



IPA 2012/290-552 Project

Building Resilience to Disasters in Western Balkans and Turkey

Project Kick-off Meeting

30 August 2012, Zagreb, Croatia

Kras Congress Centre



MEETING SUMMARY

I. Introduction

- a. Background: The objective of the IPA 2012 Project Kick-off and First Steering Committee Meetings was to present to a large audience the objectives and planned activities in order to raise the awareness and visibility of the Project among the beneficiaries and stakeholders. The project implementation plan with respective timeline, the role, responsibilities and working methods of the Steering Committee and Advisory Group were presented and discussed at the meeting.

- b. Agenda, venue, attendance: The Agenda of the Meeting is attached as Annex I. The meeting was organized by the Meteorological and Hydrological Service of Croatia and kindly hosted by the Kras Company at their Congress Centre in Zagreb. The meeting was attended by a total of 58 participants. Among them were the Project National Coordinators and Focal Points of the IPA beneficiaries and representatives of the following international and regional organizations and programmes attended the meeting: the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)¹, European Union (EU), European

¹ UNDP delegations from the following country offices participated to the meeting: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey).

Commission (EC), EUMETNET, European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Initiative for South Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE), Euromed Programme for Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters (PPRD South), Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI), Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Italian Civil Protection (CIMA), National Meteorological Administration of Romania and the Slovenian Environmental Agency. A List of participants is attached as Annex II.

II. Opening and Welcome Address

The Kick-off meeting was opened by:

- Hrvoje Dokoza, Deputy Minister of Ministry for Environment and Nature Protection, Croatia
- Ivan Čačić, Director of Meteorological and Hydrological Services of Croatia
- Nikola Gaće, Deputy Director, Protection and rescue Directorate, Croatia
- Richard Masa, Chargé d' Affaires, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Croatia
- Louisa Vinton, UN Resident Coordinator
- Paola Albrito, Head of Europe Regional Office in UNISDR
- Dimitar Ivanov, Chief of the WMO Regional Office for Europe

The speakers outlined the significant human and economic impact of the disasters affecting the region and the need for national and regional actions to build up the resilience to disasters to ensure sustainable development and economic growth. This was especially evident due to the recent climate variations experienced by all countries in the region: a very cold spell in winter 2011/2012 with heavy snowfall causing difficulties and damages in the transport and energy sectors , followed by an extremely hot and dry summer causing severe draught and forest fires in many areas. These conditions have affected many sectors, for example, water resources, agriculture, forestry and tourism, resulting in significant economic losses. It was stated that the projected climate change scenarios were likely to exacerbate extreme weather conditions in all project beneficiaries, therefore, the Project was considered very timely and relevant to the beneficiaries' needs for appropriate adaptation actions and regional cooperation.

The speakers expressed the gratitude to the EU, EC and the implementing agencies, UNISDR and WMO, for further supporting the regional disaster risk reduction agenda and the goals of the Hyogo Framework for Action "Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters 2005-2015". The speakers highlighted previous actions already taken with the support from the EU/EC and other international and regional organizations and stressed that the new project would ensure continuation and sustainability of such efforts addressing the resilience to disasters in the region. In particular, the contributions through the IPA 2009 Project on DRR, supported by the EU/EC and implemented by UNDP and WMO, the results of the South Eastern Europe Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Programme (SEEDRMAP), and the work of UNISDR, the World Bank, DPPI SEE and other partners in the Western Balkans and Turkey have been highly appreciated.

III. Press Conference

A press conference with representatives of different media, newspapers and TV stations, was organized to inform the general public on the activities and results envisaged by the project and enhance the visibility of the intervention. The press conference was attended by representatives of the implementing organizations (UNISDR and WMO), the European Commission, the Croatian institutions involved in the project (the Croatian National Protection and Rescue Directorate and the Croatian National Meteorological and Hydrological Institute).

For this event, a press released was issues by UNISDR and WMO:

(http://www.preventionweb.net/ipadrr/assets/documents/20120830_Bldg_Resilience_Balkans_Turkey_en.pdf)

IV. Presentation of the project by implementing organizations

The Project leaders, Ms. Albrito, the Head of Europe Regional Office from UNISDR and Mr. Ivanov, the Chief of the Regional Office for Europe from WMO, discussed in their presentations the priority strategies and background regarding international disaster risk reduction with a focus in the South-Eastern Europe. They outlined the main achievements of the previous efforts as well as the objectives, focus areas, challenges and opportunities provided by the new project. It was emphasized that a crucial factor for the success of the project is the full involvement of the different partners and stakeholders from the relevant beneficiaries' institutions. The approach for capacity development in DRR and in the supporting services provided by the NMHSs was both national and regional with the understanding that building further the regional cooperation would bring effectiveness and efficiency of the prevention, preparedness and response actions. The presenters acknowledged the assistance that would be provided by a number of regional and international partners throughout the implementation of the Project.