

## Europe Report

Session 5 – Global Platform  
Regional and Global overview of implementation – progress and gaps

### **Risk scenario – Setting the picture**

Europe presents a very heterogeneous risk patterns. Mortality risk overall is very contained. In contrast, in terms of economic loss, large parts of Northern, Central and south-eastern Europe and the Caucasus are considered a hotspot in terms of economic losses.

The earthquake hazard presents a significant risk which is exemplified by long history seismic events. In terms of relative human vulnerability, Armenia, Turkey, Italy, the Russian Federation and Georgia are all listed amongst the top 15 countries for earthquakes. The Mediterranean/Trans-Asian fault zone passes through Balkans, while the Vrancea zone intersects Romania and part of Bulgaria and Moldova.

Floods and landslides are tangible risks in parts of Italy, South-Eastern Europe, Turkey and the Caucasus. South Eastern Europe is affected by rapid-onset downpours and flooding that can be forecasted only by strong and capable weather forecasting systems that must be supported by accurate data. While drought is gaining land in many part of Europe.

### **Progress in reducing the risk of disasters in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action**

Europe has succeed in the effort of incorporating disaster risk reduction into their international development and humanitarian assistance programme. In the United Kingdom, different studies were commissioned by UK Department for International Development (DFID) targeting the need for the integration of disaster risk reduction in European Union development policies. At the same time, DFID earmarked a part of its humanitarian aid budget for disaster reduction activities.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) are also discussing how to integrate disaster risk reduction in their aid programmes.

During the German EU presidency, the Federal Foreign Office lead a discussion on the integration of disaster reduction into the humanitarian assistance provided by the European Commission and member states.

The Swiss Development Cooperation is preparing a strategy for integration of disaster risk reduction into the countries' development assistance.

### Regional Organisations and Cooperation Initiatives

Political regional and sub-regional structures are important actors in disaster reduction on the European level. This is true for the European Union among their many initiatives related to disaster risk reduction we shall mention the new legislation on flood management and the new research Framework Programme of the European Commission.

The Council of Europe with its European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) has adopted a resolution on “Priorities for action in the field of Disaster Reduction in the European and Mediterranean Space” and a Work Programme 2007-2011 which provides an important step forward in the integration of disaster reduction within the

member states of the CoE. The work programme is developed based on the Hyogo Framework for Action.

There are a number of sub regional initiatives such as the Stability Pact on Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (South Eastern Europe) (DPPI) that has been actively working in developing and implementing 3 programmes: Disaster Management Training Program, Project Joint Emergency Response Units and Project Harmonization of Seismic Hazard Maps for Western Balkan Countries.

The Civil-Military Emergency Planning Council (South Eastern Europe) focused on encouraging civilian control of military resources during disasters within nationals while building a multinational “network-of-networks” among nationals that facilitate regional cooperation among neighbours when planning or responding to natural or man-made disasters.

The Central European Disaster Prevention Forum (CEUDIP) is working on exchanging information on the status of disaster prevention institutions and activities in early warning, media role, legislation, education. This year’s meeting was focused on hydro-meteorological issues.

Finally, the World Bank, UN/ISDR and international partners (WMO, EU, Council of Europe, OECD and others) has initiated a South Eastern Europe Disaster Risk Management Initiative (SEEDRMI). The initiative aims at building on existing regional and national efforts in disaster risk reduction and incorporates three focus areas: - hydro-meteorological forecasting, data sharing and early warning; - coordination of disaster mitigation, preparedness and response; and financing of disaster losses, reconstruction and recovery, and disaster risk transfer (disaster insurance).

### **National interaction and achievements**

The increasing interaction between national and regional level moved forward by National Platforms and HFA focal points opens up an additional added value for strengthening the integration of disaster reduction on national – regional – international level.

To build on this interaction and opportunity for exchanges in May 2007 a European National Platforms and HFA focal points meeting took place in Strasbourg hosted and organised by the Council of Europe (EUR-OPA Agreement) and UN/ISDR secretariat.

The meeting provided the opportunity to exchange on a number of initiatives undergoing in Europe and to establish cooperation opportunities among national partners.

On national level the issue of adaptation to climate change starts to shape the agenda. In a number of countries like the Scandinavian or the Alpine countries but also in France and Germany national strategies for the adaptation to the negative effects of climate change have been developed. National Platforms and Institutions designated as HFA focal points are heavily involved and in some cases driver of this process. In France as an example an Early Warning system for heat waves became operational<sup>1</sup>. Risk mapping is another common achievement in Europe. From the most experienced countries such as Switzerland and France

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<sup>1</sup> A UN/ISDR secretariat and DKKV initiative on Strengthening the National Platforms for Disaster Reduction reviewed EU countries provided a comprehensive overview of the situation with regard to National Platforms for disaster reduction and HFA Focal Points in Europe.

to Romania and Moldova. Education and awareness in disaster risk reduction is another common aspect of the European agenda.

A network between the French, German and Swiss National Platform has been established in April this year. They agreed on common goals, objective and work plan to reduce the risk of disasters among their countries and in the region.

In South Easter Europe the interest in addressing disaster risk reduction issues is grown since the adoption of the HFA. Number of initiatives are undergoing on legislation on disaster risk reduction for instance in Bosnia and Herzegovina a Law on the Protection and Rescue of People and Property in Natural and other Disasters is under development with a component related to disaster risk reduction. Romania is advancing on the task of insurance while Turkey is actively addressing issues related to disaster risk reduction in terms of building codes, insurance and the establishment of a national platform.

Examples on activities related to disaster risk reduction in Europe are many and more to come as the countries are working towards the establishment of a National Platforms. Norway, Sweden, Italy, Romania, Turkey, Moldova, Slovenia and Croatia are among the countries working on this important step.

### **Challenges and gaps**

- Although exchanges and opportunities are arising, there is still a need to communicate and exchange on common hazards and data sharing and the regional but also national level;
- There is a wealth of expertise and knowledge that does not get fully utilized in the context of disaster risk reduction need to build on champions and scientific community;
- The process of evolving from a purely disaster preparedness and response to disaster risk reduction in on-going but not fully achieved;
- Initiative sharing among partners at the national and regional level needs to be strengthened; the same concept applies for reporting at the national and international level.
- The participatory approach of all role-players has to be further enhanced.

But let's not forget that challenges represent also opportunities.

The information expressed in this report does not necessarily reflect the opinions of all disaster risk reduction stakeholders operating in the European region. The update has been prepared drawing from national WCDR, Global Platforms progress reports, technical reports, regional meetings and events.
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