



4th National Advisory Group Meeting

21 February 2019, Baku, Azerbaijan

Meeting Report

Mr Jeyhun Isgandarli, PPRD East 2 National Programme Coordinator, declared the meeting open and welcomed the participants.

Mr Samadagha Samadov, Deputy Head of Chief Department of Operations of Ministry of Emergency Situations and PPRD East 2 Programme Steering Committee member, welcomed the participants. He pointed out that EU PPRD East 2 Programme opened broad opportunities for Partner Countries to come closer to Union Civil Protection Mechanism. He also said that new documents are being developed/updated in line with the recommendations of the Programme experts and as key beneficiary of the Programme, the Ministry of Emergency Situations is interested in cooperation with EU. He thanked the Team Leader and the experts for their support in this respect.

EU Delegation representative Ms Ulviya Abdullayeva welcomed participants and conveyed greetings of the EU Ambassador to Azerbaijan. She stressed that special attention is paid to strengthening disaster prevention, preparedness and crisis management via capacity building projects within Eastern Partnership. Moreover, she said that EU Delegation highly appreciates cooperation with Azerbaijan and noted that talks are underway to launch the 3rd phase of the PPRD East Programme.

Mr Isgenderli pointed out that there is indeed a need for the third phase since some issues are still remaining to be addressed. and thanked EU Delegation for support.

PPRD East 2 Programme Team Leader Mr Sergej Anagnosti welcomed participants on behalf of the PPRD East 2 expert team. He stressed that FRM, DRA, civil protection capacity building, HNS, and disaster awareness raising were selected by Azerbaijan as priorities. He pointed out that it is the strength of the Programme that all documents within the Programme were drafted by the national experts, public administration employees. Within the Programme, 20 working groups were established, and 35 thematic focal points were appointed in all six Partner Countries - 4 of them in Azerbaijan. He also mentioned that one single entity cannot cope with disasters and disaster risks. Therefore, inter-ministerial cooperation is crucial. Mr Anagnosti also mentioned that contacts were established with other EU projects, for example with the Civil Protection Exchange of Experts Programme. All six Partner Countries, including Azerbaijan, benefitted from this cooperation and



got exposed to the EU best practices. All regional documents are drafted in English and Russian, whereas national documents are developed in national languages and English and they are available at the Programme website.

Mr Marco Massabó, Programme FRM and DLD expert, spoke about the FRM accomplishment at the regional level. He stressed that Regional FRM Guidelines were developed and include recommendations on how to apply the EU Floods Directive. He also presented 2 Regional Workshops held within the Programme. He mentioned that the Flood Protocol was drafted for Dniestr river basin and it can be used as a reference document for all other transboundary river basins existing in the region.

Mr Anagnosti presented DRA on behalf of Ms Nataša Holgincer, DRA expert. He pointed out that DRA state of affairs was analysed in all six Partner Countries and in principle, drafting national DRA guidelines was proposed. He also presented the objectives and outcomes of the Regional DRA Workshop organised in Tbilisi. At the workshop tables of analysis were developed as a first step to bring Partner Countries closer to European practices in DRA.

Mr Massabó presented achievements in DLD and pointed out that DLD is highly regulated area in all Partner Countries. Closer cooperation with EU Member States of DLD was proposed.

Mr Anagnosti presented that ERRA was launched during the phase 1 of the Programme. During the Phase 2 two regional workshops were organised, installation and developers' manuals were developed, and all 'bugs' were fixed. The upgrade of ERRA, proposed by the Programme, has been postponed by the EC as sustainable solution for administration and maintenance of the regional ERRA nod is yet to be found.

Mr Antonín Petr, Capacity Building Key Expert, presented disaster awareness raising. He said that the assessment conducted in 2015 found one common gap in all Partner Countries - lack of national level communication strategy. Therefore, the PPRD East 2 experts recommended to develop a national communication strategy (NCS) in all Partner Countries. Regional workshop on development of the NCS was held in October 2016, Guidelines on how to draft the NCS were developed and shared with Partner Countries. He also noted the importance of cooperation of civil protection communication experts and journalists. This area was addressed by the Programme by organisation of a regional workshop for the communication experts and journalists and by organisation of a specific workshop for journalist students from Moldova who played the role of journalists during the EU MOLDEX 2017 exercise.

In the area of Civil Protection Volunteerism Mr Petr presented:



- the study tour to Finland and Denmark which aimed at offering and showing two different legal and institutional frameworks governing CPV in the EU Member States;
- the regional workshop on CPV to provide Partner Countries regional forum to exchange the experience in developing and establishing the national CPV legal and institutional systems, and to introduce the EU Aid Volunteers initiative; and
- 4 documents developed by the Programme to support the establishment of legal and institutional frameworks for CPV.

Mr Petr also presented a cartoon video developed by the Programme in a form of Public Service Announcement. When the video is finalised in national languages of all Partner Countries, it will be shared with them to support them in promotion of volunteerism in civil protection and to motivate people to become civil protection volunteers. The video was welcomed by the meeting participants.

Mr Anagnosti informed participants that in total 91 events were held within the Programme, out of which 40 were regional and 51 national, and almost 3000 participants took part, half of which came from the civil protection organizations and half from other organizations and institutions. He also noted that the Final Conference of the Programme will take place on 28 March 2019 in Brussels and then the final report will be drafted.

Mr Isgenderli informed that activities in the 2nd phase of the Programme were directed at priority areas selected by Azerbaijan. The purpose of the Programme was to develop regional cooperation and bring it closer to the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Mr Isgenderli pointed out that there had been a number of trainings and exchanges, a lot of work was done in the field of legislation, awareness raising, disaster forecasting, particularly establishment of FRM, DRA and HNS WGs.

Mr Tarlan Salmanov, State Border Service, inquired about the draft Law on HNS which was discussed in December, at what stage it was? Mr Isgenderli responded that the HNS rules are drafted. Mr Alasgar Aliyev will speak about it at length. Azerbaijan planned to send it to PPRD East 2 for comments.

Mr Michael, Elmquist, civil protection key expert, informed participants about civil protection capacity building, particularly about the eight training courses at three different levels, the Regional Table-Top Exercise, the full-scale regional field exercise EU MOLDEX 2017, and the subsequent lessons learnt follow-up. He gave detailed presentation of the field exercise, where 150 rescuers from 8 countries plus 560 Moldavians took part. He also stressed the importance of coordination in disaster response. The exercise video was presented as well.



Mr Ilgar Hasanov welcomed the participants. Being a national exercise planner for EU MOLDEX 2017, he confirmed that a lot of efforts had been invested into the preparation of the exercise depicted in the video. He stressed that this exercise helped Azerbaijan to acquire a lot of knowledge and skills, since Azerbaijani team participated in 3 components - urban search and rescue activities, chemical, biological, and radiological (CBRN) component, and water rescue. He also mentioned the Training of Trainers workshop held in Denmark in July 2018, and national workshop held for local staff afterwards.

Mr Elcin Rustamov, State Customs Committee, inquired about coordination centre – how is this mechanism regulated in Europe and Azerbaijan? Do we have this coordination centre in Azerbaijan? Given the location of our country, participation of Azerbaijan is important to make international relief operations smooth in case of disasters.

Mr Isgenderli informed that European Union has a civil protection mechanism and an Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERSS) located in Brussels in charge of coordination 24/7 and covers all EU Member States, whereas in Azerbaijan there is a Crisis Management Centre, which has a responsibility of a nationwide coordination centre. Mr Ramid Aliyev added that MES Crisis Management Centre encompasses the entire territory of Azerbaijan and is in charge of receiving, coordinating and communicating the data about disaster via a hotline 112.

Mr Alasgar Aliyev, HNS National Focal Point, informed that current legislation was reviewed with an aim to simplify national HNS procedures, and to bring national legislation closer in line with that of EU. He also said that based on European practices and benefitting from the Programme experts' help, draft HNS rules have been developed with particular account of Moldovan experience, and that the next step is to have a HNS WG meeting to discuss the draft rules and test it through the table-top exercises.

Mr Rauf Muradov, National Seismological Service Centre, stressed the importance of having a risk map to know which disasters are specific to particular regions. Therefore, it would be useful to have help in developing the maps. He also asked about the initial assessment of disasters. Mr Aliyev responded that the initial risk assessment is key to decide the scope and which stakeholders to engage. He also mentioned that ERRA was developed within PPRD East 2 Programme and Azerbaijan risk atlas is being developed in interaction with ANAS.

Ms Vusala Sadigova from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs touched upon an issue raised during last meeting concerning a simplified procedure for visa issuance for those coming to help. She pointed out that it was discussed with the relevant department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Article 2 of Decree N326 of President on issuance of visas for foreign citizens and stateless persons envisions



that foreign citizens and stateless person may obtain visa in the Republic of Azerbaijan if they are coming to help in emergency situations upon the submission of MES.

Mr Petr inquired if the draft HNS rules can be shared so that expert feedback is provided, and if there is a date for the next meeting of WG and training. Mr Aliyev responded that MES of Azerbaijan can share the draft version of document which has been prepared with the support of PPRD East 2 experts, in order to get proposals or feedbacks. He pointed out that currently MES is finalizing a provision about road tax. Once this is clarified, MES can share the draft rules. As to the next HNS WG meeting, it is planned before the next meeting in Brussels and as to training most probably in May, but no exact date so far is fixed.

Mr Anagnosti provided information about DRA. He mentioned that during 1st meeting of WG in May 2018 it was agreed to draft work plan on DRA, as well as agreeing the responsibilities of different institutions and institutions expressed willingness to cooperate. Mr Isgenderli stressed the importance of DRA and said that there is a delay because of the health problems of the national focal point, but the work will continue in this respect and the plan is to have DRA WG meeting and develop DRA rules.

Mr Salmanov asked what the word management in Flood Risk Management imply - does management include dredging? Mr Isgenderli pointed out that FRM implies initial flood risk assessment and development of maps and then development of flood risk plans which envision the water basin principle. Mr Massabó expressed his agreement with Mr Isgenderli. He said that EU Floods Directive identified steps for this - identify hotspot, assess risks and then take measures. One of the participants inquired if EU Floods Directive also covers the responsibilities of organizations/people? Mr Massabó informed that tasks and responsibilities are enshrined in the chapter on tasks and responsibilities of EU Flood directive. Ms Naila Hasanova, Baku State University, said that FRM can be structural (e.g. dams) and non-structural (e.g. maximum flow calculations). She added that there is only structural part in Azerbaijan and there is no data for non-structural part.

Mr Isgenderli informed that there is a plan to set up a WG on disaster awareness raising and draft a strategy with the application of European experience. MES does a lot of awareness raising. Ms Vusala Zahirova, chief officer of public relation department raising awareness of population, informed participants about awareness raising activities implemented by MES: MoU was signed with the Ministry of Education to raise awareness in schools. Mr Petr stressed that awareness raising about disasters (RAD) is important. Mr Isgenderli pointed out that despite the MoU there is still need for the national communication strategy for RAD. Ms Zahirova informed that the ministerial level concept is not approved yet, and it is not for engaging all stakeholders for awareness raising.



Mr Muradov informed that the National Seismological Service Centre does awareness raising in schools as well as institutions what to do prior, during and after the earthquakes, but certainly there shall be a national communication strategy to cover everything. Mr Isgenderli agreed that there should be a national document encompassing everything. Mr Petr expressed full agreement and said that there is a need for funding to make it possible. If you are going to implement a national communication strategy, you need to decide what amount will be needed. Ms Zahirova said that MES is responsible for awareness raising. She pointed out Technical University or fire-fighting specialists are engaged to develop necessary materials and MES is playing a role of coordinator. Mr Aliyev stressed the importance of awareness raising and that it is part of emergency preparedness of population. He also pointed out that it shall not be conducted only by MES. Awareness of populations in the field of emergency situations is also implemented by local executive authorities.

Mr Anagnosti informed that visibility-wise there are 1500 subscribers in the Programme mailing list. He also pointed out that it is possible to obtain information about PPRD East 2 Programme on the Programme web page as well as the Programme's Facebook page which is regularly updated. He stressed that fact sheets and 7 newsletters were developed within the Programme. He also stressed that result oriented monitoring outcomes for 2017 are received and audit outcomes are good as well thanks to Stantec. He also noted that inception report and 7 progress reports are approved by the European Commission and available on the Programme web site, the last one is in the stage of approval. The Final Conference will take place on 28 March 2019. A draft final report will be delivered 1 month prior to the end of Programme and final report at the end of the Programme.

Mr Isgenderli thanked everybody, particularly the Team Leader Sergej Anagnosti, experts Antonín Petr, Michael Elmquist, and Marco Massabó, interpreters and declared the meeting closed.