



**European Union**

**2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

**13-17 May 2019**

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**Resilience Dividend: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Societies**

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**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

**- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -**

## **2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**

### **Resilience Dividend: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Societies**

#### **Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Montenegro, Serbia and Albania<sup>\*</sup>, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Ukraine and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

We thank the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for convening the Sixth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Government of Switzerland for hosting it in Geneva.

Since the last Global Platform two years ago, disasters across the globe, small and large-scale, natural and man-made, continue to remind us how vulnerable we are. Hundreds of millions of people were affected by severe sudden on-set disasters and emergencies. More than half of the world's population experience changing climate and weather patterns. We all know that the intensity and scale of disasters will continue to grow globally.

These trends continue to affect also Europe. Forest fires and droughts, for example, stretch nowadays from Scandinavia and the Baltics to our Southern borders. Severe weather resulting in flooding, landslides, storm surge, and cold and heatwaves put lives at risk and destroy livelihoods and infrastructure.

We need to respond to the challenges of today, but also to think about the risks of tomorrow. Those that jeopardise our lives, exacerbate poverty, displace people, cause extraordinary economic loss and may pose security risks. The citizens of this world expect their leaders to act, and we simply cannot afford the cost of inaction. The EU is convinced that the implementation of an effective disaster risk prevention policy is essential to adapt to the effects of climate change and respond to new emerging risks.

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<sup>\*</sup> Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Very recently, the European Union improved its Union Civil Protection Mechanism by also including "rescEU". It will strengthen effectiveness of response to disasters through additional operational capacities. The EU will also develop a civil protection knowledge network, alongside enhanced prevention and preparedness measures. We are ready to assist any country in need.

Building resilience is at the heart of our international engagement and solidarity with others. The European Union is the largest donor in disaster risk reduction worldwide and the main supporter to the Sendai Framework implementation in our partner countries. We encourage other donors to consider increasing their support for disaster risk reduction. In our humanitarian aid assistance, we enhance national and local disaster preparedness for an early local response. We focus on risk reduction and preparedness in situations of crisis, fragility and recovery, where resilience strategies are being pursued.

There is still much to do. We have to achieve the targets of the Sendai Framework. This is our opportunity to improve disaster risk management. It is our responsibility to protect people. Disasters require solidarity and a well-organised, calm and unified reaction at all levels of society. Therefore, it is our duty to demonstrate political leadership. Based on operational experience, the EU wants to emphasise four key priorities:

Firstly, the EU will especially work towards achieving Target E of the Sendai Framework by 2020. This means to develop and implement disaster risk reduction strategies that are knowledge-based and inclusive, and take into account the positive role of women in disaster risk reduction. We recognise that education, including professional training create more risk-informed communities.

In addition to national measures for disaster risk communication, media and social networks should play a positive role before, during and after disasters. Their support to the efforts of public authorities by disseminating accurate information and by raising public awareness is crucial for making communities more resilient. They shall also enhance cooperation and boost confidence between citizens and the disaster management authorities.

Secondly, we must encourage private and public investments that are risk-informed to create a more sustainable path for our planet and our economy. We should consider nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches in our investments and development programmes, and foster economic activities that can reduce specific vulnerabilities.

Thirdly, we have to make infrastructure and cultural heritage more resilient. The recovery phase is a window of opportunity to achieve this in a sustainable way.

Finally, we will continue to promote innovation and disseminate science for disaster risk management, and strengthen capacities to forecast and anticipate response, including access to early-warning systems. We know that these measures can save lives and reduce losses.

Dear delegates,

With the Sendai Framework, we are determined to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. Within the European Union and through our cooperation with partners in the world.

Our world is facing a critical moment in history. Climate change is a colossal risk and challenge to us all.

The time for action is now.

Thank you.