

THE EU PROMETHEUS 2014 PROJECT: an EU Civil Protection Mechanism Exercise

GENERAL

The main role of the Community Mechanism for Civil Protection is to facilitate co-operation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major emergencies which may require urgent response actions. This applies also to situations where there may be an imminent threat of such major emergencies. It is therefore a tool that enhances community co-operation in civil protection matters and was established by the [Council Decision of 23 October 2001](#) . A [Recast of this Council Decision](#) was adopted on 8 November 2007.

In accordance with the **principle of subsidiarity**, it can provide added-value to European civil protection assistance by making support available on request of the affected country. This may arise if the affected country's preparedness for a disaster is not sufficient to provide an adequate response in terms of available resources. By pooling the civil protection capabilities of the participating states, the Community Mechanism can ensure even better protection primarily of people, but also of the natural and cultural environment as well as property.

So as to enable and ensure an effective delivery of assistance, teams working in emergencies need to be mobilized rapidly. Moreover their work needs to be well co-ordinated while requiring flexibility. In order to achieve this, the Mechanism has its own tools that help to ensure this.

EU Civil Protection Exercises organized at EU level are designed primarily as field tests aiming to establish a common understanding of co-operation in civil protection assistance interventions and to accelerate the response to major emergencies. These exercises provide a learning opportunity for all actors involved in operations under the Mechanism and enhance operational co-operation between them.

Contingency planning, decision-making procedures, provision of information to the public and the media can also be tested and rehearsed during these events, so as to be better prepared for similar real-life situations. Moreover, exercises can help supervisors identify further training needs for their staff involved in operations, while lessons-learned workshops organized in parallel can serve as a forum to identify operational gaps to be improved.

Exercises at EU-level are organized by the participant states with co-financing from the Commission. [A call for proposals for exercises is published each year.](#)

In July 2012 the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, the Hellenic National Authority for Civil Protection submitted a proposal following the Call for Proposals on Civil Protection Mechanism Exercises published in the Official Journal, No C147/04 of 25 May 2012.

As a result of a (5) months period of evaluation of the submitted proposals the Financial Support from Council Decision 2007/162/EC, Euratom of 05/03/2007 establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument is granted to this project proposal entitled "Forest Fire Emergency Response in Wildland-Urban Interference" (Acronym: EU PROMETHEUS 2014, "the project").

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

Project title: Forest Fire Emergency Response in Wildland-Urban Interface

Project Acronym	EU PROMETHEUS 2014
Start Date:	1 January 2013
End Date:	30 September 2014

Purpose & Objectives

The objective of this project is to test the activation of the Community Mechanism for Civil Protection in an extreme wildfire scenario, followed by a technological accident (TWIN DISASTER).

The scenario baseline is a mega-wildfire that occurs near populated areas in urban-wildland interface and has already (due to extreme fire weather conditions) hit an industrial area resulting in an explosion and subsequent structure collapses. This is hence a twinning disaster. In addition, the fire has already burned homes causing further extensive structure collapses. The extent of the disaster and the conditions create the need for simultaneous wildland fire suppression and structure collapse rescue operations, while as the situation evolves, populated areas need to be evacuated. National resources have been stretched thin and because of the extent of the disaster, it becomes necessary to use EU assistance in many different areas at the same time and the establishment of EU Joint Modules.

Enabling/intermediate objectives include:

- (1) evaluate national emergency operations plans and the Secretary General's Decision 121/2009 on National Host Nation Support Policy and Procedures,
- (2) develop and test Joint European EU Civil Protection Modules;
- (3) evaluate the coordination of assistance through the DG ECHO Monitoring and Information Center (including the coordination of Joint Modules);
- (4) evaluate the deployment and effectiveness of EU Modules (including Joint Modules);
- (5) evaluate the coordination of incoming EU assistance in Greece; and
- (6) increase awareness of the population in terms of wildfire preparedness.

Actions and means involved

The EU PROMETHEUS 2014 Exercise Project includes two Simulation Exercises: one Table Top Exercise and one Full Scale Exercise.

Both exercises share a mega-wildland fire scenario, with a secondary risk to wildland-urban interface areas. The risk intensity and the conditions of the simulated disaster will be chosen as to rapidly overwhelm national capabilities and create the need for reinforcements. EU assistance will be requested through CECIS. Italy, Cyprus and Croatia will respond with offers of FFFP, GFFF and MUSAR Modules. The dispersion of the disaster and the simultaneous requirements will not allow the use of entire Modules, Joint Modules will be established and deployed.

Specifically:

(1) **FFFP:** Two Joint FFFP Modules, comprising a formation of one Greek and one Italian aircraft, will be established and deployed according to Commission Decision 2010/481 of July 29, 2010.

(2) **GFFF:** Two Joint GFFF Modules will be established and deployed according to Commission Decision 2010/481 of July 29, 2010.

(3) **MUSAR:** Two Joint MUSAR Modules will be deployed according to Commission Decision 2007/73 of December 20, 2007 and Commission Decision 2010/481 of July 29, 2010.

New technologies, including but not limited to social media (e.g. Facebook®, Twitter® etc.) will be used to highlight parts of the MSEL related to public information.

Furthermore, a wide variety of communications media (including but not limited to e-mail; SMS messages; mobile telephones; and Skype®) will be used to ensure an effective exercise control. Exercise Evaluators will evaluate the performance of the system against exercise objectives and performance standards set up by the General Wildfire Emergency Operations Plan and the General Technological Accident Emergency Operations Plan. An After Action Report will outline the strengths and areas for improvement.

Expected results

An effective Full Scale Exercise, where:

(1) Local/Regional & National actors can exercise their emergency operations plans and procedures against a scenario designed to rapidly overwhelm local/regional & national capacities

(2) The General Secretariat for Civil Protection has the opportunity to exercise the procedure defined under Secretary General for Civil Protection Decision 121/2009 on National Host Nation Support Policy and Procedures, and the Activation of the Community Mechanism for Civil Protection in Greece.

(3) The DG ECHO-MIC can test the process of providing EU disaster relief through CECIS.

(4) Exercise players (including EU Civil Protection Modules) can exercise wildfire response and structure collapse rescue operations simultaneously in Greece.

(5) Joint European EU Modules (one Joint European FFFP Module, one Joint European GFFF Module and one Joint European MUSAR Module) are developed and tested. Joint Modules are a priority of the Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2014, and have already been approved by the Commission. In addition, Joint Modules help save funds and develop the cooperation between MS and participating countries.