

INFORMATION ABOUT DISASTER REDUCTION BASED ON THE YOKOHAMA STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

NATIONAL REPORT

1. Political Commitment and Institutional Aspects

Throughout its history, in the struggle for its independence and through the state associations of which it was part, the Republic of Croatia was very often endangered by wars and by natural and other disasters. This has eventually led to organising the protection through national authorities.

Croatian Army, police, civil defence, fire-fighting services, monitoring and warning services, paramedics and others are just parts of the organised forces which in cooperation with government agencies, and within the scope of their activities, work toward protecting nature, environment, waters etc. They make an integral whole aimed at preventing various types of threats and providing relief.

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

Pursuant to the basic provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia /NN/ No. 33/02) Croatian Parliament adopted the Strategy of National Security which defined security as a functional area of operation of security institutions and society in general in achieving the security goals and interests of the Republic of Croatia. In 2002, Croatian Sabor also adopted the National Strategy for Environmental Protection, and the National Plan of Action Concerning Environmental Impact (NN 46/02), determining the measures for the protection of environment, including marine environment. National monitoring of the quality of seawater is conducted within Project "Jadran" (Adriatic).

The Republic of Croatia participates in international programmes for preventing sea pollution in the Mediterranean (UNEP/MAP) and other international projects (UNDP, CARDS, LIFE etc.).

Several laws have been enacted in this area: the Defence Act (NN 33/02); the Law preventing members of the armed forces, police, civil defence, civil servants and government technical staff from the Republic of Croatia from participating in peace-keeping operations and in other activities abroad (NN 33/02); the Police Act (NN 129/00); the Internal Affairs Act; the Natural Disasters Act (NN 73/97), the Law on Protection from Ionising Radiation. The Protection and Rescue Act is just undergoing the procedure for its enactment.

In the context of the Protection and Rescue Act, the State Directorate for Protection and Rescue is being set up to provide administrative and technical support for establishing a system of protection and rescue of lives, property and other assets in case of disaster, to train rescue staff, to provide the necessary assistance in averting danger in case of natural disasters, epidemics and other disasters, to perform activities related to civil defence, fire-fighting, monitoring and alarming, and international cooperation.

This Directorate will have organised forces at its disposal which will interact with other forces. There are also many by-laws (decrees, rules and decisions) obliging ministries and other participants to action in case of danger or disaster.

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

At the national level, the Government of the Republic of Croatia is the body responsible for coordinating the activities of the national agencies such as the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Defence; the Ministry of the Interior; the Ministry for Economic Affairs, Labour and Entrepreneurship; the Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Traffic and Development; the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management; the Ministry for Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Building; and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport. In the event of a crisis, the Crisis Management of the Government is activated, and it includes Deputy Prime Minister and the responsible ministers, to coordinate the activities of administrative bodies and crisis management forces.

Currently, a concept with appropriate legislation necessary for setting up the National Centre for Civil Defence and Crisis Management is being developed.

The National Centre for Civil Defence and Crisis Management will work toward defining the national policy and strategy and harmonising the plans, as well as coordinating and guiding the activities of Government bodies and related services and activities, to act successfully in time of crisis.

The National Centre for Civil Defence and Crisis Management should also serve as an expert team in support of the Government i.e. its Crisis Management.

Crises may be major natural disasters, technical, technological disasters, failures in electric power and other energy systems, traffic/information/telecommunications and other breakdowns, various major epidemics, major difficulties in the supply of provisions for the population, consequences of terrorist activities, etc.

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)?

Within the framework of activities of individual government bodies, an environmental action plan (adopted at the Government meeting on 29.07.1999) has been prepared pursuant to the Environmental Protection Act (NN 82/94). The plan determines the types of risk and danger and the procedures and measures for alleviating and eliminating direct effects on the environment, as well as the facilitators for individual measures, and coordination with actions under other laws.

In addition, there has also been adopted the Action Plan in Case of Sea Pollution Incidents, and the Action Plan for the Protection of Water Resources.

1.4 Is disaster risk reduction incorporated into your national plan for the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), National Adaptation Plans of Action, National

Environmental Action Plans and WSSD (World Summit on Sustainable Development) Johannesburg Plan of Implementation?

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken over the coordination of preparing the Report on the MDGs in the Republic of Croatia. To this end, a Task Force has been set up consisting of representatives from the following government agencies: Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Traffic and Development; Ministry for Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Building; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; Office for Associations; Ministry for European Integration; Ministry for Families, Veterans and Inter-generation Solidarity; State Bureau of Statistics; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management; Ministry of Science, Education and Sport; Ministry for Economic Affairs, Labour and Entrepreneurship; Office for Gender Equality; Office for Human Rights; Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In cooperation with the UNDP, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised round tables to discuss MDGs in May and June in Zagreb. The basis for the discussion between the representatives of ministries, state institutions, NGOs, experts, members of the civil society, was the Draft Report of Croatia on the implementation of its millennium goals, prepared by the Economic Institute in Zagreb in July 2003.

The Report is expected to be handed to the UN Secretary General at the 59th meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2004.

The Republic of Croatia has acceded to and ratified conventions on arms and armament control (NPT, CTBT, CWC, BTWC, CCW, Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines, Convention on Timely Notification of Nuclear Accident, ENATO etc.

The Republic of Croatia signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement in Luxembourg in 2001, and has applied for full membership of the EU in 2003. On 20 April 2004, it received a positive opinion of the European Commission. On 18 June 2004, the European Council granted the Republic of Croatia the candidate status and issued the decision to start negotiations in early 2005. One of the conditions for joining this association is setting up a transparent and efficient system of protection and rescue. The Protection and Rescue Act is currently being prepared.

Bearing in mind the increasing awareness of the need to reduce disaster risk, the Republic of Croatia is attempting to develop a defined, integral and long-term programme for reducing disaster risk in Croatia, which would also have global relevance. This way our country is approaching the Johannesburg concept of sustainable development and the admission to the European Union.

Croatia's admission to NATO's Partnership for Peace has opened way for bilateral programmes (Slovenia, Hungary, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Poland, Slovakia) and multilateral programmes institutionalised in the form of initiatives (CEI, SECI, Alps-Danube Working Community, Danube Regions Working Community, AII, Quadrilateral, SEDM, EU-initiated SP). This enables the synergy of the initiatives mentioned above in all areas of interest to the Republic of Croatia, and in this context disaster relief is becoming increasingly important, because the effects of disasters are becoming a global threat and issue.

1.5 Does your country have building codes of practice and standards in place which take into account seismic risks?

The Republic of Croatia has building codes of practice which include seismic risks regulated by the Rules on Technical Standards for the Construction of Buildings in Seismic Areas (adopted in 1981). The problem is that the Rules have no legal force of laws.

There are seismologic maps (6 maps) showing the expected intensity in recurring periods of 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 10,000 years. The intensity for the recurring period of 500 years is taken as reference.

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

In the national budget of the Republic of Croatia funds are being earmarked for alleviating or compensating disaster damage. Funds are collected within the framework of financial plans of budget beneficiaries as separate activities. Funds for alleviating the effects of natural disasters or alike may be granted from the current reserve of the national budget.

Pursuant to the Strategic Commodity stockpiles Act (NN 87/02) funds are planned in the Annual Budget for financing commodity stockpiles. The state body in charge - the Directorate for Commodity stockpiles - performs administrative, technical and commercial tasks related to commodity stockpiles.

A special item in the national budget is provided for relieving and eliminating the effects of natural disasters.

In addition, units of local or regional self-government (municipalities, cities and counties) allocate funds from their budgets (in proportion with their potential) for relieving the effects of natural disasters. Also, the Law on Protection from Natural Disasters (NN 73/97) and the Criteria for Assessing Disaster Damage (NN 96/98) prescribe the basic protection measures, the rights and duties of participants, assessing the damage and assisting the affected areas. Pursuant to Art. 40 of the Law, local or regional units may pass decisions on lowering taxes or on tax exemption or provide relief in another way.

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

In addition to the efforts of regular services and activities, protection in the Republic of Croatia is also provided through the activities of NGOs, humanitarian and volunteer organisations such as the Red Cross Society, Caritas, Mountain Rescue Service, Rescue Dog Training Service, Mine-clearing Centre, National Fire-fighting Service, local fire departments, scuba diving clubs, environmentalist groups etc.

Note that with a view to achieving the most efficient utilisation and inter-compatibility, legislation should be harmonised to provide conditions for the involvement of these groups in crisis management.

2. Risk identification

2.1 and 2.2 Has your country carried out hazard mapping/assessment? Has your country carried out vulnerability and capacity assessments?

In the context of disaster risk identification, each government agency is responsible for carrying out threat assessment for its particular field. Various plans and rules have been prepared for identifying risk, and criteria are being developed for preparing the National Plan with the emphasis on the civil defence plan in which all the relevant facilitators should be involved.

2.3 Does your country have any mechanisms for risk monitoring and risk mapping?

The provisions of the above-mentioned legislation put government agencies in charge of risk monitoring in their respective fields of competence and of assessing the zones and intensity of threat.

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

On the national level, there is general risk assessment in whose preparation every government agency participates within its own field of competence.

There is a State Commission for assessing loss in natural disasters. Enclosure: a copy of allocation sheet for the relief from the national budget (in HRK) by counties in the period from 1999 to 2003.

2.5 Are there early warning systems in place?

In the Republic of Croatia there is a system of monitoring and reporting and a system for early warning, currently in place with the Ministry of Defence. Following the adoption of the Law on Protection and Rescue, it will be part of the State Directorate for Protection and Rescue.

This system is conceived as a service with warning centres, monitoring stations and alarm units. Warning centres are organised 24 hours a day on the levels of the state, counties and cities, with the call number 985 (new draft law proposes 112).

Warning centres manage sound alarm systems. They also serve as communication centres in the event of crisis and maintain databases of the government agencies and officials responsible for a specific type of risk. They are linked with the public information system to inform the population in case of a disaster.

Monitoring stations and alarm units are activated in case of major threats and they are responsible for monitoring the national territory, air and waters to be able to timely communicate any danger to the Warning Centre and alarm the population.

3. Knowledge Management

3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 Does your country have disaster risk information management systems (governmental and/or non-governmental); Are the academic and research communities in the country linked to national or local institutions dealing with disaster reduction; Are there educational programmes related to disaster risk reduction in your public school system; Are there any training available?

In the Republic of Croatia there are several institutions scientifically engaging in disaster risk management, such as the Centre for Defence Studies, Higher School for Security etc. Training is provided through seminars and education courses, as well as through international events on the subject.

Civil Defence within the system of the Ministry of the Interior is the promoter and facilitator of such activities. The new Draft Law on Protection and Rescue envisages setting up a teaching establishment for educating members of Civil Defence (active and reserve), rescue services and citizens.

Databases by individual types of risks are managed by expert teams such as the Technical Support Centre responsible for Nuclear Risk, the Operation and Information Centre of the National Oil Company (as the core of the national ECO headquarters), the National Institute for Toxicology etc. The teams supply technical data to the Civil Defence HQ, the warning centres and the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and propose measures to be carried out in specific cases.

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

Considering the fact that the Republic of Croatia only emerged from the war a few years ago, having suffered heavy civil and material losses, extensive empirical knowledge and skills related to reducing disaster risk have been accumulated.

Government bodies, primarily the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior, have trained a large number of their experts in the country and abroad, who actively participate in various international exercises and seminars as lecturers, transferring their own practical experience.

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

In the Republic of Croatia, increasing importance has been attached to training experts and educating the public on how to reduce disaster risk. This is also reflected in the passage of the Law on Protection and Rescue, on the basis of which a training facility will be set up for professionals and the general public. The facilitators will be the Ministry of the Interior (Civil Defence) and the Ministry of Defence, plus the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport.

4. Risk Management Applications/Instruments

4.1 Is there any good example of linking environmental management and risk reduction practices in your country?

Risk management in the protection of the environment, the sea, water resources, forests and agricultural activities, are regulated by the Law on the Organisation and Competence of the Ministries and Administrative Agencies which defines the competence and responsibility for individual activities. Environmental protection is the responsibility of the Ministry for Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Building; sea and coastal areas are the responsibility of the Ministry for Sea, Tourism, Traffic and Development; managing water resources, afforestation, agricultural activities are the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management. These and other ministries develop their action plans for proceeding in time of crisis. The Ministry for Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Development implements the Action Plan for Environment. It was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in 1999 with a view to dealing with possible life and health threatening environmental disasters or contingencies.

4.2 Are financial instruments utilised in your country as a measure to reduce the impact of disasters?

Financial instruments utilised in the Republic of Croatia to reduce the impact of disasters - in addition to the funds mentioned in 1.6 - are provided by a variety of insurers with whom interested parties sign insurance policies.

In Croatia, insurers are business entities professionally engaged in insuring and re-insuring risks, e.g. by concluding insurance contracts for the protection of property and persons plus related re-insurance contracts, as well as implementing measures for preventing and reducing risk to property and persons. Insurers offer financial products for the insurance of property from disaster impact.

Financial products of insurers fall into insurance groups Other Insurance against Liability, and Other Insurance of Property.

Other insurance against liability covers the property damage and personal injuries arising from the risk caused by human factor. An example is spilling or spreading hazardous substances in the environment.

Other insurance of property covers the damage arising from the risk caused by natural disasters which are not caused by human factor.

These insurance products are optional and may be utilised by both legal and natural persons to protect their interests.

Apart from the above-mentioned allocations from the national budget, there are no special relief funds in the Republic of Croatia nor any special financing terms to be implemented for the purpose of repairing the damage or reducing the impact of disasters.

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

Specific examples of technical measures related to disaster risk reduction in the Republic of Croatia are reflected in the construction of dikes and dams on all major rivers, construction of relief canals in the event of floods, construction and maintenance of rainwater canals and sewage in settlements and along farming land, seaport piers, fire paths etc.

5. Preparedness and Contingency Planning

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

Article 24f of the Police Act (NN 129/00), Chapter II A of the Law on Internal Affairs (NN 73/91, 19/92, 76/94 - final versions 161/98, 29/00, and 53/00), and the Rules on the criteria for the preparation and content of the plans for the protection and rescue of people and property from natural and civilisational disasters (NN 31/95), determine the preparation and content of protection and rescue plans.

Protection and rescue plans are prepared on the basis of risk assessment concerning the impact of natural and civilisational disasters, and the available human and material resources for protection and rescue. These plans are prepared on local level (municipalities and cities), regional level (counties), national level, and the level of legal entities.

The facilitators for preparing local and regional plans are the competent departments of the Ministry of the Interior.

The facilitator for civil defence plans for the Republic of Croatia is the Department for Protection and Rescue of the Ministry of the Interior.

The facilitators for preparing the plans for legal entities are their respective competent departments.

The Protection and Rescue Plan is approved by the Government of the Republic of Croatia at the proposal of the Minister of the Interior.

Protection and Rescue Plans for local and regional and national levels and individual legal entities consist of the following:

- 1.- Civil Defence preparedness plan,
- 2.- Services mobilisation plan, leadership and commanding bodies and civil defence units,
- 3.- Civil Defence Action Plan, with related documents.

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, medicines, tents?

The funds for disaster response are identical to the ones mentioned in 1.6 with reference to this paragraph. On national level, there are scheduled commodity stockpiles (food, energy, equipment etc.) taken care of by the Directorate for Strategic Commodity stockpiles with the Ministry for Economic Affairs, Labour and Entrepreneurship.

The Law on Strategic Commodity stockpiles (NN 87/02) regulates the conditions for piling up, financing, utilising and renewing strategic commodity stockpiles and for preparing the facilities to accommodate and keep them.

Commodity stockpiles consist of agricultural products, foods and non-food products necessary for the accommodation and subsistence of people, oil products, materials and raw-materials required for production.

Strategic commodity stockpiles or commodity stockpiles are utilised

- In the event of major natural disasters and technical/technological and ecological disasters,

- In the time of war or imminent threat to the independence, unity and existence of the state.

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?

The following are responsible for the coordination of disaster response preparedness: Civil Defence HQ on national level, county and city HQs. In addition to the Civil Defence HQ, the main coordinator of the activities in the event of a disaster is the Crisis Management HQ of the Government, headed by Deputy Prime Minister, with responsible ministers as members (convened as necessary).

There are plans to set up the National Centre for Civil Defence and Crisis Management as an operative body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for managing crises. The Crisis Management HQ of the Government has formally been fully staffed, its members have been appointed and funds have been earmarked and specified as current reserve in the national budget.

6. Call for good practices in disaster risk management

Example # 1: Flood defence in northwestern Croatia

An example of successful flood defence comes from northwestern Croatia in the year 1998.

In anticipation of the expected water surge, the Civil Defence Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia were alarmed to take charge of coordinating the activities for the protection and rescue of endangered population and conducting measures for preventing the flood by using the available equipment and materials.

Members of the Civil Defence, together with members of local volunteer fire departments and citizens engaged in building dikes, closing gaps cut by gushing water, reinforcing and repairing embankments.

Members of the Civil Defence, together with professional fire fighters worked on pumping water from houses and cellars and salvaging the crops.

The activities of the Civil Defence were coordinated by the National Water Management Company through its area manager, as provided by the National Plan for Flood Defence (NN 8/97).

The action also involved members of the special police forces and the Croatian Army who brought cattle to safety in their special vehicles.

Example # 2: Putting out open space fire - Operation Tramuntana

An example of successful open space fire-fighting was Operation Tramuntana in the Adriatic coastal area in 1998.

The Civil Defence, with special fire-fighting units of the Ministry of the Interior and local Police Departments involved in the operation together with other departments of the Ministry of the Interior, managed to successfully carry out all the tasks required.

The Crisis Management of the Government decided that the Civil Defence of the Ministry of the Interior took full charge of the logistics for the fire fighters in Operation Tramuntana. This operation was an example of the mobilisation and employment of a large number of special fire-fighting units of the Civil Defence and other fire-fighters.

The whole fire-fighting operation was led by the national Commander-in-Chief of the fire fighters in the Republic of Croatia, and local commanders, the fire having assumed the scale of a natural disaster.

In addition to these, we can also mention the examples of big fires on the coast and the islands which almost every year, particularly in the summer, claim large-scale involvement of fire-fighting units and Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia with Canadair airplanes and other fire-fighting aircraft, with massive engagement of personnel and equipment.

A very good coordination of activities had been set up to carry out these tasks, with occasional involvement of the Regional Centre for Assistance and Disaster Relief in Split. An example of cooperation was also the use of a military helicopter in support of the Mountain Rescue Service.

There is also a very good coordination of rescue efforts at sea, coordinated by the National Centre for Coordinating Search and Rescue at Sea.

Example 3: Technical Support Centre - Exercise CONVEX2a

The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Economic Affairs have developed a Technical Support Centre whose description and operation is presented on the bilingual homepage of the Ministry for Economic Affairs, Labour and Entrepreneurship: www.mingo.hr/tpc.

13. On 13 November 2003, late in the afternoon, the exercise CONVEX2a took place in accordance with the requirements of the Convention on early warning and the Convention on Emergency Relief in the Event of Nuclear Disaster. The specific objectives of the exercise were to check the 24-hour preparedness of national warning centres and their alarming the national bodies in the event of a nuclear disaster. The IAEA Emergency Response Centre sent a warning to all the members expecting the national Centre to confirm having received the message within 30 minutes, and the national body in charge was expected to confirm being alarmed by the national Centre and to deliver a message to the IAEA ERC within 2 hours from the initial warning. The exercise was carried out successfully.

7. Priorities you want addressed at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

7.1 Considering the facts noted above, as well as the existing experience, there was a public discussion in Croatia on "Civil Defence in Integration Processes" focusing among other things on the issues of its relevance for preparing the National Report for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

Our priority is to define an integral system with a competent umbrella organisation having the authority of the Government in planning and utilising all the

necessary resources (human and technical) not matter what sector they come from. This body should be the "National Centre for Civil Defence and Crisis Management" of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.