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From: Presidency
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

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Subject: Report from the Estonian Presidency on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection

1. Delegations will find attached a Presidency Report on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection.
2. COREPER is advised to invite the Council to take note of the report.

**REPORT FROM THE ESTONIAN PRESIDENCY ON THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AT
EU LEVEL IN THE FIELD OF CIVIL PROTECTION**

This report outlines the main achievements of the EU in the field of civil protection during the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Discussions in the Working Party on Civil Protection (PROCIV) focused on how to improve public risk awareness and preparedness for disasters, which is an essential part of an effective risk management strategy and one of the specific objectives of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism Decision ('the UCPM Decision')¹.

Following the adoption by the Commission of an interim evaluation report on the UCPM, PROCIV has started to reflect on the future framework of the Mechanism. On 23 November the Commission adopted a proposal to amend the UCPM Decision².

In parallel, the Youth Working Party has examined the Commission proposal for a Regulation on the European Solidarity Corps³, the aim of which is to offer opportunities for young people to engage in solidarity activities. Such activities may include prevention of and preparedness for disasters. A general approach was agreed by the Council on 20 November⁴.

In order to promote cooperation between Member States and stakeholders and exchange good practice in fire safety and experience from fire accidents, in October the Commission organised the first meeting of the Fire Information Exchange Platform, which focuses on fire safety in buildings.

Civil protection was involved in the response to natural and man-made disasters around the globe, with a number of activations of the UCPM, both inside and outside the EU.

¹ Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ 347 of 20.12.2013, p. 924.

² 14884/17, COM(2017) 772.

³ 9845/17.

⁴ 14601/17.

1. Raising risk awareness and self-resilience

Increasing public awareness and preparedness for disasters is one of the specific objectives of the UCPM (Article 3(d) of the UCPM Decision).

The main task of civil protection, which is the protection of our citizens, starts at the individual level – do we, as individuals, have sufficient awareness and knowledge of disaster risks and self-resilience? Public awareness of the risks and sufficient knowledge about how to prepare for and act in crisis situations is key to reducing negative consequences of disasters for the public.

We need to focus on raising public disaster risk awareness and self-resilience because there are three alarming trends which we need to address:

- 1) The public is facing new threats such as cyber threats, climate change, etc.
- 2) Disasters are more likely to affect the public as they occur more often⁵
- 3) People are becoming more vulnerable as a result of urbanisation, dependence on vital services and the interdependence of those services, etc.

Raising public awareness is a key focus across various platforms including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the work done by the OECD⁶.

A Presidency workshop on 'Raising Public Risk Awareness and Self-Resilience' took place from 4 to 5 July 2017 in Tallinn. The Presidency's aim was to build bridges between the work done by Member States, the Commission, the OECD and the United Nations within the Sendai Framework.

⁵ <http://www.emdat.be/>.

⁶ EU co-financed review on risk communication policies.

The UCPM Decision (Article 5(1)(a)) stipulates that the Commission is to take action to improve the knowledge base on disaster risks and facilitate the sharing of knowledge, best practices and information, including among Member States that share common risks. The Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (DRMKC) was launched on 30 September 2015. The DRMKC is supported and coordinated by a number of Commission services in partnership with a network of Member States.

Raising public risk awareness and preparedness is the responsibility of the Member States. The key issues which were tackled at the workshop in Tallinn were how to improve potential synergies between activities carried out by Member States and what could be done at EU level to help Member States ensure better awareness-raising.

*Raising public risk awareness and preparedness – sharing best practices*⁷

The Presidency commends the work done by the Commission and the DRMKC. The DRMKC was launched to help enhance EU and Member State resilience to disasters and their capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies through a strengthened interface between science and policy. The Presidency also commends the fact that many awareness-raising projects, including EU-funded projects,⁸ have been carried out. However, discussions underlined the need for better exchange of good practice, and sharing of information on completed projects. In this regard, the Presidency wishes to make the following observations and recommendations:

- There is a need for better information exchange to ensure that the best practices and innovative solutions used in different Member States are collected and learned from. A wide range of good practices and innovative solutions are used in the Member States, but there is not much exchange of information on the methods used in different Member States.

⁷ Presidency discussion paper on raising public risk awareness and preparedness – sharing best practices: 11838/17.

⁸ KnowRISK, YAPS, EVANDE, ADAPT, POP-ALERT, Kulturisk, etc.

- Since the risks differ from Member State to Member State, the messages given to the public on preparedness at personal and household level also differ. Because of cultural and social differences, it is not recommended that uniform risk awareness or self-resilience messages be developed at EU level. However, where risks are shared by several Member States, it could be worth exploring the added value of common messages.
- The exchange of information about existing projects and planned activities needs to be improved. The Presidency recommends that the Commission should explore how to make better use of the existing tools and platforms, such as the DRMKC. The Commission, in cooperation with Member States, should also consider how to encourage beneficiaries to publish the main results of every project at EU level. That would ensure that all useful results from the various EU-level projects are available to the Commission and the Member States.
- There is a need for better sharing of information on completed projects. The Presidency recommends that the Commission has a key role to play in collecting, organising and distributing the results of EU-funded projects and, if possible, organising dedicated workshops to share information on the results of the finished projects. The Presidency also recommends that the upcoming Civil Protection Forum in 2018 should include a dedicated part focusing on innovative solutions and best practices in the field of disaster risk awareness and communication, with, for example, a comparative presentation of various infographics.

Measuring the progress made in increasing public awareness and preparedness for disasters⁹

The effectiveness of the actions contributing to public risk awareness and preparedness should be evaluated both in Member States and at EU level. The only existing tool at the European level that provides information about opinions and trends among EU citizens on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism is the Eurobarometer survey on Civil Protection. It is important to use this tool, but the Presidency encourages the Commission, in cooperation with Member States, to explore ways of improving the survey questions.

⁹ Presidency discussion paper on measuring the progress made in increasing public awareness and preparedness for disasters: [12549/17](#).

2. Interim evaluation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism

In accordance with Article 34(2) (a) of the UCPM Decision, on 30 August 2017 the Commission submitted to the Council and to the European Parliament an interim evaluation report on the implementation of the Mechanism in the period 2014-2016. The report is a result of extensive consultations carried out by the Commission and its external contractor. It also takes into account the special report of the European Court of Auditors on the UCPM¹⁰, and the Commission's report on progress made and gaps remaining in the Voluntary Pool¹¹. The Commission concluded that 'the Mechanism is on a solid footing to achieve the specific and general objectives of the Decision. For the period 2014-2016 under evaluation, the performance of the UCPM has showed encouraging results in each of the three pillars (prevention/preparedness/response) and overall is viewed positively by the Participating States and the main stakeholders. At the same time, the evaluation also highlighted a number of challenges that, if addressed promptly, could increase even further the impact of UCPM supported action.'

The report includes the following recommendations for further application of the Mechanism:

- **prevention:** increase the focus of the annual prevention (and preparedness) projects financed by UCPM; better articulate the linkages between the UCPM prevention (and preparedness) projects and broader EU programmes; strengthen the link between prevention and preparedness/response activities;
- **preparedness:** revise the capacity goals for the Voluntary Pool with an evidence-based approach; re-assess the system of incentives for pooling assets in the Voluntary Pool based on lessons learned and other knowledge emerging from operations; develop a more need-based, efficient approach for the training and exercise programmes; expand the end-user side of trans-national early warning systems platforms, such as EFFIS¹² and EFAS¹³;

¹⁰ Special report No 33/2016, January 2017.

¹¹ 6448/17, COM(2017) 78.

¹² European Forest Fire Information System.

¹³ European Flood Awareness System.

- **response:** promote consistent collection of quantitative data and produce systematic analysis of response missions to improve future performance; consider the pre-deployment of a small UCPM team ahead of the formal UCPM activation when facing imminent disasters; further simplify the administrative and financial procedures for engaging response capacities under the UCPM; ensure the best match between operational needs and experts deployed in the EU CP Teams;
- **cross-cutting recommendations:** a continuous feedback loop between lessons learned and the implementation of activities; ensure a good match between peer reviewers and the needs of reviewed countries; prevention and preparedness ('advisory') missions should build on a well-formulated, result-oriented approach; further increase the coherence between the UCPM and the neighbourhood policy instruments.

The report was discussed in PROCIV and among Directors-General for Civil Protection at their October meeting in Tallinn. Member States largely supported its main findings in the areas of prevention, preparedness, response and cross-cutting issues. A number of delegations called for a simplification of administrative and financial procedures for the Participating States. There were also calls for an improved evaluation methodology to assess the functioning of the Mechanism, provided it would not create any additional burden for Participating States.

3. **Proposal for a Decision amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism**

On 23 November the Commission adopted a legislative proposal amending the UCPM Decision. The proposal is accompanied by a policy statement set out in the Communication on Strengthening EU Disaster Management: rescEU Solidarity with Responsibility¹⁴.

The proposal will be presented in PROCIV in December.

¹⁴ 14883/17, COM(2017) 773.

4. Cooperation between civil protection and humanitarian actors in emergencies outside the EU

In September PROCIV held a joint session with members of the COHAFA Working Party in order to take stock of the progress regarding cooperation between civil protection and humanitarian aid, two years after the list of actions was jointly agreed by both working parties under the Luxembourg Presidency¹⁵.

The results of the survey carried out by the Presidency in July¹⁶ and the subsequent discussion in the Working Party proved that the actions have been widely implemented by Member States and that Member States are committed to continuing their work in the months to come.

5. Management of the consequences of terrorist attacks

Following deliberations on the management of the consequences of terrorist attacks under the Netherlands, Slovak and Maltese Presidencies, work has continued to deliver on the actions identified.

Within the framework of the Security Union and based on the outcome of the 36th meeting of the Directors-General for Civil Protection, the Commission organised a second technical workshop on cooperation between first responders at the disaster scene in response to terrorist attacks (Brussels, 9-10 October 2017).

The workshop provided the opportunity to discuss lessons learned from recent terrorist attacks across Europe, take stock of common challenges, exchange best practices and explore how to improve EU cooperation in this area. The focus of the workshop was on practical measures to address gaps in inter-sectoral cooperation. With more than 90 participants from different sectors, the workshop proved to be a useful interdisciplinary platform for discussion. DG ECHO will be following up on the results in close cooperation with DG HOME and DG SANTE.

¹⁵ 14896/15.

¹⁶ 14648/17.

6. Enhancing preparedness against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) security risks

On 18 October 2017 the Commission adopted the 'Eleventh progress report towards an effective and genuine Security Union'¹⁷, accompanied by documents including an Action Plan on enhancing preparedness against CBRN security risks.¹⁸ This Action Plan aims to increase European cooperation to strengthen CBRN security, with a focus on preventing, preparing for and responding to CBRN threats and terrorist attacks. However, many of the proposed actions pursue an all-hazard approach, and should contribute to improving preparedness for any large-scale CBRN incidents unrelated to terrorism.

The proposed actions will be supported by funding from existing instruments, including the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. The document includes civil protection-related actions:

- strengthening training and exercises for first responders, including civil protection; and
- strengthening the European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC), including the EU Medical Corps, *inter alia* by encouraging Member States to continue committing new CBRN capacities and supporting them in the process of registering and certifying CBRN modules and other capacities in the EERC.

The Terrorism Working Party has led the follow-up work in the Council.

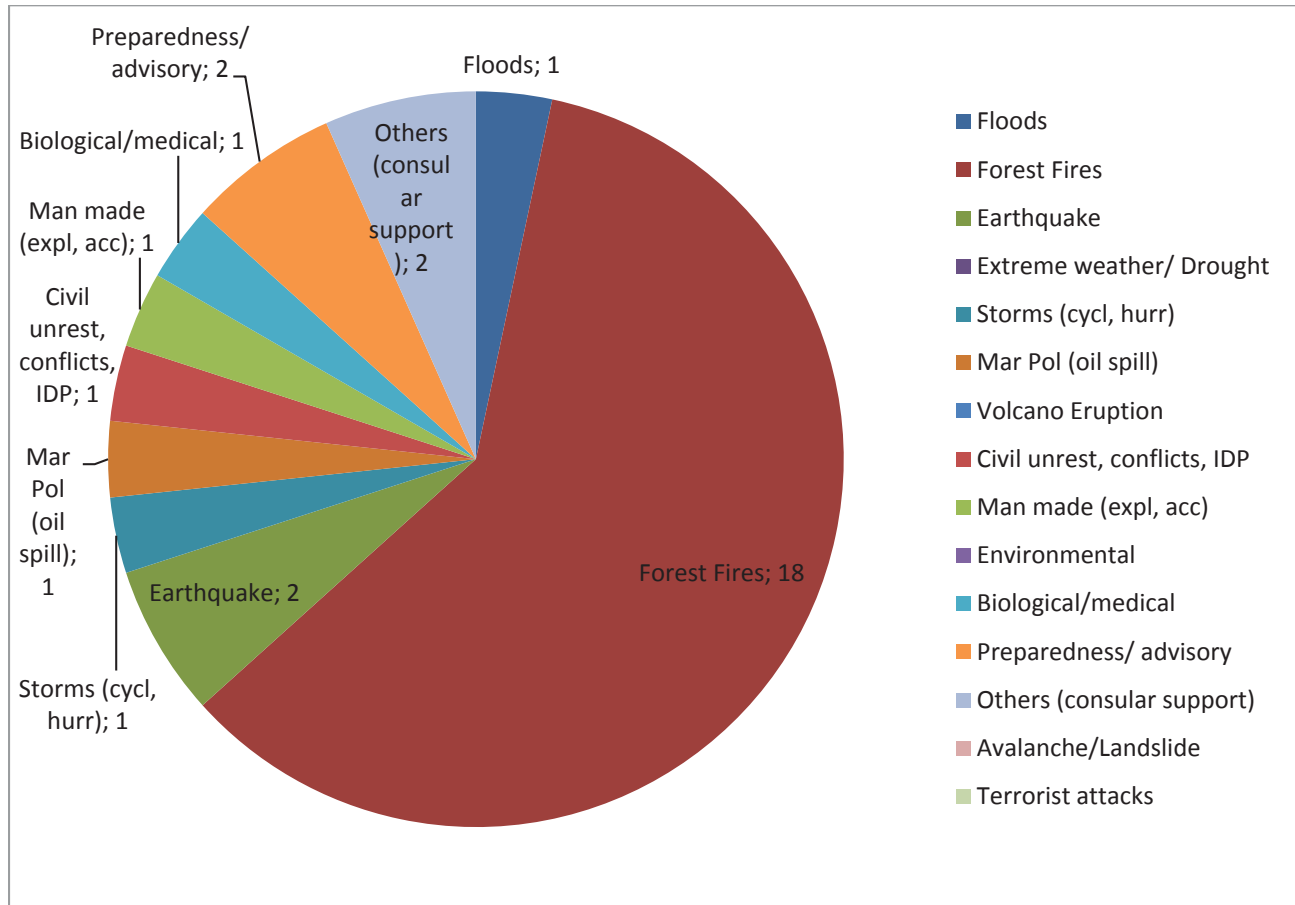
¹⁷ 13478/17.

¹⁸ 13484/17.

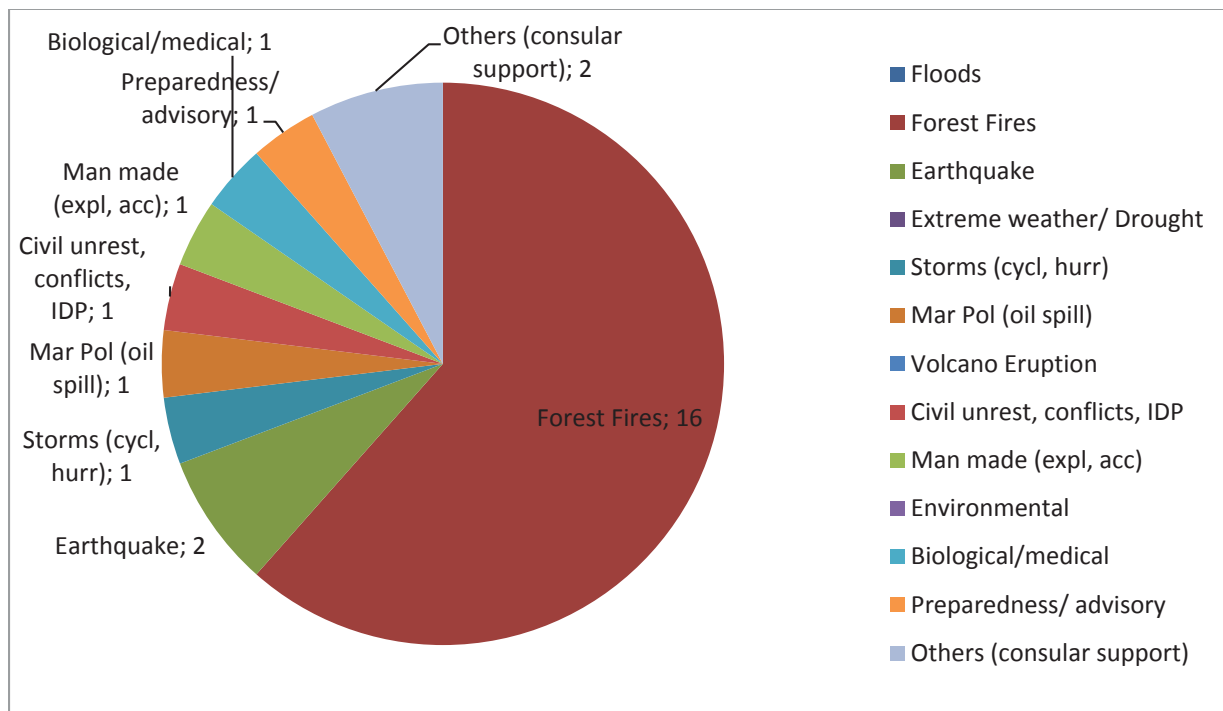
7. Response to disasters and crises

Since the beginning of 2017, the UCPM has been activated for 30 requests for assistance (11 inside the EU and 19 outside the EU).

The overall 2017 situation is presented in the chart below – based on the type of emergency:



Between 1 July and 23 November, there were 26 activations of UCPM where Participating States supported the affected countries.



The disaster situations which required the activation of the UCPM are as follows:

– **Forest Fires:**

- France (July)
- Italy – 4 (July, August twice and October)
- Portugal - 3 (July, August and October)
- Greece (August)
- Montenegro - 2 (July and August)
- Albania (August)
- Tunisia (August)
- Georgia – 3 (August twice and September).

- **Preparedness and Prevention:** Jordan - Disaster Response Management System – mission organised with UN/CADRI
- **Explosion/ Chemical accident:** Armenia – Nairit Chemical Plant
- **Oil Spill:** Greece – Piraeus harbour
- **Tropical Cyclones in the Caribbean:**
 - **TC Irma-17:** The Netherlands requested assistance on behalf of Sint Maarten consisting of various items (emergency shelter, medical, logistical resources). The EU budget contributed with transport co-financing.
 - **TC Maria-17:** The UCPM was activated based on the request for assistance from Dominica in the aftermath of TC Maria which caused widespread destruction on the island.
 - **Consular Support missions:**
 - Germany activated the UCPM to receive support for a consular mission to USA/Florida helping EU citizens stranded due to the effects of Tropical Cyclone Irma.
 - The Netherlands activated the UCPM to receive support for their consular mission to Sint Maarten helping EU citizens stranded due other effects of Tropical Cyclone Irma.
- **Earthquakes:**
 - Mexico Earthquakes (magnitudes 8.1 Mw and 7.1 Mw in September).-
 - Earthquake in Iran/Iraq
- **Complex emergency:**
 - Rohingya Crisis / Bangladesh – Humanitarian Response

– **Outbreak:**

- Uganda – Marburg virus.

A. Ongoing crises

a) Refugee and migration crisis

The activation is still valid but there is nothing to report from a UCPM perspective for this period.

b) Iraq/Mosul – civil protection support to the humanitarian response

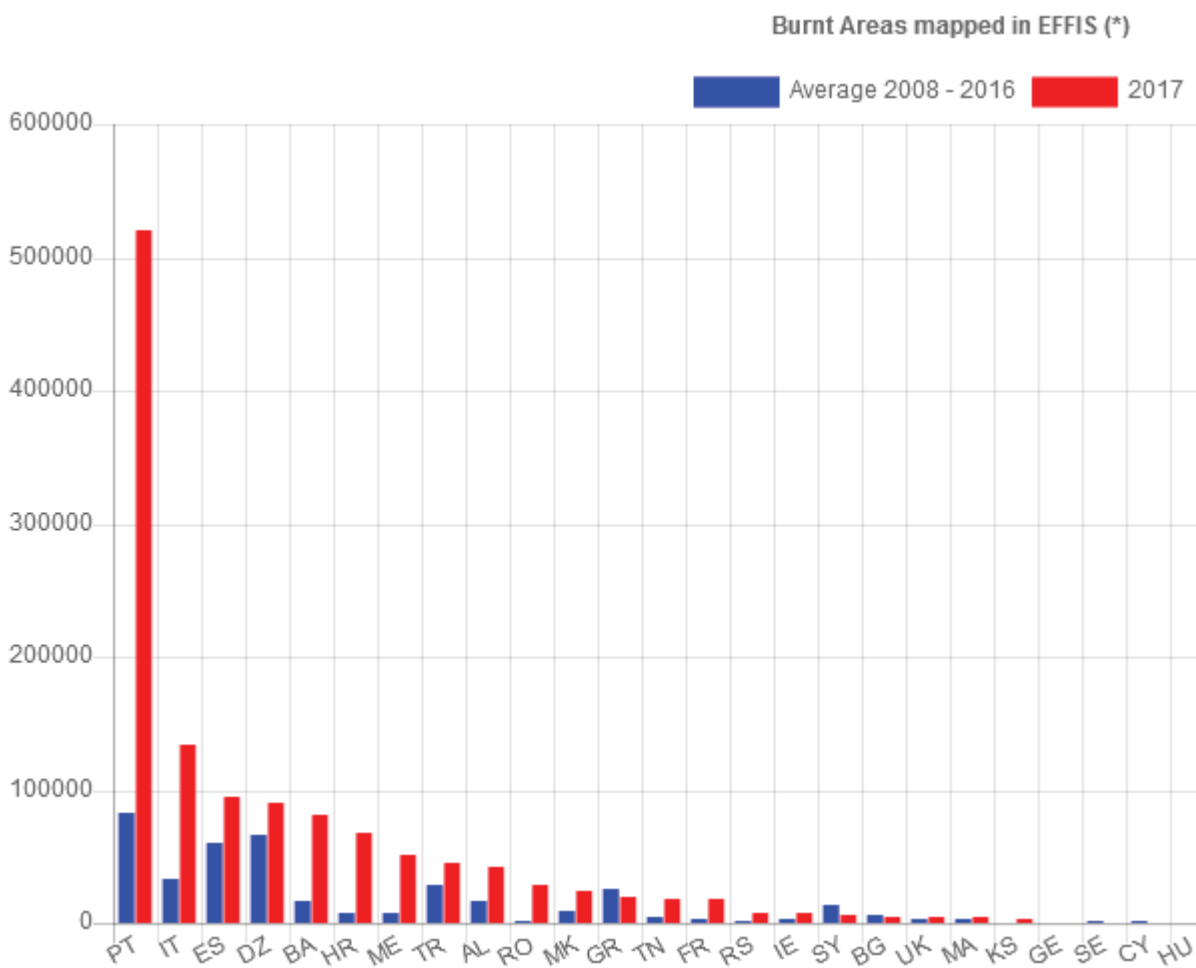
The activation is still valid but there is nothing to report from a UCPM perspective for this period.

B. UCPM activations

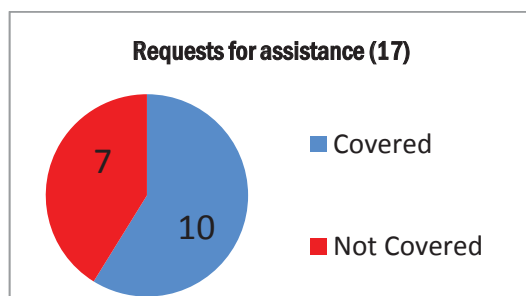
a) Forest fires in EU and neighbourhood countries

Since June 2017 the ERCC has received 18 requests for assistance for forest fires affected EU Member States (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal) but also countries in the neighbourhood of the EU (Albania, Georgia, Montenegro, Tunisia).

Overall the 2017 forest fire season was one of the worst in recent years in terms of number of fires and areas burnt, compared with the average values in the last nine years.¹⁹



¹⁹ 2008-2016 – EFFIS analysis.



During the forest fire season the Copernicus EMS was triggered by the affected countries 25 times and more than 200 satellite maps were produced.

Although Participating States affected by the fires helped each other as much as they could, not all of the requests were covered in full, highlighting some limitations of the Mechanism.

Lessons learned from the forest fires season were discussed at the meeting of Directors-General for civil protection held in Tallinn on 3-4 October and at a dedicated workshop for forest fires held at ERCC in Brussels on 14 November.

b) Armenia – Explosion at Nairit Chemical Plant

On 28 August, a series of explosions occurred at Nairit Chemical Plant, near Armenia's capital Yerevan, resulting in burnt waste and in chemical fumes spreading towards the city. There was an urgent need to conduct a detailed assessment of the situation at the Nairit plant, looking both at the baseline situation at the plant which led to the event, but also evaluating the risk posed by the remaining chemical substances, and to develop proposals for appropriate mitigation measures.

Following the official request from the Government of Armenia to the United Nations office in Armenia, and in the light of the standing cooperation arrangements between DG ECHO and OCHA, on 1 September 2017 OCHA made a request to the ERCC for chemical emergency experts to support the UN advisory mission in response to the chemical accident at the Nairit plant. Two UCPM experts (from France and Sweden) joined the UNEP/OCHA team for an assessment mission in Armenia from 10 September to 2 October.

c) Greece – oil spill

On 9 September an oil tanker sank in the sea near Piraeus, Greece. The ship was loaded with about 2 195 tonnes of fuel oil and 340 tonnes of marine gas oil as cargo. The ship also had on board 15 tonnes of marine gas oil as bunker fuel and 300 litres of lubricants. Fuel oil and marine gas oil spread out in the wider sea area of Piraeus anchorage around the wreck. The adjacent shorelines of Salamis island and Piraeus were polluted. Greece requested assistance in the form of one cleaning vessel, which was provided by EMSA. Nine cleaning vessels operated by the national authorities of Greece also worked on the cleaning operation. In the second phase of the operation, Greece made a request for technical expertise in shoreline oil cleaning techniques. One Italian expert was selected and deployed via UCPM, working alongside three experts from REMPEC (Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea).

d) **Tropical cyclones in the Caribbean region**

In September the Caribbean region was affected by a series of powerful tropical cyclones. The most devastating were TC Irma-17 and TC Maria-17, which affected many Caribbean Islands

(Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Martin and Sint Maarten, Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica) as well as Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Bahamas, and the USA (Florida).

Due to the level of destruction and subsequent emergency situation, several actions were channelled via the UCPM in order to support the affected people:

- Germany and the Netherlands activated the UCPM to receive support for consular missions to the USA (Florida) and Sint Maarten to assist EU citizens stranded due to the effects of the Tropical Cyclones.
- The Netherlands requested transport support to send in-kind assistance to Sint Maarten to help deal with the effects of Tropical Cyclone Irma.
- The UCPM was activated following a request for assistance from Dominica in the aftermath of TC Maria, which caused widespread destruction on the island. Dominica received in-kind assistance support from France, the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands. Also, transport support has been provided to the WFP to transport food stocks to Dominica due to the scarcity of food on the island. A European Civil Protection team was deployed to facilitate the coordination and receipt of the incoming assistance.

The Copernicus Emergency Mapping Service was triggered eight times and produced 81 satellite maps for the areas affected by these two tropical cyclones (French Antilles, Haiti and Dominican Republic, Sint Maarten, British Virgin Islands, Florida (USA), Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands, St Kitts and Nevis, Turks and Caicos Islands, and Dominica).

e) **Mexico earthquake**

On 19 September, an earthquake of 7.1 magnitude Mw struck central Mexico. The earthquake was strongly felt in Mexico City and the states of Puebla, Morelos and State of Mexico.

Another magnitude 6.2 earthquake (32 km deep) then occurred at 12 km north of city of Ixtepec (State of Oaxaca) worsening the already difficult situation in the affected areas. A state of emergency was declared. According to the official reports more than 300 people lost their lives, over 27 000 houses were affected, damaged or destroyed in Chalco, Oaxaca, Tuxtla, Ecatepec, and Chiapas, and 900 churches suffered damage in the state of Chiapas alone.

The EUCP experts who were deployed in September as part of the UNDAC team reported that there were some needs in Mexico City, where buildings have been checked extensively; however, in Morelos, Oaxaca and Chiapas, where affected communities are more remote, needs were reportedly higher, especially for shelter and WASH.

On 3 October, the Mexican Agency for International Development Co-operation (AMEXCID) sent a letter to the UCPM, asking for in-kind assistance in the form of tents, portable toilets, kitchen sets, generators, beds, and water purification, health and other equipment. Structural engineers were also needed to assess the damage to heritage buildings in the affected areas and to set out restoration methodology/criteria to support Mexican authorities in the restoration phase of historical temples/churches. On 20 October 2017, an EUCP Team composed of civil protection experts and cultural heritage restoration experts was deployed for a two-weeks mission. The EUCPT presented their findings and recommendations to the Mexican authorities on 3 November. Copernicus EMS was triggered twice and 16 satellite maps were produced to support the damage assessment in the affected areas.

f) Rohingya Crisis / Bangladesh – Humanitarian Response

The violence in Rakhine State (Myanmar), which began on 25 August 2017, has driven an estimated 603 000 Rohingya across the border into Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Humanitarians are continuing to scale up their response in the Cox's Bazar area. The IOM is providing the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) with the logistical capacity to ensure a coordinated response.

As the IOM has not been able to secure the setting-up of a coordination hub through other means and channels, and in order to reduce, as far as possible, the delays in opening and operating the hub, on 27 October the IOM requested the support of the UCPM for deployment of light basecamp elements for a coordination hub for 45 people with meeting space for 60 people and associated installations. Countries that form part of the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) have offered this basecamp via the UCPM.

g) Earthquake in Iran and Iraq

On 12 November, an earthquake of magnitude 7.2 Mw occurred in Halabja in Iraq, close to the Iranian border. It caused considerable damage in both countries, with hundreds of people dead and thousands injured. In Iraq, two important dams (Darbandikhan dam from 1961 and Dukan dam from 1959) needed to undergo post-earthquake inspections to assess their integrity.

At the request of the Iraqi national authorities, UN OCHA mobilised a UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to assess the situation and support the coordination of response efforts. On 13 November, the UN Environment - OCHA Joint Unit requested assistance from the UCPM in the form of one expert specialising in dam structural assessment. A Romanian expert was deployed on 15 November to join the UNDAC team in Iraq, until 4 December, in order to assess and make recommendations on the potential impact of the earthquake on the dams and surrounding communities. In addition, the ERCC has activated the Copernicus Emergency Management Service for provision of grading satellite maps in four different affected areas in Iraq.

h) Marburg Virus Disease in Uganda

Following a Marburg virus disease outbreak in Uganda in October 2017, on 16 November the World Health Organisation (WHO) requested assistance from the UCPM to support the diagnosis and containment efforts. A German mobile lab from the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNI) was deployed on 21 November. It is part of the European Medical Corps and composed of specialised equipment, together with two health experts. For approximately one month, it will support a high containment treatment unit for the Marburg virus run by Médecins Sans Frontières – France in Kapchorwa District. An ERCC liaison officer has also been deployed. In addition to diagnosing potential new cases of infection, the lab will closely cooperate and coordinate with partners, notably the national authorities leading the response and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), to improve response capabilities.