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EU Handbook

on assistance interventions

in the frame of the

Community Mechanism for

Cooperation in civil protection

Compiled from Member States' experts contributions and edited by

European Commission

Environment Directorate-General

Civil Protection unit D3

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1. Introduction

The procedures in this handbook are subsidiary to national rules or guidelines applicable for response teams or experts and thus only summarise regulations that are peculiar for response in the framework of the Community mechanism.

The mechanism as introduced by the COUNCIL DECISION of 23 October 2001 to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions (see Annex 11.1) is intended to provide support in the event of major emergencies which may require urgent response action. It aims at facilitating the mobilisation of intervention teams, experts and other resources, as required, through a reinforced Community civil protection structure consisting of a monitoring and information centre and a common emergency communication and information system. It will also provide an opportunity for collecting validated emergency information, for disseminating that information to the Participants in the mechanisms and for sharing lessons learnt from interventions.

The mechanism has to take due account of the relevant Community legislation and international commitments. The Decision therefore does not affect the reciprocal rights and obligations of the Participants in the mechanisms under bilateral or multilateral treaties, which relate to the matters covered by the Decision.

In the event of a major emergency within the Community, or imminent threat thereof, which causes, or is capable of causing, transboundary effects or which may result in a call for assistance from one or more Participants in the mechanisms, there is a need for relevant notification to be made as appropriate through an established reliable common emergency communication and information system

Preparatory measures need to be taken at Participants in the mechanism and Community level to enable assistance intervention teams in emergencies to be mobilised rapidly and coordinated with the requisite flexibility and to ensure, through a training programme, the effective response capability and complementarity of assessment or coordination teams, intervention teams and other resources, as appropriate. Other preparatory measures would include pooling of information related to necessary medical resources and stimulation of the use of new technologies

A mechanism should make it possible to mobilise, and facilitate coordination of, assistance interventions in order to help ensure better protection primarily of people but also of the environment and property, including cultural heritage, thereby reducing loss of human life, injury, material damage, economic and environmental damage, and making achievement of the objectives of social cohesion and solidarity more tangible.

Assistance interventions would either be conducted autonomously or as a contribution to an operation led by an international organisation, for which case the Community should develop its relations with the relevant global and regional international organisations.

To facilitate this, the regulation in this handbook are closely connected to and in part taken from other internally valid guidelines like:

- International Travel and Health, World Health Organisation, Geneva, 2002
- International Search and Rescue Response Guidelines (INSARAG), UN OCHA, 2000
- UNDAC Field Handbook, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNITED NATIONS DISASTER ASSESSMENT AND COORDINATION, United Nations, 3. Edition (printed 2000)

2. How to use this handbook

This handbook should provide practical guidance and recommendations for missions and interventions of individuals and teams within the Community Mechanisms to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance operations.

It encompasses the crucial items to prepare for and execute such kind of mission and intervention. The size and format of this book enable a use in an operation and provide information during every phase of the operation. Therefore its structure is oriented to the cycle of a mission (mission cycle, see fig.1).

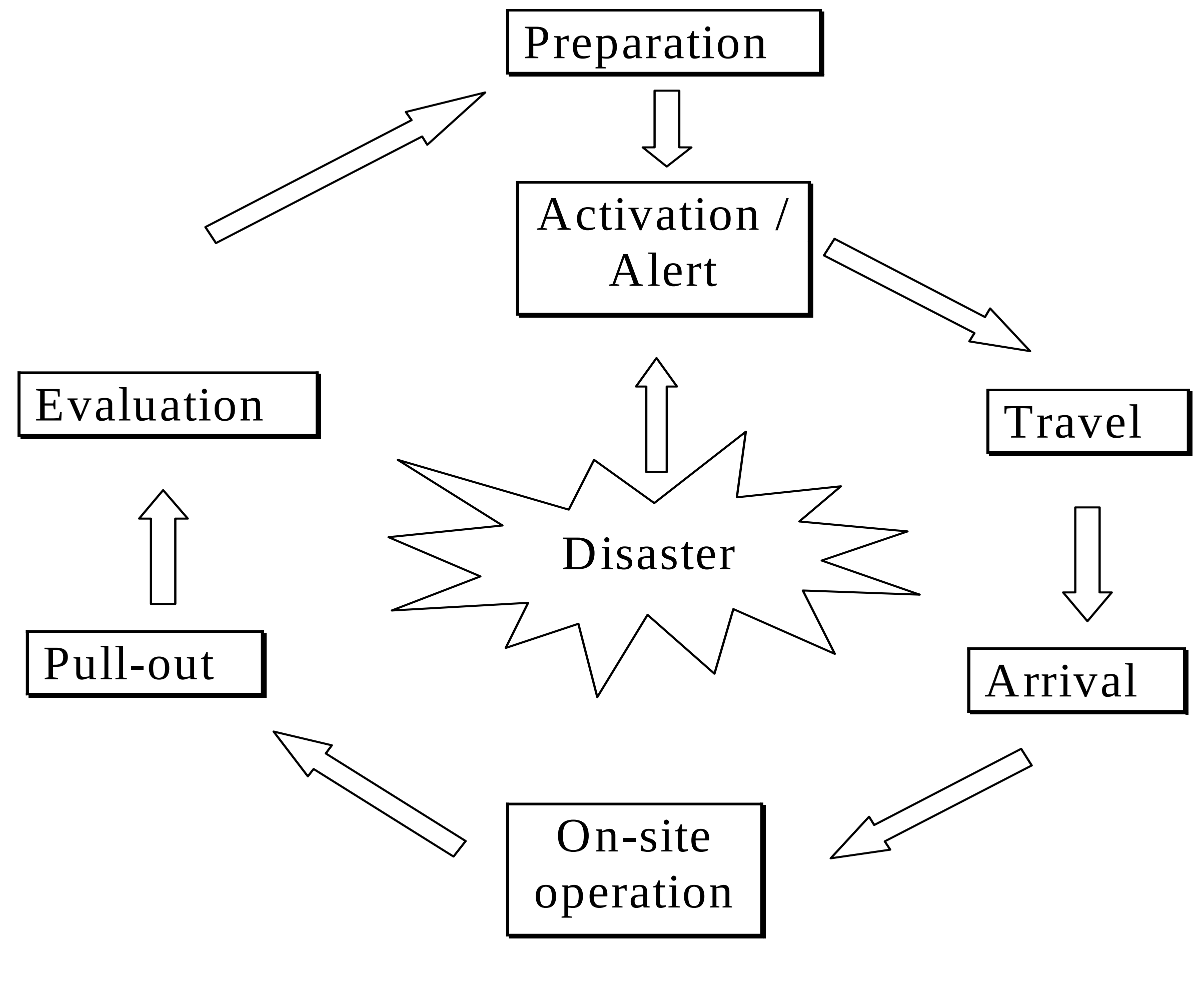

Fig. 1: Mission cycle, timely structure of response

Starting and or ending point is the preparation phase. Every operation should be well prepared and the lessons learned at the end of any mission or intervention should improve the preparation of the next one.

The operation itself starts with the activation or alert phase. This phase encompasses the identification of the appropriate personnel and means to execute an operation and the mobilisation and dispatch of individuals or teams. Teams should come together at an assembly point and get a first briefing, as far as information is already available. The necessary arrangements for visa and permits have to be taken as well as the logistical provisions. These should include those, if applicable, for passing through transit countries.

In the travel phase, the individuals or teams undertake all steps to reach the affected country. This encompasses, if necessary, the crossing of one or more transit countries.

At arrival in the affected country, visa and custom procedures should easily be passed with help from the reception centre. A first briefing on the situation will take place there, followed by the transport to the scene (including the transport of sensitive materials). First contacts to the competent authority and representations should be taken, if possible through the coordinator available for the mechanism. Accommodation and food is needed as well as the provisions to get to the mobilisation area or base of operations as soon as possible.

The on-site operation phase is characterised by the tasks to be fulfilled and the coordination with all partners on scene, in particular with the local authority.

The decision to go out, the arrangements to travel back, and the hand-over procedure take place in the pull-out phase.

In the evaluation phase, all elements of an operation should be checked to improve all procedures for the benefit of participants in the mechanisms and the Commission using the Community Mechanism.

The results of this evaluation will appropriately update all rules and procedures to be applied particularly in the training within the Mechanism.

It is evident that all improvements will feed the update of this handbook, too.

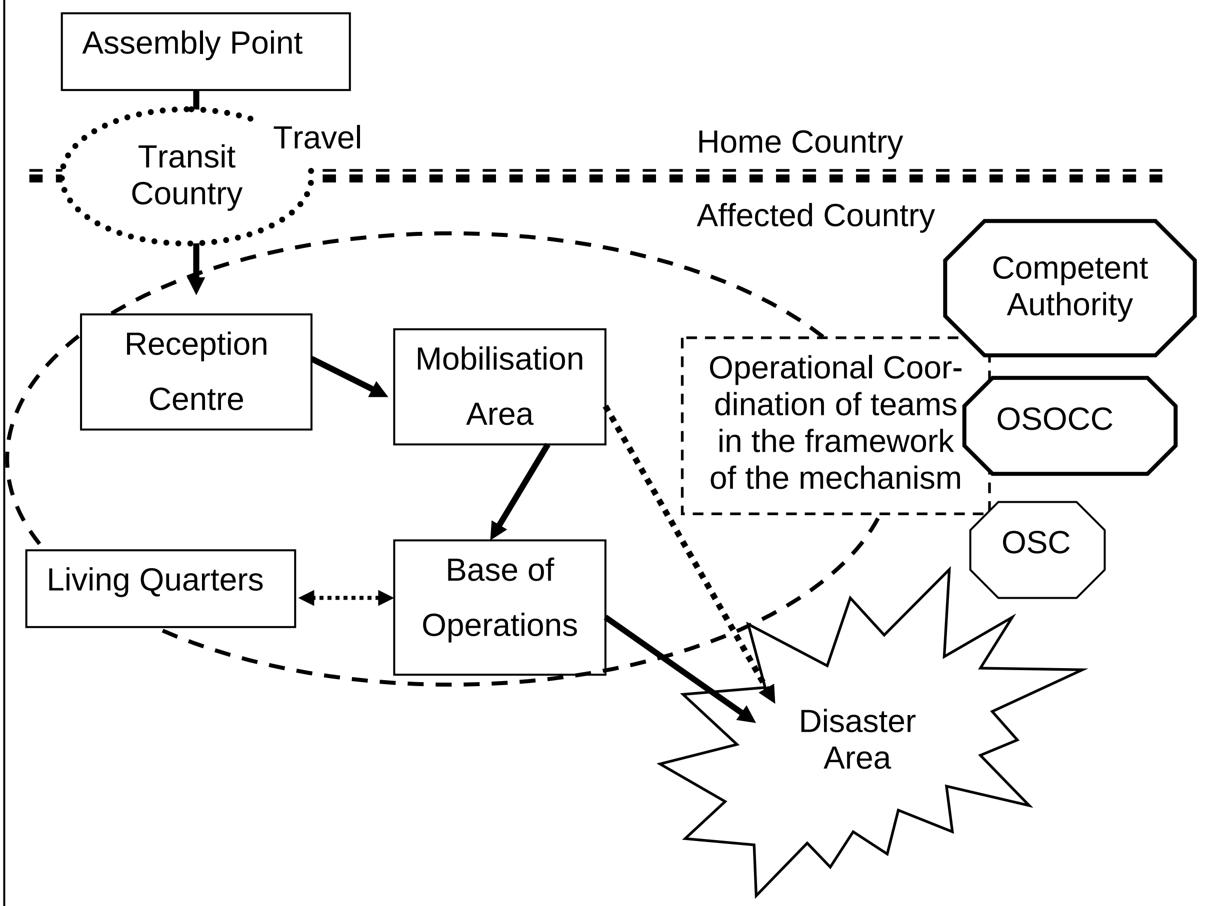

Fig. 2: Travel and Response of Community Teams: Spatial structure (Liaison and chain of command not shown)

The spatial structure of the travel, arrival, and on-site operational phase is shown in fig. 2. Differences may exist in several countries; this is just to be taken as an example. According to UNDAC definition, LEMA is the **L**ocal **E**mergency **M**anagement **A**uthority (in some cases also defined as **M**anagement **A**gency).

3. Regulatory Background

The “Mechanism” was introduced by the COUNCIL DECISION of 23 October 2001 establishing a Community mechanism to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions (annex 11.1). This decision is in force since the 1. January 2002 and imposes obligations on the Commission as well as on Participants in the mechanisms. These obligations and the procedures to apply in this context have been laid down in the Common Rules, particularly on the following matters:

(a) resources available for assistance intervention,

(b) the **M**onitoring and **I**nformation **C**entre (MIC),

(c) the **C**ommon **E**mergency **C**ommunication and **I**nformation **S**ystem (CECIS),

(d) the assessment and/or coordination teams, as laid down in Article 4(c), including criteria for the selection of experts,

(e) the training programme,

(f) information on medical resources, and

(g) the interventions inside as well as outside the Community.

These Common Rules, established in the form of COMMISSION DECISIONs, are reproduced in annex 11.1.

A comprehensive description of the mechanism and the Commission’s Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) may be found in annex 11.1.

4. Preparation

Preparing for a mission or intervention is crucial for

- the individual expert or member of a team (see checklist in annex 11.7)
- a team (assessment and or coordination / intervention) in total (see checklist in annex 11.8).

It shall be noted that these lists are recommendations only and should help to check completeness of equipment. They do not replace existing regulations of participants in the mechanism or services dispatching personnel nor do they warrant any claim for supply with equipment.

The preparation is a three-phased approach:

- General mission preparedness
- Disaster related preparedness
- Location/situation peculiar issues

A Individual preparation

1. General mission preparedness

1.1 Health and Medical. The individual should be in general good health and have regular medical examination and certification for fitness to travel and work overseas. This includes preventive health measures (for example malaria prevention) as well as check of vaccinations. For the details see annex 11.5.

1.2 Family Matters. The following family and private matters should be taken care of:

- Will and testament
- Family arrangements when being sent on mission, particularly when there is a security risk
- Personal/family insurance
- Arrangements for paying bills and accounts
- Support for the family if required

1.3 Employment. Individuals should ensure that they have their employer's permission to take part in response; the employer should be prepared to accept that, due to circumstances beyond the individual's control, his/her return date might be subject to change. Arrangements should be made for extended replacement of the individual's work as necessary.

1.4 Documentation. Key travel and identity documents should be kept up to date, including passport and international driving licence. Some countries will not issue visas to a passport with less than one year or six months validity remaining. Also, some countries will not allow entry if passports contain visas or entry stamps of certain nations. Where national laws permit, more than one passport is an advantage when visas are required. Photocopies of key documents and several spare passport photos should be on hand.

1.5 Clothing. Clothing needs vary with task, climate, season, culture, terrain, and duration of mission. Most requirements can be met by using good quality clothing made from modern materials and adopting the layer principle, but certain items are vital to protect against extremes of weather and hazards such as sunburn, wind chill, and humidity. Careful assessment of climatic and other factors should be made once the mission area is known and appropriate clothing selected. The checklist in 11.2. contains a basic list of clothing to be considered.

1.6 Personal Welfare and Hygiene. Good hygiene on mission is vital for the health and welfare of both the individual and team colleagues. Please find a list of hygiene and welfare items for general guidance in the annex 11.7. Individuals should personalise this list to suit their own preferences, but the key issues are to stay as clean and tidy as possible, be comfortable, avoid boredom or distraction, and support personal and team morale.

1.7 Food. If necessary, food and liquid for the first 72 hours should be taken, with the necessary utensils. Dehydrated food is convenient to carry and can be prepared using a lightweight stove, but ensure that you can obtain the appropriate fuel. Some types of fuel, including gas cylinders, are not permitted on aircraft.

1.8 Papers and Office Supplies. A small personal office kit is extremely useful on most missions (individual missions only).

1.9 Regular checks of papers and the handbook to ensure the validity of necessary documents and proper handling of procedures in the case of activation within the mechanism are recommended.

1.10 Credit cards are used in most countries, but in others, particularly where the banking system has collapsed, cash is the only usable financial instrument. Traveller's Cheques are useful from a security point of view, but are not as negotiable as cash

In each case, the provision with a credit card, cash or traveller checks follows the established procedure in the participating States and services dispatching teams or experts. The knowledge about the procedure and about time needed to get provided with is of high importance.

2. Disaster related preparedness

There may be certain items that relate to specific technical functions or types of disaster that can be made ready before the exact location or scale of disaster is known. This includes handbooks, documentation, and specialist equipment.

3. Location/situation peculiar issues

When the alert has been given for a specific mission in a known location, the following should be addressed:

- Country/Regional data and maps
- Visas
- Currency
- Contact details
- Health hazards
- Climate/terrain/culture (for clothing and equipment selection)
- Security and safety
- Language (phrase books)

The lists in annex 11.7 are fairly comprehensive, but should be taken as re-commendation and modified to suit each individual's personal requirements. Moreover, they should be reviewed regularly, paying particular attention to important items such as medication and food. For small teams, these supplies should be available for each team member.

C Team preparation

1. General mission preparedness

The general mission preparedness of the team should be - at a first stage - the same as described above for an individual. Each member of a team has to take care for his personal preparation.

The team leader should – in addition - take the responsibility of the following issues (for further details see the checklist in annex 11.8):

<u>Papers and Office Supplies:</u> For the proper functioning of appropriate procedures within the team, sufficient paper, templates, forms, and supplies should be available. It is very important to maintain in particular the information flow.

<u>Money</u>: - *same as for individuals -.*

<u>Logistics:</u> It is important to identify, discuss, and define pre-departure agendas together with the team members, in particular logistical possibilities in the country affected. It should also exist an overview on transportation and supply kits (e.g. office kit, communication kit). Of high interest is a list on the immediate needs of the team after arrival in an affected country and a compilation of radio frequencies for communication. These lists should be established as soon as possible and forwarded via the MIC to the dispatching country.

2. Disaster Related Preparedness

If the objectives of a mission or an intervention fit in the range of the “normal” tasks of the team, no additional preparation is needed. If no precise information on the situation at the scene is known, the team should be prepared for all potential contingencies. In particular, all equipment and material should be to taken with. In any case, the equipment and material should be checked on a regular basis to ensure a proper use.

3. Location and Situation peculiar issues

In general, there is no difference between the topics mentioned in an individual mission and in a team mission or intervention. For a team, the influence of the climate on the proper functioning of the equipment and material is crucial. Also, the safety and security issues should be considered very carefully.

4. Briefing by the team leader

In addition to his personal preparation, the team leader should take care for some more issues to ensure that the team in its total is well prepared. Details are proposed in chapter 9.

5. Activation Phase

The procedure to dispatch intervention teams is laid down in the common rule on interventions, published as "Commission Decision on the Interventions inside and outside the Community" (see Annex 11.1).

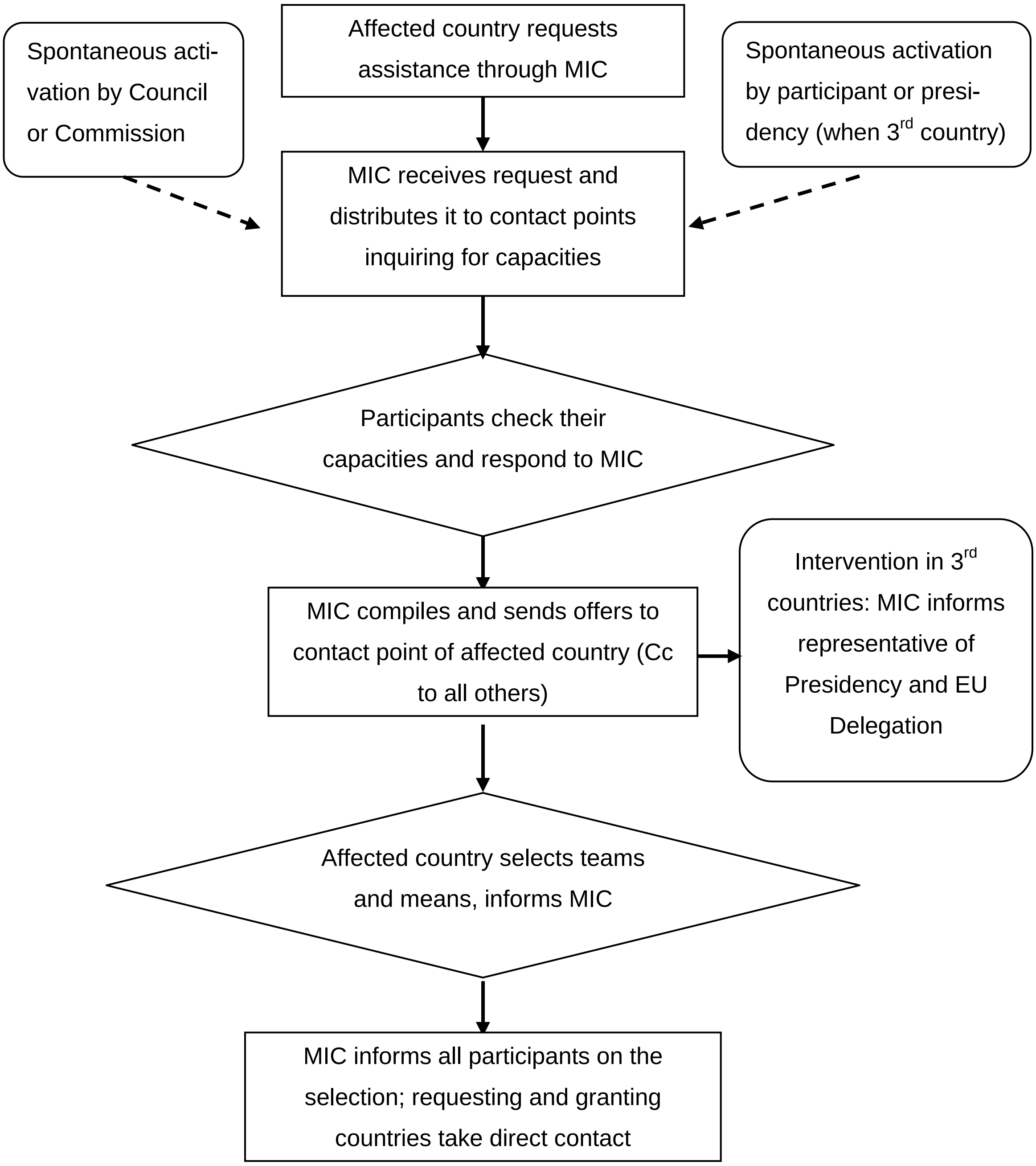

Fig. 3: Activation of assistance

5.1 Request for assistance

The Participant in the mechanism undergoing an emergency should notify the MIC as soon as possible about the situation. It shall, if needed, officially request Community assistance through the MIC, providing all relevant information concerning the situation, specific needs, the support requested and the area (if possible, its coordinates) where assistance is needed (see fig. 3).

Third Countries may officially request Community assistance via the Delegation of the European Commission or the Embassy of the Member State entrusted with the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Moreover, the Commission may decide on its own initiative to activate the MIC in order to propose Community assistance. This decision shall immediately be transmitted to the authorities of the affected country through the Delegation of the European Commission. The MIC will inform the Civil Protection permanent representative of the Member State entrusted with the Presidency of the Council of the European Union as well as all other Participants in the mechanisms of this decision.

If assistance in the form of expertise and/or intervention teams and means is requested, the requesting State shall inform the MIC about the area and time frame for assistance as well as about the proposed port of entrance. The requesting participant in the mechanism shall also define the base of operations and the on site command (OSC) managing the emergency at regional level and being in charge of receiving the support. Third countries should supply this information through the representative of the Member State entrusted with the Presidency of the Council.

Following co-ordination between the MIC and the requesting State (for third countries, including the representative of the EU Presidency), the MIC will dispatch the request for assistance to the Contact Points of participants in the mechanisms and to their competent authorities. In parallel, the MIC will, when relevant, inform the competent Commission services.

On the basis of the official request, participants in the mechanisms shall promptly inform the MIC about their current capacity for providing assistance. This information will immediately be compiled and transmitted by the MIC to the requesting State and provided as information to the other participants in the mechanisms. For interventions in Third Countries, the representative of the EU Presidency and the Delegation of the European Commission will be informed.

The requesting State shall inform the MIC on its choices made for proposed intervention teams and means. The MIC will inform the participants in the mechanism about this. Participants will keep the MIC regularly informed on the dispatch of the assistance teams and means provided.

When experts are requested, MIC will contact the Contact Points of selected participants on the basis on the ‘expert database’, enquiring about the availability of their experts. Once the Commission has selected amongst the available experts, agreement shall be found with the requesting State. The MIC will then take direct contact with the experts and proceed to dispatch them according to the rules established in the “Commission Decision on the assessment and/or co-ordination teams, including criteria for the selection of experts”.

The requesting State shall provide the MIC with an updated situation report in order for preparing a correct briefing for the experts before their dispatch.

5.2 Dispatch of teams or means for assistance

The requesting State will coordinate the details of assistance by teams and means directly with the State(s) granting the assistance. The partners will arrange for the point of entry (reception centre), customs handling, and route to the scene of deployment.

As stated in the introduction, the national and organisational rules and procedures govern the deployment of teams. Therefore, only additional advice is given here for work abroad.

5.2.1 Arrangement for teams going on mission

There may be certain items that relate to specific technical functions or types of disaster that can be made ready before the exact location or scale of disaster is known. This includes handbooks, documentation, and specialist equipment. The teams should prepare this equipment with support from their national responsible agency.

After notification for a mission in a known location, the following should be addressed:

- Country/Regional data and maps
- Visas
- Currency
- Contact details
- Health hazards
- Climate/terrain (for clothing and equipment selection)
- Security and safety
- Language (phrase books)

The lists reproduced in chapter 4 (Preparations) and its annex are fairly comprehensive, but should be modified to suit each individual's personal requirements and reviewed regularly, paying particular attention to perishable items such as medication and food.

Before leaving for a mission, the completeness of equipment should be checked on the basis of these lists.

5.2.2 Arrangements for equipment to be dispatched without personnel

When equipment or other response material like consumables are being dispatched, make sure to include directions for use, needed accessories, connecting cables or hoses, power supplies (watch out for different voltage), fittings, etc. Clearly state when the equipment is assumed to be returned after the end of the emergency, otherwise it might be accepted as donation as is normally the case for consumables like sand bags.

Care for adequate packing and needed papers for handling by customs; it might be preferable to include the official request for assistance by the country in emergency stating the purpose of the consignment for emergency response.

5.3 Dispatch of experts or assessment teams

On the basis on the existing ‘expert database’, the MIC will contact the selected states participating in the mechanism, enquiring about the availability of their experts. After agreement with the requesting State, the Commission will select amongst the available experts. The MIC then will take immediately direct contact with the experts and proceed to dispatch them; all participants will be informed through their Contact Points on the selection made and on the dispatch.

The dispatch procedure followed by the MIC will be based on the “Confirmation Relating to the Secondment of Experts” currently used by the Commission in emergency situations and which covers e.g. the following:

- written confirmation of the mission;
- the objectives of the mission;
- the envisaged duration of the mission;
- the local contact person information;
- the insurance condition coverage;
- the daily compensation allowance to cover expenses;
- the specific payment conditions for travel expenses;
- Guidelines for technical experts, assessment experts, coordination experts and Heads.

Further arrangements for experts and assessment teams are equivalent to the procedures for intervention teams as described in chapter 5.2.1.

5.4 Confirmation of dispatch

The assistance granting state should inform the MIC when the teams or means have been dispatched and have left their home country.

6. Travel Phase

The travel phase covers the time from dispatch to the time of arrival at the reception centre. Things that were not properly prepared before starting the travel might not be repaired any more! In the case that an affected country cannot be accessed directly, special care should be taken for permits and visa of personnel and material to pass through transit countries.

The teams should make sure to always be on time at the assembly point and allow sufficient time for security procedures at airports. Please remember that items that might be used to endanger other persons are not allowed in the cabin and that the use of electronic devices is forbidden at many phases of a flight. If connecting flights are needed, care for your luggage to be transferred promptly; when going through customs at an interim airport, you will have to carry it yourself.

Use the time during travel to prepare and fill in forms for obtaining visa and for customs declarations. Be correct and honest to avoid any problem with local authorities. In case of problems, contact the representative of the reception point or the delegation of the Member State entrusted with the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

A representative of the reception centre should welcome teams at the exit of the airport or at the border in case of surface travel and guide them to the mobilisation area. He should grant support in the case of lost luggage or other problems and facilitate exchange of currency if needed.

7. Arrival Phase

Immigration and customs

Immediately upon arrival in the affected country, the team should proceed through the necessary immigration procedures and custom clearance. Make sure all team members have their passports ready.

Depending on the situation in the country, the equipment may have to be declared at entry. Precise lists including all equipment made up in advance makes the procedures easier. Specifications for communication equipment, certificates, and frequencies are preferably gathered in advance (see preparation phase).

Community Reception Centre

Preferably, the team should be met at arrival at the Reception Centre by the Community coordinator or by his/hers staff, normally at the airport or at the boarder. The Reception Centre is to be established in co-operation between the Community coordinator and the Contact Point or representative of the affected country. At this place, incoming resources are gathered when boarder-crossing procedures are finalised.

The MIC should have gathered information on first contact, reception centre, or mobilisation area and forwarded to the teams before departure. It also should inform the coordinator about equipment carried by the team and should help to prepare the necessary arrangements with the affected country for the equipment to be entered.

First contact

The team should report upon arrival to the point defined by the affected country competent authority (**L**ocal **E**mergency **M**anagement **A**uthority , LEMA), in co-operation with the Community coordinator. As soon as possible, the team leader should report to them and inform about the teams' capabilities. The team leader is to be briefed about the current situation. In the first contacts with LEMA, it is important to establish a good working relationship and, as soon as possible, have a Liaison officer from the team taking part in the LEMA actions.

In most cases, the teams should proceed quickly from the Reception Centre to the mobilisation area or base of operations close to the site of deployment where all supporters assemble. The time needed depends upon many variables, such as available personnel and means for equipment movement, available ground- or air-transportation to the disaster area, and weather conditions.

Because there is no guarantee for being deployed to the field immediately, the reception centre should be in position to host the teams for a given time. Therefore, favourable conditions for the experts or intervention teams, as well as technical conditions, have to be met. Depending on the local situation, reception centre and mobilisation area could coincide in one place when distances are small. The Community coordinator should clarify this in advance of the teams' arrival.

Establish the Base of Operations

The team should ask LEMA for advice where to locate the Base of Operations (BoO). Needs of the team may differ from team to team, but safety and security matters must be in focus and, on the other hand, proximity to the disaster area to maintain short travel times.

First report

Immediately when the Base of Operations is identified, the team leader should communicate the location and possibilities for communications to the MIC. Base co-ordinates, known information on the emergency, planned activities, and possible alternative communication possibilities are to be included.

Identify key contacts

The team should identify key contacts as soon as possible. This always includes the Community coordinator and a liaison officer connected to the proper operational level of LEMA.

8. On Site Operations

Experts and teams for assistance dispatched for an intervention in a requesting country will follow their national or their organisation's rules for responding. Hence, these recommendations only complement existing rules and give special advice for deployment within the Community mechanism.

Golden Rule: Always respect the authority of host country and behave as a worthy representative of the European Union.

8.1 Administrative procedures

8.1.1 Handling of equipment and materials

The consumption of material should be monitored to allow for replacement in time and for justification after termination of intervention. Operation of valuable equipment should be restricted to team members or to instructed local responders. Any loss of equipment should be documented. If part of the equipment is left at termination of response for further use by requesting state, receipts should be signed at hand-over procedure.

The owner or donator of equipment or funds may define rules on handling of the equipment or expenditures.

8.1.2 Documentation of expenditures

All expenditures should be registered and proven by receipts. For major amounts, several offers or suppliers should be requested; but it is understood that formal tenders can not be launched in a state of emergency. If a receipt can not be obtained, the head of the mission should acknowledge the expenditure. The files and proves for expenditures might be needed after return from mission to justify spending of money.

8.1.3 Co-ordination with others and reporting measures

Care for constant co-ordination with the local On-Scene Command and liaison officer and report regularly back to the MIC and to your home institution. Include status on personnel, supplies, monetary back up, and anticipated duration of response. Indicate whether additional personnel or equipment might be needed or further expertise would be beneficial. Be aware that the messages might be intercepted and do not forward open criticism on host.

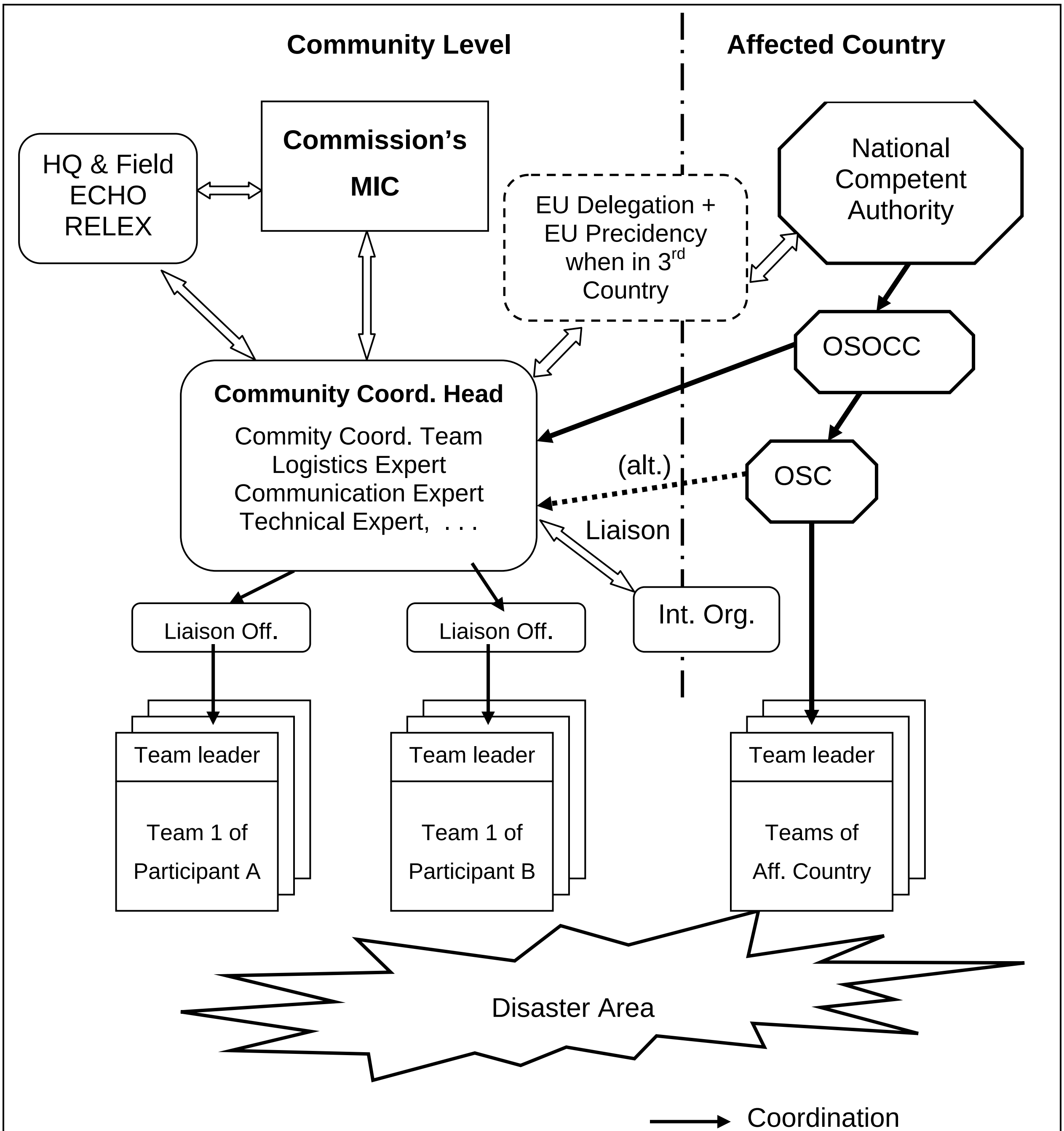

Fig. 4: Example for Coordination and Liaison

8.2 Behaviour towards media

Prudence is needed in any contact with media. Harsh rejection might lead to bad press, open answering of questions might lead to friction with local authorities or other teams involved in the intervention. If possible and practical, all inquirers should be directed to the press office next to the scene. **Intervention teams or experts are not authorised to speak on behalf of the Commission**.

To avoid conflicting information, inquiries should only be answered by the head of the mission or deployment or a person acting as representative only in close co-ordination with local on scene command. Moreover, any person answering questions should restrict him/herself to the own area of responsibility and avoid any speculations about the situation elsewhere. Critical remarks about other involved parties or agencies and institutions of the host country should not be made, even not “off the record” since this information might be carried to others.

If an interview is given, be honest, open, positive, and stick to facts, avoid presenting personnel opinion or speculative prognosis.

8.3 Operational Management

On-site, all community intervention teams are linked to the Community coordination team by their own liaison officer.

The Community co-ordination team co-ordinates all Community activities with the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA).

Just after arrival on site, the team management (team leader and deputy team leader) should attend initial briefing, provided by Community coordination team and LEMA, to discuss the current situation. Included in this briefing will be:

- Existing chain of command and provisions for coordination
- Formal lines of authority
- Lines of communication with the LEMA and the Community coordination team
- Strategic plans

- Communications plan
- Reporting schedule
- Schedule of operational briefings
- Local available support for the team
- Available transportation
- Safe shelter for the team
- Interpreters (if necessary)
- Location and assignment of other Community intervention teams
- Food and water
- Safety and security
- Availability of cranes and other heavy equipment

The specific team assignment should be discussed with LEMA and the Community co-ordination team and include:

- an assignment
- specific objectives of the assignment

and information on

- general population demographics
- native language
- methods of communicating with the local population
- types of occupancies (schools, factories, or residences)
- anticipated number of victims
- detailed maps of the area, site information, building plans, and utility information
- local medical policies and procedures, assessments, and patient hand-off information
- needs for self re-supply

There are two critical issues the team leader and his deputy must address immediately upon arriving at the work site and commencing operations. The first is the operational work period scheduling and rotation of personnel. The initial deployment of personnel into an emergency operation may have lasting effects on extended operations later in the mission. The team leader must consider whether to commit all personnel to the first emergency effort or hold some personnel in reserve for 24-hours operations or a combination of the two.

The second issue is the site location and set-up of the team's BoO. If this site has not been previously determined by LEMA, the Community coordination team or an advance team has to define it immediately. An appropriate BoO site is essential to effective operations by the team. A safe and secure site must be obtained that considers environmental factors, team member stress reduction, and proximity to the work site. The team leader must determine what personnel resources are required to establish the BoO and start emergency operations simultaneously.

It is imperative that LEMA officials have an understanding of the capabilities of a team. The Community coordination team should have previously provided LEMA officials with a copy of the appropriate intervention team capability document and a briefing on general team composition, capabilities, equipment, etc. In addition, the limitations of a team must be identified. Any known specific support requirements for the team should be identified and resolved at this time.

As soon as possible, the intervention team must be integrated into the emergency operation. If needed, the intervention team operations may begin by sending out reconnaissance personnel into its assigned area.

More detailed standard operational procedures have to be established according to the scenario and the kind of intervention.

8.4 Communications

The following is an overview of (radio) communications agendas possibly used in the field. Special radio communication procedures will make sure common understanding and minimise radio time. It is important that all users of communication network keep strict discipline.

- Prepare the set for operation
- Use standard transmitting procedures (phonetic alphabet and procedure words)
- Identify the organisation/firm/administration, which are responsible for allowances, operation, and maintenance of the communication systems.
- Obtain technical information, such as:
    - Broadcast power.

- Operating frequencies, call signs.
- Standby power sources.
- Mobile capability.
- Repair/maintenance facilities.
- Language of transmission.

- Identify key personnel (administration, owners, management, operations, and maintenance).
- Determine the integration of military and civilian communication networks.
- Determine what communications facilities exist that are operable or easily repaired and could be used for disaster response activities.
- Identify the type of systems in the affected country:

  - Radio
  - Broadcast
  - Amateur
  - Police
  - Armed forces
  - Government agencies
  - Telephone (Cable and wireless)
  - Newspaper
  - Other

8.5 Safety and Security

Safety and security are two different aspects of ensuring a person's or team's safe working conditions when on mission.

Safety is especially connected with physical work related issues. This could for example be to ensure the proper precautions when working in an earthquake damaged area, i.e. taking care not put up ones camp beside a fractured five story building (because of the risk of aftershocks).

Security, on the other hand is connected to other peoples' threats to staff or the team. This would usually be an issue in the context of complex emergencies but could also be an issue when on a mission in a security risk country that has been struck by a natural disaster.

The EU Commission, the Participants in the mechanism, the nominated experts, and team members ensure that all necessary measures are taken into account for the dispatch of experts, teams on missions or interventions regarding safety and security issues for individuals and teams. This includes:

- Recommendations and best practices, as listed below, regarding safety and security of experts and team members as well as team security. Mines awareness must especially be taken into account.
- Health awareness before, during, and after deployment, e.g. vaccination before departure, adequate instructions about health and hygiene precautions appropriate to the visited locations (this is discussed further in the chapter on health).
- Ensuring proper personal equipment with regard to different factors such as climate and working conditions.

These precautionary measures - and these concerning health as described in the next chapter - might not be needed for response within the European countries, but very important for deployment to third countries and especially to tropical areas or those undergoing a crisis.

Safety and security issues have been divided into team related safety and security, and personal related safety and security and, at the end, special precautions relating to mines are given. The advice should be followed seriously; it is based on experiences and lessons learned at various missions, interventions in the field of civil protection, and humanitarian aid (in particular UNDAC teams Handbook).

8.5.1 Team Safety and Security

Firstly, it is important that each team member acknowledges his/her co-responsibility for the team's safety and security. Breaches in safety and security procedures may well endanger each member, the whole team or the mission, for which reason it is essential that all contribute to the established security scheme. Secondly, it is important that the team leader is aware about his/her responsibility for the safety of the team. Ultimately, the team leader is responsible for laying down team safety and security procedures and rules and for enforcing them.

General topics:

- Safety and security measures should be realistic and appropriate to the situation, not at a level higher than the situation warrants. On the other hand, it is often true that people (especially those coming from already safe and secure countries) might not be aware about the necessity of security and safety measures. However, it is essential that safety and security measures be taken seriously.
- All team members must know and respect the safety and security measures.
- The team leader is usually responsible for establishing evacuation plans. Evacuation plans may be divided into 1) semi-evacuation (in case it is necessary to reduce personnel down to a skeleton team); 2) full evacuation (when there is enough time for the whole team to evacuate in an orderly manner and take all the equipment, vehicles, etc. with them); and 3) emergency evacuation (when there is only time for the team to take the most necessary equipment and vehicles). Items that should be included in these plans are: always keep a sufficient amount of money for evacuation purposes; always keep a fuel reserve ready for vehicles to be used; pin-point vehicles to be used for emergency evacuation. Find potential routes to be used out of the area; if possible, make agreements beforehand with authorities, border posts, NGOs, etc. (it may be possible for the team and other organisations that are evacuating, to evacuate together). Bring interpreters (be aware that this may endanger the interpreter if he/she is local).
- With reference to local people working for the EU, procedures concerning their evacuation must be taken up with the EU representative.
- Do not build up daily routines: otherwise, it will be easy for a potential aggressor to elaborate a plan of action.
- During working hours, the team must know at all times the whereabouts of each member and the estimated time that he/she is expected to return, for example, to team headquarters. The production of route cards (on which the itinerary is written) will be of help.

- It may be necessary either for the team to live in the same building or, if not, to check on team members that have time off (e.g. by radio, telephone, etc.). The employment of the "buddy system" (no unaccompanied persons) will enhance security.

At Base of Operations

The security situation in-country must be assessed before carrying out safety and security measures. The team leader should do this, partly from available information before the mission and partly on arrival, through, for example, the EU representative, the UN, the national authorities, the ICRC/IFRC, NGO's, and other organisations working in the area.

A set of safety and security rules must be established. These rules should include the following:

- Base of operations (and living quarters, when separated) security, e.g. the need for guards (who could be either team members or locals, depending on the situation), admission procedures, etc. If a form of ID is used, change it from time to time.
- In case of armed conflict, it may be necessary to designate a cellar location as a shelter against shelling, air raids, etc., or dig holes for shelter. It may also be necessary to reinforce existing buildings with, for example, sandbags and to tape windows to reduce the effect of flying glass caused by explosions.
- Establish a procedure to check up on team members, e.g. by using radio calls, etc.
- Security measures concerning vehicles, equipment, etc. can be carried out by, e.g., keeping a list of equipment and regularly checking it against actual equipment, keeping equipment and vehicles (when not in use) under lock, always locking all vehicle doors, and assigning guards.
- For safety reasons, fuel should be stored away from living and working quarters as well as away from vehicles. It is also important to keep an eye on fuel quantities as well as locking the stocks up, since fuel may be seen as an asset worth stealing. There should also be a lower limit on fuel in the store: enough should always be kept for purposes of potential evacuation.

In the Field

When going into the field, it is important to prepare the trip. There are a number of things that should be investigated and carried out before leaving and when in the field. The following will be of help in preparing and carrying out a field trip:

- Check the security situation with the EU representative, the UN, the authorities, and any organisation in the area where the field trip will take place. Especially people just back from the area may have valuable information.
- If authorisation is needed for the trip, be sure to get it.
- Procedures concerning accidents and breakdowns must be agreed upon before a field trip. These procedures may differ depending on the situation, but make sure that the field team knows what to do and that the team base will be able to help when necessary; it is important to have telecommunications between the team and the base. If an accident occurs, especially one involving human casualties, it is important that the team must beforehand have established whether it would be safe to stop and give first aid, or whether one should drive on without stopping and contact the next police station, checkpoint, hospital, etc.
- The following must be brought on the trip: spare fuel, tool kit, spare tire (or two tires if it is a long trip), a shovel, an electric flashlight, spare batteries, towing rope, rations for 24 hours, water for 24 hours (the latter all in a pack, enabling quick "get away"), first-aid or trauma kit, cash, and necessary documents (e.g. driver's license, vehicle registration papers, importation papers, radio transmission permit, insurance papers, etc.). When driving in the winter season, you should take also warm clothes, anti-skid chains, an axe and shovel, and a primus stove together with fuel for 24 hours.
- Before the trip, check that the vehicle is in good order, that the fuel tank is full, and that all necessary equipment is present.
- If a country has problems with mines, try to get a map of where these may be. Be aware that these are not always accurate, and that there may be more than the ones shown.
- Establish how checkpoints should be negotiated.
- There should be radio contact between field teams and the team base, with frequent radio checks. This is one of the most important security measures to be taken and

must not be overlooked. It can save lives if the team has radio contact - **at all times** - with the base. The use of an easy system of situation codes will indicate if a team member(s) is in difficulty without arousing suspicion.

- When leaving for a field trip or an excursion, write a log with complete travel details (e.g. using route cards) prior to departure, and establish call-times for radio checks.
- If the field team uses more than one vehicle, there should be radio contact between them.
- A general rule is to make sure that it is obvious who you are, i.e. have big EU stickers on the vehicles, use flags on the vehicles, etc. There may be situations, though, where the EU might be targeted; this would, of course, change the above recommendation.
- Travelling by night in a security risk situation/area should, as a general rule, be avoided. If it is essential to travel at night, there should be more than one person in the vehicle and there should be more than one vehicle. You should not stop unless, for example, at a checkpoint; you should know the checkpoint procedures for night travel; you should always have as much light turned on as possible; and always keep the doors locked (even when driving).
- After a field trip, it is important that the field team be debriefed on the security situation, the road conditions, mood of the local population, etc. in the areas visited, and the roads taken. This data should be put on file so that others going to the same area will have the latest information.

8.5.2 Personal Safety and Security

Many things mentioned above are also applicable to individual team members. The following is a list of safety and security measures that may be of help in various situations of risk:

- Investigate both the national and local security situations and act accordingly - but do not overreact. Local authorities, EU staff, UN personnel and NGO's in the area will usually be able to offer valuable information.
- Be aware of what is happening around you and react accordingly, before a potential situation becomes serious - learn to be "street wise".

- Observe local behaviour as this may indicate imminent outbursts of major trouble, shelling, etc. It is important to observe changes in the normal habits of the local population.
- Do not carry large amounts of money. The money you do carry should be divided into smaller amounts and kept in separate places. Enough should be carried if the need arises to pay for various "services".
- Arrange your days without routines, as this will make it more difficult for potential aggressors to elaborate plans against you.
- When at the base of operations, living quarters, hotels, etc., investigate possible escape routes in case the building is attacked. Observe the number of windows in each room and where they are situated, the best ways out of rooms, the best places to seek cover, etc. Know the fire escape plan (or create one for yourself). Make these things a habit.
- If you leave the base of operations, make sure that someone (preferably the team leader or someone appointed by him to manage security) knows where you are, how long it will take, and the estimated time that you will be back.
- If you regularly travel between two fixed places (e.g. between living quarters and the base) try to change time and the routes of your travel.
- When outside the base of operations, always stay together with another team member or two if possible.
- When going into the field, ask people who have just been to the same place and travelled the same route about the security and safety situation.
- If you are equipped with a helmet and/or a flack jacket or bullet-proof vest, make sure you use them; they **do** work and may save your life.
- If travelling by car, always lock the doors, both when driving and when parking (to prevent easy theft and for personal safety).
- When parking, be sure to park in a way that it will be fast and easy to drive away if necessary, i.e. do not park with the front of the vehicle against a wall or any other obstruction.
- Make it a rule that you never pick up people wanting a lift; you do not know who the person is and what his/her intentions are. Especially, do not pick up military personnel or police, as they may be dangerous or they may be targeted, which will then

endanger you. Also, if you are stranded, e.g. because of breakdown, etc., do not accept rides from the police or military for the same reasons.

- If you should be the target of a robbery or hold-up, the following procedures should be followed: try to keep calm; do not be provocative; do not play the hero; be passive and talk only when spoken to; obey orders; be cooperative; avoid eye contact; and (in most situations) make it understood that you are an EU representative. BUT: Stand out from others only if appropriate.
- When driving, steer around potholes. They may not be ordinary potholes, but craters with unexploded artillery or mortar shells or holes with mines. Be especially aware of small holes, as these may be the entry hole of shells. Just because other vehicles have gone through a pothole does not mean that there is not unexploded ordnance; it may survive 35 vehicles, while the 36th will trigger it.
- If you have a camera, be cautious where you use it. Photos should never be taken where there are soldiers, military activity, or checkpoints.
- To be prepared for evacuation, you should always have a bag packed with private items, warm clothes, extra food and drink, a first-aid kit, helmet (if supplied) and flack jacket (if supplied).
- Always carry EU credentials and your passport (a photocopy of the passport may be useful to hand out instead of the passport, if officials demand to have the passport). Even a duplicate passport may be useful.

Last but not least, it should be mentioned that local populations will usually take sides and have cultures that may well be different from those of the COMMUNITY experts. For these and other reasons, avoid to enter into relations of a type that could affect security. Close sexual relationships should also be avoided, not only for the above reasons but also because of possible serious health consequences.

8.5.3 Mines Precautions

There are a number of countries (including also disaster-prone ones) that have problems with mines left over from various forms of conflict. It is vital that Community experts going to these countries have minimum knowledge on how to avoid mines and what to do if the worst happens. In this handbook it is not possible to go into detail concerning precautions to take against mines. It is therefore advisable to get further information from, for example, one of the NGO's that have been established in recent years to deal with this kind of threat to civilian populations. The following is a list of what to do and what not to do:

Avoiding Mines

First of all it is advisable to seek local information from the authorities, the EU representatives, the UN and NGO's on where the mines might be. There may even be maps where dangerous areas have been marked. Even though information on the whereabouts of mines has been received, it should be used only as a guideline, as there could be mines elsewhere. Beware that a map with an overview of the minefield may lead to a false sense of security.

Never go into visible minefields; these may be visible by mines scattered on the surface or by the minefield being fenced or marked with signs warning of danger. Be aware that minefields that have been cleared may have been re-mined. It happens that mines are cleared during the daytime only to be re-mined the following night.

If an area has been fought over, it is likely that parts of it have been mined. Terrain around military positions (or former positions) and terrain which is seen to afford defence for enemy troops near military positions is most likely mined. Buildings in areas where there has been fighting may also be mined or booby-trapped. Booby traps may be in connection with doors, under carpets, under bodies, in connection with food as well as medical and first-aid equipment, in connection with objects that could be seen as mementoes, etc. Do not go through gaps in hedges, as there may well be trip-wired mines.

If there is any doubt at any time as to whether an area or a building has been mined, turn back.

When travelling in places that are high-risk mine areas (and this should be done only if absolutely necessary), then (when travelling by car) use only roads and tracks that are well used and (when walking) use only paths that are well used. Avoid areas of fresh earth, whether on roads, tracks, or paths. It is important to know also that even well travelled areas may have been re-mined during the night. When in need to urinate or defecate, never go outside the road, track or path; either swallow your pride or wait. Areas full of fresh human excrement will usually be safe from mines.

Never approach mines, ammunition or suspicious objects, as this can be both dangerous and a bad example to the local community. Do not - under any circumstances - handle or touch unexploded ordnance (or anything else that looks suspicious), however harmless it may appear. If mines or unexploded ordnance is observed, make a note of the position and - if possible - the type (mine, shell, bomb, etc.) and report back.

The last important thing to remember is to be alert. Most mine injuries occur because people do not see the mines. This is understandable because the mines are usually buried, camouflaged, or covered over by vegetation; or else the victim is simply looking in the wrong direction. Being alert and observant of certain signs will not make travelling in mined areas safe, but it will make it safer. There are certain clues that can be looked for in order to avoid mines. These are:

- Shapes that are unusual in nature (sharp edges, round or rectangular objects, etc.) and colours that are unusual in nature (rusty-coloured surfaces, metallic colours and plastic surfaces). These may be mines, as mines are usually round (cylindrical) or rectangular and are made from metal, plastic or wood.
- Thin, taut, partly buried or entangled wire as well as fishing line, etc. These can be connected to mines and must never be touched.
- Stakes, poles, etc., especially if they are connected with wire. These may be connected to mines.
- Signs of mines having been brought to detonation, e.g. animal remains, pieces of footwear, etc.
- Signs of battles having occurred in the area, such as bunkers, barbed wire, weapons, helmets, destroyed vehicles, ammunition, etc.
- Buildings that may have been occupied or used during fighting.

- After heavy rains that have created landslides, mines may well have floated away or washed away; beware of areas near landslides.

If the Worst Happens

The two most usual ways in which you will discover that you are in a minefield are

1) if there is an explosion and

2) if you find a mine.

If an explosion occurs or a mine is found, the first thing to do is to stop all movement. Any movement may detonate one or more nearby mines. Anyone in the vicinity must be warned. If there is a casualty, it is most important that he/she does not move and that - at least initially – **no one goes into the minefield to help**. People rushing in to help are very often either killed or maimed. First aid can be given only when a safe path has been found into the field.

Establishing a safe path into or out of a mine field is something that should be done only as a last resort. It is always best to get professional help, either from trained military personnel (usually from an engineering regiment) or from a de-mining NGO. If a safe path has to be found without professional help, the following must be done:

If there is a safe path:

- If possible, find out where the closest safe area is. This may be the direction in which the path must go. The safest path, though, would usually be the route that was used on the way into the minefield.
- If there is more than one person in the minefield, only one person must be in charge, and only one person must move at a time. Keep a safe distance of at least 10-20 metres between each person.
- The original route into the minefield should be followed **very closely**, while the person moving must stay alert at all times. Panic must, as far as possible, be stopped immediately.

If there is <u>no</u> safe path:

- If you cannot remember your route into the minefield or if you find a mine on the route that you thought was safe, then the only way forward is by probing for mines. Probing is done with an instrument, e.g. a knife at least 8-10 cm long (remember to procure such an instrument before entering an area where there is a risk of mines). This is used to stick into the ground at an angle of 30 degrees. Every square cm of the path must be probed. If there is an obstruction, this is **carefully** exposed. If it is a mine, then warn the others, mark the spot (use stones, pieces of wood, etc.) and continue probing.
- When probing, it is important to decide the width of the path to probe: if it is too narrow, someone may tread outside; if it is too wide, an unnecessary amount of time may be used to probe and there will be further risk of detonating a mine. Be aware that probing is time-consuming, very tiring and nerve- racking - especially for the untrained.

Rescuing a Mine Victim

- If a path must be made to rescue a mine victim, this should be done only if the person is alive and when there is no professional help. When the person has been reached (by one of the above methods), an area around the person must be cleared, allowing room for the use of first aid. Be careful, as there may be untriggered mines under the casualty: probe under the person.
- If the casualty is hysterical, it is vital to calm him/her before getting close. Often, though, victims are unusually calm; this is because they have had a traumatic shock.
- When the above has been carried out, give first aid.
- When ready, the casualty must be extricated from the minefield. This can be done, for example, by using a fireman's lift or by pulling the person along the path. It is important to be very careful so as not to get injured by mines yourself.

It is important to be aware that rescuing a casualty from a minefield is a very risky undertaking, and that no one is therefore obliged to carry this out. The use of helicopter evacuation (by winch) is a possibility that should be looked into, if possible.

8.6 Medical Issues and Stress

8.6.1 Personal Hygiene and Health in Tropical Areas

The following advice is intended to make adaptation to local conditions easier for personnel going to tropical or subtropical areas on a mission or on transfer. It is of particular interest to those who have not had any experience of life in these climates. It is not possible to prepare a set of rules applicable to all the regions but these suggestions are valid for most tropical countries.

This text is based on a publication made by WHO. It is not an official text but should be regarded simply as a guide to be followed as closely as possible. For any uncertainty, consult with a physician. Measures to be taken before departure are described in chapter 4.

Precautions taken after Arrival

Way of life

During the first weeks, the newcomer unused to the conditions of life and climate is likely to have a lower resistance. He should allow himself at least eight hours of sleep a night, if possible have a short siesta, avoid excessive physical or intellectual strain and lead a regular life.

Diet

This should be well balanced. Heavy meals should be avoided and alcoholic drinks either excluded or consumed in moderate quantities, only in the evenings. On the other hand, enough liquid should be drunk to compensate for perspiration losses; it may be necessary to increase salt intake in the case of profuse perspiration. Amoebic dysentery and other enteric infections very widespread in tropical regions, are transmitted by foods eaten raw or contaminated by dirty hands or unclean water. This causes acute or chronic digestive troubles, which can be prevented by taking simple hygienic precautions.

Water should be the object of special care: it can transmit numerous infectious diseases when used for drinking or toilet purposes. Water of uncertain purity should be treated or boiled (boiling remains the best method). In case of difficulty, drink water in the form of tea or mineral water. When a house-filter is used, it is of paramount importance of boiling the water after filtration. See Safe Food for Travellers below.

Body hygiene

Water used for oral and dental hygiene should be purified or boiled beforehand; even sea water may be contaminated near river mouths, and bathing in suspect water can be the cause of certain tropical infections. Without reliable information, bathing should therefore be avoided.

Protection against Insects

Certain insects and particularly certain mosquitoes in hot countries can transmit infections such as malaria. When mosquitoes are numerous in an area where malaria is endemic, all exposed areas of the skin should be treated with mosquito repellent in order to prevent bites, which, besides being painful, are also dangerous. In addition, it is useful to wear clothing that covers the arms and legs in the evening.

It should be remembered that mosquito nets only provide protection under certain conditions: material sufficiently finely meshed, folded correctly during the day and the net properly closed at night so that insects cannot get in. Inside houses, insects must be destroyed by spraying with an insecticide. Sprays made from products with a pyrethrum base destroy rapidly but their action is short lived.

Prophylaxis against Schistosomiasis (Synonym Bilharzia)

It is important to avoid contact with unsafe water in a zone where this affection is found. Bathing in rivers or other water sources should be strictly avoided in the absence of reliable information, as the infestation is brought about by penetration of the skin by the larval form of the parasite.

The above instructions do not pretend to be complete, their purpose is to draw attention to the main essentials.

Safe Food for Foreigners abroad

One of the two main reasons for foreigners abroad becoming ill is eating without taking into consideration some simple rules. Following the rules laid down below may, in the short term, spare the traveller a considerable amount of annoyance, while, in the long term, they can hinder serious diseases.

Preparing before Departure

- Consult your physician for advice on the various diseases to which you may be exposed, and the need for vaccinations or other preventive measures.
- Make sure your medical kit contains Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) and water-disinfectant tablets.

Eating Safely

The following recommendations apply to all situations, from food vendors on the street to expensive hotel restaurants:

- Cooked food that has been held at room temperature for several hours constitutes one of the greatest risks of food borne illness. Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked and is still hot when served.
- Avoid any uncooked food, apart from fruits and vegetables that can be peeled or shelled. Avoid fruits with damaged skin. Remember the dictum "Cook it, peel it or leave it".
- Ice cream from unreliable sources is frequently contaminated and can cause illness. If in doubt, avoid it.
- In some countries, certain species of fish and shellfish may contain poisonous biotoxins even when they are well cooked. Local people can advice you about this.

What to do in case of diarrhoea

Most diarrhoea attacks are self-limiting and clear up in a few days. The important thing is to avoid becoming dehydrated. As soon as diarrhoea starts, drink more fluids, such as bottled, boiled or treated water, or weak tea. Fruit juice (diluted with safe water) or soup may also be taken. If diarrhoea continues for more than one day, prepare and drink ORS solution[1] and continue to eat normally.

Amounts of fluid or ORS to drink:

Children less than 2 years	1/4 - 1/2 cup (50 - 100ml) after each loose stool
Children 2 years to 10 years	1/2 - 1 cup (100 - 200 ml) after each loose stool
Older children and adults	unlimited amount

Seek medical help if:

Diarrhoea lasts for more then 3 days and/or there are very frequent watery bowel movements, blood in the stools, repeated vomiting or fever.

When there is no medical help available and there is blood in the stools, a course (5 days) of cotrimoxazole may be taken[2].

Prophylactic use of antibiotics is not recommended. Antidiarrhoeals (e.g. loperamide) are nor recommended but may be used, in addition to fluids, by adults only, for symptomatic relief. They should never be used for children. If there are other symptoms, seek medical advice.

Safe Water for Foreigners abroad

Contaminated water is the second main reason for foreigners abroad becoming ill during their stay in foreign countries. Again, as in the case of food, it is vital to follow some simple rules to prevent disease caused by unclean water.

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1 If ORS is not available, mix 6 level teaspoons of sugar plus 1 level teaspoon of salt in one litre of safe water. Drink this as indicated above for ORS. Another solution would be to drink a cola soft drink.

2 Dosage for cotrimoxazole (trimethoprim, sulfamethoxazole):
For adults: 160 mg of trimethoprim and 800 mg of sulfamethoxazole, twice a day, for 5 days.
For children: 5 mg of trimethoprim and 25 mg of sulfamethoxazole per kg of body weight, twice a day, for 5 days.

Precautions to be taken

When travelling - if you are at all in doubt - **all** water should be perceived as being contaminated. The following recommendations therefore apply to all solutions:

- When the safety of drinking water is doubtful, have it boiled or disinfect it with reliable, slow-release, disinfectant tablets. These are generally available in pharmacies.
- Avoid ice unless you are sure that it is made from safe water. Be aware that ice from apparently clean sources, e.g. hotel ice-automates, is not always safe.
- Beverages, such as **hot** tea or coffee, wine, beer, and carbonated soft drinks or fruit juices which are either bottled or otherwise packaged, are usually safe to drink.
- Unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption.
- It is possible to buy bottled clean water in most places. It is recommended that water be purchased and used whenever possible - also for brushing teeth.

8.6.2 Stress

Working in emergency relief environments - especially in the case of complex emergencies - exposes the relief worker to a number of stress factors, such as internal and external organisational problems, conflicts within the group, lack of information, time pressure, various levels of confusion, different levels of human suffering, dangers to him/herself and to friends and colleagues, and, in the extreme, even the wounding or killing of a colleague.

The level of reactions to stress varies from person to person and can range from feeling apathetic, confused, or being very active, through feeling sick, having headaches, feeling helpless or being quick-tempered, to having attacks of fear, a sense of guilt, sleeplessness, and even having attacks of paralysis.

All these reactions - and others - are normal reactions to abnormal situations. It is important, however, for the relief worker to acknowledge this and to do something about it, because the reaction to a situation **can** be alleviated and prevented from becoming chronic. There are a number of things that can be done to increase the relief workers ability to manage stressful situations. The following are different aspects of the stress situation.

The Stress Situation

Experience has shown that knowledge, especially through training, is a kind of "stress-vaccine" - not to say that this will prevent stress, but it will lessen the possibility of acute or chronic stress or even trauma. First of all it is important to know the kinds of situations that may occur during ones work, i.e. the stress factors during assessments (pressure of people asking for help, the experience of the, often, horrendous human suffering, the dangers in the disaster situation etc.) and co-ordination, and the dangers if the work is carried out in a complex emergency. This should be made clear through training. Second, it is important that the relief worker knows the symptoms of stress and trauma, enabling him/her to recognise these within him/herself as well as in others. Thirdly, a relief worker should be able to know the basic principles in coping with stress.

Within a team it is vital to pair up in a "buddy system", which enables people to recognise the first symptoms of stress in his/her partner, whereby coping strategies can be set in early in the process.

The Phases of Stress

Stress reactions occur in several phases:

- *The acute phase* which may have a duration of seconds to days; it is the time during which a person is exposed to the event. This is the time of shock, where people react differently. 10-30% react calmly and are actively helping; 50-75% are apathetic and confused; 10-25% show such strong reactions that they need medical help; while 1-3% lose control and show symptoms of serious breakdown, i.e. complete mental breakdown or panic.
- *The interim phase* which can be divided into two parts: the reaction period, lasting from one to six weeks, and the healing period which lasts from one to six months. This phase commences after the event and its immediate effects when people start to realise what has happened and what it means for them.

- *The post-event phase*, which starts after about six months and can last indefinitely; this is also called the post-traumatic period, which may be latent. This phase may never occur, though, if a successful healing period has taken place. The post-traumatic results can vary greatly, but can typically be re-living the event; nightmares; over-reaction to sounds; a lack of interest in important occurrences; insomnia; feelings of guilt; problems of concentration; and loss of memory.

Stress symptoms

It is important to know - and thereby be able to recognise - stress symptoms that might occur. It is not only vital to recognise them within the person him/herself, but also if they occur in colleagues. The symptoms may include some of the following:

- Palpitations
- Excessive perspiration
- Diarrhoea
- Nausea
- Shivering
- Hyperventilation
- Dizziness
- Sensation of a weight on the chest
- Difficulty in breathing
- Headache
- Difficulty in physical coordination
- Lack of perception:
  - Does not understand given orders
  - Does not remember information
  - Is unable to remember names
- Irrational activities
- Assessment abilities affected
- Tunnel vision
- Irritation
- Fear
- Weeping

- Sadness
- Apathy
- Complete mental breakdown

This list must be seen as symptoms that may occur, and certainly not all symptoms will occur. Reactions such as the above may not occur at all. It very much depends on the level of training of the individual and the help that a person is given and how long after the event.

Help

One of the most important things to keep in mind - both for the affected person and the helper - is that reaction to stressful situations is a normal, natural and acceptable mechanism. It is when reactions carry on outside the periods mentioned in the above phases that they become dangerous for the individual. It is important that help is given immediately.

Psychological First Aid

The affected person needs:

- Psychological and physical closeness
- Contact and care

and should:

- Accept feelings
- Not deny reality.

The helper should:

- Prepare individually
- Transmit a feeling of safety and confidence
- Accept symptoms and behaviour
- Calm the affected individual, soothe and encourage
- Try to control behaviour
- Mobilise positive aspects of the situation

- Know his/her own limitations
- Not create scapegoats - they help no one
- Bear in mind that the helper may also need help.

Debriefing

If, e.g. an individual or a team is exposed to traumatic events certain procedures should be carried out. Initially help should be given immediately in the form of a (psychological) debriefing while professional help may be required at a later stage. Experience shows, though, that if a debriefing is started within the first 48 - 72 hours after the event, more help is rarely needed.

The debriefing can very well be initiated by the team leader, and has short-term and long-term objectives.

Short-term Objectives

Technical aspects:

- To collect information for use in investigating the incident
- To uncover needs for radical changes in operational procedures

Mental aspects:

- To "decompress"
- To assess the need for professional help.

Long-term Objectives

Technical aspects:

- A learning process
- To provide the grounds for possible adjustments to policies, plans, principles, material etc.
- To provide the grounds for disseminating the acquired knowledge

Mental aspects:

- To prevent mental after-effects
- To assess the need for professional help
- To ensure daily functioning
- To maintain and improve team solidarity and
- To prevent the "scapegoat" effect
- To ensure the team leaders future energy and activity resources.

Main Debriefing Points

- Immediately after the event (not more than 48 - 72 hours later)
- The team must initially be together in plenum
- The session should start by going through the operation and giving it and the event coherence and a linking thread
- The next phase should be in groups of not more than 6 - 12 persons
- If possible this should be led by people who have knowledge of emotional/psychological first aid (a team leader should be capable of this)
- Every participant should be allowed to talk about anything he/she wants to and to show the emotions that he/she feels.
- The session should not last more than about four hours
- If there is a need, a new session can be carried out later
- “High-risk" groups should be identified (e.g. personnel closest to the event, people with responsibility etc.)
- Carry out a separate debriefing should be carried out with the high-risk group.

8.7 Logistics and Resources

Logistics and resources should include logistical arrangements in place for the team such as accommodation and transport as well as resources available to the team.

8.7.1 General Logistics

1. Determine where to activate transportation and supply units

2. Oversee the establishment of a management system for team equipment, supplies, and relief commodities. The system should include receiving, inventory, storing, security, and tracking equipment, supplies and commodities
3. Establish logistical support requests process
4. Establish contacts with the MIC, Member States representative and/or affected country to obtain the following information:

- Local warehousing capabilities and conditions
- Local power source requirements
- Local accommodation possibilities
- Local space for set up shelters
  - Availability of local hiring of personnel for logistical support
  - Reliable local common carriers (trucks, aircraft, ships
  - Local road conditions
  - Local rail capabilities and conditions

8.7.2 Food and water for 10 -14 days

The quantity of food and water an expert and/or an intervention team needs to carry is very difficult to quantify. This depends upon many variables, such as planned duration of the mission, region and climate, resources available on-site.

Nevertheless there should be some basic assumptions as follows:

1. Food in sufficient quantities for 14 days, which is appropriate for entry into the affected country.
2. Mineral water is available for the initial phase (3 days at least) and water purification equipment is sufficient to support the experts and/or team needs.
3. Sufficient sanitation and hygiene provisions for 14 days are available for deployment.
4. Self re-supply ability for each expert and every intervention team

Besides this, the Community assessment experts in place and the EU representative have to check out if self-supply is feasible on site and to report to the MIC. Emphasis has to be made on the availability of surface raw water. The MIC has to inform the Contact Points on the outcome of the assessment. Experts and intervention teams have to make provision according to that.

Frequently, it might make sense to ask the Community Reception Centre an/or the Community Operational Basis to centralise the procurement of food, water, fuel and sanitation and hygiene provisions for all experts and/or intervention teams. These provisions might be coordinated through the MIC, which centralises all available information.

8.7.3 Use of Cash

From experiences of various missions / interventions conducted in different frameworks (MS, UN, NGO's) it has been proved vital for an operation, and in some cases for individual team members' security, that a certain amount of cash is readily available to the individual / team.

The amount will depend on the number of experts / team members and / or the length the mission. This amount of cash should be in the currency usually used locally or the easiest currency to exchange locally (usually Euro or US dollars). *The participants in the mechanisms should be aware that there might be the need to provide money in advance also for the experts, which might be reimbursed by the Commission upon presentation of justification.*

It is also essential that the currency is in small denominations, otherwise is will be next to impossible to exchange or use, due to mistrust in the validity of large notes.

For later justification it is strongly recommended to try getting always a receipt of the spent money. If a receipt can't be obtained, the expenditure has to be documented and signed by the leader / head of the mission.

In many countries, it is usual that various issues traditionally are taken care of on the spot. This is usually done with the help of cash. Not being able to live up to this kind of cultural aspect can in many cases place one in a security risk situation. If an expert or team does not have the necessary cash, it would in a large amount of cases be extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible, to carry out the mission.

The situations which, in many cases, are solved on the spot with cash would be, for example:

- when starting an operation, it may be necessary to rent apartments, offices, vehicles etc. In some countries and in some situations, cash may be the only way to enable rental;
- when entering certain countries, it may be necessary to pay cash to get your equipment, vehicles etc. in;
- if your life is directly threatened, cash may be the only way to get out of the situation;
- being involved in an accident, payment for damage may be required to resolve the problem.

9. Pullout Phase

The requesting country has the utmost right to decide if a mission should be ended. A participant in the mechanism sending teams also has the right to decide about the presence of its teams.

Depending on where the decision to pullout is taken and the reasons behind, the dealings might be different. The mission might be cut short or finished as planned. Sometimes, other teams are taking over.

The experts will usually recommend whether they want to stay or pull out. The decision is then to be made by the MS or the requesting country. The Commission will generally rely on advice of either MS or requesting country. Safety and security matters are vital input to the decision process.

In case of operations ongoing for longer periods new teams could relieve earlier arrived.

9.1 Hand-over procedures

Administrative

The administrative routines for teams are set up by the donors/providers of teams. When a team is to be relieved by another it is important to hand over assets in a proper way. This is especially important when more than one organisation is involved.

A proper hand-over procedure is crucial for further development in a disaster-affected area when a team or delegation leaves. It is necessary for proofing the right use of funding and the hand-over protocol should also be part of the final report.

The hand over protocol preferably states:

1. All assets at the date of the hand-over, such as:

- Cash, bank account and working advance balances
- Receipts or documentation of expenditures (latter signed by head of mission)
- Vehicles
- Office machines, equipment and furniture

- Furniture and equipment in delegates' houses
- Operational equipment

2. All stock, normal relief goods such as food, tents, and blankets.

It is important to provide sufficient time for the establishment of the hand-over protocol. Physical inventories of stock and fixed assets may be quite time consuming.

The following "filing system" could be used:

- Chronological files
- Personnel files
- Legal / contractual issues
- Purchase files
- Finance files
- Stocks and distribution
- Fixed assets file
- Reports files
- Project files
- Safety / security issues

One copy of the files is to be repatriated to the Participants in the mechanism sending the team. One copy is, if possible, to be given to the Community coordinator. If a new team is coming after, the files are to be used in the hand over process.

The procedure will depend on the kind of files and the mission. The last option could be to destroy them, party or fully.

Operative

Community interventions under the mechanism should not stand in isolation. Working together with other teams and local authorities are essential. At the same time, it is important to avoid creating an aid dependency culture or leaving behind a void that cannot be filled.

Teams should always try to ensure that their departure from the scene does not result in further harm to the beneficiary. It is important that the tasks are handled over to reliable organisations or individuals such as local authorities, EU elements or the UN. Depending on the case knowledge, expertise and, if appropriate, material assets are handled-over so that work can continue. Development of a local capacity is always to be preferred.

The pulling-out team leader should always try to have a formal hand-over meeting with the new incoming team leader and record the proceedings.

Mission Summary Report

A mission summary report is not only an essential part of ensuring “donor satisfaction” but also helps to build up a corporate memory. It can illustrate problems that where tackled during the course of the operation and which could occur again.

The mission summary report should somehow cover the following areas:

1. Disaster Summary

- Date of disaster
- Nature of disaster
- Number of killed/injured/homeless
- Houses destroyed
- Livestock/crops destroyed

If possible, the entire disaster as well as more precisely the working area of the team are to be covered. The source of information and estimated reliability is also to be noted.

2. The assignment, purpose of the teams’ intervention given before departure, changes?

3. Assistance Summary

- Number of beneficiaries
- Where a significant number of:

    - children under five years of age / pregnant or lactating women
    - mothers / handicapped / elderly
    - other vulnerable groups assisted
- Nature of assistance
- Food/clothing/shelter/blankets/medical welfare/ welfare services/ others
- Technical assistance

4. Short operations summary

5. Conclusions / lessons from experience / recommended improvements

9.2 Travel back arrangements

Stocks and equipment

When leaving the affected country, the question about what to do with the equipment used and remaining stocks must be sorted out. Is some or all of it to be left? It is not unusual that stocks or equipment are left in an affected country. If so is done, it is important to make sure who is the recipient. A receipt signed by the new owners is preferable to get and to include in the final documentation.

Customs and tax clearance

Depending on the situation, customs and tax clearance issues can be different. The EU-representative - if present - or otherwise the COMMUNITY co-ordinator should help to arrange this with the authorities of the affected country. Participants in the mechanisms should prepare arrangements in their own states for their personnel returning home.

Flight and transportation arrangements

The EU-representative in the affected country may support the COMMUNITY co-ordinator and the teams when local travel arrangements are necessary. Flights and other transportation back home are to be arranged with support by the MIC for the experts and for the teams of the participants in the mechanisms. Probably, there is no need for new visa, but this is to be checked out.

Upcoming invoices

If invoices are supposed to arrive after departure, arrangements for payment or forwarding have to be made. The COMMUNITY co-ordinator - if still present - or the EU-representative should provide this service if necessary.

10. Evaluation

According to art. 5 par. 1 of the Common Rule on “The intervention inside and outside the Community”, reports on the on-site assistance phase shall be prepared by

A. the competent authority of the affected state,

B. the authorities of assisting participants in the mechanisms,

C. the involved liaison officers, and

D. the dispatched Community experts.

The reports (standard structure to follow the check lists given below) should be based on mission debriefings performed immediately after the termination of the mission to collect information on the response as long as it is still fresh. The reports should be structured according to the defined mission cycle from the Activation to the Pull-out phase.

Upon receipt of the reports, the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) could organise a meeting on lessons learned in order to improve the procedures laid down in the Mechanism.

A. Report of the affected states’ competent authority

The competent authority should evaluate the assistance provided following considerations upon:

1. Activation phase:
   - 1.1. selection of teams and experts, definition of tasks and skills needed
   - 1.2. co-ordination with dispatching states and MIC
   - 1.3. time needed for processing alert and co-ordination
   - 1.4. preparing arrangements for accepting teams or experts and means

2. Travel and Arrival phase

2.1 co-ordination of timing

2.2 arrangements with border control (e.g. visa) and customs

2.3 briefing of teams and experts on situation, adaptability of teams and means to demands and situation

2.4 availability of and co-operation with advance party (COMMUNITY co-ordinator team)

2.5 arrangements for transport to scene

3. On-site operation phase

3.1 integration of experts and teams in response on scene, proper plans/preparations for accepting teams

3.2 co-ordination of tasks and suitability of chains of command

3.3 self-sufficiency of teams and experts

3.4 compatibility of means, especially means of communication

3.5 ability of accepted teams and experts to cope with the situation

3.6 effectiveness of response

3.7 accidents, illnesses, and other problems encountered in response

3.8 contacts and experiences with media

4. Pull-out phase

4.1 proper termination of response

4.2 proper debriefing by experts and team leaders

4.3 clear hand-over procedure of the site

4.4 provisions for equipment left behind

4.5 travel back arrangements.

B. The report of the assisting participant's authority

The competent authorities of dispatching states should evaluate the assistance provided based on reports of their teams and experts received during response and after return following considerations upon:

1. Activation phase:

1.1 selection of teams and experts, definition of tasks and skills needed

1.2 co-ordination with accepting state and MIC

1.3 time needed for alerting and dispatch teams, and to co-ordinate

1.4 preparing arrangements for dispatching teams or experts and means

2. Travel and Arrival phase

2.1 co-ordination of timing

2.2 arrangements with border control (e.g. visa) and customs

2.3 briefing of teams and experts on situation, reliability of information on emergency situation

2.4 availability of advance party (Community coordinator team)

2.5 arrangements for transport to scene

3. On-site operation phase

3.1 integration of experts and teams in response on scene

3.2 co-ordination of tasks and suitability of chains of command

3.3 support granted to teams and experts on scene

3.4 compatibility of means, especially means of communication

3.5 proper definition of tasks and site of response to teams and experts

3.6 deficiencies in material or logistics

3.7 accidents, illnesses, and other problems encountered in response

3.8 effects of operation (success, failures, turn over)

3.9 contacts and experiences with media

4. Pull-out phase

4.1 proper co-ordination of termination of response with local authority

4.2 clear hand-over procedure of the site

4.3 provisions for equipment left behind

4.4 travel back arrangements.

C. Report of the involved liaison officers

Liaison officers should evaluate the assistance provided based on their observations made and comments received from teams or requesting states' authorities. They should consider:

1. Activation phase:

1.1 co-ordination with accepting state, dispatching states, and MIC

1.2 time needed for receiving alert and preparing travel to the scene

2. Travel and Arrival phase

2.1 co-ordination of timing and preparation of travel

2.2 arrangements with border control (e.g. visa) and customs

2.3 briefing of teams and experts on situation at port of entry, reliability of information on emergency situation

2.4 arrangements for transport to scene

3. On-site operation phase

3.1 integration of experts and teams in response on scene

3.2 co-ordination of tasks and suitability of chains of command

3.3 support granted to teams and experts on scene

3.4 relations with experts and Community personnel

3.5 compatibility of means, especially means of communication

3.6 proper definition of tasks and site of response to teams and experts

3.7 accidents, illnesses, and other problems encountered in response

3.8 problems of co-ordination between local command and team leaders

3.9 contacts and experiences with media

4. Pull-out phase

4.1 proper co-ordination of termination of response with local authority

4.2 clear hand-over procedure of the site

4.3 provisions for equipment left behind

4.4 travel back arrangements.

D. Report of dispatched Community experts

Dispatched Community experts should evaluate the assistance provided based on their experience during response and under consideration of:

1. Activation phase:

1.1 Suitability of experts' skills on tasks entrusted

1.2 co-ordination with accepting state and MIC

1.3 time needed for receiving alert and to co-ordinate

1.4 preparation of arrangements for dispatch

2. Travel and Arrival phase

2.1 co-ordination of timing

2.2 arrangements with border control (e.g. visa) and customs

2.3 briefing by accepting state on situation, reliability of information

2.4 availability of advance party (Community coordinator team)

2.5 arrangements for transport to scene

3. On-site operation phase

3.1 integration in response on scene

3.2 co-ordination of tasks and suitability of chains of command, experience with on-site co-ordination

3.3 support granted on scene

3.4 compatibility of means, especially means of communication

3.5 proper definition of tasks and site of response to teams and experts

3.6 deficiencies in material or logistics

3.7 accidents, illnesses, and other problems encountered in response

3.8 contacts and experiences with media

4. Pull-out phase

4.1 proper co-ordination of termination with local authority

4.2 travel back arrangements.

The Monitoring and Information Centre will compile the reports received to draft a comprehensive report on the mission. This draft will be discussed at a lessons learned meeting to be organised by the Commission and finalised then based upon the discussions.

The finalised reports on interventions will facilitate a regular update of procedures and recommendations for preparation and conduct of future missions as well as for training courses.

11. Annex

Annex 11.1: Copy of regulations

Annex 11.2: Glossary

Annex 11.3: Code of Ethics

Annex 11.4: Injury or death of Community team member

Annex 11.5: Vaccinations

Annex 11.6: Templates

Annex 11.7: Mobilisation Checklist for Individuals

Annex 11.8: Mobilisation Checklist for Team leaders

Annex 11.9: Detailed equipment list