

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003884/25
to the Commission**

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(3 October 2025)

Subject: Lack of standardisation of firefighting equipment as an obstacle to cross-border operations and European preparedness

Despite European integration, national differences persist in the equipment used by fire services. Hose couplings and connector systems are a case in point. While in Belgium DSP couplings using the Guillemin system are standard, in Germany and the Netherlands the Storz system is used. During cross-border operations, special adapters are needed to enable the interoperability of the different systems. Even within the same coupling system, national differences may exist, for instance in the coupling sizes of the hoses used.

Comparable national differences also exist regarding hydrant connections, nozzles, crisis communication networks, vehicle equipment and the training of rescue personnel.

During cross-border operations, divergent national standardisation leads to additional logistical burdens, which cost time and attention.

1. Is the Commission aware of the extent to which technical incompatibilities (such as hose couplings or hydrant connections) hinder and delay cross-border fire service operations in the EU?
2. Does the Commission plan to take measures to promote the standardisation of firefighting equipment and materials in European civil protection?
3. How does the Commission assess the possibility of ensuring greater interoperability of equipment and infrastructure within the framework of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) or through future resilience investments?

Submitted: 3.10.2025

Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(6 January 2026)

The Commission is aware of the challenges posed by technical incompatibilities, like incompatible firefighting equipment and of the need for improved cross-border integration and standardisation in disaster response equipment.

While the EU has a supporting competence in civil protection, the primary responsibility lies with Member States, including for firefighting equipment.

The Commission, alongside Member States, implements the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) Training and Exercises Programme⁽¹⁾ to enhance response capabilities and improve coordination, interoperability, compatibility and complementarity.

In addition, the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP)⁽²⁾, a reserve of emergency response teams and equipment, has a strong focus on interoperability, as one of the main focuses of the certification process⁽³⁾.

An important element of interoperability is the Storz Standard for hose connection adaptors, which forms part of the quality requirements for modules and teams involved in firefighting as well as other modules in other areas as defined in EU legislation⁽⁴⁾.

As part of the preparedness efforts, firefighter teams are prepositioned in countries most affected by forest fires during the summer. This initiative enhances expertise exchange and interoperability, serving as the initial layer of international response when necessary.

The EU Preparedness Union Strategy⁽⁵⁾ supports Member States by complementing national efforts, enhancing coordination while respecting national competences.

⁽¹⁾ <https://civil-protection-knowledge-network.europa.eu/media/ucpm-training-programme-brochure-2024>.

⁽²⁾ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/european-civil-protection-pool_en.

⁽³⁾ <https://civil-protection-knowledge-network.europa.eu/welcome-european-civil-protection-pool-ecpp-or-pool>.

⁽⁴⁾ These requirements, detailed in the Annex II of Commission Implementing Decision 2025/704: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2025/704/oj, must be met for inclusion in the ECPP.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/circabc-ewpp/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/b81316ab-a513-49a1-b520-b6a6e0de6986/file.bin>.

One of the key actions is to incorporate preparedness by design into EU policies and programmes and the European Parliament's support is crucial for these initiatives.
