“Building a Local Government Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction” - Consultative Meeting

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CONTEXT

- Catalunya region
- Capital city Barcelona
- 32.000 km²
- **7.134.697** people (2006)
- Wide geographic diversity, one of the most highland countries in Europe
- 946 local councils, 5% over 20.000 inhabitants (70% of Catalan population)
- Autonomous government in a very decentralised state model (wide competences in civil protection).
- A own language (Catalan)

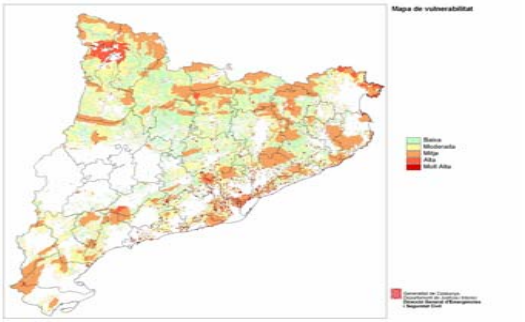
CONTEXT

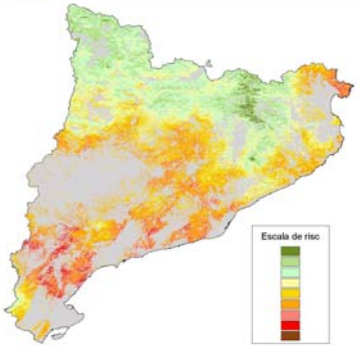
- Civil Protection in Catalunya: regional (Home affairs Catalan Ministry) and local (town, villages) competences.
- Very new organisation, evolving from a model born in the fire-fighter organization.
- Quite extensive emergency planning, coordination and organization basis. Building a specialization on operative coordination and logistics. Good system of coordination and participation commissions.
- Nearly all the emergency services work for the Catalan regional government.

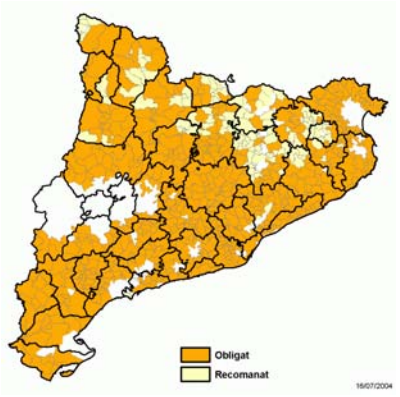
Disaster Risk and Vulnerability – PROFILE & TRENDS

- Catalonia main natural risks:
  - •Forest fires
  - •Flooding
  - •Other: earthquake, geological (subsidence), draught, extreme heat …

Disaster Risk and Vulnerability – PROFILE & TRENDS







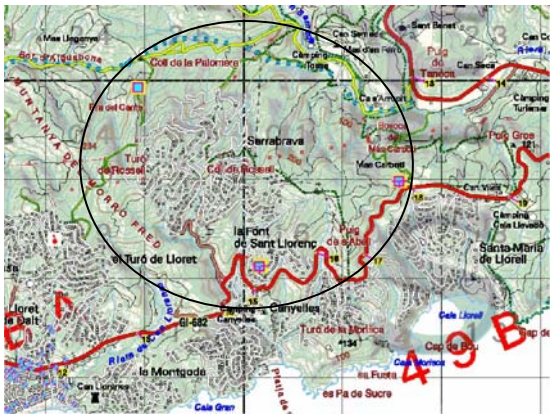
Forest fires

7/1994:
27.000 ha

7/1998:
18.000 ha

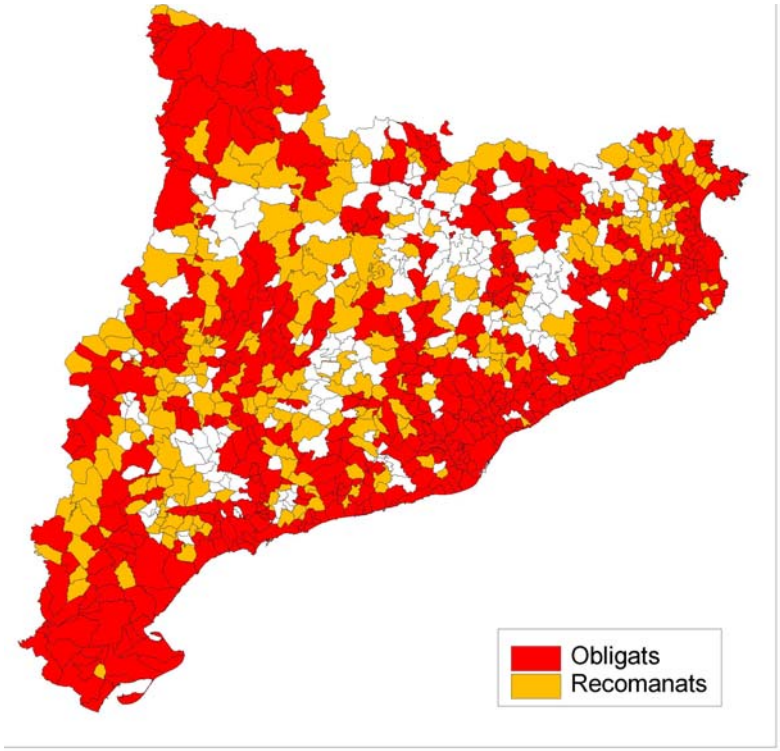
8/2003:
4.600 ha

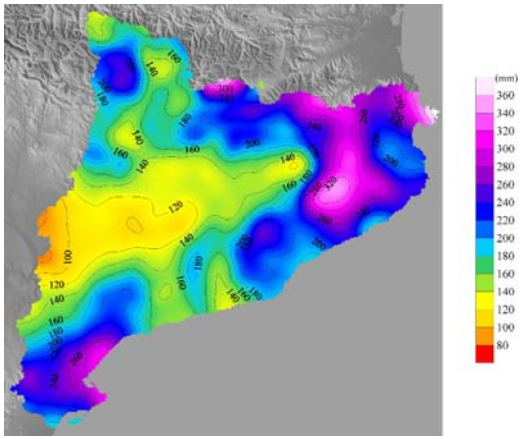
Disaster Risk and Vulnerability – PROFILE & TRENDS



Mediterranean climate (hot, dry summers).
60 % of the country is forest. Large forests (continuity) due to rural works abandonment (very big forest fires).
Urbanised areas in the woods (urban interface, many vacation homes).

Flooding





-Due to orography, a hydrographical network: 70.500 km, 32.000 km2
- Mediterranean climate: heavy locally intense rain. Flash flooding.
- Torrents and streams on urban areas exposed.

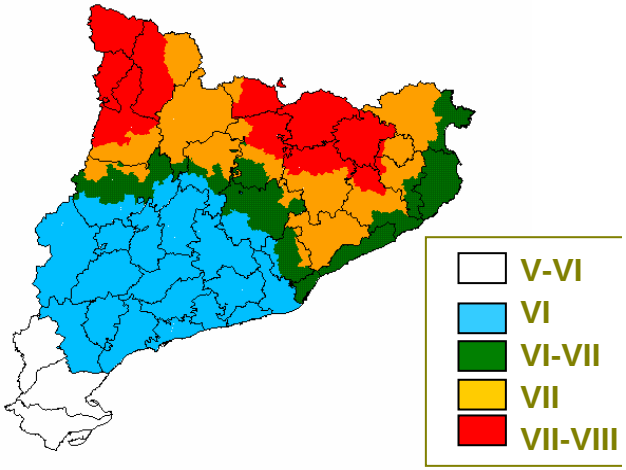
Disaster Risk and Vulnerability – PROFILE & TRENDS

25/9/1962, Vallès, > 500 death people
7,8/11/1982. Lleida Pirenee, 12 deaths

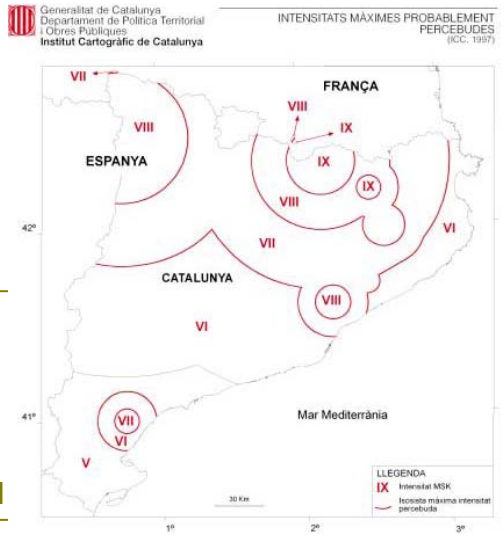
Llevantades (Heavy windy storm coming from the sea, from the NE)
3/12/1998. Many areas of Catalunya, some of them > 200 l/m2 at some areas. Some beaches seriously damaged
7,8/5/2002. Many areas of Catalunya, some of them > 300 l/m2 at some areas.

Disaster Risk and Vulnerability – PROFILE & TRENDS

Earthquake



INTENSITY (500 YEARS)



1373-1448: the most destroyers epicentre intensity VIII-IX (mainly Pyrenees).

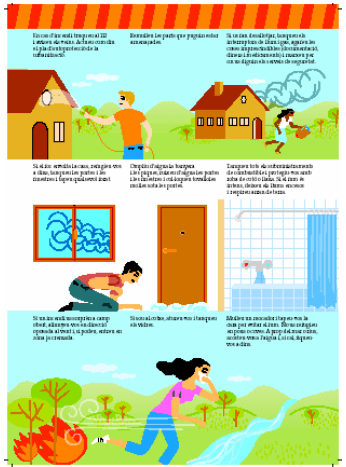
XXth century: VII-VIII (1923, 1927)

Subsidence

A part of a neighbourhood Mining induced

WHAT has been done so far to address the issue?

- Building a systematic work of prevision, prevention, emergency planning, intervention preparedness and information to population.
- Risk prevention regulations. Land use planning in risk areas by law (2004).



What have been the GOOD PRACTICES…

- The whole process of emergency planning with a wide participation of all the parts.
- Studies such as risk of flooding in the Pyrenees camp-site areas.
- Regulations such as forest fire prevention in urbanised areas in the woods.

… and the LESSONS LEARNED

- We need a shorter scaled risk analysis and emergency planning, half way the region and local scale.
- We need to involve the citizen, to inform him better about risks and self-protection. We have new kinds of citizen, and need new strategies.
- We need to support more the local authorities and to get them more involved.
- Work is not done without technical and material resources.

What are the CHALLENGES ahead?

- A new concept of organization with more resources and a central position between the operative bodies.
- Being able to do an effective land use planning on risk areas.
- Emergency planning for new risk scenarios: big earthquakes, extreme heat, etc.

… and HOW to address them?

- Political support: resources for the management of very improbable situations but that can produce very severe effects and that normally are not in the political agenda a priori.
- Continuity in the policies and organizations.
- Agreement and participation between the parts.

CONLUSIONS

- Catalunya share natural hazards with most of the Mediterranean area.
- At the moment, we have good opportunities to improve our system of civil protection, in order to go further and be more effective.
- To do so, we need to involve the local authorities and the citizen.

Thank you