



EUROPEAN FORUM  
FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION  
ROME, ITALY 21-23 November 2018

# 2018 EUROPEAN FORUM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 21-23 NOVEMBER ITALY

***Securing Europe's Prosperity –  
Reducing Risks of Disasters***



According to SwissRe, the cost of disasters worldwide in 2017 has reached an average of \$306 billion in total economic losses and produced global insured losses that made it the third-most expensive year. This represents a 63 percent jump from \$188 billion in 2016. Natural disasters represented about \$300 billion of the total, while man-made disasters another \$6 billion.

Europe is highly – and increasingly exposed to disaster risks. The number of forest fires in the EU has more than doubled in 2017, affecting Portugal (64 people lost their lives), Italy and Croatia amid high temperatures and lower-than-normal rainfall. Following the heatwave, storms and floods have severely affected Italy, Austria, Russia, Poland, Czech Republic and Germany in 2017 that have left a trail of victims and severe damage to critical infrastructure. This year again, Europe experienced extreme heat waves and there were devastating fires in Greece (at least 74 people lost their lives) and Sweden.

The Genoa bridge tragedy that occurred in August, causing the loss of 43 lives, highlights the need to urgently readdress the challenges of infrastructure safety in Europe. Many European countries must deal with aging infrastructures built in the past and in need of renovation interventions, given the societal and economic changes that have taken place including the new risks Europe faces. Refurbishing and maintenance operations of the public infrastructure system as Europe faces increased extreme weather has become crucial for the protection and safety of European citizens.

According to the European Environment Agency (EEA), weather and climate-related extremes accounted in 2016 for 92% of total reported disaster events and around 83% of the total losses. Still in 2016 the earthquake(s) in central Italy caused direct losses and damages for €23.53 billion, which number was multiplied by the underlying indirect losses. The 2014 flooding in Serbia proved to be one of the costliest disasters in the country with damages running up to \$2 billion, putting the country into recession.

Extreme events have increased in Europe, with more heat waves, droughts and forest fires in southern and central Europe, while the number of floods and instances of heavy precipitation has increased in Northern and North-eastern Europe. Slow-onset events and longer-term changes in temperature and precipitation may also contribute to increasing disaster risks in Europe (e.g. climatic changes impacting exposure to disease outbreaks). Even in the case of modest scenarios of climate change, economic costs can potentially be high; in the case of more severe scenarios of global warming, costs rise significantly. The projected damage costs from climate change are highest in southern Europe. Estimates of the projected economic impacts of climate change in Europe, however, only consider certain sectors and uncertainty remains high.

According to MunichRe, Europe has seen unusual low temperatures in 2017 April causing billions in damage to European farmers since their crops had already grown robustly in an otherwise warm spring. Depending on the region and particular fruit, harvests were up to 50% smaller than usual. Another apparent paradox is that such events may start to occur more frequently in the future as a result of climate change: plants in certain regions are beginning to sprout earlier in spring, while the threat of frost often does not diminish to the same extent, so that the risk

actually increases. Losses caused by the late frost amounted to US\$ 3.6bn (€3.3bn), of which only US\$ 650m (around €600m) was insured, given the low insurance penetration in the agricultural sector.

Increasingly natural and man-made disasters affect the lives of European citizens, the European economy and the environment every year. Whether of natural or man-made origin, disasters are becoming increasingly extreme and complex, exacerbated by the impacts of climate change in our interlinked economies, and are by nature irrespective of national borders

The risks related to economic losses and infrastructure damage are rising as a result of the increasing number and value of the assets exposed to hazards, the inadequacy of prevention measures and the growing interconnectedness of markets, societies and technologies in a digitalized economy. Protecting investments and reducing economic losses require a number of urgent measures. These measures are embodied in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and its global targets, which call for a major commitment to risk sensitive investment, particularly in critical infrastructure; ecosystem management and land-use planning; and for the development and design of partnerships to build resilience, especially with the private sector.

Disasters are obstacles to economic growth, prosperity and to achieve sustainable development. The direct and indirect costs of disasters with potential cascading and global effects are a real threat to economic stability and well-being of societies.

All this considered, Europe has the potential of becoming a protagonist and a reference model for best practice in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, alongside with the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. But a bold and determined change of gear is required, and several underlying conditions have to be realized.

## **REGIONAL PLATFORMS FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 recognizes the Global and Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction, in Europe referred to as the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) as key mediums for its implementation, building on the pivotal role that they have played in supporting the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The Global and Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, as recognized by the UN General Assembly, is the main forum at the global and regional level for strategic advice, coordination, partnership development and the review of progress in the implementation of international agreements on disaster risk reduction.

The Sendai Framework also underscores the need for the Global Platform and Regional Platforms to function as a coherent system of mechanisms in order to fully leverage the potential of

collaboration across all stakeholders and sectors to provide guidance and support in implementation. The Global and Regional Platforms serve as instruments to<sup>1</sup> :

- Forge partnerships;
- Periodically assess progress on implementation,
- Share practice and knowledge on disaster risk-informed policies, programmes and investments, including on development and climate issues;
- Promote the integration of disaster risk management in other relevant sectors;
- Contribute to the integrated and coordinated follow-up processes to United Nations conferences and summits.

### **European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR)**

The European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR), forms the regional platform structure of Europe.

The biennial EFDRR has established itself as an important vehicle to address the regional challenges. It provides an opportunity to address such issues through cross-border leadership and solutions that can benefit the people and the countries of the region.

EFDRR has been instrumental in creating innovative ways to address challenges i.e the PEER Review. Hosting of the secretariat by UNISDR, European Commission and Council of Europe has facilitated stronger collaboration and coherence across the partners.

The EFDRR also serves as a forum for other stakeholders to take a shared responsibility and make actionable commitments to reduce disaster risk. The conference, true to the multi-stakeholder spirit of the Sendai Framework, enables governments and stakeholders to exchange experiences on successful practices and innovative approaches to prevent, reduce and manage disaster risk. This results in forward looking action plans based on a mutual sharing status of DRR implementation.

### **2018 EUROPEAN FORUM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

#### **THEME AND OUTCOME**

This year's EFDRR will build on the outcomes of the 2017 EFDRR held in Turkey, 2017 Global Platform for DRR held in Mexico and aim to address key issues that can accelerate in the implementation of the Sendai Framework in coherence with the SDGs and Paris Agreement.

At the closing session of the 2017 EFDRR, Italy as the new chair invited all European DRR actors to join the EFDRR session to be held in 2018, as an opportunity to continue the discussion on local level resilience, economic of risks and reaching 2020 priority targets.

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<sup>1</sup> Ref: Sendai Framework paragraphs 28 (c) and 49

While taking stock of the 2015-2020 European Roadmap for the implementation of the Sendai Framework, this year's 'open' forum will address some of the below topics amongst others:

- a. Engaging the Market: Making the economic case for DRR and Sustainable Financing;
- b. Promoting coherence: Using National DRR strategies<sup>2</sup> for coherent implementation of 2030 development agendas (Sendai Framework, SDGs, New Urban Agenda and Paris Agreement);
- c. Addressing the Grey Rhino (recognize and act on obvious risks) and the Black Swan (unexpected events of large magnitude and consequence): From risk assessments to understanding and communicating risk;
- d. Every life counts: inclusive and equality based strategies;
- e. Reducing risk to cultural heritage;
- f. Understanding local challenges and opportunities;
- g. Innovation and science: Looking at the technology needs for effective DRR

As a next step, broad and close consultations with all actors will need to be a key feature in the preparation for the EFDRR session.

#### AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

The EFDRR 2018 will feature the following main substantive events:

- Plenary and High Level Sessions
- Technical Sessions
- Featured Events
- Field visits

#### PARTICIPATION

The EFDRR 2018 is expected to host participants from European countries, Ministers, Sendai Framework focal point, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations and international organizations, and stakeholder groups including National Societies of Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations, Children and Youth, Civil Society and Community Practitioners, Women, Parliamentarians, Local Authorities, Science and Technology and Academia, Private Sector, Media, Disability, etc.

All the participants are required to register through the EFDRR 2018 website. The conference registration is open.

#### Contacts

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<sup>2</sup> Target E - Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020.