



EXCHANGE OF EXPERTS IN CIVIL PROTECTION PROGRAMME

GUIDELINES

Introduction

The **Union Civil Protection Mechanism** was established in 2001, fostering cooperation among national civil protection authorities across Europe. The Mechanism aims to facilitate coordination in the field of civil protection, in order to improve the effectiveness of the system for prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters in Europe and elsewhere.

The Exchange of Experts in Civil Protection programme allows civil protection experts to gain experience and knowledge through exchanges in other UCPM Member States/Participating States. Exchanges can also take place for civil protection experts from certain other countries.

Through exchanges, experts can see first-hand how different national systems operate; familiarize themselves with techniques used; study the approaches taken by other emergency services; and, if necessary, to attend or provide courses requiring specific expert knowledge not available in their home or host country.

The programme is funded by the European Commission and administered by CN APELL-RO in consortium with IGSU (General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations).

1. SELECTION CRITERIA

1.1. Participating Countries

The Exchange of Experts programme is open to professional experts and volunteers from the administrations concerned with any aspect of civil protection and environmental emergencies, which are resident in the Member States/Participating States of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, candidate countries, the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland) plus the following eligible countries:

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and "Kosovo"¹

Eastern Neighborhood countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine;

Southern Neighborhood countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine², Tunisia.^{3 4}

1.2 Exchanges

An exchange would typically be a secondment to a host country and host organisation to observe the operational structures, learn different techniques and study the approaches taken by other emergency services, but could also additionally comprise attendance or training to gain expert knowledge not available in your country.

Experts may be exchanged individually or in a small group. The maximum number of experts

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

² This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

³ At present, Experts from eligible third countries are only exchanged to host organisations in Member States/Participating States.

⁴ For applications from non-UCPM Member States/Participating States please contact the Programme Team for further information.

per group is 10, for exchanges with participation of experts from multiple eligible countries. The length of the exchange may vary from a minimum of a few days to up to three months. The typical length is generally **five working days**. The actual time period and length of an exchange will depend upon type of exchange proposed and the resources available to the respective host organisation. Experts may be exchanged to institutes or organisations, such as government departments, emergency services, and scientific institutes with a recognised role in civil protection. Experts may visit one or more organisations in one or more countries (though, the last not during the same exchange), depending upon the scope of the exchange.

Only costs related to the secondment to civil protection institutions (competent bodies at the national, regional, or local level or bodies having a recognised role in relation to civil protection) of the participating countries and visits to the ERCC are eligible.

1.3. Target groups for participation

It is required that candidates are:

- Prevention and preparedness experts
- Intervention team leaders, deputy intervention team leaders and liaison officers
- Technical experts
- Assessment experts
- Members of coordination teams
- Staff in charge of coordination
- Key national contact point
- Staff responsible for receiving/handling emergency calls and their trainers
- Staff involved with policy making on disaster management

Priority will be given to the following areas:

- Cross-border cooperation
- Communication and awareness-raising
- Fires, including forest fires, ground and aerial fire-fighting
- Disaster management (such as prevention reporting obligations, operational coordination, capability development, international deployment)
- New and emerging threats
- Participation from EoE programme countries with lower participation rates

Experts should come from operational or scientific institutions, such as

- Governmental departments
- Emergency Services (professional or volunteer)
- Scientific Institutes having a recognised role in civil protection.

1.4. Important considerations

- For the exchanges approved during the COVID-19 situation in the world, COVID-19 safety measures will be in place by the Host organization depending on the national situation (including PCR tests, masks, disinfection, ventilation in facilities, physical distancing, etc.) and need to be strictly followed throughout the duration of the exchange.

- The expert approved for the exchange takes care of all health-related precautionary measures from his/her side.
- The expenses of COVID-19 self-isolation or quarantine in the host country should be borne by the sending organization.
- Equal opportunities will be given to men and women. The Programme explicitly encourages the participation of female experts.
- Experts applying to the Programme should be able to converse in English and/or the language of the host nation to ensure smooth communication⁵.

2. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- Each candidate for an exchange is **required to individually complete the online application form** on the website: www.exchangeofexperts.eu. **We strongly recommend you contact your National Training Coordinator for guidance before submitting the application.**
- The application should contain a **clear and focused motivation statement**. The motivation statement should include a **list of the subject areas** which are to be covered during the exchange.
- The **expected results** and the benefit for the host organisation have to be defined.
- The application should include a proposal for **further steps which will be carried out at the national level** to distribute/publicise the knowledge and experience gained in the exchange.
- The **reasons for choosing a specific country or organisation** should be closely linked to the objective of the exchange.
- Before submitting the application, you will be requested to confirm that all the details completed in the form are correct, to agree with the conditions from the programme guidelines, to confirm holding the appropriate language skills and to give your consent for the processing your personal data as explained in the programme privacy statement.
- Upon submitting the application, you will receive by email the application in PDF format: the application must be sent for approval to the National Training Coordinator (NTC). Please refer to the list of NTCs available at <https://www.exchangeofexperts.eu/participation/programme-guidelines.php>
- The Programme Team will assist, if necessary, in selecting a host organisation for the expert and /or assist a host organisation in selecting experts. However, you are encouraged to liaise with your preferred host organisations/experts in advance.
- In cooperation, the host organisation and expert(s) develop an agenda and a suitable timeframe for the exchange. The Programme Team will send the proposal, consisting of the NTC-approved application(s) and the draft agenda to the European Commission for review and approval.
- When your application is approved, you will receive **credentials** to log in to your e-application to provide more information to help with the logistical arrangements (accommodation and travel arrangements).
- You will use the same credentials to access the **evaluation and field report form** upon completion of the exchange.

3. PLACEMENT PROCEDURE

Upon receiving the NTC-approved application, the Programme Team will review the candidate's request for an exchange. The exchange comes under consideration when an organisation has consented to host the candidate(s).

⁵ An interpreter may be provided if necessary for the successful completion of the exchange.

Following approval of the exchange by the European Commission, the Programme Team will notify all parties, and begin the logistical organisation of the exchange.

Please note: An exchange can only be initiated with the approval of the European Commission. Experts are responsible for obtaining the consent of their employer / employing organisation / institution for participation in the exchange.

The candidates will be given information about:

- The Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and the role of the Exchange of Experts programme within the UCPM and additional information pertaining to EU Training Courses
- Responsibilities and requirements of the exchange (documentation, financial matters etc.)

4. LOGISTICAL ORGANISATION OF THE EXCHANGE

4.1. Travel and accommodation arrangements

All travel documents such as flight tickets, train tickets and information relevant to the exchange will be sent out in a timely manner prior to the exchange.

Outward/Return Journey

- The Programme Team will reserve and purchase the necessary airline tickets and/or train tickets.

Transfers

- Transfer of experts from/to the airport is also covered by the Programme. This will be made with public transportation (when not available, taxis may be considered). The transfer can be organized by the Host organisation, in which case the Programme can reimburse the transfer costs by request).
- **Other transfers** required for the activity such as in-country trips to visit specific sites/institutions are not covered by the Programme and the Host organisation is invited to make proper arrangements in this respect.

Accommodation

- The Programme Team will select, book and procure the necessary accommodations for the duration of the exchange⁶.
- The Host organisation is kindly asked to assist the Programme team in identifying and making appropriate arrangements for lodging of the experts for which the Programme will cover the expenses.

Please note that the Programme Team needs sufficient time to make the mentioned arrangements (min. 2 months and max. 6 months) from the receiving of Commission's approval of the exchange.

4.2. Unforeseen events and cancellations If an expert should be prevented from attending an organised exchange, it is the responsibility of the expert to:

- Inform the Programme Team immediately by phone or email.
- Contact the airline if the initial flight, or any part of the flight schedule, will be missed.
- Inform the contracted hotel.
- Written justification for each cancellation (a supervisor's statement/a physician's certificate) is mandatory and has to be sent to the Programme Team who forwards it to the European Commission for review.

⁶ This will generally be a standard single room with breakfast. Whenever possible, a half-board arrangement (breakfast and dinner) will be made in the lodgings in which the expert is staying.

- Subject to time and budget restraints, the expert's sending institution/organisation will undertake to provide a substitute, in order to ensure that the exchange will take place.
- The substitute expert will be required to complete the online application form and secure the NTC's official approval.

Please note: In cases of unaccountable absence or inadequate justification, the Exchange of Experts Programme reserves the right to invoice the expert or the expert's organisation for unrecoverable expenses made on behalf of the cancelling expert.

5. EXCHANGE AUTHENTICATION PROCEDURE

Evaluation **Experts are required to complete an evaluation form during the exchange.**

The evaluation must be completed by the expert using the Expert Evaluation Form on the website within one week after the completion of the exchange. The evaluation is a prerequisite for the issuance of a certificate and will be used as a basis for quality assessment of the exchange.

Attendance List As proof of involvement in an exchange, the host organisation will maintain a list of participants. The **Attendance List must be filled induring the exchange and signed by all exchanged experts and the host organisation.** The host organisation must send the list of participants to the Programme Team within one week after the end of the exchange.

Field Reports The Exchange of Experts **requires participants in the programme to prepare a report within 30 days after the exchange is completed** (a template will be provided in advance). This report should describe the activities under-taken, the lessons learned, the results achieved and benefits of the exchange. In case of group exchanges the experts coming from the same organization are required to **develop a joint Field report**. As a practice, joint reports were made in the past even in case of multinational group exchanges, therefore the experts are encouraged to do so. The experts must fill-in the template of the Field report and send it to the National Training Coordinator (NTC) for approval. Only then the Field Report can be submitted on the platform, while a confirmation e-mail of the NTC approval will be forwarded to the Programme Team as a last step for a successful completion of the programme.

Certificate of Participation Upon the successful completion of the programme, the experts and host organisations will receive a certificate of participation in the Exchange of Experts Programme. A certificate will be issued when all relevant exchange documents have been submitted to and validated by the Programme Team (attendance list, evaluation form, field report endorsed by the NTC, etc.). The certificate will be sent in copy to the NTC.

6. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Exchange of Experts in civil protection programme is funded by the European Commission. The eligible expenses will be funded through the project budget according to EU regulations.

7. LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

- Experts participating in the programme are responsible for their own safety and insurance coverage (e.g., health insurance, accident insurance, liability insurance). The CN APELL-RO shall be liable only in the event of damages arising from willful misconduct or gross negligence caused by its members (Members defined as Programme team employees) actions. Damage to life, limb and health remain subject to the statutory provisions governing liability.
- If a privately-owned motor vehicle or rental car is used in the course of an exchange, neither the European Commission nor the CN APELL-RO will be held liable for damages to vehicle, driver or third parties.
- In instances whereby a privately-owned motor vehicle or rental vehicle is used, the driver/owner must be in possession of a valid driver licence and insurance policy that covers all liability under civil law.

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