European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC)

What is it?

The European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) is a set of operational tools designed to fill gaps in the humanitarian response to sudden-onset natural hazards and human-induced disasters. This resource aims to help the Commission support partners and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance where the humanitarian community struggles with the immediate response. It also helps cover immediate needs of the affected population.

Why is this important?

Today, humanitarian needs are at an all-time high. According to the UN, in 2023, 339 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection. This is a significant increase from the 274 million people in need in 2022, which was already the highest figure in decades.

On top of an already challenging humanitarian situation worldwide, COVID-19 has severely affected vulnerable communities, putting a strain on food security, education and health care, among other areas.

As needs soar, humanitarian actors are called to step up to the challenge. They must adapt to fast-changing scenarios where even the shortest delay in the field response might cost lives and further deteriorate the situation.

Through the EHRC, the EU aims to respond to sudden humanitarian disasters where swift assistance is vital and face new developments in protracted crises.

The EHRC initiative allows the EU to intervene proactively, drawing from its resources. This is done through targeted actions involving EU partners already active in the field and participating EU countries.

How are we helping?

To ensure a swift humanitarian response to a sudden onset disaster and/or worsening of an existing crisis, the EHRC tools are mobilised thanks to the coordination of the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC).

Based on a prior evaluation and assessment, the ERCC leads the response and decides where and how the tools should be used.

In addition, following a “Team Europe” approach, the EHRC will offer further opportunities for EU countries to work together to respond to emergencies.
The 3 pillars of the EHRC complementing the existing tools for the EU humanitarian response are:

**Common logistics services**
The common logistics services include:
- the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge operations
- a greater variety of transport options such as international and in-country transportation solutions, including EU Humanitarian Aid Flight
- common warehousing services
- other logistics options.
The strengthening of these logistics services aims to fill critical gaps by facilitating humanitarian aid delivery and reinforce humanitarian or emergency responses.

**Pre-positioned stockpiles**
The stockpiles hold humanitarian aid supplies such as emergency kits (shelter, wash and hygiene kits) and other good to fulfil urgent needs in case of an emergency. Their regional pre-positioning helps deliver the items as quickly as possible, allowing them to be deployed to the affected areas as soon as there is a need.
The EU offers stockpiled goods managed by the EHRC to its humanitarian partners free of charge and which can be complemented with other supplies from participating EU countries.
The stockpiles are hosted in 4 locations worldwide: Brindisi, Kuala Lumpur, Dubai, and Panama.

**Deployment of expertise**
The EU can also support partners deploying different expertise in the logistics and health sectors.
Logistics experts are based in Panama, Bangkok, and Nairobi. Specific additional expertise can be deployed in case of particular needs.
For health expertise, the EU counts on the partnership with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) to deploy its own and Member states’ public health expertise in humanitarian contexts.

**Operations**
Since its inception, the EHRC has responded to 12 humanitarian crises worldwide.
For Ukraine, since April 2022, the EHRC has provided common logistics and transportation services to over 60 humanitarian partners. It carried out over 940 transport operations and facilitated the delivery of over 13,000 tonnes to “hard to reach” destinations.
The assistance also included opening 4 warehouses in Vinnitsya, Dnipro, Kharkiv and Mykolayev, inclusive of cold chain and International supply chain services.
For Syria, the EHRC has mobilised its EU Humanitarian Air Bridge and Stockpiles capacities to deliver emergency supplies to the people affected by the earthquakes of February 2023.
The material delivered consists of 225 tonnes of stock items to both non-government controlled areas and government-controlled areas in Northwest Syria. It includes winterised tents, heaters, blankets, water, sanitation, and hygiene kits and kitchen sets.
Since the beginning of 2022, the EU has organised 40 Humanitarian Air Bridge operations worldwide in aid of Afghanistan, Madagascar, Moldova, Somalia, Burkina Faso, and Syria.
**Facts & figures**

The EHRC is a set of operational tools designed to fill gaps in the humanitarian response. It consists of **3 pillars**:

- pre-positioned stockpiles with humanitarian aid supplies
- common logistics services
- provision of logistical and public health expertise

**4 regional stockpiles.**

**40 Humanitarian Air Bridge operations** since 2022.

Activations to respond to **12 crises** worldwide since 2022.