



EU EXCHANGE OF EXPERTS IN CIVIL PROTECTION

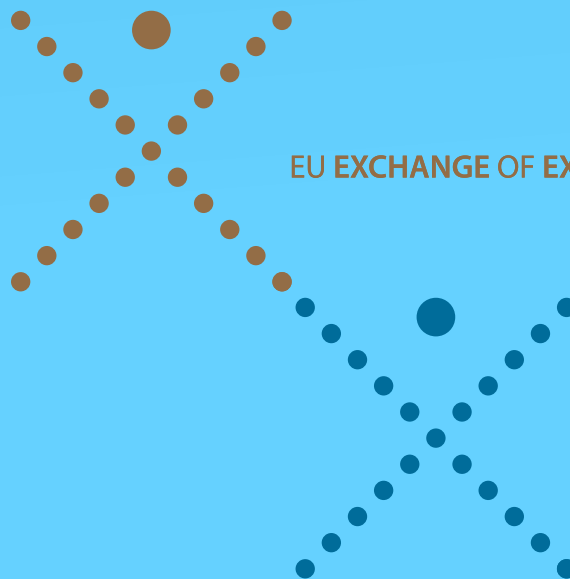


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# Sharing expertise, learning from others



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- The European Community Mechanism for civil protection



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In order to ensure fast and efficient collaboration between national civil protection organisations, the Council of the European Union on 23 October 2001 adopted a decision for the development of a cross-border European relief system: the '**Community Mechanism to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions**' inside and outside the European Union, also known simply as the '**Community Mechanism**'. It has been in force since 2002 and has already proved effective in a large number of disasters inside and outside the EU.

Part of the Community Mechanism is the EU Exchange of Experts Program. It serves to improve the competence of civil protection forces in the EU in disaster situations and to increase the effectiveness of joint operations.



- The EU exchange of experts system

The EU Exchange of Experts Program was set up several years ago. Like the EU exercises, it is designed to complement a training programme tailored to the needs of interventions within the framework of the Community Mechanism.

The EU Exchange of Experts Program offers civil protection experts **numerous opportunities to exchange experiences**, extend their expert knowledge and their operational skills and to strengthen international relations. By doing so, it makes a significant contribution to the further development of the Community Mechanism.

The success of the system depends on reciprocal exchanges between the participating organisations, which means organisations can host experts as well as sending them.

The EU Exchange of Experts Program is funded by the European Commission. The Federal Agency for Technical Relief, THW, Germany ([www.thw.de](http://www.thw.de)), has been commissioned as program coordinator.

In each country taking part in the EU Exchange of Experts Program there is a **National Training Coordinator** who is responsible for assessing and approving registrations.

As programme coordinator, THW works closely with the network of National Training Coordinators. A list of all National Training Coordinators can be found on the Internet at [www.exchangeofexperts.eu](http://www.exchangeofexperts.eu).



# Sharing expertise, learning from others

- Who can participate?
- Taking part as a host organisation

The EU Exchange of Experts Program is aimed at **all civil protection institutions and organisations** that:

- are based in the EU Member States, EEA countries\* or in countries, which have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Commission\*\*
- work as governmental or non-governmental organisations at administrative, operative or scientific level and
- are active in areas such as coordination and incident management, technology, emergency assistance and/or emergency planning, emergency calls management, response on shore to marine pollution and coordination of training.


Do you, or does your organisation belong to the target group described above? Then you have the opportunity to invite civil protection experts through the EU Exchange of Experts Program, to demonstrate your competence and working methods in the area of civil protection to them, and to exchange experiences with them in a wide range of fields.

The program coordinators at THW will assist in selecting an expert whose specialization in civil protection meets the needs of your organization, for instance as a short-term instructor. Another possibility would be to invite a number of experts to participate as observers in an exercise.

The EU Exchange of Experts Program also offers hosts the chance to make new contacts, to enter into new partnerships and to extend existing networks.

You can find detailed instructions about the registration process on page 9 and our website [www.exchangeofexperts.eu](http://www.exchangeofexperts.eu). Please also refer to the **EU Exchange of Experts Guidelines**.

* Austria	Finland	Latvia	Portugal
Belgium	France	Liechtenstein	Romania
Bulgaria	Germany	Lithuania	Slovakia
** Croatia	Greece	Luxembourg	Slovenia
Cyprus	Hungary	Malta	Spain
Czech Republic	Iceland	Netherlands	Sweden
Denmark	Ireland	Norway	United Kingdom
Estonia	Italy	Poland	



- Taking part as a guest expert

Are you a **civil protection expert** who would like to learn about the techniques and working methods practised in other organisations while representing your institution abroad? Then the EU Exchange of Experts Program offers you an excellent opportunity to **exchange experiences at operative, tactical, scientific and planning/administrative level**. You can take part on your own or with a small group (e.g. 2 - 10 persons).

Since the EU Exchange of Experts program is part of the Community Mechanism, registrations from the following will receive special consideration:

- (deputy) intervention team leaders
- liaison officers
- technical experts
- assessment experts
- coordinators (and members of coordination teams)
- key national contact point staff

The exchange will give you an **insight into your host's intervention structures**. You will be able to take part in exercises as an observer, visit training facilities, take part in courses or pass on your specialist knowledge by training others. Throughout your stay, you will have the opportunity to meet with other experts and make new contacts and perhaps initiate more extensive partnerships with your host organization. Your individual interests will be gladly taken into account by the hosts.

For more information on participation in the EU Exchange of Experts Program, go to our website: [www.exchangeofexperts.eu](http://www.exchangeofexperts.eu).





# Registration

There are two different registration forms, one for guests and one for hosts. They are divided into two parts:

On the Internet at [www.exchangeofexperts.eu](http://www.exchangeofexperts.eu) you will find a **fill-in registration form**. Once completed, the registration form must be sent to your National Training Coordinator **online** or **by fax/post**.

If you are registering as a group, each expert must fill in a separate registration form and note the names of the other group members on the form.

**A.** In part A, you are asked to provide contact details, and your foreign language skills. A good level of English or your host country's language is a prerequisite for your participation in the exchange.

**B.** In part B, you are requested to provide details concerning your professional background, as well as your motivation for participation in the exchange, and what you desire in an expert/host. If you have pre-selected an exchange partner, enter the name(s) and contact information on the registration form. Next, you are asked to indicate your preferred dates for the exchange. Your registration has an increased likelihood of success when you provide several dates, unless your exchange is linked to a specific event.

In the event that you are unexpectedly prevented from taking part in the exchange, you are requested to provide the name of a replacement candidate. This information is mandatory, and will be considered binding; it ensures that the scheduled exchange continues according to plan.

Please note that only complete registrations that meet the **EU exchange of experts guidelines** can be considered.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact the THW program coordinators.



# The next steps



- **A. For guests**

Once your registration has been received you will be sent an acknowledgement of receipt by email. Over the next few months the programme coordinators at THW will look for a **suitable host** for you, provided you have not already suggested a host yourself. If a host suggested by you is not available, we reserve the right to suggest alternatives.

Following the examination and final approval of the proposed exchange by the European Commission, the program coordinators will begin the arrangements for transportation and accommodation.

You will receive your tickets and all other necessary documents in good time before your departure.

**Please note:** Changes to travel dates or programme content are only possible in exceptional cases and must be approved by the programme coordinators and by the European Commission.

### **Meeting your costs**

The programme coordinators will pay for your travel and lodging out of project funds in accordance with the standards stipulated by the European Commission. Your ticket and accommodation will be booked and paid for before your exchange visit begins.

### **Reporting on your experience**

The programme coordinators are keen to keep refining the EU Exchange of Experts Program. Your evaluation plays an important part in this process.

The more feedback we receive, the greater our ability is to improve the design of the exchange system.

Online evaluation forms for experts are available on the website.

Following the exchange, the expert will each receive a certificate of participation from the EU Exchange of Experts program.

# The next steps



- **B. For hosts**

Once the programme coordinators have received your offer from the National Training Coordinators you will be sent an acknowledgement of receipt.

They will then look for a suitable guest expert for you.

The programme coordinators will also be happy to assist you - if you so wish - in **developing an exchange schedule**. This will be discussed first with the guest expert and then agreed with the European Commission. You will of course be given your guests' contact details as soon as possible so that you can contact each other before the exchange visit.

As soon as your guest experts' transport and accommodation have been booked, the programme coordinators will send you their travel dates. The programme coordinators are always grateful for suggestions regarding accommodation for guest experts.

**Please note:** If, contrary to expectations, the exchange schedule approved by the European Commission cannot be implemented, the programme coordinators will ask the host organisation to propose an alternative exchange schedule of the same standard.

## **Financial matters**

The cost of your guests' outward and return travel and accommodation will be met by the EU exchange of experts system in accordance with the standards stipulated by the European Commission.

## **Reporting on your experience**

Your experiences as a host organisation are very useful. In order to achieve long-term results from the EU Exchange of Experts Program and to keep improving the system, the programme coordinators rely on your evaluation. Online evaluation forms for hosts are available on the web site. After the exchange, the host will receive a certificate of participation from the EU Exchange of Experts program.



# Information



- More information available online

On the internet you'll find further information about the EU Exchange of Experts Program: Background information, the programme guidelines, field reports, a userfriendly online registration area, a blog area where you can discuss with other participants and lots of interesting links.

The programme coordinators at THW are of course happy to help if you need further information:

Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW)

**Heike Enderes**

and **Marcia Renée Shelton**

phone: +49 228 940 -1124 /1819

fax: +49 228 940 - 1064

***info@exchangeofexperts.eu***

***www.exchangeofexperts.eu***

*To learn more about civil protection  
in Europe:*

*ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/index.htm*



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environment



# Comments from participants

"Through this "Exchange of Experts" program, we had the opportunity to attend a program organized according to our needs... we felt really welcome by the host organization. The program was made exactly according to our needs as described in our application. Very useful was the combination of presentations and indoor discussion followed by on-site visits to the related centers... Extensive dialogue in a friendly environment helped us understand the civil protection system in Styria in depth."

*Expert from Greece*

"...the exchange of experiences between the French, Portuguese and Polish firefighters allowed the assimilation of a great deal of information about the reality in each country, the interventions in different kinds of risks (forest fires, storms, chemical risks, compartment fires, etc.) and the operational answer of different civil protection models."

*Expert from Poland*

"...the organization and support provided to participants of the event was utterly impressive! Every detail was prepared, every need foreseen and taken care of with great effort. We found the event very inspirational, and brought back many valuable information, contacts and even partnership proposals. Thank you very much for enabling this with your support."

*Expert from Slovakia*

● Contact:  
Heike Enderes und Marcia Renée Shelton  
**Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW)**

Provinzialstrasse 93 · D-53127 Bonn, Germany  
Phone: + 49 228 940 - 11 24 - Fax: + 49 228 940 -1064  
e-mail: [info@exchangeofexperts.eu](mailto:info@exchangeofexperts.eu)

For further information, please visit:  
**[www.exchangeofexperts.eu](http://www.exchangeofexperts.eu)**  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/index.htm>