



National Coordinator for  
Counterterrorism and Security  
*Ministry of Justice and Security*

# National Crisis Management Handbook



*Within the flexibly designed national crisis management network, the national government of the Netherlands cooperates intensively with local governments and relevant public and private partners to jointly manage actual and potential crises as effectively as possible.*

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# Foreword

Our society is constantly evolving and is subject to changes that may also impact our safety and security. The risks entailed in societal, technological and ecological developments may lead to crises with broad, supra-regional and national effects. While ensuring a safe and secure society is a core task of the government, it requires contributions from all parties involved. It is therefore vital that the government – together with public and private partners at every level, with social organisations and with citizens – is as well-prepared and well-equipped as possible to prevent and/or manage crises.

As Minister of Justice and Security, I am responsible for the establishment of crisis management policy and the corresponding system, as well as for ensuring (in coordination with the relevant public and private partners) its proper functioning and a cohesive approach in real-world practice. The major points of the national crisis management organisation are laid down in the present National Crisis Management Handbook. The Handbook constitutes a more detailed elaboration of the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (Establishment) Order and sets out the roles, tasks, responsibilities and powers of the most important actors within the national crisis management network.

This network can be activated in situations of an urgent nature in which national security is at risk, or which have serious consequences for society. These are generally situations in which the standard structures and procedures are no longer adequate. The new versions of the Order and the Handbook supersede the obsolete versions from 2016. This new Order and Handbook set out the changes made on the basis of lessons learned, experiences gained and findings from evaluations (such as concerning the crisis approach to the COVID-19 pandemic) and describe the current standard practice in situations with a supra-regional and national impact.

In addressing a crisis, we must be mindful of possible consequences, both for vulnerable groups and for the practical implementation of measures and their enforceability and

financial feasibility. We must also be able to explain why we are taking certain measures. Accordingly, the national crisis management organisation will from the outset be focused on close and flexible cooperation with other government authorities, government services and public and private partners concerned, as constituent parts of a nationwide system. For example, based on their administrative responsibility, it will be possible to invite a mayor, chair of a safety region or chair of another public body to take part in meetings in an advisory capacity. In addition, other operational partners and subject-matter experts will also be able to participate as advisers, such as the police, the Royal Military Constabulary, intelligence and security services, the armed forces and private partners, such as providers of critical processes, knowledge institutions or knowledge networks.

Together with the current Safety Regions Act, this Handbook offers a policy framework in connection with preparing for specific situations, such as in the form of nationwide crisis plans and a platform for education, training and exercises. I am pleased that the agreements have been reached through harmonious consultation with the relevant public and private partners.

In the upcoming period, the Dutch government will take measures to further permanently strengthen the crisis management mechanisms in order to remain well-prepared for future risks. These measures will include a revised legal framework as part of a joint long-term national crisis management agenda with joint national objectives. The present Order and Handbook are therefore intermediate steps on the road to a future ministerial regulation and a nationwide handbook.

**Dilan Yeşilgöz-Zegerius, Minister of Justice and Security**



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## Order of the Prime Minister, Minister of General Affairs, of 25 November 2022, no. 4302072, establishing the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee

The Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs),

Acting in accordance with the view of the Cabinet;

Having regard to article 25, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure for the Cabinet,

Decides as follows:

### Article 1

A Ministerial Crisis Management Committee is to be established.

### Article 2

The Committee is tasked with coordination and decision-making of an urgent nature with regard to all measures and provisions necessary with a view to taking a coherent approach to situations in which national security is (or may be) at risk or which have (or may have) serious consequences for society.

### Article 3

1. The Committee's permanent members are the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) and the Minister of Justice and Security.
2. The Minister of Justice and Security is the coordinating minister and chair, unless the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) decides to assume the role of chair.
3. Any minister or state secretary may request that the Minister of Justice and Security convene a meeting of the Committee. The Committee's chair will decide on the request in agreement with the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) and after consultation with the minister or state secretary bearing primary responsibility for the matter to which the request pertains.
4. In agreement with the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs), the chair will determine for each situation, and if necessary for each meeting, which other ministers will be members of the Committee.
5. The Committee's chair may allow state secretaries to participate in the Committee's meetings in an advisory capacity where the matters at hand directly concern their ambit of authority.
6. The chair may invite the chair of a safety region, a mayor or the chair of another public body to take part in meetings of the Committee in an advisory capacity.
7. After consultation with the minister or state secretary whose area of authority coincides most with the matter at hand, the chair may invite other partners and experts to participate in the meetings as an adviser based on their substantive or operational expertise.
8. Provided the Committee's chair grants permission in advance, ministers or state secretaries – as well as the chair of a safety region, a mayor or the chair of another public body – may be assisted by a civil servant during meetings.
9. The Committee will not appropriate any powers from any minister and will not take decisions on matters that particularly concern a minister who is not present at a meeting.



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**Article 4**

1. If it is necessary to take a decision by vote, the decision will be based on a simple majority, in which each minister in attendance has a single vote. In the event of a tie, the chair will have the casting vote.
2. The head of the National Crisis Centre will act as executive secretary to the Committee.
3. Where decisions require the Cabinet's approval, the executive secretary will ensure that a list of the decisions, including the Committee's conclusions, is drawn up as quickly as possible. Where decisions need to be implemented without delay, prior approval of the list is not required.

**Article 5**

The Committee will be advised at senior civil-service level by the Interdepartmental Crisis Management Committee chaired by the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism.

**Article 6**

The Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (Establishment) Order 2016 (Government Gazette 48258 ,2016) is repealed.

**Article 7**

This Order will enter into force one day after the date of publication of the Government Gazette in which it is published with explanatory notes.

**Article 8**

This Order shall be cited as follows: Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (Establishment) Order 2022.

This decision and the associated explanatory notes will be published in the Government Gazette.

*The Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs),*  
M. Rutte



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### General

In a situation in which national security is (or may be) at risk or which has (or may have) other serious consequences for society, it may be desirable for the national government to bear responsibility at the political-administrative level for coordination and decision-making of an urgent nature in respect of the totality of measures, facilities, provisions and potential actions that must be taken or arranged in cooperation with the involved public and private partners with a view to a coherent approach. These are generally situations in which the standard structures and procedures for decision-making are inadequate. In such situations, the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee can be convened on the grounds of article 25, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure for the Cabinet.

This Order concerns the organisation and procedures of the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (hereafter: the MCMC). The procedures of the MCMC and the support it receives are described in further detail in the National Crisis Management Handbook. In June 2019, the Cabinet adopted the long-term National Security Strategy (NSS)<sup>1</sup>. Risk analyses in that context show that there are many areas of correlation between the various risks and that a complex, dynamic and partly unpredictable threat landscape exists. In December 2020, the Safety Regions Act Evaluation Committee concluded that the Netherlands is not well-prepared for large-scale and occasionally longer-lasting crises. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that the consequences of social, technological and ecological developments (such as the energy transition, digitisation and climate change) can, to an increasing degree, lead to new and even more complex crises with broad, supra-regional and national effects. It has also become emphatically clear that the approach must include attention to possible and expected broad societal consequences, such as the effects on vulnerable groups. Numerous evaluations have recommended safeguarding the uniformity of government policy by establishing and maintaining a connection between the national, regional and local governments. The Cabinet is currently working to realise a single nationwide system for crisis management, along with a corresponding revised legislative framework. This amendment to the Establishment Order concerning the Committee and the National Handbook does not anticipate a future adjustment of the legal framework, but rather formalises the changes that have already been implemented in the organisation, procedures and support of the MCMC.

### Article 2

The MCMC can be convened if national security is (or may be) at risk. National security is at risk if the vital interests of the State of the Netherlands and/or society are threatened to the extent that there is actual or potential social disruption. This may involve disruption to or loss of critical infrastructure (e.g. electricity, gas, cyber, and drinking water systems), floods, infectious diseases, animal diseases, nuclear incidents or a terrorist threat or attack. Examples of situations that have serious consequences for society include local or regional incidents or accidents with many casualties, incidents or accidents abroad with a large number of Dutch victims, or events in the Netherlands that are of national or international significance. In such situations, a coherent, integral, feasible and enforceable approach is necessary because the uncoordinated implementation of measures, exercise of powers and potential lines of action to be communicated can be inefficient and even counterproductive. To that end, it is also important that any measures or provisions to be announced should first be evaluated with regard to their practicability, enforceability and financial feasibility.

The ministers concerned will therefore coordinate the deployment of their respective powers in the context of the MCMC and will exercise those powers in agreement with the MCMC's decisions. The MCMC will not appropriate any powers from any minister or take decisions on matters that particularly concern a minister who is not present at a meeting. For instance, no decisions will be taken on defence personnel or equipment in the absence of the Minister of Defence.

### Article 3

As the coordinating minister responsible for the organisation, functioning and coherence of crisis management policy and the associated system, as well as for overseeing the integral approach to that policy, the Minister of Justice and Security will serve as

<sup>1</sup> National Security Strategy, Parliamentary Papers II, 821 30 ,2019–2018, No. 81. The Cabinet is developing a Nationwide Security Strategy that is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2023. This strategy sets out the nationwide strategic focus on the national security of the entire Kingdom of the Netherlands. Prompted by the increasing interconnectedness of internal and external security, this strategy combines and integrates the current Geïntegreerde Buitenland- en Veiligheidsstrategie [Worldwide for a secure Netherlands, a comprehensive foreign and security policy 2022–2018] and the National Security Strategy (Parliamentary Papers II, 925 35 ,2022–2021 VI, No. 32).



chair of the MCMC. The standard deputation arrangement will apply to the MCMC, currently in his absence the Minister of Justice and Security will be replaced by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) may choose to assume the chairmanship at any time. In his absence this is the Deputy Prime Minister, designated in accordance with the standard deputation arrangement.

In agreement with the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs), the chair of the MCMC will decide which other ministers are invited to join the Committee. The chair will also decide whether a state secretary may participate in a meeting in an advisory capacity.

In devising an approach to the crisis, the Cabinet is emphatically focusing on the potential and expected broad societal consequences, particularly those with an impact on vulnerable groups, the practical implementation and the enforceability of potential measures. To that end, the component parts of the national crisis management organisation that responds to actual and potential crises will – from the outset – be structured and organised in such a way as to ensure intensive and flexible cooperation with local governments, government services and relevant public and private partners. The ministries and safety regions will, in all cases, be informed when the MCMC and/or the advisory and supporting bodies within the national crisis management organisation are convened. The chair of the MCMC may decide to invite the chair of a security region (typically the chair of the Safety Regions Council) or a mayor or chair of another public body (e.g. a dike warden or the Governor of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius or Saba) to take part in meetings in an advisory capacity based on their administrative responsibility. This advisory capacity will involve issuing recommendations during the meeting, not participating in decisions taken by vote.

In addition, upon the chair's invitation, other partners and experts may attend Committee meetings as an adviser on the basis of their operational or substantive expertise. Such experts may include members of the police, intelligence and security services, the armed forces, the Royal Military Constabulary, private partners including the providers of critical processes, and experts from knowledge institutions or knowledge networks.

The chair may also invite the Netherlands Public Prosecution Service to take part in a meeting if the situation gives reason to do so. The Public Prosecution Service can inform and advise the MCMC with regard to the enforceability of measures on the grounds of criminal law, as well as with regard to measures that relate to the enforcement, under criminal law, of the rule of law (such as the surveillance and security system). The Public Prosecution Service can also inform the MCMC regarding actions carried out under the authority of the Public Prosecution Service in connection with criminal-law enforcement of the rule of law (such as a criminal investigation).

#### **Article 4**

Like the decision of a cabinet committee, the decision list of the MCMC is subject to the approval of the Cabinet. Because the decisions of the MCMC are generally urgent and permit no delay, it has been determined that (in those time-sensitive situations) such approval is not a prerequisite for commencing implementation of the decisions made by the MCMC.

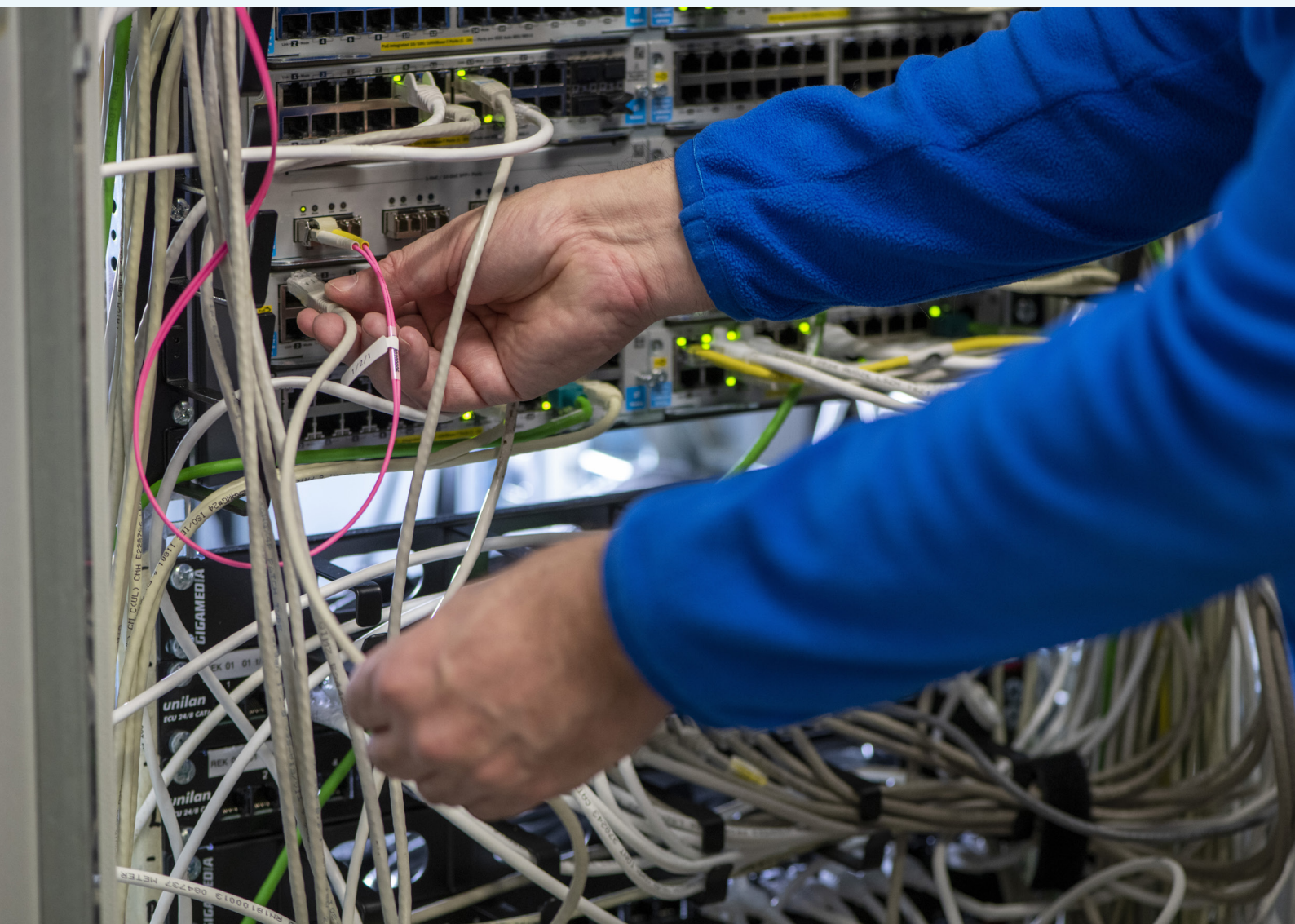
#### **Article 5**

The Interdepartmental Crisis Management Committee (ICMC), consisting of representatives of the various ministries at Director General (DG) level and invited representatives of local governments, will advise the MCMC's chair on a case-by-case basis on whether the MCMC should be convened and subsequently on coordination and decision-making. The MCMC and the ICMC will be supported by the Interdepartmental Coordination Group (ICG) and a multidisciplinary staff, for instance in connection with the nationwide information provision and operational coordination, for gaining insight and forming opinions and to provide advice on specific matters, crisis communication or accountability to parliament. All components and consultative bodies within the national crisis management organisation will be consulted as and when necessary, and will be flexibly organised and selected with scope for improvisation in the form of buffers in capacity and variety in procedures to ensure a maximum degree of customisation in response to each situation and, if necessary, each meeting.

*The Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs),  
M. Rutte*



*Risks entailed in societal, technological and ecological developments may lead to crises with broad local, regional, supra-regional and nationwide effects.*



# I Introduction

1. Our society is constantly evolving and is subject to changes that may also impact our safety and security. Risks entailed in societal, technological and ecological developments (such as the energy transition, digitisation and climate change) may lead to crises with broad local, regional, supra-regional and nationwide effects. Crises are situations comprised in part of unpredictable and unknown elements and aspects, which threaten the safety and security of our society and call for urgent and deliberate attention. While ensuring a safe and secure society is a core task of the government, it requires contributions from all parties involved. It is therefore vital that the government – together with public and private partners at every level, with social organisations and with citizens – is as well-prepared and well-equipped as possible to prevent and/or manage potential and actual crises.
2. The Cabinet has appointed the Minister of Justice and Security as the coordinating minister for crisis management. The coordinating minister is responsible for the organisation, functioning and coherence of crisis management policy and the associated system, as well as for overseeing the integral approach to that policy. The major points of the crisis management policy and the network involved in the national crisis management organisation are laid down in this National Crisis Management Handbook. The Handbook constitutes a more detailed elaboration of the *Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (Establishment) Order*<sup>1</sup> and sets out the roles, tasks, responsibilities and powers of the most important actors within the national crisis management network.
3. The national crisis management network can be activated in situations in which national security is (or may be) at risk or which have (or may have) other major impacts on our society. These are generally situations in which the standard structures and procedures for decision-making are inadequate. In such situations, it may be desirable for the national government to bear responsibility at the senior civil-service and political-administrative level for coordination and decision-making of an urgent nature in respect of the totality of measures, facilities, provisions and potential actions that must be taken or arranged in cooperation with the involved public and private partners with a view to a coherent approach.
4. At the heart of the national decision-making structure in crisis situations are the Interdepartmental Crisis Management Committee (ICMC) and the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (MCMC). Both these committees are supported and advised by the Interdepartmental Coordination Group and ad hoc multidisciplinary teams. All components and consultative bodies within the national crisis management organisation will be consulted as and when necessary, and will be flexibly organised and selected with scope for improvisation in the form of buffers in capacity and variety in procedures. This allows for a maximum degree of customisation in response to each situation and, if necessary, each meeting. The component parts of the national crisis management organisation will – from the outset – be structured and organised in such a way as to ensure intensive cooperation and coordination with the network of relevant public and private partners in order to embed relevant knowledge and expertise within the national crisis management network. A graphic representation of the major points of the national crisis management network and the public and private partners who may be involved (as the constituent parts of a nationwide crisis management system) has been included as Appendix A.
5. The agreements on connecting the safety regions to the national crisis management structure have been coordinated with the chairs of the safety regions who come together on behalf those regions in the Safety Regions Council. The National Crisis Management Handbook has been adopted by the Cabinet. It may be amended in the light of new circumstances and information, for example in response to actual situations, incidents, events and exercises. The Minister of Justice and Security will submit

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1. *Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (Establishment) Order 2022 (Government Gazette 2022, 32675)*.

the necessary proposals for changes to the Cabinet.

6. The National Crisis Management Handbook applies in the Netherlands, and therefore to public bodies in the Caribbean Netherlands, unless otherwise specified.<sup>2</sup>
7. The Handbook is distributed to:
  - ministers and state secretaries;
  - King's Commissioners;
  - mayors;
  - chairs of the safety regions;
  - Governors of public bodies in the Caribbean Netherlands;
  - the Kingdom Representative for the public bodies of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba;
  - the Presidents of the House of Representatives and Senate of the States General;
  - the President of the Court of Audit;
  - the Vice President of the Council of State;
  - the Chairman of the Board of Procurators General;
  - the Inspection Council;
  - the Chairman of the Dutch Safety Board;
  - the Chairs of the Safety Regions Council, Association of Provincial Authorities, Association of Netherlands Municipalities, Association of Water Authorities, the Chief Officer of the National Police Force, the Chief of the Netherlands Defence Staff, the Commander of the Royal Military Constabulary, the Chair of the Council of Commanders and Safety Region Directors, the Council of Public Health Directors, the Regional Military Commanders, and the central government representatives, and also to the chairs of the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW) and the Dutch Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MKB-Nederland).

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2. *See the Crisis Management Handbook for the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom (House of Representatives, session year 2020-2021, 30 821, No. 129). This Handbook sets out the main points of the generic roles, tasks and responsibilities of the European and Caribbean crisis partners who are (or may be) involved in an actual or potential disaster or crisis on one of the public bodies and/or in one or more of the autonomous countries in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands.*

*When managing crises at the national level, we serve to connect the public-private approach and play a facilitating role, for instance by coordinating support to and from the police, fire services, medical assistance and the Ministry of Defence.*



# II Crisis management, national security and the roles of the national government

1. Within the framework of the National Handbook, crisis management represents coordination and decision-making of an urgent nature in respect of the totality of measures, facilities, provisions and potential actions taken or arranged by the government in cooperation with public and private partners involved in a situation in which national security is or may be at risk, or in another situation in which there is or may be a major impact on society.<sup>3</sup>

2. National security is at risk if one or more of the vital interests of the State of the Netherlands and/or society are threatened to the extent that there is actual or potential social disruption. The national security interests as described in the National Security Strategy are:

- territorial security: the unimpeded functioning of the Netherlands and its EU and NATO allies as independent states in a broad sense, or territorial security in a narrow sense;
- physical safety and security: the ability of people to go about their lives in an unimpeded manner within the Netherlands and their surrounding area;
- economic security: the unimpeded functioning of the Dutch economy in an effective and efficient manner;
- ecological security: the unimpeded continued existence of the natural living environment in and around the Netherlands;
- social and political stability: the continued and unimpeded existence of a social climate in which individuals are free to go about their lives and groups are able to coexist within and in accordance with the democratic and lawful state of the Netherlands and its shared values;

3. *This definition is broader than the one set out in the Safety Regions Act. In the context of that legislation, crisis management refers to enforcement of the public order (Safety Regions Act, Section 1).*

- international rule of law: the functioning of the international system of rules, standards and agreements established for the purposes of international peace and security.

These six interests are usually so closely intertwined that they cannot be taken in isolation.<sup>4</sup>

Examples of situations that have a major impact on society include local or regional incidents or accidents with many casualties, incidents or accidents abroad with a large number of Dutch victims or a major impact on Dutch society, or events in the Netherlands that are of national or international significance.

3. Crisis management is organised as an ongoing, cyclical process that includes risk analysis, preparation, response, and a follow-up stage and recovery. At the central government level, each ministry is responsible for organising the crisis management measures to be taken within its own policy field, arranging the financing of those measures (in coordination with the Minister of Finance) and effectively coordinating them with the coordinating minister (Minister of Justice and Security), other central government parties and the relevant public and private partners. Individual ministries are also responsible

4. *National Security Strategy, Parliamentary Papers II, 2018–2019, 30 821, No. 81. The Cabinet is developing a Nationwide Security Strategy that is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2023. This strategy sets out the nationwide strategic focus on the national security of the entire Kingdom of the Netherlands. Prompted by the increasing interconnectivity of internal and external security, this strategy combines and integrates the current Geïntegreerde Buitenland- en Veiligheidsstrategie [Worldwide for a secure Netherlands, a comprehensive foreign and security policy 2018–2022] and the National Security Strategy.*

for ensuring that a framework is in place for the crisis management measures to be taken by the providers of critical processes, insofar as these entities fall within their mandate.<sup>5</sup> The Cabinet will adopt a broad, long-term national crisis management agenda. The inter-ministerial policy coordination will take place within the national consultative body on crisis management for directors, which also includes representatives from the safety regions and the providers of critical processes.

4. In most instances, a local or regional crisis will be dealt with by the tier of government (e.g. municipality, water authority, safety region or public body of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius or Saba) and organisations operating at that level. Depending on the nature and scale of the incident, multiple organisations may be called in (horizontal and/or vertical escalation). Each safety region is responsible for preparing for disasters and crises that may occur within the region and, to that end, will draft a regional crisis plan and (where necessary and/or required by law) a contingency management plan. When scaling up their response to various levels, the safety regions will use a national uniform escalation system (GRIP<sup>6</sup>) for which the Safety Regions Act provides the legal framework. In the event of a crisis of local significance (i.e. a local crisis), the mayor can solicit advice from a Municipal Policy Team and trilateral coordination will take place between the mayor, the Public Prosecutor and the police commissioner on aspects such as enforcement. If the effects of an actual or potential disaster or crisis have consequences beyond a particular local area, the chair of the relevant safety region will convene the Regional Policy Team and will bear administrative responsibility for maintaining public order and (in the event of a potential or actual disaster) general public safety.<sup>7</sup> The Regional Policy Team consists of the mayors of the municipalities which are involved in or at risk of being impacted by the disaster or crisis, along with the Chief Public Prosecutor.
5. Depending on how a situation develops, the central government (i.e. the Ministries) can play three roles – or some combination thereof – in an actual or potential crisis: facilitation, coordination and management.

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5. *For an up-to-date summary of government responsibilities, see the Bestuurlijke netwerkkaarten crisisbeheersing (a network plan describing duties and responsibilities in a regional crisis management context) and the corresponding charts (<https://nipv.nl/bestuurlijke-netwerkkaarten-en-bevoegdhedenschemas/>).*
  6. *GRIP is the Dutch acronym for: Gecoördineerde Regionale Incidentbestrijdingsprocedure (Coordinated Regional Incident Management Procedure). The GRIP system consists of a series of levels: local (1-3), regional (4) and interregional (5).*
  7. *In accordance with Section 39 of the Safety Regions Act.*

#### a. Central government facilitation

Central government can assist the competent authorities in the general-sector chain (municipality, safety region, province, public body of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius or Saba) or functional-sector chain (water authority, provider of critical process). This assistance and support can be provided at the request of the aforementioned authorities or on the central government's own initiative.

Examples of facilitation are:

- opportunities for expertise, knowledge and advice for the purposes of crisis management, such as the Crisis Expert Team environment and drinking water;
- opportunities for coordination and consultation between the parties involved;
- facilitation of operational processes, national/local provision of information and crisis communication;
- resources (e.g. communication tools such as [www.crisis.nl](http://www.crisis.nl), [www.rijksoverheid.nl](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl), and the 0800-1351 public information line);
- Coordination or provision of support (e.g. through the National Operational Coordination Centre, or specifically via the DCC of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management for pump capacity), contacts and exchanging information with neighbouring regions, such as liaising with a neighbouring region if there are not enough local or regional staff to handle crisis communication.

#### b. Central government coordination

The central government can intervene in situations in which some form of coordination and/or harmonisation of action by the relevant authorities is desirable or necessary in the general and/or functional chain.

It enacts such coordination by providing urgent advice to the relevant authorities. This urgent advice is intended chiefly to facilitate joint action and/or to reconcile the divergent interests of the relevant parties.

Coordination (urgent advice) can be provided at the request of the aforementioned authorities or on the central government's own initiative.

This advice will relate to one or more specific aspects of the actions to be taken by the relevant authorities. The competent authorities must keep one another sufficiently informed regarding their respective roles and provide feedback on how they have responded to the urgent advice.

Examples of coordination are:

- the harmonisation of crisis communication, other communication and talking points;

- the preparation of policy principles and tolerance levels for uniform nationwide measures to maintain public order.

### c. Central government management

The central government can perform a management function directly or indirectly, but may do so only in so far as its formal powers permit. These powers have a legal basis (whether in so-called emergency law or otherwise) and are generally linked to specific measures.

Some examples of these powers<sup>8</sup> are:

- the implementation of security and protection measures in the central government domain;
- the provision and prioritisation of assistance by the police, fire service, medical assistance and the Ministry of Defence, either to alleviate scarcity or otherwise;
- the implementation of measures to prevent infectious diseases ('category A diseases');
- the implementation of measures to manage 'category A' radiation incidents;
- the ability to close airspace;
- the implementation of requisitioning measures to combat general, protracted scarcity of goods or services;
- the implementation of measures to prevent or mitigate the consequences of a terrorist threat or attack;
- the ability to order measures to manage an actual or imminent flood (e.g. large-scale evacuation);
- the implementation of restrictive measures to manage the supply and use of drinking water;
- the implementation of measures in the event of a major IT incident;
- power to issue instructions or delegate this task.<sup>9</sup>

The central government will take managerial measures to protect national and international interests, such as:

- State security;
- the public interest;
- the six national security interests.

Powers must be exercised in accordance with the substantive and/or procedural conditions on the exercise of powers laid down in the relevant laws and in keeping with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

8. A non-exhaustive list is available (in Dutch) via <https://nipv.nl/bestuurlijke-netwerkkarten-en-bevoegdhedenschemas/>

9. For example by having a King's Commissioner issue instructions regarding policy or other matters under the Safety Regions Act or the Code of Conduct for the King's Commissioner.

In the event a minister other than the Minister of Justice and Security issues further regulations or takes further measures in response to a disaster, they will confer with the Minister of Justice and Security before making use of these powers, unless the necessary speed of the response does not allow for such consultation.

In the event a minister other than the Minister of Justice and Security issues further regulations or takes further measures in a crisis situation, they will inform the Minister of Justice and Security without delay.<sup>10</sup>

The ministers and state secretaries concerned coordinate the mobilisation and exercise of their powers amongst themselves.

In situations when the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (MCMC) has been convened, that coordination task takes place within this committee.

When the central government exercises its powers, it will explicitly inform the public and private parties affected via the National Crisis Centre or the relevant Departmental Crisis Coordination Centre (DCC). When the central government exercises its formal powers, it establishes a framework which determines how local authorities will use their powers; this is not the same as assuming those powers. Exceptions are permitted in exceptional circumstances (where provided for by emergency or other law<sup>11</sup>) and in cases of neglect of duty.

Central government management does not prejudice the necessary local, regional or supra-regional coordination with partners, including central government representatives known as 'Rijksheren'.

Central government management does not affect the existing accountability structure: the government is accountable to the House of Representatives, and the chair of the safety region and the mayor are accountable to the council of the municipality concerned or to their own council, respectively, while the governors of public bodies are accountable to the island council.

10. In accordance with Section 44 of the Safety Regions Act.

11. For example, under Section 54 of the Safety Regions Act, the Minister of Justice and Security may, in exceptional circumstances, assume powers in whole or in part from the King's Commissioner and the mayor, or transfer them in whole or in part to another authority if urgently required in the public interest. This Section has not yet entered into force. When necessitated by extraordinary circumstances, this Section may be put into effect by Royal Decree at the recommendation of our Prime Minister.

*A high-quality crisis management organisation requires professionally equipped officials and a strong, flexible crisis network. It is therefore crucial that the staff and teams who play operational roles in the national crisis network be given frequent opportunities to take part in education, training and exercises.*





# III Preparation: risk analysis, planning, education, training and exercises

1. The first step in the cyclical process of crisis management is to analyse the risks. The ministries and the safety regions bear joint responsibility in this area. The Nationwide National Security Risk Analysis and the analyses at the regional level lead to shared insight concerning risks at the national and regional levels. This insight serves as a basis for political-administrative decision-making in connection with which risks must be assigned priority and potentially addressed in a concerted effort.
  2. The joint risk analyses provide a basis for subsequent joint preparations. The National Crisis Management Handbook and the Safety Regions Act provide the policy framework and guidelines for all planning and preparations by the central government and the safety regions with regard to specific situations, incidents or events. Based on the Handbook, agreements will be formalised in ministerial handbooks, crisis plans, guidelines and so on. For crises with supra-regional or national consequences, nationwide crisis plans will be drawn up with the central government and safety regions as joint owners. To the extent that it is relevant, the planning and preparation by third parties must also be in keeping with the content of this National Handbook.
  3. The foundation underlying successful cooperation within networks is (in addition to mutual familiarity) pursuing shared education, training, exercises, testing, evaluation and learning. This applies not only to the basis of the individual organisation, but more importantly to action and cooperation in the multidisciplinary context, between the various governments and government services and with the relevant public and private crisis partners.
- The structure of the crisis management organisation of each ministry, the quality of that organisation and the timely adjustment of the ministerial structures and agreements, such as in the departmental crisis management handbooks, fall under the responsibility of the relevant minister. To that end, in part, every minister will specifically promote the deployment of education, training and exercises for the benefit of the crisis-related decision-making structure and procedures at their respective ministries.
4. Within the Ministry of Justice and Security, there is a National Academy for Crisis Management (NAC) which provides a programme of education, training and exercises to enhance the quality of the national crisis management organisation and offers training programmes to support the ministries in their own efforts toward that end. This may include education, training and exercises for the national crisis management organisation, cooperation with other government bodies, government services and relevant public and private crisis partners, along with exercises conducted at the international level. Joint activities will be developed for various types of crises. The programme of exercises will focus on skills including the ability to improvise and to act in accordance with established scenarios. Planning and prioritising will take place in the national consultative body on crisis management for directors based on statutory obligations,

national risk analyses, regional risk profiles and current events, and will take into account the various partners' capacity for action. When available, the existing or future nationwide crisis plans will be taken as the starting point for these efforts, which are aimed at maintaining an effective level of preparedness and identifying areas for improvement in the approach and organisation of the crisis management.

5. During a crisis, the various bodies within the national crisis management organisation (ICG, ICMC, MCMC) will regularly reflect on whether it is necessary to adjust the approach and organisation in the interim. In addition, every intervention by the national crisis management organisation will be evaluated for the purpose of learning from that past performance. The Minister of Justice and Security can initiate such evaluations via the National Academy for Crisis Management.

*Failure or disruption of critical processes can result in social disruption. Based on their substantive and/or operational expertise, providers of critical processes can offer advice on how to manage a crisis.*



# IV Coordination and decision-making at the principal civil-service level

1. A ministry's response within its own sector is implemented and coordinated by and through its Departmental Crisis Coordination Centre (DCC) or another designated body within the ministry concerned. If it is necessary to involve other policy sectors, the initiative will be taken by the line ministry responsible for the sector in question, unless it has been agreed that the National Crisis Centre (NCC) will take the initiative instead. By way of the NCC, the Ministry of Justice and Security will communicate with and provide information to the general chain (province, safety region, municipality) about the decisions taken, unless the law states otherwise. In that case, the ministers concerned will notify the Minister of Justice and Security at the same time.
2. When necessary, an Interdepartmental Crisis Management Committee (ICMC) can be convened at the senior civil-service level (DG level), chaired by the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV). The ICMC will meet at the NCC. The decision to convene the ICMC is taken by the chair, who will do so following consultation with the ministry bearing primary responsibility. All ministries and the safety regions will be informed when the ICMC is convened. Ministries or the safety regions may, in the event they are not invited to attend the meeting, inform the chair of their reasons for wishing to attend. The chair will determine the composition of the ICMC after consulting with the DG of the ministry bearing primary responsibility.
 

The membership of the ICMC consists of:

  - National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV), chair;
  - Senior Adviser, Ministry of General Affairs;
  - representatives of the responsible ministries (delegates representing the minister) at DG level and up to one adviser;
  - Chair of the Interdepartmental Coordination Group;
  - Head of the National Crisis Communication Core Team (NCTC);
  - Head of the National Crisis Centre (executive secretary).
3. Representatives of local governments (municipalities, safety regions, public bodies such as water authorities or Bonaire, Sint Eustatius or Saba) can, at the chair's invitation, take part in meetings of the ICMC in an advisory capacity. Other partners or experts can also take part in meetings on the basis of their substantive or operational expertise when invited by the chair. Such experts may include members of the police, the Royal Military Constabulary, intelligence and security services, the armed forces, private partners including the providers of critical processes, and experts from knowledge institutions or knowledge networks.

The chair may also invite the Netherlands Public Prosecution Service to take part in a meeting if the situation gives reason to do so. The Public Prosecution Service can inform and advise the ICMC with regard to the enforceability of measures on the grounds of criminal law, as well as with regard to measures that relate to the enforcement, under criminal law, of the rule of law (such as the surveillance and security system). The Public Prosecution Service can also inform the ICMC regarding actions carried out under the authority of the Public Prosecution Service in connection with criminal-law enforcement of the rule of law (such as a criminal investigation).

4. The tasks of the ICMC include:

- exchanging information and identifying information gaps;
  - gaining an understanding of the situation and making an assessment of it, including with respect to international aspects;
  - soliciting the necessary advice from experts;
  - discussing potential and expected broad social consequences, focusing specifically on the impact on vulnerable groups, by means of a wide range of relevant scenarios;
  - deciding on measures in response to the Interdepartmental Coordination Group's recommendations or otherwise;
  - advising the Prime Minister (the Minister of General Affairs) and the Minister of Justice and Security on convening the MCMC;
  - advising the MCMC and/or other government bodies on coordination and decision-making regarding the full spectrum of measures, facilities, provisions and potential actions;
  - providing advice on the national and international political consequences of measures taken or proposed;
  - advising the MCMC regarding the inter-ministerial strategy and the overarching objectives and principles;
  - drawing up instructions for the civil service;
- providing advice with regard to the feasibility and enforceability of the intended measures – including insight into actual or potential budgetary consequences, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and/or the directorate responsible) – and of key decisions;
  - advising on the explicability of and public or other communication regarding previously taken and/or intended measures;
  - determining the structure and frequency of meetings;
  - reflecting on whether it is necessary to adjust the approach and organisation of the crisis-related decision-making in the interim and advising the MCMC in that area.

*At the political-administrative level, the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (MCMC) is responsible for decision-making in respect of the totality of measures and provisions with a view to a coherent approach.*



# V Coordination and decision-making at the political-administrative level

1. A crisis situation at the national level will first be addressed by the minister who oversees the policy area affected. This minister has a duty and responsibility to ensure an adequate approach. In such cases, the minister will inform the Minister of Justice and Security immediately. Together, they will ensure close coordination of measures and communication.
2. In a situation in which national security is (or may be) at risk or which has (or may have) other serious consequences for society, it may be desirable for the national government to bear responsibility at the political-administrative level for coordination and decision-making of an urgent nature in respect of the totality of measures and provisions that must be taken or arranged in cooperation with the involved public and private partners with a view to a coherent approach. These are generally situations in which the standard structures and procedures for decision-making are inadequate. In such situations, the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (MCMC) can be convened<sup>12</sup> on the grounds of article 25, paragraph 1 of the *Rules of Procedure for the Council of Ministers*.<sup>13</sup>
3. When convened, the MCMC will:
  - gain an understanding of the situation and make an assessment of it, including with respect to international aspects;
  - discuss potential and expected broad social consequences, focusing specifically on the impact on vulnerable groups, by means of a wide range of relevant scenarios;
  - take decisions, possibly on the ICMC's recommendations;
  - consider the national and international political consequences of decisions or proposed decisions;
  - discuss recommendations made to the Council of Ministers and other tiers of government;
  - formulate an inter-ministerial strategy;
  - inform the States General;
  - draw up instructions for the civil service;
  - assess the feasibility of previously taken and/or intended measures;
  - assess the enforceability of previously taken and/or intended measures;
  - assess the financial feasibility of previously taken and/or intended measures;
  - assess the explicability of and public or other communication regarding previously taken and/or intended measures;
  - determine the structure and frequency of the Committee's meetings;
  - during a crisis, reflect on whether it is necessary to adjust the approach and organisation in the interim.

12. *Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (Establishment) Order 2022 (Government Gazette 2022, 32675).*

13. *Last amended by an Act dated 27 March 2020, Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 115.*

4. The MCMC's permanent members are the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) and the Minister of Justice and Security.
5. The Minister of Justice and Security will serve as the chair, unless the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) decides to assume the role of chair.
6. Any minister or state secretary may request that the Minister of Justice and Security convene a meeting of the Committee. The Committee's chair will decide on the request in agreement with the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) and after consultation with the minister or state secretary bearing primary responsibility.
7. In agreement with the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs), the chair will determine for each situation, and if necessary for each meeting, which other ministers will be members of the Committee. The Committee's chair may allow state secretaries to participate in the Committee's meetings in an advisory capacity where the matters at hand directly concern their ambit of authority. The chair of the MCMC may decide to invite the chair of a Safety region (typically the chair of the Safety Regions Council) or a mayor or chair of another public body (e.g. a dike warden or the Governor of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius or Saba) to take part in meetings in an advisory capacity. This advisory capacity will involve issuing recommendations during the meeting, not participating in decisions taken by vote. All ministers and the safety regions will be informed when the MCMC is convened and of its composition. Ministries or the safety regions may, in the event they are not invited to attend the meeting, inform the chair of their reasons for wishing to attend. When the MCMC is convened, the House of Representatives will be informed of this fact as soon as possible.
8. Provided the Committee's chair grants permission in advance, ministers, state secretaries, the chair of a safety region, a mayor or the chair of another public body may be assisted by a civil servant during meetings. The National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (the chair of the ICMC) and a representative at DG level of the ministry bearing primary responsibility will attend the MCMC's meetings as permanent advisers. Meetings will also be attended by the spokesperson/director of communication of the ministry bearing primary responsibility and/or the head of the National Core Team for Crisis Communication. At the Prime Minister's request, a representative of the Netherlands Government Information Service will also attend the MCMC's meetings.
9. Upon the chair's invitation, other partners and experts may attend Committee meetings as an adviser on the basis of their operational or substantive expertise. Such experts may include representatives from the police, intelligence and security services, the armed forces, the Royal Military Constabulary, private partners including the providers of critical processes, and experts from knowledge institutions or knowledge networks. The chair of the ICG may be invited as well when relevant.  
  
The MCMC's chair may also invite the Netherlands Public Prosecution Service to take part in a meeting if the situation gives reason to do so. The Public Prosecution Service can inform and advise the MCMC with regard to the enforceability of measures on the grounds of criminal law, as well as with regard to measures that relate to the enforcement, under criminal law, of the rule of law (such as the surveillance and security system). The Public Prosecution Service can also inform the MCMC regarding actions carried out under the authority of the Public Prosecution Service in connection with criminal-law enforcement of the rule of law (such as a criminal investigation).
10. The Committee will not appropriate any powers from any minister and will not take decisions on matters that particularly concern a minister who is not present at a meeting.
11. In the temporary absence of the Minister of Justice and Security and of the Prime Minister (the Minister of General Affairs), the Deputy Prime Minister will chair the MCMC. The standard deputation arrangement will apply in the temporary absence of any other ministers who are part of the MCMC.<sup>14</sup>
12. If it is necessary to take a decision by vote, the decision will be based on a simple majority, in which each minister in attendance has a single vote. In the event of a tie, the chair will have the casting vote.
13. The head of the National Crisis Centre will act as executive secretary to the MCMC. The executive secretary will be assisted by a deputy secretary. Where decisions require the Cabinet's approval, the executive secretary will ensure that a list of the decisions, including the Committee's conclusions, is drawn up as quickly as possible. Where decisions need to be implemented without delay, prior approval of the list is not required.

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14. *At the request of the Prime Minister, a principal adviser from the Ministry of General Affairs will stand in for the Prime Minister in his absence.*



14. The MCMC meets at the National Crisis Centre (NCC). If required due to the severity of the situation, an alternative location is available for MCMC meetings.
15. The MCMC's decisions form a framework for their implementation by public and private partners. In his capacity as the minister responsible for coordinating crisis management, the Minister of Justice and Security monitors the implementation of the MCMC's decisions and reports back to the Cabinet on the progress of this and on any problems that may arise during that implementation. Ministerial/inter-ministerial implementation of the MCMC's decisions is a responsibility of the relevant ministers and is coordinated by the DCCs, if necessary in cooperation with the Interdepartmental Coordination Group.
16. The MCMC's chair will decide when to disperse the Committee, in agreement with the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) and after consultation with the minister or state secretary bearing primary responsibility. When the MCMC is dispersed, the House of Representatives will be informed of this fact as soon as possible.
17. Where necessary, the MCMC may depart from the provisions of this National Handbook, unless such action is contrary to the Rules of Procedure for the Cabinet and/or the Order establishing the MCMC.
18. As the minister responsible for coordinating counterterrorism, the Minister of Justice and Security is entitled to perform the tasks and exercise the associated powers of another minister if immediate action is required to prevent a terrorist offence (or to limit its impact beforehand) or if it is impossible for the Minister of Justice and Security and the other minister to confer or to agree on measures in the time available. The Minister of Justice and Security may, for example, block or restrict access to some areas of Dutch airspace by civil aircraft or block mobile telephone communications.<sup>15</sup>

If time is of the essence, the Minister of Justice and Security can exercise his extended powers even if the MCMC has been convened in response to a terrorist threat or attack. The Minister is, however, bound by the Committee's decisions, which may also affect the Minister's extended powers.

In such cases, these additional powers will be operationalised, in so far as possible, through regular, existing channels. In most instances, this means that the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) will contact the line ministry's Departmental Crisis Coordination Centre on behalf of the Minister of Justice and Security.

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15. *Decree on the temporary reallocation of ministerial tasks in the event of a terrorist attack of an urgent nature (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2005, 662), effective as of 21 December 2005.*

*'NL Alerts' can be deployed in situations where there is a threat to life and health, such as a large fire, a terrorist attack or unexpected severe weather. The NL Alert message will then instruct citizens as to what they should do.*



# VI Support for decision-making in crisis situations

## Interdepartmental Coordination Group (ICG)

1. To support crisis-related decision-making by the ICMC and/or MCMC, or to prepare for an imminent crisis, an Interdepartmental Coordination Group (ICG) can be convened at the National Crisis Centre (NCC) on the initiative of a director of the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV). A Departmental Crisis Coordination Centre can also convene a meeting by submitting a request to the head of the NCC. The ICG is chaired by a director of the NCTV. The decision to convene the ICG is taken by the chair, who will do so following consultation with the ministry bearing primary responsibility. All ministries and the safety regions will be informed when the ICG is convened. Ministries or the safety regions may, in the event they are not invited to attend the meeting, inform the head of the NCC of their reasons for wishing to attend. The chair will determine the composition of the ICG after consulting with the ministry bearing primary responsibility. If the ICMC and/or MCMC have already been mobilised, participants in the ICG will include (at minimum) the ministries, local governments, government services and other parties represented in these bodies.
2. At the chair's invitation, representatives of local governments (safety regions, municipalities, water authorities and/or other public bodies) can take part in meetings of the ICG in an advisory capacity. Other partners and experts may also attend ICG meetings as an adviser on the basis of their operational or substantive expertise when invited by the chair. Such experts may include representatives from the police, intelligence and security services, the armed forces, the Royal Military Constabulary, private partners including the providers of critical processes, and experts from knowledge institutions

or knowledge networks. Input from representatives and experts is vital: for instance, in connection with evaluating and reporting back on the feasibility and enforceability of potential measures or due to the need for specific independent knowledge and expertise.

The chair may also invite the Netherlands Public Prosecution Service to take part in a meeting if the situation gives reason to do so. The Public Prosecution Service can inform and advise the ICG with regard to the enforceability of measures on the grounds of criminal law, as well as with regard to measures that relate to the enforcement, under criminal law, of the rule of law (such as the surveillance and security system). The Public Prosecution Service can also inform the ICG regarding actions carried out under the authority of the Public Prosecution Service in connection with criminal-law enforcement of the rule of law (such as a criminal investigation).

3. The duties of the Interdepartmental Coordination Group include:
  - exchanging information concerning the situation;
  - gaining an understanding of the situation and making an assessment of it, including with respect to international aspects;
  - discussing potential and expected broad social consequences, focusing specifically on the impact on vulnerable groups, by means of a wide range of relevant scenarios;
  - coordinating with regard to recommendations from the ICMC/MCMC regarding decision-making and measures to be taken, including the feasibility and enforceability, as well as actual or potential budgetary consequences (in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and/or the directorate responsible within FEZ);

- advising the ICMC/MCMC on the formulation of an inter-ministerial strategy;
  - coordinating the recommendations to the ICMC/MCMC with regard to the explicability of public or other communication regarding previously taken and/or intended measures, facilities, provisions, and potential actions;
  - deciding on the delegation of liaison officers or representatives from the national crisis management organisation to other partners;
  - coordinating the mobilisation of a Crisis Expert Team (CET) and appointing a national enquiry coordinator;
  - deciding on the need to convene the ICMC and/or MCMC and coordinating the necessary preparations;
  - coordinating the implementation of measures to be taken by the relevant partners based on decision-making by the ICMC and/or MCMC;
  - dealing with subjects that do not need to be considered by the ICMC and/or MCMC;
  - reflecting on whether it is necessary to adjust the approach and organisation of the crisis-related decision-making in the interim, and advising the ICMC/MCMC in that area.
4. The ICG can decide on the further, situation-specific organisation and procedures to support and advise the ICMC and/or MCMC. The processes can be dealt with by multidisciplinary, interdepartmental teams headed by the ICMC and/or MCMC. Specific teams will be mobilised as and when required, consisting of representatives of the public and private partners involved. The processes can include governmental and parliamentary accountability, the provision of information, operational advice and/or coordination, substantive or legal expertise, the mobilisation of a Crisis Expert Team (CET) and a national enquiry coordinator, the verification of victims, follow-up, evacuation and accommodation, mobility, surveillance and security, etc. The frameworks for these processes and teams are laid down in protocols, fact sheets, etc.
5. For the purposes of ensuring an integral, cohesive approach, liaison officers (the connecting links) and representatives from the national crisis management organisation can (in consultation with the receiving party) be delegated to other local authorities, government services or sectors, including vital sectors. Liaison officers and representatives can be delegated from the NCC or a line ministry. Consultations with the receiving party will determine which matters liaison officers or representatives are delegated for and what working agreements are made.

#### Knowledge and advice

6. A generic model has been developed to ensure access to adequate and independent expert advice. This model sets out a harmonised national knowledge and advice network that supports all administrative levels and can be used to establish an independent Crisis Expert Team (CET). Examples of such teams are the Environment and Drinking Water CET and the Radiation and Nuclear CET. A CET which is mobilised to support the national crisis management organisation is linked to the enquiry coordinator appointed for that CET. The enquiry coordinator manages, coordinates and oversees the request for advice and sees to it that the advice finds its way to the organisations in the national crisis structure. A representative of the CET may be asked to explain the information.

#### National Crisis Centre (NCC)

7. The National Crisis Centre (NCC), which is permanently staffed around the clock, is housed at the Ministry of Justice and Security and acts as an interdepartmental coordination centre and a hub for the exchange of information nationwide. The scaled-up NCC acts as the central government's central contact point (one-stop shop) for all public and private partners as soon as one of the organisations in the national crisis structure is mobilised. The Head of the NCC is the executive secretary of the MCMC and the ICMC.

The duties of the NCC include:

- a. supporting the national crisis structure and the parties involved;
- facilitating the scaling-up of the national crisis structure;
  - overseeing the entire process of coordination and decision-making at national level and acting as a key liaison for the central government. The NCC fulfils this role on behalf of and in cooperation with ministers, safety regions and other relevant partners;
  - serving as the core of the support/implementing staff, preparing and implementing coordination and decision-making at both civil-servant (ICMC) and political-administrative (MCMC) level;
  - identifying potential dilemmas that are relevant to the coordination and decision-making process;
  - acting as a liaison between the general sector (province, safety region, municipality) and the functional chains.

b. Providing information

- 24/7 information desk and single point of contact for the central government, both nationally and internationally;
- informing the other ministries involved, the relevant local and/or regional competent authorities and the other public and private partners involved as soon as one of the parties in the national crisis structure has been mobilised;
- informing the partners involved to the greatest extent possible and necessary as to what role(s) the central government is fulfilling, what relevant decisions and measures have been taken, what advice has been given, etc. Unless otherwise agreed with the NCC, the ministries themselves inform the agencies and sectors that report to them via the relevant DCC;
- the NCC is responsible on behalf of the central government for developing a national (and possibly international) overview of the situation. The NCC is therefore the central hub for the provision of information both horizontally (between ministries and for decision-making on crises at national level) and vertically (in relation to the safety regions and other relevant public and private partners). The NCC can convene an Information Team for this purpose, with relevant public and private partners being invited to take part;
- organising net-centric provision of information so that the parties involved can provide their information to a central (digital) point on the basis of reciprocity to create a shared overall understanding. The NCC supports the process of refining the available information and ensures that all relevant partners are given a full picture of the situation on a timely basis.

Operations: National Operational Coordination Centre (NOCC)

8. The National Operational Coordination Centre (NOCC), which falls under the Ministry of Justice and Security, is part of the national crisis structure and participates in the ICG. The NOCC is staffed by experienced employees from various organisations in the safety and security domain, such as the safety regions, the national police, the fire services, the Ministry of Defence, GGD/GHOR, RIVM and the Red Cross. This makes the NOCC a multidisciplinary organisation both in terms of its structure and its activities.

The NOCC's duties are to:

- oversee the development of a multidisciplinary national operational overview and supply operational advice in the event of national and international incidents, crises, disasters and large-scale events;
- coordinate assistance at the regional, national and international levels, including the support referred to in the Safety Regions Act and the Police Act 2012;
- at the request of the relevant partners, provide support in the event of national and international incidents, crises, disasters and large-scale events;
- as the National Training Coordinator, oversee the coordination, training and deployment of Dutch experts in connection with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

Communication: National Crisis Communication Core Team (NCTC)

9. During an incident or crisis, The National Crisis Communication Core Team (NCTC) functions as the central government's information hub for its communications with the press and public. The NCTC advises the central government crisis-management bodies with regard to the chosen communication strategy and the communication-related implications of the decisions that have been taken or proposed. To that end, the NCTC 'brings the outside world inside' by monitoring and analysing online and offline media, questions from the press and public, and public and other research being conducted. The NCTC formulates the agreed communication frameworks and key messages for all partners at central government level. The goal of the communication is to ensure that the public and partners have timely knowledge of what they can, may and must do, as well as what the government expects of them. The NCTC coordinates the timing and content of communications with other relevant parties. All ministries and other units of the central government work together in the NCTC. The NCTC's basic staff consists of communication specialists from the ministries involved and the NCTV's Communications department. Depending on the situation, this basic staff may be supplemented by communication specialists from regional and local governments (safety regions, municipalities, water authorities) and other partners.
10. The NCTC is headed by the Director of Communications of the Ministry of Justice and Security and/or the Director of Communications of the ministry bearing primary responsibility. The directors represent the NCTC in the

ICMC/MCMC. Day-to-day management of the NCTC is in the hands of the head of the NCTV's Communications department and a representative of the most closely involved ministry.

Liaison officers and Central government representatives ("Rijksheren")

11. Where relevant, each minister can appoint up to one representative to act as an administrative liaison between the government and the region, in this case the Regional Policy Team (RPT) of the safety region. The following can be appointed as liaison officers: the regional military commander (Ministry of Defence), the regional ambassador (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy), the managing director of Rijkswaterstaat (Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management) and the Health Inspector (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport). Other regional officers, services and organisations will retain their crisis powers and normal authorities or can participate in the RPT as crisis partners, subject to the approval of the chair of the safety region. Subject to approval from the chair of the safety region, an official from the NCTV can also participate in the RPT as a liaison from the national crisis structure.

In extraordinary circumstances, certain officials may assume the role of central government representative (in the formal sense) and exercise the powers provided for by emergency or other law on behalf of their minister. Central government representatives ("Rijksheren") are devolved national-level civil servants, which means the work they do in the provinces falls under the central government's authority and they are therefore obligated to comply with the instructions of the central government.<sup>16</sup> The King's Commissioner is the coordinating central government representative ("rijksheer") of the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Minister of Justice and Security; within their assigned province, the Commissioner coordinates the cooperation between the central government representatives and between the representatives and the safety regions.

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16. *Examples of regional crisis partners include ProRail, Dutch Railways, drinking water companies, TenneT, energy companies, grid operators, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Chief Public Prosecutors and State Harbour Masters. Depending on the situation, these partners can participate in the Regional Policy Teams and exercise their day-to-day duties and powers to play an important part in regional crisis management.*

# VII Legislation and regulations

1. The main principle of crisis management is to use only the normal powers laid down in existing legislation and regulations, tailored to the specific situation, for as long as possible.<sup>17</sup>
2. As the term implies, emergency legislation is intended for use in exceptional situations in which normal statutory powers give the government insufficient scope for effective action.
3. The Exceptional Emergencies (Coordination) Act means that emergency powers can be exercised in line with current thinking on crisis management, i.e. in a manner that is proportionate and flexible, in keeping with the nature and severity of the situation.
4. The entry into force of emergency powers, whether wholly or in part, is in principle linked to two different levels of emergency (listed here in order of severity): a restricted state of emergency and a general state of emergency. These states of emergency may be declared 'if unusual circumstances make such a step necessary in order to safeguard internal or external security'.
5. A state of emergency is declared and extraordinary powers are made operative by Royal Decree on the recommendation of the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs). The States General decide in a joint session whether these powers should be prolonged.
6. Sections of emergency legislation can be activated even when there is no state of emergency – though special circumstances must apply – again by Royal Decree on the recommendation of the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs), and extended by a further legislative procedure. Such separate application is permissible only in relatively small-scale situations in which declaring a state of emergency would be too drastic a measure. Emergency powers that infringe fundamental rights can be exercised only if a general state of emergency has been declared.

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17. For a summary of government responsibilities, see the *Bestuurlijke netwerkkaarten crisisbeheersing (a network plan describing duties and responsibilities in a regional crisis management context)*: <https://nipv.nl/bestuurlijke-netwerkkaarten-en-bevoegdhenschemas/>

*When there is an urgent need for relief supplies or international humanitarian assistance around the world, action can quickly be taken to mobilise or support the provision of emergency aid.*





# VIII Cross-border and international crisis management

1. The national crisis management organisation can also be mobilised if an actual or potential situation abroad is resulting in or could have consequences for the Netherlands. In the event of a major crisis, the Netherlands could have a need for international assistance as well. The response is based on treaties the Netherlands has ratified and bilateral and multilateral agreements it has concluded. The Ministry of Justice and Security has a coordinating role with regard to requests for civil assistance from the European Union. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for coordinating requests for civil assistance to and from the other international crisis management organisations. In addition, the Ministry of Defence has individual and specific powers and duties with regard to international crisis management. Other ministries can also be involved if they have a specific, primary responsibility or substantive knowledge, expertise or resources (to offer as assistance). The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, for example, can provide assistance in floods and nuclear incidents; the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport can respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases; and the Ministry of Justice and Security and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) can respond to cybersecurity incidents or cross-border disruptions to vital infrastructure.
2. At the level of the European Union, the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) supports rapid and coordinated political decision-making in connection with severe and complex crises, such as terrorist acts, a pandemic or a joint response to a foreign aggressor. Through the IPCR, the president of the Council of the European Union coordinates the political response to crises by bringing together the EU institutions, the affected member state(s) and other important actors. The IPCR includes a communication network in which communication professionals from the member states exchange and (when necessary) coordinate information on their actions. The IPCR's preparations fall under the authority of the Ministry of Justice and Security, with the NCC acting as a hub between the national and EU crisis structures. The network of directors of European crisis centres facilitates and promotes the exchange of good practices, expertise and experiences. Through the EU civil protection mechanism (UCPM), member states can request assistance from the EU safety net when they are affected by a crisis. Resources are available, such as a pool of national experts or the potential to purchase goods and equipment under certain conditions. The Netherlands contributes both financially and substantively to the realisation of this response capacity within the UCPM, such as through the USAR module made available by the Ministries of Justice and Security and Foreign Affairs and via the RIVM's advisory body for public health and the environment (available through the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management) and the mobile emergency high-capacity pumps. The Ministry of Justice and Security represents the interests of civil protection on the Netherlands' behalf in the Council working group and the Civil Protection Committee led by the European Commission.
3. The NATO Resilience Committee focuses on strengthening the resilience of allies. The baseline requirements provide a framework for enhancing national and collective resilience and increasing civil readiness, thereby supporting the core tasks of NATO. The Ministry of Justice and Security provides policy coordination in this area, in close consultation with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence. The NATO Crisis Response System (NCRS) consists of the crisis-management processes in connection with preparing for crisis situations in which NATO plays a role. This also includes the Crisis Response Measures (CRMs),

the previously established measures that have been further elaborated for each member state to ensure NATO members can take uniform action. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence are connected to the political-military processes and, through these, with the line ministries, while the NATO PV represents the policy interests of civil protection in the Resilience Committee.

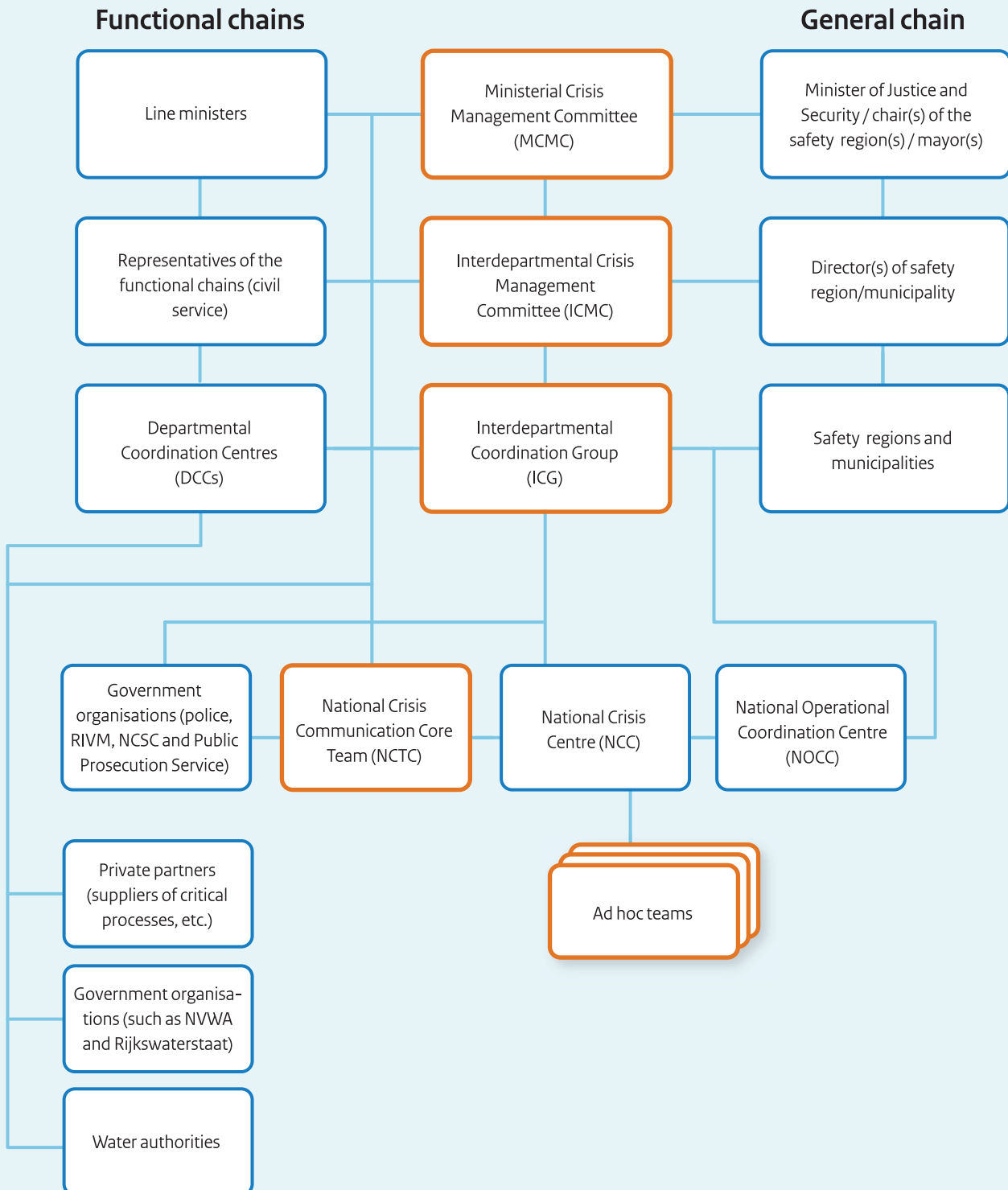
4. In the event of a cross-border disaster in the Benelux region, the Secretary-General of the Benelux will facilitate coordination between the crisis centres in the Benelux and those in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The coordination focuses on identification of the risks, planning the measures to protect the population in the event of a crisis, mutual aid on an ad hoc basis, the exchange of information, and the communication and provision of information aimed at the public.
5. The Netherlands additionally participates in the UN's Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction (United Nations Risk Reduction Instrument). This international framework is intended to facilitate the establishment of joint agreements and prioritisation in the approach to major disasters. There is also a strong focus on climate-related disasters. The Ministry of Justice and Security is tasked with the coordination of the Sendai Framework.
6. Outside the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs bears on-site responsibility for consular services, diplomatic efforts and potential repatriations. In instances where the MCMC and/or ICMC are dealing with situations outside the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participates in the MCMC and/or ICMC. In instances where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is coordinating repatriation to the Netherlands, the Ministry will involve the NCC and other ministries in arranging the reception in the Netherlands with regard to providing aid to the returning victims and managing potential responses in this country. In such cases, Foreign Affairs is responsible for the repatriation until the moment the person sets foot on Dutch soil. Once in the Netherlands, assistance is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and Security. Operational coordination of the reception and registration in the Netherlands is provided by the NOCC in close cooperation with the operational and administrative partners concerned. The Ministries maintain their functional responsibility, particularly in the follow-up stage, such as with regard to accommodations, health, financial aspects and social security.
7. The national crisis management organisation can also be mobilised if situations in a conflict area have consequences for the Netherlands. In such cases, the Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Justice and Security contribute the expertise they have gained from military and civil missions. The Minister of Defence is responsible for coordinating any military action. The Ministry of Defence is also capable of acting in large-scale and high-intensity conflict situations if necessary. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence can also use their international contacts to work with other countries if required.
8. International humanitarian assistance worldwide falls within the policy remit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who coordinates requests for assistance from outside the EU. The Minister of Justice and Security is responsible for the deployment of civil protection measures and requests for assistance from within the European Union, for which the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence have their own respective policymaking responsibilities.
9. The relevant ministry will coordinate the response to foreign requests for assistance and/or information. As the single point of contact, the NCC directs requests for assistance from the European Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and/or the NATO Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the DCC of the relevant line ministry and the NOCC.

# IX Follow-up stage and recovery

1. When the national crisis structure is mobilised, preparations for the follow-up stage and recovery will begin during the response to the crisis itself. By identifying – at local and/or regional level – the victims and persons directly involved and estimating the damage and other consequences as early as possible, the relevant parties can determine what actions need to be taken. This allows the transition from the active stage to the follow-up stage to proceed in the most organised way possible. The exact structure of the follow-up stage depends strongly on the nature and duration of the crisis situation. The scaling-down of the national crisis management organisation and the transition from the active stage to the follow-up stage will, in most cases, proceed gradually and take place in consultation with the relevant ministries, municipalities, safety regions and other involved partners.
2. For the purposes of this Handbook, the follow-up stage comprises all actions taken after the scaling-down of the national crisis management organisation to prevent or alleviate social disruption and resume normal activity as quickly as possible. The Minister of Justice and Security is responsible for the general organisation and coordination of the follow-up stage. The relevant line ministries are responsible for specific themes. The continued progress of follow-up processes is monitored by the regular structures of the relevant ministers and discussed in the Cabinet if necessary. The follow-up stage can cover a wide range of themes. A list of such themes, which has been coordinated with the ministries and the safety regions, is presented in Appendix B. The list is not exhaustive; it is intended as a guide for the preparation of a joint response in the follow-up stage.
3. The Interdepartmental Coordination Group can decide that the coordination of and approach to one or more follow-up themes should be dealt with and implemented by an interdepartmental, multidisciplinary team, in cooperation with local governments and other public and private partners if necessary. A general action plan for the follow-up stage is then prepared, which the ICMC submits to the MCMC if necessary. The Minister of Finance is involved in the preparation of the plan. Any necessary decisions on the plan are taken by the Cabinet.

# Appendix A

## Major points of the nationwide crisis management system



# Appendix B

## List of themes: follow-up stage and recovery

The following list of themes<sup>18</sup> has been compiled in consultation with the various ministries and the safety regions. The list is not exhaustive and is intended solely as a guide for the preparation of a joint response in the follow-up stage. Additional themes and involved parties may be added as desired.

Theme	Explanatory notes	Responsible party / relevant ministry or ministries	
1	Coordination and organisation of follow-up stage	Establishing the inter-ministerial project team, which is responsible for planning, prioritising, allocating resources and coordinating activities during the follow-up stage.	JenV (general coordination of follow-up stage) and line ministries (organisation-specific themes)
2	Providing accountability/political accountability	Relevant administrators/politicians, media, elected officials.	Line ministries, JenV, AZ
3	Continuity and recovery of critical processes	Ensuring that the critical processes continue to function or return to normal operation as quickly as possible to enable recovery and aftercare.	EZK, IenW, FIN, JenV, BZK
4	Registration and tracking of affected persons/evacuees/victims	For the purposes of localising evacuees and affected persons, such as to provide them with aid, for victim registration and verification, to reunite families, repatriate citizens and issue compensation for damage. An up-to-date Personal Records Database is vital in light of the services and systems connected with it.	BZK (municipalities), JenV (safety regions), BZ (for situations abroad)
5	Accommodations and/or relocation, recovery and reconstruction	Securing accommodations for affected persons. Organising temporary or semi-permanent reception for affected persons. Clean-up and recovery of area, built environment and other facilities (physical liveability).	BZK (safety regions and municipalities)
6	Food supply	Food supply for evacuees and the rest of the population	LNV
7	Healthcare	Health research and monitoring	VWS (RIVM, etc.)
8	Psychosocial care/assistance	Treating psychosocial problems in the short and long term (both aid workers and citizens).	VWS (incl. RIVM), JenV (aid workers)
9	Promoting the social cohesion of society	Social cohesion, monitoring social upheaval, solidarity, mutual aid, stability.	AZ, SZW (NGOs, civil society)

18. Based in part on: *Providing direction for the final step: the follow-up stage. Strengthening nationwide recovery and after-care following disasters and crises*, The Hague: Ministry of Justice and Security, 2012.

19. <https://www.nctv.nl/onderwerpen/vitale-infrastructuur/overzicht-vitale-processen>.

Theme		Explanatory notes	Responsible party / relevant ministry or ministries
10	Emergency measures for social security	How to manage benefits, compensation for special costs of illness, etc.	SZW
11	Monitoring/approach to damage to nature, environment and landscape	Monitoring leakage of hazardous substances in the environment. Monitoring threats to public health resulting from environmental damage from a disaster, etc.	IenW, VWS, OCW
12	Waste processing/ discharge of sewage water	A large number of affected persons means more waste. Waste processing and sewage-water treatment can fail. Environmental and healthcare problem.	IenW
13	Continuity of public administration, judicial system, police, etc.	Guaranteeing the continued function of government services and the continuity of the democratic rule of law in the affected area.	JenV, BZK
14	Continuity of transport (critical national infrastructure, etc.)	Important to maintain lines of communication with the outside world. Transport of goods (emergency aid and resumption of economic activities). Public transport. Passenger transport.	IenW
15	Continuity of economic life/market forces	Mitigating economic losses by quickly resuming economic activities. Continuity of commercial operations. Fall-back options based on ICT. Emergency loans. Tax measures. Setting up a support point (one-stop shop for multidisciplinary back office).	EZK (Chamber of Commerce), FIN, SZW
16	Preserving cultural heritage	Evacuation, restoration and temporary storage of cultural heritage.	OCW
17	Damage assessment	Estimating the extent of damage and the resulting costs.	JenV, EZK (Netherlands Enterprise Agency) and the line ministry/ministries with closest involvement
18	Reconstruction of the affected area	Organising approach to reconstruction following a disaster, such as by using blueprints for public-private partnerships. Spatial planning for reconstruction (re-creation or innovation?)	Public-private partnerships
19	Compensation for damage and financial provisions	Establishing compensation schemes, coordinating the processing of damage claims, awarding financial compensation.	JenV, FIN and the line ministry/ministries most closely involved
20	Registering temporary/ semi-permanent accommodations for evacuated livestock, animal health and animal welfare	Ensuring the safety of the livestock population and arranging shelter for evacuated farm animals.	LNV
21	Continuity of emergency services	Organisational restoration of emergency services (back-up staff). Evacuation of aid workers' families. Leave arrangements for aid workers.	JenV, VWS, SZW

Theme	Explanatory notes		Responsible party / relevant ministry or ministries
22	Public information	Means of communicating with public and communication plans for reaching target groups.	JenV (NCC, NCTC) and the line ministry/ministries with closest involvement
23	Funeral arrangements, grieving process and memorial ceremonies	Organising national memorial ceremonies for major national/international incidents and supporting local communities.	JenV, in cooperation with BZK and VWS (and BZ in the event of a disaster abroad)
24	Criminal and other investigations and liability	Public Prosecution Service, police and businesses where the situation has occurred.	JenV (Public Prosecution Service), line ministries
25	Government and other supervision	Role of the inspectorate, region (permitting, etc.)	Joint inspections
26	Evaluation research	Studies into the cause and the actions of emergency and other services.	State Inspectorates, the Dutch Safety Board

# Appendix C

## List of abbreviations

AZ	Ministry of General Affairs	MCMC	Ministerial Crisis Management Committee
BZ	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	NAC	National Academy for Crisis Management
BZK	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
CET	Crisis Expert Team	NCC	National Crisis Centre
CRM	Crisis Response Measures (NATO)	NCRS	NATO Crisis Response System
DCC	Departmental Crisis Coordination Centre	NCSC	National Cyber Security Centre
DG	Director General	NCTV	National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism
EADRCC	Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (NATO)	NCTC	National Crisis Communication Core Team
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre (EU)	NVWA	Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority
EU	European Union	OCW	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
EZK	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy	PV	Permanent Representative
FIN	Ministry of Finance	RBT	Regional Policy Team
GRIP	Coordinated Regional Incident Management Procedure	RIVM	National Institute for Public Health and the Environment
ICG	Interdepartmental Coordination Group	Stb	Bulletin of Acts and Decrees of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
ICMC	Interdepartmental Crisis Management Committee	Stcrt	Government Gazette Official publication of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
IenW	The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management	SZW	The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.
ICPR	Integrated Political Crisis Response (EU)	UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism (EU)
JenV	Ministry of Justice and Security	USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
KB	Royal Decree		
NOCC	National Operational Coordination Centre		





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