



# European Disaster Risk Management

ECHO FACTSHEET

## Facts & Figures

Since 2005, natural disasters have cost the EU close to €100 billion.

Estimated savings from investing in prevention: €4 to €7 saved for every €1 spent

Added value of EU Disaster Risk Management:  
Reducing disaster losses by improving risk assessment, analysis and management



## Key messages

- The **severity and frequency of natural disasters** has risen steadily over past decades, partly as a **result of climate change, urbanisation, population growth and environmental degradation**. In 2013, Central Europe suffered one-hundred-year floods for the second time in just 13 years.
- For **every €1 invested in disaster prevention, €4 to €7 are saved** in disaster response.
- The European Commission supports and complements disaster prevention and preparedness efforts of participating states through the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#)\*.
- Disaster risk prevention is increasingly **mainstreamed across key EU policy areas**, including health, environment, climate change adaptation, development, cohesion, agriculture, transport, energy, research and innovation.
- The EU supports the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** (2015-2030), which was agreed by 187 UN Member States in March 2015. An Action Plan adopted by the Commission in June 2016 outlines the next European steps in implementing the framework. It proposes activities on risk knowledge, risk investments, disaster preparedness and resilience worldwide.
- A **Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre** provides EU Member States and the disaster risk management community with an **online repository of disaster related research results** and access to a range of networks and partnerships.

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## EU disaster prevention tools

**Risk assessments** underpin the planning of investments to address immediate and critical risks, and contribute to improving knowledge of risks at national and sub-national levels. In 2010, the European Commission issued guidelines on risk assessment to support countries participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (Participating States) in preparing national assessments. In line with the EU Civil Protection legislation, Participating States submitted to the European Commission in December 2015 summaries of their national risk assessments. The European Commission is working closely with them to support the national risk assessment process, methodologies and further regional cooperation.

In collaboration with Participating States, the European Commission has developed guidelines for the **assessment of risk management capability**. Participating States must complete an assessment of their risk management capability by August 2018.

**Peer reviews** help the countries participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and neighbouring countries to learn from each other. They can assess each other's disaster prevention and disaster risk management systems, which contributes to better risk management policies and practices. Since 2012, eight peer reviews have taken place across Europe, either on general disaster risk management or focusing on particular areas such as risk assessment or risk management capability.

To enable the development of policies and strategies for disaster risk management, it is crucial **to improve the knowledge and evidence base as well as access to data**. In 2015, the Commission published Guidance for recording and sharing disaster losses.

The **Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre**, launched in September 2015, provides EU Member States and the Disaster Risk Management community with an online repository of disaster related research results and access to a range of networks and partnerships. A technical support system helps EU Member States carry out assessments of risks and risk management capability.

**Disaster risk prevention and management considerations have been included in a number of key EU policies**, among them cohesion policy, health, environmental impact assessment, climate change adaptation, ecosystems, agriculture, food and nutrition security, water, flood risk management, major industrial accident prevention, risk financing, nuclear safety, transport, energy, research and innovation.

**Innovative solutions for financing disaster prevention** are high on the European Commission's agenda, including the use of insurance as a tool for disaster management and as an incentive to promote risk awareness, prevention and mitigation. The EU finances disaster risk prevention on a large scale through the cohesion funds and its research budget. Prevention and preparedness projects are also financed by the Civil Protection Mechanism.

## Key risks in Europe

An analysis of national risk assessments has identified the most commonly addressed risks across the EU, The Overview of Risks (SWD(2014)134) focused on 12 key risks, underlining the cross-border nature of the risks. The overview also considered a number of emerging risks such as climate change, ecosystem degradation, space weather and anti-microbial resistance.

Floods are the most common risk addressed by EU Member States. Pandemics and severe weather conditions - e.g. storms, heat or cold waves, ice and snow - and forest fires also represent prominent risks. Among man-made disasters, industrial accidents, loss of critical infrastructure, transport accidents, terrorist and cyber-attacks are frequently cited as major risks.

The European Commission is currently updating the EU Overview of Risks on the basis of summaries of National Risk Assessments submitted by the end of 2015. The revised Overview will be published by the end of 2016.



## Enhancing international cooperation

The EU contributes to the prevention, preparedness and response to disasters affecting candidate countries, potential candidates, and other neighbouring countries (e.g. Western Balkans, Mediterranean and Eastern Partnership countries) with support from the pre-accession (IPA) and neighbourhood funds.

The EU supports the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), which was agreed by 187 UN Member States in March 2015. Many EU priorities for Disaster Risk Management have been included in the new framework, including risk assessment, risk management capability assessment, peer reviews, a strong knowledge base and the contribution of data and science. Disaster risk and resilience are also prominent in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and disaster risk reduction is closely linked to climate change adaptation in the Paris climate change deal (COP 21).

## EU projects in disaster prevention

The European Commission co-finances projects that enhance disaster prevention and preparedness through an annual call for proposals under the Civil Protection Mechanism. Past projects focusing on different risks and regions include:



The 'Baltic everyday accidents, disaster Prevention and Resilience' project (BaltPrevResilience) aims to prevent and reduce the consequences of everyday accidents and disasters or crises. In the Baltic Sea Region and the EU, there are too many injuries and fatalities as a result of everyday accidents. A key element of accident prevention is to improve learning from past accidents and disasters. © BaltPrevResilience

*BE-AWARE-2*, with project partners including authorities and civil protection agencies in the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, France, Sweden, Ireland and Germany, aims to develop an area-wide and cross-border marine pollution prevention policy quantifying available resources, current and future maritime activity levels and environmental sensitivity. The project aims to identify different future scenarios, such as oil spills and collisions, at sub-regional level for risk reduction measures and response capacities and to produce an assessment of the vulnerability of the coastline and offshore areas to marine pollution for the whole Bonn Agreement area and of the impact of predicted spills for each scenario and risk management conclusions for each sub-region. © EU/ECHO



*Flood CBA* (Cost-Benefit Analysis) is realised by a consortium of six partners from the United Kingdom, Greece, Romania, Portugal, Germany and Spain. It aims at establishing a sustainable 'Knowledge Platform' for the use of stakeholders, including flood risk management

and civil protection authorities, the research community, academia, and the private sector, dealing with the cost-benefit analysis of flood prevention measures in the context of different socio-economic environments within the EU. The project also intends to facilitate the collection, assessment and the exchange of information; provide an overview on current models and best practices; consolidate the methodology and data sources; strengthen the performance of the existing prevention mechanism and to promote the transnational cooperation of competent bodies all over Europe. © Flood CBA

