National information provided by

AUSTRIA

in preparation for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction
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Component 1 Political Commitment and Institutional Aspects

1.1. Are there national policy, strategy and legislation addressing disaster risk reduction?

In December 2001 the Austrian Parliament adopted the Austrian Security and Defence Doctrine. According to this doctrine the existing Comprehensive National Defence programme shall be developed into a system of Comprehensive Security Provision focusing on the new risk and threats. A modern and forward looking security shall seek to prevent emerging risks and threats through preventive action. The government shall ensuring co-operation between federal and provincial civil defence authorities as well as with the local operational units on the basis of existing legal provisions (Governmental disaster Protection Management). Training and exchange of information at national and international level shall be intensified, especially to prevent and fight terrorism, international organised crime and illegal migration on the one hand, and with a view to comprehensive disaster protection on the other hand. Public information on self-protection measures shall be improved, and warning systems shall be optimised.

Based on the Security and Defence Doctrine the federal ministries have developed strategies for different sectors which shall be submitted to the government for adoption in due time. In 2004 the government also adopted a new concept for the federal crisis and disaster protection management.

Due to the federal structure of the Republic of Austria the 9 provinces are mainly responsible for disaster management. Thus, the provinces have enacted acts on the establishment of rescue services, fire prevention and disaster relief; furthermore several other provincial laws deal with disaster reduction, for instance acts on land use planning.

Additionally, several federal acts and regulations aim at disaster reduction, like the water act, forestry act, radiation act , regulations on the prevention of industrial accidents etc.

1.2. Is there a national body for multi-sectoral cooperation and collaboration in disaster risk reduction, which includes ministries in charge of water resource management, agriculture/land use and planning, health, environment, development planning and finance?

In 1986, the Austrian Federal Government decided to set up a “National Crisis Management”. In 2004 the concept of the national crisis management was revised. The core of the national crisis management is a co-ordinating committee at federal level consisting of representatives of all ministries, the offices of all provincial governments, the major rescue organisations and media. Similar co-ordinating committees have also been set up at the level of provinces and the district level.

1.3. **Are there sectoral plans or initiatives that incorporate risk reduction concepts into each respective development area (such as water resource management, poverty alleviation, climate change adaptation, education and development planning)?**

On the basis of the Security and Defence Doctrine strategies have been developed for the implementation of a comprehensive security precaution in different policy areas like like internal security, economy, agriculture, traffic, information and education. Further plans are in place or developed, e.g. an action plan for flood protection and water management.

1.4. **Is disaster risk reduction Incorporated into your national plan for the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG`s), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), National Adaptation Plans of Action, National Environmental Action Plans and WSSD (World Summlt on Sustainable Development) Johannesburg Plan of Implementation?**

Disaster prevention and relief are not explicitely included in any of the above-mentioned documents. However, they are occasionally included in documents governing bilateral co-operation on an on-the-spot basis.

1.5. **Does your country have building codes of practice and standards in place, which takes into account seismic risk?**

The Austrian Association for Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics (OGE), homepage http://www.oge.ro.at/ in close research cooperation with the German (DGEB e.V.) and the Swiss (SGEB) Society of Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics, forming the so called D-A-CH-group within the European EAEE, with a common regular publication, considers all aspects of seismic safety. Of special importance is the Standard OENORM B 4015 (Design loads in building-accidental actions-seismic actions-general principles and methods of calculation; fully compliant with the EuroCode). That includes the Austrian map of Seismic risk zonation (higher resolutions, i.e. mikrozonation is available for zones of high risk from ZAMG, Vienna, http://www.zamg.ac.at).

1.6. **Do you have an annual budget for disaster risk reduction?**

Due to the federal system disaster risk reduction is a task of all administrative levels (municipalities, district administrative units, provincial governments, federal government). Measures for disaster risk reduction are therefore basically funded from budget lines of the ordinary budgets of the different administrative bodies.

At federal level a disaster fund is installed at the Ministry of finance which covers to a large extent the expenditures for protective measures against floods, torrents and avalanches. Partly this fund also covers expenditures of the provinces for equipment of fire brigades for disaster relief.

1.7. **Are the private sector, civil society, NGOs, academia and media participating in disaster risk reduction efforts?**

In Austria the provincial governments which are responsible for disaster management rely to a large extent on voluntary, non governmental organisations for the purpose of disaster relief. All in all more than 300.000 people are engaged in the work of these organisations like the fire brigades, the Red Cross and others.
The Austrian Civil Protection Association is an organisation based on private law which plays a very important role in spreading information on self protection among the public. It works in close cooperation with the ministry of the interior and municipalities.

Several universities have disaster reduction projects like the University of Natural Resources an Applied Life Sciences for example which has installed a center for natural hazards. There is also a cooperation between the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation and the Austrian Press Agency in the field of disaster prevention especially in early warning of the public.

2.1. **Has your country carried out hazard mapping/assessment?**

Hazards maps for floods are available for about 4800 kilometres along the rivers mainly concerning settlement areas. The area-wide presentation of hazard maps for floods is of highest priority especially since the last flood in August 2002.

Hazard Maps for risk assessment in torrent and avalanche catchments areas are worked out since the 70-ies in Austria. At the moment, between 30 and 100% of the hazard maps (depending on the province) are available. It is the ambitious goal to reach a 100% coverage until 2008.

Maps concerning the risks due to torrents, avalanches and erosion are worked out by the Federal Torrent and Avalanche Control Service under the ministry of agriculture, forestry, environment and water management. The maps are aivailable for authorities with responsbilities in disaster management. A general guideline for hazard mapping (torrent and avalanche control) was issued by the ministry, the hazards mapped are based on catastrophic events with a reoccurrence of 150 years. Hazard zones are worked out for the catchments of torrents and avalanches, hazards due to landslides and rockfall are only visualised without assessing the intensity and frequency of the events. A hazard map usually covers the area of a single community.

Hazard Maps for floods usually are available in the format 1:5.000. GIS web applications are party available in the GIS of the provinces. For Torrent and avalanche control hazard maps usually are released in the scale of 1:2000. The hazard maps also contain a risk map in the scale of 1:25000 or 1:50000. At the level of provinces digital hazard maps are passed on to the provincial authorities in change of land use planning and are integrated into the GIS-platforms.

2.2. **Has your country carried out vulnerability and capacity assessments?**

According the the disaster relief act of the provinces municipalities, district authorities and provincial governments are responsible for setting up disaster relief plans. This plans habe to include a general risk assessment for the respective area and a discription of the ressources available for disaster management. Furthermore special vulnerability assessments are carried out for industriall installations according to the Seveso-II-Directive as well as for certain natural risks like floods, torrents and avalanches.

2.3. **Does your country have any mechanisms for risk monitoring and risk mapping?**
(see 2.1. resp. 2.2.)

Municipalities, district authorities and provincial governments are responsible for setting up disaster relief plans which include risk assessments. Monitoring and early warning mechanisms are in place like forecasts and early warning procedures for extreme weather conditions or radiological emergencies. The fedaral alarm center and the provincial alarm centers permanently observe the security situation.

2.4. **Is there a systematic socio-economic and environmental impact and loss analysis in your country after each major disaster?**

After major natural disasters damage estimation is carried out mainly in order to provide the framework for financial assistance to victims and for sharing the burden adequately between the federal and regional authorities. Damage estimation is usually done by special commissions established at municipal level. The main categories of damages to be estimated are damages to private property and damages to public infrastructure. Usually results are available only on a local basis. After the floods in 2002 a nationwide damage estimation was carried out.

Industrial accidents under the Seveso-Regime are to be reported to the European Commission and are recorded in a data bank.

After major disasters reports on the impacts are made. For example after the floods in 2002 a comprehensive report on the impact of the disaster was issued by the Ministry Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management in cooperation with the University of Natural Resources an Applied Life Sciences university for life sciences.

2.5. **Are there early warning systems in place?**

Early recognition of extensive radioactive contamination of Austria is made possible by a nation-wide automatic radiation early warning with 345 measuring posts run by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. No village or settlement is more than 15 km away from the next measuring post. Conurbations have more than one post.

For the early warning of the population, a joint warning and alerting system has been installed by the provinces and the Ministry of the Interior. More than 7000 sirens will

warn the population in an emergency. Once a year a nationwide test of the system is carried out.

In some of the provinces, there are fully automatical flood warning and air control systems managed by the provincial government. The first have been activated lately in August 2002 (flood disaster) and contributed to the reduction of losses.

3.1. **Does your country have disaster risk information management systems (governmental and/or non-governmental?**

Systems for the management of information are in place at the level of provinces.

3.2. **Are the academic and research communities in the country linked to national or local Institutions dealing with disaster reduction?**

Academic institutions like universities mainly act as consultants for the responsible authorities if specific advice is needed and carry out special projects on behalf of the authorities. After the floods in 2002 for example studies on flood management programmes were carried out by universities on behalf of the provincial governments.

The “Act on the organisation of research” (“Forschungsorganisationsgesetz”) provides for the cooperation of scientific institutions like the Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics (ZAMG) and the Geological Survey Austria (GBA) with organisations responsible for crisis management.

3.3. **Are there educational programmes related to disaster reduction in your public school system?**

The Ministry of Interior has published several brochures on disaster protection issues which are also available for schools. Among other initiatives the Austrian Civil Protection Association carries out the “Safety tour” for schools which is a competition among school classes in self protection knowledge.

3.4. **Are there any training programmes available?**

Training programmes are available at several levels.

Basic training for relief workers as well a high level training is provided by the civil protection and fire brigade schools of the provinces. The big rescue organisations like the Red Cross also have their own academies for staff training.

The “Security Academy” of the Ministry of the Interior offers training for police forces as well as for other authorites. Special courses are offered for crisis management.

Some universities also offer special training. The University for Health Sciences, Medical Informatics and Technology (UMIT) in Innsbruck for example offers an interdisciplinary, 2-year part-time course in “socioeconomic and psychosocial crisis- and disaster-management”.

The Ministry of Defence offers an Emergency Response Awareness Course including issues like international disaster relief operations for civilian and military personnell earmarked for relevant operations. Furthermore a Crisis Response Seminar and a Civil Military Cooperation Course are organized by the MOD.

Since the Austrian MOD/Armed Forces have started to provide these courses/seminars, the mutual understanding between military forces and civilian organisations in theatre has substantially improved, in particular for the sake of disaster-/crisis-driven local population.

3.5. What kind of traditional Indigenous knowledge and wisdom is used in disaster-related practices or training programmes on risk reduction in your country?

A leading role is played by the Austrian Civil Protection Association (ACPA) which is in close connection to the Ministry of Interior.

ACPA is one of the main players for raising public awareness encharged with important core tasks relative to all questions in the field of civil preparedness and self-protection. Its task focuses on safety and prevention in order to motivate the population and achieve prevention-awareness e. g. by:

- Information policy, PR, advertising, public motivations, marketing, customers relationship management, education, training, skills, exercises, advisory services, civil protection-events etc.
  (http://www.zivilschutzverband.at)

3.6. **Do you have any national public awareness programmes or campaigns on disaster risk reduction?**

Among other initiatives the Austrian Civil Protection Association (see 3.5.) offers the "children's Safety Olympics -SAFETY-Tour as a model for effective and lasting preventative work in the area of self-protection.
With support of school authorities, classes can take part in this country-wide event year by year. Run up games with cups and prizes, provincial and national finals are to be organized with the aim to publicise civil protection awareness to children and youth. This concept is offered to other countries as well (Start workshop, planning, arrangements)

Safety Information Centres are designed to develop awareness and initiative of the citizens to acquire self protection-knowledge. In the SICs the population learns important safety measures in order to behave in dangerous situations and survive these critical phases with a minimum of harm and without major injuries until organized relief arrives. The Austrian Civil Protection Association (ACPA) is responsible for the organisation of SICs. At present there are more than 1.900 SICs out of 2.359 municipalities in Austria. The aim is to establish a SIC in all of them.

A mobile exhibition managed by the Federal Ministry of Education, Sciences and Culture and by the Austrian Association for National Defence and Security Policy is presented all over the country in public buildings (city halls etc.)

In close co-operation with organisations like the Austrian Civil Protection Association, the Ministry of Interior provides information for stocking up for emergencies, reaction after nuclear accidents, civil engineering sheltering measures, first aid, warning and alerting, etc.

Once a year the alarm system is tested nationwide.

4.1. **Is there any good examples of linking environmental management and risk reduction in your country**

Within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management the "Platform for Natural Hazards" was established, which comprises the services for forestry, torrents, erosion control and water management. This platform contributed to the reduction of losses during the floods in 2002.

Further examples exist in the responsible provinces e.g. flood-retarding basins, flood-control reservoirs, high-elevation afforestation, afforestation in subalpine areas, renaturisation of river channels and river beds, purchase of flooding areas for flood prevention by the government and NGOs.

The "Austrian Dialogue on the Forest", initiated by the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, is a process of dialogue among actors dealing with forest where mutual interests on the forest and the forestry are formulated and a programme on the forest is developed. The sustainable economic use, maintenance and development of all forms of forests also include a protection function with the view on natural disasters.

4.2. **Are financial instruments utilised in your country as a measure to reduce the impact of disaster (e.g. insurance/reinsurance, calamity funds, catastrophe bonds, micro-credit community funds, etc)?**

A National Disaster Fund was installed under the authority of the Ministry of Finance. This fund covers protective measurs and provides financial assistance to victims of disasters (individuals, enterprises); it also partly covers damages to publick property. Additionally the provincal governments contribute to the compensation of losses after disaster.

Besides public interventions insurances and priviate donations contribute to damage recuction.

4.3. **Please identify specific examples of technical measures or programmes on disaster risk reduction that have been carried out your country**

Numerous technical measures and promotion programmes for disaster risk reduction have been developed, in particular to reduce the impact of floods, mountain torrents and avalanches; the setting up of damage databanks and the digitalisation of potential risk zones can be mentioned in this respect. Particularly in the capital Vienna severe flood damage could be prevented by the establishment of a protection system.

A system of early warning has been set up by the "Central Institute for Meteorology and Geomagnetism" ("Zentralanstalt für Meteorologie und Geodynamik") and the "Regional Warning Agencies" ("Landeswarnzentralen") to be alerted early in enough in case of extreme weather changes. Automatic measuring instruments have been activated in numerous rivers. In the mountainous regions systems of avalanche warning have been set up and avalanche committees have been established within the local communities for risk assessment.

5.1. **Do you have disaster contingency plans in place? Are they prepared for both national and community levels?**

Contingency plans are in place at municipalities, district administrative units, provincial governments and for special scenarios also at the federal level. The main components of these plans are:

- a description of risks for the respective are
- the identification of threats and the alerting of the responsible alarm center
- the alerting of rescue services an the competent authority
- the implementation of specific measures for consequence management
- data bases on specific resources
- equipment and personnel

Plans are activated according to alert messages by the competent authority, depending on the scale of the event (mayor, district administrative unit, provincial government). Different plans are activated depending on the nature of the specific event. Contingency plans are verified in exercises; according to the results of exercises and technical developement plans are updated and improved on a regular basis.

5.2. **Has your government established emergency funds for disaster response and are there national or community storage facilities for emergency relief items – mainly food, medicine, tents/shelters?**

A National Disaster Fund was installed under the authority of the Ministry of Finance. This fund covers protective measurs and provides financial assistance to victims of disasters (individuals, enterprises). It also contributs to the funding of equipment for disater relief of the fire brigades. In a disaster additional funds can be mobilized by the government for of the the compensation of losses. Additionally the provincal governments have budget lines for distaster relief.

Emergency relief items are stored by the provincial governments in close cooperation with the relief and rescue organisation and the federal army.

5.3. **Who is responsible for the coordination of disaster response preparedness and is the coordination body equipped with enough human and financial resources for the job?**

At the federal level a co-ordinating committee was set up for crisis and disaster management. This committee consists of representatives of all ministries, offices of provincial governments, the major rescue organisations and representatives of media.

Similar co-ordinating committees are established at the level of provinces and districts.

According ton the magnitude of a disaster co-ordination is done by district administrative units, provincial governments or the federal government.

<u>Component 6</u> Call for good practices in disaster risk management

a) Example from the province of Upper Austria:

The digitalisation of disaster protection plans serves as an example for disaster risk management. The project “Digitalisation of disaster protection plans in Upper Austria” started in 2001 in order to gain fast and better relevant data and information for disaster protection.

In case of an emergency the appropriate data and information must be available so that the “Disaster Assistance Service” (“Katastrophenhilfsdienst”) can operate well. For the setting up of digitalised disaster protection plans so-called “DPP-administrators” were nominated in all 445 local communities of Upper Austria in order to establish the DPP and to update the information. At the district level DPP-adminstrators have been nominated likewise. This project has lead to an awareness raising in the field of disaster protection among the population.

Although the local communities act in these activities within their own competences, they have supported this project fully. In addition they have taken advantage of the service offered by Upper Austria by using the software for harmonisation and by consulting trainers.

b) Example from the province of the Tyrol:

Promoting the principle of self-provision and self-protection

The Tyrolean Regional Authority pursues an active information policy to promote public awareness for the need for civil defence and disaster protection in the region. In particular, campaigns are organised for local communities and schools in collaboration with the Tyrolean Education Authority, the police and the various emergency services.

Self-protection centres offering counselling for the general public have been established in a total of 260 Tyrolean communities.

c) Example Capital of Vienna:

A few regions were effected by the floods of August 2002. In Vienna floods could be prevented by diverting the water in a separate arm of the river Danube. This can be seen as the result of an established flood protection programme in the Austrian capital.

Component 7 Priorities you want addressed at World Conference on Disaster Reduction

- No specific priorities or topics can be raised –

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Was the information provided consulted with other institutions? YES ~~NO~~
If yes, please list these organizations here-below:
9 Provinces of Austria
Ministry of Defence
Ministry for Economic Affairs and Labour
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Component 8: current international policy on risk reduction, including within development or other donor agencies as well as trans-border agreements or regional cooperation.

In the fields of emergency aid, radiation and environmental protection as well as ambulance service by air plane Austria has concluded 25 bilateral agreements so far.

Apart from programs of international organisations special importance is attached to bilateral agreements on emergency aid. Austria has concluded special agreements on emergency aid with the majority of its neighbouring States as well as several other states within and outside of Europe. These agreements regulate the co-operation among the State parties to prevent possible disasters and combat occurring disasters, especially by announcing contact points, facilitating cross-boarder rescue services, importing and exporting of relief items as well as organising common exercises to be well prepared for an emergency case.

Bilateral emergency agreements

Concluded with:
Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Jordan

In negotiation with:
Croatia, Algeria, Italy, Morocco, Poland, Tunisia

Preliminary talks with:
Belarus, France

Bilateral agreements on "nuclear security"

In the field of nuclear security and in addition to the IAEO agreement on early and immediate information as well as mutual assistance in the case of nuclear incidents bilateral agreements with Slovenia, Hungary, Poland and the Ukraine are in force. Furthermore, a pertinent agreement with Switzerland was signed. The agreement completed with the Former German Democratic Republic is now applicable to the Federal Republic of Germany. The same counts for the agreement completed with the former Czechoslovakia which is now applicable to the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In addition to the bilateral agreement with the Czech Republic on radiation protection the so-called "Info-Hotline Temelin" was established which provides immediate information of the "Bundeswarnzentrale" also in the case of marginal incidents which are not subject of the "Bilateral Nuclear Information Agreement" ("Melker Abkommen", 12 December 2000).

As regards the agreements with the former Soviet Union which currently is applicable to the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, preliminary talks are held with member States of the Community of Independent States about the conclusion of a new agreement, especially with the Russian Federation and Lithuania. A pertinent agreement with Belarus has been paraphrased.

Bilateral agreements on environmental protection

Concerning the field of environmental protection an agreement on transnational effects of industrial accidents was signed within the framework of UN/ECE (Economic Commission for

Europe). Furthermore, special treaties on cooperation in the field of environmental protection were signed between Austria and the Czech Republic, Hungary as well as Poland.

CEI (Central European Initiative)
Austria takes part in the CEI´s Working Group on Civil Protection. The main activity of this Working Group is the "Co-operation Agreement on the Forecast Prevention and Mitigation of Natural and Technological Disasters", signed on 18 July 1992 in Vienna on the occasion of the CEI Annual Summit. The Agreement is a political document for co-operation in the field of forecast and prevention of major risks, entailing serious consequences for the safety of people, assets and environment. This includes the exchange of scientific and technological information and relevant data on a regular basis; the implementation of common research programmes; the training of experts in the field of forecast prevention and relief in order to set up joint programmes on Civil Protection and Disaster Management. The document has been signed by Austria and 5 other CEI countries so far (Croatia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia). In May 2004, Balarus, Bulgaria and the Slovakian Republic joined this agreement.