



European Medical Corps

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

9 Member States have committed medical teams, mobile laboratories, and logistical support teams to the European Medical Corps

The European Medical Corps is the new framework for mobilising medical and public health experts and teams for preparedness or response operations inside or outside the EU.

Two teams were already mobilised during the Ebola outbreak.

16 people were evacuated using the EU MEDEVAC System



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Key messages

- At the height of the **Ebola crisis in West Africa**, the acute shortage of trained medical teams ready for deployment for health emergency response became an apparent gap in the international response.
- As a direct follow up, the European Union has set up a **European Medical Corps (EMC)** through which teams and equipment from the EU Member States can be rapidly deployed to provide medical assistance and public health expertise in response to emergencies inside and outside the EU.
- The EMC is part of the existing **European Emergency Response Capacity** (also known as voluntary pool), established under the **EU Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM)**.
- To be part of the EMC, the teams need to undergo a certification process to make sure that they meet the strict quality criteria and that they are trained to work within the international coordination framework. In return they benefit from **EU financial support**.
- By January 2016, **nine Member States** have already offered teams and equipment to the European Medical Corps (BE, LU, ES, DE, CZ, FR, NL, FI, SE).

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The European Medical Corps

Background

The Ebola virus disease outbreak showed important gaps in the international and the European response: the difficulty to quickly deploy medical staff and deal with the logistical & management challenges. This led Germany and France in late 2014 to propose a "White Helmets" initiative, which laid the foundation of the European Medical Corps (EMC).



© German Red Cross

The EMC is the new framework for mobilising medical and public health experts and teams for preparedness or response operations inside and outside the EU. The EMC will be Europe's contribution to the Global Health Emergency Workforce being set up under the helm of the World Health Organization (WHO). Therefore, work on all strands of the EMC is carried out in close cooperation with the WHO.



© Emergency Response Team, Czech Republic

It will significantly increase the availability of doctors and medical equipment in response to emergencies, and will also allow for better planning and preparations for response to emergencies with health consequences. It will create a European Medical assistance that meets requisite levels of quality. Synergies at the operational level will be fully exploited by deploying multi-sectorial teams and teams that complement each other (i.e. a medical team together with a mobile laboratory and a logistical support unit).

European Medical Corps composition

The EMC will include emergency medical and public health teams, mobile biosafety laboratories, medical evacuation capacities, medical assessment and coordination experts and logistical support teams. These teams could be mobilised for any type of emergency with health consequences, at short notice, when needed:

- **Emergency medical teams** provide direct medical care to the population affected by a disaster. These teams have to meet the high standards set up at [WHO](#) level for international deployments. So far, **Spain, France** and the **Czech Republic have committed teams under this category**. **Germany** will also contribute with an isolation field hospital provided by the German Red Cross
- **Public Health teams** may be deployed to assess the situation and analyse the public health risk, to assess needs, to advice on measures to be taken, or to carry out specific tasks (i.e. vaccination campaigns, training). They will be formed ad-hoc by experts from various participating states, and from the European [Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](#).



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- **Mobile biosafety laboratories** have been developed and deployed during the Ebola outbreak response. Some of them have received EU funding (full financing for the [European Mobile Labs](#) and the EU-West Africa Mobile Laboratory by the [EuropeAid Cooperation Office](#); partial financing for the Belgian B-Life laboratory through the [EU Research Programme](#) and the EU CPM). As part of the EMC, these labs remain available for future missions. So far, **Belgium** committed its B-Life Lab (Biological Light Fieldable Laboratory for Emergencies), and **Germany** is also making available the mobile laboratory developed by the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine.



© EMLab, Bernhard-Nocht-Institute for Tropical Medicine, Germany

- **Medical evacuation capacities** are key for mobilising humanitarian and medical workers to go to areas affected by diseases or other disasters. Evacuation capacities were initially a bottleneck during the Ebola response. Therefore, the EU has developed a Medical Evacuation system for international humanitarian workers, in close partnership with the WHO, Member States, and private organisations. **Luxembourg** was among the first EU Member States to commit specialised planes to the EMC.

- **Medical assessment and coordination experts** are needed to support the overall coordination structures and processes put in place by the host country or by the UN/WHO in support of the host country government. Specific training will be provided to such experts.

- Response operations in all types of disasters are conditional on good **logistical support and coordination** which therefore, represents a key component of the EMC. Logistic teams have been committed so far by **Germany, Finland, the Netherlands** and **Sweden**.



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How will the European Medical Corps operate?



© ESCRIM Field Hospital, France

Once committed by the EU Member States, the teams undergo a quality assurance/certification process. Following a successful certification process, a medical response capacity is registered in the EMC, and it becomes available for deployment in EU emergency response operations.

The deployment of the medical teams is coordinated by the European Commission's [Emergency Response Coordination Centre \(ERCC\)](#), the operational hub of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Member States retain the final decision on deployment and can opt out of a mission if necessary.

In the field, the teams will be coordinated through the coordination platform set up for the concrete emergency on the ground, managed by the relevant authorities of affected state or under the UN coordination system.



EU's financial support

Grants for upgrading the teams to an enhanced status of readiness, quality and availability are available ("adaptation grants" – up to 100% financing from the EU budget). Activities related to the certification of teams, including training, exercises and workshops, can also be fully supported by the EU. Once part of the EMC, transport grants for deployments of the teams to emergencies of up to 85% are available.

Examples of deployments

Belgian laboratory to fight Ebola in Guinea

More than thirty Belgian experts were deployed to N'Zérékoré, Guinea, from December 2014 to March 2015. Their efforts within the B-Life laboratory have contributed to saving lives and putting a halt to new cases in the region. The B-Life laboratory also supported clinical research on drugs for the treatment of Ebola patients. It benefitted from the financial support of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism of around 318.000 EUR in transport co-financing grants.



© B-Life, Belgium

Luxembourg medical evacuation solution



© Luxembourg Air Rescue

Luxembourg was among the first EU Member States that decided to contribute to building a European Ebola medical evacuation capacity. The planes already used for routine medical evacuations were adapted, with EU financial support, to allow for the evacuation of Ebola patients. This capacity has been used for two evacuations from Sierra Leone to Europe. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism co-financed with over 1,4 million EUR the upgrade of the planes and the evacuations.

Overview of commitments

TYPES OF TEAMS	COMMITTED
Emergency Medical Teams	CZ x 1 (Type 1) ES x 1 (Type 2) FR x 1 (Type 2) DE (Red Cross) x 1
Public health teams	Experts will be nominated for mission by Participating States & ECDC
Mobile biosafety laboratories	BE x 1 DE x 1
Medical evacuation capacities	LU x1
Medical assessment and coordination experts	Experts will be nominated for mission by Participating States
Logistical support teams for medical operations and coordination	DE x2 FI x1 SE x1 NL x 1



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