



Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Workshop report

TOWARDS DISASTER RESILIENCE GOALS

Setting the scene, enabling discussion, and designing a common approach to the development of the Union disaster resilience goals in the area of civil protection

7-8 July 2021

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INTRODUCTION

"Together. Resilient. Europe."

The main priority of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU is to contribute to **building a stronger and more resilient European Union**. To that end, the Slovenian Presidency is focusing on improving **the EU's ability to anticipate and deal effectively with emergency situations** which, due to their nature or their extent, exceed the capacity of individual Member States to manage them, or which have a considerable transboundary impact.

In the field of civil protection, the Slovenian Presidency is focusing on strengthening resilience to natural and man-made disasters, further improvements in the effectiveness of the European Union's response to large-scale disasters, and development of the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network.

An important part of the emerging European resilience framework will be the **Union disaster resilience goals in the area of civil protection** (hereinafter: disaster resilience goals). This new element was introduced in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (hereinafter: UCPM) with the latest revision of Decision No. 1313/2013/EU, i.e. with the Regulation (EU) 2021/836 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021, amending Decision No. 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (hereinafter: revised UCPM legislation). Disaster resilience goals are defined in Article 4:

"Disaster resilience goals means non-binding objectives established in the area of civil protection to support prevention and preparedness actions for the purposes of improving the capacity of the Union and its Member States to withstand the effects of a disaster which causes or is capable of causing transboundary effects".

In accordance with Article 6(5) of the revised UCPM legislation, **the Commission shall establish and develop disaster resilience goals together with Member States.**

These goals will support the prevention and preparedness actions for the purposes of improving the capacity of the Union and its Member States to withstand the effects of a disaster which causes or is capable of causing multi-country transboundary effects.



WORKSHOP

The Slovenian Presidency organised a workshop “Towards disaster resilience goals” to launch a reflection process on the development of the disaster resilience goals in the area of civil protection.

The workshop was held on 7 and 8 July 2021 as a virtual event. It gathered **116 participants** from 27 Member States, two Participating States, one Candidate Country, representatives from the European Commission (DG ECHO, DG HOME and Joint Research Centre), the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, NATO, the UNDRR and the Red Cross.

The first morning’s plenary presentations set the context for a discussion on designing disaster resilience goals in the area of civil protection. Experts from EU, UNDRR and NATO presented disaster resilience goals as a Union Civil Protection Mechanism priority, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness, as well as connection to other EU frameworks (ex. resilience of critical infrastructures).

The theoretical part was followed by three parallel breakout sessions around which the workshop was structured and participants had the opportunity to discuss the relevant issues in more detail:

- ∞ **The Union disaster resilience goals in relation to other disaster resilience frameworks;**
- ∞ **The resilience of critical societal functions: the role of civil protection and the union disaster resilience goals;**
- ∞ **How to design Union disaster resilience goals fit for the future.**

The workshop provided an opportunity to:

- ∞ Exchange views between different stakeholders on key conceptual issues;
- ∞ Reflect on the process of development of the disaster resilience goals;
- ∞ Discuss different possible approaches to designing the disaster resilience goals (i.e. an all-hazard, risk-specific, cross-sectoral approach, or, for example, going from general to more specific requirements);
- ∞ Explore the options for building resilience through UCPM components.



WORKSHOP THEMES

THE UNION DISASTER RESILIENCE GOALS IN RELATION TO OTHER DISASTER RESILIENCE FRAMEWORKS

Breakout Session 1 was attended by 36 participants from 20 Member States, one Participating State, one Candidate Country and representatives from the European Commission (DG ECHO, DG HOME, JRC).

Theme 1 – The Union disaster resilience goals in relation to other disaster resilience frameworks

Breakout Session 1 focused on the disaster resilience goals and their relation to other resilience frameworks, with a focus on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness. The participants agreed on the importance of developing disaster resilience goals for the overall resilience of the European Union and Member States/UCPM Participating States. The experience and best practice of the existing international frameworks need to be recognised, avoiding duplication of the work already done. A multi-stakeholder approach should be encouraged, and the future Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network platform should be used as a tool to exchange knowledge and best practice.

The implementation of the NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and their implications for the disaster resilience goals

While setting the scene, designing and developing the disaster resilience goals the Commission and the Member States are encouraged to take into account the **best practice and lessons learned from the existing international resilience frameworks** and to avoid duplication of the work already done.

The participants of Breakout Session 1 unanimously agreed that international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness need to be taken into account when designing and developing the

disaster resilience goals. At the same time, the disaster resilience goals have the potential to contribute, at a strategic level, to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and of the NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness.

The efficient development and implementation of the future EU framework on disaster resilience goals in the area of civil protection would noticeably enhance the disaster resilience of the EU and the Member States.



Synergies and differences between different resilience frameworks and the future disaster resilience goals

Even though there are **synergies** between the disaster resilience goals and these international frameworks, it is important to recognise the **differences**. The participants saw differences with regard to scope: whereas the UNDRR is a global framework which includes a broader cross-sectoral approach to resilience, the NATO baseline requirements for civil preparedness focus on the civil-military aspect of resilience. Even though some participants commented that the scope of the area of civil protection is too narrow, several delegates explained the reasoning and its limitations according to the UCPM Regulation. After the explanation, a common understanding was reached; **the future disaster resilience goals should focus on prevention and preparedness in the area of civil protection**, and should also be coherent with other EU instruments

(e.g. the European Green Deal, the Directive on the resilience of critical entities, new resilience measures in the health sector, etc.).

A cross-sectoral, multi-hazard and risk-specific approach is required in order to enhance the disaster resilience of the Member States and the UCPM Participating States.

The future disaster resilience goals should be based on the **closely related** work carried out on building Union-wide **disaster scenarios** (Article 10 of the revised UCPM legislation), and should focus on prevention and preparedness. The implementation of the disaster resilience goals would help the EU and Member States withstand natural and man-made disasters with multi-country transboundary effects.

Lessons to be learned from designing, implementing and monitoring other resilience frameworks

The main benefits of learning from the experience of the international frameworks in designing resilience goals are a quicker implementation of the future disaster resilience goals, and efficient use of the already existing expertise.

At the same time, the participants cautioned against the uncritical transfer/copying of processes established under the UNDRR and NATO frameworks when designing the disaster resilience goals, as these processes are

adapted to the specific organizational structures and thus may not be directly transferable to the EU context.

The participants were in agreement that a **multi-stakeholder approach** needs to be followed when designing the disaster resilience goals, and that a **specific expert group** should lead and coordinate the process. The **Disaster Prevention and Risk Management Expert Group** (DPEG) was identified as a good forum to carry out this role. The participants



emphasised the importance of strong cooperation between the nominated DPEG civil protection experts and other relevant stakeholders.

The Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network platform was highlighted as a promising tool that

could bring together various stakeholders at both national and international level. The importance of a cross-sectoral approach at the national and EU level when designing disaster resilience goals was also highlighted by the participants.



THE RESILIENCE OF CRITICAL SOCIETAL FUNCTIONS: THE ROLE OF CIVIL PROTECTION AND THE UNION DISASTER RESILIENCE GOALS

Breakout Session 2 was attended by 43 participants from 17 Member States, one Participating State and representatives from the European Commission (DG ECHO, DG HOME, JRC) and the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU.

Theme 2: The resilience of critical societal functions: the role of Civil Protection and the Union disaster resilience goals

Breakout Session 2 focused on the relationship and close links between civil protection and critical services. It was emphasised that the critical infrastructure/service providers should take the disaster resilience goals, as well as interdependencies between sectors, into consideration. Energy, telecommunications, transport, water and food supply chains were identified as the key sectors for cooperation between civil protection and critical infrastructure/service providers. A strong emphasis was also given to ensuring business continuity and to the importance of good and clear communication and information exchange between sectors at the national and international level.

Complementarities between risk assessments under the UCPM and the Proposal for a Directive on the Resilience of Critical Entities

The participants discussed the **importance of identifying critical infrastructure and entities** for ensuring effective emergency operations; of their minimum level of performance in order to ensure civil protection operations in disaster situations; and of the role that civil protection authorities play with respect to critical societal functions at the national level.

The participants recognised close links between civil protection and critical services, including when it comes to the disaster resilience goals. They agreed that **infrastructure resilience is a shared responsibility of the government, the private sector, communities, and individuals**. Close cooperation and coordination with other sectors and domains is crucial. The importance of

good, clear communication – between sectors, and the importance of common language at the national and international level – was stressed throughout the session.

Complementarities between risk assessments carried out under the UCPM and the future Critical Entities Resilience (CER) Directive will be warranted both for the purposes of a holistic approach and for the reduction of administrative burdens.

There was a common agreement that Member States should recommend that critical infrastructure operators take the future disaster resilience goals and interdependencies between sectors into consideration. The possible impacts of disruption in



one sector on other sectors should not be neglected.

The results of regular risk assessments under the UCPM should be taken into account by Member States when planning prevention and the disaster resilience of society as a whole.

When designing the disaster resilience goals, risks to critical infrastructure, both natural and man-made, should be considered, in order to have an overarching view of the

Identify infrastructure/services and entities that are crucial to ensuring effective emergency operations during a crisis

Energy, water supply, transport, telecommunications, and food supply chains were identified as the key sectors. An important element that was also considered was the “human factor”, in relation to both the population in general and, specifically, to people working in civil protection.

A strong emphasis was given to ensuring business continuity. All this implies continuity of critical

threats. The participants pointed out that although the disaster resilience goals are to be defined in the area of civil protection, a broader context should be kept in mind at all times. The importance of a **cross-sectoral approach and open communication channels with other (non-civil protection) stakeholders** was stressed several times. The areas of hybrid threats, terrorism and cybersecurity were listed as some of those the civil protection community should build bridges and maintain links with.

services, including public administration.

The participants stressed the importance of public-private cooperation, although the approach may vary from nation to nation. However, there was wide support for private entities to be part of the process of identifying the infrastructure/services and entities that are crucial to ensuring effective emergency operations during a crisis.

What is the minimum level of performance of the basic critical services required to ensure effective civil protection operations in disaster situations

The discussions revealed some divergence of opinion with regard to the feasibility of setting quantitative targets for the minimum level of performance for critical services. A number of the workshop participants highlighted the idea that setting (quantifiable) **targets for the minimum level of performance** can be helpful in organising future

resilience-related work. Targets such as those set by NATO for mass casualties (the ability to assist 1000 casualties) or mass population movement (the ability to provide shelter for 2% of the national population) were mentioned as examples of quantifiable goals that help guide resilience work. Other participants argued that setting



quantitative targets could be a challenging task for many services, given that the level of performance depends on service providers, the specificities of any given service, and national approaches to regulation, disaster situations, and other factors.

When designing the resilience framework, an attempt should be made to formulate **“operational” goals** that lend themselves to monitoring. Inspiration could be taken from other sectors, such as the **“stress-testing” approach** applied in banking. However, it is important to avoid the creation of an overly complex framework which would become difficult to implement. In parallel, the disaster resilience goals should be linked to the scenario-building which will be carried out as

Exchange of information

A large number of participants pointed out the importance of **exchange of information** between Member States and sharing of good practice, knowledge and expertise. In addition, Member States encouraged **regional cooperation** in the area of civil protection and the development of disaster resilience goals. In their

pursuant to Article 10 of the revised UCPM legislation.

Member States underlined that the coordination between civil protection and critical infrastructure operators would bring added value, and help to build resilience in a collaborative manner.

This could be achieved in various ways: by involving the operators in preparedness planning, by designing a model for cooperation between civil protection and critical infrastructure operators before and after emergencies, or by reviewing critical services and setting requirements for upholding them during disasters, including emergency operations.

view **training and exercises** also play an important role. The European Commission could, according to the participants, substantially support Member States' efforts in this area, especially through the future Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network platform, and closer cooperation with the Joint Research Centre (JRC).

HOW TO DESIGN UNION DISASTER RESILIENCE GOALS FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Thirty-seven participants from 17 Member States and one Candidate Country, and representatives of the European Commission (DG ECHO, JRC), the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, and the Red Cross – Europe Office participated in Breakout Session 3.

Theme 3 – How to design Union disaster resilience goals fit for the future

Breakout Session 3 focused on designing and developing disaster resilience goals which could help Member States withstand future natural and man-made disasters.

The participants underlined the importance of common understanding of the scope of the risks and their dimensions. The disaster resilience goals should focus on those risks where civil protection has a primary role in the area of prevention, preparedness and response. When designing the disaster resilience goals, current and emerging risks from a specific and multi-risk perspective should be taken into account. The process of designing the disaster resilience goals should be closely coordinated with the building of scenarios at Union level and the identification of capacity gaps. Science plays an important role in better understanding the risks, and should significantly support the risk management activities. The Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network should support the implementation of the disaster resilience goals, in particular through its Science Pillar.

Risks and disasters that should be the primary focus of the Union disaster resilience goals

The participants stressed a need for a **common understanding of the scope of the risks/disasters and their dimensions** (multi-country transboundary disasters and other terms) which should be the primary focus of the disaster resilience goals.

The risks to be addressed by the disaster resilience goals should focus on the current risks and risks based on forward-looking scenarios (anticipatory approach), and duly take emerging risks and

interdependencies into account. The disaster resilience goals should focus on those risks where civil protection has a primary role in the area of prevention, preparedness and response.

A large number of the participants pointed out that the **EU overview of risks¹ and lessons learned** under the UCPM should be taken into account. The disaster resilience goals should be addressed from two angles: **the generic/multi-risk perspective and**

¹ For example, see the Commission staff working document: Overview of natural and man-made disaster risks the EU may face, SWD(2020) 330.



the risk-specific perspective, and should include both approaches (performance-based and as a common baseline). The disaster

resilience goals, as non-binding goals, should be specific, limited in number, measurable and achievable.

Ways and goals for strengthening the anticipatory capacity, early warning systems, and scientific support to risk/disaster management in the EU

The participants were of the strong opinion that science plays a key role in better understanding and communicating disaster risks, so it should be closely involved in disaster risk-related activities. **Cooperation with the JRC** should be strengthened through relevant Commission fora to support the process of developing the disaster resilience goals through several activities, i.e. developing realistic future risk scenarios, assisting the implementation and further development of the disaster resilience goals, measuring and monitoring them, identifying and analysing causes and drivers of risks, enhancing early warning systems, managing

databases of effects related to historical events, and other relevant activities.

A number of participants stressed that scientists, practitioners and policymakers should build stronger partnerships, both at national and EU level.

There is a need for continued research, development and enforcement of the early warning systems (EWS). Cooperation on multidisciplinary and transboundary EWS needs to be strengthened.

Linking the development of the disaster resilience goals with the scenario-building under Article 10

The participants recognised that the development of the **disaster resilience goals and scenario-building** are closely related processes. Both processes should run in parallel, and close coordination between the two activities should be ensured. Scenario-building should focus on Union-wide and realistic worst-case scenarios². This would help identify

risks to be addressed as a priority, and point to specific areas where resilience goals should be defined, and should also inform the capacity gaps at EU level to provide a strengthened evidence base for developing the European Civil Protection Pool and rescEU capacities.

² The concept of realistic worst case-scenarios would still need to be discussed and its scope to be agreed upon.



Support of the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network

The workshop participants were of the common opinion that the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network should support the implementation of the disaster resilience goals through

its relevant activities. In particular, its Science Pillar should be one of the cornerstones of both the implementation of the disaster resilience goals and scenario-building.

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Based on the discussions in the three parallel breakout sessions, the workshop outcomes were divided into four thematic sets.

General findings

The participants in all three parallel breakout sessions agreed that the efficient **development and implementation of the disaster resilience goals would noticeably enhance the disaster resilience** of the EU and the Member States, despite their non-binding nature. As the disaster resilience goals are to be designed and developed within the area of civil protection, they came to the conclusion that the scope of work of civil protection, which is different in different Member States, needs to be agreed in further discussions.

The disaster resilience goals should focus on those risks where civil protection has a primary role in the area of prevention, preparedness and response.

One important dimension that should be reflected not only in the disaster resilience goals framework, but also in the broader perspective and **cross-sectoral approach, is the resilience** of key infrastructures and critical services, in particular those supporting emergency operations in disasters.

The process of development of the Union disaster resilience goals

The European Commission and the Member States are encouraged to take into account **best practice and lessons learned** from the existing international resilience frameworks in the process of designing disaster resilience goals in the field of civil protection.

It is important that the Commission and the Member States do not duplicate the work already done.

When designing the disaster resilience goals the focus should be on civil protection. Nevertheless, in order to build resilience to complex, large-scale disasters, the disaster resilience

goals should also take into consideration **cross-sectoral multi-hazards** and, when needed, **a risk-specific approach**.

The Member States and the European Commission are already doing a lot of work within the UCPM that should feed into the development of the disaster resilience goals. In the area of prevention, Member States regularly prepare and share Commission National Risk Assessments (NRAs) which provide useful information on the disaster risks faced in different parts of Europe. Taking into account the NRAs, as well as its own policy and operational and scientific work, the Commission regularly prepares and publishes cross-sectoral overviews of



natural and man-made disaster risks that are of concern to the EU as a whole³.

The results of risk assessments and lessons learned under the UCPM should be taken into account by Member States when planning prevention and the disaster resilience of society as a

whole. The regional dimension of risks should also be considered.

There is a need for a common understanding of different technical terms, e.g. “disasters which cause or are capable of causing multi-country transboundary effects”, to identify risks and their impacts that should be the primary focus of the disaster resilience goals.

The role of science and the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of science when planning prevention, preparedness and response measures. **Science** plays an important role in better understanding and communicating disaster risk and should significantly support the development of the disaster resilience goals. The Commission and Member States should build a stronger **partnership between scientists, practitioners and policymakers**: in order to tackle systemic challenges related to disaster risk reduction, a transdisciplinary and holistic approach is necessary. The first steps were taken by the 2019 revision of the UCPM legislation, which provided for the establishment of the Union Civil

Protection Knowledge Network. The Knowledge Network, which aims to be launched by the end of 2021, will bring together civil protection and disaster management experts and organisations, increase knowledge and facilitate its dissemination within the UCPM, and support the Union’s ability and capacity to deal with disasters.

The Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network will be used to exchange knowledge and best practice between various stakeholders, and should support the implementation of the disaster resilience goals.

Further steps in designing the Union disaster resilience goals

The workshop participants welcomed the suggestion to use the Commission’s **Disaster Prevention and Risk Management expert group** as the main forum for developing the disaster resilience goals. The participants expressed the view that

this group should ensure the appropriate coordination and involvement of relevant stakeholders at national and EU level. Whenever relevant, external experts could be invited to the meetings to share expertise and experience with

³ For example, see the Commission Staff working document: Overview of Natural and Man-made Disaster Risks the EU may Face, SWD(2020) 330.



building disaster resilience. The timeframe for adopting the Commission Recommendations in 2022 should be feasible, taking into account national procedures and the time needed for national consultations. A step-by-step approach could be applied to the development of goals, if needed, with

several sets of disaster resilience goals developed in the short and medium term. In the long term, the Commission and Member States should consider the development of guidelines to support the implementation of the disaster resilience goals.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do you support the outcomes of the workshop “Towards disaster resilience goals – setting the scene, enabling discussion and designing a common approach for the development of the Union disaster resilience goals in the area of civil protection”?
2. What expectations do you have for the Union disaster resilience goals in the area of civil protection?
3. How do you see the process of development of the Union disaster resilience goals and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including national Civil Protection Authorities at different levels and relevant Commission fora?
4. How do you see the role of the Union disaster resilience goals in setting priorities under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism i.e. when developing annual and multi-annual programmes?