responding to major disasters outside the EU was less straightforward due to the existence of bilateral support. However, the added value of the Mechanism for affected countries outside the EU was that they only had to deal with a single contact point, which coordinated the EU-level efforts, rather than rely on a multitude of bilateral contacts with different States. The coordinated EU emergency assistance also reduced the risk of duplication of efforts.

The Mechanism also brought visibility to the EU by ensuring solidarity between Participating States in the Mechanism and third countries.

However, there is room for improvement, for example by ensuring a better take up of the outcomes of the lessons-learned and by enhancing opportunities for operational and cross-sector learning.

For instance,

In relation to **Prevention-related actions**, they helped improving the connection between existing financial and legislative instruments and prevention elements in many other related EU policies (inter alia. regional, environmental, health, climate change policies). They also contributed to raising awareness and promoting EU Member States' cooperation in the field of civil protection.

The results of prevention related-actions could not have been achieved by Member States acting in isolation - indeed, most prevention actions and projects involved multiple partners from different Participating States who were not necessarily used to cooperating with one another. Most budgets of completed projects were considered as proportionate for the implemented activities

Anyway the evaluators underlined that the DG ECHO

- should consider further promoting prevention activities. For instance, the adoption of effective prevention strategies at national level could reduce the severity of some disaster types and improve the resilience of affected areas.

- should incentivize Participating States to adopt common models of preventing the occurrence or spreading of major disasters through common standards and/or operational procedures, etc. Prevention projects also could foster cooperation and share good practices, lessons learned and insights into how best to implement these at national level.

In relation to **Preparedness-related actions**, they were largely in line with the needs of Participating States and adequately addressed the needs of other relevant stakeholders, such as national civil protection authorities and professionals. The training courses involved the appropriate target groups and attracted a high numbers of civil protection actors. The simulation exercises were in line with the disaster types affecting the majority of Participating States and their associated needs. The exchange of experts programme was even slightly oversubscribed. The module exercises allowed for the identification of gaps in SOPs of modules, which were subsequently addressed in the development and implementation of guidelines for the modules. The preparedness projects, the pilot project and preparatory actions responded to important needs as identified from major disasters over time.

The coherence and relevance of preparedness-related actions was overall ensured via the lessons learned programme of the Mechanism. In terms of effectiveness, preparedness-related actions mainly contributed to a common understanding of cooperation in civil protection interventions in Europe. The training programme improved the skills, know-how and competences of experts through training courses, realistic simulation exercises and via the exchange of experts. This ultimately also contributed to strengthening and making the response capacity of Participating States more effective in case of disasters within and outside the EU. Similarly, modules and module exercises somewhat contributed to increasing the Participating States' response capacity by organising and testing the coordination of national capacities. Preparedness projects, pilot project and preparatory actions in particular contributed to raising awareness and to

promoting EU Member States' cooperation in the field of civil protection. They also allowed for the testing of innovative arrangements to reinforce the EU's rapid response capacity.

The budgets of preparedness-related actions were proportionate and appropriate with respect to their scope and objectives. The competitive tendering for the organisation of elements of the training programme generally helped in controlling the costs of such actions. The efficiency of module exercises was high considering the limited time that civil protection personnel at national level could devote to such exercises. This was strengthened by the identification of key lessons following the organisation of such exercises. The budgets for preparedness projects, pilot project and preparatory actions were adequate to implement the planned activities.

The main EU added value of preparedness related actions resided in building a community of civil protection practitioners in Europe. This community is characterised by: a common understanding of the Mechanism; a good understanding of the national civil protection systems; and a set of common and standard operating procedures. The EU added value of the training programme was found in the common body of knowledge generated through participation. The networking effects resulting from the training programme were also considered as bringing EU added value. Preparedness projects, the pilot project and preparatory actions contributed to the establishment of common procedures and standards and the development of additional response capacity.

Some improvements were anyway recommended by the evaluators, for instance,

- *Certify training course participants*: DG ECHO should introduce a systematic test at the end of each course to ensure that learning outcomes have been achieved. Passing these tests would be a condition for progressing through the training curriculum. This would ensure better coherence of the training groups and help to create trust among Participating States and Host Nations with regard to the minimum standards of assistance and the expected level of expertise.
- *Improve the effectiveness of the training courses*: DG ECHO should consider adopting a train-the-trainers approach in order to raise awareness of the Mechanism at national level. The training participants could disseminate the knowledge of the Mechanism more widely by using the training materials and the tools provided. In order to make the training programme more cost-effective basic courses may alternatively be replaced by e-learning sessions.
- *Define expert profiles*: DG ECHO should take a proactive approach in first mapping the skills and competencies required to manage emergencies in the field, in cooperation with the Participating States, followed by the development of profiles matching the needs identified. These profiles could serve both to inform the future design of the training courses, the selection of training participants and, ultimately, the selection of EU CP team members.
- *Involve general public in simulation exercises*: Simulation exercises could involve the general public and residents in risk prone areas where exercises are being run in order to raise awareness and increase the preparedness and resilience of society at large.

- *Continue improving interoperability and effectiveness of assets and procedures (SOPs):* The interoperability of equipment and procedures should be further enhanced. Preparatory actions could focus on further developing and testing innovative arrangements. Moreover, EU financing should be made available for "creating and maintaining" a voluntary pool of assets.

Finally in relation to the **Response-related actions**, they were relevant to the needs of the stakeholders: the replacement of the MIC by the ERCC and the incorporation of early warning systems are good illustrations of how the Mechanism has evolved over time to meet the needs expressed by stakeholders. Similarly, the introduction of transport assistance into the Mechanism helped addressing the lack of available transport means to move the offers of assistance by Participating States.

Response related actions were overall internally coherent. The MIC/ERCC significantly improved the coordination and complementarity of the assistance provided by Participating States. This applied to all types of interventions, including those targeting marine pollution disasters, inside and outside the EU.

The response related actions proved effective, efficient, and flexible in delivering relief in the context of major disasters. The MIC/ERCC allowed for the rapid and effective deployment of EU CP teams and modules and facilitated the coordination of EU interventions with Participating States and International actors. The provision of transport assistance was also considered as a major step forward for the Mechanism and proved a useful, effective and efficient tool.

## 2. Training Activities

The training programme is an essential part of the Mechanism. It is crucial in preparing experts for international civil protection assistance interventions inside as well as outside Europe. It also provides an excellent platform for experience-sharing and networking between national experts from participating countries. The programme involves training courses, joint simulation exercises and an exchange programme, where experts can learn first-hand about similar responsibilities under different national systems.

Since it was launched in 2004, the training programme has developed and now includes 12 courses: two introductory, six operational, two management and two refresher courses.

These courses aim at enhancing the coordination of civil protection activities and enhancing the complementarity of the intervention teams. They also aim at making emergency response more effective.

In total, around 4,700 civil protection experts and specialists were trained since the Training Programme was launched

The target group is wide, which opens the training programme to many different categories of experts. These can range from assessment and coordination experts to specialists within a certain field of work, such as marine pollution experts, environmental experts (landslides waste management, dam stability etc), experts in geo-hazards or logistics in emergency operations, and medical staff.

All courses combine theory and field experience, as well as international guidelines and standard operating procedures. They all contain practical exercises (field and table-top) based on different emergency scenarios where participants get the opportunity to practise their skills in a realistic setting.

In order to benefit most, candidates are encouraged to follow courses according to a basic order.

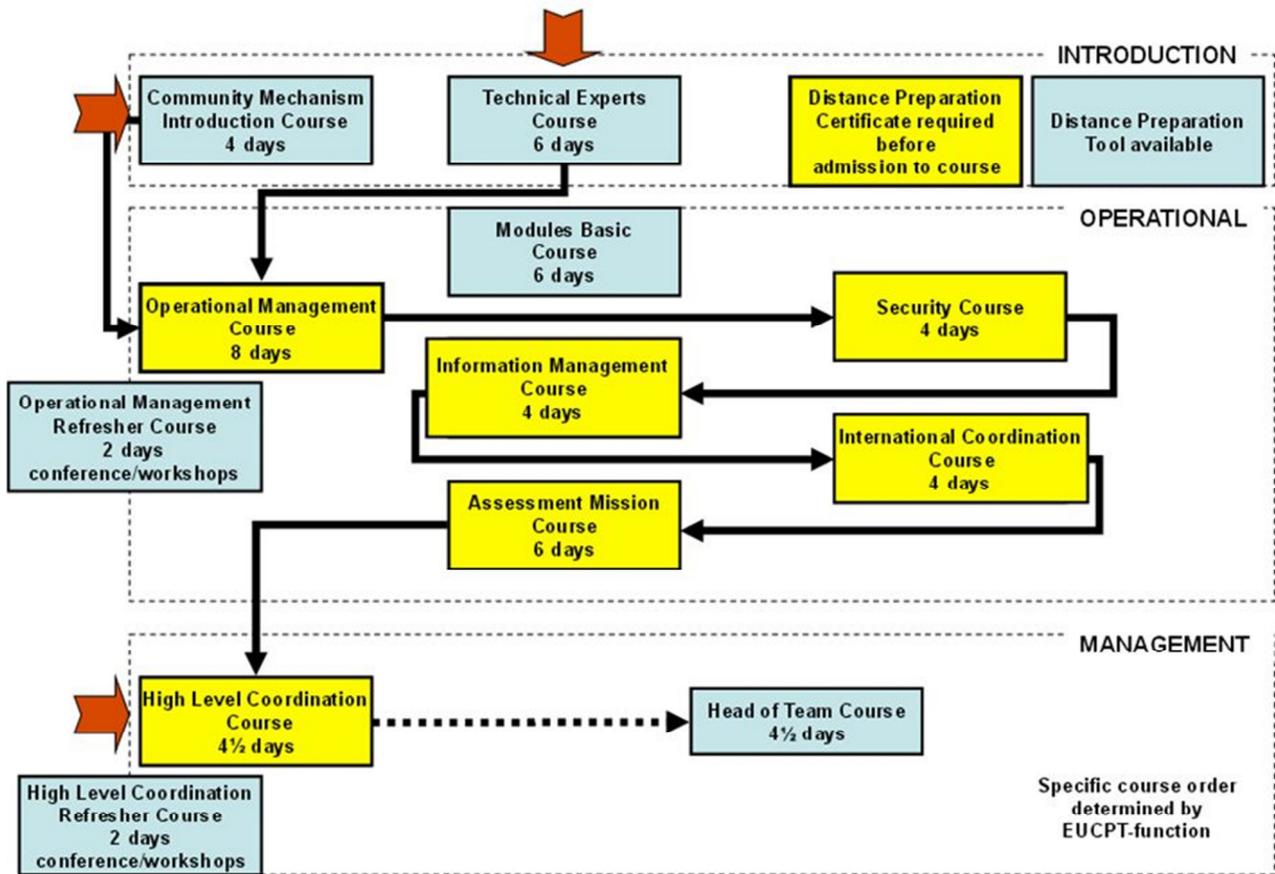
All courses conclude with a final test in order to review the progress of the participants during the course. A certificate is handed out at the end of each course providing the participant has attended the entire course.

From the 11th cycle onward (mid 2013), candidates make use of a distance preparation tool.

For each cycle of training courses, the total number of course places is divided between the Participating States and external organisations. This quota is based on the reported training needs of the country as well as the size of the country. To administrate training-related issues, each Participating State has appointed a national training coordinator who is responsible for identifying and nominating experts to attend the training courses. To increase collaboration with other international actors and facilitate cooperation in the field, partners such as other European Commission services, the United Nations and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement are invited to participate in relevant courses.

Detailed information on the training programme can also be found on the virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (V-OSOCC), which is a virtual platform developed by the Emergency Response

Coordination Centre (ERCC) in the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) in Geneva, Switzerland.



Training courses overview

## **2.1 The Community Mechanism Induction Course (CMI)**

The Community Mechanism Induction Course (CMI) is a six-day introductory course and the entry point to all courses offered within the Community Mechanism training programme. The course is aimed at team leaders, deputy team leaders, managers, experts and administrators who are likely to be involved in international civil protection assistance interventions.

The overall objective of the CMI is to introduce participants to the scope, mandate, components and functions of the Community Mechanism and provide them with the basic knowledge and skills to prepare themselves for international civil protection missions, both within and outside the Community Mechanism's geographical area. The course covers some areas to familiarise participants with the international emergency environment and commonly applied working procedures.

The course looks at the different civil protection systems within the geographical area covered by the Community Mechanism, as well as international partners and actors European teams are likely to encounter. Topics covered include information management, use of communication and IT equipment, safety and security and cultural awareness, as well as humanitarian principles and how to organise work in an emergency situation.

The course ends with a simulation exercise, where participants are divided into teams and given the opportunity to experience what it is like to work on a civil protection assistance intervention.

Completing the introductory course is a prerequisite for attending the next course, the Operational Management Course (OPM)

## **2.2 The Technical Experts Course (TEC)**

Experience from previous civil protection assistance interventions, as well as training assessment and coordination experts, have shown that there is a need to train technical specialists for expert interventions. The Technical Experts Course (TEC) is a six day course designed specifically for technical experts such as marine pollution and water management experts, environmental experts (landslides, waste management, dam stability etc), geo-hazard or logistics experts, medical staff and infrastructure engineers.

The main objective is to introduce technical experts to the Mechanism and the mission cycle of operations. It also aims to increase their knowledge of international response systems and coordination mechanisms and their teamwork capability in a multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary team. Experiences from previous civil protection assistance interventions, particularly those where special expertise was required and/or used, are discussed. The course is composed of theory, group work sessions and a practical exercise based on disaster scenarios.

As the Technical Experts Course aims at preparing technical experts for international missions in their field of experience within the framework of the Mechanism, graduates are invited to attend other courses in the training programme on the same basis as experts who have completed the Community Mechanism Introduction course (CMI).

For technical experts, the certificate of the TEC is one of the prerequisites for attending the next course, the Operational Management course (OPM).

## **2.3 The Module Basic Course (MBC)**

The six day Modules Basic Course (MBC) is a stand alone course within the training programme. The target group is key staff from participating countries that would be deployed with their civil protection module to an emergency within or outside the European Union. Key staff can include team leaders, deputy team leaders, liaison officers or communications officers. It is recommended (but not compulsory) that participants attend the Community Mechanism Introduction (CMI) course before going to the Modules Basic Course (MBC).

The course includes theory, group sessions and case study work, as well as an exercise. The main purpose of the course is to increase participants' capability to manage the civil protection modules in a multi-task and multi-stakeholder operation and to integrate them into existing national and international coordination arrangements in a disaster-affected country. The course focuses on the crucial issue of interoperability when teams are deployed alongside units from other countries.

For members of the target group who have not followed the CMI before, the certificate of the MBC is a prerequisite for attending the next course, the Community Mechanism Introduction course (CMI). For those who have already followed the CMI, the next course is the Operational Management course (OPM).

## **2.4 The Operational Management Course (OPM)**

The Operational Management Course (OPM) is the first specifically aimed at future deployments inside and outside Europe. It can be regarded as the corner stone of the training programme to follow and as such it provides all the basics that make it possible for graduates to function as a full member in an On-site Operational Coordination Centre (OSOCC – outside Europe) or coordination setting (inside Europe).

It is the second course in the training programme and is open to those who are in possession of the certificate of the Community Mechanism Introduction Course (CMI) and achieved the Distance Preparation Certificate for the OPM.

The eight-day course targets national experts and European Commission representatives who aim to be potential team members or liaison officers of a European Civil Protection team sent by the European Commission.

As inside Europe deployments also have their specifics, attention for this subject is on the agenda as well. The main tasks of an EUCP team consist of facilitating the coordination in the field, assessing needs of the affected country and providing expertise, based on the request of the affected country, whether it be inside or outside Europe. The focus of this course is on coordination and course topics include internationally agreed guidelines and procedures, planning, information management and how key partners work on an operational level, as well as ethics, code of conduct and basics on Safety and Security.

The core objective of the course is not only to improve the individual capabilities of experts and teams, but also to enhance their ability to function within a wider framework of international partners.

Training is carried out within the context of emergency situation scenarios, enabling participants to practice the above described topics in a realistic setting.

## **2.5 The Security Course (SEC)**

The four day Security Course (SEC) is one of the specialised courses and is open to those who are in possession of the certificates of the Community Mechanism Introduction Course (CMI) and the Operational Management Course (OPM) and achieved the Distance Preparation Certificate for the SEC.

The core objective of the Security Course is to enhance participants' understanding, knowledge and skills in terms of security management at operational and strategic levels. Team security is increasingly an essential element of field work during a civil protection assistance intervention. Interventions often encompass the element of providing security advice and services to team members and partners, within the framework of the security regulations that apply.

The SEC intends to provide competences to act as security advisors within the team as well as knowledge and skills to act appropriately according to the safety regulations.

The course is composed of theory and group work sessions, where participants learn about different aspects of security management (international security systems, security assessments, security planning and training). The course also includes a field exercise providing participants with an opportunity to put this into practice in an emergency setting.

## **2.6 The Information management Course (IMC)**

The ability to provide accurate information in a timely and effective manner to the appropriate stakeholders is of utmost importance during disaster response interventions. It can even be described as the most important critical success factor.

As the process of information management is seen as key for functioning successfully in operational coordination, the four day Information Management Course focuses solely on this topic. It aims to facilitate assessment, coordination and decision-making during expert interventions through strengthened information management processes. Specifically, the course objectives are to improve the participants' understanding of how sound information management practices can facilitate the mission, increase and broaden their understanding and ability to apply standard information tools used in emergencies and identify best practices and share experiences in terms of information management.

The IMC is open to those who are in possession of the certificates of the Community Mechanism Introduction Course (CMI) and the Operational Management Course (OPM) and achieved the Distance Preparation Certificate for the IMC.

The course is formed around the information management cycle and is composed of theory, group work sessions and practical exercises based on realistic disaster scenarios.

## **2.7 The International Coordination Course (ICC)**

The four day International Coordination Course (ICC) is one of the specialised courses of the training programme and is open to those who are in possession of the certificates of the Community Mechanism Introduction Course (CMI) and the Operational Management Course (OPM) and achieved the Distance Preparation Certificate for the ICC.

However, according to the basic order of courses, having graduated from the Security Course (SEC or MSC as equivalent) and the Information Management Course (IMC) before the ICC is preferred.

Even though all courses in the training programme contain elements of international coordination mechanisms and procedures, the growing complexity of disaster response requires experts to have in-depth knowledge of these mechanisms and procedures. This is particularly necessary in large-scale emergencies where many organisations, also from the European institutions, as well as military components are involved or in situations with additional challenges, such as a difficult political environment.

The overall objective of the course is to increase participants' knowledge of, and ability to work with or under the overall coordination of other international response systems like the United Nations. International coordination mechanisms, civil military coordination and the approach of other organisations in the field of disaster management are covered by the course, which is composed of theory, case study-based group work sessions and practical exercises.

## **2.8 The Assessment Mission Course (AMC)**

The Assessment Mission Course (AMC) is a six day specialised course for national experts and managers in the field of emergency management, European Commission officials and experts from partner organisations likely to be involved in international civil protection interventions where assessment activities are to be expected.

The AMC is open to those who are in possession of the certificates of the Community Mechanism Introduction Course (CMI) and the Operational Management Course (OPM) and achieved the Distance Preparation Certificate for the AMC. Having followed the other courses according to the basic order of courses is preferred (SEC – or MSC as equivalent –, IMC and ICC).

While on mission, experts are engaged by the European Commission to carry out their tasks by assisting local authorities in close cooperation with the UN and other international organisations on site.

The experts attending the Assessment Mission Course are trained to carry out assessment in a wide array of needs (humanitarian and civil protection), related to the specific mandate of an EU Civil Protection team.

The core objective of the course is not only to improve the individual capabilities of experts and teams, but also to enhance their ability to function within a wider international framework. The course includes sessions on how to prepare and perform a field assessment, negotiation skills and information management. The main focus of the course is a long field exercise, where participants get to test their new skills performing needs assessments on a wide variety of location settings and meeting local officials who are experienced in managing real emergency situations.

## 2.9 The High Level Coordination Course (HLC)

The High Level Coordination course (HLC) is the third general course in the training programme and is the end-course for all team members (if graduated). It aims at experts who could be selected as members of a team that can be deployed by the European Commission to facilitate coordination assistance in emergencies. The course takes 4½ days.

The HLC is open to those who are in possession of the certificates of the Community Mechanism Introduction Course (CMI) and the Operational Management Course (OPM) and achieved the Distance Preparation Certificate for the HLC. Having followed the other courses according to the basic order of courses is preferred. In specific cases candidates (like from other organisations or with extensive field-experience) can be admitted directly after permission of the European Commission.

The course focuses on emergencies outside the Mechanism's geographical area and how to work within a wider international framework. The course contains strategic and political aspects of international disaster management and humanitarian assistance, such as mission management, negotiation, international coordination policy, staff management, the legal framework of international disaster management operations and media relations.

Group work, based on case studies, is an important part of the course where the participants can discuss experiences, alternatives and best practice for managing the mission itself during complicated situations.

The course concludes with a two day field exercise where participants can practice the different team roles in a realistic setting.

The certificate of the HLC is one of the prerequisites for attending the next course, the Head of Team course (HOT).

## **2.10 The Head of Team Course (HOT)**

Being a Head of Team during civil protection interventions puts a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of the selected person. That is why national experts graduated from the High Level Coordination course and selected to potentially become a Head of Team, are offered an additional training of 4½ days.

The HOT is open to those who have acquired the certificate for the High Level Coordination course and were selected as a candidate for the Head of Team course.

Diplomatic behaviour, political dynamics in disaster affected regions, relations with and between European institutions, relevant international agreements as well as Council and Commission Decisions and their impact on coordination during interventions inside and outside the European Union, the ability to interact effectively with the media in stressful situations as well as internal team management and -psychology and leadership are addressed in the course. These are subjects that demand the full commitment of the participants and extensive preparation.

## **2.11 The Operational Management Refresher Courses (OPM-R) and The High Level Coordination Refresher Courses (HLC-R)**

The field of emergency response is a constantly changing environment. No two emergencies are exactly the same. New actors enter the field or existing ones have their mandate changed. Changing situations, also inside the European Commission and the development of new techniques and equipment mean that experts need to learn about the latest developments, as well as refresh knowledge gained on earlier courses.

The OPM-R and HLC-R can be regarded as “consolidation courses”. By following them, candidates show their interest to remain active within the Mechanism. As individual candidates know best in which field they need to be updated, these courses are organised in a two day conference/workshop on different topics.

The OPM-R is open to those who are in possession of the certificates of the Community Mechanism Introduction Course (CMI) and the Operational Management Course (OPM) and achieved the Distance Preparation Certificate for the OPM-R. The HLC-R is open to those who are in possession of the certificates of the Community Mechanism Introduction Course (CMI), the Operational Management Course (OPM) and the High Level Coordination course (HLC). In specific cases candidates that graduated from the HLC directly (because of their previous experience) can be admitted after permission of the European Commission.

The Operational Management Refresher course makes use of operational lessons learned from recent deployments of expert teams. The participants can meet with experienced trainers on different subjects. The High Level Coordination Refresher course focuses more on the strategic and political dimensions of international disaster management and humanitarian assistance, in relation with recent emergencies

### **3. Modules, exercises and exchange of experts**

The European Commission organises a programme based on modules, exercises and exchanges of experts, as well as actions in areas where a common European approach is more effective than separate national approaches. Improving the quality of and accessibility to disaster information, implementing prevention measures, raising public awareness on disaster management, developing guidelines on risk assessment and hazard mapping, encouraging research to promote disaster resilience, and reinforcing early warning tools are some of the EU-level disaster prevention activities being developed and constantly upgraded.

## 3.1 Modules

The idea of establishing civil protection modules to strengthen the European response to natural and man-made disasters was launched by Member States in the wake of the December 2004 tsunami in South-Asia. In June 2005, the European Council endorsed the general concept, calling for the establishment of an EU rapid response capability based upon Member States' civil protection modules.

Consequently the Council Decision establishing a Civil Protection Mechanism (Recast) emphasises the importance of developing a European rapid response capability based on the civil protection modules of the Member States. The Council Decision defines the civil protection modules and provides that Member States are required to identify modules within six months of the adoption of the Mechanism recast – meaning until 16 May 2008.

The European Commission and Member States have worked closely together to develop the implementing rules for Civil Protection Modules. The implementing rules provide the technical framework for a total of 17 modules covering pumping and purification of water, aerial fire fighting (planes and helicopters), urban search and rescue (heavy and medium), medical assistance including medical evacuation (advanced medical posts, field hospital, aerial evacuation), emergency shelter, CBRN detection and sampling, and search and rescue in CBRN conditions. Tasks, capacities, main components and deployment times are defined and the provisions give more details about the notions of self-sufficiency and interoperability. The rules also provide for a Technical Assistance Support Team (TAST) for the support and/or coordination of the teams and, under specified conditions, TAST is incorporated in specific modules to fulfil support functions.

### ***The modules concept***

Modules are task and needs driven pre-defined arrangements of resources. They are assembled and made available to respond more quickly to emergencies both within and outside the EU. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are defined and they contain all the predictable procedures during the deployment cycle.

The modules:

- are composed of mobile/moveable resources from Member States which can be deployed abroad;
- are able to work independently as well as together with other modules and provide assistance inside and/or outside the EU to other EU bodies and international institutions, especially the UN;
- can be made up of resources from one or more Member States of the Community Mechanism on a voluntary basis;
- are self-sufficient, interoperable and can be dispatched at very short notice (generally within 12 hours following a request of assistance);
- are equipped, trained and operate in accordance with acknowledged international guidelines.



***The types of EU CP modules are the following:***

1) High Capacity Pumping

- 2) Flood Containment Module
- 3) Flood Rescue Module using boats
- 4) Water Purification
- 5) Medium USAR
- 6) Heavy USAR
- 7) Aerial Forest Fire-Fighting using helicopters
- 8) Aerial Forest Fire-Fighting using airplanes
- 9) Ground Forest Fire Fighting
- 10) Ground Forest Fire Fighting using vehicles
- 11) Advanced medical post
- 12) Advanced medical post with surgery
- 13) Medical aerial evacuation of disaster victims
- 14) Emergency temporary shelter
- 15) CBRN detection and sampling
- 16) SAR in CBRN conditions
- 17) Field hospital and Technical assistance support team (TAST)

## 3.2 Exercises

The EU and EU member states invest significant resources into Civil Protection exercises. Civil Protection exercises organised at EU level are designed primarily as field tests aiming to establish a common understanding of cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions and to accelerate the response to major emergencies.

The objectives of the exercises are “to improve civil protection preparedness and response to all kinds of emergencies, including marine pollution, chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear emergencies, as well as combined emergencies and emergencies simultaneously affecting a number of countries (inside or outside the EU) by providing a testing environment of established and/or new operational concepts and procedures of the Mechanism and a learning opportunity for all actors involved in civil protection assistance interventions under the Civil Protection Mechanism”.

For this reason, these exercises provide a learning opportunity for all actors involved in operations under the Mechanism and enhance operational co-operation between them. One of the main objectives of these Civil Protection exercises is to enhance international cooperation. Contingency planning, decision-making procedures, provision of information to the public and the media can also be tested and rehearsed during these events, so as to be better prepared for similar real-life situations.

Moreover, exercises can help supervisors identify further training needs for their staff involved in operations, while lessons-learned workshops organised in parallel can serve as a forum to identify operational gaps to be improved.

**The Commission Decision 2004/277/EC, Euratom** of 29 December 2003 defines the **target group** of the exercises (Article 22) and the **Exercise aims** (Article 24).

The *exercise aims* (Article 24) are reproduced below:

"The **exercises** shall, in particular with regard to the target group set out in Article 22(a), **aim** at :

- (a) Improving the response capacity and providing the necessary practice of the teams meeting the criteria for participation in civil protection assistance interventions;
- (b) Improving and verifying the procedures and establishing a common language for the coordination of civil protection assistance interventions and reducing the response time in major emergencies;
- (c) Enhancing operational cooperation between the civil protection services of the participating States;
- (d) Sharing lessons learned.

As defined in the article 22 of Commission Decision 2004/277/EC, Euratom, the target groups of the exercises are:

- Participating States' intervention teams
- Participating States' intervention team leaders, their deputies and liaison officers

- experts of the Participating States as set out in article 15 of the same decision (technical experts, assessment experts, coordination team member, coordination head)
- national key contact point staff
- officials of the European institutions



**The expected results of the exercises are:**

- The existing procedures for the various elements of the Civil Protection Mechanism are improved and new procedures, where needed, are established.
- The interoperability of intervention teams is improved as the result of the exercise; in particular this will mean quicker dispatch time, improved cooperation arrangements, better communication between headquarters and field, identification of shortcomings in the existing structures.
- Participating States are aware and prepared to receive and to provide assistance through the Mechanism.

**Types of exercises**

Eligible projects to be co-financed under this call for proposals will comprise one of the following types of civil protection exercises:

**Full Scale Exercises (FSE)**, involving a sufficient number of the various categories of the training programme target group, necessarily including deployment of intervention teams. A FSE is designed to replicate one or several phases of an emergency with the commitment of all the public bodies and authorities that would be committed in a real situation. All the functions (operation, command, logistics, communication, public information, etc...) of a real operation are replicated and played in a coordinated way. It is expected that the exercise is preceded by a tabletop exercise (TTE), and includes a command post exercise part. About 40 full scale exercises over the last 13 years were organized.

**Command Post Exercises (CPE), with a minimum and focused deployment in the field** of a number of the categories comprising the target group of the training programme. It should be noted that the requirement of a minimum deployment in the field distinguishes the above command post exercises from the ones organised by the Commission as part of the CECIS training, the latter being "pure" command post exercises with no deployment in the field. A CPE is designed to put command structures in a real situation, requesting

the deployment of an EUCP Team and possibly key staff of operational assets together with command and communication staff and tools.

**Table top exercises or other type of discussion based exercises (TTE)** as deemed suitable to achieve the set objectives. A TTE is designed to put real crisis managers in a situation to use existing plans and procedures to take decisions according to a proposed scenario. Being a discussion mode exercise, it does not require any deployment but gathers the players in one single location under the guidance and control of experienced staff.

**In all types of the above exercises, at least two coordination levels should be exercised.**

The scenario of the exercises takes into account one, several or all of the following phases: alert and request of assistance, deployment, operational engagement, operational disengagement.

The scenario is related to any type of disaster that overwhelms the response capacity of the affected State. Pre-deployment is acceptable when realistic or when the objective of the exercise is more focused on operation and disengagement than on deployment. Natural and technological disasters (including CBRN events) are typically in the scope of Mechanism exercises, being at land or at sea.

It is mandatory that also the operational structure of the national civil protection authority of each exercise player takes part in the exercise as player.

In addition to the above categories, exercise players could also come from "other intervention support, which might be available from the competent services, such as specialised personnel and equipment to deal with a particular emergency, and resources which may be provided by non-governmental organisations and other relevant entities." [Article 4(4) of Council Decision 2007/779/EC, Euratom].

There are no specific restrictions in either the total number of exercise players or the number of the members of each team. Particular thought should be given to this issue in order to ensure that the number of exercise players allows proper play and testing of the exercise objectives.

Experts and teams from third countries, with the appropriate qualifications, can participate as exercise players (article 7 of Council Decision 2007/162/EC, Euratom). Personnel of International Organisations and agencies, in particular those that form part of the United Nations system, can also participate as exercise players when relevant (see article 9 of Council Decision 2007/162/EC, Euratom).

The exercise duration is a minimum of two days and two nights, except for TTE that can be limited to one full day.



A team has to be dedicated to control the exercise, i.e. providing injects, information and reactions to the players through the channels set up in accordance with the local, national and international rules. This control team is not allowed to guide directly the decision making process of the players by imposing actions and a timeline, which should remain indicative in the planning of the exercise. Besides provision of injects, the role of the control team is to ensure that the activities of the players stay within the limits permitted by the resources dedicated to the exercise.

Finally, concerning the geographical areas, there are no restrictions on the scenario is supposed to take place at. The scenario can evolve inside or outside the EU. Particular attention should be given to scenarios that take place in disaster prone areas. Anyway, the exercise location has to be in the territory of a Participating State of the Mechanism.

One of the main principles during the exercise, which should be taken into account during the planning phase, is: "let the player play".

### 3.3 Exchange of experts

The Exchange of Experts Programme was established to complement training and exercises. The exchange system allows for the secondment of civil protection experts to participating states. This exchange of experts provides participants with knowledge and experience on all aspects of emergency intervention and the different approaches of national systems.

Experts can either apply to go on a mission, or civil protection organisations can invite expert(s).

The duration of the exchange can vary in length from a few days to two weeks. Typically, the length is five working days.

The system allows for experts from a national systems to be temporarily loaned to the administration bodies of other participating countries, in order to gain direct experience and more in-depth knowledge of how the civil protection system works in a country other than their own.



The exchange can be organized in two ways:

- 1) Civil protection experts can visit one or more organisations in one or more countries. They can, for example, observe operational structures in the country and learn new techniques. In addition, they can also, for example, attend workshops or conferences or participate in training courses or simulation exercises.
- 2) Expert(s) from a different state are invited by an hosting organisation to, for example: observe operational structures in the country; learn new techniques; attend workshops or conferences; participate in training courses or simulation exercises. It's also possible to invite experts as trainers .

The Exchange of Experts Programme thereby makes a significant contribution to the ongoing development of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and builds capacity in the field of civil protection

Applications are open for a new cycle of the EU Exchange of Experts programme, running until October 2016.

In these last years the Exchange of experts Programme has allowed for the secondment of around 900 national civil protection experts to administrations in other Participating States. These exchanges covered all aspects of emergency interventions.

## 4. Response

Response means facilitating the cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major disasters inside and outside the EU. It deals with International collaboration and it embeds any action taken upon request for assistance under the Union Mechanism in the event of an imminent disaster, or during or after a disaster, to address its immediate adverse consequences.

The new actions in disaster Response are related to

- the Establishment of **Emergency Response Coordination Centre** (ERCC) with 24/7 operational capacity
- the establishment of a European Emergency Response Capacity consisting of a **voluntary pool**
- the co-financing of **buffer capacities** to address temporary shortcomings
- the seed-funding for **new response capacities** in very specific situations, where a potentially **significant gap** has been identified

## 4.1 The strategic Operational centre – The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)

ERCC is the operational hub of the Mechanism for facilitating a coherent European response during emergencies inside and outside Europe.

It was established on the basis of over 10 years of experience of coordinating European disaster response. In 2001, its predecessor, the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) was created as the main operational tool of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism

ERCC is the new "heart" of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. It replaces and upgrades the functions of the previous Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC). Beyond that it plays a key role as a coordination of the response of the participating countries in case of a crisis, thus planning a better joint European assistance in advance, i.e. to move away from an ad-hoc response to a pre-planned response.

When a disaster strikes, every minute counts. An immediate, coordinated and pre-planned response saves lives. The ERCC has been established exactly for this reason: to enable the EU and its Member States to respond to overwhelming natural and man-made disasters in a timely and efficient manner.

*The ERCC collects and analyses real-time information on disasters, monitors hazards, prepares plans for the deployment of experts, teams and equipment, works with Member States to map available assets and coordinate the EU's disaster response efforts.*



It monitors emergencies around the globe 24/7 and is able to deal with several simultaneous emergencies in different time zones

Thanks to its pre-positioned and self-sufficient civil protection modules, the ERCC teams are ready to intervene at short notice both within and outside the EU. They undertake specialised tasks such as search and rescue, aerial forest fire fighting, advanced medical posts and more.

The EU's disaster response coordination has evolved throughout the years, following a continuous increase in requests for assistance from all over the world. The ERCC therefore gives countries access to a one-stop-shop of civil protection means available amongst the all the participating states. It acts as a communication hub at headquarters level between participating states, the affected country and dispatched field experts.

Any country inside or outside the EU affected by a major disaster can make an appeal for assistance through the ERCC. In response, the ERCC matches offers of assistance to the needs of the disaster-stricken country.



Until now the EU civil protection response has been based purely on voluntary and ad-hoc offers of Member States' assistance. Such assistance can encompass in-kind assets (e.g. shelter, water tanks, blankets), trained expert teams (e.g. medical staff, search and rescue teams), or both. In the past, the ad-hoc character of the assistance sometimes made it difficult to predict and plan relief operations and has therefore led to avoidable delays. The ERCC, on the other side, manages a pre-identified pool of Member States' response assets - "civil protection intervention modules" - that can immediately be deployed to any large scale emergency.

The countries participating in the Mechanism can commit some of their core resources on standby in a voluntary pool – ready to be instantly set in motion as part of a coherent European response when the need arises. Better planning and the preparation of a set of typical disaster scenarios can further enhance the ERCC's capacity for rapid response.

To ensure highest quality standards, this emergency response capacity will include a certification process for the resources made available to the pool. The ERCC will initiate a process of identification of eventual gaps in the panoply of European assistance and of proposals on how these gaps can be covered, through financial support from the EU or other means.

By merging the current Crisis Room for humanitarian crises and the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) for civil protection, the ERCC fosters increased cooperation between the civil protection and humanitarian aid operations. The ERCC keeps direct links to the civil protection and humanitarian aid authorities in Member States which enables a smooth and real-time exchange of information.

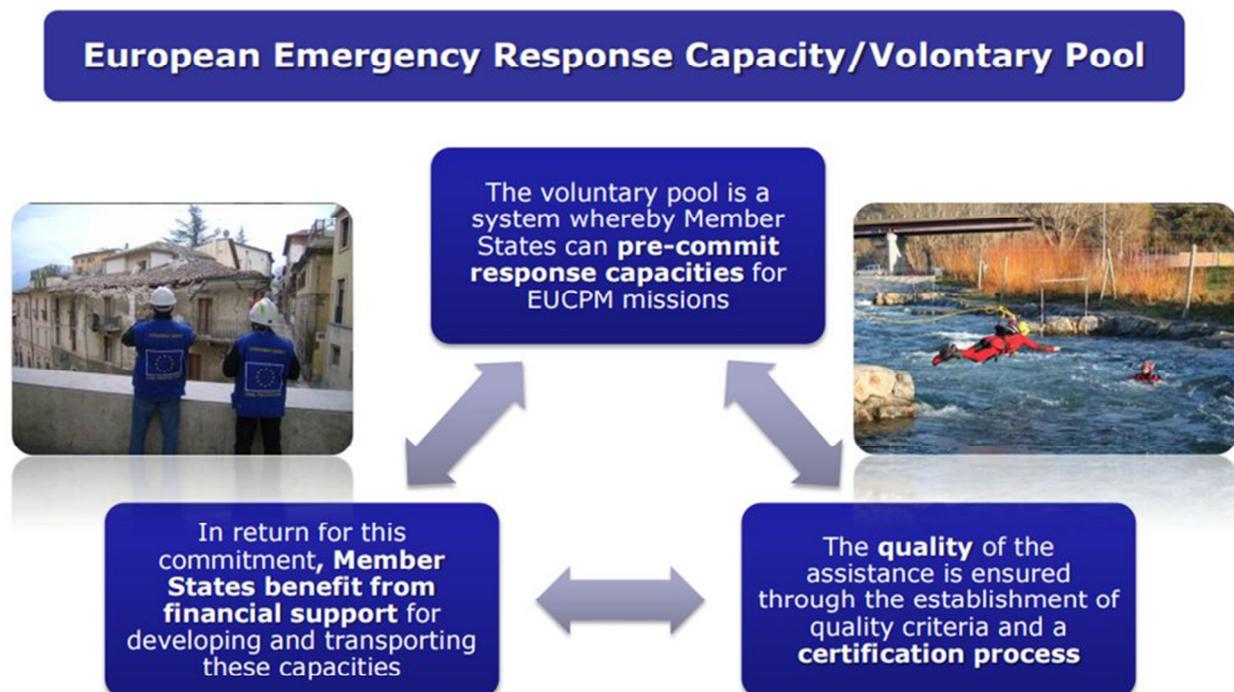
## 4.2 European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC) consisting of a *voluntary pool*

A European Emergency Response Capacity is established and the Member States shall on a voluntary basis identify and register the response capacities. The EERC consists of a voluntary pool of pre-committed response capacities of the Member States and include modules, other response capacities and experts.

On the basis of identified risks, the Commission defines the types and the number of key response capacities required for the EERC ("capacity goals") and defines quality requirements for the response capacities that Member States which are based on established international standards.

Response capacities that Member States make available for the EERC are available for response operations under the Union Mechanism following a request for assistance through the ERCC. When domestic emergencies, force majeure or, in exceptional cases, serious reasons prevent a Member State from making those response capacities available in a specific disaster, that Member State shall inform the Commission as soon as possible.

The Voluntary Pool' cycle is described below:



In the Response Actions can be also included the co-financing of *buffer capacities* to address temporary shortcomings (see below)

The EU can co-finance up to **40% of the standby costs** of

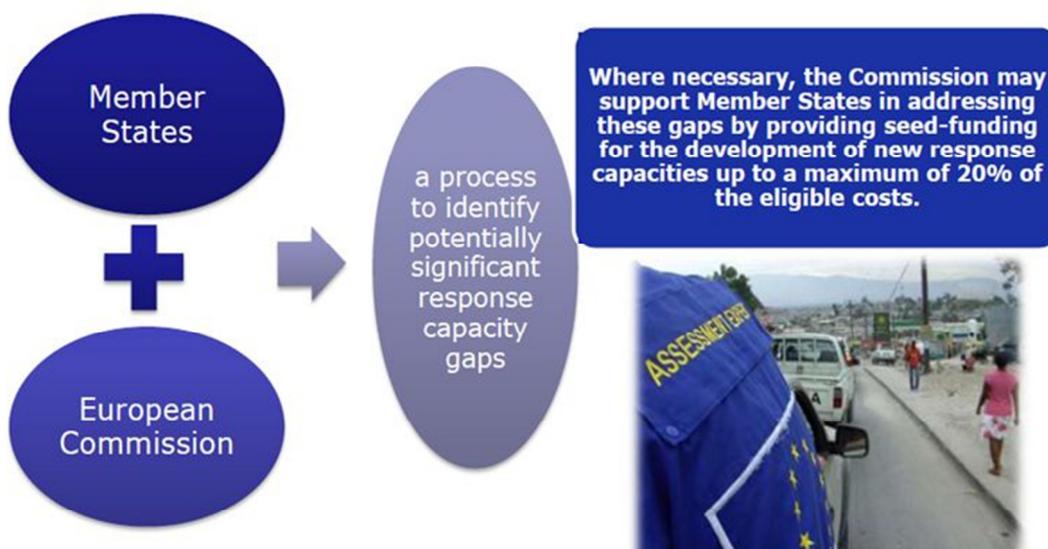
- framework contracts
- framework partnership agreements
- similar arrangements

to have additional response capacities available in order **to address temporary shortcomings in extraordinary disasters.**



Finally the Commission monitors the progress towards the capacity goals and identifies potentially significant response capacity gaps in the EERC.

Where potentially significant gaps have been identified, the Commission shall examine whether the necessary capacities are available to the Member States outside the EERC and it will encourage Member States to address, either individually or through a consortium of Member States cooperating together on common risks, any strategic capacity gaps that have been identified. The Commission may support Member States in those activities also through the seed-funding for new response capacities in very specific situations, where a potentially significant gap has been identified, following the process described below.



## 5. Best Practices

### FLOODS IN SERBIA BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 2014

#### Introduction

Due to continuous rainfall that started on 13 May 2014, extreme floods hit Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina, affecting and displacing thousands of people. It is estimated that over 3 million people in both BiH and Serbia were directly or indirectly affected by the floods, mudslides and landslides. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their livelihoods and were evacuated from their homes. Provision of clean water, health and sanitation was one of the main concerns. Across the region, key infrastructure, including bridges and roads as well as health and educational facilities, were damaged in many affected areas.

This practice is related to the UPCM activation in the field of preparedness and effective coordinated response to disasters.

It's a practice presented by Yves Dussart (DG ECHO Civil Protection Policy Unit) during the conference titled *"Conference on natural disasters and 'one health', are we prepared?" held in Brussels on 16 and 17th April 2015. The title of the intervention was "Member states collaboration, the role of the European Union through the EU civil protection mechanism".*

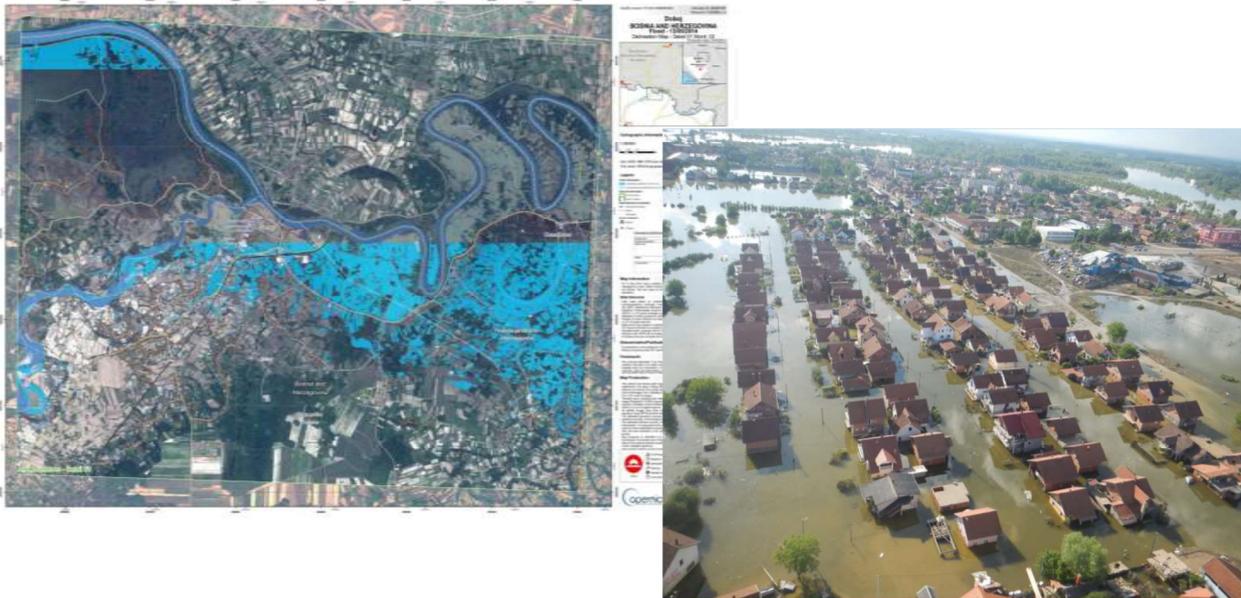
#### The Floods in Serbia: Situation overview

**Serbia** experienced the most catastrophic floods unprecedented in its history. A State of Emergency was declared for the whole Republic from 15 – 23 May.

- 40 municipalities and 1.6 million people were affected.

The Municipality of Obrenovac (near Belgrade) was mostly affected (**90% flooded**).

- 485 housing units have been completely destroyed by the floods and landslides. 16.200 houses were damaged.
- Infrastructure, Health Sector, Environment and Education sector heavy affected. Losses mount to € 1.5 billion.
- **60 casualties** have been reported during the emergency – 26 as a result of drowning.
- **31.879** people were **rescued** and **evacuated**, **180.000** were in **need of assistance**.



### **Request for assistance through the UCPM**

On **15 May** Serbia has requested assistance through the UCPM in form of High Capacity Water Pumping (HCP) modules.

- Due to worsening of the situation, on **16 May** 2014 a **second request** for HCP modules, flood rescue teams with boats and helicopters for rescue and evacuation operations of the affected people; chemicals for suppression of larvae and adult forms of mosquitoes,
- On **23 May**, a **third request** for assistance followed for Water Purification Teams.
- Assistance was provided by **9 Participating States** (22 teams, with 563 members):
  - Flood Rescue Teams
  - Helicopters
  - High Capacity Water Pumping
  - Water Purification Teams

### **The Floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Situation overview**

Continuous rainfall (4 months of rain fell in just three days) started on 13 May and led to exceptional flooding in many parts of **Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

- Over **3.000 landslides** were triggered, **landmines** were uncovered - boats or helicopters provided the only possible evacuation methods.
- **300.000** inhabitants were **directly affected**. More than **1 million** of people were hit by the flood **indirectly**.
- Roads, infrastructure houses and entire villages were swept away.
- In Posavina Canton, floods killed number of Poultry Cattle and other animals. **Serious epidemiological situation as dead animals still in the water.**

Needs boats and personal equipped with sanitary and hygienic items to pick up dead animals and move them to incinerators.



### **ERCC/ UCPM response for both countries**

**23 EU Member States** provided in-kind assistance, such as rescue boats, helicopters, high-capacity pumping modules and water purification units (in detail the Member States offering assistance have provided via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism: 2 helicopters, 22 high capacity pumping modules -12 to BiH and 10 to Serbia-, 111 pumps -85 to BiH and 26 to Serbia-, 39 rescue boats -25 to BiH and 14 to Serbia- and 15 water purification modules -14 to BiH and 1 to Serbia-).

In addition, 11 000 water purification tablets, 14 000 blankets and more than 1 000 tents have been channelled through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to the flood victims in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

All this equipment has been deployed with and operated by more than 800 relief workers from EU Member States who have been working on the ground in the two countries.

The teams deployed through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism directly rescued over 1700 people in BiH alone.

The European Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) has been in constant contact with the relevant authorities in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to match the incoming offers for assistance with needs on the ground.

EU Civil Protection Teams were deployed to Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina in order to assist the national authorities in their response to the wide scale flooding and to support the coordination of the incoming EU assistance.

This assistance has helped save lives, pump out water from flooded buildings, maintain electricity access, deliver supplies to affected areas and predict water flow evolution and assess the damage through satellite images. providing clean drinking water including water purification tablets and the repair of wells, food, hygiene and household kits, blankets and mattresses.

The European Commission co-financed the transportation of relief material and personnel costs to deliver aid to the affected areas.

In addition,

- More than **800 relief workers** with their equipment deployed through the UCPM.
- ERCC deployed **4 EUCP coordination and assessment teams** to support coordination on site. In total **26 experts** and **6 ERCC LO's**.
- **€ 430 000** has been requested by the Participating States of the Mechanism to co-finance transportation costs of Assistance. Over 40 grant requests were processed.
- **80 Satellite maps** of the flooded areas via the Copernicus Emergency Management Service were produced by the Commission to support both the affected countries and those providing assistance
- 4 experts deployed through UCPM for **Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)** .

On top of the in-kind assistance provided by the EU Member States via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the EU also released **€ 3 million in humanitarian aid** to address the most immediate needs and to help the most vulnerable population in the two affected countries.

The funding, channeled through the Red Cross/Red Crescent and other partner organisations on the ground, fills some of the most critical gaps and immediate needs in the two countries.

Based on the findings of the needs assessments, the € 3 million funding is used mainly for the provision of clean drinking water including water purification tablets and repair of wells, provision of food, hygiene and household kits, blankets and mattresses. It also ensures access to assistance for all vulnerable groups and minorities. It is estimated that the funding provided humanitarian assistance to some half a million people.



As the situation evolved, the EU mobilized to support the recovery and reconstruction of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. For this purpose €62 million was allocated by the European Commission to respond to short to medium term needs in the affected areas.

This funding was re-allocated from previous programmes under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The money included support for public infrastructure such as schools and social care services as well as basic equipment for enterprises and farms to restart their activities.

The EU is committed to continue its support also in the medium to long term with new IPA money that are allocated for the period 2014-2020 in order to address reconstruction needs and improve river and flood risk management.

The European Commission is working with the affected countries and in close coordination with the International Financing Institutions (IFIs) to assess the needs.

The exact scope will have to be developed on the basis of complete needs assessments. The followings actions are examples of what further EU support could cover:

- grants, together with IFIs loans, to reconstruct infrastructure: priority will be given to transport infrastructure, public buildings, schools, social services, etc.;
- reconstruction of damaged coal mines and power plants which are crucial for energy supply;
- grants to NGOs, international organisations and other relevant partners for the provision of services, supplies, and works to support reconstruction and relief efforts;
- technical assistance for the assessment of damages, recovery needs and project preparation;
- technical assistance to develop flood risk maps, improve flood risk management and civil protection mechanisms.

## 6. Glossary

**Disaster:** any situation which has or may have a severe impact on people, the environment, or property, including cultural heritage;

**Response:** any action taken upon request for assistance under the Union Mechanism in the event of an imminent disaster, or during or after a disaster, to address its immediate adverse consequences;

**Preparedness:** a state of readiness and capability of human and material means, structures, communities and organisations enabling them to ensure an effective rapid response to a disaster, obtained as a result of action taken in advance;

**Prevention:** any action aimed at reducing risks or mitigating adverse consequences of a disaster for people, the environment and property, including cultural heritage;

**Early warning:** the timely and effective provision of information that allows action to be taken to avoid or reduce risks and the adverse impacts of a disaster, and to facilitate preparedness for an effective response;

**Module:** a self-sufficient and autonomous predefined task- and needs-driven arrangement of Member States' capabilities or a mobile operational team of the Member States, representing a combination of human and material means that can be described in terms of its capacity for intervention or by the task(s) it is able to undertake;

**Risk assessment:** the overall cross-sectoral process of risk identification, risk analysis, and risk evaluation undertaken at national or appropriate sub-national level;

**Risk management capability:** the ability of a Member State or its regions to reduce, adapt to or mitigate risks (impacts and likelihood of a disaster), identified in its risk assessments to levels that are acceptable in that Member State. Risk management capability is assessed in terms of the technical, financial and administrative capacity to carry out adequate:

- (a) risk assessments;
- (b) risk management planning for prevention and preparedness; and
- (c) risk prevention and preparedness measures;

**Host nation support:** any action undertaken in the preparedness and response phases by the country receiving or sending assistance, or by the Commission, to remove foreseeable obstacles to international assistance offered through the Union Mechanism. It includes support from Member States to facilitate the transiting of this assistance through their territory;

**Response capacity:** means assistance that may be provided through the Union Mechanism upon request;

**Logistical support:** the essential equipment or services required for expert teams referred to in Article 17(1) to perform their tasks, inter alia communication, temporary accommodation, food or in-country transport.

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