



5th National Advisory Group Meeting

27-28 February, 2019

Holiday Inn Express Hotel, 97/2 Pavstos Buzand St., Yerevan 0002, Armenia

Meeting Report

Welcome note and Introduction

Mr Paulius Strelciunas (EU Delegation) welcomed the participants to the 5th NAG meeting of the PPRD East 2 Programme. He particularly expressed the hope that the EU Flagship Initiative helped to establish long-lasting regional partnerships in the area of Disaster Risk Management (DRM), and brought Partner Countries closer to the EU CP Mechanism. He further mentioned tangible achievements of the Programme in regard to legislative development (e.g. Law on voluntarism), inter-institutional cooperation, and enhanced general capacities in disaster response as tested during the full-scale regional field exercise EU MOLDEX 2017. He stated that EU will continue to support both at the regional level – for PPRD Phase 3 of 6 mln Euro, and at the bilateral level – for TWINNING program of 1 mln Euro. Mr Strelciunas thanked all the stakeholders for excellent cooperation so far.

Mr Artavazd Davtyan (Steering Committee (SC) member) emphasized that the Programme provided an opportunity to see what are the areas where they succeeded and had achievements, what are the bottlenecks, what are the areas that need continuous efforts, the missed opportunities and the directions needed for improve. He expressed gratitude to all colleagues and partners who contributed to the Programme, its development and achievements, wishing fruitful work through the day.

Mr Sergej Anagnosti (PPRD East 2 Team Leader) emphasized the importance of continuing the work started in Phase 2 and expressed hope that the leadership of the Ministry will continue the work of the inter-institutional WGs in the period preceding and during the Phase 3 as well.

The stakeholders presented themselves prior to starting the presentations by the team on what has been done on regional perspective and then by the national experts on what has been accomplished at the national level.

Achievements and Accomplishments – Regional level activities

Mr Anagnosti commenced the presentations with the political framework, and then acknowledged the achievements and accomplishments in the areas of legal approximation and institutional sustainability, complemented with extensive capacity building. He particularly mentioned the 6 Country Profiles, referred to achievements with regard to DRM thematic topics selected by the country: Flood Risk Management (FRM), Disaster Risk Assessment (DRA), Disaster Loss Data (DLD) collection and processing, ERRA, Raising Awareness about Disasters (RAD), Civil Protection Volunteerism (CPV), provided statistics on number of events and participants, and listed the remaining activities till the end of the Programme, concluding with the announcement of the Final Conference in Brussels scheduled for 28 March 2019, before the final reporting and close-out. He also provided feedback on Lessons Learnt & Recommendations.

Disaster Risk Assessment

Ms Nataša Holcinger (Disaster Risk Assessment expert) emphasized that work on DRA entails certain paradigm shift from reactive to proactive, which requires a mind change and cooperation across all the sectors in the country and a need for a new legal framework, a guiding document so



that all actors know their defined roles and responsibilities. The EU DRA Guidelines and best practices have been presented during a regional DRA workshop. Current state of affairs in DRA has been analysed in each Partner Country. The already established working groups need to keep the momentum developing sustainable DRA process and procedures.

Disaster Loss Data

Mr Anagnosi acknowledged that all Partner Countries are doing a good job in collecting and processing disaster loss data (DLD), however the only missing link was/is data sharing and its compatibility with the international methods and approaches.

Mr Anagnosi also informed about the ERRA regional workshops and developed installation manual, as well as conducted ERRA IT missions. The upgrade of the ERRA, proposed by the Programme exoert team, has been postponed by the EC.

Raising Awareness about Disasters

Mr Antonín Petr, Capacity Building Key Expert presented the achievements in the area of Raising Awareness about Disasters (RAD). The common gap identified for all the Partner Countries was the lack of a national communication strategy. Guidelines on how to develop National Communication Strategy was developed in RU and EN and distributed. A Regional Workshop on National Communication Strategy, and a Regional Workshop on Cooperation of CP communication experts with journalists & media were organised in 2016. Student-journalists have been engaged to play the role of international media during the exercise EU MOLDEX 2017. Prior to the exercise, a specific one-day workshop was organised for the journalist students.

Civil Protection Volunteerism

Another area of activities – Volunteerism in DRM was presented by Mr Petr. A Study tour on Civil Protection Volunteerism for Partner Countries' experts was organized to Finland and Denmark in 2016. A Regional Workshop on CPV was organized in Minsk in May 2017. The EU Aid Volunteers Initiative was presented at the workshop. Four documents have been developed: Assessment Tool for Comparative Analysis of Civil Protection Volunteerism, an Application for Registration with Central Registry of Civil Protection Volunteer Organisations, a Set of Templates and Guidelines for Certification of CP Volunteer Organisations, and Recommendations on the Evaluation of the Economic Value of Civil Protection Volunteerism. The last document, developed at the request of Partner Countries, provides an analysis of economic benefits of using volunteers rather than using CP professionals. In order to promote the volunteerism concept, a video has been produced with a motto to become a registered, trained and prepared CP volunteer. The video was screened first time in Armenia. The expectation is that the video will be publicly distributed for population at large in the countries through TV & media.

Mr Anagnosi provided some statistics on Programme events, mentioning that 92 events (approximately 2 events per month) had been conducted. He thanked the respective SC member and National Programme Coordinator for all the invaluable efforts in animating the other institutions to take part in PPRD East 2 events. He touched upon the upcoming events. He emphasized the importance of the regional approach for the uptake of lessons learnt and information exchange. As a concluding recommendation he mentioned the need for political support for the reforms to happen.

National level activities

Mr Artavazd Davtyan defined the approaches used to implement the Programme activities (i.e. establishment of thematic WGs, promotion of the EU good practice, exchange of information), and then tackled the national activities undertaken in the area of DRA and FRM, mentioning that a river basin management model plan has been approved according to the Governmental Protocol Decree.

Thereafter, Akhuryan, Ararat and Southern river basin management plans have been developed. A field exercise testing population protection actions to be taken after Akhuryan river dam collapse, had been conducted in Armavir Marz.

Draft of Governmental Decree on Approving the Procedure for Arranging Civil Protection and Disaster Management in Emergencies /Major Disasters/ and draft of SOPs for RA Commission, LEMA and HNS team have been developed which, after some changes, need to pass through certain legal procedures in order to become a guiding regulation for the country in this area. Armenian team took part in the EU MOLDEX 2017. Armenian rescuers have a rich experience in both participating in international exercises and in hosting such. The team has received OSOCC, LEMA, and UCC trainings by Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA). A conference on practical implementation of customs agreement in Armenia (Aghveran) was co-organised by MES and UN OCHA. Mr Davtyan informed that during the Geneva Humanitarian Cooperation Week, an expert group on exercises has been established within the UN OCHA, that will develop a unified approach in methodology for exercises, trainings, both international and national. He referred to ERRA tool that needs regular upgrading in view of constant technological progress. Mr Davtyan mentioned that significant efforts need to be taken to achieve some progress in the area of RAD, starting with the need for legislative changes so that the MES is in position to develop National Communication Strategy. On the other hand, the awareness raising is strongly linked to the culture of volunteerism, which is not yet well established in Armenia. However, there is a good progress in the area of CPV, one example of it is the Law on the Status of Rescuers. The Law on Volunteerism is in process of discussion and rescue voluntary work should also be reflected there. There are already 5 volunteer stations existing in the regions of Armenia. In conclusion Mr Davtyan reiterated that all the priority directions addressed through the PPRD East 2 will continue to be priorities for MES after the Programme is completed.

Mr Anagnosti reflected with some data: Armenian participants participated in 41 events - 35 regional and 6 national (297 participants, of which 230 males and 67 females).

Science and Disaster Risk Management

Mr John Karapetyan from the National Academy of Sciences informed about their research in the area of flood risk reduction with regard to safe exploitation of dams, electronic maps on potential flooded areas in case of dam accident, natural disaster forecasting, and production of water level metering/control/filtering equipment. In this view, he emphasized the importance of cooperation with MES in terms of both scientific and technological expertise, and expressed readiness to develop and submit a joint programme for EU consideration.

Civil Protection

Civil Protection Key Expert, Mr Michael Elmquist continued the meeting with presentation on civil protection (CP) activities, specifically, the CP training programme, the preparation process (Table-Top Exercises (TTX), Planning Conferences, Regional Lessons Learnt Conference, etc.) and implementation of the full-scale regional field exercise EU MOLDEX 2017 that took place on 18-21 September 2017, with 4 main objectives: Cooperation, Coordination, Communication and HNS. A video on EU MOLDEX 2017 gave an overview of environment and activities and complexity of the exercise that engaged around 800 participants, including rescuers, trainers, observers, and media. In conclusion, he encouraged Armenian colleagues to update the description of CP (Chapter 2) in the Country Profile developed back in 2015.

Mr Tigran Gidachyan reflected on the experience of the Armenian team through the process of preparation and participation in the exercise EU MOLDEX 2017. He particularly commented on the complicated national regulation and procedure for air transportation/transit of special dual-purpose

equipment, including required documentation and state fees. Moldovan partners had issued a special government decree waiving any customs fees for temporary import of the equipment of the incoming rescue teams. While all the Partner Countries have national regulations with this regard in case of a disaster, however, the main identified gap is the lack of such national regulations in case of international field exercises. He acknowledged that the exercise was organized on a highly elaborated level. This, in turn resulted in low level of discretion and free-play, preventing participants from the possibility of taking own decisions independently and learning from that process.

Mr Anagnosti explained the rationale behind the detailed pre-planning of the exercise activities – safety and equal task distribution among the rescue teams.

Mr Tepelikyan from the Ministry of Healthcare expressed hope that participants from relevant structures of other national institutions will also be engaged in future field exercises.

Introduction of Host Nation Support in Armenia

Further, Mr Gidachyan presented introduction of HNS in Armenia, starting from capacity building training courses, formation of HNS ministerial and inter-institutional WGs, HNS TTX, prospective legal regulations on HNS that should likely be stipulated in a government decree in the future, assessment of airport capacities, practical guide on procedures for humanitarian aid transportation, etc. He described also the cooperation and management process in place in case of a major disaster (earthquake).

Mr Tigran Tovmasyan from UNICEF informed about Disaster Management Country Team (DMCT) established with UN support, and engaging all the humanitarian structures available in country as members and the Red Cross as the observer organization. The purpose of the Team is coordination of preparedness and response activities of the international humanitarian structures. A response plan in case of large-scale evacuation has been developed, and currently a DMCT action plan in case of major earthquake is under preparation.

Mr Antonín Petr commented that PPRD East 2 experts have supported the preparation of drafts for two pieces of legislation: Government decree on approving the procedure for arranging CP disaster management in emergencies and SOP for Crisis Commission LEMA and HNS team. So, Mr Petr asked when these documents would likely be officially approved and adopted. Mr Gidachyan replied that both documents are annexed as parts of one common draft decree; however it is difficult to indicate when it will be officially adopted.

Mr Tepelikyan added that due to current political reforms taking place in the country, reallocation of responsibility areas among government institutions, changes of government structure - it is difficult to define the legal documents' adoption timeline.

Mr Anagnosti encouraged to keep the HNS WG active, test the SOPs regardless of the formal legal adoption of the documents that might be a lengthy process.

Civil Protection Volunteerism

Mr Kyureghyan presented rescue volunteerism movement formation and development activities undertaken in the period of 2014-2019, including the legal documents, ministerial decrees for establishment of 33 fire-rescue stations, amendments in the Republic of Armenia Law on Rescue Forces and Status of Rescuer, regulations on compensation to volunteers leaving for emergency scene for up to 15 days. A draft Law on Volunteer Activities and Volunteer Work has been developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs which was not approved by the former Government.

Mr Sergey Sahakyan for the Red Cross Society of Armenia informed that a model of joint disaster response activities of Red Cross volunteers in cooperation with MES in remote regional communities is currently in the process of development. After testing, such model can further be replicated in other regions as well, and some of the fire-rescue stations will be included in the model. Mr Petr commented about importance of having a relevant law necessary for institutionalization of volunteer activities. He added that volunteers could be used also in prevention phase, particularly in awareness raising campaigns. He wondered if any activities are foreseen for development of volunteer organizations' database. Mr Kyureghyan responded affirmatively that there is an existing registration log of volunteers that will be maintained and developed into a database of volunteers – both natural and legal persons. Mr Petr encouraged making use of the templates developed by the Programme that will allow volunteers to become accredited for EU Aid Volunteer programme.

Mr Anagnosti advised to include the regional volunteer-rescue units into the overall DRM system of Armenia, in order to secure their financial and institutional sustainability.

Disaster Risk Assessment

Mr Armen Dashyan presented the activities implemented in the area of DRA, namely the inter-institutional WG has been established by the MES decree, EU methodological approach in DRA has been studied. He mentioned that after assessment of the disaster risk there is a need to have designated bodies responsible for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) of the identified and assessed risks. A DRM model is being tested during a year in the regional communities of Armenia with an objective to identify the most efficient combination of applicable methods and tools. Assessment of earthquake risk for Armenia, Yerevan seismic risk, landslide, and flood risks have already been done.

Ms Holcinger reflected that national guidelines need to be adopted to make all the available DRA methodologies comparable in the end, to allow identifying the biggest risk in the country and the areas that require priority investments for addressing the specific risks. Each risk can have its own assessment methodology, which should be refined constantly in view of technological progress and knowledge advancement. Once again, she briefly introduced the steps recommended in line with the EU approach for DRA.

Flood Risk Management and Disaster Loss Data

Mr Armen Dashyan further presented works undertaken by MES in the area of FRM. He particularly mentioned that water basin management plans for 5 areas have been approved by Government decree. The structure of those plans mostly corresponds to those recommended by the EU directives. Mr Davtyan informed about exercise conducted in Armavir Marz with an objective of testing response plans and cooperation process with different authorities, including communities - for the abovementioned Akhuryan water reservoir dam collapse scenario. The exercise detected the importance of information exchange coordination efficiency on regional level for effective response actions.

Marco Massabo (FRM & DLD expert) presented the achievements, particularly establishment of the FRM WG, draft Action Plan for approximation to EU Floods Directive, Analysis of Water Code, and the developed policy recommendations for approximation to EU FD.

Mr Hakob Hakobyan (DLD WG lead) presented DLD data collection coordination activities of MES. Damage assessment procedures have been approved by the Governmental decree. Three levels of assessment are regulated: by Community, Marz and Republican commissions. He noted importance of damage estimation clear indicators for informed annual budget planning decisions. The pressing issue in this sector is the lack of common methodology for damage assessment, the lack of capacity

on community level, as well as misperception with regard to the use of assessment data, as it is not meant for full compensation against damage, but rather for some monetary assistance from the Government. Synchronization with Sendai monitoring mechanism for DLD collection and indicators development is another important factor to address prospectively. It has been decided to share the DLD collection community level example form with PPRD East 2 experts for comments and recommendations.

Community level DRR

Ms Holcinger elaborated on differences between the a) DRA process addressed within the framework of the PPRD East 2 Programme that includes response capacities along with vulnerabilities and community information to be collected before something happens, that allows to make strategic decisions on specific sectors (infrastructure) demanding investment in DRR, b) the multi-sector Rapid Risk Assessment when an emergency occurred (MIRRA or ARIANA tool already adopted in Armenia), and c) DRA in terms of early warning.

Mr Ara Aslanyan provided a brief outline on what has been done in DRA on local level (LLRM), such as the developed and approved practical guide on DRM for communities. The communities should foresee and include in their 5-year development plans specific DRR activities. Currently only 15-17% of communities have it included in their plans.

Mr Anagnosti recommended that ideally all the assessment and collected information at the community level should contribute to overall national risk management system. He brought examples of cleaning riverbeds and reforestation that are implemented by communities but are not always perceived and recorded as DRR measures by them.

Mr Khangeldyan from the MES Crisis Management Centre commented that the time for the risk to become a threat is so short, that the relevant risk assessment mechanisms for given dynamic risks are not managed to be applied. He also noted that in order to organize efficient response and decrease disaster losses - efforts should also be focused on early detection of fast-pace risks. Generally, the risks should be assessed and analysed individually. Responding to Mr Khangeldyan's question, Ms Holcinger explained that national risks assessment in Croatia is a continuous process carried out every 3 years, following the EU DRA Guidelines, using the national platform for DRR. It should be distinguished between preventative risk assessment in early warning stage before something happens, and risk assessment during emergency.

Mr Anagnosti clarified on the use of terminology with regard to hazard (natural phenomena), and risk - as a combination of hazard and vulnerability. Good governance, rule of law and cost-benefit analysis should be the backbones of decisions on how much to invest aiming to reduce the negative impacts of disasters.

Visibility and Programme Management

Mr Anagnosti further updated on publications and social media materials that have been developed and disseminated through the Programme. He informed about result-oriented monitoring of the programme (Feb-Apr 2017), financial audit of the Programme (Oct-Nov 2017), both with highly positive feedback from the EC. The Final Conference is scheduled for 28th March 2019.

Mr Davtyan informed that PPRD East Phase 3 is planned to be launched likely in January 2020. The Partner Countries need to summarize the results of the Phase 2 and define the priority areas in DRR/DRM where EU expertise and consultancy is needed. He also informed about the SEPA sub-committee meeting in Brussels scheduled for 11-12 March 2019 where activities envisaged through

PPRD East Phase 3 will also be discussed. In addition, he informed that TWINNING project fiche is prepared, with 4 main priority directions to address, yet to be finalized in the nearest future.

ALTER Project

Mr Evangelos Katsaros presented the main objectives of the ALTER Project implemented jointly with lead partner – National Observatory of Athens, European University Cyprus, Centre for Defence and Security (Bulgaria), and with Armenian counterparts: ARNAP – National DRR Platform and AUA – American University of Armenia. The Project is in the second year of implementation and is working towards establishing cooperation between public and private sector and local communities in specific pilot areas of Armenia – Sisian, Kapan and Akhtala, for addressing specific risks associated with environmental adverse impact of hydropower dams and tailing dams in the communities. The Project activities include also TTXs, training programs in local communities, small scale field exercises to test specific scenarios.

To transfer the experience of the EU CP Mechanism – the Project will bring and transfer to Armenian authorities tools, methodologies, know-how on how to deal with risk of floods caused by earthquakes, how to manage risks of dam failures. Such dams are often owned or managed by private companies, so the ambitious goal of the ALTER is to engage them more into DRR in the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility, possibly have some agreements, MOUs or small action plans that foresee some investments from their side in order to reduce the risks in specific pilot areas. Final conference of the Project is scheduled next December. In conclusion Mr Katsaros thanked PPRD East 2 team for invitation and opportunity to participate and share at the 5th NAG meeting.

Mr Anagnostis expressed hope that ALTER could take the legacy or to bridge over in working with all the stakeholders and inter-institutional WGs until the Phase 3 starts.

Concluding remarks

Summarising the work of the NAG meeting, in his concluding remarks Mr Davtyan expressed gratitude to the PPRD East 2 team for the great investment transferring knowledge and experience that allowed to strengthen resilience and safety of Armenia. Overall, the programme was a vehicle for mutual learning and exchange through the journey “Together for a Safer Future”.

Mr Anagnostis concluded that the Programme was unique and experimental in certain ways, and despite of the fast changing political environment in the country, the Armenian partners have always kept cooperation on the highest level, for which he thanked all the Armenian partners on behalf of the PPRD East 2 team.

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AGENDA

Day 1

09:30-10:00	Registration and welcome coffee	
10:00-10:15	Official Opening	Mr Armen Harutyunyan, Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations Mr Paulius Streliunas, EU Delegation
10:15-10:30	Welcome note and introduction of participants	National Programme Coordinator (PPRD East 2 Team Leader) Plenary

Setting the Scene – Programme's Overview

10:30-11:00	Overview of the overall PPRD East 2 Programme achievements	PPRD East 2 expert team
11:00-11:30	Brief Overview of the PPRD East 2 Programme achievements in Armenia	National Programme Coordinator
11:30-11:45	Coffee break	

Presentation of the Civil Protection Capacity Building Programme (including the EU MOLDEX 2017)

11:45-12:15	CP Training Courses, TTXs, EU MOLDEX 2017, Lessons Learned approach, follow-up activities – regional perspective	Civil Protection Key Expert Plenary
12:15-12:45	CP Training Courses, TTXs, EU MOLDEX 2017, Lessons Learned approach, follow-up activities – Armenia achievements	(MES) Exercise Planner (MES) Lessons Learnt Focal Point (MES) Leader of the AM Rescue Team

12:45-13:15	Discussion	Plenary
13:15-14:30	Lunch	
Presentation of Armenia priorities: Host Nation Support (HNS), Civil Protection Volunteerism (CPV) and Raising Awareness about Disasters (RAD)		
14:30-15:00	Host Nation Support - approach, achievements, and future action	HNS Focal Point
15:00-15:30	Discussion	Plenary
15:30-16:00	Civil Protection Volunteerism – approach, achievements, and future action	CPV Focal Point
16:00-16:30	Discussion	Plenary
16:30-16:45	Coffee break	
16:45-17:15	Raising Awareness about Disasters – approach, achievements, and future action	RAD Focal Point
17:15-17:45	Discussion	Plenary
17:45-18:00	Conclusion of Day 1	National Programme Coordinator

Day 2

09:30-10:00	Recapitulation of Day 1	National Programme Coordinator (PPRD East 2 Team Leader)
Continuation of presentation of Armenia priorities: Flood Risk Management (FRM), Disaster Risk Assessment (DRA), and Disaster Loss Data (DLD)		
10:00-10:30	Flood Risk Management - approach, achievements, and future action	FRM Focal Point
10:30-11:00	Discussion	Plenary

11:00-11:30	Coffee break	
11:30-12:00	Disaster Risk Assessment - approach, achievements, and future action	DRA Focal Point
12:00-12:30	Discussion	Plenary
12:30-13:00	Disaster Loss Data - approach, achievements, and future action	DLD Focal Point
13:00-13:30	Discussion	Plenary
13:30-14:30	Lunch	
Presentation of the PPRD East 2 Visibility and Programme Management Activities		
14:30-14:45	Presentation of the PPRD East 2 Visibility and Programme Management	Team Leader
14:45-15:00	Discussion	Plenary
15:00-15:30	Summary and next steps	National Programme Coordinator
15:30-16:00	Closing words and group photo	Team Leader Ministry of Emergency Situations EU Delegation

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