

CRISIS MANAGEMENT UNIT MFA, GREECE



The Answer to crises on the State Level- The cooperation between MS in answering crises in third countries : national experiences and perspectives on the implementation of the new Consular Protection Directive

Types of crises

- Terrorist attacks
- Large –scale accidents
- Natural disasters
- Kidnappings/hostage-takings
- Political crises/civil war/war
- Technological crises
- Medical crises

Who we are- Organization

In 2009 the MFA has set up a Crisis Management Unit

- This Unit operates under the supervision of the Secretary General as the coordinating body amongst services at the MFA and other Ministries when emergency situations of a humanitarian or consular nature arise.

Greeks abroad and Crisis Management Unit

- ❖ Assisting Greeks abroad is, among others, one of Ministry of Foreign Affairs principal duties.
- ❖ Assistance in emergency situation includes individual plans, management plans, media plans, family plans, humanitarian plans and financial plans.

Preparedness

- ❖ Activate emergency plans-each Embassy has a basic emergency plan and evacuation plan adjust to the needs of the country.
- Country risk assessment
- Size and spread of Greek community
- Tourists
- Family members
- Assistance to EU citizens and their family members
- Participation to exercises (national- EU level)

Greek diaspora

- Almost 7 millions
- Information via : SMS, through communities, MFA's internet site, social media (Embassy-Crisis Management Unit)

Tourists

- Greek telephone mobile companies may send SMS to their subscribers
- MFA's twitter
- Through Crisis Management Unit's facebook page (information in English, too)
- Travel agencies- tour operators
- Planning to establish an application for travelers

Greece abroad

- ❖ Embassies : 82
- ❖ General Consulates: 41
- ❖ Consulates: 6
- ❖ Liaison offices: 2
- ❖ Permanent Representations :8
- ❖ Commercial offices :61
- ❖ Honorary Consulates :139
- ❖ Coast Guards: 27

Emergencies

- ✓ In emergencies, the Unit is put into 24-hour operation, providing the necessary organizational support for the Ministry services involved in confronting a given emergency.
- ✓ Permanent contact is established with the relevant mission abroad.
- ✓ A hotline for citizens is set up.
- ✓ Close cooperation with EU MS- third countries
- ✓ Facilitate family members holders of non EU passports
- ✓ Cooperation with all relevant Embassies in Athens

24/7 operation

- 24/7 duty officers (diplomats)
- Cooperation with EU MS crisis centers
- Embassies in Greece
- EEAS- CION
- ERCC Brussels
- Cooperation with relevant Greek authorities

Recent events

- ❖ Terrorist attacks
- ❖ Natural disasters (Hurricanes, earthquakes, volcano in Bali)
- ❖ In Greece : sea accidents, forest fires in Mati Attiki, earthquakes.

Evacuation of EU citizens and other nationals - Mediterranean sea

- Libya 2011 & 2014
- Egypt 2011
- Lebanon 2006 (close cooperation with Cyprus)

How

- By sea :
 - ❖ Commercial fleet (largest in the world)
 - ❖ Navy ships (in 24 hours)
 - ❖ Database of active Hellenic ships
 - ❖ Main ports in Mediterranean sea : Pireus, Kalamata, Heraklion, Rhodes

How

- By air :
 - ❖ Military airplane (in few hours)
 - ❖ Airplanes of Greek private company
 - ❖ Overflights though MFA duty officers

LIBYA 2014

- FRIGATE SALAMIS.
- 186 people were evacuated
- 77 Greeks, 78 Chinese, 12 Cypriots and 19 citizens from United Kingdom, Belgium, Russian Federation and Albania
- Close cooperation with their Embassies in Tripoli and Athens
- Cooperation with Crisis Management Units

LIBYA 2014

■ Evacuation procedure (during night)



LIBYA 2014

- FRIGATE SALAMIS- registration process (no staff from the capital) Embassy's staff



Problems

- Change of plans cause of weather conditions
- Change of plans cause of security reasons
- Registration on frigate, waiting for the final list
- Communication through CoOL
- Three different approaches of evacuation
- Impossible to reach port of Benghazi

Coordination

- Close cooperation with Italian Embassy in Tripoli and Italian Crisis Unit
- Close cooperation with Malta
- Second Greek vessel on Maltese territorial waters
- Importance of communication with Embassies in Athens
- Importance of communication through Crisis Management Unit in Athens

LIBYA 2014

- Port of Piraeus, July 2014
- ‘Help desk’ on port (MFA staff, police, Embassies)



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unrepresented EU citizens in third countries

- Unrepresented citizens of other MS assisted by Greece: most cases Cyprus
- Greek citizens unrepresented abroad assisted by other MS : most cases Italy and France

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- Role of accredited Embassy and MFA HQ-Crisis Unit is pivotal
- Other actors : Honorary Consuls, local communities.
- Locally : create an information system like a pyramid

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problems

- Bear in mind that in many cases a significant number of these citizens are dual nationals
- Information about emergency preparedness, contingency plans and assembly points-classified information for many MS, not sharing national plans
- Financial procedure in a crisis situation
- Family members

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Financial procedures in crisis

- Inform your nationals (unrepresented) that, if they are assisted by another MS, they could be required to pay for consular assistance on the same conditions as the national of the assisting MS or that they could be requested to sign an undertaking to repay the relevant amounts to you.
- Role of UCPM

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facilitated procedure in crisis situation

- Family members
- Do any specific rules apply to third country family members of EU citizens?

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Union Civil Protection Mechanism

- Medevac
- Natural disasters
- Civil war/war

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Joint EU Consular Crisis Preparedness Framework

- Council Directive 2015/637 provides guidance for crisis preparedness and cooperation (Art.13) in order to ensure that unrepresented citizens are taken into account in contingency planning and can be provided with the necessary assistance in the event of a consular crisis.
- The Joint Framework is designed to enhance coordination and effectiveness in the event of a crisis, while taking into account the national responsibility of Member States in consular matters. It neither replaces the existing national crisis plans of Member States nor their responsibility to provide consular assistance to their own nationals.

Social media

- Page on Facebook : facebook@crisisunit.gr
- Internet site : www.mfa.gr
- Twitter : @GreeceMFA

Thank you for your attention....

