

EU launches medical emergency corps

February 15 2016

The European Union on Monday launched its own medical corps to respond faster to emergencies such as the recent Ebola outbreak, with the capacity to act both within and outside the bloc.

"The aim of the European Medical Corps is to create a much faster and more efficient EU [response](#) to health crises when they occur," said EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid Christos Stylianides, who hosted the inauguration event in Brussels.

"We need to learn the lessons from the Ebola response; a key difficulty was mobilising medical teams," he added in a statement.

Through the new medical entity, EU member states and other participating European countries will make medical teams and assets available for rapid deployment before an emergency strikes—"thus ensuring a faster and more predictable response," the statement said.

The resources made available could include emergency medical teams, public health and medical coordination experts, mobile biosafety laboratories, medical evacuation planes and logistical support teams.

The new "voluntary pool" of medical expertise will be part of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which already intervenes in response to natural disasters.

The European Union recognised that a key difficulty during the Ebola virus outbreak, which hit mainly west African countries, was organising

the quick deployment of medical staff, as well as coping with logistical and management challenges.

So far nine EU member states—Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Luxembourg, Germany, Spain, Sweden and the Netherlands—have committed teams and equipment to the project.

The teams taking part in the European Medical Corps will be certified by Brussels, ensuring that those involved meet "strict quality criteria" and have received training in working in an international response operation, and can receive EU financial help.

In the field, such teams will report to an overall coordination team either under the leadership of an affected state or under the United Nations coordination system.

EU Commissioner Stylianides urged more countries to join the new [medical](#) corps "so the EU's response will be able to meet increasing needs and will allow for better planning and preparation before any disaster."

© 2016 AFP

Citation: EU launches medical emergency corps (2016, February 15) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-02-eu-medical-emergency-corps.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--