European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

European Civil Protection Pool

What is it?
The EU established the European Civil Protection Pool to advance European cooperation in civil protection. It aims to enable a faster, better-coordinated, and more effective European response to human-induced disasters and natural hazards.

The Pool brings together resources from 25 Member States and participating states, ready for deployment to a disaster zone at short notice. These resources can be rescue or medical teams, experts, specialised equipment, or transportation.

Why is this important?
Whenever a disaster strikes, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism may receive a request for assistance. That is when emergency response teams, technical equipment, and other resources must be deployed as soon as possible to support the response efforts.

Being well prepared to intervene immediately in a disaster is crucial in saving lives and minimising damage. The European Civil Protection Pool allows for better-organised, more predictable and coherent EU operations.

To this end, the European Commission has set up a certification and registration process. It ensures that capacities (e.g., emergency response teams and equipment) provided by EU Member States and participating states meet high operational standards.

Certification includes the participation of emergency teams in disaster simulation exercises so that their performance can be observed and assessed by a certifying team composed of peers and EU staff. The aim is to verify they properly operate during international deployments.

The European Commission oversees and funds the EU certification process with the support of national experts.

How are we helping?
As of January 2023, 25 Member States and participating states have a valid offer for a total of 124 specialised response capacities to the Pool.

Out of these, 86 are certified and can be deployed for response operations in and outside the EU following a request for assistance via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

The European Commission provides financial support to capacities that are part of the Pool when they are deployed for response operations. They can range from mountain rescue teams to the availability of mobile laboratories, medical air evacuation, water purification equipment, etc.

The Commission covers 75% of the transport and operational costs for deployments inside or outside Europe.
In addition, financial support is available for the upgrade or repair of response capacities committed to the Pool to strengthen disaster preparedness.

EU co-financing in the form of “adaptation grants” can be granted for already existing capacities within one Member State or participating state to ensure readiness to be internationally deployed.

Recent response operations using resources from the European Civil Protection Pool include:

**Pakistan floods (2022)**

Heavy monsoon rainfall and floods have been affecting Pakistan since June 2022. On 29 August, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was activated following a request for assistance from the Pakistani authorities.

A French water purification module started operation on 16 October in Dadu, in Sindh province. The module produced a total of 629,000 litres of clean water. The team concluded their mission and returned on 5 November.

In parallel, a Belgian water purification module arrived in Karachi on 25 October and produced more than 100,000 litres of clean water in 2 sites: Bhuria (Sindh province) and Kot Diji.

The team completed their mission and returned on 4 November, but all the equipment was donated and will continue running for at least six months.

**Wildfires in Portugal and Albania (2022)**

On 4 June 2022, a wildfire broke out on the uninhabited island of Sazan, off the coast of Vlora Municipality, Albania.

Albania activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Greece responded by deploying 1 firefighting airplane that arrived on Sazan Island on the morning of 7 June. It made a total of 23 drops.

In July, Greece deployed a Canadair to combat forest fire in Portugal.

**Tropical cyclone Batsirai in Madagascar (2022)**

Tropical category 3 cyclone Batsirai hit Madagascar’s south-eastern coast on 5 February with winds over 160 km/h. Another tropical storm, Dumako, made landfall in northern Madagascar on 15 February.

France deployed a water purification module and a remotely piloted aerial system. Both modules arrived in Madagascar on 9 February and were deployed to Mananjary.

Germany deployed a water purification module, which arrived in Madagascar on 9 February.

Poland deployed an emergency medical team of 15 doctors, nurses and paramedics. The module was deployed to Nosy Varica.

**Previous activations**

**Haiti earthquake and tropical storm Grace in 2021**

In August 2021, a 7.2-magnitude earthquake hit south-western Haiti, followed by tropical storm Grace which struck the country just a few days after.

Causing a shortage of emergency medical staff, clean water and housing, EU Civil Protection Teams were immediately deployed from Europe to Port-au-Prince.

Sweden contributed to these teams with 5 previously certified members who provided technical assistance and support. Luxembourg contributed with 2 certified members who ensured emergency communication, and Norway sent certified doctors and health experts – altogether mobilised from the EU Civil Protection Pool.

This support was provided in addition to €3 million in humanitarian funding to address urgent needs as well as 175 tonnes of humanitarian cargo delivered by 3 EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flights.
Greece wildfires and floods in Belgium in summer 2021
Following the severe forest fires in Greece, a French team of ground forest firefighting team was deployed, previously certified and part of the EU Civil Protection Pool. They fought fires alongside firefighters from 10 other EU countries.
When Belgium was affected by floods in July 2021, a certified French team of flood rescue experts arrived with boats to support national rescuers.

Lebanon explosions in 2020
Following the blasts in Beirut, Lebanon, and ensuing activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the Emergency Response Coordination Centre coordinated the deployment of several capacities from the European Civil Protection Pool.
Urban search and rescue teams from Czechia, France, Germany, Poland and the Netherlands, as well as a Technical Assistance Support team from Finland.
The overall operation also allowed for the deployment of other medical staff and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear experts, as well as for the provision of urgently needed medical equipment and supplies.

COVID-19 pandemic in 2020
In response to the coronavirus pandemic, various emergency medical teams that are part of the Pool were deployed.
In April, 2 Emergency Medical Teams from Norway and Romania were deployed to northern Italy to help Italian medical staff battling the pandemic.
The operation also allowed for the provision of medical equipment and supplies. In June, an Italian Emergency Medical Team was deployed to Armenia following an activation of the Mechanism.

Facts & figures
The European Civil Protection Pool is a reserve of emergency response teams and equipment (known as “capacities”).
Capacities are committed by European states to respond to disasters inside and outside the EU.
The Pool was established in 2013.
To date, 25 European countries contribute more than 100 resources to the Pool.
The Pool allows for a more predictable, pre-planned and quality-checked European response.
The European Medical Corps gathers all health-related response capacities that are committed to the Pool.