



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

# The Netherlands National Handbook on Decision-Making in Crisis Situations





## Introduction

This brochure consists of two parts.

The first part consists of the full text of the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (Establishment) Order 2016, which came into effect on 13 September 2016.

The Order concerns the organisation and operation of the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (MCMC) and the advisory and support role the civil service plays in this regard.

The MCMC decides on 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.

The second part presents the full text of the National Handbook on Decision-Making in Crisis Situations (“Nationaal Handboek Crisisbesluitvorming”, NHC), as adopted by the Cabinet.

The National Handbook work out the principles laid down in the Order, outlining the powers, responsibilities and core tasks of the main actors in the national crisis structure.



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Ministerial Crisis  
Management Committee  
(Establishment) Order 2016

## Order of the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) of 6 September 2016, no. 3889766, establishing the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee

(Government Gazette, 12 September 2016, no. 48258)

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,

Orders:

### Article 1

A Ministerial Crisis Management Committee is to be established.

### Article 2

The Committee's task is to coordinate and decide on 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 Security and Justice.
2. The Minister of Security and Justice is chair, unless the Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) decides to assume that role.
3. Any minister or state secretary may request that the Minister of Security and Justice 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 with primary responsibility for the matter at hand.
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. After consultation with the minister or state secretary whose area of authority coincides most with the matter at hand, the chair may invite experts to participate in the meetings.
7. Provided the Committee's chair grants permission in advance, ministers or state secretaries may be assisted by a civil servant during meetings.
8. 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.

### 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 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 2013 (Government Gazette 2013, 11207) 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 may be cited as the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (Establishment) Order 2016.

This Order will be published in the Government Gazette with explanatory notes.

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

## Explanatory notes

### General

To ensure that a coherent approach is taken to situations in which national security is (or may be) at risk or which have (or may have) serious consequences for society, central government can take political and administrative responsibility for coordination and decision-making regarding the full spectrum of actions to be taken in cooperation with public and private partners. In such situations, the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (MCMC) can be convened under article 25, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure for the Cabinet.

This Order concerns the MCMC's organisation and procedures, and the advice and assistance it receives from civil servants; these matters are described in further detail in the National Handbook on Decision-Making in Crisis Situations. The Order establishing the MCMC and the National Handbook have been revised and re-adopted by the Cabinet.

### 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 and/or society are threatened to the extent that there is actual or potential social disruption. This may involve disruption to or loss of vital infrastructure (e.g. electricity, ICT, and water systems), floods, infectious diseases, animal diseases, nuclear incidents or a terrorist threat or attack.<sup>1</sup> 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, the knowledge and expertise available at the responsible ministries must be mobilised promptly and appropriately and made available to the MCMC. A coherent approach is necessary because the uncoordinated exercise of powers can be inefficient and even counterproductive.

The ministers concerned will exercise their 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. The MCMC's decisions form a framework for the decisions taken by public and private partners.

### Article 3

As the minister responsible for the organisation, functioning and coherence of crisis management policy and for coordinating the policy and associated system, the Minister of Security and Justice chairs the MCMC. The standard deputation arrangement will apply to the Ministerial Committee, currently in his absence the Minister of Security and Justice will be replaced by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The Prime Minister (Minister of General Affairs) may choose to assume the chair 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 Committee's chair will invite other ministers to join the Committee. He will also decide whether a state secretary may participate in a meeting. After consultation with the minister or state secretary directly involved in the matter at hand, the chair will, at their request or otherwise, invite an expert to attend the meeting. Such experts may have expertise in a particular area or be expert representatives of other public authorities, public services or vital sectors. The component parts of the national crisis organisation will be structured and organised in such a way as to promote close cooperation within the network of public and private partners and embed relevant knowledge and expertise in the national crisis organisation.

### Article 4

As with the list of decisions of a Cabinet subcommittee, the list of the MCMC's decisions requires the Cabinet's approval. If the MCMC's decisions cannot be delayed, prior approval of the list is not required.

### Article 5

The Interdepartmental Crisis Management Committee (ICMC), consisting of representatives of the various ministries at Director-General (DG)/Deputy Director-General or Secretary-General (SG) level, 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 that will be consulted as and when necessary and flexibly organised and selected, for instance to provide information, insight and opinions, and to advise on specific matters, crisis communication or accountability to parliament.

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

<sup>1</sup> National Security Strategy, Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives 2006-2007, 30 821, nos. 1 and 3.



# National Handbook on Decision-Making in Crisis Situations

# I Introduction

1. The Minister of Security and Justice is responsible for coordinating crisis management on behalf of the government. It is up to him to devise and implement a coherent, integrated crisis management policy and crisis management system. This National Handbook on Decision-Making in Crisis Situations presents the main points of central government's crisis management policy and the national crisis organisation system. It works out the principles laid down in the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (Establishment) Order 2016<sup>2</sup> and outlines the powers, responsibilities and core tasks of the main players in the national crisis structure.
2. The Handbook applies to all situations in which national security is (or may be) at risk or which have (or may have) serious consequences for society. To ensure a coherent approach is taken to a crisis, it may be advisable for political leaders and senior civil servants to assume responsibility for coordinating and making decisions regarding the full spectrum of measures taken and provisions made in cooperation with public and private partners.
3. 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 a multidisciplinary staff. All component parts and consultative bodies associated with the national crisis organisation will be called upon when they are needed and will be organised and selected flexibly on a case-by-case and, if necessary, meeting-by-meeting basis. The national crisis organisation will be structured and selected from the outset so as to promote close cooperation and coordination within the network of relevant public and private parties, in order to embed the relevant knowledge and expertise in the national crisis structure. The main processes in the national crisis structure and the public and private partners that may be involved are shown in Annexe A.
4. The National Handbook on Decision-Making in Crisis Situations 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 Security and Justice will submit the necessary proposals to the Cabinet.
5. The National Handbook on Decision-Making in Crisis Situations is central government's policy framework and guide for all planning and preparations for specific situations, incidents or events. It serves as a basis for specific agreements in ministerial handbooks, specific national crisis plans, guidelines, etc. Plans and preparations made by third parties should also be consistent with this Handbook in so far as relevant.
6. The National Handbook on Decision-Making in Crisis Situations applies to the Netherlands, including public bodies in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands, unless stated otherwise.
7. The Handbook is distributed to:
  - ministers and state secretaries;
  - King's commissioners;
  - mayors;
  - heads of the safety regions;
  - heads of public bodies in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands;
  - 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 chairs of the Safety Regions Council, Association of Provincial Authorities, Association of Netherlands Municipalities, Association of Water Authorities, the commissioner of the National Police Force, the head of the Dutch fire service and the chair of the Public Health and Safety Association.

<sup>2</sup> Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (Establishment) Order 2016 (Government Gazette. 2016, 48258).



# II Definitions

1. In the context of this National Handbook, crisis management entails the full spectrum of measures taken and provisions made by central government in cooperation with relevant public and private partners for coordination and decision-making in situations in which national security is (or may be) at risk or which have (or may have) serious consequences for society.<sup>3</sup>
2. National security is at risk if one or more of the vital interests of the State and/or society are threatened to the extent that there is actual or potential social disruption. Those vital interests are:
  - territorial security: in a broad sense, the Netherlands' ability to function without disruption as an independent state; in a restricted sense, territorial integrity;
  - economic security: the Netherlands' ability to function without disruption as an effective and efficient economy;
  - ecological security: the capacity of the environment to recover adequately and spontaneously from damage;
  - physical security: the ability of people and their surroundings to function normally, without disruption, in the Netherlands;
  - social and political stability: the continued existence of a social climate in which groups of people can live together successfully, without disruption, within the framework of the rule of law and shared values.
3. At central government level, each ministry is responsible for organising and financing the crisis management measures (preparation, response and recovery) to be taken within its own policy field and coordinating them with the Minister of Security and Justice, other central government parties and the relevant public and private partners. Individual ministries are also responsible for ensuring that a framework is in place for the crisis management measures to be taken by the vital industries, organisations and installations that fall within their mandate.<sup>5</sup>
4. In most instances, a local or regional crisis will be dealt with by the tier of government (e.g. municipality, water authority or safety region) and organisations operating at that level. Depending on the nature and scale of the incident, other organisations may be called in (horizontal and/or vertical up-scaling). A national, uniform system (= GRIP)<sup>6</sup> is in place for that purpose. If the effects of a situation, incident or event have ramifications beyond a particular region, the head of the source region is responsible for maintaining public order and general public safety.
5. Depending on how a situation develops, central government can play three roles in a crisis: facilitation, coordination and management.

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

Situations that can have serious societal consequences include local or regional incidents or accidents with many casualties, incidents and accidents outside the Netherlands that involve a large number of Dutch victims or have a major societal impact in the Netherlands, or events in the Netherlands of national and international significance.

#### a. Central government facilitation

Central government can assist the competent authorities in the general sector (municipality, safety region, province) or functional sector (water authority, vital industry). Assistance can be provided at the request of the competent authorities in the general or functional sector or on central government's own initiative.

<sup>3</sup> This is a broader definition than the one laid down in section 1 of the *Safety Regions Act*, which defines crisis management as 'maintaining public order'.

<sup>4</sup> *National Security Strategy, Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives, 2006-2007, 30 821, nos. 1 and 3.*

<sup>5</sup> For an up-to-date summary of government responsibilities, see *Bestuurlijke netwerkkaarten crisisbeheersing* (a network plan describing duties and responsibilities in a regional crisis management context) (Dutch Safety Institute; IFV, 2015) and the appended charts, which illustrate the competences of the parties involved.

<sup>6</sup> GRIP is the Dutch acronym for Coordinated Regional Incident Management Procedure. The GRIP system consists of a series of levels: local (1-3), regional (4) and interregional (5).

Central government provides:

- expertise, knowledge and advice;
- opportunities to coordinate the parties involved;
- facilities for operational processes, information technology and crisis communication;
- resources (e.g. [www.crisis.nl](http://www.crisis.nl) and the 0800-1351 public information line);
- liaison facilities: contacts and exchanges of information with neighbouring regions (e.g. through the National Operational Coordination Centre, NOCC), liaising with a neighbouring region if there are not enough local or regional staff to handle crisis communication.

#### b. Central government coordination

Central government intervenes in situations in which some form of coordination and/or harmonisation of management is desirable or necessary in the general or functional sector. It does so by providing urgent advice to the relevant authorities. Urgent advice is intended chiefly to facilitate joint action and/or to reconcile the divergent interests of the relevant parties. Coordination can be provided at the request of the competent authorities in the general or functional sector or on central government's own initiative. It will relate to one or more aspects of the crisis strategy. The competent authorities must provide feedback on how they have responded to the urgent advice. They may depart from central government's advice only with good reason.

Examples of coordination are:

- the agreement of crisis communication and talking points;
- the preparation of policy principles for standard national measures to maintain public order;
- the harmonisation of tolerance levels.

#### c. Central government management

Central government can perform a management function only in so far as its formal powers permit. These powers have a legal basis in emergency law or otherwise.

These powers<sup>7</sup> include:

- the implementation of security and protection measures in central government;
- the provision of assistance by the police, fire service, medical services 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 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 implementation of measures to manage an actual or imminent flood (for example, large-scale evacuation);
- the implementation of restrictive measures to manage the supply and use of drinking water;
- the implementation of measures in a major IT incident;
- power to issue instructions.<sup>8</sup>

Central government will take measures to protect national and international interests, such as:

- State security;
- public interest;
- the five vital interests of national security.

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 the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

The ministers and state secretaries concerned coordinate the mobilisation and exercise of their powers among themselves. If the MCMC has been convened, that coordination task takes place within this forum.

When central government exercises its powers, it will inform the public and private parties affected via the National Crisis Centre or the relevant Departmental Coordination Centre (DCC). When central government exercises its formal powers it 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 law<sup>9</sup>) and in cases of neglect.

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

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.

<sup>8</sup> 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*.

<sup>9</sup> For example, under section 54 of the *Safety Regions Act*, the Minister of Security and Justice may 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 in exceptional circumstances if urgently required in the public interest.

<sup>7</sup> A non-exhaustive list of powers is available at [www.nctv.nl](http://www.nctv.nl).





# III Coordination and decision-making at civil service level

1. In the first instance, a situation should be dealt with in an effective manner by the minister or state secretary responsible for the policy field concerned. This entails promptly informing the Minister of Security and Justice and working closely with him to coordinate the necessary measures and communication.
2. A ministry's response within its own sector is implemented and coordinated by the Departmental Coordination Centre (DCC) or another designated body within the ministry. 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 is agreed that the National Crisis Centre (NCC) will take the initiative. By way of the NCC, the Ministry of Security and Justice will communicate with and provide information to local authorities (province, safety region, municipality) about the decisions taken, unless the law states otherwise. In that case the ministers concerned will notify the Minister of Security and Justice at the same time.
3. Where necessary, an Interdepartmental Crisis Management Committee (ICMC) chaired by the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) may be convened at senior civil servant level (Director-General level). The ICMC will be convened at the NCC. The decision to convene the ICMC will be taken by the chair after consulting the ministry with primary responsibility for the matter at hand and informing all other ministries. The ICMC's composition will be determined by the chair after consulting the DG of the ministry with primary responsibility. The ICMC will be made up of:
  - the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (chair);
  - senior adviser, Ministry of General Affairs;
  - representatives of the responsible ministries (delegates representing the minister) at DG/Deputy DG/SG level and up to one adviser;
  - the head of the National Crisis Centre (executive secretary).
4. To coordinate and take decisions on a specific matter, the chair of the ICMC, after consulting with the minister with primary responsibility, can invite experts to attend the ICMC's meetings on an ad hoc basis. These may include experts in a specific field or expert representatives of other authorities, government services or vital sectors.
5. The ICMC's tasks are to:
  - exchange information and identify information gaps;
  - gain an understanding of the situation and make an assessment of it;
  - decide on measures in response to the Interdepartmental Coordination Group's recommendations or otherwise;
  - advise the Prime Minister (= the Minister of General Affairs) and the Minister of Security and Justice on convening the MCMC;
  - advise the ministerial committee and/or other government bodies on coordination and decision-making regarding the full spectrum of measures;
  - provide advice on the national and international political consequences of measures taken or proposed;
  - establish strategic frameworks;
  - draw up instructions for the civil service;
  - establish policy frameworks for public information materials and announcements;
  - determine the structure and frequency of meetings.



# IV Coordination and decision-making at political/administrative level

1. In the event of a situation in which national security is (or may be) at risk or which has (or may have) serious consequences for society, central government can take political responsibility for coordination and decision-making. Under article 25, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure for the Cabinet<sup>10</sup>, the Ministerial Crisis Management Committee (MCMC) can be convened in such situations.<sup>11</sup>
2. The MCMC will:
  - assess the situation;
  - take decisions, possibly on the ICMC's recommendations;
  - consider the national and international political consequences of decisions or proposals;
  - discuss recommendations made to the Cabinet and other tiers of government;
  - establish strategic frameworks;
  - inform the States General;
  - draw up instructions for the civil service;
  - establish policy frameworks for public information materials and announcements;
  - determine the structure and frequency of meetings.
3. Permanent members of the MCMC are the Prime Minister (= the Minister of General Affairs), and the Minister of Security and Justice.
4. The Minister of Security and Justice acts as chair of the MCMC unless the Prime Minister (= the Minister of General Affairs) assumes that role.
5. Any minister or state secretary may request that the Minister of Security and Justice convene a meeting of the MCMC. The chair of the MCMC decides on the request in consultation with the Prime Minister (= the Minister of General Affairs) and with the minister or state secretary with primary responsibility for the matter at hand.
6. After consulting the Prime Minister (= the Minister of General Affairs), the chair determines which other ministers will be MCMC members on a case-by-case and, if necessary, meeting-by-meeting basis. The chair may allow state secretaries to attend meetings in an advisory capacity in so far as the matters discussed are directly related to their duties. All other ministers will be informed that the MCMC has been convened and what its composition is.
7. Provided the MCMC's chair grants permission in advance, ministers or state secretaries may be assisted by a civil servant during a meeting. The National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (the chair of the ICMC) and a representative at DG level of the ministry with 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 with 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.
8. In order to coordinate and take decisions on a particular subject, experts can attend meetings if invited by the chair following consultation with the minister or state secretary most

<sup>10</sup> Last amended by Decree of 28 April 1998, *Bulletin of Acts and Decrees* 305.

<sup>11</sup> *Ministerial Crisis Management (Establishment) Order 2016 (Government Gazette 2016, 48258)*.

closely involved. They may include experts in a specific field or expert representatives of other authorities, government bodies or vital sectors.

9. The MCMC will not appropriate any powers from a minister or take a decision on any matter that concerns a minister who is not present.
10. In the temporary absence of the Minister of Security and Justice 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.<sup>12</sup>
11. 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.
12. The head of the National Crisis Centre will act as the executive secretary to the MCMC. The executive secretary is supported by a deputy secretary drawn from the NCC pool. The executive secretary will draw up a list of decisions with the Committee's conclusions as quickly as possible. The list must be approved by the Cabinet. If decisions cannot be delayed, prior approval of the list is not required.
13. The MCMC meets at the NCC and will decide whether the Committee's structure is appropriate given the nature of the crisis, or whether the situation can best be handled by the ICMC or by the minister with primary responsibility.
14. 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 Security and Justice 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. Ministerial implementation of the MCMC's decisions is a responsibility of the relevant ministers and is coordinated by the DCCs, if necessary in the Interdepartmental Coordination Group.
15. If the situation becomes serious enough to warrant it, the MCMC will meet at an alternative location.
16. 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.
17. As the minister responsible for coordinating counterterrorism, the Minister of Security and Justice 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 Security and Justice and the other minister to confer or to agree on measures in the time available. He may, for example, block or restrict access to some areas of Dutch airspace by civil aircraft or block mobile telephone communications. These powers are granted provisionally by Royal Decree pending the passage of a Bill by parliament.<sup>13</sup>

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

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 Coordination Centre on behalf of the Minister of Security and Justice.

<sup>12</sup> Order of 5 November 2012 containing the deputation arrangement in the event of the temporary absence of a minister (*Government Gazette* 2012, 23054). At the request of the Prime Minister, a senior adviser from the Ministry of General Affairs will stand in for the Prime Minister in his absence.

<sup>13</sup> 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.





# V Support for decision-making in crisis situations

## Interdepartmental Coordination Group (ICG)

1. To support decision-making by the ICMC and/or MCMC, an Interdepartmental Coordination Group (ICG) can be convened on the initiative of a director of the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) or at the request of a ministerial crisis coordinator. The Group is chaired by a director of the NCTV. The decision to convene the Group is taken by the chair following consultation with the ministry with primary responsibility for the matter at hand and simultaneous notification of all other ministries. Ministries that have not been invited to attend the ICG can inform the NCC of their reasons for wishing to attend. The chair will decide on the composition of the ICG following consultation with the ministry with primary responsibility. If the ICMC and/or MCMC has already been mobilised, the ICG will include, at the very least, the ministries represented in these bodies. Following consultation with the ministry most closely involved, the chair can, on its own initiative or otherwise, invite experts to attend the meeting. These may include experts in a specific field or expert representatives of other authorities, government services or vital sectors.
2. Duties of the Interdepartmental Coordination Group include:
  - supporting the ICMC and/or MCMC;
  - sharing information on the situation;
  - contributing to the overall assessment of the situation;
  - deciding on the delegation of liaison officers from the national crisis organisation to other authorities, government services or vital sectors;
  - coordinating the mobilisation of a Crisis Expert Team (CET) and appointing a national enquiry coordinator;
  - deciding on the need to convene the ICMC and coordinating its preparations;
  - coordinating the advice provided to the ICMC and/or MCMC regarding the measures to be taken, including the exercise of powers, either on the mandate of the crisis managers or on their own initiative;
  - coordinating the measures of the public and private partners concerned;
  - coordinating the implementation of the ICMC/MCMC's decisions;
  - dealing with subjects that do not need to be considered by the ICMC and/or MCMC;
  - deciding on the further, situation-specific organisation and procedures to support and advise the ICMC and/or MCMC.
3. 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, substantive expertise (e.g. the ICT Response Board) 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.
4. For decision-making purposes, liaison officers in the national crisis organisation can be delegated from the NCC or a line ministry to other authorities, government services or vital sectors.

Consultations will determine which matters liaison officers are delegated for and what working agreements are made.

5. To harmonise the national knowledge and advice infrastructure, a generic model has been developed to establish a Crisis Expert Team (CET). An example of such a team is the Environment and Drinking Water CET, which is mobilised to support the national crisis organisation and is linked to the enquiry coordinator appointed for it. The CET 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)

6. The National Crisis Centre (NCC), which is staffed around the clock, is housed at the Ministry of Security and Justice and acts as an interdepartmental coordination centre and a hub for the exchange of information nationwide. The scaled-up NCC acts as 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. Its duties include:

- a. Supporting the national crisis structure and the parties involved
  - facilitating the scaling-up of the national crisis structure;
  - the head of the NCC acts as executive secretary to the MCMC and the ICMC;
  - overseeing the entire process of coordination and decision-making at national level and acting as a nerve centre for 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 related to the coordination and decision-making process;
  - acting as a go-between between the general sector (province, safety region, municipality) and the functional sectors.

- b. Providing information

- 24/7 information desk and single point of contact for central government, both nationally and internationally;
- informing the other ministries involved, the local and/or regional authorities and the other public and private partners, once one of the parties in the national crisis structure has been mobilised;
- informing the partners involved to the greatest extent possible and necessary what roles 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 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 public and private partners);
- providing net-centric information so that the parties involved can provide their information to a central (digital) point 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)

7. The National Operational Coordination Centre (NOCC) is staffed by personnel from the public order and security sectors (police, fire service, medical services, Ministry of Defence and municipalities) and is available around the clock. It is responsible for coordinating the operational aspects of crisis management at national level and falls under the authority of the NCTV. The NOCC's duties are to:

- maintain an up-to-date overview of planned events and deployable capabilities (people, resources, knowledge) of the public order and security sectors;
- prepare an overview of capabilities (teams, resources, foreign experts) that can be requested and deployed to address an international situation;
- coordinate national and, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' request, international requests for assistance in public order and security matters;
- gather information from the public order and security sectors and inform the NCC regarding operational matters and potential actions of relevance to the overall picture at national level;
- advise the parties concerned on operational matters;
- assess the operational feasibility of proposed actions;
- devise potential administrative dilemmas and operational actions (advice) for the national crisis structure.

8. On its own initiative or at the request of a ministry, part of the national crisis organisation or the chair of a safety region, the NCTV can ask the NOCC to issue a nationwide operational advisory on the availability and deployability of people and resources, and on the operational feasibility and consequences of the primary public order and security measures to be taken. To prepare this advisory, it will use the knowledge and expertise of the public care sectors, the police, fire service, medical services and the Ministry of Defence. To prepare a more comprehensive advisory, other operational services and/or

relevant public and private partners may be consulted. Each ministry involved decides on the participation of the operational services and organisations that report to it. The ministry will also remain responsible for its own operational service(s). A representative of the NOCC can be asked to explain the advisory to one or more bodies in the national crisis structure. The NOCC ensures that operational aspects of the decisions taken in the national crisis structure are coordinated as effectively as possible, monitors their implementation and updates the advisory where necessary. It does so in consultation with the ministry responsible for the operational services.

crisis powers or can participate in the RPT as crisis partners.<sup>14</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 Security and Justice; he coordinates the provincial crisis managers and promotes cooperation between the central government representatives and the safety regions.

## Communication: National Core Team for Crisis Communication (NCTC)

9. The National Core Team for Crisis Communication (NCTC) coordinates press releases and public information. It advises the crisis committees at central government level on the communication strategy and communication consequences of proposals and decisions. The NCTC 'brings the outside world inside' by monitoring and analysing the media, internet and questions from the press and public. The NCTC formulates communication frameworks and key messages for all partners at central government level. It coordinates the timing and content of communications with other relevant parties.
10. The NCTC is headed by the Director of Communications of the Ministry of Security and Justice and/or the Director of Communications of the ministry with primary responsibility. The directors represent the communication sector in the ICMC/MCMC. Day-to-day management of the NCTC is in the hands of the Communication Unit of the NCC and the coordinator of the press and public team. The NCTC's basic staff consists of communication specialists from the Directorate of Information of the Ministry of Security and Justice and the Communication Unit of the NCC. If other ministries are involved, their communication specialists will also be part of the NCTC. In practice, the NCTC is managed substantively by the press and public team coordinator of the ministry with primary responsibility and functionally by the head of the NCC's Communication Unit.

## Central government representatives ("Rijksheren")

11. Where relevant, a representative of each minister can be appointed to liaise between the government and 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), the managing director of Rijkswaterstaat (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment) and the Health Inspector (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport). Other regional officers, services and organisations will retain their

<sup>14</sup> Regional crisis partners include ProRail, Dutch Rail, drinking water companies, TenneT, energy companies, network managers, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Chief Public Prosecutors and State Harbour Masters. Depending on the situation, they 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.



# VI Legal aspects

1. The main principle of crisis management is to use only the normal powers laid down in existing legislation for as long as possible.<sup>15</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 gravity of the situation.
4. The entry into force of emergency powers is in principle linked to two different levels of emergency: a restricted state of emergency and a general state of emergency, which 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 (= the 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 (= the Minister of General Affairs), and extended by further legislation. Such separate application is permissible only in relatively small-scale situations in which it would be inappropriate to declare a state of emergency. Emergency powers that infringe fundamental rights can be used only if a general state of emergency has been declared.

<sup>15</sup> For a summary see Bestuurlijke Netwerkaarten Crisisbeheersing, Arnhem, Dutch Safety Institute, IFV, 2015.



# VII Situations abroad

1. The national crisis organisation can also be mobilised if situations abroad could have consequences for the Netherlands. The response is based on treaties the Netherlands has ratified and bilateral and multilateral agreements it has concluded. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays a special role in such situations. Other ministries can also be involved if they have a specific, primary responsibility or substantive knowledge, expertise or resources. The Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, 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 National Cyber Security Centre can respond to cyber security incidents or disruptions to transnational vital infrastructure.
2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible outside the Netherlands for consular services, diplomatic efforts and 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. Where the ministry is involved in coordinating the repatriation of Dutch nationals to the Netherlands, it will bring in the NCC and other ministries to help with their reception and assistance once they return to the Netherlands. In such cases, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for these individuals until they are back on Dutch soil. Once in the Netherlands, assistance is coordinated by the Ministry of Security and Justice and provided by the NOCC in close cooperation with the operational and administrative partners concerned.
3. The national crisis organisation can also be mobilised if situations in a conflict area have consequences for the Netherlands. The Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Security and Justice contribute the expertise they have gained from military and civil missions. 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.
4. International humanitarian assistance abroad falls within the policy remit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Minister of Security and Justice is responsible for policy on civil protection within the European Union.
5. The relevant ministry is responsible for responding 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) 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.



# VIII Follow-up stage

1. Preparations for the follow-up stage to a situation in which the national crisis structure is mobilised – the recovery and aftercare stage – will already begin during the response. 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 action needs to be taken. The transition from the active stage to the follow-up stage is a gradual process.
2. For the purposes of this Handbook, the follow-up stage comprises all actions taken after the scaling-down of the national crisis organisation to prevent or alleviate social disruption and resume normal activity as quickly as possible. The Minister of Security and Justice is responsible for the general organisation and coordination of the follow-up stage. Line ministries are responsible for specific themes. The follow-up process is monitored by the regular structures of the relevant ministers and discussed in Cabinet if necessary. The follow-up stage can cover a wide range of themes. A list of such themes, covering the whole of central government, is presented in Annexe 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 other public and private partners if necessary. A general action plan is then prepared, which the ICMC submits to the MCMC if necessary. The Minister of Finance is involved in the preparation of the plan. Decisions on the plan are taken by the Cabinet.



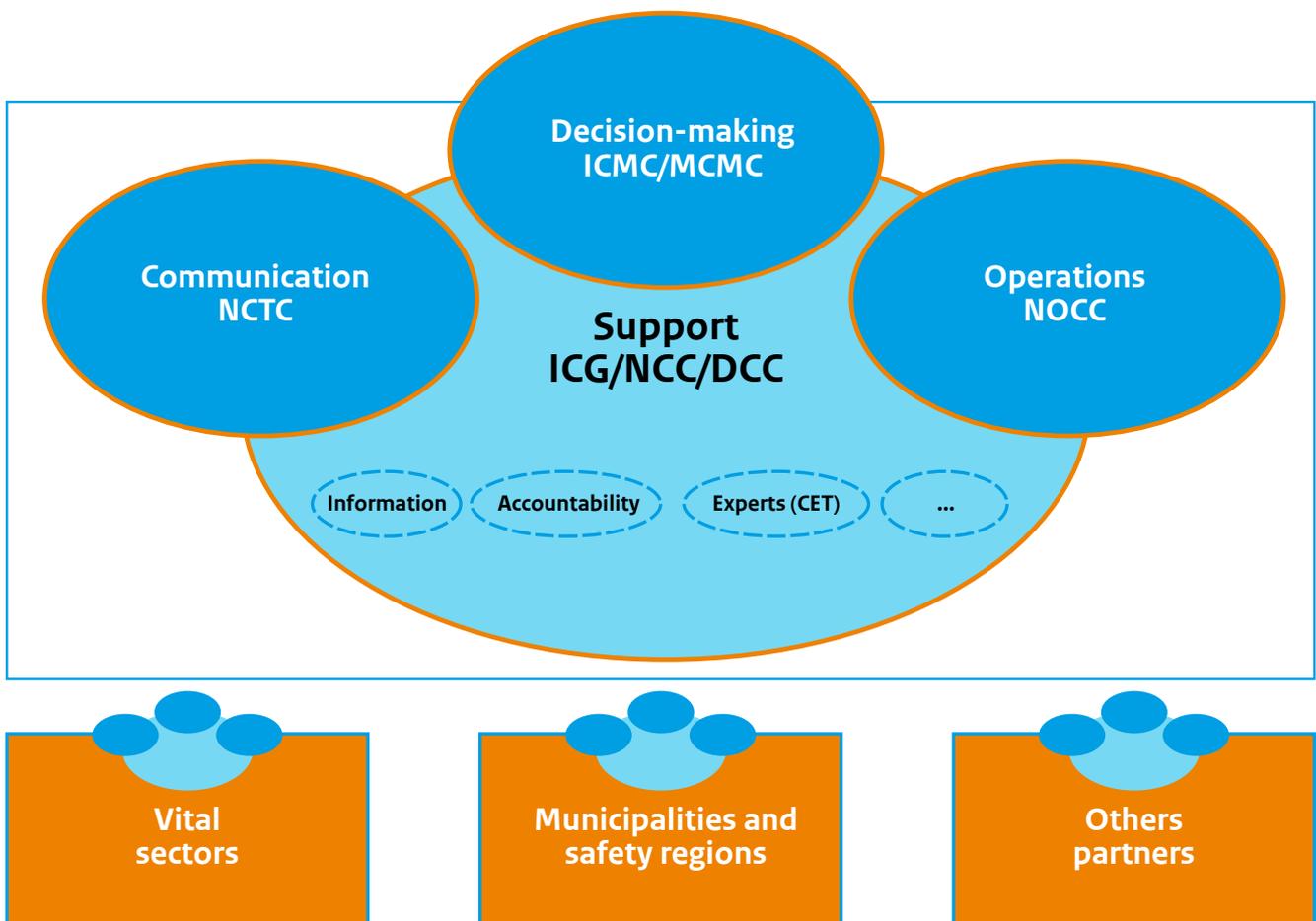
# IX Exercises and evaluation

1. Ministers are responsible for the structure, quality and timely adaptation of their crisis organisations and agreements, as laid down in, for instance, their own ministry's crisis management handbooks. Each minister organises training courses and exercises to improve his own crisis decision-making structures and procedures.
2. The Ministry of Security and Justice houses the National Academy for Crisis Management, which enhances the quality of the crisis organisation by offering training programmes and organising exercises for the benefit of the national crisis organisation, collaborating with public and private partners and participating in international exercises. Its purpose is to maintain the requisite level of preparedness and to identify potential improvements in the structure and organisation of crisis management.
3. All the national crisis organisation's activities are subsequently evaluated in order to learn from past experience. The Minister of Security and Justice initiates the evaluation with the assistance of the National Academy for Crisis Management (NAC).

# Annexes

Annexe A

# Main crisis management processes



## Annexe B

# Themes in the follow-up stage

The following list of themes<sup>16</sup> was prepared in consultation with the various ministries. The list is not exhaustive and is intended only as a set of guidelines when planning joint actions in the follow-up stage. Other themes and parties can be added if required.

Theme	Note	Ministry with primary responsibility or biggest role to play
1. Coordination and organisation of the follow-up stage	Establish interdepartmental project team, responsible for planning, prioritisation, allocation of resources and coordination of activities in the follow-up stage	Security and Justice (general coordination of the follow-up stage) and ministries (specific themes)
2. Rendering account/political accountability	Ministers/state secretaries/politicians, media, members of parliament	Line ministries, Security and Justice, General Affairs
3. Continuity and restoration of vital infrastructure <sup>17</sup>	Ensure that vital infrastructure remains in operation or returns to normal as quickly as possible to enable recovery and aftercare	Economic Affairs; Infrastructure and the Environment; Finance; Security and Justice; Interior and Kingdom Relations
4. Registering and monitoring evacuees, victims, other affected parties	Localise evacuees and victims/casualties for the purposes of aid, registration and verification, family unification, repatriation and payment of damages. An up-to-date municipal records system is important on account of the services and systems linked to it.	Interior and Kingdom Relations (municipalities); Security and Justice (safety regions); Foreign Affairs (in the event of crises abroad)
5. Rehousing, recovery and reconstruction	Find shelter for victims; organise temporary or semi-permanent housing; clean up and restore affected areas, buildings and other facilities (built environment)	Interior and Kingdom Relations (regions and municipalities)
6. Food supply	Provide food to victims and the population at large	Economic Affairs
7. Healthcare	Medical screening and healthcare monitoring	Health, Welfare and Sport (including National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM))
8. Psychosocial care/assistance	Short and long-term treatment of psychosocial problems (both carers and the public)	Health, Welfare and Sport (including RIVM); Security and Justice (care providers)
9. Strengthen social cohesion	Social cohesion, monitoring social unrest, solidarity, mutual assistance, stability	General Affairs; Social Affairs and Employment (NGOs, civil society organisations)

<sup>16</sup> Based in part on *Richting geven aan de laatste schakel: de nafase. Rijksbrede versterking van herstel en nazorg bij rampen en crises (technical paper on government-wide enhancement of recovery and aftercare in disaster and crisis situations)* (in Dutch), The Hague, Ministry of Security and Justice, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> According to the revised list of vital infrastructure, the relevant sectors are: energy, ICT/telecoms, drinking water, water, transport, chemical, nuclear, finance, public order and security, and public administration. See: *Progress report on national security (In Dutch)*, 12 May 2015, *Proceedings House of Representatives 2014-2015*, 30 821, no. 23.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Ministry with primary responsibility or biggest role to play</b>
10. Emergency social security measures	Dealing with benefit payments, exceptional medical expenses, etc.	Social Affairs and Employment
11. Monitoring/addressing environmental and landscape damage	Monitoring leaks of hazardous substances in the environment; monitoring threats to public health due to disaster-related damage, etc.	Infrastructure and the Environment; Health, Welfare and Sport; Education, Culture and Science
12. Waste/sewage treatment	A large number of affected individuals means more waste; waste and sewage treatment plants may fail, creating environmental and health problems	Infrastructure and the Environment
13. Continuity of public administration, the judiciary, police etc.	Guaranteeing the operation of public services; continuity of democratic legal order	Security and Justice, Interior and Kingdom Relations
14. Continuity of transport (including vital infrastructure)	Important for maintaining communication with the outside world; goods transport (emergency aid and resumption of economic activities); public transport; private transport	Infrastructure and the Environment
15. Continuity of economic life/market forces	Limit economic damage through rapid resumption of economic activities; business continuity; IT fall back arrangements; emergency credit; tax measures. Benefit desk (one desk for multidisciplinary back office)	Economic Affairs (Chamber of Commerce); Finance; Social Affairs and Employment
16. Secure cultural heritage	Evacuation, restoration and temporary storage of cultural heritage	Education, Culture and Science
17. Damage assessment	Estimate the scale and cost of the disaster	Security and Justice; Economic Affairs (Netherlands Enterprise Agency)
18. Reconstruction	Post-disaster reconstruction, e.g. by means of blueprints of public-private partnerships; spatial planning (reconstruction or innovation)	Public-private partnerships
19. Payment of damages and financial arrangements	Introduce damages scheme; coordinate settlement of damages; pay financial compensation	Security and Justice; Finance
20. Register temporary/semi-permanent shelter for displaced livestock, animal health and animal welfare	Provide shelter for displaced livestock	Economic Affairs
21. Continuity of emergency services	Restoration of emergency services (back-up facilities); evacuation of aid workers' families; leave arrangements for aid workers; logistical support; staff rotation; psychosocial counselling for aid workers	Security and Justice; Health, Welfare and Sport; Social Affairs and Employment
22. Public information	Establish mass communication channels (including an information and advice centre). Communication plans to reach target groups	Security and Justice (NCC, NCTC); Health, Welfare and Sport
23. Funerals, bereavement and commemoration	Organisation of national commemoration for major national and international disasters and support for local communities	Security and Justice in cooperation with Interior and Kingdom Relations and Health, Welfare and Sport (and Foreign Affairs in the cases of a disaster abroad)
24. Criminal and other investigations and liability	Public Prosecution Service, police and businesses in disaster area	Security and Justice (Public Prosecution Service), line ministries
25. Official oversight (by central government and other authorities)	Inspectorate, region (e.g. issuing permits)	Inspectorates
26. Investigation/evaluation	Investigation of the causes of the disaster and evaluation of the performance of the emergency services	Central government inspectorates, Dutch Safety Board

## Annex C

# Abbreviations

CET	Crisis Expert Team
DCC	Departmental Coordination Centre
DG	Director-General
EADRCC	Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre
GRIP	Coordinated Regional Incident Management Procedure
ICG	Interdepartmental Coordination Group
ICMC	Interdepartmental Crisis Management Committee
MCMC	Ministerial Crisis Management Committee
NAC	National Academy for Crisis Management
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCC	National Crisis Centre
NCTV	National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism
NCTC	National Core Team for Crisis Communication
NOCC	National Operational Coordination Centre
RPT	Regional Policy Team
RIVM	National Institute for Public Health and the Environment
SG	Secretary-General



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September 2018 | 115343