

Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network



Dear Readers,

It is my great honour to invite you on behalf of the Slovenian Presidency to read the second issue of the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network newsletter.

Under the slogan "Together. Resilient. Europe." the Slovenian Presidency contributes to strengthening the EU's resilience to different man-made and natural disasters. Our new tool – the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network, introduced with the 2019 revision of the UCPM legislation – will be one of its cornerstones. As it was confirmed by the participants of our workshop "Towards disaster resilience goals" in July, the Knowledge Network should support the implementation of the Union disaster resilience goals through its relevant activities, namely scientific advice and innovation, thematic workshops and conferences, UCPM Lessons Learnt Programme, projects and UCPM training and exercises programme among others.

Preventing, preparing for and responding to disasters requires strong cooperation, mutual trust and our shared commitment to solidarity – the fundamental value of the European Civil Protection community. By communicating more and better, sharing knowledge, experience and expertise in a more systematic way, we will become even more efficient and effective at protecting and saving lives.

The upcoming Knowledge Network online platform will provide a meeting, learning and working space for our community and an additional impetus for going further also in the field of communication, essential for connecting our community even more. We look forward to start sharing information through the platform, starting with news from #SIQUAKE field exercise taking place in October in Slovenia.

In this edition of the newsletter, you will find more about two devastating natural disasters that happened during this summer. As well as the article on July floods in Western Europe, there is the first-person experience of Gerard Guerin, who was deployed as the ERCC liaison officer after the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti in August. More information is provided on the Seminar for Mechanism Experts and on the Knowledge Network Partnership call and its projects. Besides the Science corner, you can find an overview of new publications, upcoming activities and events linked with the Civil Protection community.

Together with my team, I wish you a pleasant autumn, full of learning experiences, good collaborations and interesting ideas for improving the UCPM.



Stanislav Lotrič
Slovenian Presidency Team

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Näkemiin - Farewell

As I am now spending my last working days at DG ECHO before taking up my duties as EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator on 1 October, I wanted to share a few thoughts with our many friends and colleagues everywhere in Europe that are engaging in European perspectives of civil protection and disaster management.

This summer we have again witnessed the importance of our joint work within the framework of Union Civil Protection. Inside Europe, but also throughout the world. Its relevance is obvious, not only to professionals but also to countless EU citizens. As an EU civil servant living in Belgium, I was also shocked by the sheer destruction caused in the Belgian Ardennes this summer. During that emergency I was impressed to see the immediate support that many Member States offered to Belgium. It was not only a comforting gesture of solidarity, but a real support to the difficult tasks of the local first responders. It made me proud, and reminded me of what the UCPM is all about.



During my posting as Director for Disaster Preparedness and Prevention, one of the most important projects to move forward with was the design and set up of the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network. This work had to be done not in a rush, but in close consultation with all Member States and stakeholders. The Knowledge Network will only ever be a success if the civil protection community supports it. I am glad that as we move forward, we receive many messages of support that stress the high expectations for the Network. This is important to me as it shows that we are on the right track, moving in the right direction. I have no doubt that my successor will continue in the same direction. Julia Stewart-David, Head of Unit ECHO B1, will take the function of acting Director until a successor is appointed.

This Newsletter is only one visible product of the Network. More will come, once the Network is formally launched later this year. This section also gives me an opportunity to thank the team in ECHO Unit B3, but also to express my thanks to our friends and colleagues in Member States and in Participating States that have worked with us and have shared their precious input and ideas as we moved forward.

Thank you and *näkemiin*, as we say in Finnish.



Ilkka Salmi

Director for Disaster Preparedness and Prevention
European Commission, DG ECHO

Thoughts and experiences from the European Civil Protection Team in Haiti

Interview with Gerard Guerin, Emergency Response Coordination Centre Liaison Officer

On the 14th of August 2021, a devastating 7.2-magnitude earthquake hit south-western Haiti, followed by “Tropical Depression Grace” which struck on the 17th of August. On the 16th of August, Haiti requested assistance through the UCPM for emergency medical teams (EMT), water and sanitation (WASH) needs and shelter items. An EU Civil Protection Team (EUCPT) composed of twelve experts plus two Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) Liaison Officers were immediately deployed to Port-au-Prince, arriving there on the 18th of August. The EUCPT is on the ground supporting the authorities and facilitating the coordination of the EU assistance. The team is working mostly on civil protection aspects in close cooperation with the United Nations Disaster Assessment Coordination team (UNDAC), focusing on humanitarian actions. Based on the current situation on the ground, ongoing UCPM operations are likely to continue well into October.

What were your first impressions and feelings when you first landed in Haiti?

Sadly my first impression of Haiti was the visible suffering of the people here, you can see the pain and despair on their faces, it's actually a very tough thing to acknowledge to one's self and to try and rationalise. Coming from Europe we are privileged in so many ways, we have so much, but these people have very little. The effects of the earthquake and “Tropical Depression Grace” have exacerbated an already very difficult situation, in fact the current situation here can correctly be described as “a complex emergency” with a “natural disaster” on top, which has created a very challenging operational environment. The current political situation and the safety and security situation in Haiti and particularly in Port au Prince remains tense and unpredictable. From my recollection I cannot think of a more complex or difficult situation where the UCPM has been deployed previously.

What are the implications of the security situation for you and the team, are you scared from time to time?

Natural and man-made disasters often happen in some of the poorest, most vulnerable and not so secure countries in the world. We must face up to the risks and

difficulties of working in such challenging environments if we are determined to help people in real need and we must collectively decide what level of risk we are willing to accept and where we draw the line. I am pleased that the UCPM was activated for this emergency, that there was a willingness on behalf of member and participating states to deploy capacities, I think that the valuable lessons which we will learn from this deployment will help develop and improve the ability of the UCPM to respond more effectively and efficiently to future difficult missions around the world.

Every day here is a new mission. One colleague recently joked that your life expectancy in Haiti is 24 hours renewed each morning. It makes me proud however to tell you that despite the many challenges which we face here on a daily basis, the EUCPT are determined to overcome them all and fully support our member / participating state / UCPM capacities to deploy in the earthquake affected regions of Haiti to help people that are seriously in need of our help. It's the European spirit “failure is not an option”.

This mission has the full engagement and cooperation of five key partners which is essential



given the particular security situation on the ground: the EU Delegation Haiti, ECHO Field Office Haiti, ECHO Security Cell, ERCC and EUCPT, all meeting regularly and working closely together to ensure the safe conduct and delivery of the mission.

We are receiving extremely good intelligence regularly which gives us good situational awareness, we have very well-developed safety and security planning in place which also inspires confidence, the team are disciplined with good security protocols, which means that we have the necessary flexibility to do our jobs without compromising our own safety or the safety of the team. We are also working under COVID conditions therefore workable practical COVID protocols have also been developed by the EUCPT health experts and TAST nurse.

I always get concerned when I hear gunfire, however I trust in my colleagues, I trust in my training and what I have learned over the years in exercises and on previous missions and as the last thing at night I say a prayer asking God to keep me safe.



What are the most urgent, pressing needs, and how is the EU contributing to meeting them?

One of our roles here is to very quickly identify and confirm the most urgent critical needs on the ground and through the ERCC inform our member / participating states. We do this by engaging directly with National, regional and local authorities, by collaborating closely with other international responders such as UNDAC, by participating in the established coordination structure and through dialogue with operational partners and stakeholders. Unfortunately, the needs are many in Haiti and as is the case in most earthquakes, they are predictable. In this emergency, HEALTH, urgent medical intervention (EMT 1's & 2's) are priority needs followed by WASH, water purification to provide clean drinking water as we know the public piped water system in the worst affected areas has suffered severe damage. We are very grateful to France for very quickly deploying a water purification team of 40 highly motivated firefighters led by Lieutenant Colonel R. Avenel, to Norway for deploying an

Emergency Medical Team type 1 (EMT1) with 36 personnel, which is a hugely impressive: 90,000kg and 700 cubic meters of equipment including a heavy base camp and five 4x4 vehicles including three 4x4 ambulance vehicles. We are grateful to Luxembourg for deploying its emergency response module "emergency.lu", which has enhanced the French and Norwegian deployments in addition to supporting the EUCPT and many other responders including National Civil Protection authorities (DGPC). I also want to thank Sweden and acknowledge the hugely important role played by the Technical Assistance Support Team (TAST) who on this occasion were really full integrated into the EUCPT. This "a one Europe one team" approach was really critical given the enormity of the challenges we faced especially at the beginning of the mission. As previously mentioned, this mission also presented particular security concerns and needs and I must acknowledge the huge contribution of the Dutch naval ship "HOLLAND" based in CURACAO with rotary wing support (NH90) and its 99 crew members, particularly in the early weeks of the mission. The ability to provide intelligence gathering and analysis, safety and security, armed LNO Team on the ground working closely with EUCPT, ability to fly assessment missions safely were all essential elements which allowed EUCPT to conduct operations safely and to understand well the risks environment which was necessary to ensure the safety of the mission. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Spain for its contribution of water purification plants. Some of these have been installed, donated and local staff trained which is a long lasting and very worthwhile solution.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank most sincerely the member / participating states for the very much needed and hugely appreciated in-kind assistance which is arriving on a regular basis.

It is also important to acknowledge that in identifying and meeting these needs, the EUCPT work closely with the United Nations. This is a good example of an integrated mission with UNDAC colleagues. It is a great combination as we are all playing to our strengths. Our complementarity and easy communication help us to save valuable time and reduce duplication of efforts. In addition, we have developed a very good working relationship with the national authorities and other operational partners in the field such as the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) who is strongly supporting the Ministry of health.



How have UCPM training courses and UCPM exercises prepared you for missions like this?

Every day is different in most emergencies, but this is absolute guaranteed in Haiti. You can take nothing for granted here and the team are continually developing new contingency plans for the contingency plans. Haiti is the place where the emergency kicks your ass if you are not at least two steps ahead all the time, this means that extensive tactical and operational planning never stops. Now I realise, this is what all the



training and exercising is all about. Now I completely understand everything that my good friend Rene Wagemans and many other experienced trainers in the UCPM system taught me over the years. This continuous heightened level of operation, on top of the very close monitoring of the unpredictable political and security situation is both time consuming and exhausting. We deployed here with a 22-person team including 12 EUCPT experts, 2 ERCC liaison Officers and an 8 person TAST. We needed all those experts to function as one single team which they did, to start up and run this mission successfully.

How does your day start and end? Is every day different or is there a certain routine to your day even in the midst of a disaster situation?

My day begins around 05.00hrs each morning, as there is a significant time difference of 6 hours between Brussels and Haiti. Brussels always has a head start, Ionut Homeag, Alfonso Lozano and Esther El Haddad, the ERCC Coordinators are not so forgiving to allow me to oversleep, I'm joking of course. I usually start my day by updating the ERCC duty officers and Coordinators, discussing key issues, new developments, emerging priorities and on this particular mission always a high priority is safety and security. The ERCC continues to play a significant role in coordinating and guiding this mission. The ERCC coordinators and the Duty Officer team, work around the clock to support the mission in every way possible, they are really the silent heroes in every mission, and I applaud them.

As an ERCC liaison officer, my job here along with my colleague Berengere Tripon is to work very closely with the team leader and deputy team leader providing

strategic and tactical advice to support the mission, I'm really the conduit between the ERCC and the EUCP team which I hope binds the whole team together. In addition, I also undertake other functions such as liaising with National Authorities, the EU Delegation, ECHO Field Office, ECHO Security Cell and I am a nominated spokesperson to address International Media on behalf of the mission and ensure the visibility of the mission which is a very important element. Once we reach the EUCPT office in the morning, the day usually takes on a life of its own, in this environment one must have extremely good planning in place to deliver on all elements but also remain open and flexible, as I have learned many times from MODEX exercises "the best laid plans never survive first contact with the enemy". You reach a certain battle rhythm as a team, everyone find their place and in this particular mission, despite having a large team, such were the challenges and the huge workload, particularly for the first two weeks, that the team really did find its battle rhythm and worked extremely well together.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family for their love and support, my management and colleagues in the European Commission for their unconditional support which has allowed me to undertake operational missions as an ERCC Liaison Officer over the last six years, it has been my privilege.

6 September 2021



A macro-regional response for better preparedness and response

Interview with Kinga Perge, Senior Advisor for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, EU Strategy for the Danube Risk Priority Area (EUSDR PA5), Project Director of Budapest Firefighter Association, Trainer in the UCPM Training Programme



What were your first reactions and emotions when you heard the news about flooding in West Europe in July?

When I first heard of the devastating floods in Western Europe, I was shaken by the magnitude of the disaster. It has left at least 200 people dead (as of 19 July 2021) and hit Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands the worst. My sympathy goes out to the families of the dead. The amount of rain that fell in 24 hours, or even less, was extraordinary. Still, when the first reports came out about the number of deaths, everyone hoped it would not raise that high. Sadly, it was unavoidable that there will be more victims.

The complexity of the situation was evident; the flash flood triggered landslides and the cascading effects were significant as well. Dams threatened to break, while electricity and cell phone networks were shut down and drinking water was not available in many regions. The speed and magnitude of the events caught many people by surprise. Thousands of responders were deployed.

Just as many of my fellow responders, I immediately felt the urge to support the response efforts. It was also clear though, that very specific support was needed from the European countries (which our organisation

doesn't have yet) such as flood rescue teams using boats, boat rescuers and helicopters. Austria, Italy, and France were able to send these capacities through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).

How could the members of the disaster management network of the Danube region support the response in case such devastating flooding occurred in your region?

Responders are ready to support, no matter what. The main question is: 'Is there a framework to support their mission?' If there is no system in place, and the units deploy without adequate arrangements, it might be more harmful than helpful.

I truly believe in coordination and preparedness. Therefore, we are working on building a network in the Danube Region, which would give flexibility and guidance at the same time, so the members can rely on a clear process and procedures. Our mission with the Budapest Firefighter Association is to ensure and encourage the members of this network to engage in joint preparedness and response activities. As we face similar hazards in our region, we have resources to support our neighbours.

So, I hope, that if such devastating event occurs, the members will use our network, offer and receive assistance from each other in an organised way. This does not mean creating additional agreements. The existing mechanisms should not be duplicated, rather used in a more efficient way – on bilateral basis between countries or triggering the UCPM.

One of our projects, [RISKHUB](#) (funded by the European Regional Development Fund), is based on cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Hungary, linking municipalities and volunteer firefighter associations. The partnership shows that such programmes are needed. Now we need to see how we can enlarge its scope to ensure an active role for them in the Danube region. To this end we also work on tools, such as mobile application, e-learning and glossary of terms, and procedures, to ease the response, maintain better information flow and ensure that adequate support is provided. An even larger network of networks project is [DAREnet](#) (Horizon2020) which already works on connecting the relevant flood response organizations in the region.

What are in your view the advantages of a macro-regional approach both in the preparedness and response phases of disaster management?

We need solutions tailored to macro-regional environmental risk and involving governmental and non-governmental organisations. We are lucky to have a macro-regional level strategy in place in the Danube region, which started 10 years ago during the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is the implementing organisation of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) in Hungary, and its Environmental Risks Priority Area (PA5) is co-coordinated by Hungary and Romania. Ever since its launch, Hungary supports the implementation of the Action Plan of EUSDR. One of the actions of EUSDR PA5 is to 'Strengthen

disaster prevention and preparedness among governmental and non-governmental organisations'. The EUSDR PA5 Disaster Management Working Group (DM WG) was established to focus on emergency response and preparedness elements of managing environmental risks. The main advantage of our network is exactly its macro-regional character, which connects the responder organisations within. There are capacities available for deployment to a neighbouring country which are not self-sufficient. They do not fulfil the requirements of a module registered in the UCPM system neither. But it is important to realise, that it is not needed either. Maybe, standardisation of assets is not a realistic goal, but harmonisation of preparedness activities is achievable and desired at regional level.

Our Knowledge Network project [DiMaND](#), is focusing on the objectives of the [EUSDR PA5 Disaster Management Working Group](#). Our Association is also involved with the DG ECHO [PROFOUND](#) project, aiming to establish unified flood operation in the Danube region through preparedness activities leading to a full-scale field exercise. These two projects provide great opportunity for us to align our efforts and use the network and strategic nature of DiMaND for the benefit of the very operational PROFOUND, analyse and evaluate the exercise project's implementation and results to finetune the recommendations, developed by the Knowledge Network project.

How can cooperation between civil protection and humanitarian actors during these emergencies be improved?

Through joint preparedness activities. This includes training, exercising together, establishing or nursing the existing cooperation

and collaboration. In our EUSDR PA5 Disaster Management Working Group, we identified and included both civil protection and humanitarian actors, knowing that one supports the other when it comes to response. So why not make more efforts to prepare jointly for these missions?

When we organise national or cross border exercises or training, we try to ensure the presence of both and create scenarios, where the responders should work together. The humanitarian workers benefit from the work of the civil protection services, and vice versa. It could be as simple as providing hot drinks and encouraging words for the responders overnight. While humanitarian assistance includes many tasks and lasts longer than the response phase, the interconnection with civil protection is evident. Understanding these synergies and the role played by each sector would make cooperation more effective. Amongst other tasks, the psychological support provided by humanitarians needs more attention in our region, both for the responders and the communities suffering from disasters. This topic is often neglected, and silently leads to tragedies. We can do better.

Would the Knowledge Network have a role to play?

I think the main role of the Knowledge Network is to identify and connect the main actors from both civil protection and humanitarian aid within the EU. Keeping in mind, that in many cases the volunteer civil protection or rescue units are already aligned with the humanitarian organisations. The cooperation and co-existence in some cases is already there, so there are good practices to share the wider community. Both in the EUSDR PA5 DM WG, and in our projects, humanitarian organisations figure

amongst members and partners. We also made this possible.

For example, our next event, the Effective Response Conference in DiMaND, is focusing on humanitarian coordination and volunteer management (please see more information in the "upcoming" section of the newsletter). It will allow scientists, theoreticians, practitioners, and student researchers to present and exchange their research results, experience and views on topics related to Effective Humanitarian and Civil Protection response. Also, the PROFOUND field exercise will be a good opportunity for the Hungarian Red Cross medical team, H-HERO, which is preparing for its WHO certification EMT Type 1. We also coordinate cross-border cooperation activities. Our cross-border field exercise, WILDFIREX (funded by International Visegrad Fund) in Slovakia (23-25 September 2021) focusing on wildfires, and besides volunteer firefighters from Komárom (HU) and Komarno (SK) countries, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta also participates. They have great interest in training jointly and learn about coordination of the responders, while their support is highly appreciated by the firefighters as well.

Our overall goal is to ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to join the network, share ideas and experience, and to do it in a coordinated manner with concrete actions. The development of the Knowledge Network at EU level supports this aim greatly, as it allows experts to contribute both to the objectives and the implementation of those. The existing networks can bring new ideas to the system and the Knowledge Network welcomes these recommendations. I believe we are on the right track and I am very optimistic about the future of our communities.

Discovering EU Civil Protection team deployment operations by the Emergency Response Coordination Centre

When disaster strikes, every minute counts. Immediate and coordinated response is essential to save lives, even more so as natural and man-made disasters are on the rise due to climate change, population growth, urbanisation and increased industrial activity. The [Emergency Response Coordination Centre \(ERCC\)](#), operated within the European Commission's department for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), is the heart of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), set up to support a coordinated and quicker response to disasters both inside and outside Europe.



Following the request by a country affected by disasters, the Centre, which operates on a 24/7 basis, coordinates and facilitates the rapid deployment of emergency support. The assistance to disaster stricken countries may take the form of specialised equipment, relief items or expertise. In certain cases to support delivery of the assistance on the ground, the ERCC mobilises and deploys the EU Civil Protection teams (EUCPT).

When the emergency context requires, the ERCC launches a call for interest and puts together a team of experts that have been nominated by the Member States and/or the six UCPM Participating States.

Once the team has been selected, the experts are in continuous contact with the ERCC that manages the entire deployment. Colleagues in Brussels take care of the logistics related to the deployment, from preparing the expert's contract to organising the travel and accommodation arrangements. The analytical team prepares the security briefing, sets up safety protocols and the ERCC provides insurance coverage. From its headquarters, the ERCC briefs the experts on the situation on the ground before their departure and offers continued 24/7 support to the experts while on mission. This way, the experts can focus on their mission and on saving lives, and do not need to worry about the practical aspects. They know the ERCC team will be always there to help and they can get in touch with them anytime.

In many deployments, liaison officers from the ERCC itself as well as a technical assistance and support team (TAST) are also deployed to provide support on logistics, administration and ICT to the EUCPT on the ground.

Since 2003, the ERCC has coordinated assistance more than 500 times in response to activations of the EUCPM. 690 experts have been deployed for a total of over 190 missions to all corners of the World including Philippines, Mozambique, Nepal, Chile and Albania to mention as examples. Only in 2021, the ERCC has deployed experts to Equatorial Guinea, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Sri Lanka and most recently to Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake that hit the country on 14 August.

In the words of Annelie Yngbrant-Medghoul, the key colleague fully dedicated to overseeing the deployment of experts in the ERCC, on her 10th year at the ERCC:



No mission is the same, there are always new elements coming with the nature of the emergency, but time is always the biggest challenge to overcome. A lot of arrangements have to be often prepared in short time, and it can be challenging to find, for example, travel options at short notice. Since COVID-19 hit, this became even more challenging because we need to take into account additional constraints and requirements. (...) Even in this new difficult context, we managed. We continue to send experts and provide them support. Nothing is more satisfying than to see the experts return safe and sound, after having contributed to a relief operation.

COMING UP

Training: Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Workshop series 1-8-15 October 2021

As reported in our first edition of the Knowledge Network newsletter, the UCPM, European Commission and World Bank carried out the study [Economics for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness](#) to model the potential impact of floods and earthquakes on Europe's society and economy and quantify the costs and benefits of investments in disaster resilience. The study calls for 'smart' disaster resilience investments, enhanced financial preparedness instruments and targeted capacity-building efforts.

Would you like to know more? Follow the three 90-min training modules:

Session 1: Friday 1 October, 12:30-14:00 CET

Modelling disaster risks in Europe to understand the economics of disaster prevention and preparedness

The session provides an overview of natural hazard risks affecting the EU. It covers the fundamentals of disaster risk analysis, before showing an EU-wide analysis of flood and earthquake risk in support of further economic analysis. There will be contributions from hazard experts and risk analysts from the World Bank, JRC, and other risk analytics partners.

Session 2: Friday 8 October 12:30-14:00 CET

Financial risk and opportunities to build resilience in Europe: funding gaps and disaster risk financing instruments

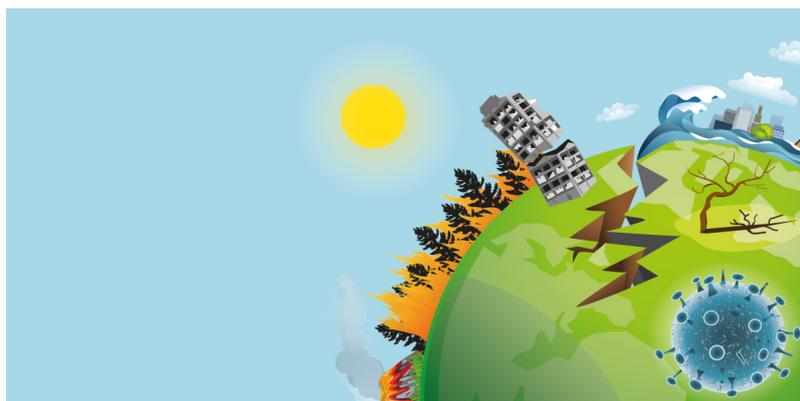
This session offers expert insights into country-level and regional-scale analyses conducted for the EU, with practical exercises and presentations to show the methods used in macro-economic analysis and analysis of funding gaps in managing the fiscal impacts of disasters in the EU. The session focuses on the findings of the study of the estimation of macro-economic impacts and identification of disaster risk financing as an opportunity to reduce impacts of disasters on people and economies.

Session 3: Friday 15 October 12:30-14:00 CET

Investing in disaster risk management in Europe makes economic sense: cost-benefit analysis of investments in disaster prevention and preparedness

The session presents different types of investment available for the management of multiple hazards and provides guidance in methods, opportunities and challenges of carrying out cost-benefit analyses. The approach is based on the World Bank's 'Triple Dividend of Resilience', which shows that, in addition to preventing human and economic losses during a disaster, disaster risk management investments can actively contribute to wealth, wellbeing, profit, growth and sustainable development.

Interested in attending? Please contact ECHO-CP-P&P@ec.europa.eu **before September 29.**



COMING UP

Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network Day, 7 December

It is here to stay! Are you interested in getting to know better the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network, meet some of its main actors, learn about its activities? Would you like to discover what added value this new European project on knowledge in civil protection and disaster management can bring to your work?

Join us on 7 December 2021 for a day dedicated to the Knowledge Network, its mission, priorities, tools and work! You will be able to participate in interactive discussions with top policy-makers, experienced practitioners and renowned experts and become part of the diverse and vibrant European civil protection and disaster management community.

Further information on the agenda & attendance modalities coming soon.

UNION CIVIL PROTECTION
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Launching soon!

3rd INSARAG Global Meeting, 6 October (online)

Strengthen Quality, Predictability, Speed and Flexibility in Support of National and Local Capacities

Hosted virtually by Poland with the guidance and support of the Global, Regional and Technical Working Group Chairs, and the INSARAG Secretariat (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), the event will commemorate 30 years of life-saving work. Since 1991, the INSARAG has facilitated the coordination of international Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams, available for deployments to countries hit by devastating events of structural collapse, due primarily to earthquakes.

INSARAG Global Meetings are organised every few years to discuss new ways of strengthening preparedness through localisation and delivering life-saving flexible international assistance. In this occasion the three INSARAG Regional Groups, the eight technical working groups as well as policy, operations and USAR teams' focal points and other relevant INSARAG partners share expertise and good practices from across the world on USAR-related matters, striving for a global approach.

During the event, the Warsaw Declaration will be endorsed, to guide the INSARAG Strategic Plan 2021-2026 and its four strategic objectives of quality standards, localisation, flexible response, and partnerships.

For the very first time, an EU Member State will host the event. This is an excellent opportunity to increase the visibility of the EU in the field of disaster capacity building and response, and to step up cooperation between the EU and INSARAG. A representative of the European Commission (DG ECHO) will speak at the session "Bolstering Partnership 30 Years On".

To learn more about the event programme, the side events and the interactive platforms, please visit the [IGM Portal](#).



COMING UP

Putting Resilience on the First Place, 30 September (online)



**SECURITY
AND
PROTECTION
THROUGH
KNOWLEDGE
SYNERGIES**

The event's focus is a multi-hazard and multi-vulnerability risk assessment tool tackling the complex chain(s) of socio-economic effects scenarios. Scientists and risk management experts will demonstrate applicable practices and approaches from different countries.

The event is a space for a cross-sectoral discussion on mapping simultaneous, cascading, and even disconnected, but temporally subsequent, hazards or threats that complicate responses. We aim to gain advice and ideas on the content and functionalities of the international risk assessment and mitigation tool for better communicating potential negative impacts and damages caused by hazards and threats due to urbanisation, smartening of society, climate change and health pandemics.

The public event will be held in English. See more: [CRISPRO website](#).

Disaster Research Days, 12-21 October (online)

DCNA
Disaster Civil Protection Knowledge Network
**DISASTER
RESEARCH
DAYS 2021**



Science and research play an essential role in preventing disasters while building resilient systems, improved dialogue and transfer of scientific knowledge into practice are crucial. [The Disaster Research Days 2021](#) support dialogue and networking between different scientific disciplines and public authorities, emergency organisations and business to be as prepared as possible for challenges in the prevention and management of disasters.

The event will feature a webinar series extending over two weeks, with a focus topic each week. The sessions last from 14:30 to 16:00 CET (Plenary sessions) and from 16:00 to 17:00 (Networking sessions). Each webinar day is scientifically organised and directed by a group of experts.

Registration: [Disaster Research Days 2021 - ConfTool Pro - Login](#)

National French Fire Association Congress, 13-16 October



The annual gathering of French firefighters and national civil protection stakeholders will take place from 13 to 16 October in Marseille. This year it will highlight European innovation in fire and rescue services.

The aim of this Congress is to stimulate networking with practitioners, manufacturers and providers and participate in lectures, talks and workshops on technical subjects in the field of fire protection. Our purpose is to make a contribution to the EU's Knowledge Network by sharing good practices and experience of French firefighters.

The UCPM will be the focus of the "wildfire and climate change" workshop on 15 October. On 14 October, the EU-funded project FIRE-IN will organise its annual event on natural disasters, structure fires, CBRNE, and search and rescue.

Contact: com2021-intl@sdis13.fr | Website: congres2021.pompiers.fr

COMING UP

Crowd Management and Vulnerability Mitigation Methods, 21 October (online)



**SECURITY
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Would you like to learn how to assess crowd safety risks and identify hazards? We offer a consultative workshop for demonstrating various vulnerability aspects of evacuating, rescuing and caring for people victims of flood and storm disasters. We are looking for defining standard operational procedures, material support and aid to maintain adequate conditions for victims. What are the costs of the evacuation of the population based on the prediction of natural disasters? Should we look for safety measures for public events in nature like openair off-urban festival events or camping in tents for school children? Join our workshop to discuss recent events and real stories.

For more information, visit [CRISPRO website](#).

3rd International Conference on Effective Response, 5 November

The Hungarian Red Cross will host the Third International Conference on Effective Response on 5th November 2021 in Békéscsaba, Hungary. The event is organised as part of the Knowledge Network project [DiMaND](#).



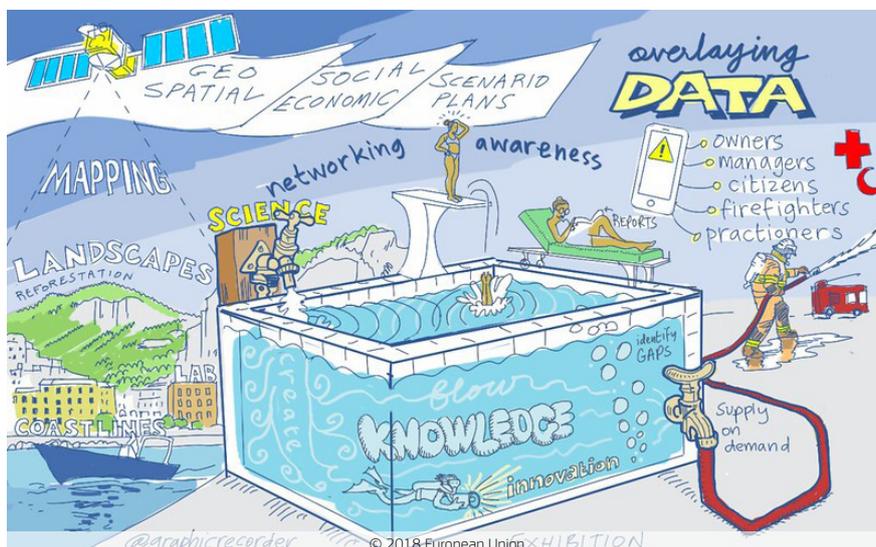
MAGYAR VÖRÖSKERESZT
HUNGARIAN RED CROSS
ORSZÁGOS IGAZGATÓSÁGA



This year's conference, held in hybrid format, encourages researchers and practitioners to present their findings and field experiences related to the role of volunteer organisations and municipalities in Disaster Management.

Papers related to all core issues of disaster management are welcome and can also cover topics such as coordination and cooperation in Civil Protection, Disaster Response and Humanitarian Operations, assessment methodologies and practices, and innovative technologies assisting disaster response and humanitarian activities.

For a full list of topics and submission of abstracts, visit [this link](#). For questions on this event, please contact [András Molnár](#).



FROM OUR COMMUNITY

"Where there is partnership, there is a way"

Against a backdrop of complex, widespread and simultaneous natural and human-induced disasters, knowledge can be a game changing card. Cooperation and partnerships at local, regional and international level are key in disseminating, testing and exchanging knowledge. To do this, civil protection actors, from field practitioners and volunteers to scientists and decision-makers, need to come together and identify needs, gaps and priorities in knowledge of risk and disaster management.

The mission of the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network is to make this happen and the Calls for Proposals on Partnerships are just one of its tools.

The pilot [Call for Proposals on Knowledge Network Partnerships](#) was launched in April 2020 to consolidate the role of the

Whether a university, civil protection agency or expert organisation, for our consortium it was clear from the beginning. This funding scheme finally focuses on the most pressing topic in disaster management: the translation of scientific research into operational capabilities. But HEUREKA does not only contribute to enabling this to happen, it is also changing the relation between the civil protection in the Middle East and the EU into a stronger, more equal partnership for the whole region and beyond. Furthermore, the exchange of valuable knowledge in Disaster Risk Management will help bridge existing gaps in the region. United in the matter!

Helmut Kreuzwirth, Coordinator of project HEUREKA, Regional Government of Styria, Department of Civil Protection and Defence, Austria

([CRISPRO](#)) and propose Artificial Intelligence solutions ([ARTION](#)), integrated approaches ([INDIMA](#)), innovative educational and awareness tools ([RESISTANT](#)), and new doctrines ([ROADMAP](#)) in disaster management. Some projects have specific geographic focus ([DiMaND](#) in the Danube region; [HEUREKA](#) in the Middle East), while others cover a Europe- or Neighbourhood-wide spectrum.

The diversity in topics, areas of work and geographical focus is coupled with the projects' varying size, country representation and geographical coverage. Coming from 19 UCPM Member States, three Participating States and ten third countries, the project partnerships include national civil protection authorities, local governments, centres of excellence, research centres, public policy institutes, national Red Cross societies, universities, associations of volunteers and fire and rescue services among others.

ICCSS has made the promotion and expansion of the UCPM and the Knowledge Network in Eastern Europe and the Middle East our priorities. We truly believe the Knowledge Network fills the gap both within the EU and with neighbouring countries by ensuring innovation, improved knowledge, enhanced expertise and skills through cooperation, exchange, partnership and networking.

Amb. Krzysztof Paturej, Coordinator of project NET-CBRN-REACT, International Centre for Chemical Safety and Security (ICCSS), Poland

Knowledge Network as an inclusive place for shared knowledge, expertise, good practices and networking. Thanks to a collaborative approach with thematic and geographical linkages, project proposals would contribute to shaping the Knowledge Network.

The eleven selected projects got underway in January 2021 for an 18-month period. The total budget for all projects is almost EUR 2.8 million, with the EU co-financing up to 85% of the projects' eligible costs.

The projects focus on a range of natural and manmade hazards and disasters: forest fires ([AFAN](#)), earthquakes ([L2BR](#)), pandemics (IPP) and preparedness against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies ([NET-CBRN REACT](#)). Others adopt a multi-hazard approach

When first reading the Call for Proposals we thought it was not really for us. However, on second glance, we realised our work in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) could link in very well. We were in the middle of the pandemic and had several network meetings on MHPSS and COVID-19 in the South Caucasus region. We knew that many MHPSS services were already offered but support to the helpers was not as well developed. That gave us the idea to expand our network and create a knowledge management platform. This is how the IPP project was born!

Elin Baranyai-Ulvestad, Coordinator of project IPP, Austrian Red Cross

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

All the projects are committed to building a true network by joining forces, linking and creating synergies among their activities. For example, RESISTANT recently offered advice to ARTION on their training material, with ARTION making that material available to RESISTANT for them to use in their dissemination activities. The two projects are currently discussing the idea of a joint workshop.

[The second Call](#) in March 2021 sharpened the focus on a key activity of the Knowledge Network – the thematic communities, that is multinational and multidisciplinary expert groups that bring together different profiles of practitioners and researchers active in disaster prevention, preparedness and response. Thematic communities can focus on a specific natural or human-induced hazard, a cluster of hazards or particular preparedness and response scenarios while considering wider horizontal priorities

such as digitalisation, greening, resilience and gender.

For a team of scientists like us at the IHU, aware of the devastating experiences in Greece (Mati, Athens in July 2018 and Mandra, Attica in November 2017), knowledge and awareness during the critical moments of a disaster can save lives. People need to know how to act and how to protect themselves when confronted with disasters. This is what triggered our participation in this Call for Proposals. Plato the Greek philosopher said “Knowledge is life” and we, at the IHU, strongly believe that knowledge saves lives. Project RESISTANT is now walking the talk.

Prof. Dimitrios Emmanouloudis, Coordinator of project RESISTANT, International Hellenic University (IHU), Greece

The Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network was established on the premise that knowledge can make a difference in how the civil protection and disaster management communities can prevent, prepare for, and respond to disasters. Our project consortia partners have shown their willingness to test, exchange and share knowledge by coming together under the Knowledge Network Partnerships Calls for Proposals. Where there is a will – and partnership – there is a way.

The [list of full project titles and consortia coordinators](#) is published on the European Commission’s [funding and tender opportunities](#) website.

For inquiries on the Calls for Proposals: ECHO-CP-KNOWLEDGE-NETWORK@ec.europa.eu

ARTION aims to design, develop, implement and test Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms for specific disaster scenarios including forest fires, floods, and earthquakes. Novel AI technology in support of first responders can assist the management of such disasters. The wealth of data first responders are increasingly able to collect can prove invaluable in disaster management and reduce significantly the risk and impact of disasters. ARTION delivers open access material, such as datasets and algorithms that may be exploited by other researchers and stakeholders.

Prof. Marios Polycarpou, Coordinator of project ARTION, KIOS Research and Innovation Centre of Excellence, University of Cyprus

While the Knowledge Network online collaborative platform will provide a space for thematic communities, the 2021 Call for Proposals also gives interested applicants the possibility to establish centres of expertise as the thematic communities’ “physical place”.

Applicants were invited to conceptualise and set up thematic communities and centres of expertise as well as design and implement capacity-development, scientific and research activities. The application period ended in June 2021 and the newly selected projects will begin in January 2022 for a period of 18 months.

The INDIMA consortium recognises the Knowledge Network as a very innovative way to develop new basic approaches, methods and processes in modern disaster management and make them useable for the community of disaster managers and authorities. We see INDIMA as an opportunity to share experiences and know-how between partners inside and outside the project and interact with other institutions and experts to contribute to a better UCPM.

Dr. Bogdan Pop, Coordinator of project INDIMA, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Department of Emergency Situation, Romania

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Spotlight on IPA Floods and Fires - EU Support to Flood Prevention and Forest Fires Risk Management in the Western Balkans and Turkey



EU Support to Flood Prevention and Forest Fires
Risk Management in the Western Balkans and Turkey

The programme “EU Support to Flood Prevention and Forest Fires Risk Management in the Western Balkans and Turkey (IPA FF)” started in November 2020. IPA FF is an EU-funded regional capacity development initiative, conducted in close collaboration with a consortium of European national and regional Civil Protection authorities and foundations.

IPA FF will run for three years, allowing time for continuity with previous EU regional initiatives in broad disaster risk reduction, build on their results and bring beneficiaries closer to the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) over the last decade.

IPA FF works to improve:

- the legal and institutional framework related to the EU Floods Directive (EUFD);
- institutional coordination among all actors involved in the EUFD implementation;
- prevention, preparedness, and capacity to respond to forest fires at central, regional and EU level.

IPA FF implementation is based on a highly participatory and consultative approach to ensure strong local ownership, sustainability, and a regional perspective combined with Partner specific capacity development approaches. It works with the local authorities of civil protection and other local institutions and agencies, fostering regional cooperation and exchange of good practices.

As project manager Agostino Goretti puts it: “We want not only to address the regional dimension, but also partner specific solutions. This has been requested by the European Commission: not only harmonising procedures among beneficiaries but also providing partner-specific solutions; otherwise they would not be practical”.

From May to July 2021, IPA FF developed an initial context analysis through a series of online meetings with relevant national institutions. Within the framework of the different programme components, they identified the most urgent needs and priority areas and created a joint work-planning. This inception phase will be finalised by October 2021, with the next stage of the implementation moving on to putting the planned activities into action.

More information:

www.ipaff.eu

www.facebook.com/IPA-Floods-and-Fires



© 2021 European Union (photo by Sotiris Dimitropoulos)

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

PREVAIL: European fire-prone countries cooperate on forest fire prevention

The combination of extreme climate events (e.g., heatwaves and drought) and accumulation of fuel (depending on types of plants, frequency of fires, rainfall and even grazing) is leading to increasingly large wildfires, often overwhelming the suppression capacity of single countries. According to the PESETA IV study by the Joint Research Centre, under a 3°C global warming scenario, the number of Europeans exposed to fire danger levels from high to extreme would increase by 25%. Under the UCPM Prevention and Preparedness programme, five research organisations from Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece joined forces under the PREVAIL project (PREvention Action Increases Large fire response preparedness).

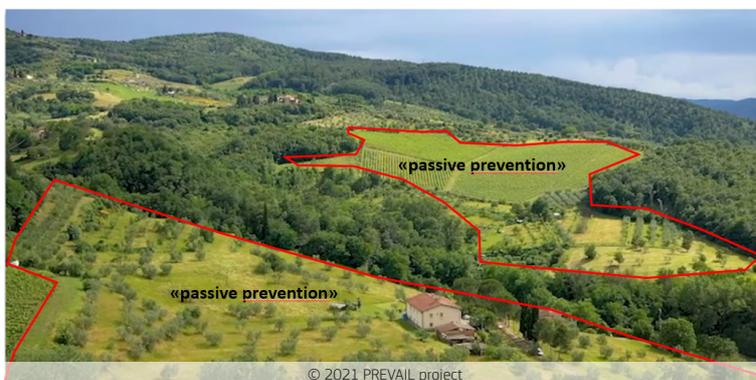
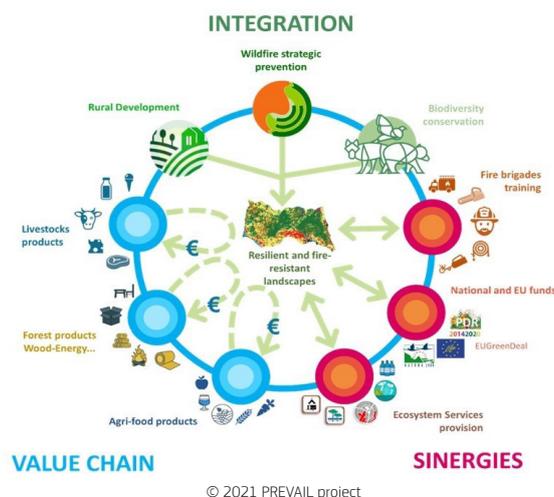


PREVAIL urges us to see forest fires as a complex phenomenon emerging from the interaction between biological, physical and socio-economic aspects. Fire prevention strategies should be seen as an opportunity to generate social and economic gains that contribute to the new European “Green Deal”.

The project shows that landscape-based fire prevention delivers to a community benefits in the economic, social and environmental spheres. Fire-resistant and resilient landscapes make active prevention less costly and response to wildfires more efficient and safer.

After reviewing a database of 360 large and 495 smaller fires in the relevant countries between 2000 and 2019, PREVAIL found out that fire suppression can become more effective and less costly when applying “smart” solutions. These include for instance: make the landscape more fire resilient and resistant by promoting sustainable land management strategies and practices. A diversified landscape with a mosaic of vegetation and other types of land use including areas with low fuel levels (such as vineyards and orchards, annual crops and grazed land) offers more possibilities to stop and control wildfires.

The project took also stock of best practices, innovative and smart solutions collected from programmes implemented in EU, and evaluated the effectiveness of measures such as fuel management. The decision support system and the methodology based on feedback of technicians in charge of fuel management, fire prevention and forest management at local level is available online.



Read more about the [PREVAIL project](#) or watch the [trailer for PREVAIL's upcoming documentary](#) on smart solutions for fire prevention (to be released late autumn).

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

RECIPE: Making disaster preparedness "climate change" ready

Climate change poses a significant challenge to disaster risk management, as it increases hazards and their impact and decision-makers are faced with more uncertainty. [RECIPE](#) (Reinforcing civil protection capabilities into multi-hazard risk assessment under climate change), a disaster preparedness project funded by the [UCPM Prevention and Preparedness programme](#), aims to strengthen emergency preparedness, taking into account the impact of climate change. Spanish, German, Italian, Austrian and Portuguese disaster risk management institutions engage with local stakeholders in emergency management to reach results that can help decision-making processes.

To set a common framework, RECIPE started off by defining risk drivers (hazard, exposure and vulnerability) for a number of natural hazards (wildfires, floods, storms, avalanches, rock falls and landslides). The [common methodology](#) developed by the project identifies the characteristics of a territory and infrastructures that increase or reduce a risk. This is the basis for a multi-hazard assessment on how new situations posed by climate change can modify the level of risk. This methodology also considers possible cascading effects of hazards or risks. For example, wildfires affecting forest coverage in a particular area which, in turn, increases the risk of avalanches in the same area.

RECIPE has collected a number of lessons learnt and [good practices](#) from civil protection operations across Europe. The project has also developed and made available a number of decision-making [support tools](#) such as the 'Guidelines for flood civil protection planning with a participatory approach' which targets decision-makers and end-users, especially at local level. The Project also analysed climate change impacts on natural hazards, and identified the emergency management requirements to face unexpected or new risk situations posed by climate change. All reports are available on the [project website](#).



© Pau Costa Foundation - Risk awareness raising with children in El Bruc municipality, Spain. This activity is part of the project's support tool and guidelines for integrated risk assessment and planning for landscape and wild-land urban interface (Spain and Portugal)

NEW RESOURCES

Lessons Learnt from Recent Floods in Europe

The [Lessons Learnt from Recent Floods In Europe](#) presents some preliminary thoughts on issues and shortcomings during the recent floods in Europe, as well as practical recommendations for measures that could be added to those usually taken during deadly floods. The paper also makes brief suggestions on how to avoid similar issues in future to reduce as much as possible the loss of human lives.

Recommendations of the note apply to all cases of floods in the urban areas of cities crossed by major rivers and concern mainly dwellings located alongside them.

These areas that are particularly sensitive to flood activity exist in numerous European cities and towns due to the fact that from ancient times until today, towns and cities are generally established on either side of a river.

Disastrous flood activity in urban areas can be grouped into four phases: the awareness phase, the warning phase, the evacuation phase and the safe sheltering phase. The scientific note groups its main remarks observed during the recent floods, together with suggestions for future improvement, around each phase.



LEARNING

Upcoming Full-Scale Exercise SIQUAKE: key facts and figures

What

The exercise scenario is an earthquake in central Slovenia, striking 34 municipalities with 600 000 inhabitants, affecting housing units, public buildings, factories and various key infrastructure – roads, bridges, railways, water supply, sewage and gas pipe network, telecommunications and electrical grid. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia will request international assistance through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, asking for in-kind assistance, search and rescue teams, temporary shelter, damage assessment and engineering capacities.



For the first time in the Full-scale exercises programme, there will be a full remote Observers programme, with no restriction on participants' numbers.

European Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič will also be present.

Where and when

Ljubljana, Slovenia 4-7 October 2021

Who

Slovenian participation:

- Civil Protection commanders and headquarters at the local, regional and national levels;
- Civil Protection units: damage assessment, search and rescue, mobile medical capacity, psychosocial support, disaster victim identification unit;
- Host Nation Support Cell;
- Situation assessment experts and experts for assessment of damaged buildings;
- Urban Search and Rescue units, Rescue dog handlers;
- Slovenian Red Cross – management of temporary accommodation;
- Slovenian Firefighting Association – light urban search and rescue, shoring and stabilisation of damaged buildings logistics transport, safety and security officers;
- Scouts organisations: mass shelter for affected population;
- Police, Slovenian Armed Forces in line with the National emergency response plan in case of a major earthquake.



International teams:

- Croatia: Medium Urban Search and Rescue (USAR);
- Hungary: Medium Urban Search and Rescue (USAR);
- Austria: Advanced Medical Post (AMP); Water Purification (WP);
- Italy: Structural Engineers / Damage Assessment / Shoring, Emergency Temporary Shelter (ETS);
- European Civil Protection Team (EUCPT) supported by Technical Assistance and Support Team (TAST)

More information available on [project website](#).

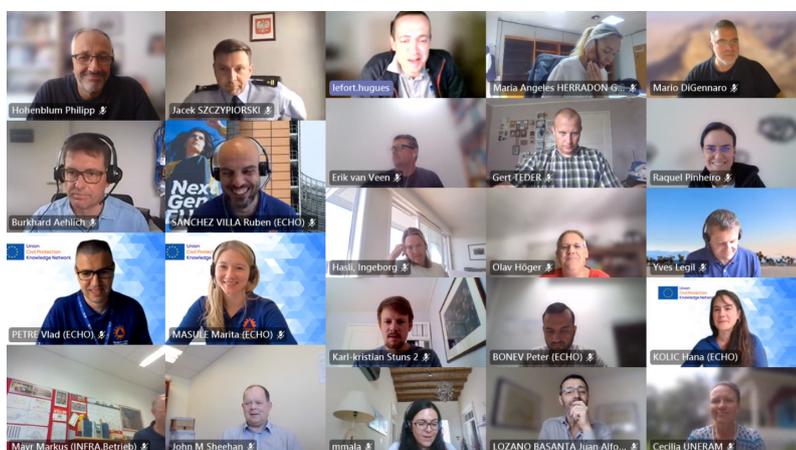
LEARNING

The Seminar for Mechanism Experts: an active and tailor-made experience

The European Commission (DG ECHO) delivered in June the first course of the UCPM training programme ever designed and run entirely in-house: the Seminar for Mechanism Experts (SME). Organised in a virtual format, the SME is a refresher course for experienced experts, who had already followed other UCPM training activities.

During the course, the Knowledge Network UCPM Training team moderated group exercises and discussions using real-life scenarios and practical examples. Forty-eight participants from around Europe learned from each other through sharing their knowledge and experience.

The seminar included updates from the Emergency Response Coordination Centre and on Union Civil Protection Mechanism legislation, as well as sessions on The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and cooperation with the European Civil Protection Team and Visibility and behavior of the European Civil Protection Teams. Participants also had the opportunity to choose other topics to be discussed, selecting the following options for the workshops: Coordination with EU Delegations and ECHO office, Interaction between Civil Protection and Humanitarian Affairs professionals in the field, Advisory (Preparedness & Prevention) Missions and Logistics.



Coming next...

The SME is open to graduates of the Operational Management Course (OPM) and the High Level Coordination Course (HLC) or the Technical Expert Course (TEC) or the Technical Expert Course for Maritime Incidents (TEC MI).

DG ECHO will organise an SME session on 25-26 November 2021 and several more in 2022 and 2023. Invitations will be sent to the National Training Coordinators, who will be responsible for the selection of participants.

Contact: ECHO-CP-TRAINING-EXERCISES@ec.europa.eu



This is exactly the way an update for EUCP experts should be done - direct and open information from colleagues that are completely in the system and have the most recent information.

Course participant

SCIENCE

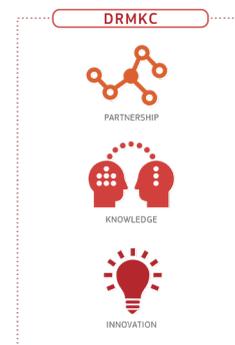
5th Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre Annual Seminar, 17-18 November 2021

The [Fifth Annual Seminar of the DRMKC](#) will launch a new phase between civil protection authorities and the scientific community to start building the science pillar of the Knowledge Network. The goal is to establish the core community of scientists who will help to construct the knowledge base that will support disaster risk management activities and actions. The first phase will be shaped around the development of multidisciplinary and cross-cutting knowledge, scientific guidance and new technologies for building resilience towards complex transboundary disasters.

The seminar will address:

- Making available better quality risk and loss data, improving risk assessment methodology, better understanding of risk drivers and the harmonisation of risk metrics;
- Providing scientific advice in implementing, measuring and monitoring the Union Disaster Resilience Goals;
- Advising on strategies and policies to counter disastrous situations through the development of resilience scenarios that factor in multiple hazards and cascading effects for improved early warning systems.

Please register [here](#) before 12 November.



Joint CONRIS-DRMKC Disaster Risk Management Training Seminars September 2021 - March 2022

The Disaster and Emergency Management course at Coventry University, in cooperation with the DRMKC and the [CONRIS](#) network, will host [12 online Disaster Risk Management Training seminars](#) on various topics related to disaster risk management practices.

The series of collaborative online international learning seminars will address the need for collaboration between academics and professionals in the arrangements for disaster risk management to understand the factors which can enhance resilience and capacity.

For registration, please contact [Dr. Yung-Fang Chen](#).



You can read more about DRM activities within the European Commission in [a dedicated newsletter](#).

Would you like to receive future updates on the [Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network](#) directly to your mailbox? If yes, please let us know by filling in this [short form](#).