



European
Commission

4th European Civil Protection Forum

**Brussels,
15-16 May 2013**

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The European Civil Protection Forum is the largest recurring public event on European civil protection cooperation. Following successful editions in 2002, 2007, and 2009, the 4th European Civil Protection Forum took place in Brussels from 15-16 May 2013. It gathered more than 700 participants from politics, academia, civil protection services and international organizations.



The Forum comprises a conference and an exhibition. At this year's conference, the programme included two high-level debates, six panel discussions on different aspects of disaster prevention, preparedness and response, as well as addresses by EU Commissioners Kristalina Georgieva, Connie Hedegaard and Cecilia Malmström.

The exhibition inside the Charlemagne building featured innovative technology projects and civil protection training centres. The outdoor exhibition was organised on Rond-Point Schuman, simulating the work of an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre after severe floods affecting large areas of EU Member States and third countries.

This year's Forum was preceded by the official opening by Commission President José Manuel Barroso of the new EU Emergency Response Centre. The Centre builds on the former Monitoring and Information Centre. It is the Commission's central hub connecting the 32 Participating States through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

Opening address by Ms Kristalina Georgieva, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response

Commissioner Georgieva opened the Forum by emphasizing the successes of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Over the past decade it has developed into an effective tool for coordinating European disaster response and for strengthening disaster preparedness and prevention in the Participating States. But as with most things, there is still room for further improvement, in particular with regard to three main challenges.

First, Ms Georgieva made the point that a much greater emphasis should be placed on prevention and preparedness. To do so, the Commission has integrated the principles of disaster risk management into EU funding instruments; and it is ensuring that the revised rules for environmental impact assessments include provisions to make major infrastructure projects "disaster-proof". Developing a culture of risk assessment and better management of risks is also at the heart of the new civil protection legislation proposed by the Commission.

Second, the collective European response to disasters would be improved by moving towards a more pre-planned system of providing assistance. This has equally been addressed in the new civil protection legislation through the provisions for a voluntary pool of civil protection response assets. Other important elements include the opening of the Emergency Response Centre, the improved transport arrangements and the 'gap' identification process which will give an indication about where additional investments are needed.

Third, Ms Georgieva stressed that Europe should be able to take a leading role in developing global policies on disaster management. International partnerships with countries outside the EU are of crucial importance in an increasingly fragile world and for ensuring solidarity at the global level. Work towards building up disaster resilience in some of the world's most vulnerable countries has already started. When it comes to disaster response, the well-established partnership between the EU

Civil Protection Mechanism and UN OCHA needs to be maintained and further built upon. As regards disaster prevention, the Commission aims for an ambitious upgrade to the current Hyogo Framework for Action.



Commissioner Georgieva speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Commissioner Georgieva visiting the outdoor exhibition of the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.

Commissioner Georgieva also showed a short video of the inauguration of the new Emergency Response Centre by Commission President José Manuel Barroso. In his speech, Mr Barroso stressed that the Centre will help to better protect European citizens against disasters by bringing the knowledge and capacity of EU Member States as well as of different Commission services together. The Centre will build upon a decade of experience in this respect, including disasters such as the dispersion of toxic red sludge in Hungary in 2010 or the explosions at the Evangelos Florakis naval base in Cyprus in 2011. Mr Barroso stressed that European solidarity also extends to third countries and recalled European assistance to victims of the 2004 Asian tsunami, the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. He called on both the European Parliament and the Council to swiftly adopt the new civil protection legislation that is currently being negotiated so as to ensure full continuity in the financing of the work of the European Civil Protection Mechanism.

'We have established a facility that will give Europeans the protection they deserve.'

José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013 (Recorded at Emergency Response Centre Opening).



Commission President José Barroso and Commissioner Georgieva at the opening of the Emergency Response Centre in Brussels on 15 May 2013.

High-level plenary on “The European and international framework for disaster management: Prospects for the future”

Speakers agreed on the need to invest more in prevention and to involve the insurance industry in this endeavour as a starting point. While the response to disasters is usually well-covered by the media, prevention and resilience-building measures are not, which means that the public may not be sufficiently aware of the value of prevention – which lies in reducing both the number of casualties as well as the costs in economic damage that may be caused by a disaster. It was agreed that conducting risk assessments and making those widely available to the public might lead to pressure on politicians to mitigate the risks as well as influence individuals’ behaviour.

In order to achieve a shift towards a ‘culture of prevention’, speakers also stressed the role of education. Schoolchildren should already be made aware of disaster risks as well as of possible prevention and preparedness measures at an early age. Moreover, specialized university courses in disaster management notwithstanding, more could be done to integrate disaster risk considerations into other fields, such as construction engineering. The point was made that we can develop business opportunities in prevention and preparedness and that we should consider ways of fighting youth unemployment by engaging them in activities that increase resilience.

As regards emergency response, speakers reiterated that assistance must be needs-based, and that it should be well-coordinated and predictable. The newly-inaugurated Emergency Response Centre (ERC) will play an important role in this respect by facilitating the coordination of assistance on a 24/7 basis, and with an increased capacity, compared to the former Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC), to monitor and analyse both humanitarian aid and civil protection issues. The more concerted the European response, the better it also fits under the global coordination umbrella provided by the United Nations. As regards predictability, speakers agreed that there is a need to move towards a system in which Member States pre-commit capacities that are in principle available for response operations under the Union Mechanism so as to enable better planning for any joint European disaster response.

Finally, all panellists looked forward to a quick adoption of the civil protection legislation that is currently being negotiated. Once adopted, this legislation will put a stronger focus on prevention than previously, and will encourage Member States to collaborate even more closely than before by pooling assets and experience. After all, the strength of Europe lies in it working together.

‘We [the EU Civil Protection Mechanism] have been in existence for ten years and during that time we have come a long way but the world’s problems have become more complex so we have to take the high road and go even further.’

Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, European Commission speaking during the plenary session ‘The European and international framework for disaster management: Prospects for the future’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.

‘The rapidity of emergency responses is what can save human lives. I don’t want small budgetary problems to stand in the way... More than 90 % of Europeans are asking for more Europe in sectors like this. Let’s make an effort to make a Europe that is closer to its citizens.’

Elisabetta Gardini, Member of the European Parliament speaking during the plenary session ‘The European and international framework for disaster management: Prospects for the future’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.

'We have to explain that if we do nothing or if we cut the budget or keep the same budget, we are going to end up spending three or four times more in the long term. We have to communicate better what the return on the investment [in disaster prevention and preparedness] has been and what it will be in the future.'

Michèle Striffler, Member of the European Parliament speaking during the plenary session 'The European and international framework for disaster management: Prospects for the future' at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.



MEP Elisabetta Gardini speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



MEP Michèle Striffler speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Irish Minister O'Dowd speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Rudolf Müller, Deputy Director and Chief, Emergency Services Branch, UN OCHA Geneva, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.

Panel 1: Better disaster response coordination – Support from the Union

The discussion on disaster response coordination focused on the current and future role of the MIC/ERC, and compared the EU Civil Protection Mechanism with, on the one hand, the EU agency for external border security (FRONTEX) and, on the other hand, with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre).

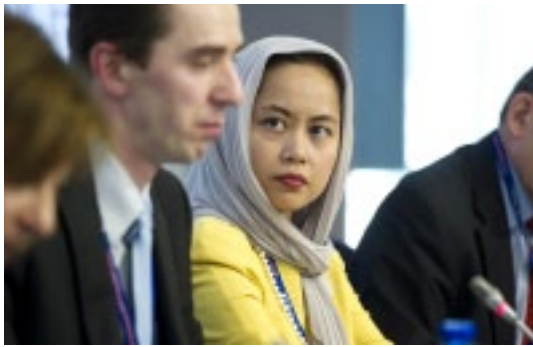
Frontex is interesting for the EU Civil Protection Mechanism because it relies on voluntary contributions from Member States to form a 'pool' of available border guards. When an EU Member State requests assistance in securing its borders, guards from this pool are provided within strict deadlines: a decision to deploy experts is taken within at most five days of the request, an action plan drafted within not more than the next five days, and all necessary guards and equipment deployed, at the latest, in the five days after that. In 2010, 170 guards and equipment were deployed to Greece within seven days of the request. In addition, Frontex organizes exercises and rotations in order to train the experts; and it ensures continuous monitoring of the EU's border situations. There are thus several organisational similarities between Frontex and the Civil Protection Mechanism which provide a good basis for possible exchanges of experience.

The AHA Centre is another regional disaster management coordination centre and thus a natural counterpart of the MIC/ERC. It was developed following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami that affected ten ASEAN countries and the 2008 cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in which access to assistance was an issue. The agreement among ASEAN countries setting up the AHA Centre is legally binding and has two main objectives, namely a) to ensure a coordinated disaster response in order to avoid being a burden to the country receiving assistance and b) to reduce disaster losses. To be able to do so, the AHA Centre manages stockpiles of disaster response assets and runs a risk reduction programme in which each ASEAN Member State takes the lead in a field it is most knowledgeable in.

Speakers agreed that receiving assistance can be more difficult than providing it. Therefore, when Japan requested the European assistance after the March 2011 triple disaster to be well-coordinated, it was crucial that the MIC/ERC was able to facilitate the coordination, thereby avoiding additional burdens on the Japanese administration. Another added-value of the MIC/ERC lies in its monitoring and analytical capacity, using the most advanced technologies for satellite images, early warning systems etc. Staff working in the MIC/ERC can produce qualitative analyses and is able to link the knowledge and skills from different Participating States so as to create common understanding. A suggested area for improvement of the Union Mechanism concerned the area of training. Just like the UNDAC system, the Mechanism could consider investing in more intensive training for selected Civil Protection experts. Also, modules registered in CECIS could be used in exercises more often.

'Nowadays it's more difficult to receive assistance than to provide it, so we are keen to learn from the EU in this area.'

Adelina Kamal, Head of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Division, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Department, ASEAN Secretariat speaking during the panel 'Better disaster response coordination – Support from the Union' at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.



Adelina Kamal, Head of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Division, ASEAN Secretariat, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director for Strategy, Policy and International Cooperation, DG ECHO, European Commission speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



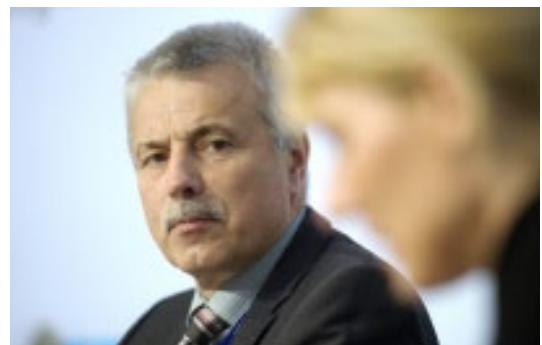
Bruno Maestracci, Head of the COGIC, General Directorate for Civil Protection and Crisis Management, France, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Klaus Rösler, Director of Operations Division, FRONTEX, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Mariusz Feltynowski, Deputy Director, National Center for Rescue Coordination and Civil Protection, Poland, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Branko Dervodel, Deputy Director General, Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief, Ministry of Defence, Slovenia, Rapporteur at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.

Panel 2: Disaster management finance – Available funding in times of economic crisis

This panel addressed different public and private sources of funding for disaster management, and the challenges in properly using the available funding. Speakers identified risk assessment and long-term planning as the key conditions for sustainable financing decisions and more widespread insurance schemes. A policy of open data and information on risk assessment would be beneficial to all public and private actors, including individuals.

It would be important to have in place an agreed methodology for calculating benefits/ impacts of various investments in risk management, so that options are comparable and investment decisions are taken on more solid grounds. It should be checked if this is a problem of lack of methodology or lack of awareness, and addressed accordingly.

Balancing the level of risk management and resilience among EU Member States was also identified as important, so as to achieve the most with the available funding, at least when the support for financing comes from the same pot (e.g. EIB loans). Concerning the future structural funds (post-2014), it was pointed out that a formal ex-ante conditionality related to the existence of a risk assessment has to be fulfilled by EU Member States if they want to use the funds for risk management measures. The final deadline by when fulfilment has to be proven is end of 2016.

The existence of long-term risk management planning, backed by a clear financial plan, is also important to reduce the interference of political considerations (e.g. strategy changing too often, protective measures built in non-priority areas). The concept of ‘Chief Risk Officers’ has proven successful in the corporate sector and might therefore be worth considering also for the public sector at different levels of government. These officers should protect the capital base of countries/regions and decide on risk financing at national/city level. Public-Private Partnerships in the sector of risk management were also recommended by the speakers (based on experiences from Mexico, among others), in order to allow for sharing of information, creating economies of scale and synergies. Finally, in relation to the ‘growth and jobs’ agenda, it has been said that although building dykes, to take one example, does not create too many jobs, it does protect them!

‘Risk assessment is key: we can’t prioritise properly if we don’t know what the risks are.’

Jack Radisch, Risk Policy Analyst, OECD Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development speaking during the panel ‘Disaster management finance – Available funding in times of economic crisis’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.



Raed Arafat, Secretary of State, Ministry of Health, Romania, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Jack Radisch, Risk Policy Analyst, OECD, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Reto Schneider, Director and Head of Emerging Risk Management at Swiss National Reinsurance Company, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Harald Schölzel, Water Sector Specialist, European Investment Bank, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Andreas Frantzis, Senior Civil Defence Officer, Cyprus Civil Defence HQ, Rapporteur at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.

Panel 3: Risk management – Enhancing our capability to understand risks at all levels

Speakers on the panel discussing risk management identified four priority areas of action: a) for the scientific community to systematically collect reliable and comparable data; b) for all European countries to develop and share national risk assessments in order to determine the risks that the EU will face in the future; c) to strengthen the connection between the political and operational civil protection actors and the scientific community and d) to adequately communicate disaster risks to citizens.

The panel discussed in particular challenges in data collection, which make classifications and comparisons of disasters difficult: standardisation and harmonisation of terms and definitions (such as the definition of a ‘disaster’), interoperability of data, recording and managing disaster losses. The panel discussed the need to promote a Europe-wide approach which includes preventive and/or responsive measures on a national or sub-regional level, including the development of clear standards, data systems and maps. Countries should assess their national risks with a holistic, all-hazards approach. By doing so, the results become more comparable and the sharing of good practices, scenarios, and lessons learned is facilitated. Potential black swans (i.e. unpredictable, rare, but high impact events) might also be identified in certain areas and thus mitigated in terms of impact.

It was outlined on several occasions during the panel that the scales of risk vary from country to country and different levels of responsibility exist. A country therefore should follow an approach that includes all kinds of stakeholders from the civil, academic or public area. In addition to a legislative approach and capacity-building, it is also necessary to foster exchange of best practices and experience between stakeholders and to understand how citizens perceive the risks that they are facing.

‘I feel very concerned about how risk is communicated and how those hearing the message perceive the risk.’

Franco Gabrielli, Head of Civil Protection Department, Italy speaking during the panel ‘Risk management – Enhancing our capability to understand risks at all levels’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.



Franco Gabrielli, Head of Civil Protection Department, Italy, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



Debarati Guha-Sapir, Director, WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), University of Louvain, Belgium, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.

Special addresses by Ms Connie Hedegaard, EU Commissioner for Climate Action, and by Ms Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs

Commissioner Hedegaard started her speech by reiterating that mitigation and adaptation efforts in the face of climate change are both important and ‘two legs to stand on’. She showed a short video illustrating the recorded weather between the years 1880 and today: it showed that while temperatures were fluctuating over most of this period, the last two decades brought a steady and unequivocal rise in global temperatures. Scientists confirm that this trend will stay, so it is a necessity for Europe to adapt to it, i.e. different regions need to adapt to the different challenges caused by climate change. While much is already being done to this effect, we are still moving too slow in Europe.

Ms Hedegaard then focused her intervention on the EU Adaptation Strategy that was designed to strengthen Europe’s resilience against the effects of climate change. It encourages all Member States to develop national adaptation strategies, complemented by regional and local strategies as appropriate. The role of the insurance sector in promoting resilient investments, climate-proofing of European infrastructure, adaptation at city level (modelled on the Covenant of Mayors) and the further development of the CLIMATE-ADAPT web platform are also addressed in the EU Adaptation package. Furthermore, 20% of the overall EU budget will have to help achieve the climate targets, thus addressing also the Common Agricultural Policy, the Structural Funds as well as the EU research agenda.

‘We are not very good at being inspired by one another in Europe. Sharing good experiences is very important.’

Special address by Connie Hedegaard, European Commissioner for Climate Action: ‘The Adaptation Strategy as a Contribution to Risk Management in Europe’. Given at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.

Having heard about the risks of extreme weather, the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström, turned the audience’s attention to other, additional areas of risk. Events like the nuclear disaster in Japan or other chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) accidents could also occur in Europe. Ash clouds can severely impact on air traffic. Terrorist attacks pose a serious threat, as could be seen from the Breivik attack in Norway, the Burgas bus bombing in Bulgaria, the Merah case in Toulouse, and the recent bombing at the Boston marathon. A recent example of capacity building in the fight against terrorism is the ATLAS Common Challenge exercise, the largest EU preparedness response exercise for EU anti-terrorist police units, organized in April 2013 and including simultaneous terrorist attacks against critical infrastructure in nine EU Member States.

There is still a need to further streamline EU policies in the fields of civil protection, counter-terrorism, protection of critical infrastructure, CBRN and public health, and to better link our sectorial crisis management capacities and instruments. This is one of the objectives of the EU Internal Security Strategy, adopted in 2010. The newly-inaugurated Emergency Response Centre (ERC), with its 24/7 capacity, will play a key role in this context and in the framework of the solidarity clause, having been designated as the initial entry point in case of activation of the clause. The ERC will link up with the “Strategic Assessment and Response” capability in DG HOME Affairs and other situation awareness centres. New elements will also come into place, such as a new approach to the protection of critical infrastructure (a Commission Communication on this subject will be adopted soon) and a more coherent risk management policy linking threat and risk assessment to decision making.

‘Where critical infrastructures depend on the Internet we must make sure we have both a good level of resilience and the ability to respond in the event of system failure.’

Special address by Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner for Home Affairs: ‘The Internal Security Dimension’. Given at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.



EU Commissioners Malmström, Hedegaard, and Georgieva speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.

Panel 4: Disaster response planning – Procedures, plans, people, practice

The panel on disaster response planning underlined why good disaster response planning is essential and drew on experience from the United States and Russia as well as from the European Union to illustrate different ways of how it can be done.

One of the main pre-conditions for ensuring good disaster response planning is having common frameworks for understanding how communities can work together. Not only do all levels of government have to collaborate on the basis of appropriate legislation, but what is needed is a ‘whole of community’ approach which includes normal citizens. The local population, i.e. neighbours, colleagues, and relatives, are the first responders in a disaster situation and therefore need to be taken into account in any response planning.

Speakers also explained that disaster response plans need to be based on an identification of risks, of capabilities to respond and of possible gaps between the two. It is important to be aware of one’s weaknesses; and even otherwise well-prepared countries might lack arrangements for receiving assistance. The United States, for instance, drew its lessons from hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, developed its host nation support system and is now better able to receive international assistance. The same holds true for Russia: during the forest fires in 2010 it did not have sufficient procedures in place for receiving international assistance but has been looking into the issue since then. For the EU, Host Nation Support guidelines were approved in 2012 to assist Member States in building up their systems for receiving assistance.

Response planning is also addressed in the ‘Headline Goal 2010’. In 2004, EU Member States made the commitment that by the year 2010, they would be capable of responding with rapid and decisive action to the whole spectrum of crisis management operations (including combat and peacekeeping as well as humanitarian and disaster relief operations). In order to do that, Member States identified possible synergies as well as obstacles and interoperability issues for their military and civilian assets. In view of the fiscal constraints on all EU Member States, the ‘pooling and sharing’ concept, agreed by defence ministers in 2010, specifically encourages systematic cooperation in defence planning as well as protectionism from subsequent defence cuts, i.e. once an area has been identified as an area for pooling and sharing it should be exempt from future cuts in a country’s defence budget.

Training and exercises were also mentioned by speakers as crucial elements of disaster response planning. People need to get to know each other’s roles, develop networks, and use common terminology in order to be able to work well together. In this respect, speakers on the panel were confident that cooperation in civil protection is a non-controversial issue, i.e. joint trainings and exercises between different countries are easily organized. Political decision-makers should also be involved in the development of response plans in order to make sure that they turn to existing plans in case of emergency. Ultimately, it is not the response plan that matters most but the process through which it was developed. This process needs to be inclusive in order to secure people’s ownership.

‘There are sometimes no links between plans ... if they’re not linked well together, they’ll collapse in on themselves.’

Timothy Manning, Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness, FEMA speaking during the panel ‘Disaster response planning – Procedures, plans, people, practice’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.

‘Pooling and sharing encourages all Member States in the EU to consider cooperation from the outset.’

Paul Matthews, Commander Royal Navy, Action Officer, EU Movement Planning Cell, EU Military Staff, European External Action Service speaking during the panel ‘Disaster response planning – Procedures, plans, people, practice’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.



Timothy Manning, Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness, FEMA, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.



Paul Matthews, Commander Royal Navy, Action Officer, EU Movement Planning Cell, EU Military Staff, European External Action Service, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.



Wolfgang Krajic, Synergies, Slovenia, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013. Sitting next to him is Alexey Skantsev, Representative of EMERCOM at the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union.



Attila Nyikos, Head of International Department, National Directorate General for Disaster Management, Hungary, Rapporteur at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.

Panel 5: Solidarity and responsibility in the EU – Tackling costs of disasters

Investments in the field of prevention and preparedness are often quantified. However, it is more difficult to quantify benefits. This is equally true for the costs and benefits of response measures, and also of recovery measures. Not much initiative has been taken in this field so far. The debate on the panel stressed again that allocating more funds for prevention and preparedness makes economic sense, as is also proposed in the new EU Civil Protection legislation. Speakers discussed the main drivers of costs in case of extreme natural disasters and pointed out that it is not merely climate change, but increasing populations living in vulnerable areas.

The panel then looked at various disaster management structures and cost-sharing models in place in different countries and organizations, in order to determine which might be most cost-effective. A representative of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) explained that following large-scale oil spills (e.g. Erika 1999, France, or Prestige 2002, Spain), EMSA was tasked with setting up a network of stand-by oil spill response vessels. These vessels serve to ‘top-up’ pollution response capacities of the EU Member States in case of need. This has proven to be cost-effective. It was suggested that it might be interesting to develop EU buffer capacities for forest fire fighting, similar to the capacities developed by EMSA.

Looking at the emergency response systems in place in Canada, Australia, Italy and Germany, the panel showed that most systems rely on the principle that financial burdens are shared among different layers of government (local, regional, national) with the umbrella authorities topping up resources when needed. The degree of involvement of the central government differs from country to country, as does the level of voluntariness of the assistance given. In Germany, for instance, cooperation between the Länder is strictly regulated by law, and although this has not been the case thus far, one Land could sue another in case it did not invest enough in prevention and preparedness. For the EU, panellists agreed that Member States may have different levels of preparedness given their history, risk profiles and different financial capacities. What is important is that Member States prepare as much as is necessary. One way of encouraging investments in preparedness is to widely share risk assessments and thus raise people’s awareness of risks. If risk awareness is accompanied by incentives such as subsidies, decision-makers are better able to invest in corresponding measures.

‘It’s helpful to quantify the true cost of responses and we often don’t do that in Canada. We really need to know the true cost of responses.’

Kim G. Connors, Director, Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) speaking during the panel ‘Solidarity and responsibility in the EU – Tackling costs of disasters’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.



Brian Kenny, National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Ireland, Rapporteur at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.

Panel 6: Future Disaster Management – A global responsibility

During the panel session on future disaster management, key on-going international processes (notably Rio+20 follow-up, post-2015 development agenda, and the successor of the Hyogo Framework for Action) were discussed in the context of the challenges and opportunities that countries, regional organisations and the international community face to reduce disaster risks and build long-term resilience.

The role of science and technology was highlighted as particularly important to stimulate cultural change and adopt a foresight-approach in managing disaster risks. Close cooperation with the private sector and strengthened regional cooperation could steer progress in critical areas and provide for cost-effective solutions. It will be important to include multi-hazard risk assessments into national policies on which policy-makers and businesses should base their investment decisions and long-term planning strategies. Legislation could help to establish more effective and coherent frameworks for risk assessments and to tackle issues regarding disaster management planning, risk communication and awareness-raising. The coordination and strengthening of governmental and institutional structures is crucial to take a holistic view on prevention, preparedness and response as well as to improve governance.

The mainstreaming of disaster risk management considerations needs to be pursued in all policies, including environmental protection, financing, transport, energy, infrastructure, and business continuity. Effective monitoring of the progress towards reducing the risks is crucial and needs setting specific goals and targets (e.g. reduction of economic impact of disasters) as well as resilience indicators. In this respect, there is a strong need to quantify all losses and effects of disastrous events and better use research to analyse the costs and benefits of resilience action. Exchange of good practices, lessons learned and peer reviews can help to track success and/or failure of resilience policies and improve policy-making. There is a potential for countries and the private sector to share exposure to risk information and collaborate in reducing local vulnerabilities. It would be helpful to identify “bridge builders” and create a platform where scientists, private sector actors and practitioners working in disaster risk management can come together and put science into action.

‘The post-2015 international framework should set global targets to reduce economic loss and death caused by disasters.’

Tomoo Inoue, Director for Water Management Coordination International, Water and Disaster Management Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan speaking during the panel ‘Future Disaster Management – A global responsibility’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.

‘There is a massive international capability that is being mobilised but there is room for more coherence on how it is mobilised.’

Maxx Dilley, Team leader, Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UN Development Programme speaking during the panel ‘Future Disaster Management – A global responsibility’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.



Alicia Dela Rosa Bala, Deputy Secretary General, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, ASEAN, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.



Tomoo Inoue, Director for Water Management Coordination International, Water and Disaster Management Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.



Sara Myrdal, Strategic adviser to the Director General, International Affairs, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), Rapporteur at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.

High-level plenary on ‘The European and international framework for disaster management: Perspectives from the Member States’

National Civil Protection Directors-General shared their experiences and views on how to prepare for new risks, taking into consideration the limited resources available. It is crucial to ‘think out of the box’ and to also include ‘unthinkable’ scenarios. A good way of doing this is by getting new insights and ideas through international cooperation, e.g. on solar storms. Innovative technologies such as satellite imagery, modelling and integrated communication systems were recognised as useful to address new challenges, especially in the case of floods.

It is also crucial to have good cooperation and interaction between all levels of administration and different players responsible for crisis management. One of the speakers stressed that no civil protection system can be effective if solidarity is not enshrined in it. Moreover, the system needs to cover all regions, including overseas territories. It is also essential to speak the same operational language, one example being the need for further standardisation of procedures for medical triage systems. Good cooperation with private entities through partnership and co-responsibility is important, particularly in the case of preventing and responding to industrial accidents.

Although disasters are mostly local, they often have an impact also on neighbouring countries and communities. People and countries are interconnected and are thus more and more “condemned” to work together in order to create more resilient societies. Cooperation at EU and regional levels is vital because even the best prepared country can be overwhelmed in the case of a severe disaster. This is particularly important in the field of training, where some defended the idea that exercises could be used to evaluate the performance of modules and teams through bench-marking.

The speakers also recognised the importance of working closely with local citizens, given that they usually are the first responders. In some countries more than 90% of the response is done by volunteers. In this respect, social media was mentioned as a powerful tool to create a more resilient society. In conclusion, the need for a holistic approach to disaster management was recognised; and the fact that prevention and preparedness are becoming equally important to response was welcomed.

‘We should build relationships with other countries and agencies to help us think out of the box.’

Helena Lindberg, Director General for the Swedish Contingencies Agency speaking during the plenary session ‘The European and international framework for disaster management: Perspectives from the Member States’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.

‘Involving local populations in civil protection is enormously important.’

Norbert Seitz, Head of Department for Crisis Management and Civil Protection at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Germany speaking during the plenary session ‘The European and international framework for disaster management: Perspectives from the Member States’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.

‘You cannot anticipate everything but you can reduce the “unknowns”.’

Michel Papaud, France speaking during the plenary session ‘The European and international framework for disaster management: Perspectives from the Member States’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.

‘We shouldn’t forget what we have achieved already.’

Pentti Partanen, Director General, Ministry of the Interior, Department for rescue services, Finland speaking during the plenary session ‘The European and international framework for disaster management: Perspectives from the Member States’ at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.

'It's clear that there is a rising consciousness in the whole community about the hazards we are faced with and the interconnectivity between us.'

Claus Sørensen, Director-General of the Directorate-General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, European Commission speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 2013.



Helena Lindberg, Director General of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), Sweden, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.



Pentti Partanen, Civil Protection Director-General, Finland, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.



Norbert Seitz, Civil Protection Director-General, Germany, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.



Michel Papaud, Civil Protection Director-General, France, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.



Piotr Kwiatkowski, Civil Protection Deputy Director-General, Poland, speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.



Claus Sørensen, Director general DG ECHO, European Commission speaking at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 16 May 2013.



European Civil Protection Directors-General at the 4th European Civil Protection Forum, 15 May 2013.



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