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Answer given by Ms Lahbib  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(28.8.2025)

The Commission would like to recall that the EU has a support competence in civil protection. As such, the training of first responders, including volunteers, is the primary responsibility of the individual Member States.

Together with the Member States, the Commission implements the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) Training Programme<sup>1</sup>, aiming at increasing the overall response capability, by enhancing the coordination, compatibility and complementarity of response capacities, improving the competence of civil protection experts in Member States and UCPM participating states. This programme supplements the national training offer provided to experts and volunteers.

Whilst the allocation of dedicated resources specifically for the training, support, and stable employment of volunteer firefighters is primarily a national responsibility, the EU provides support through various funding mechanisms, such as the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), which can be used by Member States to invest in the training and skills of civil protection experts. The specific allocation and implementation of such programmes are determined at the national or regional level.

To facilitate cooperation in disaster response under the UCPM, teams of firefighters, selected by their national authorities, are being prepositioned in countries most affected by forest fires, during the summer period. This contributes to the exchange of expertise and increased interoperability, whilst representing the first layer of international response when needed.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://civil-protection-knowledge-network.europa.eu/system/files/2024-06/UCPM%20Training%20Programme%20Brochure%202024.pdf>.