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IPCR 3

## NOTE

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From:	Presidency
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee
Subject:	IPCR working methods under the Swedish Presidency

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## Background

1. The **EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR)** arrangements are the **Council's mechanism for coordinating a common EU political response to major crises** with broad-ranging consequences.<sup>1</sup> The IPCR arrangements are Presidency-led and fall under the authority of Coreper.
2. The essential elements of the IPCR arrangements are:
  - a) **Informal IPCR Roundtables** convened by the Presidency when the IPCR is activated in full mode for a specific crisis. IPCR Roundtables aim at exploring the situation and identifying and addressing the key issues to support political decision-making. In addition to Member States, other relevant stakeholders and experts are invited as appropriate. Roundtables are neither working party meetings, nor a decision-making forum, although they do adopt operational conclusions. *All 27 MS* plus the Schengen associated countries can be invited to attend. However, more *limited formats* (e.g. the most affected MS, with the relevant EU bodies) can and have also been used.

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<sup>1</sup> The IPCR arrangements were set up by the Council on 25 June of 2013 (doc. ST 10708/13). They have been codified legally through Council Implementing Decision 2018/1993 (OJ L 320/28, 17/12/2018).

Furthermore, roundtables can be held at different levels: the *working level* (default option), *high level* (Coreper II ambassadors) and *Council* (ministerial) *level*.

- b) **Integrated situational awareness and analysis (ISAA) reports.** These are regular, timely analytical reports, drafted jointly by the Commission and the EEAS, intended only for limited circulation and not as public documents. Their aim is to provide decision makers with a clear and complete picture of the situation.
  - c) **The IPCR web platform.** This is an online tool, accessible to Member States and institutions, which allows for exchange of information, and it is used inter alia for collection of information for and the distribution of, the ISAA reports.
  - d) **The central 24/7 contact point** at Union level with Member States' competent authorities and other stakeholders. This contact point in the Commission (ERCC) ensures 24/7 liaison with key actors in Brussels, as well as monitoring and alerting functions for IPCR purposes.
3. The **level of IPCR activation** can be fine-tuned depending on the situation and its political assessment. Three levels are available: *monitoring mode* (which is not considered a true activation) and two levels of activation – *information sharing mode* and *full activation mode*. The organisation of regular roundtables is only foreseen under full activation.
4. When activated, the IPCR arrangements allow to develop a **common picture** of the situation and, when used in full mode, **to identify gaps and bottlenecks** as well as possible solutions. The main objective is to **ensure coherence of the handling** in the EU of the crisis and of the overall response at Union political level. The IPCR arrangements do not replace existing procedures or operational tools, but aim at creating synergies between existing structures and ensuring that there are no gaps.
5. The IPCR is a **flexible mechanism** and the Presidency has the ability to *activate, deactivate, or escalate / de-escalate* an activation in order to adapt the overall effort to the severity of a given crisis.

6. So far, the IPCR arrangements have been fully activated in three cases: in **2015 for the migration crisis**, in early **2020 to address the COVID-19 pandemic** and in early **2022 as a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine**. They have proven their value by providing the Council with the relevant tools and flexibility for addressing immediate challenges in times of crisis. IPCR has remained fully activated for all three crises.

### **Presidency working methods**

7. The Presidency aims to make sure that the IPCR is **used in accordance with its original purpose**, that it is *activated* when a major crisis requires immediate and active coordination, with the aim to provide the Council with the relevant tools to address its consequences. This also means that there should be an assessment if IPCR could be *deactivated*, when there is no longer a need for immediate and active crisis coordination.
8. The Presidency will address matters concerned by the three current IPCR activations **in the most relevant and effective way**, predominantly in *ordinary working party structures*, and use the IPCR for *acute crisis situations with cross-cutting and broad-ranging consequences*, under the *strategic guidance of Coreper*. Close coordination between IPCR and the concerned working parties will be ensured.
9. The organisation of **IPCR Roundtables will be needs-based and events-driven**. This could result in less frequent roundtables. However, the Presidency will not hesitate to use IPCR when needed and roundtables may be called together on short notice, to agree on a clear operational and coordinated response, when the situation so requires.
10. The Presidency will honour the **tasking by Heads of State or Government** in European Council conclusions, to follow up political commitments at an operational level in IPCR as appropriate.
11. The Presidency will assess, in close dialogue with the Member States, the **prospect of downscaling** full IPCR activations to information sharing mode, when no roundtables have proven necessary since a considerable amount of time.

12. Moreover, the Presidency aims to conclude the **review of the IPCR Standard Operating Procedures** in the ad-hoc Working Party on preparedness, response capability and resilience to future crises. The Presidency will propose a review of the current IPCR activations, in the light of the result of this process.

### **Operational conclusion**

13. Coreper is invited to take note of the Presidency's intentions regarding IPCR working methods, as described above.
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