



**DG Joint Research Centre (JRC) Annual Conference, in cooperation
with the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC)
“Building a Resilient Europe in a Globalised World”**

30 September 2015, Charlemagne Building, Brussels

**Opening Session Speech of Marc Hansen, State Secretary for Higher
Education and Research**

Dear Chair, dear Commissioner, dear Director General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I greatly welcome this opportunity to exchange with all of you on the challenging topic of resilience that is vitally important to all of us.

Given the substantive context, resilience requires a multifaceted strategy aimed at both reducing the multiple risks of a crisis and at the same time focusing on prevention and preparedness, improving rapid coping and adaptation mechanisms at local, national and regional level allowing entities to bounce back rapidly to repeated adverse events, with setting ideally the focus on tackling the root causes rather than dealing with the consequences.

It is a fundamental part of poverty reduction and a long-term effort to reduce the impacts of recurrent natural and man-made disasters that needs to be firmly embedded in national policies and planning in order to enhance capacities to better manage future uncertainty and change.

However there are no easy solutions to complex situations.

First, it is important to understand the ever-evolving context of the debate about resilience. It is equally important to grasp a realistic knowledge of the factors underlying vulnerability and a sound understanding of the priorities underpinning the necessity of developing a resilient Europe built on inclusive, innovative and reflective societies.

Furthermore, one should make the difference between resilience issues of different countries. It is of prime importance to interpret, if existing, the citizens' resilience strategies, encompassing economic, social and cultural aspects to develop a response that matches the scale of the crisis.

Analysis of the differences and similarities of urban and rural areas could lead to subsequent different national or regional resilience scenarios. Furthermore as mentioned in the past, national risk assessment registers and vulnerability analyses should get performed. Proper early warning systems could advance resilience.

For groups subject to disasters, it is vital to have increased coordination, to merge forces in research knowledge, systematic exchange of information, networking and practices across a range of stakeholders. Tailored communication aspects and project outcomes to multiple collaborators, stakeholders and user groups should get set up. Information systems need to be interconnected with policy and decision-making at national and regional levels.

For any strategy being at the upfront of a political engagement, it is essential to use the lessons learned from past experiences to improve the effectiveness to reduce vulnerability, reducing the negative effects of the existing gaps and multiply successful approaches.

At this stage, I would like to take the opportunity to make a reference to a public-private partnership called [emergency.lu](#) between the Luxembourg Government and three Luxembourgish enterprises (SES Techcom Services, Hitec Luxembourg and Luxembourg Air Ambulance) that makes available the deployment of satellite-based telecommunication systems and the assistance of volunteers of the Luxembourg Civil Protection specially trained in the installation of such equipment to the humanitarian community, primarily deployed at the request of the World Food Programme. These deployments aim to restore or establish an internet connection and other communications services following a natural disaster or in remote locations with no local infrastructure. In July 2015 an agreement was signed as well with the International Organization for Migration.

Beside politics, I would like to mention that for building more resilient communities, the use of global technologies and social media is important. ICT is the most important reason for the increasing complexity of the world on one hand and on the other hand it offers an important creative power to handle

this complexity. Today ICT offers great opportunities with regards to complexity, such as handling acute crises, developing new and safe technologies, and modelling their impact thus helping us to tackle grand societal challenges.

In that context I would like to quote a strategic RT&D (research, training and development) programme targeting resilience, headed by Prof. Verrisimo on *information infrastructure security and dependability*, at the SnT, the Interdisciplinary Centre for Security, Reliability and Trust, of the University of Luxembourg. SnT, launched by the University of Luxembourg in 2009, aims to become a European centre of excellence and innovation for secure, reliable, and trustworthy ICT systems and services. The SnT main objective is to achieve high impact and excellence by collaborating with external partners such as industries, government bodies, institutions, and international actors.

It is my firm belief that by the end of the day we will reaffirm the need to intensify our efforts to reinforce resilience at several levels and in a greater number of countries and regions. It is essential to question the challenges and limits of resilience by analysing the politics led in this domain in a critical way while putting forward novel constructive proposals. This leads me to say that I really look forward to the expert talks of today's meeting and the forthcoming debates as we look to the future.