PRESIDENCY WORKSHOP REPORT

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE FOR DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN EUROPE

Systems, Strategies and Action Plans

SPANISH PRESIDENCY CIVIL PROTECTION WORKSHOP

Aranjuez, 5-6 July 2023

Contents

1. Executive Summary

Why a Workshop on Governance for disaster risk management (DRM)? This topic was chosen as one of the priorities of the Spanish EU Presidency, in order to highlight the need to reflect on how our systems are coping with and adapting to the increasingly diversifying and complex risk landscape we are facing. This choice was reinforced by the coincidence in time with the mid-term review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, earlier this year.

Governments need to strengthen their governance systems to reduce risk and increase resilience, which requires a systemic cross-sectoral and multilevel approach involving all stakeholders. Mobilizing resources and capacities to plan, anticipate, implement, monitor and evaluate disaster risk reduction strategies, and developing action plans for different time horizons, from the short to the long term, should be made a priority, also within the UCPM States. This is also in line with the Union Disaster Resilience Goals and, in particular, with DRG1.

Against this backdrop, the Spanish Presidency Workshop on Strengthening Governance for DRM was held in Aranjuez on 5 and 6 July, with the attendance of more than 60 delegates from UCPM Member and Participating States and around 15 experts and speakers, who were in charge of setting the scene for the ensuing discussions between the participants. Registration for the event was followed by a survey on the topic of the Workshop which provided the basis for a detailed analysis of the different aspects of DRM governance in the three groups which were organized.

After a plenary session with presentations by international organizations dealing with this topic, such as UNDRR, DG ECHO, the World Bank and the OECD, complemented by the national perspective of Portugal, all participants had the opportunity to engage actively on this topic in the breakout session of their choice:

1. System, governance and institutional framework
2. Disaster Risk Management planning
3. Monitoring and Measuring DRM Governance

As a result of the work in these groups, a series of improvements were mentioned as possible recommendations to be adopted at national level, such as developing a whole-of-society approach in all stages of the DRM process, engaging all stakeholders: public institutions, academic and research entities, the private sector, civil society, and communities, fostering trust among key stakeholders involved in disaster risk management. The need to improve the legal framework for DRM and decision-making processes in a multi-level governance was also stressed by some, as well as the importance of flexible arrangements capable of adapting to the new risk landscape. Finally, it was underlined that DRM should be strongly anchored in scientific evidence; data needs to be collected, if possible, on an almost permanent basis to enable regular, cyclical monitoring.

Possible actions suggested to be taken forward by the European Commission are, among others, the creation of a community of practice on DRM Governance within the Knowledge Network and a database for DRM funding instruments. It was also suggested by some that Commission (non-binding) guidelines for developing a national DRM Action Plan could be prepared.

The success of the Workshop lies in its having brought to the forefront the topic of governance for disaster risk management within the UCPM, considering the Disaster Resilience Goals and

answering to the urgent need to shift the focus of the limited resources from response to prevention in the light of climate change and other current risk drivers.

2. Introduction

The Civil Protection Workshop of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union took place in Aranjuez (Madrid) on 5 and 6 of July 2023, gathering around 80 delegates and experts from the different UCPM Member States and Participating States to exchange knowledge and experience on the topic "Strengthening Governance for Disaster Risk Management in Europe: Systems, Strategies and Action Plans".

This report by the Spanish Presidency aims to offer an overview of how the workshop was developed and of its main outcomes in terms of possible recommendations and key actions. Facilitating progress in governance for DRM is one of the objectives of the Spanish EU Presidency, so further efforts will be made to bring forward these outcomes during the second half of 2023 and beyond.

3. Background: Why a Workshop on Governance for Disaster Risk Management?

Disasters of natural origin in Europe, especially those driven by climate change, are becoming more frequent and of greater magnitude and complexity, affecting the lives of millions of people and diminishing the value of assets. In recent years, Europeans have had to deal with multiple emergencies resulting in the loss of human lives, property, the environment and cultural heritage. They have occurred in all parts of the EU, in some cases more extreme than ever, affecting places that had not previously suffered such threats[1]. At the same time, the nature of humanitarian crises has gradually become more protracted, unpredictable and complex[2], with situations that put at risk not only life and security, but also the fundamental rights and dignity of people, as evidenced by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

The risk landscape across the EU is diversifying from more "traditional" risks related to natural hazards to technology-driven risks, particularly cyber. New technologies may intensify threats, while offering new solutions to address them. It should also be borne in mind that disaster risk involves highly dynamic processes, because its components are constantly changing in space and time. These changes are increasingly rapid and profound due to the action of different risk drivers, such as climate change, massive urbanization or environmental degradation.

In line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, efforts should focus on reducing risk as much as possible, avoiding new risks and reducing the consequences of existing ones. And while Governments have undoubtedly the leading role in disaster risk reduction, the participation of all stakeholders in the implementation of risk reduction measures is required. Coherent strategic planning and risk management frameworks in the public sector are key to the development of sound policies, only way to increase resilience against disasters and reduce their consequences. We need to address the paradigm shift from managing disasters to managing disaster risk, in order to avoid new risks, reduce existing ones and manage residual

---

[1] COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT "Overview of natural and man-made disaster risks the European Union may face". Brussels, 30.11.2020 SWD(2020) 330 final

[2] DG ECHO Guidance Note. Disaster Preparedness 2021

risks. Along this process it is important to focus not only on disaster response and preparedness but above all on prevention, as a basic process to avoid disasters, but also on recovery, which will allow us to address post-disaster reconstruction as an opportunity - following the "Build Back Better" principle-, eliminating risk practices and increasing resilience.

Governments around the world, including those of the EU, are thus facing multiple and increasingly complex challenges and need to update and strengthen their governance systems to reduce risk and increase resilience, which requires a systemic, multidisciplinary, multisectoral, multilevel (local, subnational, state) and cross-border approach involving all stakeholders. These systems should focus on mobilizing and allocating resources and capacities to plan, anticipate, implement, monitor and evaluate disaster risk reduction strategies, developing action plans for different time horizons, from the short to the long term. The Union Disaster Resilience Goals (DRGs)[3] are an important contribution in this line. Particularly relevant in this context is DRG1 which, in line with the above, addresses anticipation in terms of identifying and assessing the most relevant disaster risks in order to reinforce prevention and preparedness activities, trying to avoid new risks where possible or at least to reduce their consequences. This involves establishing risk reduction strategies, anticipating disasters and setting goals, objectives and actions to achieve them.

Article 6 of UCPM Decision 1313/2013, also at EU level, provides for the assessment of risk management capacity as well as the development and improvement of disaster risk management planning at the appropriate national or sub-national level, which requires reviewing and analysing DRM governance with a comprehensive and holistic view.

There is no doubt that, as stated in the second priority of the Sendai Framework, "strengthening governance to manage disaster risk" is one of the keys to have more robust civil protection systems that allow progress in disaster risk reduction, building more disaster-resilient societies. Promoting disaster risk governance[4] is therefore a prerequisite for building resilience to disasters.

4. Objectives

The general objective of the Workshop was to identify opportunities for improving governance for disaster risk management (DRM), in order to contribute to building more disaster resilient societies in the different UCPM Member States and Participating States. This general objective was further elaborated into several specific objectives, analysing the main elements of the respective national DRM systems and identifying opportunities for improvement in:

- Governance and decision-making structures in DRM, including national and subnational platforms and other coordination mechanisms.
- DRM planning instruments and tools adopted by the different States for the development and implementation of DRM systems, in particular Disaster Risk Management Strategies and the subsequent action plans, if any.

---

[3] Commission Recommendation of 8 February 2023 on Union disaster resilience goals 2023/C 56/01

[4] Defined as the system of institutions, mechanisms, policy and legal frameworks and other arrangements to guide, coordinate and oversee disaster risk reduction and related areas of policy. Annotation: Good governance needs to be transparent, inclusive, collective and efficient to reduce existing disaster risks and avoid creating new ones. https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster-risk-governance

• Monitoring and Measuring DRM Governance: Indicators developed as a tool to monitor the outcome of disaster risk management actions.

5. Implementation

As is usual in the UCPM Presidency workshops, the event was organised around a first plenary session, with presentations by several speakers, followed by further work in 3 breakout sessions, each of them led by a civil protection expert team (chair, co-chair and rapporteur) with different national and professional backgrounds. The results of the breakout sessions were then pooled and shared with all participants during a second plenary meeting on the last day of the Workshop. A roundtable with three experts from Member and Participating States closed the plenary with a geographically diverse reflection on the main takeaways of the discussions.

5.1 Survey on DRM Governance

Several weeks before the Workshop, a survey with 23 questions was distributed to the registered participants in order to draw a comprehensive picture of the DRM governance situation in the different UCPM Member and Participating States. The results of the survey (32 answers received) were then used as a starting point to initiate the discussion in the different breakout sessions.

5.2 Presentations during the plenary session

The presentations made during the opening plenary session by 5 speakers from national and international institutions directly related with the topic of DRM Governance aroused great interest from the audience and laid the foundations for the discussions during the breakout sessions:

• Gaetano Vivo (Deputy Head of Unit, Disaster Risk Management, DG ECHO) explained the technical, financial, and institutional support that Member and Participating States can receive from the UCPM in their efforts to strengthen risk governance, establishing the link to the Union Disaster Resilience Goals.
• Patricia Gaspar, Secretary of State for Civil Protection of Portugal, presented the Portuguese National Strategy for Preventive Civil Protection 2030, which aims to shift the focus from response to prevention, towards a better risk governance.
• Néstor Santamaría, from the Governance Reviews and Partnerships Division of the OECD, described, among others, the support offered by the High-Level Risk Forum of the OECD as a platform to exchange experiences and best practice in connection with risk governance, disaster risk and crisis management.
• Zuzana Stanton-Geddes, DRM Specialist of the World Bank, referred to the technical assistance and loans for DRM planning awarded by the WB to several EU Member States, as well as to other resources available in this area, both from the WB and other sources, highlighting how these investments bring along political commitment for disaster risk reduction.
• Finally, Andrew Bower (Programme Management Officer, UNDRR) referred to the Sendai Framework priorities and described the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) roadmap 2015-2020, which promotes among others regional collaboration and shared learning.

5.3 Breakout sessions

Each of the 3 breakout sessions dealt with one of the specific objectives of the event and was prepared by a small team formed by chair, co-chair and rapporteur, who agreed internally on its contents and development. Around 27 delegates chose to take part in each of them. Whenever possible, interactive methods and tools were used to engage the participants. Each breakout session ended with a list of recommendations to the national authorities and a proposal for actions which could be launched by the Commission. All of them are listed at the end of this document.

5.3.1. System, governance and institutional framework

With the overall objective of discussing improvements to legal systems and frameworks and identifying strategies to strengthen DRM in Europe in the light of new challenges, the session focused on the following three topics for discussion:

1) Better governance: turning threats into opportunities: on this topic, the following questions guided the debate among the participants:

o   Are our systems effectively prepared to deal with DRM in order to reduce the risk of disasters?
o   Do disaster risk management regulations include decision-making procedures?
o   Prevention pays: do our systems invest enough in prevention? Are economic assessments supporting the development of the overall governance framework?

2) Institutional framework: getting everyone on board. The aim of this section was to discuss institutional setups in place in MS and PS with the aim of highlighting the key characteristics that should be present to effectively implement the overall DRM governance framework. Good practices were highlighted in developing a whole-of-society approach and getting everyone on board, as well as approaches and tools that could facilitate this process.

3) Systemic resilience and policy coherence: working across silos: The participants reflected on the concept of systemic resilience and policy coherence, and explored how the UCPM could contribute to reinforce national DRM systems in connection with Art. 6 of Decision 1313/2013 and, where applicable, action taken under Disaster Resilience Goal (DRG) n.1. Good practices were identified during the discussion, along with a list of recommendations to foster the implementation of those concepts in national DRM governance systems across Europe and beyond. Also, the groups were invited to reflect on how the implementation of the Union DRGs could support that process.

During the discussions on these three topics, several weaknesses in the DRM governance systems of UCPM Member and Participating States were mentioned by some participants: among others, the poor vertical and horizontal coordination, a weak coordination of action in the prevention phase, or the lack of formalised procedures either for engaging other stakeholders in DRM governance or for updating risk assessments and adapting the DRM framework on a regular basis.

On the other hand, positive developments in this field were also mentioned, such as the fact that many countries are implementing efficient lessons-learned processes involving key DRM

stakeholders, with the aim of identifying weaknesses and strengths of their DRM system; another progress noted was the growing awareness in most countries about the fact that improving DRM governance is key to strengthening their disaster resilience at the different territorial scales.

5.3.2. Disaster Risk Management Planning

For the purposes of this session, Disaster Risk Management planning was defined as the process of identifying how each significant risk can be reduced, adapted or mitigated in terms of impact and likelihood through prevention and preparedness measures.

In order to identify ways and possibilities for improvement, the session focused on the following three topics for discussion:

- HOW is the process conducted? Trying to identify sectors involved, responsibilities, phases, background etc.
- WHAT is the content of the Plan? What stages of the DRM cycle are involved? Is it a whole approach or does it only cover preparedness and response? Just Civil Protection or other sectors involved?
- WHO holds responsibilities in the implementation phase? (Responsibility for the activities planned, funding, etc.)

Participants were divided into two subgroups to facilitate exchanges and participation in two parallel discussion rounds. First, the results of the questionnaire, past practices and lessons learned were discussed. One group was responsible for identifying strengths and the other for identifying any weaknesses. Next, the participants tried to identify the role of the UCPM in DRM planning, analysing ways to move forward at all levels. In this case, one group worked on information exchange and the other on capacity building.

A plenary debate followed during which several possible conclusions were mentioned by the experts regarding the drafting process/coordination/stakeholder, the content of the planning instrument and its implementation. These outcomes are summarized below in the section on recommendations and actions proposed.

5.3.3. Monitoring and Measuring DRM Governance

The third breakout session was implemented in a hybrid format, with an online presentation that served as input for the ensuing plenary discussion, followed by work in smaller groups.

In order to measure governance, it was explored how to define a strong framework that could guide the identification of the elements to monitor and the best way to do it. It was clear from the first interactions that DRM should be strongly anchored in scientific evidence and that it should be able to flexibly and quickly adjust to new and unexpected conditions. Working with indicators helps build trust between the engaged partners (vertical and horizontally), underscoring the added value from the measures that have been implemented.

During the session, goals and indicators for DRM governance were identified regarding three different types of capacities: administrative, technical and financial. For this purpose, the three following phases of the DRM policy cycle were considered: Risk assessment / Risk management

planning / Risk prevention & preparedness implementation measures. These are some of the suggestions that were mentioned for DRM governance monitoring, based on capacities:

<u>Administrative capacities:</u>

Goals: clear and comprehensive governance framework, political oversight, inclusion of all relevant stakeholders

Indicators:

• Legislation and guidelines adopted
• Risk assessment document existing and regularly updated
• Periodical review
• Monitoring of implementation at sectorial and sub-national level
• Institutional mechanisms to involve all relevant institutions / organizations

<u>Technical capacities:</u>

Goals: up-to-date competences, well-functioning data collection system

Indicators:

• Methodologies in place for risk assessment and technical guidance
• Oversight implementation and update
• Capacity building activities, including for new technologies
• Trained personnel / DRM experts available
• Data collection system in place

<u>Financial capacities:</u>

Goals: permanent budgetary lines for DRM, funding available across governmental levels

Indicators:

• Funding resource available and type of sources
• Budget allocated and spent on DRM
• Availability of other instruments, such as insurance

6. Outcomes: Recommendations and Key Actions

The main outcome of the Workshop has been bringing to the forefront within the UCPM the very important and topical field of Governance for DRM. MS and PS experts have had the opportunity to engage during two days on the different ways disaster risk management is organised in their respective countries, exploring strengths and weaknesses, and listening to the perspectives offered by different international organisations specialised in the field. This is an important contribution to the new paradigm of risk management required by the current changing risk landscape. We are already aware of new impulses in connection with DRM Governance and the UCPM that are arising in the wake of the Workshop.

As regards conclusions that emerged from the various breakout sessions (as outlined above), the following section summarizes the possible recommendations made to national authorities

and the main possible actions proposed to the Commission and other international organizations.

6.1 Possible recommendations for MS/PS

1. ***Focusing more on prevention*** and establishing good coordination processes between bodies responsible for prevention activities for different hazards. Communicating the importance of prevention by highlighting the economic benefits of investing in prevention activities (to decision-makers).

2. ***Developing a whole-of-society approach*** in all stages of DRM process (including risk assessment processes).

3. ***Empowering citizens and promoting "individual resilience"*** by creating a risk-informed culture that seeks to make citizens aware of their role in DRM.

4. ***Improving the regulatory frameworks*** to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different entities and to align their strategies in relation to DRM.

5. ***Involving the private sector in DRM*** to increase investment, especially in prevention (e.g. insurance companies).

6. ***Establishing a coordinating tool/instrument/structure covering the whole DRM cycle*** (e.g. a national platform for DRR, or an inter-institutional committee, depending on the country's organisation). Stakeholder mapping to identify all key actors to be involved should be the first step.

7. ***Bridging the gap between science and policy*** for evidence-informed decision-making processes. Fostering collaboration with experts and enhancing expertise at institutional level.

8. ***Conducting lessons-learnt processes on a regular basis*** or at least after major emergencies, exercises/projects to improve the system.

9. ***Better decision-making processes*** in a multi-level governance: ensuring both a top-down and bottom-up and cross-sectoral approach by setting measurable objectives to be achieved, improving risk assessments at different levels to inform decision-makers and adopting transparent criteria (ensuring accountability for actions). Empowering the local administration level in terms of decision-making but also of availability of resources and expertise.

10. ***Visualisation of the need for DRM funding.***

11. ***Strengthening a DRM planning process****. It is considered that the development, improvement and/or implementation of a DRM plan in each MS/PS with different time horizons would greatly increase overall resilience.

12. ***Engaging all*** - During the planning process, engaging all stakeholders through informative, consultative and inclusive actions: public institutions, academic and research entities, the private sector, civil society, and communities, fostering trust among key stakeholders involved in DRM.

13. ***Engaging civil protection authorities in DRM planning*** – Rethinking the role of CP authorities to reinforce their ability to cooperate in defining DRM action planning by line ministries or at different administration levels. Despite the fact that DRM has a cross-sectoral agenda, the mandate of CP authorities does not always allow them to directly influence/steer planning by line ministries or local governments to prioritize financing for DRM, and that makes their role as advocate for DRM challenging.

14. ***Permanent data collection***: Data needs to be collected on an almost permanent basis to enable regular, cyclical monitoring. Increased sharing of data and methodologies should be a regular practice. Using additional data sources (such as: data from civil society organizations, crowdsourcing).

15. ***Flexibility and adaptability:*** Normative regulations and methodologies should not

restrict too much the ability to integrate the new risk landscape in order to enable adaptability and anticipation capacities. An agile management should be promoted to integrate changes into the system.

16. ***Establishing good communication***: Need to communicate DRM and its monitoring and measuring in a proper and understandable way to everyone (decision-makers, citizens, other stakeholders).

17. ***Promoting anticipation***: building scenarios and foresight analyses on emerging and systemic risks (with extreme impacts and connected impact),

18. **UCPM Knowledge Network**: promoting at national and subnational level the use of this platform to facilitate sharing of know-how, expertise, lessons learnt, and assess monitoring tools already existent on DRM Governance.

6.2 Possible recommendations for the European Commission and/or International Organizations

1. Information needs to be shared between existing national DRR platforms.

2. ***Strengthening links and exchange of ideas between international organisations*** (UNDRR, ROECA, DGECHO, OECD and UfM) to explore ways to harmonise agendas and roadmaps on DRM governance and action plans.

3. ***Developing institutional capacity -*** Strengthening the institutional capacity for planning, implementing and tracking DRM investments, for example, through a centralized database/mechanism that could provide planning guidance, an overview of DRM measures, an overview of EU and national funds, as well as training on accessing and managing projects.

4. ***Terminology:*** update of the UNDRR terminology of 2016 could be opportune to keep in line with new resilience concept.

5. ***Greater coherence among reporting cycles:*** Aligning the timelines and terminology of different reporting cycles (reporting, risk assessment, etc.) in order to have an integrated methodology.

6. ***Use what exists:*** Existing indicators in place - such as Sendai, UCPM DRM reporting (Article 6) - could be explored for DRM governance monitoring. However, this might not be enough. A more detailed assessment should be done to be able to build on these indicators and strive for greater coherence.

6.3 Possible key actions for the European Commission

1. **Assess together with MS/PS the impact of tools already implemented within the UCPM** to evaluate their effectiveness/draw conclusions on already ongoing evaluations and further improve them before implementing new ones, so as not to overstretch the Mechanism.

2. **Creating a database for DRM funding instruments,** considering that DRM funding sources are varied, often complex and sometimes little known by decision-makers and practitioners. The database should consider multilateral mechanisms through which DRM might be financed, including activities not directly aimed at risk reduction (environmental protection, biodiversity, etc.).

3. Preparing **voluntary guidelines** (perhaps building on DRG as a list of preparedness goals, on the basis of the EU Overview of Risks) for developing **national DRM Plans as well as**

investment plans, aiming to enhance and promote DRM and its integration into national policies and implementation supported by EU funds.

4. Promoting **voluntary** thematic and, according to MS/PS needs, **peer reviews/exchange of experts** at national and subnational levels.

5. Creating a **community of practice on DRM Governance within the Knowledge Network** to facilitate sharing of information, know-how and expertise.

6. Creating a specific **training program** and **education material** for different audiences on the topic of disaster risk management, with an emphasis on prevention, for future DRM reviewers.

7. **Media and social media conduct (voluntary) guidelines**, it is important to "befriend" the media before any event happens, media has to be educated, via the production of training material on what DRM planning means and of its purpose.