



Reducing Tsunami Risk through Early Warning System, Preparedness and Awareness

Information Workshop on North-eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean and connected seas Tsunami Warning System (NEAMTWS)

National School of Civil Protection

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Although the tsunamis risk on the Spanish coasts exists and it is well documented throughout history, the public awareness about it is scarce. This lack of awareness complicates the Civil Protection activity in order to taking decisions focus on prevention and preparedness.

The meeting has been a significant forum for discussion, discovering initiatives that are being carried out in different countries in relation to the tsunami risk, the activities developed by IOC / UNESCO to encourage coordination among different nations at different levels and the promotion of national alert systems. Likewise, it has provided an opportunity for the national agencies with responsibilities regarding the tsunami risk to present their advances, as well as to strengthen the needed collaborations for continuous progressing to the national early warning system.

Some of the issues treated during these days must be highlighted:

1. The recognition of IOC / UNESCO activity in promoting and coordinating the international efforts for the tsunami risk early warning systems, as well as the valuable and extensive documentation that they make freely available, for wide public and in multiple languages.
2. The progress made by Spain establishing a national regulatory framework for the alert in the event of a tsunami (law 17/2015 for the National Civil Protection System). The development of this basic guideline by the State, the regional administrations and local entities, has to be progressively implemented and will be a great advance in the preparedness and will help to coordinate the different agencies work in case of an emergency event.
3. The importance of the consecutive steps that have being taken to establish risk maps. The Spanish Coastal Hazards Study that should be the starting point for more detailed studies to be carried out in the future is completed. The currently underway study led by the Geological Institute of Spain (IGME) and the Insurance Compensation Consortium to assess the economic impact of a tsunami on the Spanish coasts is also very valuable. Furthermore, Spanish Universities, mainly the Universities of Cantabria and Málaga, have been developing a valuable work on risk analysis.
4. The evaluation of the different advances that are taking place for the whole implementation of a national warning system based on existing capacities: the IGN's seismic alert network (24/7 on duty) in permanent contact with the Civil Protection authorities (DGPCE), and with the Harbours Authorities (PE) tide gauges network, as well as with national and regional warning centers of third countries.
5. The key importance of the international coordination that allows the reception of warning messages of possible tsunamis launched by other warning centers. The systematically checking of the operational system through test exercises allows the national system to be complemented for the warning of a risk that does not understand legal boundaries. It also will enable a better response in case of emergency.



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6. The significant value made by the programmed NEAMwave17 exercise, scheduled for October and early November of this year. The Spanish public administrations that integrate the national Civil Protection system are readiness to participate actively in the scheduled exercises.
7. The importance of promoting education and awareness in tsunami risk. The NEAMTIC is an example that can be followed at national level and it should be a reference for NEAM countries. Regarding this educative task, involving the local entities is essential to implicate the general public and improve their self-protection capacities.
8. The highly valuable role that can be played by the "International Day of Public Awareness on Tsunami Risk", established by the UN General Assembly Agreement, which will be held on November 5th.