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EU PROJECT “EURBAN WATER AID 2016”
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SUBJECT: 1st Workshop (Budapest) – Report - „EURBAN WATER AID“

Within the project “EURBAN Water Aid”, in Budapest, Hungary the first of four Workshops was held. This important event took place between the 7th – 8th of March 2016, and present were representatives from Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia and Serbia, and a representative from European Commission: Mr. Per-Øyvind Semb, desk officer of the “EURBAN Water Aid 2016” project.

The Workshop started with welcome speech from Colonel Peter Jackovics from the HUNOR (Hungarian National Organization for Rescue Services). The delegations from each participant organization introduced themselves. Budapest Waterworks hosted the event, which was led by the National Directorate General of Disaster Management. Belgrade and Kosice waterworks representatives were also present, as well as the Hungarian Red Cross.

The project logo and design was presented by Budapest Waterworks corporate design manager.
<http://www.euwa2016.org/>

In the following, the representative from European Commission: Mr. Per-Øyvind Semb, desk officer of the “EURBAN Water Aid” project made his opening speech. Beyond introducing himself, Mr. Semb expressed his opinion that the present Project is similar to the very successful projects (e.g.:“Mura 2015”), and that it is important to have neighbouring countries together. The desk officer stressed that the Mechanism we are using is for EU solidarity and cross border help, in three main areas: prevention, preparedness, and response. Aim is to improve the capacity to respond to disasters, with exercises, trainings, exchange of experts. Mr. Semb then discussed technical aspects of reporting on the present Project, advising participants to start writing their reports immediately, and to pay double attention to financial details.



After the opening meeting, participants joined a plenary meeting at 1pm, moderated by Mr. Arpad Keresztesy. Ferenc Toth, brigadier general of National Directorate General of Disaster Management gave his opening speech to the participants. Following his address, Mr. Csaba Haranghy, CEO of Budapest Waterworks delivered his welcoming speech to the delegates. Mr. Haranghy stressed the importance of the Project for the Budapest Waterworks, and expressed his hope that the professional contacts made in this project will last for many years to come, bringing the different countries together and making cooperation in time of need much easier. (For more details, please visit <http://www.euwa2016.org/>) Mr. Semb followed, greeting the two earlier speakers, and making a general presentation of the EU aid mechanism, including DG ECHO (civil protection and humanitarian aid with 34 countries), ERCC (the heart of DG ECHO, a 24/7 operations centre and crisis respond unit). Mr. Semb made clear that the normal budget for civil protection is small, because the aid is from one Member State to the other, and also pointed out that the Exchange of Experts Program is underused.

Following the plenary meeting, at 2pm, participants were divided into three groups: Command and Control Workgroup; Support and Logistics Workgroup; Operations Workgroup. The workgroups program lasted for the rest of the day and also the second day of the 1st Workshop.

Workgroup methodology was prepared in such a way as going through a prepared list of questions. Questions included 10 questions prepared beforehand and ad-hoc issues raised during the workgroup sessions. Comparative approach was used, with 4 countries and 5 organisations present. Participants' aim was getting to know each other and their partner organisations, legal, human and technical possibilities and limits, the depth of their experiences.

1. Workgroup Support and logistics

Questions, discussions

- 1) What are the organizations who have access to and management of equipment, resources and personnel in case of emergency?

Similar in countries, that all segments are involved in emergencies (national governments, local, authorities, churches, civil society, etc.)

- In Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia it is under Ministry of Interior (MoI) (Slovakia in floods is also under Ministry of Environment).
- In Croatia, National Protection and Rescue Directorate (NPRD) is an independent governmental organisation (financial dependency to MoI, but reporting directly to Prime Minister).

Serbia: Belgrade Waterworks is obliged to help with machine and equipment in situation, without compensation.

Croatia: NPRD pays for equipment and resources used in emergencies; it only takes responsibility, when a situation is declared a disaster, then it gets in charge on the national level. Until then all actions are on the local level. Declaration of disaster is government's responsibility. NPRD is generally for natural disasters, but also gets involved in humanitarian emergencies, but not as the authority in charge.

Hungary: NDGDM (National Directorate General for Disaster Management) is responsible for all (natural and manmade) emergencies in the country, control and coordination. Vis major fund (non-restricted budget) is used in case of emergencies.

Slovakia: small scale events are taken care of on local or regional level, only country wide major emergencies are taken care of by MoI (Ministry of Interior), while preparation on water and environment management in emergency is shared between various actors (coordination on local and national level).

2) What is the national legislation and what is the compliance with EU regulations?

All countries' participants maintained that their respective countries are in compliance with EU regulations. The legal framework in the participant countries is as follows:

- Hungary: Basic Act + Disaster Management Act + Army Law + Union Civil Protection Mechanism (+ branches for example Water Management).
- Croatia: Law about System of Civil Protection (umbrella law, new), Law on Water; and Operation Plan (state level, issued every year).
- Slovakia: Law on Civil Protection (general law for all emergencies), special laws for specific emergencies, i.e. flood (responsibilities defined for specific emergency measures).
- Serbia: Similar to Croatia, but Operation Plan is changed every 6 years (for flood and ice on rivers as well).

3) Are parameters the same for the quality and quantity of water required in emergency and regular conditions?

Same in all participant countries (in Serbia quantity can be different in city and rural).

4) How is your organization prepared for cooperation (in theory and practice)?

All participant countries are prepared to give and receive help from 34 EUCPM countries.

5) Additional founding:

Lack of preparedness and awareness in public education.

6) Timeline of a flood disaster

7) Host nation support

Can the country manage the support received? Coordination, human and material assistance, transportation and logistics. How to integrate assistance arrived into the national response system and mechanism? Language barriers, technical incompatibility, etc.

- **Separate coordination body needed to take care of assistance**
- Transit countries have host nation support responsibilities.

8) Self-sufficiency

Self-sufficiency is a MUST for all international assistance missions, but the extent depends on the size, the length of mission and on the means of transportation (ground/air). Practical info:

- Before arriving, gather all information!
- Always liaise immediately for possible ways of resupply (fuel, food, etc.) around the BoO (Base of Operation).
- Resupply can be provided by host nation, but purchase is more likely (bring €/ \$ cash).

9) Communication: Always use the most cost effective mean of communication

10) Media

- You are ambassadors of your country, PR is very important and politically sensitive.
- Best language skill member should give all interviews or media appearances.

2. Command and Control Work Group

Major topics discussed: Organizations with access to and management of equipment, resources and personnel in emergency / Parameters of water quality and quantity in emergency and under regular conditions. / How are organizations prepared for cooperation? / Host Nation Support / Self-sufficiency / Media and communication regarding support and logistics.

3. Operations Work Group

Working group „Operations” answered basic questions about:

- the organisation of rescue work
- operations carried out by rescue units or EUCP modules
- interoperability between EUCP teams
- interoperability between national and international rescue units
- host nation support
- the gaps in rescue operations in the field during the floods

Trouble areas could be:

- *Communication*
Recommendation - person with language ability of effected country inside of team
- *Lack of interoperability* between EUCP modules and national rescue units
Recommendation - exercises, methodology, workshops, exchange of experts
- *Unexpected weaknesses* in system
Recommendation – early identification of weaknesses, sharing of information, exercises
- *Information flow* between host country and EUCP modules before departure
Recommendation – contact person (resident person in host country), contact list, etc.

Final Conclusions of the EURBAN WATER AID 1st Workshop

At the end of the second day of the 1st Workshop, participants met for a final plenary meeting, where the three Work Groups presented their findings and then conclusions were made. During the Workshop participants analysed and discussed about current legislation on floods in the respective countries and they proposed their standardization and harmonization.

Conclusions by Work Group manager Mr. Gabor Finaczy, advisor to the Budapest Waterworks:

It is excellent to have similar emergency response structure in each country: Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia. Still, the learning of best practices will help eliminate weaknesses. We must always look for the „weak link“: what can go wrong in an emergency. Some of these points and solutions were identified, including:

- *Contact person on the ground* permanently. When all else fails you should have a contingency plan. This involves a contact person, who speaks the local language, is on the ground permanently, and can be called upon 24/7 in an emergency.

- *Communication failure.* The normal mobile networks can fail. Special telephones are necessary.
- *Written templates* with same structure in each country, just like a driving license.
- *Host nation vs transit nation.* Transit nation can also be very important.
- *Incident commander:* the decision maker on the ground.
- *Police* to control access to disaster area.
- *Chaos vs order.* We stand between chaos and order in time of emergency. We could do better, not just create order, but a community building experience. A disaster could become a nation's finest hour, we must use it as an opportunity, not just a threat. Managed well, a community, a nation, a region, even the whole EU could look back and be proud, and find new strength in a job well done, a renewed sense of community and fellowship.

Participants then further analysed and discussed current level of cooperation and in available time they identified some shortcomings and proposed possible solutions, to be discussed at length in forthcoming workshops.

