

## **Working group 1: Developing knowledge-based disaster prevention policies**

### **Objective**

The working group will aim at identifying the components of a common approach aiming at facilitating knowledge-based disaster prevention policies, at all levels of government.

### **Background**

The necessary knowledge for developing and implementing disaster prevention policy includes relevant data on disasters, adequate assessment of the hazards and risks and their potential impacts, and information on effective prevention measures.

#### ***1. Data on disasters***

Relevant data on past disasters and their impacts is the foundation for developing a prevention policy. While some Participating States may in different ways and to different degrees have set-up data bases on disaster events, at European and international levels, the available data on disasters is limited and suffers from a lack of comparability. Data on the physical and economic impact of disasters remains indicative at best. Key issues include the lack of comparable data. Furthermore data lies with a wide range of institutions that are not necessarily actively sharing it.

To date little effort has been put in improving the situation. This contrasts with the significant means devoted to developing models predicting the impact of climate change on natural disasters. The Commission Communication proposes as first step to make an inventory of information sources on disasters with a view to identify gaps and comparability issues and guidance on methodologies and definitions.

*Questions for discussion:*

- 1. Does your country dispose of a data base on disasters? Describe what type of data is collected and for which type of disasters. How is this data used?*
- 2. What would be the added value of sharing data on disasters and their impacts at European level? What type of data should be prioritised?*
- 3. What kind of methodological issues for data sharing need to be addressed to ensure that data is comparable?*
- 4. What other data-related issues need to be addressed?*

#### ***2. Hazard and risk assessment and mapping***

Information on past disasters is only one aspect of the information needed to develop prevention policies. It is also necessary to have a predictive approach to understand the type and magnitude of the risks society is likely to face and also include future techniques, population, land use planning and changes due to climate change. Hazard and risk assessment and mapping provide the basis for this and may address either specific disasters or take a multi-hazard approach. Member States have developed their work with hazard and risk assessment to various degrees in different sectors. This work can be further developed. Existing research suggests that assessment and mitigation of the impacts of disasters in a given area require innovative approaches allowing a comparison of different risks and accounting for disasters. Some Participating States have developed national multi-hazard assessments. At EU level work on risks and hazards related to disasters is currently limited to the study of scenarios. The Commission Communication proposes as a first step developing European guidelines on hazard and risk mapping.

*Questions for discussion:*

1. *What type of hazard/risk assessments and maps are needed for Member States. What types are the Member States producing already and how are they useful?*
2. *Would European guidance on hazard and risk assessment and mapping be useful for your country? What aspects of common interest should be addressed?*
3. *What would be the added value of a general risk assessment at the EU-level? How would this differ from the assessments done at the national level?*

### **3. Encourage research synergies**

The research community contributes to the understanding of disasters through many projects, that examine threats, causes, impacts or the effectiveness of disaster management policies. There should be an effort made to promote research programmes and projects that can study the needs for disaster prevention at the local, national, and Community levels.

*Questions for discussion:*

*Are you aware of particular knowledge gaps that could be filled by stimulating research activities?*

*Which priorities would you propose for disaster prevention related research?*

### **Background documentation**

- Annual 2008 statistical review (EM-DAT database)  
[http://www.emdat.be/Documents/Publications/ADSR\\_2008.pdf](http://www.emdat.be/Documents/Publications/ADSR_2008.pdf)
- Impact of Europe's changing climate – 2008 indicator- based assessment  
[http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/eea\\_report\\_2008\\_4](http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/eea_report_2008_4)
- EIONET (European Topic Centre Land Use and Spatial Information )  
<http://etc-lusi.eionet.europa.eu/>
- Natural hazards research projects  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index\\_en.cfm?pg=hazards](http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index_en.cfm?pg=hazards)  
for example "Principles of multi-risk assessment"
- <http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm>