

Association Européenne de Représentants Territoriaux de l'Etat

European Association of State Territorial Representatives



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**“Management of natural disasters
by the State territorial representatives”**

**XXIXth European Days
Of the State Territorial Representatives**

**İZMİR, Türkiye
May 2 - 4, 2024**



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PARTICIPANTS PROGRAM

Thursday, May 2, 2024

- ◆ **10:00 - 10:30** Registration of participants (conference hall at the hotel)
- ◆ **10:30 - 11:00** Presentation of the participants
 - **Mrs. Nicole KLEIN**, Prefect (h), Secretary General of the EASTR (**France**)
- ◆ **11:00 - 12:30** **OPENING PROTOCOL SESSION**
 - **Mr. Saffet Arikani BEDÜK**, President of the EASTR, Governor, President of the Turkish Association of Governors (**Türkiye**)
 - **Mr. Süleyman ELBAN**, Governor of Izmir (**Türkiye**)
 - **Mr. Ali YERLİKAYA**, Minister of the Interior (**Türkiye**)
- ◆ **12:30 - 14:00** Welcome lunch (with partners)
- ◆ **14:00 - 15:30** **INAUGURAL SESSION**
 - **Prof. Dr. Orhan TATAR**, Director General of Earthquakes and Risk Reducing, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (**Türkiye**) 30'
 - **Prof. Dr. Olivier BORRAZ**, Director of research at the CNRS (National Center for Scientific Research), founder of CrisisLab, Center for Sociology of Organizations of Sciences Po (**France**) 30'
"The role of state territorial representatives in managing natural disasters"
 - **Mr. Hüseyin Kürşat KIRBIYIK**, Governor, Deputy Minister of Health (**Türkiye**) 30'
- ◆ **16:00 - 18:50** Free time for members not participating at the Board of Directors
- ◆ **16:00 - 18:00** **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
- ◆ **18:00 - 18:50** Free time
- ◆ **18:50** Meeting at the hotel lobby
- ◆ **19:00** Departure for dinner by bus
- ◆ **20:00** Dinner hosted by the Governor of Izmir, Mr. Süleyman ELBAN
Dress code: cocktail dress

PARTICIPANTS PROGRAM

Friday, May 3, 2024

- ◆ **8:45 - 10:00 Round table 1 “Coordination of relief operations and organization of crisis management”**
Crisis Management Experiences by the STRs in the February 6, 2023 Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes in Türkiye

Moderator:

- **Associated Prof. Selim ÇAPAR**, Governor and Head of the Research and Studies Center of the Ministry of Interior of Türkiye (Türkiye) 10'

Speakers:

- **Mr. Okay MEMİŞ**, Governor and Director of the Disaster and Emergency Management (Türkiye) 15'
“General effects of earthquakes and situation analysis”
- **Mr. Mustafa MASATLI**, Governor of Hatay Province (Türkiye) 15'
“Infrastructure, environment and cleaning services”
- **Dr. Osman VAROL**, Governor of Adıyaman Province (Türkiye) 15'
“Search and rescue, temporary shelter, debris removal services”
- **Mrs. Fatma Turhan KESER**, Perşembe District Governor (Türkiye) 15'
“Psycho-social support services for earthquake victims”

Debate with the audience: 10'

- ◆ **10:00 - 10:15** Coffee break
- ◆ **10:15 - 11:30 Round table 2 “Joint action by STRs and other local, regional and national actors to assist disaster victims and mobilize resources”**

Moderator:

- **Mrs. Laura LEGA**, Prefect, Head of the civil liberties and immigration Department, General Secretary of ANFACI (Italy) 10'

Speakers:

- **Mr. Sándor SZABÓ**, Government commissioner, Government office of Nógrád county (Hungary) 15'
“The role of the Government Commissioner in crisis management in Hungary and Defense drill in case of an earthquake in Nograd County”
- **Mr. Renato FRANCESCHELLI**, Head of the Department of firefighters, public rescue and civil protection (Italy) 15'
- **Mrs. Eugenia GOMEZ DE DIEGO**, Government Delegate to the Region of Cantabria (Spain) 15'
“Governance of natural disaster management in Spain”
- **Mrs. Pascale TRIMBACH**, Prefect of Allier (France) 10'
“Hail episode in Vichy, a city listed as a world heritage site: ecological and economic consequences”

Debate with the audience: 10'

- ♦ 11:30 - 12:45 Round table 3 *“Support for the resumption of normal activities and the resilience of territories”*

Moderator:

- **Mr. Laurent PREVOST**, Prefect, former Director General of Civil Security and Risk Management, French Ministry of the Interior (**France**) 15'

Speakers:

- **Mr. Jacques BILLANT**, Prefect of the department Pas-de-Calais (**France**) 15'
“Floods in Pas-de-Calais”
- **Mr. Tommy LECLERCQ**, Governor of the Hainaut Province (**Belgium**) 15'
“The importance of territorial powers in preventing deficiencies in the orohydrographic network and flooding”
- **Mr. Frank SCHERER**, Landrat of Ortenaukreis district (**Germany**) 15'
“How to manage severe weather events, their consequences and the measures taken to prevent them in future”

Debate with the audience: 10'

- ♦ 13:00 - 14:00 Lunch

- ♦ 14:00 - 15:15 Round table 4 *“Crisis communication and relations with the Government”*

Moderator:

- **Mrs. Anne AZAM-PRADEILLES**, Honorary civil administrator, international expert in public administration reform (**France**) 10'

Speakers:

- **Mr. Tom Cato KARLSEN**, Governor of Nordland county (**Norway**) 20'
“Crisis communication in the Arctic”
- **Mrs. Cathy BERX**, Governor of Antwerp province (**Belgium**) 20'
“Crisis communication and relations with the Government”
- **Mr. Nertil JOLE**, Prefect of Korca region (**Albania**) 20'

Debate with the audience: 10'

- ♦ 15:15 - 15:30 Coffee break

- ♦ 15:30 - 15:45 Synthesis of the sessions by Mr. Jean-Michel BRICAULT, Lecturer at the Reims University (**France**)

- ♦ 16:00 - 17:00 **GENERAL ASSEMBLY**
Approval of accounts, vote on the 2024 budget, modification of the statutes

- ♦ 17:00 **CLOSING SESSION**

- **Mr. Saffet Arıkan BEDÜK**, President of the EASTR, Former governor, General President of the Association of Turkish governors (**Türkiye**)

- ♦ 17:30 - 19:50 Free time

- ♦ 19:50 Meeting at the lobby of the hotel

- ♦ 20:00 Departure for dinner by bus

- ♦ 20:30 Gala dinner hosted by the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Ali YERLİKAYA
Dress code: cocktail dress

Opening protocol session



BY MRS. NICOLE KLEIN

Prefect (h), Secretary general of the EASTR, France

Dear friends,
dear colleagues,
ladies and gentlemen,

New Secretary General of the EASTR since January 1, 2024, I am pleased to welcome you, in Izmir, to the 29th European Days of State Territorial Representatives, dedicated this year to “the management of natural disasters.” You will see that our Turkish hosts have made a lot of effort, through daily contact with our Officer-in-charge, Anastasiia Diakova, so that we can work in the best conditions. I thank them, on behalf of all of us, for their exceptional organization and hospitality.

I will start with some news from the association. The bad first is the departure of Sweden, then the excellent is the more than likely return of Spain. It is represented here by two Government Delegates, from the region of Cantabria and that of La Rioja, and by the Deputy Director of European and international relations of the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Democratic Memory, whom I congratulate for the energy she deployed for the return of her country to this association.

Our Dutch friends have apologized as well as our Swiss friends, the appointment of Boris Cuanoud having not yet been made

official and he and his colleagues being held by the heavy prefectural commissions for setting leases.

I welcome the presence of a single Albanian representative, Mr. Nertil Jole, acquired thanks to our friend Anne Azam-Pradeilles who deploys her expertise in territorial administration reform throughout Europe and beyond.

Finally, I welcome the last official presence of Frank Scherer, Governor of Ortenaukreis County. He assured us that he would continue to come to our Days in an unofficial capacity. His appointment as honorary member will be proposed to the Board of Directors and the General Assembly.

Before giving way to the inaugural session and the opening of our work by Mr. Saffet Arikan Bedük, President of the EASTR, the Governor of Izmir and the Turkish Deputy Minister of the Interior who gives us the honor of his presence, I suggest that each of the delegations which are placed in alphabetical order introduce themselves. Knowing the faces, names and functions will allow us to exchange more easily, proving once again that the EASTR is a magnificent place for professional meetings and warm conviviality. ●



BY MR. SAFFET ARIKAN BEDÜK

President of the EASTR, Governor, President of the Turkish Association of Governors, Türkiye



As the President of the Turkish Association of Governors and EASTR Chairman-in-Office, I would like to welcome you to our country and Izmir. In 2015, we hosted the 22nd European Days in Istanbul, where we discussed the topic of "State Territorial Representatives as a Profession" in a program intertwined with history and nature in the largest city of our country. Nine years later, we are honored to host our esteemed colleagues and academicians, in our country and in Izmir.

Especially after the earthquakes in our country last year, which were the "Disaster of the Century", it was very meaningful to choose the theme of "State Territorial Representatives in Disaster Management". We hope that the exchange of knowledge and experience and the exchange of ideas within the scope of our European Days program will be beneficial for all our participants. On the other hand, we have prepared a program full of history and natural beauties. In this context, I would like to express our great pleasure to present you the best examples of Turkish culture and hospitality with the delicious cuisine, unique natural beauties, rich historical and cultural heritage of our country.

As in all member countries of our Association, in our country, STRs carry out works and operations in all areas of life and in many different fields. STRs are not only administrators, but also people who are always present in the society, performing duties in every field where people exist, making significant changes in people's lives and touching their lives with these duties. The administration of a province or district requires not only being aware of everything about that area, but also being able to share the same feelings, thoughts and emotions with the citizens. For this reason, STRs act within a very broad framework in terms of their field of duty.

In the Presidential Government System in Türkiye, the executive duty and authority is assumed by the President. STRs serve as representatives of the State and the President in provinces and districts. Therefore, STRs in provinces and districts ensure cooperation and coordination between public institutions, private sector and non-governmental organizations. The earthquake on February 6 last year was one of the most effective examples of working with this understanding.

Governors and district governors (STRs) are appointed by the President. However, their entry into the profession, in-service training, personal rights and appointment files are monitored by the Ministry of Interior. In this context, the Ministry of Interior

occupies a strategic position in the management of the country's territory in Türkiye.

"Disaster Management", which is the subject of this year's meeting, falls primarily within the scope of duty of the local administrative chiefs in accordance with the relevant legislation. Unfortunately, Türkiye is located in a geographically densely disaster-prone region.

Not only earthquakes such as the "Disaster of the Century" that occurred in Kahramanmaraş on February 6, 2023, but also many other disasters such as floods, forest fires and landslides.

In order to put forward the most effective struggle with this intense disaster situation of our country and to manage emergencies successfully, our Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, which was established under the auspices of our Ministry of Interior, is a subsidiary institution in our central organization. In addition, as the provincial organization, provincial disaster and emergency directorates carry out their duties under the command of the STRs. When we look at the district structure, in accordance with the Türkiye Disaster Response Plan (TAMP), a district AFAD Center can be established under the chairmanship of the STRs in the districts to be determined by the governorships by evaluating the disaster-prone nature of the districts with a population over 50,000.

The disaster management of our country is carried out with an integrated approach as pre-disaster, during disaster and post-disaster works and operations. Our STRs play an active role in all of these processes and work with great sacrifice and devotion regardless of working hours in order to provide the best service to our citizens.

While transferring our knowledge and experience in this field to our esteemed participants, it will be very valuable for us to learn about the experiences and good practices in your countries. I would like to thank the SG Mrs. KLEIN and Mrs. DIAKOVA for their valuable and devoted work, which will make the program very detailed and productive.

Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to the Governor of Izmir for hosting the event and for his support during the preparation and execution process; and to the Minister of Interior, who, as a STR himself, has experienced all the difficulties of our profession up close; who has never withheld his support for the execution of today's meeting. ●



BY MR. SÜLEYMAN ELBAN
Governor of Izmir, Türkiye

First of all, I would like to welcome you, esteemed EASTR members and participants of the 29th European Days to Izmir. We are delighted to host you in Izmir.

I would like to express my gratitude to the EASTR General Secretariat and the Turkish Administrators Association for choosing Izmir as the venue for the 29th European Days, and to the Ministry of Interior for their support in organizing the meeting.

The organization of the meeting in Izmir will contribute not only to the content of the work but also to the activities, cultural excursions and geographical diversity of the non-working time.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish that the 29th Europe Days will be beneficial for all participants and greet you with respect. ●



BY MR. MEHMET AKTAŞ
Deputy Minister of the Interior, Türkiye

We are pleased to welcome you, esteemed members of the EASTR and distinguished participants of the 29th European Days, to our country and Izmir. Our Minister wanted to be with us today, but due to his busy schedule, he could not attend the program. As the Deputy Minister representing our Ministry, I and our Director General of Provincial Administration came together with you today.



As the Ministry of Interior, we are in contact with our STRs on a 24/7 basis in terms of our areas of duty, authority and responsibility. Our STRs, who have the primary responsibility for ensuring security and public order in our provinces and districts, also take part in the management levels of the central organization of our Ministry.

Although the official and personal procedures of our STRs are carried out by our Ministry, the Turkish Association of Governors is the only association that takes part in increasing the professional knowledge and experience of our colleagues, improving their personal rights and promoting the profession.

The Turkish Association of Governors' participation in regional and international organizations, particularly the EASTR, is very valuable in terms of providing international contributions to the development of the profession of governors. In this context, as the Ministry of Interior, I would like to take this opportunity to once again express our support to the Turkish Association of Governors in this regard.

Over thousands of years of world history, a wide variety of governance models, laws and rulers have emerged in different geographies and civilizations. Just as life itself is in constant change and development, the forms of governance in different parts of the world are undoubtedly in constant change and development. Each country has developed governance systems in line with its social reality. Governance systems have a vital place and importance in the governance models of countries, both directing and experiencing this change. Understanding this change and development process well and benefiting from the experiences can only be possible through organizations and meetings that enable the sharing of these experiences. One of the most productive and undoubtedly one of the most important examples of these meetings in the context of governance is the European Days that we will be organizing here.

There is no doubt that such good opportunities to share experiences with our colleagues both within our countries and in other countries in order to provide the best service to our citizens in the places where we work, to see examples of good practices and to learn about preventive measures to solve possible problems in governance issues before they occur will be of great benefit to all participants.

The fact that the theme of this year's meeting is "STRs in the Disaster Management" has been very valuable for us. As you are aware, Türkiye is located in a region where disasters are experienced intensely due to its geographical location. We are still working to heal the wounds of the earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş on February 6, 2023, which we describe as the disaster of the century.

With the unprecedented effort and devotion of our state and our nation, hand in hand, with an unprecedented effort and devotion, with the struggle to eliminate the loss caused by the earthquake, important work has been carried out for our disaster-stricken citizens so far, and our friends will provide you with detailed information on these issues. Our recovery efforts will continue unabated until the victimization of the last citizen affected by the earthquake is eliminated.

In this whole process, our STRs have assumed effective and critical roles at every stage of the disaster and continue their duties. Although it refers to an administrative division and grading, the STR is actually involved in every field where people are present and carries out their duties. In the provinces and districts where they work, they are obliged to ensure effective cooperation and coordination among other professionals as well as their high-level managerial duties. Therefore, it is of vital importance to train and equip them professionally in order to produce solutions by using initiative in situations where the tasks are not clear from time to time, when it is necessary to take a quick reaction in the face of developing events and when information is limited with the existing facilities and information, and when necessary, they are also responsible for effective crisis management.

In this context, I believe that this meeting held in Izmir will bring important experiences both to our colleagues in our country and to you, our esteemed participants. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all colleagues who have contributed to the preparation of this valuable meeting and greet you with respect. ●

Inaugural session



BY PROF. DR. ORHAN TATAR

Director General of Earthquakes and Risk
Reducing, Disaster and Emergency
Management Presidency, Türkiye

On February 6, 2023, our country was rocked by two major devastating earthquakes occurring 9 hours apart. With magnitudes of 7.7 and 7.6, these earthquakes marked one of the largest natural disasters in Anatolian geography in perhaps the last century, if not the last five hundred years, in terms of their formation, affected areas, total population affected, length of surface rupture created, and the simultaneous rupture of 7 separate fault segments. The area directly affected by the earthquake is larger than many countries in Europe. Three times larger than Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Denmark, and larger than the area of Bulgaria. The population directly affected is about 14 million. Following the earthquake that occurred at 04:17, a level 4 disaster situation was declared 45 minutes later, and an international aid call was made.

With the establishment of AFAD in 2009, an integrated disaster management approach began to dominate in our country, and the Türkiye Disaster Response Plan (TAMP) came into effect according to the destructive effects of the disasters, enabling the management of disasters both centrally and in the field. In TAMP, there are 25 disaster groups at the national level and 23 at the local level, with intervention levels determined according to the degree of impact. S1 indicates sufficient local resources, S2 indicates the need for reinforcement from supporting provinces when local resources are insufficient due to the magnitude of the disaster in a province, S3 indicates the need for national support, and S4 indicates the need for international support.

Since the establishment of AFAD under the Prime Ministry in 2009, it is possible to say that there has been a new understanding and organization in disaster management in Türkiye. Accordingly, governors at the provincial level and district governors at the

district level have been authorized as the primary responsible parties for local disaster management. With the transition to the Presidential governmental system in 2018, the closure of the Prime Ministry and its attachment to the Ministry of Interior Affairs marked the beginning of a new era where disaster management and territorial administration converged. In this regard, many high-ranking officials of AFAD Presidency have been appointed from territorial administration.

Following the earthquakes on February 6, over 700 State Territorial Representatives were appointed both at the Ankara AFAD Disaster Management Coordination Center and in the affected provinces. 59 governors served as coordinating governors both in the field and at the center. While STR's coordinated processes such as intervention, search and rescue, evacuation, temporary sheltering, nutrition, logistics, and warehouse management from the moment of the earthquake, they also contributed to many processes related to disaster management at the center.

The recovery efforts carried out in coordination with all state institutions under AFAD after the earthquakes on February 6, constitute the largest recovery operation ever carried out in the world in such a short period. Meeting the basic needs of citizens staying in temporary shelter areas, providing rent support, removing heavily damaged buildings, selecting locations for permanent housing, and starting to deliver permanent housing and workplaces from the first anniversary of the earthquake are tremendous successes. Undoubtedly, STR's have made significant contributions to this success at district and provincial level. In the future, continuing state-citizen cooperation and interagency coordination are vital for building resilient communities and cities against earthquakes and other natural disasters. ●

Inaugural session

The role of state territorial representatives in managing natural disasters

BY DR OLIVIER BORRAZ

Director of research at the CNRS,
founder of CrisisLab, Center for Sociology of
Organizations of Sciences Po, France



States and their representatives have always had a central role in managing natural disasters, either through prevention and mitigation, organizing and coordinating emergency response, or financing compensation and reconstruction in their aftermath.

But with global warming, the situation is changing. Not only are natural disasters bound to occur more frequently, but regions that had previously never experienced extreme events will be confronted with large fires, droughts or floodings, for instance.

These disasters will also be different in nature. As highlighted by recent crises, six features are liable to turn disasters into major crisis situations.

1. Natural disasters and their effects will be protracted, i.e. they will not just be limited events in time and space, but will produce long-term effects that will be felt in other regions. This requires the capacity to anticipate early on these effects, to limit their occurrence.
2. Natural disasters have never been just that: natural. They have always had important social, economic, and political dimensions. But with global warming, these features will be even more pronounced. Crises will be multidimensional, either because the initial event will trigger many secondary crises; or because disasters and accidents in different domains will occur simultaneously. This requires a capacity to manage compound crises.
3. Natural disasters may also emerge as creeping crises, i.e. slow-moving phenomena that are either not perceptible or considered under control; until they turn into a full-blown crisis. Marine submergence is such an example, but there are many others. This requires the capacity to detect early on such phenomena and treat them as actual crises.

4. Managing natural disasters involves the coordination of multiple organizations. This has always been the case, but we have witnessed during the last decades a proliferation of organizations in all domains of social, economic, and political life. This implies that a substantial part of crisis management will go into coordinating a massive number of organizations at different levels. Yet, emergency plans often list only a limited number of these organizations, leaving out those that could play a key role in an actual disaster.

5. Traditionally, crises are associated with uncertainty due to lack of information regarding the nature, amplitude or characteristics of the triggering event or its effects. But nowadays, this lack of information is quickly superseded by too much data and information flowing in from multiple sources, including the organizations mentioned above and social networks. This leads to a new type of uncertainty, resulting from too much information and the difficulty in assessing its accuracy and validity.
6. Local populations are also often left out of emergency planning as potential sources of first response, mobilization, solidarity, and self-organization. They are to be protected, but are denied any form of agency, let alone rationality. Yet, they often play an important role which must be taken into consideration alongside public administrations, emergency services, local governments, and NGOs.

Acknowledging these six features should lead to a reassessment of the role of territorial state representatives. This involves rethinking the relations between state and society, in the face of growing environmental threats. ●

Inaugural session Disaster Management Experiences

BY MR. HÜSEYİN KÜRŞAT KIRBIYIK
Governor, Deputy Minister of Health, Türkiye



As you know, the earthquakes that affected 11 provinces on February 6, 2023 and the following days, and deeply injured all of us, caused great destruction. Our professional work during the period in question has progressed by combining with the spirit of volunteerism inspired by our humanitarian and conscientious feelings. By sharing this experience with you, I would like to guide the decisions we will make from now on, both in our work and in our hearts.

Especially in the days immediately after the earthquake, we focused on our work calmly due to obligations such as acting quickly, making quick and correct decisions, focusing on multiple points, and instantly analyzing deficiencies and needs. In later times, duties such as acting fairly, being able to distinguish some malicious behaviors and requests, and presenting a conscientious approach equally to every earthquake victim were added to these obligations. All of these have provided us with great gains in solidarity and a professional approach to disasters.

Our first place of duty for coordination and support immediately after the earthquake was the Elbistan district of Kahramanmaraş. The personnel within the Edirne Special Provincial Administration were immediately directed to the earthquake zone. A number of tools and equipment, from excavators to diggers, were also shipped to the earthquake zone.

Additionally, volunteers working in the private sector contributed to the aid and search and rescue activities in Kahramanmaraş Elbistan. Volunteers, whose support we are always grateful for, worked in the region with large equipment from construction machines to cranes.

As one of the three coordinator governorships assigned to the area, we took on a wide range of responsibilities, from managing search and rescue teams to tent areas, and we quickly started to work actively.

We carried out many activities, including tent installation, in Elbistan district until February 13. In addition to the tent areas created in the center, container city planning was carried out in the neighborhoods; Animal tents were set up for citizens who lost their barns due to collapse or damage. Food was provided to earthquake victims by opening soup kitchens in different locations; From soup distribution to treat distribution, many people were given a helping hand.

The buildings damaged as a result of the earthquake were identified and the number of those that needed to be demolished urgently or were severely damaged was determined. Unfortunately, many of our citizens lost their lives during this period. At this point, it was of great importance for the earthquake victims, their loved ones and their families to reach their bodies. For this reason, it was among our duties to ensure that the burial procedures of the bodies were completed and they were bid farewell.

After Elbistan, I was notified of the position of Hatay Antakya-Defne Coordinator Governor. Here, first of all, the demolished buildings in the city center were mapped using geographic information systems technologies. These maps became our guide in both search and rescue and debris removal activities.

Destroyed buildings and buildings with the possibility of life were identified on the map with students studying at gendarmerie and coast guard schools. The city was divided into 5 main regions and 50 sub-regions, taking into account the density of destroyed buildings with prepared maps. Search and rescue activities were carried out in the city with teams established under the responsibility of the local administrator. The vehicles and construction equipment affiliated with DSI, the Ministry of Highways, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the construction equipment sent by the municipalities, and the construction equipment that voluntarily came to search and rescue operations took an active role in search and rescue activities until February 25.

Following the search and rescue activities, debris dumping areas were established and debris removal operations began under the control of law enforcement. Edirne, together with public and private sector volunteers as well as other teams, worked in the earthquake zone for a total of 80 days.

The awareness of solidarity in the region and the power of brotherhood and unity were felt at every moment. This also enabled everyone to work more diligently.

What happened there was not an earthquake, the apocalypse had broken loose there.

Everything we could have experienced in the great Istanbul earthquake happened there. ●

Round table 1

Coordination of relief operations and organization of crisis management Crisis Management Experiences by the STRs in the February 6, 2023 Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes in Türkiye

BY THE MODERATOR

PROF. SELİM ÇAPAR

Governor and Head of the Research and Studies
Center of the Ministry of Interior of Türkiye,
Türkiye



Although the Republic of Turkey reached its 100th anniversary last year, it is based on a state tradition of 4-5 thousand years. In particular, based on the principle of “let the people live so that the state can live”, the State in Türkiye has gained serious experience in the management of natural disasters in the context of preparation, response and recovery phases. This is because Türkiye is located on a geography with a high level of disaster. However, within the scope of the developments in the world, the multi-organization model in disaster management was abandoned in 2009 and Disaster and Emergency Management (AFAD) Presidency was established. With this step, an “integrated disaster management” approach that prioritizes risk management was adopted.

With its establishment, AFAD assumed the responsibility of being the sole authorized institution for the coordination of disaster management. It has assumed the duty of coordination in the preparation and implementation of plans such as Turkey Disaster Response Plan (TAMP) and Turkey Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (TARAP).

The purpose of TAMP is “to define the roles and responsibilities of working groups and coordination units that will take part in response activities related to disasters and emergencies, and to determine the basic principles of response planning before, during and after disasters. TAMP covers ministries, institutions and organizations, private organizations, NGOs and real persons who will take part in response to disasters and emergencies of all types and scales that may occur in Turkey”.

The national and local level response management system is composed of four services, namely operation service, information and planning service, logistics and maintenance service, finance and administrative affairs service and working groups under these services, with minimum hierarchy, maximum efficiency, modular structure according to the type and size of the event. There are 25 Working Groups at national level and 23 at local level.

AFAD is an affiliated organization of the Ministry of Interior. Therefore, the most strategic ministry related to disaster governance in Turkey is the Ministry of Interior with its central organization, affiliated organizations and provincial organizations.

In Turkey, the administrators who undertake the duty of state territorial representatives in 81 provinces and 922 districts are in an organic relationship with the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Interior has the potential to mobilize all functions of governance, especially coordination activities in the disaster area through the state provincial representatives.

Since state territorial representatives assume the role of both a legal and social leader, they have the capacity to ensure coordination and cooperation in crisis and emergency situations, including coordination among public institutions as well as civil society and private sector organizations. On the one hand, in Turkey’s social reality, local administrative chiefs in provinces and districts are adopted as the gatekeepers of the state, while on the other hand, the legislation grants extraordinary powers to state territorial representatives in disasters and emergencies. In this context, 708 state territorial representatives were temporarily assigned to the disaster area during the earthquake disaster that affected 11 provinces and a population of approximately 15 million in February 2023, which was called the “Disaster of the Century”. This number is more than one third of the total number of state territorial representatives on duty. In this session, the state territorial representatives who took charge in different fields of work during the crisis and emergency management in the disaster of the century will share their experiences. They will reveal the extraordinary work they have done to start their duties in the chaotic environment created after a small apocalypse and to bring life back to its normal flow. ●

Round table 1

General effects of earthquakes and situation analysis

BY MR. OKAY MEMİŞ

Governor and Director of the Disaster and Emergency Management, Türkiye



06.02.2023 3 major earthquakes occurred on the same day: Kahramanmaraş Pazarcık 7.7 at 04.17, Gaziantep İslahiye 6.5 at 04.36, Kahramanmaraş Elbistan 7.6 at 13.24. Disaster level 4 (international level) was declared at 05.02, 45 minutes after the earthquake that occurred at 04.17.

With the earthquake, all disaster groups were assigned within the scope of TAMP and quickly gathered at AFAD Presidency and provincial AFAD centers.

Ministers, governors and State Territorial Representatives (STRs) were assigned to the 11 provinces affected by the earthquake. A total of 708 STRs, including 59 governors, 8 governors' chief civil inspectors, 47 civil inspectors, 302 district governors/deputy governors, and 292 trainee district governors, were assigned duties and responsibilities.

After the international call, a total of 11,488 international search and rescue teams came to the region for support. A total of 35,250 search and rescue personnel simultaneously started search and rescue efforts in 26 thousand wrecks and search efforts in 39 thousand wrecks. 3.5 million disaster victims were evacuated to other provinces, and 280 thousand personnel were simultaneously transferred to the region. 4 million hot meals and 20 million food parcels were distributed daily. 150 thousand aid trucks were delivered to the region. Within the scope of the work carried out, 20 thousand vehicles and construction equipment, 141 helicopters, 182 aircraft and 23 ships were assigned.

Sanitary evacuation, personnel transportation, material transportation and fire extinguishing activities were carried out with aircraft, and in this context, 17 thousand 500 sorties were carried out. Thanks to the developed international airline network, more than 2 million passengers were delivered with 13,701 flights and 32,770 tons of aid materials were delivered with 712 cargo flights, under the leadership of Turkish Airlines.

In the first stage, 1 million tents were shipped to the region within the scope of temporary shelter. A total of 1,188,218 disaster victims were hosted in the facilities, including 477,952 people in university dormitories and 710,266 people in school dormitories. 217 thousand containers have been established in 424 container cities and we continue to accommodate 700 thousand people.

The ESEN CARD system was introduced on August 15, in cooperation with AFAD and Red Crescent, under the coordination of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, for the disaster victims we housed in container cities.

A total of 76,530 cards were distributed in our 11 provinces. A total of 1,309,074,000 TL was loaded in 7 months. 213 social markets were established and 13,641 workplaces were completed. A total of 16,672,579,500 TL rental assistance was provided to 349,474 households. Payments have been made for 11 months (APRIL/FEBRUARY).

Moreover; 10,000 TL support payment to 1,989,430 households, 15,000 TL moving aid to 557,399 households, 100 thousand TL each to the relatives of 41,004 deceased citizens, allowances transferred to the governorship, demolition/debris payments, allowances transferred to institutions and central purchasing expenses, in total; A resource of 111,740,029,201 TL was transferred.

Within the scope of damage assessment studies carried out by relevant ministry in the earthquake region; Damage assessment was made in 2,381,905 buildings and 6,617,907 independent sections. The debris of 60,675 collapsed buildings that were to be demolished immediately were completely removed in 68 days.

The debris of 170,537 heavily damaged buildings out of 200,730 heavily damaged buildings has been removed and the realization rate is 93%. During the entitlement process, which started on MAY 30, 2023, 845,371 requests were evaluated and 30 million documents were examined. The total number of beneficiaries is 441,567, of which 389,378 are residences, 40,658 are workplaces and 11,531 are stables. A total of 185,000 independent sections in provincial, district centers and rural areas were tendered. A total of 41 thousand residences and 5 thousand village houses in 11 provinces, starting from Hatay on February 3; Lots were drawn for 46 thousand houses and the houses were delivered. Another 30 thousand houses will be delivered by drawing lots in March, so we will have delivered a total of 75 thousand houses in the first year of the earthquake.

It is planned to deliver 200 thousand houses by the end of the year. ●

Round table 1

Infrastructure, Environment and Cleaning Services

BY MR. MUSTAFA MASATLI
Governor of Hatay Province, Türkiye



Services such as "water and sewerage services, garbage collection and garbage management, disinfection in all areas, food safety, stray animals, toilet and shower establishment and cleaning" were among the most important and priority issues for human life in our city, where the disaster of centuries had caused great damage in every respect.

Works: In line with the crisis action plan created by taking this fact into consideration, "KOSKİ General Manager Ahmet DEMİR is in charge of Water-Channel Works, Gebze Mayor Zinnur BÜYÜKGÖZ is in charge of Garbage Collection and Management, Gölcük Mayor Ali Yıldırım SEZER is in charge of disinfection, and Veterinary Association is in charge of Stray Animals." Burcu CAN, the representative of Burcu CAN, Provincial Agriculture Director Ergün ÇOLKAOĞLU was appointed as the Food Safety Coordinator, and our former Bodrum District Governor Bilgihan BAYAR was appointed for the installation of showers and toilets and post-service services. Immediately afterwards, through our consultations, a task schedule was drawn up in the most healthy way possible.

Infrastructure: After the major disaster, the water network infrastructure in Hatay suffered great damage.

For this purpose, this problem was tried to be solved quickly by coordinating with DSI, Bank of Provinces and Water Channel Administrations of 10 Metropolitan Municipalities.

Water began to be supplied to many of our districts, especially Antakya and Defne, on the 5th day of our appointment. As of the 52nd day of the earthquake, 485 fountains were made ready for use in places close to living spaces.

Garbage Management: We worked together with 24 municipalities and İSTAÇ on garbage, and the garbage of 15 districts was collected, brought together at 6 transfer stations and taken to two solid waste disposal facilities. More than 3 times more garbage than normal was collected, transported to Solid Waste Disposal Facilities and recycled.

Spraying: Under the coordination of Gölcük Mayor Ali Yıldırım SEZER; With the support of 19 municipalities and companies, disinfection studies were carried out under the supervision of our Ministry of Health and Public Health Directors. Support was given by many institutions and organizations, especially our Ministry of Health.

Food Safety: In our province, where an average of 1 million 200 thousand meals are distributed daily, food safety samples were taken and inspected regularly every day by the expert teams of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Sample meals were taken from points that provide meals to our people and officials and were quickly sent to food laboratories. The food samples taken were kept for 48 hours and analyzed.

Stray Animals: Necessary planning was made in cooperation with the Regional Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, Hatay Metropolitan Municipality, District Municipalities, Turkish Veterinary Association and non-governmental organizations in order to house stray animals under appropriate conditions, and 3 basic animal collection and referral centers were determined in this direction and they were located on the streets. Animals that were left homeless and in need of care were taken to these shelters and were first examined, vaccinated and cared for. Additionally, two Animal Field Hospitals were established for the operation. Our animals were cared for and fed by expert staff in Antakya, Iskenderun and Samandağ animal shelters and were transferred to appropriate shelters belonging to public institutions in various parts of our country. In addition, within the scope of the Digital Identification of Pets Project of our Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, pets collected from the streets were delivered to their owners. Large quantities of cat and dog food were supplied.

Installation and Management of Toilets and Showers: It was carried out in general areas, especially in tent cities. In this process, approximately 3377 toilets (WC) and 1581 shower units were installed throughout the province. These areas were regularly maintained, cleaned and disinfected.

In addition, we carried out all these works with my team who came with me from Amasya. ●

Round table 1

Search and rescue, temporary shelter, debris removal services

BY DR. OSMAN VAROL
Governor of Adiyaman Province, Türkiye



The February 6, 2023 earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş affected 11 provinces, 4 of which were very severe, and approximately 13 million people. The reflex, organizational capability and management capacity of public institutions are of great importance in order to manage the emergency situation after a disaster of this scale, to provide basic services and to meet the needs. In this context, our public institutions quickly established the necessary emergency management capacity and transferred a significant amount of human resources, financial resources and equipment to the region. Many governors, district governors and senior bureaucrats, including myself, were assigned to the region with their teams and performed various tasks.

All kinds of human resources, material resources, aid materials and equipment directed to the region were put into service in the areas in need in line with the decisions taken by the Provincial Disaster and Emergency Coordination Board in line with the plan at the Provincial Crisis Coordination Center established within the framework of the Turkish Disaster Response Plan (TAMP). In the coordination meetings held twice a day in the first period, urgent needs and the situation in the relevant sectors were evaluated and decisions were taken quickly and effectively. The decisions taken were effectively implemented in the field by the institutions and organizations assigned in the plan, with the contributions and efforts of the local authorities assigned as coordinators and personnel from other regions.

Search and Rescue Operations were carried out by AFAD teams, teams of other institutions and organizations (PAK, JAK, UMKE, etc.), NGO teams and foreign country teams that came for support. Coordination was ensured by the crisis center established in line with the Turkish Disaster Response Plan and AFAD technical teams. The intensive vehicle-equipment and construction equipment needed during the operations were provided by public institutions and organizations and private sector vehicles available in the province and those coming from outside for reinforcement. For the rescued earthquake victims, on-site health care services were provided by the health personnel temporarily assigned to the region and in temporary health facilities, including field hospitals, or transportation methods, including by air, were used to other provinces.

Considering the harsh climatic conditions during the earthquake, temporary shelter was one of the service areas of utmost importance. Immediately after the earthquake, tents were set up in predetermined areas and quickly identified new suitable areas and tent-cities were established. At the same time, necessary measures were taken for the nutrition and hygiene needs of our citizens in these areas. Simultaneously, container-prefabricated cities, where our citizens will stay in the medium term,

have started to be built and the process of transferring citizens to the prepared ones has been initiated. Considering that the temporary accommodation centers will provide accommodation for a long period of time, meticulous work has been carried out at all stages, especially in infrastructure. All necessary work has been carried out to ensure that our citizens do not experience any deficiency in any service area in these centers. In all shelter centers, many public service and social areas such as health units, schools, psycho-social support centers, vocational courses, various courses for women, libraries, study halls, bazaar areas, café-coffee houses, youth centers depending on the population, outdoor sports areas, etc. have been created and offered to the service of our citizens. In each temporary shelter center, a management team has been formed under the chairmanship of a Civil Administration Chief, and technical staff has also been assigned in areas that may be needed within this team.

Debris removal and demolition of heavily damaged buildings are among the important services carried out in accordance with a specific plan from the beginning of the process. Immediately after the earthquake, the works started with the demolition of dangerous buildings that had the status of urgent demolition. Following the completion of Search and Rescue operations, the capacity was rapidly increased by increasing the number of vehicles and equipment and by procuring services, and debris removal operations were carried out intensively. In this process, great importance was attached to taking the necessary measures in terms of occupational health and safety, and rubble dumping sites were carefully determined by expert teams, taking into account all risks, to prevent environmental damage. The demolition process of heavily damaged buildings has reached its final stage and has been completed to a large extent, except for the buildings for which legal processes are ongoing. ●

Round table 1

Psycho-social support services for earthquake victims

BY MRS FATMA TURHAN KESER
Perşembe District Governor, Türkiye



After the first earthquake in Kahramanmaraş province at 4.17, a crisis center was established as quickly as possible, and representatives of public institutions and organizations within the scope of the Turkey Disaster Response Plan took their place in the crisis center. In the first stage, studies were carried out to determine the current situation. Search and rescue teams on duty were directed to the areas where notice was received and all teams were called to duty. Each institution made an effort to contact all its personnel, whether on duty or not, and necessary plans were made according to the subjects they were responsible for. There was traffic congestion due to the damage to roads and bridges and collapsed buildings due to the earthquake. Communication via mobile and landlines was limited and difficult. Reports of collapsed buildings and rescue requests were pouring into the crisis center. Then the second earthquake occurred and we were faced with a more severe situation.

From the first hours of the earthquake, our coordinator Governors and their teams assigned by the Ministry reached the region, and each of them started the coordination of one or more of the TAMP working groups. All issues such as situation assessment, search and rescue, directing teams from other provinces, ensuring the safety of citizens who survived the earthquake, planning and creating temporary shelter areas, meeting the basic needs of citizens were followed and carried out simultaneously.

I took part in the coordination of the in-kind aid depot and psycho-social support activities in the city center.

In-kind warehouse services: When we reached the warehouse in the organized industrial zone, which was previously planned in line with TAMP and determined to be used as a warehouse, teams from other provinces had largely arrived to serve in emergencies in line with the relevant plan. However, there was no help yet. The main reason for this situation was that neighboring provinces were also seriously affected by the earthquake and the disruptions in transportation caused by the earthquake.

On February 6, tents, blankets and food items in the AFAD warehouse were distributed to our citizens. In the following days, aid trucks from other cities of Türkiye and all over the world arrived at the central warehouse. The central in-kind aid warehouse was generally responsible for creating an inventory of incoming aid, classifying it according to its quality within the warehouse, and delivering it to the areas in need without wasting time. State Territorial Representatives, Ministry of Family and Social Services officials, Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations officials, AFAD volunteers and accredited non-governmental organizations volunteered to provide in-kind aid services.

Psycho-social support activities: Sociologists, psychologists and social workers working in the Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Services and its affiliated organizations started their work from the first day of the earthquake. In the acute period, emphasis was placed on needs assessment, guidance and psychological first aid activities; In the following period, individual counseling, group psychological counseling and social improvement activities were carried out.

All households in Kahramanmaraş province were within the target area of psycho-social support activities. In order to carry out field work effectively, reinforcement teams were sent from other provinces as stated above. The existing teams were holding an orientation and consultation meeting with the newly arrived PSA teams in the morning, and then they were working at the PSA points in the city center and districts in line with the prepared work plan. In addition to needs assessment, training, guidance and psychological counseling activities, the psychological negativities created by the earthquake were tried to be eliminated by creating children's play tents, adult courses and activity areas with the contributions of other stakeholder institutions, organizations and non-governmental organizations. ●

Round table 2

Joint action by STRs and other local, regional and national actors to assist disaster victims and mobilize resources

BY THE MODERATOR

MRS. LAURA LEGA

Prefect, Head of the civil liberties
and immigration Department,
General Secretary of ANFACI, Italy



The theme of emergencies is a topic of extraordinary interest which requires maximum attention from all the actors in the territory and in particular from the State Representative called to be, albeit in different ways in our different countries, the nerve center of interventions.

It is a point of dramatic relevance, taking into account the multiple and increasingly frequent calamities that afflict our territories and I cannot fail to mention the tragedy that struck Türkiye with the dramatic earthquake of 2023 in which we also intervened from Italy with the National Fire Brigade who have been recognized by the UN as coordinating the various USAR teams from other countries. They were days of extraordinary commitment that I myself experienced directly as Head of Department in the Crisis unit of the Fire Brigade Department in Rome from where we coordinated the interventions.

Unfortunately, we are witnessing catastrophic events that are repeating themselves with ever greater frequency and intensity everywhere, with landslides, mudslides and disastrous floods that have caused numerous deaths and incalculable damage in Italy in recent years. I remember, just to mention the events of the last two years, the tragedy in the Marche, the Casamicciola landslide in Campania and lastly the extraordinary flood that tragically hit Emilia Romagna.

Events that require us, as we are doing today in this conference, to compare our experiences and our emergency prevention and intervention systems to draw useful reflections and ideas for the future.

I would like to highlight from the outset that there is a central issue, and that is the coordination of all the actors involved in emergency operations.

This is a strategic issue that requires attention and represents the most effective way to implement interventions with maximum effectiveness.

Italy has an extremely advanced civil protection system which is spread across the entire national territory and involves both State structures such as the national fire brigade and local government authorities (regions, provinces and municipalities). In addition to the health facilities and the police forces, a decisive role is also played by the voluntary bodies that contribute to the most delicate phases of rescuing people. In this large and complex strategic system, it is the role of the prefect who coordinates the State forces in the first emergency phase. This is a significant and delicate commitment which sees the prefecture as the nerve center of the State in the territory at the service of communities in the most delicate moments such as disasters.

The role of coordination is the key to the success of the management of events and the prefect, as representative of the State on the territory, assumes a central function as a solid point of reference for the mayors and communities in difficulty both locally and in interlocution with the regions and with the central reference structures, thus guaranteeing that trait d'union, that strategic link between the territory and the central government.

Furthermore, this is a typical function of the prefect in Italy who, in emergency situations, expresses his maximum potential at the service of citizens in the moment of greatest need.

On the strategic function of coordination in emergency management we will now listen to the colleagues of this panel who will give us the opportunity to enter into the dynamics of the experiences gained in their countries. ●

Round table 2

The role of the Government Commissioner in crisis management in Hungary and Defense drill in case of an earthquake in Nógrád County



BY MR. SÁNDOR SZABÓ

Government commissioner,
Government office of Nógrád county, Hungary

Introduction

A few sentences on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Hungary and Türkiye, in 2024 the two countries are celebrating this year as “Hungarian-Turkish Cultural Year.”

First main theme - The role of the Government Commissioner in crises management in Hungary

In our country, territorial public administration operates in a county system, where the state administrative tasks are carried out by the county government offices, and through district offices subordinated to the government office. The county government offices are headed by government commissioners appointed by the prime minister, whose mandate is for the same period as the government's term of office.

In addition to managing the government office, it is also the task of the government commissioner to chair the Territorial Defence Committee.

Short presentation of geographical status and weather conditions in Hungary.

Second main theme - Health crisis exercise in Szécsény in 2018

Three minor earthquakes happened in Hungary in the last decade, this is why the defence committee I lead initiated the implementation of a defence exercise in our county, where the professionals of the healthcare institutions can test their preparedness and practice cooperation with the defence organizations.

Scenario

Earthquake with a magnitude of 6.5
Extraordinary meeting of the Territorial Defence Committee
Declaration of a state of emergency for 3 districts
Installation of a Mobile Medical Aid Station (MOSH) in Szécsény
Receiving, determining and stabilizing the condition of the injured,
Evacuating the aid station as quickly as possible.

Participants

3 military units, police, disaster management, 10 civil organisations.

Revealing problems requiring solutions. ●

Round table 2

The Civil Protection System in Italy

BY MR. RENATO FRANCESCHELLI

Head of the Department of firefighters,
public rescue and civil protection, Italy



The Italian system of Civil Protection is characterized by its complexity as it is not entrusted to a single administration. It involves the State, the Regions and the Municipalities and, alongside the public institutions, a series of voluntary organizations, research institutes, university bodies, etc.

The country is exposed to a series of risks, some of a natural nature (earthquakes, landslides), others due to human and industrial activities.

The national structure is incardinated in the Civil Protection Department at the Presidency of the Council. The Department refers to all the Administrations involved in disaster events (Ministry of the Interior, Defence, Health, Environment) as well as all the Regions, the Red Cross and all voluntary organizations.

The system is based on two fundamental pillars: the National Fire Brigade and the network of the Prefectures in the various Provinces.

The Corps of Firemen, composed of about 40,000 units, depends on the Ministry of the Interior and has a unified and national governance. They are then joined by volunteer firefighters who work under the guidance and training given to them by the Corps. These operators are professionally specialized in public rescue and over the years have acquired more and more specialization in key areas such as helicopter rescue, speleological, river and alpine rescue, dog groups and divers.

The network of the Prefectures allows to coordinate all types of rescue whenever the event, because of its breadth and complexity, requires interventions of specialist units or reinforcements from other parts of the territory.

The relief system sees collaboration between regional and local government structures together with national ones.

At the occurrence of events that exceed the strictly local dimension, the Prefecture is active in the Coordination Center

relief that, chaired by the Prefect, brings together all the State and local Administrations of the Province as well as health and public services managers coordinating, on the basis of the provisions of the provincial plan of Civil Protection, all the necessary interventions for the relief to the populations and for the limitation of the damage. On the indication of the members of the Centre, The Prefect, also by reason of the position of Provincial Public

Security Authority, adopts the necessary provisions to protect the safety and security of the population, including through the use of police and military forces. An efficient civil protection system cannot do without an important action of prevention and risk mitigation as well as an activity of event prediction.

To this end, today the Prefectures are called to an important work of preparation and continuous updating of the provincial plans that concern the various types of risks. Together with a general plan of the Province referring to events of a more general nature (seismic risk, hydrogeological risk, etc.) Today more and more need to refine the planning for some specific risks such as for example the companies whose processing expose to significant risks the populations living around them, the risk of dams, the risk of waste storage sites.

Together with the updates of the Plans, fundamental activity is that addressed to the population that needs a correct information on the risk to which it can be exposed and on the behaviors to hold in case of alert. Tele task is entrusted in priority to the municipalities that, together with voluntary associations, identify safe areas of shelter and inform the population through widespread communication plans.

Another fundamental element is the commitment of the scientific community towards ever greater ability to predict phenomena. Weather forecasting systems or monitoring of volcanoes and seismic events allow the Civil Protection System to issue forms of alerts that require the Administrations to prepare the resources for the necessary interventions and impose restrictions necessary. ●

Round table 2

Governance of natural disaster management in Spain

BY MRS. EUGENIA GOMEZ DE DIEGO

Government Delegate to the Region of Cantabria, Spain



Dear colleagues,

Let me briefly introduce the governance of natural disasters management in Spain. In other words, how the public service that protects people and property in the event of emergencies and natural disasters is managed, without forgetting disasters resulting from human action.

I will focus particularly on a real natural disaster, severe flooding, that occurred in Spain, in the Region of Cantabria, in January 2019.

These are the main points that I am addressing. First, a brief overview of the National Civil Protection System. Second, its basic legal framework and the applicable flood regulation in Cantabria. Third, the main actions undertaken in the framework of the flood event, in particular, those involving the participation of the Government Delegation and other state resources.

National civil protection system

In Spain, Civil Protection management is set up under the National Civil Protection System, which ensures a coordinated and efficient response from all public administrations, through the actions shown in the following slide.

The following are the basic civil protection actions : anticipation, prevention, planning, first response or intervention and recovery. Coordination between administrations is of paramount importance.

The organisational structure of the National Civil Protection System is based on territorial and administrative levels. Each level has its own civil protection structure to conduct the functions within its competence.

It should be noted that first response is the responsibility of the Autonomous Communities and the State has a supporting role.

Legal framework

Civil protection legislation is structured around several policy areas : European Union, State, Regions and local authorities.

Regarding civil protection plans, they can be divided into territorial plans and special (risk-focused) plans). This differentiation applies both at the national and regional level.

Special plans are drawn up on the basis of the corresponding state basic guideline, that establishes the minimum content and general criteria for Regions. Territorial plans are applied in absence of an approved special plan.

As for the Region of Cantabria, PLATERCANT is the territorial plan and INUNCANT the special flood plan.

Preparedness and prevention

Regarding the emergencies preparedness phase, the Directorate General for Civil Protection and Emergencies is developing the National

Civil Protection Information Network in collaboration with all public administrations. The examples indicated were applied to the floods event.

As for the prevention phase, the System of Hydrological Alert is put in place (also used during the response phase). An automatic message is sent to regional civil protection services if the monitoring, pre-alert and alert levels exceed the predefined thresholds.

Planning

All plans can be integrated into a higher plan if needed. For example, if a municipal plan is activated and regional action is required, the municipal operational structure is integrated in the regional plan once activated. In other words, there is a single command to ensure coordination. Normally, regional plans are directly activated.

All plans are structured around different levels of activation depending on the emergency phase. Regarding the response phase, there are three operational situations, The first two situations are usually managed by the Region. State resources not allocated to the plan can be requested in operational situation number 2 (Emergency Military Unit (UME) belonging to the Ministry of Defence).

The operational structure of the Flood Action Plan in the Region of Cantabria, INUNCANT, is divided into management bodies, coordination bodies and response bodies. The Delegation of Government is a member of the Advisory Board.

Response

The severe flooding that hit the Region of Cantabria occurred between 22 and 25 January 2019. On the 21st, the territorial plan was activated in the monitoring phase following weather warnings. On the 24th the flood plan was activated at level 1, but it was quickly raised to level 2. A few minutes later the Emergency Military Unit (UME) was requested and started working on site shortly after.

The Operational Coordination Centre (CECOP) was located in the 112 Emergency Number room. 4 Advanced Command Posts (PMA) were installed in the most affected municipalities to mobilize and coordinate all responders.

A total of 114 people were evacuated and 32 roads were blocked, mainly due to the presence of landslides, and the railway network. Thus, a total of 61 municipalities, most of them located in the riverside areas of the Region, were affected by the floods caused by the heavy rainfall during that period

In the early afternoon of the 24th, members of the Emergency Military Unit (UME) arrived from their base in León. The unit was deployed mainly in the towns of Los Corrales de Buelna and Torrelavega, where they help with clearing public spaces, basements and car parks, as well as opening roads affected by runoff. On the 25th, a helicopter was incorporated to conduct surveillance tasks.

ES-ALERT is another relevant state resource. It is a system for sending civil protection alerts to mobile devices operational since June 2022.

Recovery

The recovery phase consists of the set of actions and support measures aimed at restoring critical community functions once the response has been completed.

The Delegation of Government managed two types of grants after the flood event :

- ◆ Emergency grants, convened by the Ministry of Interior (no deadline to apply),
- ◆ Recovery grants, convened by the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Democratic Memory for repairing and reconstruction works on local infrastructures, facilities and services and road network.

Finally, the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge carried out river restoration and protection works in the main flood areas. ●



Round table 2

Hail episode in Vichy, a city listed as a world heritage site: ecological and economic consequences

BY MRS. PASCALE TRIMBACH

Prefect of Allier, France



In June 2022, Vichy and its surrounding area were hit by two episodes of hail (hailstones 5 to 9 cm in diameter) and very violent winds.

These phenomena of unexpected magnitude in a region without notable risk, hit a “corridor”. Harbingers of developments linked to climate change, they have raised awareness of the need for better preparation for phenomena that are now inevitable.

I – The consequences

The corridor affected 123 municipalities in Allier, or more than a third of the 317 municipalities in the department and more than a third of its surface area.

The consequences were multiple:

- ♦ firstly human and ecological:
There were 20,000 victims, some of whom had to be rehoused immediately.
More than 400 firefighters were mobilized from all over France for more than 500 interventions. More than 10,000 birds were chopped by the hailstones, requiring intervention by the Bird Protection League.
- ♦ but also economical:
280 farms were affected, more than 900 roofs damaged and 14,000 hectares of crops and meadows impacted.
For the industry, the episode was all the more complex as more than 50% of the affected buildings contained asbestos (with specific procedures for construction companies).
Companies' production targets were revised due to the condition of buildings and shortages of materials, leading to penalties for those who did not have insurance.
- ♦ and finally heritage:
Vichy was listed as a UNESCO world heritage site in 2021.
However, these episodes have affected 75% of the city's heritage, including registered monuments.
As for the urban area, 60% of its heritage was also affected.
The total amount of damage exceeded 20 million euros for communities.

II – The role of the STR

For any major crisis, the role of the Prefect consists of coordinating the action of public and private actors.

A – Short term:

The first phase consists of opening a Departmental Operational Center, which brings together all security and emergency forces, as well as state services and territorial actors.

Decisions are made on the basis of evolving mapping (SYNAPSE), in support of decision-making and crisis management plans which provide a basis for planning, which

circumstances lead to adaptation.

In this case, an operational coordination platform was set up at Vichy town hall, with a dedicated telephone line and a census of the companies concerned.

In total, there were twelve working groups which dealt with different aspects of the crisis (insurance, supplies, rehousing, etc.).

B – Medium term:

Once the emergency has passed, the time comes for recognition of the exceptional nature of the event in the form of the implementation of the natural disaster procedure (CATNAT).

This procedure, initiated by the municipalities, is the subject of an instruction at the Prefecture before transmission to the Ministry. An interministerial commission decides on the attribution (or not) of this recognition, essential for compensation. In this case a list of 17 municipalities was published in the Official Journal.

Another issue is the facilitation by the State of the rehabilitation of production tools. However, this episode highlighted a specific complexity due to asbestos legislation and the exceptional heritage dimension of certain monuments.

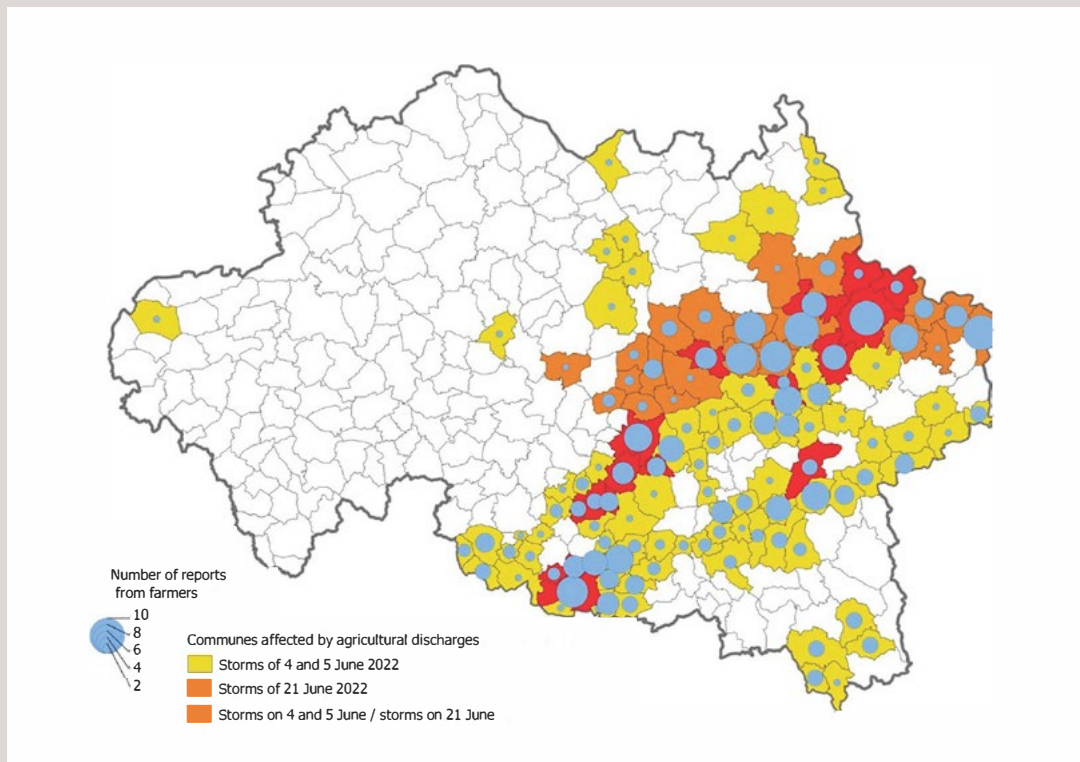
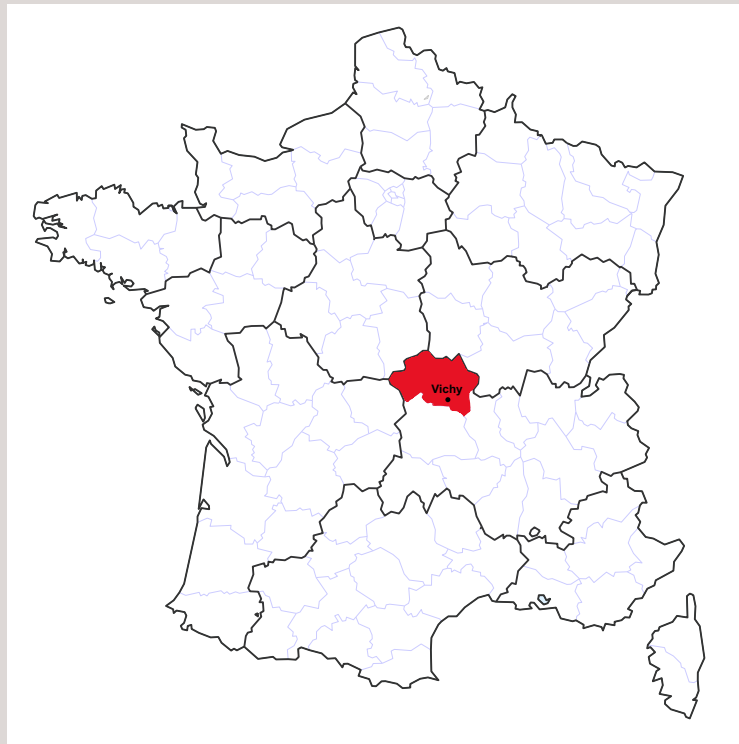
As part of their regulatory role, state services (labor inspection) have mobilized to sanction construction “companies” lacking qualifications that have “opportunity” offered their services using illegal work.

C – Long term:

The reflection now focuses on anticipating the consequences, through the insurance system, both for communities and for private actors.

This episode also had the consequence of strengthening the Prefecture's prevention towards local elected officials at the orange risk level in the form of SMS sent to town halls.

And – above all – the Prefectures are now equipped with a system called “FR-ALERTE” which, triggered by the Prefect, sounds an alert on telephones (all operators) which are within a perimeter defined by the scale of the a phenomenon, whatever its nature.



Two main lessons can be learned from these episodes. First of all, we see that such phenomena can occur anywhere. There is no longer a “spare zone”. But above all, it is now necessary to prepare for crises by developing

a resilience policy through exercises intended to acculturate involved people and promote synergies between them. This is the case in Allier with the execution of NOVI exercises (numerous victims). ●

Round table 3

Support for the resumption of normal activities and the resilience of territories

BY THE MODERATOR

MR. LAURENT PREVOST

Prefect, former Director General
of Civil Security and Risk Management,
French Ministry of the Interior, France



What is resilience? A term that appeared in the early 2000s at the United Nations conference in Kobe. An increasingly broad meaning. UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction): resilience is “the capacity of a system, community or society to resist, absorb, accommodate and correct the effects of a hazard (...) in particular through the preservation and restoration of its essential structures and basic functions.” Resilience recognizes the limits of resistance which wants to oppose hazard. It seeks to reduce its effects as much as possible. Resilience recognizes that damage is linked to a set of factors.

United Nations Sendai Framework 2015-2030 for Disaster Risk Reduction. BBB concept (build back better): rebuild by taking into account the lessons of a disaster.

EU: February 2023. Communication for a common objective to strengthen disaster resilience. 16 types of risks (natural, technological, terrorist). Need for integrated and global action. Highlights the consequences of climate change in the frequency and severity of natural disasters.

5 areas of action:

- ◆ Anticipate to improve the assessment and anticipation of risks. FRA: Implementation of PPRI and PPRT. Need for revision to take into account the evolution of the hazard.
- ◆ Prepare by strengthening public awareness and preparedness. Objective that by 2030, 90% of the European population is aware of the risks to which they are exposed. Also bad for risk culture. FRA: national day of resilience for 2 years, inspired by overseas with ancient culture of risk and ancient days focused on seismic risk or behaviors to adopt in the event of a cyclone.

- ◆ Alert by strengthening monitoring and alert systems. FRA: FR Alert implemented in 2023
- ◆ Respond by strengthening the European civil protection mechanism and solidarity between States.
- ◆ Protect by having a solid civil protection system. Role of plans and exercises.

In the previous round table, the moderator insisted on the major issue of coordination. In crisis management, this often arises quite naturally. In FRA: role of the State and its territorial representative. It's less simple after the period of the crisis itself.

In the short term, there is a need to support the return to normal life for a large number of stakeholders: citizens, economic stakeholders, territories whose damage must be assessed and a large number of support and network or activity restoration mechanisms must be mobilized. which do not all come from the State. We must also communicate regularly to make it known and avoid calling into question the inaction of the State and its territorial representatives. The prefect of Pas de Calais will illustrate this complexity and these necessities through the crisis he is still experiencing, linked to floods.

In the medium and long term, on the basis of feedback, it is necessary to initiate corrective actions that are sometimes costly and spread over long periods where, here too, communication is essential, which the Belgian and then German examples will illustrate. ●

Round table 3

Floods in Pas-de-Calais

BY MR. JACQUES BILLANT

Prefect of the department Pas-de-Calais, France



Help for the resumption of normal activities and the resilience of territories: floods in Pas-de-Calais

The north-west of the Pas-de-Calais department suffered an unprecedented wave of precipitation from October 18, 2023 which continued until January 2024: more than 700 mm of precipitation was recorded in this territory over this period, i.e. a cumulative 700 liters per square meter. The particularity of this episode does not relate to an extreme accumulation of precipitation occurring on a particular day, but to the succession of numerous days of precipitation on soils which very quickly became saturated.

This situation quickly caused particularly intense flooding in 5 watersheds where more than 500,000 people live, i.e. the average population of a French department: flooding by runoff, by overflowing of rivers and also by rising water tables. 24 flood alert bulletins of red level, the highest, were issued by State services during this period, which is completely unprecedented.

The long-term crisis management organization made it possible to effectively coordinate the various emergency services under the authority of the prefect: no casualties were reported. However, the toll is very heavy: 315 municipalities were affected and recognized as being in a state of natural disaster, 9,300 homes suffered significant damage and more than 1,000 businesses were impacted. Insurance companies have recorded more than 42,000 claims: 30,000 from individuals and 12,000 from professionals. The central reinsurance fund estimates the amount of damage caused by the floods at 640 million.

A strong mobilization of the State under the authority of the prefect, in response to the event

From December 2023, operational management was implemented in order to understand the needs and provide answers to the multiple questions posed by post-crisis management:

- ♦ treatment of the immediate consequences of floods for individuals (insurance difficulties, rehousing, acquisition by the State of damaged homes, etc.), traders, craftsmen, farmers, but also local authorities;

- ♦ carrying out extremely emergency work;
- ♦ the development of a resilience and prevention plan with the implementation of structuring works to be carried out between now and next winter and the deployment of new water governance to reassure the population.

This organization has borne fruit, since 8 out of 10 claims are now closed or almost closed and 218 million euros have been paid to victims by insurance. At the request of the prefect, the State services have deployed a real "go towards" approach, in order to facilitate the procedures for disaster victims: implementation of a single window allowing them to request via a single platform all aid measures put in place by the State and its partners, activation of a telephone cell accessible to disaster victims or even provision of physical permanence carried out by State services in connection with the Hauts-de-France Region and France Insurers in the affected municipalities.

Concerning the works, a specific procedure has been put in place to immediately carry out emergency actions, financed by the State, such as maintenance of waterways, removal of ice jams, consolidation of weakened banks and dikes, on simple prior information of the administration by the project owner. Thanks to this system, nearly 500 operations could be carried out in a very short time.

Beyond emergency management, this terrible episode commits us: to do everything to prevent it from happening again. This is the very essence of the resilience plan on which we have worked since February and which has already made it possible to program structuring work to be carried out before next winter (171 operations identified at this stage for an amount of 45 million euros), but also to organize feedback with elected officials, local actors and residents with a view to acculturation to risk. We must also respond without delay to the challenge of simplification and efficiency posed by this unprecedented crisis by proposing an evolution of water governance to make it both more visible and operational. This is the objective pursued by the creation by the beginning of 2025 of 3 EPTBs (territorial public basin establishments) which will cover the entire flooded territories while respecting the hydrographic coherence of the watersheds. ●

Round table 3

The importance of territorial powers in preventing deficiencies in the orohydrographic network and flooding

BY MR. TOMMY LECLERCQ
Governor of the Hainaut Province, Belgium



The repetition and importance of floods continue to increase in our various territories, including Europe.

Climate change and the increase in land use due to growing urbanization only increase this phenomenon.

These facts have increasingly serious consequences, both in terms of material damage, psychological consequences and human losses.

My country was faced with tragic events during the month of July 2021.

In order to limit the consequences of such events, developments and adaptations are to be planned across the territory.

How to adapt to flood risks and, in extenso, climate risks.

Proactive reflection carried out in the Province of Hainaut for more than 10 years, for which I thank the Hennuyer provincial representatives, risk mapping, awareness raising among actors is essential not only from the exclusive angle of a specific territory but by favoring a “wide-angle” vision by raising awareness, among others, of other actors in other territories, from a cross-border perspective, if necessary. By thinking about improving existing infrastructure, raising awareness among the population and its representatives, for example, through citizen reserves in civil security, training elected officials in cross-border territories, if necessary, by going beyond the legal difficulties that may be encountered, using, to do this, possible transnational means and subsidies, such as the European programs created to do this (Interreg, etc.). ●



Round table 3

How to manage severe weather events, their consequences and the measures taken to prevent them in future

BY MR. FRANK SCHERER

Landrat of Ortenaukreis district, Germany



A. Storm Lothar 1999, December 26

Facts about forests in the County of Ortenau:

- ◆ 90.000 hectares of forest, most densely wooded county in Baden-Wuerttemberg (BW) = 48% of the total area
- ◆ Forest is essential for our economy, including tourism („Black Forest“)
- ◆

The damage caused by storm Lothar on 26 December 1999 was enormous. A total of 6,000 hectares of forest were severely affected and 3.5 million cubic metres of damaged timber were produced, which corresponds to five times the annual felling volume. As a result, timber prices on the market fell massively (by up to 45%), an important source of income for the municipalities was lost and overcapacity was created.

Measures taken :

1. Founding of a private limited company by the municipalities most affected, Waldservice GmbH, to face the difficult conditions on the timber market.
2. Installation of wet storage areas, due to the oversaturated timber market.
3. Reforestation: Planting of tree species (50%), natural regeneration (40%), natural succession (10%).

B. Flood events in the Ortenau County 2006 and 2008

Heavy rainfall in 2006 and 2008 led to flooding in some municipalities due to strongly swelling streams.

In 2003 the State of BW developed a strategy for flood risk and damage minimisation, which was further developed into a flood risk management system: drawing of food hazard cards, hydraulic calculations, provision of flood information and warning system, funding for municipal technical measures, preparing of flood risk management plans.

Flood protection measures in the Ortenau County:

Construction of 4 flood retention basins and other protective measures (dams, pressure-tight windows etc.) EUR 21,5 million, further measures are under construction (EUR 6 million), development of flood alert and response plans.

Difficulties are high costs and major planning challenges (State covers 20-70% of the costs).

C. Low water/drought/heavy rains

Significant increase in average annual temperatures leads to low water levels in the summer months. The effects are the increase of water temperatures, reduction of biodiversity, influence on water supply, on the generation of energy and production processes in industry.

A federal law “Water resources Act” obliges the Ortenau County to ensure the economical use of water and to maintain the water balance,

to maintain an adequate amount of groundwater and lays down the principles of water managing. When the water level is low, it is therefore necessary for our administration to take measures which are :

- ◆ Prohibition of external use of above-ground water during low water periods:
 - ban on the watering of sports fields and private gardens
 - ban on other external use of water from water bodies. (10 times in the last 18 years - almost every year since 2017!)
- ◆ Definition of minimum water volumes for new water abstraction licences
- ◆ Counselling of municipalities in decentralised rainwater management (unsealing of surfaces ; specifications for the development of construction areas, e.g. roof greening ; rainwater utilisation)
 - Renaturalisation of water bodies
 - Development of heavy risk management concepts in the municipalities
 - e.g. hazard maps for heavy rainfall, informing citizens about the implementation of suitable measures
 - Difficulties: high costs, up to 100.000 Euros
 - 70% are funded by the State of BW
- ◆ Establishment of a common watering infrastructure to preserve fruit growing and viticulture as cultural assets of the landscape in the County (70% financial support by the State of BW)
- ◆ Forest water storage model based on the water strategy of BW: effects are flood protection through decentralised water retention in the area and the increase of groundwater recharge/ cooling through forests : Examples of measures are the creation of infiltration/evaporation troughs, re-infiltration of road surface water in the area, greening of machine paths, retention of water in the forest for as long as possible to increase soil moisture and groundwater recharge. ●

Round table 4

Crisis communication and relations with the Government

Crisis communication in the Arctic

BY MR. TOM CATO KARLSEN

Governor of Nordland county, Norway



Norway has three levels of governance; the central government (elected every fourth year), which the 10 Norwegian governors are acting on behalf of in their counties, 15 county councils (elected every fourth year), and 356 municipal councils (elected every fourth year).

The Kingdom of Norway has 5,5 million inhabitants, with Arctic and sub-Arctic climate. The country has the world's second longest coastline, and a 196 km border with Russia.

There are 45 public airports, and the driving distance from the Southernmost point, up to the Russian border is 2767 km, or around 39 hours. 80% of Norway's exports are based on the ocean - oil and gas, maritime goods and services, and seafood. There's also a high degree of trust between the government and the population.

The county of Nordland is where the Arctic Circle passes through Norway and has a population of 243000 inhabitants. 41 municipalities, and 11 public airports. 25% of Norway's coastline and 12% of Norway's land area is situated here. The municipalities range in population from 442 inhabitants to 53000 inhabitants. Scarcely populated municipalities constitute low resilience when it comes to preparedness. At the same time, there's a declining population in the North, and those living there are getting increasingly older. 2022 was the first year which the population >65 years of age was larger than the population <19 years of age, and this gap will increase in the future.

The county governors are the regional representatives of the central government and the King of Norway. The portfolio is wide, with an abundance of roles on behalf of the central government, also when it comes to crisis management and communication both with the municipalities and the general population, and up to the central government. Some of the governors are responsible for more than one county. The governor of Svalbard also has the

same roles as the other governors, as well as police authority on the island. There are specific instructions for the governors when it comes to safety, security, preparedness and crisis management. County risk- and vulnerability analysis are regularly carried out, and the governors are heading the county preparedness council, who step into action during crisis situations.

The focus on individual preparedness is increased in Norway after Russia's invasion in Ukraine, and all inhabitants are urged to keep water and foods to be self-sufficient for at least 7 days. This is also due to increasing climate changes, causing avalanches, floods, extreme winds, etc. At the same time, most Norwegians are used to handle harsh weather conditions, and are trained from kindergarden how to dress for the outdoors. Babies sleep outside in their baby strollers even in winter, and school children are also exposed to cross-country skiing, hiking in the mountains and sleeping in snow-caves during the winter during the school year.

In the event of a crisis situation, the governors are expected to convey all necessary communication from the central government, and to the municipalities and the general population. Information about the status in the county during a crisis, is also conveyed from the governors and to the central government, via the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. Communication is conveyed through traditional media, social media, public information boards, through hotels and camping facilities (to reach tourists as well), through direct SMS-alerts based on GPS, and warning sirens. Communication training is done via in-house training and prepping of staff (not only for crisis situation, but also for general interviews with the media), professional courses, and through participation in preparedness exercises. All governors are also former high-level politicians in Norway, with long experience in communication. ●

Round table 4

Crisis communication and relations with the Government

BY MRS. CATHY BERX
Governor of Antwerp province, Belgium



In April 2021, while we were still in emergency modus for the covid19-pandemic, the vegetation on a military site in the north of the province of Antwerp (near the Dutch border) took fire due to a shooting training. 500 acres were burned, which is one third of this natural reserve. 400 people needed to be evacuated. Thanks to bilateral agreements with The Netherlands and extended mutual exercises, we could count on a helicopter to extinguish the wild fires.

Even in a professional context (military in a training situation), a clear risk awareness is not always guaranteed. Risk awareness needs to be constructed pro-actively. Risk prevention requires a repeated effort, to make people aware and resilient, without creating fear.

Risk perception from a citizen point of view is also important during emergencies. Their risk perception can differ from the expert view. That is a good starting point to level the crisis communication. Thomas from Aquino already said it: perception is reality.

That brings me to the following 3 questions:

1. How do we try to fulfil the need for, and the effectiveness of information to the public, and align the back office to obtain that goal?
2. How do we organise the communication and the cooperation between authorities and stakeholders to optimise crisis management?
3. How do we (try to) deal with societal context?

Work Process Crisis Communication

When an emergency occurs, it is important to provide information quickly, even when little factual information is available, to prevent unverified information from spreading.

The approach to crisis communication includes four essential components, focusing on risk perception and creating a shared understanding of the situation, while dealing with the dilemma of a lack of information at the start of an emergency and an abundance of (potentially contradictory) information when the emergency evolves :

- ◆ information (what happened?) → we know

- ◆ behaviour (What are the emergency services doing? What can/should people do) → we do
- ◆ sensemaking (what does the organisation care about?) → we care

expectations (when will more information follow?) → we'll be back

The WPCC offers a structured and shared methodology to organise the information to

the public¹ :

1. Identify and analyse the current information position, available to the public What are the information needs? What are the needs, anyway? What are the perceptions? What information is available yet? Is that information correct ?
2. The analysis is structured following the 3 main components: information – behaviour – sensemaking. This image will than be cross-checked with the operational and strategic level. This is the basis for the communication strategy.
3. That strategy will be transformed into communication tools, such as press releases, social media messages and visuals, a frequently asked questions-list, and so on.
4. The communication output results into an effect by the population, which can be monitored again.

Together with the working process, roles are identified: it enables collaborators to have a clear view on their own tasks and those of the team members. In that way, it structures both the information to the public as the organisation of the communication team.

Citizens involvement

In new upcoming legislation in Belgium, for the first time, a role for citizens will be foreseen when it comes to emergency management in the entire risk cycle (risk analysis & awareness, emergency planning process, crisis management, recovery and reconstruction). Structural citizen involvement goes beyond mere solidarity.

Besides the initiatives from volunteering teams itself, several authorities have started with citizen participation on a local and a supra-local level. Even on the international level, volunteering

¹ See also: <https://centredecrise.be/fr/documentation/publications/le-processus-operationnel-de-communication-de-crise-pocc-0>

teams such as SBTF² and VISOV³ offer support in emergency situations.

Emergency management process

In the Province of Antwerp, we have the good practise to gather always in a multi-disciplinary way and with all actors involved. Once again, we use a vast methodology, which is called “IBOBBO” in Dutch. It contributes to a common & shared Situational Awareness by emphasizing on the following steps: information gathering, image building, judgement, decision making, command and follow-up.

Conclusion

Crisis communication is more than responding to the citizens need for genuine information. The Work Process

Crisis Communication offers a method to meet the needs for information and to structure the tasks of the communication team.

The same goes for the ‘IBOBBO’-methodology when it comes to crisis management and concertation with other crisis partners, authorities and emergency services.

But most of all: collaboration depends on the willingness and the strong engagement of people, both in a professional and a voluntary context. People always make the difference and make crisis management work, regardless of the complexity of the emergency situation. That’s why we invest strongly in the province of Antwerp in people and good relationships. ●

² Standby Task Force - <https://standbytaskforce.org/>

³ Volontaires Internationaux en Soutien Opérationnel Virtuel - <https://www.visov.org/>



Round table 4

Civil emergencies, preventions, response and management

BY MR. NERTIL JOLE
 Prefect of Korca region, Albania



The Republic of Albania is a country in Southeast of Europe. It is in the Balkans, on the Adriatic and in Ionian Seas within the Mediterranean Sea, and shares land border with Montenegro to the northwest, Kosovo to the northeast, North Macedonia to the east and Greece to the south. Korca Region is one of 12 regions of Albania, which lies in the southeastern of the country and includes 6 Municipalities. The current population of Korca Region is 173,000 inhabitants.

The Prefect represents the Council of Ministers in Region. According to Albanian Government's laws (Law no. 45/2019 "For civil defense" and Law no. 107/2016 "For the Prefect of the Region"), the Prefect has several responsibilities in civil emergencies cases. These duties include directing and coordinating emergency efforts, forming temporary committees, forming working groups for specific crises, managing emergencies and rehabilitation. This legal framework ensures that the role of the Prefect is both a managerial and operational pivot in the region's response to emergencies, emphasizing a structured and efficient approach to civil protection and disaster response.

The Prefecture of Korça Region in Albania has faced numerous challenges in handling civil emergencies including significant natural disasters and public health crisis that required extensive coordination and management, such as earthquakes, public health crisis, seasonal wildfires, and winter emergencies.

Korca Region was affected by the earthquake on June 1, 2019, with a magnitude of 5.3 on the Richter scale, hitting the southeastern of Floq, part of the Korca Municipality. This earthquake caused

significant consequences. 4 people were injured and 121 building were damaged. In response, the Prefecture swiftly established emergency headquarters and organized emergency response teams that worked diligently to address the immediate aftermath in the afflicted villages of Floq, Qafzez and Vidohovë. The response included providing temporary shelters for displaced families in tents and specially designated emergency zones.

The Prefecture of Korça directed and monitored the recovery and reconstruction phases, which involved: Forming commissions to assess and appraise the damages comprehensively. This commissions were crucial in preparing the final lists of damaged building, which needed reconstruction, facilitating the transition from emergency response to long-term recovery. The Prefecture of Korca Region led the reconstruction process, fostering collaboration among local businesses municipalities and other relevant institutions. This coordination was critical to overcoming obstacles for reconstruction process.

The Prefecture of Korca Region manages also seasonal wildfires and other natural disasters. It organizes emergency structure meetings across various administrative unit to engage with local communities on fire prevention strategies and rapid response tactics. These proactive approach significantly reduces the number of fire incidents and enhanced the effectiveness of firefighting efforts. It also manages winter emergency operations too, which involves directing the maintenance and timely intervention on roads affected by snowfalls or landslides, ensuring that all roads within the district are continually accessible. ●

Synthesis of the sessions

BY MR. JEAN-MICHEL BRICAULT

Lecturer with ability to conduct researches in public law Deputy director at CRDT Reims Champagne-Ardenne University, France



The objective of the European Days of State Territorial Representatives often consists of analyzing the concerns of its members through debates and exchanges of experience. Crisis management linked to natural disasters is one of them. The choice of Türkiye, regularly hit by major earthquakes, as host country for these 29th European Days, makes perfect sense. The earthquakes of February 6, 2023 near the cities of Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş and of February 20, 2023 in the provinces of Hatay and Malatya caused more than 56,000 victims¹.

The common thread of the debates was to analyze, according to a comparative logic between the various countries represented, the way in which States can prepare to face natural disasters and when they occur, provide assistance and relief and then ensure “resilience” to the disaster-stricken territories².

During the opening protocol session, Mr. Saffet Arikan BEDÜK³ immediately underlined the “strategic position” of the State Territorial Representative (STR) in the management of natural disasters. The very fact of being a “territorialized field agent” can lead him to play an immediate “pivotal role” both to manage relief and then to “rebuild”⁴.

As a representative of the State at the territorial level, the STR is required to make decisions. In a crisis situation, this task appears particularly difficult for three essential reasons⁵. The first is to act quickly. The second, the STR has limited information, particularly at the beginning of the disaster. Finally, the STR must coordinate a large number of organizations. It is around this triptych that a problem appears: to what extent is the STR, due to its strategic position, able to play a coordinating role to manage the effects of natural disasters?

To answer this question, two risk experts spoke during the inaugural ceremony⁶ to provide an overall overview and four

round tables were then organized. The first focused on “the coordination of relief operations and the organization of crisis management”⁷. The second, on “the joint action of STRs and other local, regional and national actors for assistance to disaster victims and mobilization of resources”⁸. A third was specifically focused on “helping the resumption of normal activities and the resilience of territories”⁹. Finally, a fourth particularly highlighted “crisis communication and relations with the Government”¹⁰.

In the light of the debates, two main axes were drawn. The first emphasizes risk management at the central level with the essential function of planning (I). The second focuses the spotlight on the unique position of the STR in the management of natural disasters, a role of coordinator in the midst of chaos (II). It is of course necessary to apply the planned systems and existing protocols, but chaos sometimes requires improvisation.

I) Risk management at central level

Fundamentally, there is a certain “unpredictability” of natural risks (earthquakes, storms, floods, episodes of hail, drought, forest fires, landslides, etc.) which also tend to multiply under the effect of climate change. This unpredictability is almost consubstantial with the notion of natural disasters. Regarding earthquakes, Orhan TATAR, Director General of the Earthquake Management Committee (AFAD), was able to highlight a “Where is next?” evocative!

However, Olivier BORRAZ, researcher in social sciences, stressed that preparation for crises linked to natural disasters is “a function of the State” in the same way as education, housing, health... States have “the duty to protect their populations and crisis preparedness has become an essential element of this mission.” The speakers repeatedly mentioned the role of existing central organizations specifically in charge of these missions (Turkish AFAD created

¹ Hüseyin Kürşat KIRBIYIK, Governor, Deputy Minister of Health (Türkiye).

² It should be noted that on a global scale, under the aegis of the United Nations, the “Sendai framework” was adopted which covers the period 2015-2030 for disaster risk reduction. At the EU level, the European Commission decided on February 8, 2023 a Recommendation (C(2023) 400 final) and a Communication (COM(2023) 61 final) relating to “the Union’s objectives in terms of disaster resilience”.

³ President of the EASTR, former Governor, President of the Turkish Association of Governors (Türkiye).

⁴ Süleyman ELBAN, Governor of Izmir (Türkiye).

⁵ Olivier BORRAZ, Director of research at the CNRS (National Center for Scientific Research), founder of CrisisLab, Center for Sociology of Organizations of Sciences Po (France).

⁶ Prof. Dr. Orhan TATAR, Director General of the Earthquake Management Committee-AFAD (Türkiye) and Olivier BORRAZ, Director of research at the CNRS (France).

⁷ Moderator: Associated prof. Selim ÇAPAR, Governor and head of the Research and Study Center of the Ministry of the Interior (Türkiye).

⁸ Moderator: Laura LEGA, Prefect, head of the civil liberties and immigration department (Italy).

⁹ Moderator: Laurent PREVOST, Prefect, former Director General of Civil Security and Risk Management, Ministry of the Interior (France).

¹⁰ Moderator: Anne AZAM-PRADELLES, Honorary civil administrator, international expert in public administration reform (France).

in 2009, Spanish Civil Defense ¹¹, Albanian National Civil Protection Agency-NACP ¹², etc.). These central organizations are provided for by various normative measures aimed at ensuring coordination of public risk management policies. They develop territorialized strategic planning documents, regularly updated, which are all responses to risk reduction (e.g. centralization of seismic signals, zoning, amplitudes and maps of earthquakes, centralized command posts, management of temporary housing, etc.). This planning (e.g. French CATNAT plan, Spanish regional plan, etc.) also provides for simulation exercises, protean monitoring and alert systems in line of course with the territories concerned. These organizations can also provide an essential interministerial coordination function (e.g. in Türkiye, no less than eight ministries are interested in the consequences of earthquakes).

Let us add that “the effects of natural disasters can be felt long after the disaster, “in terms of mental health, increased poverty, unemployment, stigmatization of foreigners and even political changes” ¹³. These observations, from social sciences, imply that crises due to natural disasters, like many other situations, are prolonged. Their effects can indeed be “felt over a long period of time, in many different dimensions”. It appears that the implications for crisis managers in these circumstances are immense but can be summed up in a single word: “anticipation” ¹⁴. During natural disasters, crisis managers must be able to anticipate developments in the situation and the impact of their decisions, and take the necessary measures to respond to these developments.

Crisis preparedness has thus “become a political area in its own right” ¹⁵. This in no way means that States have done nothing in the past to avoid disasters or to react when they occurred. But since “the beginning of the 2000s”, natural disasters, like epidemics, industrial accidents, terrorist attacks, financial crises... have been defined “as crises threatening not only the population, the economy or vital infrastructure, but more generally the social fabric and public order.” Consequently, States have undertaken “to prepare for the emergence of crises, in order to react quickly and return as quickly as possible to the previous status quo”. In short, the unpredictability of the occurrence of certain natural risks should not be synonymous with unforeseen and even less with improvisation.

The destabilization of the established organization

However, it was highlighted that “an interesting and recurring feature of crisis response is that authorities often deviate from existing plans and protocols.” The authorities justify this “by insisting that the crisis situation does not correspond to pre-existing plans and that it requires adaptation and improvisation”. According to O. BORRAZ, “crisis management plans and simulation exercises tend to give a very ordered representation of a crisis, whereas, by definition, a crisis disrupts existing procedures and organizational boundaries”. In short, there is often a gap between crisis preparation and their concrete management on the ground. This part of “uncertainty” in the application of pre-established plans on the ground is due to various factors which were clearly developed during the debates. The first concerns the

management and understanding of information.

Information management

A central point lies in the management of information on the nature of the phenomenon, its impact, its evolution, etc. To reduce this uncertainty, according to O. BORRAZ, decision-makers need information and experts. In a crisis situation, information is often lacking at first, ... but quickly, the information becomes overwhelming. Multiple streams of information provide the decision maker with more than he or she can handle, especially today with social media. Uncertainty is then linked, not to a lack of information, but to an excess of information, difficult to interpret, prioritize, evaluate and use. Disagreements between experts are frequent and even predictable. Science “does not always speak a single truth to power, but multiple truths.” Moreover, understanding scientific information can be a challenge in itself. The decision maker must then manage these disagreements and controversies, which in themselves become another source of uncertainty. Another reason why decision-making in crisis situations is difficult and linked to the number of organizations to coordinate.

Managing a multiplicity of organisations

Indeed, in crisis situations, the coordination of the numerous organizations (administrations, businesses, NGOs, etc.) involved represents a challenge. Firstly, because these organizations are not always used to working with each other, sharing information or cooperating. They may have conflicting interests, rely on varied operating methods and different technologies, have divergent worldviews and values, and compete for resources. They may not know each other and have no pre-existing relationship, which makes their collaboration difficult according to O. BORRAZ.

Crisis management plans of course list the organizations that need to be involved, define their tasks and determine how they should work together. But plans don't always go as planned. Some organizations “collapse, others change methods, many improvise to adapt to the constraints created by the disaster.” Often, organizations “that were not part of the initial plan will emerge, either spontaneously among groups of citizens, or among entities that had not been identified as emergency actors, but who decide to offer their experience and their resources. According to O. BORRAZ, it appears that “the difficulties in coordinating these multiple organizations can amplify the impact of the initial event and contribute to the crisis, because these organizations will each pursue different objectives and will not share information”.

In short, it appears that States prepare for crises, but when they arise, the application of the procedures and protocols provided for this purpose can be improved. Because what makes a crisis fundamentally “is not so much the triggering event, whether it is an earthquake, an industrial accident, an epidemic or a terrorist attack with all the initial uncertainty it entails, but the fact that it threatens multiple organizations in their ability to continue their activities” ¹⁶.

It follows that to manage a crisis, we must understand “the factors

¹¹ Eugenia GOMEZ DE DIEGO, Government Delegate to the Region of Cantabria, “Governance of natural disaster management in Spain”.

¹² Nertil JOLE, prefect of the Korça region (Albania).

¹³ Olivier BORRAZ.

¹⁴ Idem.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Olivier BORRAZ: “An earthquake in the middle of the desert may be a natural event, but it is certainly not a disaster. What makes a disaster is the impact of the initial phenomenon on the social fabric, infrastructure, cities, the economy, the health of the population, public order”.

that lead organizations to cooperate and adapt”. This can be done by providing additional resources or by softening rules and constraints. But it is essential “to understand the organizational nature of our society” to prepare for crises. As O. BORRAZ points out, we must recognize that “we live in very organized societies and that this in itself has become a source of vulnerability”.

In short, it appears that crisis managers “must understand that what makes a crisis lies not so much in the nature and impact of the triggering event as in its capacity to destabilize an existing order made up of multiple organizations, heterogeneous and often conflicting. It is therefore necessary to “shift the focus of attention from the event itself to the wide range of organizations involved and find ways to coordinate them”¹⁷.

In preparing for crises, crisis managers must recognize this multiplicity of organizations, both as a source of vulnerability and as a resource for an effective response, both in the short and long term. In this context, the pivotal role of the STR previously mentioned can facilitate the coordination work and even more broadly “fill in the gaps”¹⁸, the shortcomings and the deficiencies in planning.

Because normal decision-making capacity is affected in times of crisis, the STR, a field actor, can “improvise”¹⁹. Placed at the center of a multi-level and multi-actor network, the STR is able to assume a unique position in the management of natural disasters.

II) The unique position of the STR in the management of natural disasters, a coordinating role in the midst of chaos

In light of the debates, it appears that this position of the STR can be summarized in three points. First of all, the STR constitutes an essential relay between the central level and the field. Secondly, he is the facilitator and coordinator of a large number of actors placed at different levels to ensure the coordination of relief operations and crisis management. Finally, he is a key player in reconstruction and the post-crisis era. Whatever the period envisaged (anticipation of natural risks upstream / management of chaos / return to normal downstream), crisis communication, consisting of responding to citizens' need for information, constitutes a common thread.

The STR, nodal point between the central level and the field

This role of relay between the center and the periphery is of course situated at various times. The first step is to carry out upstream exercises aimed at anticipating the risks linked to the natural disaster. As mentioned previously, there is “a duty of the State to help”²⁰. Central States thus play an important role in planning natural risk and its management (e.g. Turkish TAMP-TARAP

seismic risk reduction plans, French CATNAT plan, etc.). During the debates, various speakers emphasized the importance of these documents which reflect the need to anticipate the risks linked to natural disasters and their concrete translation on the ground (planning of humanitarian aid, etc.). These plans often develop “very precise local scenarios”²¹ which are the subject of “crisis anticipation exercises” sometimes on a very large scale as was the case in the county of Nograd in Hungary in 2018. This was then to carry out “defense exercises in the event of an earthquake”²² (meeting of the Civil Defense Committee, installation of field hospitals, coordination of relief, etc.). These exercises make it possible to “identify certain deficiencies”²³ and above all to “learn lessons”²⁴ from them. Along the same lines, the Governor of the Province of Hainaut (Belgium) presented in great detail a plan for “preventing deficiencies in the orohydrographic network and flooding”²⁵. Proactive reflection carried out in the Province of Hainaut has enabled risk mapping, improvement of existing infrastructure and better awareness of actors, including in a cross-border dimension (establishment of citizen reserves in civil security, training of elected officials in cross-border territories, ...).

The importance of these plans was repeatedly emphasized during the debates for better preparing for the occurrence of “chaos”²⁶. What they all have in common is that they contain “early warning systems” for citizens, thus underlining the vital importance of “crisis communication”²⁷. For example, this is the case of the French “FR-Alert”²⁸ population alert and information system. Deployed nationally since June 2022, “FR-Alert” allows anyone with a mobile phone to be notified in real time of their presence in a danger zone in order to inform them of the behaviors to adopt to protect themselves. In the same sense, the “Operational Crisis Communication Process” (POCC) set up in the province of Antwerp²⁹ aims to quickly provide information, even when few factual elements are available, in order to avoid that information not verified will spread. Like other plans of the same type, it offers a structured and shared methodology for organizing information to the public. These plans all include variants adapted to the most frequent risks (e.g. Norwegian storm warning system³⁰, flood warning in the Province of Hainaut in Belgium³¹ and Germany³², earthquakes in Albania, forest fires in Spain ...). There is a compelling need to disseminate and infuse “a culture of risk” among populations. This information passes through the STR channel: “know how to sort information”, “demonstrate pedagogy towards citizens to explain things and specify what should be done and not done” through a whole series of media (press, social networks, etc.).

The occurrence of a natural disaster can plunge entire territories into “chaos”. During the debates, large-scale disasters were explained in great detail (Kahramanmaraş earthquakes of

¹⁷ Idem.

¹⁸ Mustafa MASATLI, Governor of the Province of Hatay (Türkiye).

¹⁹ Dr. Osman VAROL, Governor of the Province of Adiyaman (Türkiye).

²⁰ Okay MEMIŞ, Governor (Türkiye).

²¹ Sándor SZABÓ, Government Commissioner of Nógrád County (Hungary).

²² Idem.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Renato FRANCESCHELLI, Head of the Civil Protection Department (Italy).

²⁵ Tommy LECLERCQ, Governor of the Province of Hainaut (Belgium).

²⁶ Ex. by Laura LEGA, Prefect (Italy), aforementioned.

²⁷ This aspect was the subject of a specific round table to highlight its crucial nature. (Round table 4 “Crisis communication and relations with the Government”, Moderator: Anne AZAM-PRADEILLES).

²⁸ Pascale TRIMBACH, prefect of Allier (France), “Hail episode in Vichy, a city listed as a world heritage site: ecological and economic consequences”.

²⁹ Cathy BERX, Governor of the Province of Antwerp (Belgium), “Crisis communication and relations with the government”.

³⁰ Tom Cato KARLSEN, Governor of Nordland County (Norway), “Crisis communication in the Arctic”.

³¹ Tommy LECLERCQ, Governor of the Province of Hainaut (Belgium).

³² Frank SCHERER, Landrat of the district Ortenaukreis (Germany).

February 2023 in Türkiye³³, the Korça region on June 1, 2019 in Albania³⁴, violent floods in the Cantabria region in Spain in January 2019³⁵, massive floods in Pas-de-Calais in France during the winter of 2023-2024³⁶, “storm of the century” in Germany and France in 1999³⁷, etc.). These disasters, often heavy in victims and destruction, call for massive relief operations and more broadly “an organization of crisis management”. This requires joint action by STRs and other local, regional and national actors to assist disaster victims and mobilize resources.

The STR, animator and coordinator of relief operations and crisis management

At the heart of the tragedy resulting from a natural disaster and “chaos”, the STR often finds itself legally on the front line to act, lead and coordinate a public and private “multi-actor network”. It is at the heart of an “integrated system”³⁸ sometimes including European actors (European Task Forces from the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, NGOs³⁹, etc.) but also of course national actors (from defense and civil protection, soldiers, firefighters, health teams, water agencies, veterinarians, public works contractors, etc.). Among these actors, academics and scientific experts (present in particular in the aforementioned central organizations, e.g. Turkish AFAD) of course play a crucial role and the STR must be able to “support” them thanks to its information from the ground. This involves informing the central level about the evolution of the situation, making up for shortcomings in the initial plans, preparing plans for the next day, etc.

As part of this multi-actor network, the work and partnership with local authorities were highlighted (e.g. flood management in France and Belgium, etc.). Ad hoc structures are operated such as the French “Departmental Operational Center” (COD) which brings together all security and emergency forces, as well as state services and territorial actors. Crisis management tool available to the STR, decisions are made on the basis of evolving mapping, in support of the decision and crisis management plans which provide a basis for planning, which circumstances lead to adapt. Finer territorial structures can also be implemented closer to the ground (e.g. operational command post - PCO set up at Vichy town hall during a very intense hail episode in June 2022⁴⁰, appointment of “700 STR auxiliary” in Turkey during the earthquakes of 2023...).

A “crisis management process” methodology appears (e.g. “IBOBBO” methodology in the province of Antwerp⁴¹) which contributes to common and shared knowledge of the situation by emphasizing the following stages: collection of information, judgment, decision making, command and monitoring⁴². This risk management of course includes an important communication component.

At the heart of the chaos, the STR is the pivot for coordinating relief operations. Crisis management can sometimes be incredibly intense, commensurate with the natural disaster itself. The Turkish speakers in round table n°1⁴³, recounting their personal experiences during the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes of February 6, 2023, were able to draw up a long list of emergency actions undertaken (search for survivors, installation of “campaign hospitals”, evacuation of victims and rubble, coordination of gigantic works caused by massive destruction, delivery of medical aid and food, prevention of pandemics, division of disaster areas into “subdistricts”, disinfection of premises, problems of water pipes and more broadly the management of drinking water, management of stray animals, waste management, etc.). Very quickly, the victims must be rehoused (installation of “tent cities” or “container cities”, management of “right holders” to housing, etc.). In this chaos, psychosocial support in all its dimensions (psychological, spiritual, etc.) is also quickly put in place. This support also involves the establishment of social activities (management of orphans, idle people, installation of libraries, cafeterias, playgrounds, places of conviviality, sports groups, etc.) and educational (continuation of the schooling of children, installation of student hostels, etc.)⁴⁴.

In addition to this large-scale earthquake in Turkey, other examples of natural disasters were provided during the debates (e.g. massive floods in Pas-de-Calais in 2023-2024⁴⁵, episode of intense hail in Vichy in 2022⁴⁶...). It still appears that the STR must ensure “operational management” of the immediate consequences of the natural disaster (e.g. in Pas-de-Calais, implementation of task forces brought together by each of the district sub-prefects in the form operational committees to deal as closely as possible on the ground with all emerging issues - pumping, insurance, rehousing, etc. - and identify, plan and coordinate extreme emergency work on watercourses).

Crisis management calls, as previously mentioned, for controlled communication to inform the public (fight against “fake news”, rumors, etc.) and firstly the victims themselves (e.g. telephone cell to support individuals flooded in Pas-de-Calais, establishment of facilitating “one-stop shops”, “Vichy solidarity” etc.).

Once the peak of the crisis, the momentum, has passed, once operational management of the immediate consequences of the natural disaster has been ensured, once the media has focused on other events, once the emergency services have been partially demobilized or engaged for other emergencies, a more or less long period begins to support disaster victims and territories in the post-crisis period and in the return to a form of normality. It is then necessary to assess the damage, assist residents, help

³³ Hüseyin Kürşat KIRBIYIK, Governor, Deputy Minister of Health (Türkiye).

³⁴ Nertil JOLE, prefect of the Korça region (Albania).

³⁵ Eugenia GOMEZ DE DIEGO, Government Delegate to the Region of Cantabria (Spain).

³⁶ Jacques BILLANT, Prefect of the Pas-de-Calais department (France), “Floods in Pas-de-Calais”.

³⁷ Frank SCHERER, Landrat of the district Ortenaukreis (Germany).

³⁸ Laura LEGA aforementioned.

³⁹ Mustafa MASATLI, Governor of Hatay province (Türkiye).

⁴⁰ Pascale TRIMBACH, prefect of Allier (France).

⁴¹ This method has now become a standard in Belgium in terms of decision-making

procedure during a crisis situation.

⁴² Cathy BERX, Governor of the Province of Antwerp (Belgium).

⁴³ Moderator: Associate Prof. Selim ÇAPAR, Research and Study Center of the Ministry of the Interior (Türkiye); Okay MEMİŞ, Governor (Türkiye) “General effects of earthquakes and situation analysis”; Mustafa MASATLI, Governor of Hatay province (Türkiye), “Infrastructure, environment and decluttering”; Dr. Osman VAROL, Governor of Adıyaman Province (Türkiye) “Search and rescue, temporary shelter and debris removal services”.

⁴⁴ Fatma Turhan KESER, Governor of Perşembe District (Türkiye), “Psychosocial support services for earthquake victims”.

⁴⁵ Jacques BILLANT, Prefect of the Pas-de-Calais department (France).

⁴⁶ Pascale TRIMBACH, prefect of Allier (France).

businesses and farmers to resume their activity and compensate for losses, restart essential networks or even initiate studies with a view to repairing destroyed infrastructure. This leads to mobilizing other resources and other skills. The STR is also a post-crisis manager.

The STR, an essential player in reconstruction and the post-crisis

Support for the resumption of normal activities and “territorial resilience”⁴⁷ is an integral part of the STRs’ missions. These actions are not all the responsibility of the State, even in a country where the State is very present. Intense coordination and mobilization action is then necessary to activate all actors (e.g. insurers, etc.) and prevent everyone from sticking to the implementation of sometimes lengthy procedures while residents expect rapid responses, and, in the distressed situation they are experiencing, cannot always understand the deadlines imposed on them. It is also necessary to communicate very regularly on the actions undertaken to inform potential beneficiaries of the measures put in place but also to prevent the inevitable controversies over the inaction of “public authorities”, a very broad concept which includes both the State but also all local actors, in particular local authorities. Relaying government actions and working closely with elected officials and civil society, the STR naturally has “an essential role”⁴⁸.

It is the time for recognition of the exceptional nature of the natural event in the form of the implementation of the natural disaster procedure (e.g. French CATNAT). This procedure, initiated by the municipalities, is the subject of an instruction at the Prefecture before transmission to the Ministry. An interministerial commission decides on the attribution (or not) of this recognition, essential for compensation.

This time is also marked by work to coordinate major reconstruction work (e.g. housing in Türkiye meeting seismic standards, certain damaged monuments such as in Vichy with

an exceptional heritage dimension, roads, related works of art related with communities, etc.) and rehousing actions (e.g. long-term “mobile home” in Pas-de-Calais, acquisitions of damaged homes in France via the “Barnier fund” etc.).

It is sometimes appropriate to develop a real “resilience and prevention plan with the implementation of structuring work”⁴⁹. For example, following the floods in Pas-de-Calais, there was the deployment of a “Departmental Monitoring Committee” with the objective of “coordinating the actions developed at the basin level” and providing responses to all the problems caused by flooding. Large-scale works may sometimes be necessary (e.g. dikes in Pas-de-Calais, new urbanization in Albania following the 2019 earthquake, modeling of equipment and structures in Hainaut in Belgium following floods, works of reforestation in Germany after the storm of 1999...).

The State must also “facilitate” the rehabilitation of production tools to enable the relaunch of economic action and “support” artisans, traders and farmers in resuming activity. “Resilience plans” also often include elements to “change governance” (e.g. prevention and management of floods in Pas-de-Calais, establishment of a “Belgian Citizen Reserve”, strengthening of cooperation cross-border relationship in terms of flooding between Belgium and France⁵⁰, in terms of drought and water management between Germany and France⁵¹, etc.).

To conclude, and in the light of very dense debates, it appears in many respects that the STRs are a “generalist” of risk and in particular of natural risk due to its territorial anchoring.

Their position gives them a certain capacity to prevent natural risk by preparing for it but also to manage it on a decision-making level when the natural disaster occurs and anticipate the evolution of the situation as close as possible to populations and territories, which constitutes their undeniable added value. ●

⁴⁷ Laurent PREVOST, Prefect (France).

⁴⁸ Idem.

⁴⁹ Jacques BILLANT, Prefect of the Pas-de-Calais department (France).

⁵⁰ Tommy LECLERCQ, Governor of the Province of Hainaut (Belgium).

⁵¹ Frank SCHERER, Landrat of the Ortenaukreis district (Germany).