In the context of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism\(^1\) (UCPM), the Commission is strengthening Europe’s preparedness and response capabilities to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) disasters. The Emergency Response Coordination Centre\(^2\) (ERCC) monitors the risk and promptly coordinates the provision of emergency assistance to countries overwhelmed by a CBRN event.

Any affected country can request assistance from the ERCC for the deployment of CBRN and other response capabilities under the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP)\(^3\). These capabilities comprise specialised teams and equipment that Member States have pre-committed for use for international deployments under the UCPM.

When Member States’ support is not available or is insufficient, the Commission can mobilise its own strategic reserve of response capacities (rescEU\(^4\)). Stockpiles of critical medical items are an important part of it. They contain items that can be used also in response to radiological or chemical emergencies, such as potassium iodide tablets, protection equipment, and oxygen concentrators. Other rescEU capabilities will progressively become available from 2023 onwards and also include decontamination and detection, identification and monitoring teams as well as specific CBRN stockpiles.

Finally, a voluntary chemical response group composed of experts from across the European Union is on standby and ready to provide analytical support to the ERCC.

In the context of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, the Commission has mobilised the existing rescEU medical reserves six times to bridge urgent gaps but also to ramp up the capacity of Ukraine and the EU to counter the effects of exposure to CBRN agents in the event of chemical or nuclear incidents.

\(^1\) Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism.
\(^2\) Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, article 7.