“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
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.
Earthquake

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.
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.
CONCLUSIONS

• 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