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To: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)

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Subject: Report from the Portuguese Presidency on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection and the resilience of critical entities

Delegations will find attached a Presidency Report on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection and the resilience of critical entities.

COREPER is invited to take note of the report.

**Report from the Portuguese Presidency
on the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection and the resilience of
critical entities**

This report outlines the main achievements at EU level in the field of civil protection and the resilience of critical entities during the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Intensive work continued in the first half of 2021 despite the fact that no physical meetings were held due to the pandemic-related restrictions. Nine informal meetings of the members of the Civil Protection Working Party (PROCIV), including its formation with the participation of experts on the resilience of critical entities, were held as video conferences.

In February, following the consent of the European Parliament, the Council adopted the Decision on the conclusion of the amendments to the Bonn Agreement related to the pollution of the North Sea.

On 20 May 2021, the European Parliament and the Council adopted Regulation [2021/836](#) amending the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) Decision.

PROCIV, with the participation of the relevant experts, examined the proposal for a Directive on the resilience of critical entities.

The Presidency continued work on the identification of lessons from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on civil protection business continuity and capacity development. A virtual expert workshop was held on 13 and 14 April 2021. The recommendations from that meeting were discussed by the Directors-General for civil protection at their video conference meeting held on 21 May 2021.

Work also continued on setting up the rescEU reserve, with a particular focus on medical stockpiling and CBRN capacities.

Finally, the UCPM was activated a number of times in response to the pandemic as well as other disasters including the explosion in Equatorial Guinea, volcanic eruptions, the Ebola outbreak in Guinea and floods in Timor-Leste.

1. Proposal for a Decision amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism¹

Following swift and successful negotiations with the European Parliament, based on the Council's mandate approved by Coreper during the German Presidency², Regulation (EU) 2021/836 amending Decision 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism was adopted on 20 May 2021.

rescEU

The possibility for the Union to directly procure rescEU capacities has been set up, limited to the area of transport and logistics. In duly justified cases of urgency, the Union may also directly procure material means and any necessary enabling support services, if defined as rescEU capacities. The type and quantity of such capacities would need to be determined by way of implementing acts adopted in accordance with the urgency procedure. All the rescEU capacities, both those hosted by Member States and those directly procured by the Union, will be fully financed from the EU budget, in addition to the full funding from the EU budget of the transport of rescEU capacities both within the EU and from third countries to the EU.

Union disaster resilience goals

Non-binding Union disaster resilience goals, as defined in the amending Regulation, limited in scope to the area of civil protection, will be developed by the Commission together with the Member States and set out in Commission Recommendations. Information on the progress will be included in the reports which the Commission submits to the European Parliament and the Council every two years.

¹ 8330/20.
² 13538/20.

Budgetary management

Annex I, which establishes a percentage allocation for prevention, preparedness and response has been amended, and in addition to the MFF now also covers the EU Recovery Instrument. This allocation can be modified beyond the flexibility margins by way of delegated acts. To allow for flexibility and long-term planning, the Commission can adopt multi-annual work programmes for all prevention and preparedness actions. A limited possibility of budget implementation in indirect management has also been introduced. The budgetary execution and the projected future allocations should be presented and discussed on a yearly basis in the Civil Protection Committee.

The amending Regulation also includes *inter alia*:

- the possibility for the Member States to use emergency services under the Space Programme to warn the population in areas affected by disasters;
- the possibility for affected countries to request assistance through the UCPM consisting only of transport and logistical resources;
- co-financing from the EU budget of the operational costs of capacities committed to the European Civil Protection Pool when deployed outside the EU;
- extending to ‘assisting’ Member States the possible Union financial support for the transport of assistance needed in environmental disasters, in which the ‘polluter pays’ principle applies;
- amending provisions related to the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network, with the aim of more accurately reflecting the purpose and structure of the Network.

2. Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the resilience of critical entities³

The proposal for a Directive on the resilience of critical entities (CER Directive) was adopted by the Commission on 16 December 2020. It is being examined by a specific formation of the Working Party on Civil Protection, dedicated to the Critical Entities Resilience Directive (hereinafter: PROCIV-CER). A separate Presidency progress report on work on the CER Directive has been issued⁴.

3. Civil protection business continuity and capacity development - lessons learned from COVID-19

On 13 and 14 April 2021, the Presidency organised a virtual expert workshop entitled ‘Civil protection in the COVID-19 era: business continuity, adaptation and capacity development’. This workshop brought together 110 participants from 29 MS to share the experiences and best practices of CP authorities on how to manage the impacts of an overwhelming public health event such as the COVID-19 crisis while keeping daily business running as normal.

³ 14262/20 + ADD 1.

⁴ 8969/21.

The focus was placed on lessons identified in relation to: (1) training and exercises (how Member States and the UCPM can achieve the seemingly impossible and conduct, in person, training and exercises; the lessons learned from the plans/strategies implemented or adopted to overcome such constraints; as well as how the Knowledge Network could, in this respect, integrate and implement best practices regarding the post COVID-19 situation); (2) deployments/assessment and coordination missions (the identification of the challenges of and lessons learned from the preparation, adaptation, management and deployment of UCPM missions in the COVID-19 pandemic context, and how these lessons learned have helped to improve the resilience of UCPM missions with a view to possible future outbreaks that could occur at the same time as other emergencies that the EU regularly faces and where UCPM missions are established); and (3) business continuity plans and staff management (in relation to the business continuity plans for emergency services, in particular, on the development or updating of contingency plans, including discussions on the experiences of EU Member States and UCPM Participating States in terms of staff management, and addressing the physical and psychological impact of COVID-19 on civil protection workers).

As the main conclusion, the workshop highlighted that the role of civil protection has been reinforced throughout the pandemic. Civil protection authorities have shown adaptability and resilience, and have risen to, and met, the various challenges caused by the pandemic.

4. Implementation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism

Work continued on the implementation of the UCPM Decision, in particular on continuing to set up the rescEU reserve.

On 26 January 2021, the Commission adopted Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/88 on rescEU capacities in the area of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents⁵.

5. Amendments to the Bonn Agreement for cooperation in dealing with pollution of the North Sea by oil and other harmful substances

Following the European Parliament's consent of 19 January 2021⁶, on 5 February 2021 the Council⁷ adopted **Decision (EU) 2021/176** on the conclusion of the amendments to the Agreement for cooperation in dealing with pollution of the North Sea by oil and other harmful substances (Bonn Agreement) with regard to the extension of the scope of the Agreement and the accession to the Agreement of the Kingdom of Spain⁸.

The Bonn Agreement of 1989 aims to combat pollution in the North Sea area and to safeguard coastal areas from maritime disasters and chronic pollution from ships and offshore installations. The EU is a Contracting Party to the Agreement, together with seven of its Member States⁹, the UK and Norway. The Agreement provides that Contracting Parties carry out surveillance as an aid to detecting and combating pollution and to preventing violations of anti-pollution regulations.

The amendments extend the scope to include the surveillance of ship-based air pollution in respect of the requirements of the MARPOL Convention.

Following the Contracting Parties' decision in 2018 to invite Spain to join the Agreement, another amendment was necessary to specify the Atlantic boundary of the North Sea area, while revising the boundaries of various zones where responsibility for the surveillance and assessment of incidents is assigned to members.

⁵ OJ L 30, 28.01.2021, p. 6.

⁶ P9_TA-PROV(2021)0001.

⁷ CM 1601/21.

⁸ OJ L 54, 16.2.2021, p. 1, 3 and 6.

⁹ Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden.

6. Response to emergencies

Between 1 January and 31 May 2021, the UCPM was activated 30 times (7 requests for assistance within the EU and 23 outside the EU¹⁰). In addition, the European Commission's Copernicus Emergency Management Service was activated 18 times, producing 112 maps.

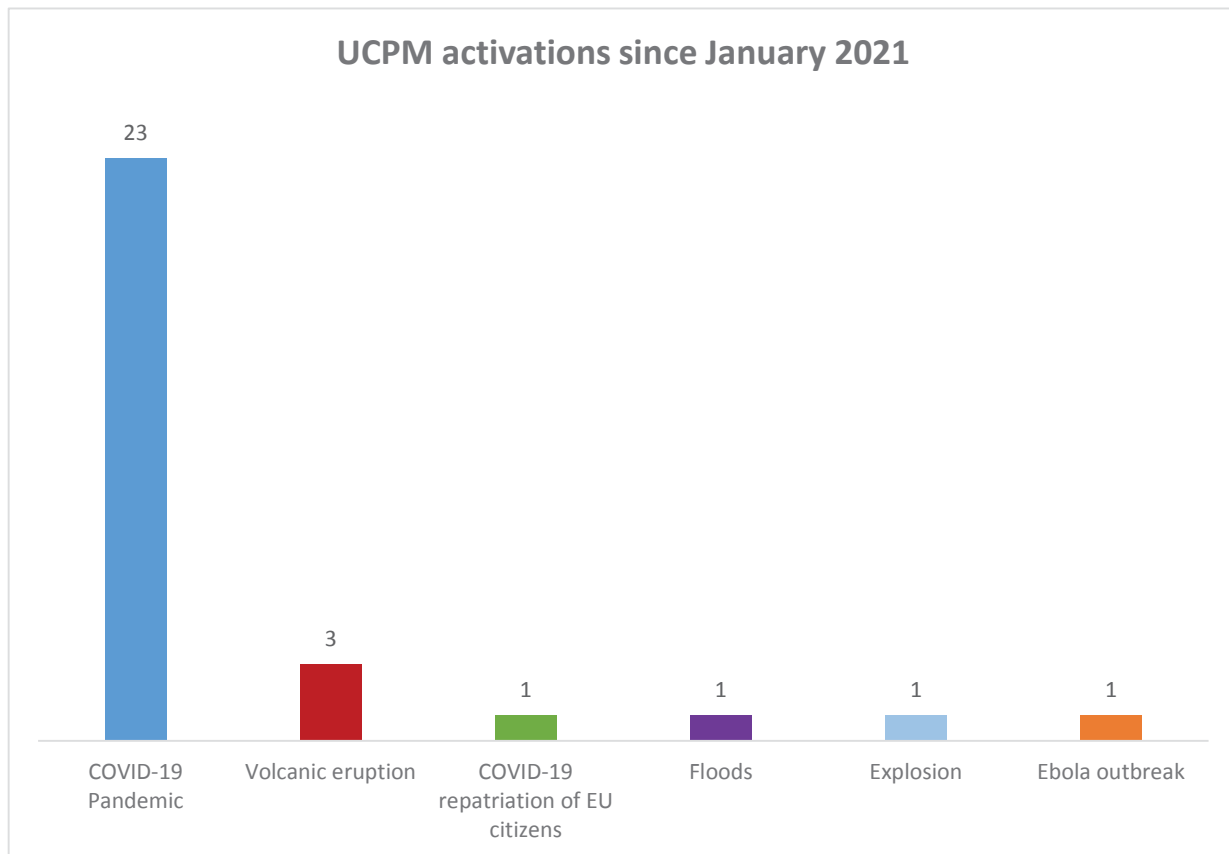


Table data as of 31.05.2021

Requests for assistance through the UCPM within the EU were related to shortages of medical personnel, medical equipment, personal protective equipment and vaccines in the fight against COVID-19.

¹⁰ Requests received from the UCPM Participating States, as well as by the Netherlands on behalf of the Dutch Caribbean Islands count as within the EU.

Outside the EU, apart from COVID-19 related activations, UCPM assistance was provided in response to the explosion in Equatorial Guinea, volcanic eruptions, the Ebola outbreak in Guinea and floods in Timor-Leste.

A description of the UCPM activations is set out in Annex 1 provided by the Commission.

Annex 1 to the ANNEX

a) UCPM activations inside the EU

1. The Netherlands on behalf of the Dutch Caribbean Islands – COVID-19 (28/09/2020 and 5/02/2021)

Request for Assistance: The request for assistance by the Netherlands on behalf of the Dutch Caribbean Islands concerned critical medical equipment for the response to COVID-19.

Response: Since the beginning of the year, the Netherlands has offered assistance to the Caribbean islands on 20 occasions, providing PPE, vaccines, ventilators, X-ray machines, etc.

2. Slovakia – COVID-19 – 20/02/2021

Request for assistance: On 20 February 2021, Slovakia sent a request for assistance focusing on medical personnel specialised in intensive care (10 medical doctors and 25 nurses).

Response: Romania offered 5 medical doctors and 8 nurses to Slovakia. Belgium sent a team of four medical personnel, and Denmark sent a team of eight medical personnel. France offered 15 000 doses of vaccines.

The ERCC deployed a liaison officer to Slovakia to support the authorities and meet the medical teams.

3. Czech Republic – COVID-19 pandemic - 05/03/2021

Request for assistance: On 5 March 2021, the Czech Republic requested 15 000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines.

Response: France offered 15 000 vaccine doses.

4. North Macedonia – COVID-19 pandemic – 03/01/2021

Request for assistance: On 3 January 2021, North Macedonia renewed its request for supplies related to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. On 8 February 2021, North Macedonia requested 50 000 FFP3/N95 masks. Subsequently, the request was updated with medical equipment, lighting equipment, shelter items, vehicles, decontamination equipment, oxygen flowmeters, testing kits, vaccines, etc.

Response: The Czech Republic, Austria, Estonia, Sweden, and Slovakia offered personal protective equipment. The ERCC invited Greece to mobilise 55 000 medium-protection overalls from the rescEU medical stockpile.

5. Montenegro - COVID-19 pandemic – 03/01/2021

Request for assistance: On 3 January 2021, Montenegro renewed its request for supplies related to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. On 3 February 2021, Montenegro requested 10 000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine.

Response: On 29 January 2021, Slovakia offered 15 000 PCR tests, 120 blankets, 120 sets of bedding and 1 000 towels. On 6 February 2021, the ERCC invited Greece to mobilise 90 000 FFP2 masks from the rescEU medical stockpile. On 1 April 2021, France offered PPE, oxygen equipment and 10 000 COVID tests. On 12 April 2021, Slovenia offered 100 000 KN95 masks and 1 200 bottles of hand sanitiser (0.5 l). Austria, Estonia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia offered assistance. The ERCC mobilised PPE from the rescEU stockpiles hosted by Romania, Germany and Greece.

6. Serbia – COVID-19 pandemic – 03/01/2021

Request for assistance: Serbia sent a request and updated requests for PPE, oxygen generators, thermal body scanners, and hand gel.

Response: France, Denmark, and Slovakia offered assistance. The ERCC mobilised PPE from the rescEU stockpiles hosted by Romania, Greece and Belgium.

7. Spain – Repatriation of EU citizens from Nepal – 17/05/2021

Due to the ongoing pandemic in Nepal and the EU citizens stranded there, the Spanish consular authorities requested consular support through the UCPM. Subsequently, Spain organised a repatriation flight for 99 EU citizens on 21 May 2021. In this context, Spain used the flight to Kathmandu to deliver COVID-19 antigen tests, oxygen concentrators, ventilators and PPE.

b) UCPM activations outside the EU

1. Sudan – COVID-19 pandemic – 4/01/2021

Request for assistance: On 4 January 2021, the Republic of the Sudan sent a request for assistance consisting of medical equipment and consumables as well as antigen testing equipment.

Response: Spain, France and Italy offered close to 50 tons of in-kind assistance (water purification tablets, jerry cans, shelter items, kitchen sets and other non-food items). In addition, Austria offered mosquito nets, jerry cans and kitchen sets.

2. Mongolia – COVID-19 pandemic – 13/01/2021

Request for assistance: On 13 January 2021, Mongolia issued a request for assistance for medical equipment.

Response: France offered oxygen masks, oxygen bezels, oxygen flowmeters, and oxygen generators.

3. Ecuador – COVID-19 pandemic – 14/01/2021

Request for assistance: Ecuador made a request for assistance for PPE, medical equipment, consumables and vaccines.

Response: So far, in 2021, there have been no offers of assistance to Ecuador.

4. Armenia – COVID-19 pandemic – 15/01/2021

Request for assistance: On 15 January 2021, Armenia renewed the validity of its previous requests for medical and laboratory equipment and Emergency Medical Teams (EMT).

Response: So far, in 2021, there have been no offers of assistance to Armenia.

5. Lebanon – COVID-19 – 29/01/2021

Request for assistance: On 29 January 2021, Lebanon sent a request for assistance consisting of medical equipment (high flow nasal cannula machines and oxygen concentrators). On 3 February 2021, the request was updated for medical equipment and medicines not related to COVID-19.

Response: Spain offered 56 oxygen concentrators to Lebanon.

6. Bolivia – COVID-19 pandemic – 29/01/2021

Request for assistance: On 29 January 2021, Bolivia sent a request for assistance for medication, medical supplies, antigen tests and technical assistance to train medical staff.

Response: Spain offered various personal protection equipment items (masks, overalls, glasses, hats, gloves).

7. Moldova – COVID-19 pandemic – 04/02/2021

Request for assistance: Moldova requested assistance consisting of PPE, vaccines, medical equipment, medical personnel, COVID-19 tests, medical devices such as ventilators and concentrators, and medicines.

Response: On 8 February 2021, the Czech Republic, Romania, Poland, Austria and Germany offered PPE, ventilators and pulse oximeters. In addition, Romania offered vaccines.

8. Guinea – Ebola outbreak – 17/02/2021

Situation: On 14 February 2021, health authorities in Guinea declared a new outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the N'Zérékoré prefecture in the Guinée Forestière region.

Request for assistance: On 17 February 2021, a request for assistance was received for laboratory materials and items for the Ebola/COVID-19 response. On 26 February and 25 March 2021, updates of the request for assistance were received, including for needs related to COVID-19, such as testing and laboratory capacities.

Response: France offered Ebola protection kits, PPE (gloves, gowns, goggles, overalls). Germany offered PPE (masks, gloves, goggles and overalls) and Belgium offered masks.

9. Equatorial Guinea – Bata explosion – 07/03/2021

Situation: On 7 March 2021, four explosions occurred in Bata, the economic capital of Equatorial Guinea, in the armoury of the Nkuantoma gendarmerie and military barracks. The explosions caused extensive damage to residential buildings as well as to a newly constructed hospital. 107 people were killed and more than 700 injured.

Request for assistance: The ERCC received a request for assistance via the ECHO Field Regional Office in Yaounde to address the consequences of the disaster. An additional request was received from the UNEP/OCHA Joint Environmental Unit for one to three Spanish-speaking environmental experts to join an UNDAC team, with generalist environmental expertise and/or specialised expertise in hazmat/industrial accident response.

Response: Spain offered medical and personal protective equipment and medicines. In addition, a medical team of trauma experts and medical personnel was deployed to Equatorial Guinea. France offered a mobile medical post with treatment capacity for 250 people, emergency and paediatric medical kits, personal protective equipment, testing equipment, family tents and kitchen kits. France also deployed a team of 10 ammunition experts supported by 2 medical personnel.

Following the request from UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit, an environmental expert from Sweden was deployed to Bata from 18 March to 2 April 2021 to coordinate the Environmental Cell of UNDAC's Emergency Operations Centre.

10. Kosovo¹¹ - COVID-19 pandemic – 10/03/2021

Request for assistance: Kosovo requested PPE, ventilators, medical items and COVID-19 vaccines.

Response: France offered 15 000 antigen tests.

11. Brazil – COVID-19 pandemic – 22/03/2021

Request for assistance: Brazil requested medicines for COVID-19 treatment.

Response: Spain and Ireland offered the requested medicines.

¹¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

12. Guinea – COVID-19 pandemic –25/03/2021

Request for assistance: Following a request for assistance related to an Ebola outbreak in the country (17 February 2021), Guinea indicated that its needs for PPE and medical equipment were also related to its COVID-19 response.

Response: France, Germany and Belgium offered PPE, reagents and laboratory equipment.

13. Papua New Guinea – COVID-19 pandemic– 29/03/2021

Request for assistance: On 29 March 2021, Papua New Guinea sent a request for assistance for medical equipment and material, PPE, antigen tests, oxygen therapy devices, transport/logistical solutions. On 2 April 2021, a request from the WHO for an Emergency Medical Team (EMT) type 1/specialised care team to be sent to Papua New Guinea was channelled through the UCPM. On 12 April 2021, the initial request was updated with a request for medical equipment, PPE, EMT, shelter, transport capacities, mobile hospitals, vaccine administration and distribution, antigen tests, PCR reagents and consumables, ventilators, disinfectants, and isolation centres.

Response: France offered PPE and ventilation devices and Germany offered an Emergency Medical Team type 1, that was deployed to Papua New Guinea between 13 April and 7 May 2021.

14. Iraq – COVID-19 pandemic – 06/04/2021

Request for assistance: Iraq made a request for assistance for medical equipment.

Response: So far, in 2021, there have been no offers of assistance to Iraq.

15. St. Vincent and the Grenadines – La Soufriere Volcano – 08/04/2021

Situation: On 08 April 2021, the Caribbean island declared a red alert and issued an evacuation order to 20 000 citizens from the designated red and orange areas. Ash covered most of the island.

Request for assistance: On 12 April 2021, authorities sent a request for assistance followed by further updates on 13, 14 and 29 April 2021 (for generators, sanitary items, cleaning items, bedding, tents, food, water, etc.). The UN Joint Environmental Unit sent a team of 11 experts to provide technical cooperation mission and requested waste management experts and volcanologists from the UCPM.

Response: German and Spanish experts were deployed in Kingstown on 23 April 2021 as EU experts supporting the UN mission for a period of three weeks. France sent emergency equipment from the Red Cross and drinking water, bedding, hygiene kits and antigen tests. The Copernicus Emergency Management Service was triggered and provided six maps to the responding organisations.

16. Timor-Leste – Floods – 16/04/2021

Situation: In Timor-Leste, heavy rainfall that had been affecting the country since the end of March resulted in flash floods and landslides. This situation was worsened by the impact of Tropical Cyclone Seroja.

Request for assistance: On 16 April 2021, the ERCC received a request for assistance for food and non-food items, water tank trucks, PPE, construction materials and technical assistance (disaster risk management, modern EWS and additional equipment and materials).

Response: Austria offered kitchen sets, jerry cans and hygiene kits.

The Copernicus Emergency Management Service was activated to support the assessment of damage across Timor-Leste.

17. Barbados – UN JEU La Soufriere Volcano – 21/04/2021

Situation: The island of Barbados was heavily affected by ash fall from La Soufriere, St Vincent. The government requested damage assessment and advisory support from the UN.

Request for assistance: On 21 April 2021, the ERCC received a specific Request for Assistance from the UNEP/OCHA Joint Environmental Unit for EU experts in the fields of ecology and pollution. The mission focussed on providing advice on cleaning up the ash, environmental health and supporting the national loss, damage and needs assessment efforts.

Response: One expert from the Netherlands was deployed in Bridgetown on 27 April 2021 as an EU expert supporting the UN mission for a period of two weeks.

18. India – COVID-19 pandemic– 23/04/2021

Situation: India faced an acute shortage of liquid oxygen for medical purposes. One of the main contributing factors to the lack of oxygen was the shortfall between demand and supply of oxygen in hospitals due to the lack of cryogenic containers for the transport of oxygen.

Request for assistance: On 23 April 2021, India requested UCPM assistance for any means of providing liquid medical oxygen.

Response: Since 25 April 2021, 17 Member States (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia) and 1 UCPM Participating State (Iceland) have offered assistance. Some transport operations are still ongoing. So far, 472 tonnes have been shipped to India (excl. ventilators and oxygen production units from France), including oxygen generators, oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders, oxygen cannulas, high-flow oxygen therapy devices, liquid oxygen, ventilators, medicines and pulse oximeters.

There were four pooling operations for the delivery of assistance to India:

-The Netherlands-Portugal-Germany-Austria, on 14 May 2021 – operation Vials Dusseldorf (transport of vials and monoclonal antibodies);

-Finland-Greece-Germany, on 12 May 2021 – operation Oxygen Helsinki (transport of live oxygen - cylinders);

-Austria-Slovenia, on 27 May 2021;

-Austria-the Czech Republic on 08 May 2021.

Two ERCC liaison officers were deployed to Dusseldorf and Helsinki, respectively.

19. Fiji – COVID-19 pandemic – 04/05/2021

Request for assistance: On 4 May 2021, Fiji sent a request for assistance to the ERCC for medical equipment, PPE and ventilators. On 6 May 2021, the request was updated with additional medical supplies.

Response: Austria offered surgical masks and blankets.

20. Tunisia – COVID-19 pandemic – 24/05/2021

Request for assistance: On 24 May 2021, Tunisia requested oxygen production units from the UCPM.

Response: France offered three oxygen generators, antigen tests, masks and respirators.

21. Ukraine – COVID-19 pandemic – 28/04/2021

Request for assistance: On 28 April 2021, a request was sent for PPE, medical equipment, antigen tests, and COVID-19 vaccines.

Response: Belgium, Germany and Slovakia offered masks and other PPE.

22. Nepal – COVID-19 pandemic – 07/05/2021

Situation: On 10 May 2021, a record 8 731 new COVID-19 cases were reported, (an increase of 29.46 % compared with the previous week). Hospital beds were unavailable, vaccines were running short and demands for bottled oxygen were rising rapidly due to the increasing number of severely ill patients. On 30 April 2021, 22 (out of 35) border points with India were closed. On 3 May 2021, the government announced the suspension of domestic and international flights. The Indian double-mutant COVID strain was also found in Nepal.

Request for assistance: On 7 May 2021, Nepal sent a Request for Assistance (through the EU delegation in Kathmandu) and the UCPM was activated. The list of needs consisted of medical equipment and supplies.

Response: Eight Member States (Finland, France, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Malta) provided assistance. A repatriation flight from Spain delivered assistance on 20/05 and transported 99 people, including 90 EU citizens, on the return flight to Spain. Deliveries are still ongoing or under preparation. So far, 53 tonnes have been shipped to Nepal (excl. Spain's assistance), including PPE, oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders, antigenic tests, oxygen cannulas, ventilators, isolation tents and pulse oximeters.

23. Democratic Republic of the Congo – Volcanic eruption – 27/05/2021

Situation: Since 22 May 2021 there have been volcanic eruptions in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and related seismic activity, causing deaths, displacement, infrastructure damage and related health problems.

Request for assistance: The DRC made a request for assistance for hygiene kits, tents, and water purification.

Response: So far, there have been no offers of assistance to the DRC.

The Copernicus Emergency Management Service has been activated to support the damage assessment in DRC.