

## NATO Civil Emergency Response and Exercises: Why, What, How, Who?

The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) is NATO's mechanism to respond to civil emergencies. It can be activated in natural and man-made disasters as well as complex crises and conflict.

To deliver fast and coherent help on behalf of the Alliance, the EADRCC works closely with civilian and military first responders, including the NATO Allies and partners, United Nations organisations and the European Union.

The EADRCC organises emergency management exercises that bring together responders, policy-makers, service members, innovators and scientists to get ahead of crises together, to build interoperability and improve coordination.

### NATO's solidarity tool

In case of an emergency, the EADRCC can be activated to coordinate international assistance to NATO Allies and partners. The Centre receives requests for help from the affected country, distributes them to NATO Allies and partners, and coordinates the response where necessary. The Centre monitors the situation in the affected area, delivery dates and details, and assistance still required. The Centre also tracks the assistance offered bilaterally or through other international mechanisms. Regular situation reports are shared with Allies and partners. By doing so, the EADRCC ensures its work supports the broader international response in a timely and well-coordinated way.

The **COVID-19 pandemic** was the EADRCC's largest ever logistical operation. NATO Allies and partners provided commercial and military airlift, set up field hospitals, shared medical expertise, and donated life-saving assistance to cope with the pandemic. A special Pandemic Response Trust Fund managed by the EADRCC enabled this work. More than 20 Allies and partners have benefitted from NATO's support to pandemic response.

The EADRCC has also helped deliver essential assistance to Ukraine, to help cope with Russia's aggression. The Centre has facilitated the delivery of humanitarian aid to Ukraine, including ambulances, X-ray machines and ventilators, as well as paramedic training and medical capacity-building.

Following the **earthquakes that hit Türkiye** in early 2023, the EADRCC helped deliver blankets, pieces of medical equipment, and more than 1000 temporary housing containers and tents to the worst-affected zones. The Centre also facilitated the creation of an air bridge to afflicted areas, which ensured timely assistance.

### Training and exercises

The EADRCC has 20+ years of experience in organising civilian-led emergency management exercises that have reached 10,000+ professionals. These are among the world's largest emergency management training events.



## Bulgaria 2025

The 20<sup>th</sup> NATO Emergency Management Exercise, BULGARIA 2025, is taking place in Bulgaria from 7 to 12 September 2025.

The operational component (in Montana), with around 1,000 participants, will focus on building interoperability in responding to a complex crisis, which includes natural disasters, extreme weather events, chemical and radiological incidents, disinformation threats, civil-military cooperation in the field and at the strategic level, and multilateral crisis coordination. Some 1000 civilian and military first responders, researchers, volunteers, evaluators and observers will take part. Together, they will:

### ***Elevate their skills***

- Train with the best emergency responders from 21 countries and multiple international organisations (NATO, EU, UN).
- Solve complex, realistic problems.
- Practice and work with diverse civilian and military stakeholders.

### ***Gain actionable insights***

- Meet and work with experts and leaders in disaster response and recovery, business continuity and resilience.
- Connect with 600+ fellow practitioners from four continents.
- Build relationships with colleagues and industry innovators.
- Find collaborators.

### ***Stay ahead of emerging threats and new technologies***

- Learn how emerging disruptive technologies are changing disaster management – and what it means for their work in the future.
- A strategic component of the exercise will run in parallel, in Sofia. The training audience - decision-makers - will address civil-military coordination in emergencies, monitoring and response to information threats, preparedness-building and whole-of-government approach to crisis management.
- Registered exercise participants (operational teams, planners, researchers, observers, guests) come from the following countries:

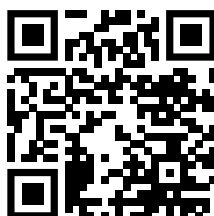
**NATO Allies:** Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, United Kingdom, United States

**Partners:** Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Japan, Jordan, Iraq, Ireland, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Republic of Moldova, Tunisia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, European Union, UN agencies.

Rigorous evaluation is an integral part of this exercise. Lessons will be captured and shared at a Lessons Learned conference that will take place in February 2026. A final exercise report will be shared with the participants.



For more information:



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