



European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

European Civil Protection Pool

What is it?

The European Commission upgraded the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and created rescEU to protect citizens from disasters and manage emerging risks. It is fully financed by the EU.

rescEU has established a new European reserve of resources (the 'rescEU reserve'). It includes a fleet of firefighting planes and helicopters, medical evacuation planes, and a stockpile of medical items and field hospitals that can respond to health emergencies.

The rescEU reserve also includes mobile shelters for those displaced. Furthermore, the EU is also developing a reserve to respond to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents.

Why is this important?

The EU plays a key role in coordinating the response to disasters in Europe and beyond. Disasters have affected every region of Europe in recent years, causing hundreds of casualties and billions in damage to infrastructure and the environment.

Epidemics, flash floods, storms, forest fires, earthquakes, and human-induced disasters continuously put pressure on the countries' response capabilities. Additionally, security concerns have become more complex and climate change is expected to worsen the impact of disasters in the future.

Conflict on the European continent, extreme weather conditions and emerging threats, such as COVID-19, have overwhelmed the ability of Member States to help each other, especially when several countries simultaneously face the same type of crisis.

In such cases, when Member States require a boost to provide a strong response to crises, the EU provides an extra layer of protection. Through the rescEU reserve, the EU ensures a faster and more comprehensive response.

How are we helping?

When the scale of an emergency overwhelms the possibilities of a country to respond on its own, it can request assistance via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

Once activated, the EU channels offers of assistance made available by its Member States and 8 participating states through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre.

To guarantee an effective response to disasters, the rescEU reserve was established in 2019 as an additional layer of protection.

War in Ukraine

Following the Russian aggression on Ukraine and related medical needs for Ukrainians inside the country and the whole region, the EU has deployed assistance from its rescEU medical stockpiles hosted in various locations across the EU.

The rescEU deliveries include duly needed medical items such as ventilators, infusion pumps, patient monitors, masks and gowns, ultrasound devices and oxygen concentrators. This assistance comes on top of aid offered by European countries and is coordinated via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

This is the largest EU civil protection operation since the creation of the Mechanism in 2001.

Medical emergencies

The EU has established a medical reserve to respond more quickly to medical needs caused by health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the war in Ukraine.

The reserve enables the swift delivery of medical equipment such as ventilators and personal protective equipment. The stockpile is hosted in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, and The Netherlands

More than 3 million protective masks, ventilators, and other equipment from the strategic rescEU distribution centres were distributed to countries that need them most. More medical and personal protective equipment is constantly bought to refill the rescEU reserve.

In addition, a plane positioned in Norway to transport or evacuate high-infectious disease patients has joined the reserve.

Forest fires

To strengthen the EU response to forest fires in 2022, the Commission finances the stand-by availability of a rescEU firefighting fleet.

For this year, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Sweden put together 12 firefighting planes and 1 helicopter at the disposal of other Member States in case of an emergency.

The Commission decides jointly with these Member States on deploying these resources. Additional firefighting aircraft will join the rescEU fleet over time.

Chemical, biological, radio-nuclear incidents and accidents

The Commission is currently developing strategic reserves to respond to chemical, biological, and radio-nuclear emergencies.

The reserve will comprise expert teams, equipment, and devices to detect, decontaminate affected people or infrastructure. It will also ensure availability of medical countermeasures such as medicines, vaccines, and therapeutics.

When there is a high risk of an attack ahead of public events, Member States can also request to mobilise material from the reserve.

Emergency shelter

Access to emergency shelter helps people in an emergency to have a safe and secure place to reside. This is why the Commission is extending its reserve to include temporary shelters to rapidly host thousands of people.

The shelters will be complemented with additional facilities (infirmaries, spaces to prepare and distribute food and drinks, and communal spaces) and non-food items (bedding items, hygiene kits, heating and cooling devices, and lighting and power generators).

Some of these items have already been procured and are being deployed to address the needs stemming from the war on Ukraine.

Facts & figures

rescEU is an **extra layer of citizen protection in Europe**, integrated into the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

rescEU **strengthens European preparedness** for disasters.

It **boosts capacities to respond to crises** in Europe, such as forest fires, medical emergencies, chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents and ensures availability of mobile shelters, emergency transportation and, locally, electricity supplies.

To **strengthen the EU response to health emergencies**, medical stockpiles in 9 EU Member States allow for a **quicker reaction to health crises**.

rescEU is **100% EU-financed**, including costs for purchase, operation and maintenance.