



Citizens and cities facing new hazards and threats

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**Session 9:
Natural hazards and climate change**

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Analysis of wildfire response governance in Europe

The research is a part of DG ECHO project

“Network of European Hubs for Civil Protection and Crisis Management”

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/502782e5-e5b1-11ea-ad25-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

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Objective

- To determine the status regarding the use of the **Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)** mechanism, and to find out potential challenging points and improvements. The methodology consisted of desktop research and interviews with experts who are experienced in acting either as incoming or hosting organisations during the activation of the UCPM.
- The research was focused on identifying the level of mutual understanding and interoperability during joint response operations.

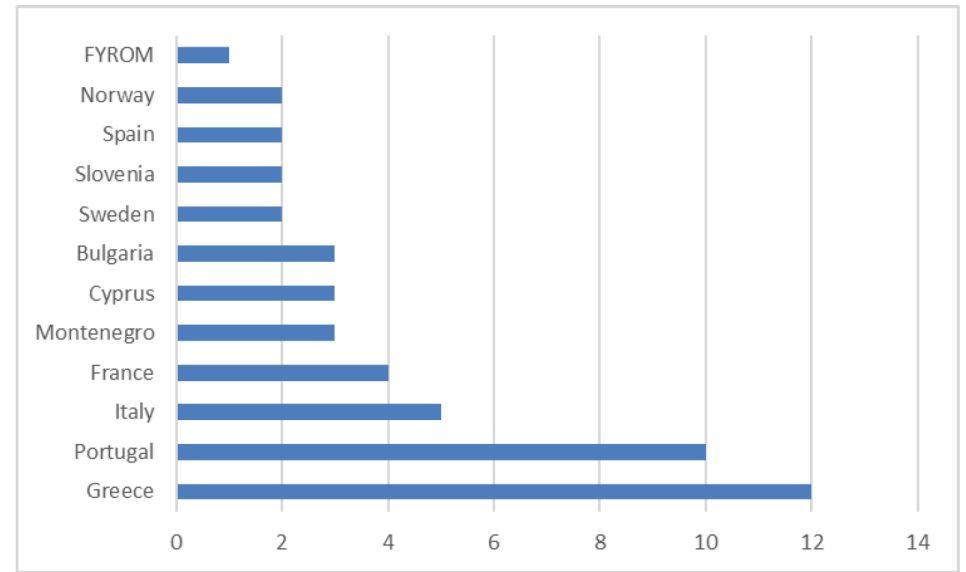


UCPM - Union Civil Protection Mechanism

*“Since 2001, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated more than **330 times** to respond to emergencies. The Mechanism pools response capacities from **all EU Member States, 6 Participating States and the UK** during the transition period.*

*The Mechanism can be **deployed inside the EU and around the world.***

*Joint disaster **prevention and preparedness** actions. In 2019, the EU stepped up its disaster prevention and preparedness and developed a **rescEU reserve capacity** to complement national capacities.”*



Number of UCPM activations for fire (2006-2016)

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/mechanism_en last accessed 26 Nov 2020



The main topics reviewed during the research were the following:

- forms of actual cooperation during big wildfire events;
- types of firefighting modules deployed in case of UCPM activation;
- efficiency of logistics on site during deployment;
- further understanding of the gaps concerning operational needs.



We focused on a number of wildfires in Europe (and worldwide), which roughly satisfied the following criteria:

- very large and long-lasting wildfires including mega-fires, which are fires with a very high impact on humans, the economy and the environment;
- wildfires involving international assistance, particularly EU assistance through the emergency response hub of the UCPM mechanism – the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC);
- representative geographic distribution across the EU (mainly south of the EU, but also including missions to northern parts of EU, which recently experienced unusual fire activity);
- maximum representation of the range of natural landscapes and forest types (Mediterranean, mountainous, boreal, alpine etc.) and a range of experience levels in fighting wildfires (wildfire-prone versus non-wildfire prone areas);
- focus on the most recent cases to ensure that the latest UCPM policies were used;
- representation of both aerial and ground firefighting modules.



The methodology

- A comprehensive knowledge acquisition campaign held to analyse experts' reflections on wildfire response operations held in the UCPM context in Sweden, Greece, Portugal, Cyprus, Chile, Bolivia and Croatia.
- The experts were approached through personal and professional contacts and the interviews were organised in a semi-structured way, supported by the questionnaire developed by the consortium and based on the information gathered during state of play analysis.



Content of the questionnaire

Main topics:

- Logistics for response capacities (Deployment and maintenance of equipment, Provision of facilities, Governance of logistics activities)
- Interoperability (Technical interoperability, Interoperability from the organisational perspective)
- Safety measures (Safety of standards, level of safety)



Recommendations - logistics

- UCPM activations' procedures formalized in context of rescEU (e.g. centralized monitoring system)
- Improvement of equipment's transportation
- Facilitation of cross-border deployment
- Mobilization should focus to expected large fires in the future



Recommendations - interoperability

- Highlighting the role of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
- Failures in compatibility and interoperability of firefighting equipment and resources (common database of shared equipment)
- Organizational interoperability to be a priority
- European Standard Operating Procedures for the deployed modules
- Joint training and operational procedures
- Fire fighting experts exchange program
- Exploit further the existing infrastructure (EFFIS, COPERNICUS, GWIS, ARISTOTLE ...)



Recommendations – safety measures

- Safety issues were managed properly
- Low-risk tasks assigned to foreign modules (due to the lack of common SOPs and training)
- Improved telecommunication components support safety of the personnel
- Ensure enhanced quality of equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) to reinforce safety

