

“Civil Emergency Planning: Building National and Regional Capability”
International Workshop
Neptun, 1-3 July, 2007

The workshop, organized under the aegis of the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership, took place at the seaside resort of Neptun, Romania. The location was especially appropriate since local authorities and specialized agencies are main stakeholders in the field of civil emergency prevention, response and mitigation.

All the participants have underscored directly or indirectly that, at present, the countries cannot rely only on their own resources in confronting major civil emergency challenges. In the face of civil emergency threats, no single state's national capacity will be sufficient and interdependency should be brought to the fore.

The workshop dwelled upon the possible role of the main actors in case of major civil emergency – governmental bodies, international agencies and non-governmental organizations – as well as upon the elaboration of effective mechanisms of efficient co-operation between them. The importance of science and education sector in raising the civil awareness and preparedness has also been emphasized in the discussions.

Special attention has been devoted to the diverse character of civil emergency threats – ranging from natural disasters, man-made disasters, to terrorist attacks. Representatives of each of the participating countries outlined their respective vulnerabilities and, consequently, ‘priority’ areas for fighting the consequences of disasters. In this context, most of the presenters stressed the importance of interoperability, the streamlining of national efforts in a way that avoids duplication and takes full advantage of each country's particular expertise and performance in special civil emergency situations.

The participation and interventions of the representatives of the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre - NATO and Monitoring and Information Center - European Commission, along with debriefing the participants about the added value that the involvement of such international agencies might yield, highlighted the increased interest of these organizations in the region, in sharing lessons learned and best practices.

The presentations and comments of officials and experts from Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom, who shared their experience of shoring up concerted efforts to combat civil emergency, added further substance to the discussions. The narratives concerning the successes and setbacks of their respective national and regional authorities to enhance capabilities in coping with emergency consequences were very instructive.

They also underscored the need to conduct regularly trainings, exercises, simulations and professional workshops among national institutions from each of the countries in the wider Black Sea region, which are directly involved in the civil emergency prevention and mitigation. Romania's National Inspectorate for Civil Emergency put forward a project proposal for further coordination and cooperation .

The project is meant to assess each participating country's risks as well as common vulnerabilities for the region, to make an inventory of the existing needs and capacities, in order to elaborate concrete means of cooperation in prevention, management and response. Investment priorities for promoting preparedness

and upgrading emergency response capabilities will also be considered. Another goal will be the identification of the critical regional infrastructure protection requirements.

The project will have **two phases**:

Phase I:

- **Assessment of disaster vulnerabilities of each participant state and review of the Black Sea countries' common vulnerabilities;**
- **Efficiency assessment of the existing coordination, cooperation and interoperability mechanisms;**
- **Inventory of each member state's capabilities to deal with possible hazards, focusing on the Black Sea coastal region particularities;**
- **Identification of the regional generic needs in terms of improved coordination, capacity, facilities and equipment;**
- **Identification of the critical infrastructure protection requirements, such as: energy pipelines, transport routes, ports, cities etc. Evaluation of the cooperation possibilities in protecting cross-border critical infrastructure.**

Phase II:

- **Identification of the country-level needs for strengthening the emergency preparedness capability;**
- **Detailed estimation of the costs of training the human resources and upgrading the facilities, the systems and the equipment in order to reach effective response in case of disasters, as part of a regional coordination mechanism;**
- **Recommendations of measures and procedures for improving the degree of cooperation and resource sharing in case of disaster.**

The project will be implemented until July 2008. It was agreed that the points of contact from each country will be identified until the 1st of July.

The political background of the workshop was that the political realities have changed around the Black Sea and in Europe generally, with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU. The Black Sea is now part of the EU agenda and has resolutely returned to the European political and cultural milieu. Crucial democratic transformations and economic growth that have been taking place in countries in the area have further anchored the entire wider Black Sea region to the European space. As a result of these changes, of global processes and new regional needs, cooperation should be revitalized and more project-oriented, in order to achieve real benefits for societies in the Black Sea and beyond.

The Russian Federation participated as an observer.