



"INSIEME 21" – Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) exercise in Switzerland

This USAR exercise aims at preparing members of a Rapid Response team for international deployment after an earthquake. The participants learn everything from their deployment to localising and rescuing trapped victims as well as providing emergency medical aid. Battling against time, the participants will be trained by five USAR partner organisations in a realistically simulated environment. The United Nations (UN) will also examine and classify Pompiers de l'urgence internationale (PUI), @fire Germany and Swiss Rescue during the exercise. Swiss Humanitarian Aid as well as the Swiss Armed Forces are hosting the 48-hour-exercise.

Summary "INSIEME 21"

Disaster management after earthquakes – search and rescue exercises in urban areas (USAR)

Where?

USAR training ground of the Swiss Armed Forces in Epeisses

When?

22 to 24 November 2021

Duration

48 hours

In brief

- Simulated emergency situation after an earthquake
- Covers all operational phases from first alert to demobilisation
- Exercise for 5 USAR teams
- Applying INSARAG methodology
- INSARAG classification and reclassification



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra



Scenario

A virtual earthquake of magnitude 7.1 on the Richter scale shook the Republic of JURENEVA on 21/11/2021. The epicentre of the quake which killed more than 1,000 people and injured many more was 20km southwest of Geneva. Around 24 hours after the government of JURENEVA had plead international assistance, the first search and rescue teams from France, Germany and Switzerland arrive at the fictitious airport Bière from where they are taken to the training ground of the Swiss Armed Forces in Epeisses.

Aim

The aim of this exercise is to strengthen the coordination of all USAR activities within the United Nation's international disaster management mechanism (INSARAG). The participants learn how to conduct assessments, develop necessary plans and complete relevant tasks. They find out more about INSARAG methodologies such as reporting to the local emergency authorities, working with the INSARAG marking and signalling system and using INSARAG documentation. The rescue teams learn how to communicate with the affected population while respecting their customs and cultures. The Swiss and French teams will undergo the INSARAG reclassification which has to be renewed every five years. @fire Germany is due to become the first classified Light USAR team worldwide. USAR Netherlands, Luxembourg and Armenia will join the exercise with one management unit each to examine their management skills and coordinate the exercise.



**"Good international
coordination saves time and
human lives"**

*Manuel Bessler, Delegate for
Humanitarian Aid*



About the IEC / IER USAR teams:



Swiss Rescue

- Established in 1981 following the earthquakes in Algeria and Italy
- Consists of 78 members, 8 rescue dogs and 18 tonnes of rescue and logistic material
- International Heavy USAR Team since 2008 (IEC)
- Specialised in locating and rescuing victims from the rubble and providing initial emergency medical aid
- Ready for take-off within eight to twelve hours after decision was made to deploy
- Made up of private and public, civilian and military partner organisations which fall under the management of Swiss Humanitarian Aid



Pompiers de l'urgence internationale

- Established in 2004
- Consists of 52 members, 4 dogs and 10 tonnes of material
- International Medium USAR Team since 2010 (IEC)
- Association of firefighters who are internationally deployed after natural and humanitarian disasters
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)



@fire – Internationaler Katastrophenschutz Deutschland e.V.

- Established in 2002
- Consists of 20 members, 3 dogs and 2.5 tonnes of material
- To be classified as first international USAR Light Team (IEC 2021)
- Specialised in locating and rescuing victims after earthquakes, wildland fire fighting and disaster risk reduction (DRR)
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

Other participants:



The Netherlands' and Armenian USAR teams which were certified in 2007 and 2015 respectively support the exercise by deploying a management team each to make sure international coordination and partnerships on mission achieve the best possible training. In addition, the «Corps grand-ducal d'incendie et de secours» (CGDIS) from Luxembourg will join the exercise and provide the teams with a "Rapid Deployment Kit" which consists of a satellite as well as a broadband connection to guarantee communication between the teams.

International Search and Rescue Advisory Group



INSARAG is a global network of more than 90 countries and organisations under the United Nations umbrella.

INSARAG deals with urban search and rescue (USAR) related issues, aiming to establish minimum international standards for USAR teams and methodology for international coordination in response to earthquakes and other disasters. Originally developed for earthquake response and rescue, the mechanisms and organisations under the INSARAG guidelines have proven so effective that they have become the basis for almost all of the UN's emergency relief efforts.

The INSARAG external (re-)classification (IEC/IER) system is designed to ensure that only qualified and appropriate USAR teams are deployed after an earthquake. The classification also intends to help disaster-struck countries choose which international search and rescue team could most efficiently support their country. The (re)classification system is an independent, verifiable, and voluntary system which has gained wide recognition through INSARAG. So far, more than 50 international USAR teams have been classified worldwide.

Swiss Armed Forces – an important partner

The Swiss Armed Forces training unit for Engineering/Rescue/ABC plays an important part within Swiss Rescue. Furthermore the Swiss Armed Forces support this international exercise by providing the infrastructure, the material and the transportation. The training ground of the rescue troops allows the teams to experience unique conditions that are close to reality.



Further information

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