



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



A civil protection exercise in Austria. ©EU/ECHO/Oerk

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**.
- For every €1 invested in disaster prevention, €4 to €7 is saved in disaster response.
- Disaster risk prevention is increasingly **included in 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**, which was agreed by 187 UN Member States in March 2015.
- 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.

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 summaries of their national risk assessments to the European Commission in December 2015. The European Commission is working closely with them to support the national risk assessment process, methodologies and further regional cooperation.

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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 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 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

The European Commission published the updated EU Overview of Risks in May 2017 on the basis of summaries of national risk assessments submitted at the end of 2015.

Improving the understanding of disaster risks in Europe is an important step towards effective disaster risk reduction, and constitutes the backbone on which to define emergency preparedness and planning measures to facilitate the response to emergencies and disasters in Europe.

The analysis of national risk assessments has identified the most commonly addressed risks across the EU, with the Overview of Risks focusing on 11 key risks, underlining the cross-border nature of the risks. Floods are again the most common risk addressed by EU Member States. Extreme weather conditions – such as 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.

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 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 accord.

