The EU Emergency and Crisis Coordination Arrangements (CCA) were designed in the wake of major terrorist attacks (2004 bombings in Madrid and 2005 bombings in London) and disasters (the 2004 tsunami in the Pacific and Indian Ocean) to allow the EU and its Member States to give a strategic and political response to crises in a coordinated manner. Following the 2004 European Council invitation to establish an integrated EU crisis-management arrangement, the CCA were formally agreed by the Council in 2006.

Since then, the CCA Webpage was activated three times for information-exchange purposes:

- during the terrorist attack in Mumbai in 2008;
- in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake of January 2010;
- following the eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull and the related ash cloud problems in April 2010.
The EU Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements (IPCR) reinforce the European Union’s ability to take rapid decisions when facing major emergencies requiring a response at EU political level. They were approved on 25 June 2013 by the Council, thus finalising the review of the EU Emergency and Crisis Coordination Arrangements (CCA).

The IPCR arrangements are flexible and scalable, enabling a tailored response at EU political level and requisite support from EU Institutions and Services in relation to a crisis and its evolution. They fully exploit synergies between stakeholders and existing resources, structures and capabilities.

They also support the Solidarity Clause (Art. 222 TFEU), ensuring a coherent, efficient and timely response at EU political level in the event of activation (single set of crisis arrangements).

The IPCR arrangements are based on the principle of subsidiarity, fully respecting Member States’ responsibilities in a crisis situation. They do not replace existing arrangements at sectoral level.

A Presidency-led coordination and decision-making tool

The IPCR process is driven by the Presidency, which ensures its political control and strategic direction, with the support of the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC), the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), acting in accordance with their respective roles and responsibilities.

The process is centred on COREPER and follows existing Council procedures.

The Presidency gathers the requisite support and advice through an informal Presidency-chaired roundtable so as to prepare decisions on the possible handling of the crisis within the Council and to develop proposals for action to be presented to COREPER/COUNCIL.

The IPCR is based on a progressive approach. Its activation by the Presidency, upon request from the affected Member State(s), leads to a number of stages, starting from situational awareness to political coordination and decision-making, at COREPER, Council or even European Council levels.

Support to the Presidency and the Council decision-making

Collecting and analysing situational information: ISAA capability

An Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis (ISAA) capability, developed by the Commission and EEAS from existing means, supports the Presidency’s and Council’s decision-making.

Upon activation, ISAA support is available on a lasting basis. It provides an integrated overview of the situation, as well as its possible evolution and consequences. It also provides input for the Member States and supports the Commission and the EEAS in their activities.

Information-sharing / electronic hub: the IPCR Web Platform

The key IPCR information-sharing tool is its Web Platform. It is accessible to all relevant stakeholders, at Member State and EU levels and supports the timely exchange of information relevant to EU political decision-making.

The IPCR Web Platform is Council-owned, permanently available and its access is protected. It is managed by the GSC with the support of the Commission and of the EEAS.

The IPCR Web Platform receives input (or contributions) from Member States, the Commission, the EEAS and the EU Agencies, acting as the IPCR communication hub.

In crisis times, one or several Crisis Pages can be generated, depending on the situation and political needs. The IPCR Web Platform also allows information-sharing outside times of crisis, notably for preparedness purposes.

Spreading the IPCR culture

In order to enhance EU crisis response capacity, there is a need to spread the IPCR culture at all levels. This is based mainly on preparedness activities, which allow the relevant decision-makers to be fully aware and trained, as well as on communication with the relevant audiences.

Communication also carries the IPCR culture internally and among the officials in the Member States, whether they are affected by the crisis or not.