

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000931/25
to the Commission
Diego Solier (ECR), Nora Junco García (ECR)
(5 March 2025)**

Subject: Urgent need for a web platform to track missing persons in crisis situations

In the light of the devastating impact of the recent floods in Valencia, which resulted in significant loss of life and widespread destruction, it has become evident that the Spanish Government's management of the crisis was highly inadequate. A major issue during the emergency response was the lack of reliable data on missing persons, which significantly hindered rescue efforts.

A critical step in improving disaster response would be to develop an EU-wide web platform that would allow families of missing persons to provide key information, such as mobile phone numbers, in real time. This platform would not store personal data but rather generate a map pinpointing the last known locations of missing persons based on the network coverage of their mobile devices. Such a tool would be instrumental in providing rescuers with crucial insights and enhancing the efficiency of emergency operations, without compromising personal privacy. Importantly, this platform would be available for use in all EU Member States, ensuring a coordinated and unified response.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission acknowledge the urgent need for a platform to enhance search and rescue operations during crises?
2. What immediate steps will be taken to develop and deploy such a tool at EU level?
3. Will specific EU funding be allocated to support Member States in implementing this critical technology?

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**Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(12 May 2025)**

In the area of civil protection, Member States have the primary role in coordinating disaster response in their country, including search and rescue operations. In the event of a disaster that overwhelms national response capacities, countries can request assistance through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) ⁽¹⁾. In case of such request, the Emergency Response Cooperation Centre (ERCC) coordinates the support from other Member States and UCPM participating states, such as specialised equipment and response teams.

Under the guidelines of the United Nations advisory body International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, various technologies are utilised to identify the exact location of victims in search and rescue operations. Urban Search and Rescue teams rely on information provided by national authorities managing the overall response efforts.

So far, Member States have not expressed the need for an EU-wide web platform for missing persons as an area where EU support is sought. Relevant national authorities may however use the Cohesion Policy instruments ⁽²⁾ or various financing tools made available under UCPM, such as the Knowledge for Action in Prevention and Preparedness ⁽³⁾ call for proposals, or the Technical Assistance for Disaster Risk Management ⁽⁴⁾ call for proposals to test new ideas for disaster risk management applications or to carry out feasibility studies and draw technical specifications for tools, including Information technology (IT) platforms.

⁽¹⁾ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en.

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/what/investment-policy_en.

⁽³⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/UCPM-2025-KAPP-PVPP?isExactMatch=true&status=31094501,31094502,31094503&frameworkProgramme=43298203&order=DESC&pageNumber=1&pageSize=50&sortBy=startDate>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/UCPM-2025-TRACK1?isExactMatch=true&status=31094501,31094502,31094503&frameworkProgramme=43298203&order=DESC&pageNumber=1&pageSize=50&sortBy=startDate>.