



ALBANIA'S CIVIL PROTECTION SYSTEM AND ITS RELATED REGIONAL COOPERATION

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1. ABSTRACT

Albania ranks as one of the countries in the world with the highest economic risk from multiple hazards. Its average annual losses count for about 2.5% of its GDP. Despite the natural disaster proneness, several underlying risk factors (e.g. uncontrolled urbanization and environment degradation) which followed its transition from a centralized to an open market economy, have contributed to strengthening of the disasters impact as well.

In the last two decades, Albania is increasingly seeking to apply a more contemporary approach in coping with natural/manmade disasters, by considering both, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Civil Protection (CP) measures. It has improved its disaster related legal framework and implementation plans, institutional structures and capacities, as well as its cooperation with other countries and international actors. The focus is to encourage a CP culture by emphasizing multi-hazard DRR and full participation by all stakeholders. Nevertheless, the Albania's civil emergency strategies and plans lack the implementation mechanisms, while the capacities' development is lagging behind due to diverging approaches and unsatisfactory involvement of the state institutions, as well as the still high dependence on foreign support.

While the support provided so far by a number of supranational actors (UN, EU, World Bank) to Albania has produced some positive results in this respect, the regional/multilateral cooperation has been limited. Albania has a better bilateral cooperation with Italy, Macedonia, Kosovo but this cooperation is still missing with some others. In this respect, after providing a short analysis, concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the DRR&CP systems in Albania, the study suggests some plausible ways for improving the Albania's capacity in dealing with the natural/manmade disasters.

In general, Albania needs to revise the legal framework and implementation plans as well as strengthening the interagency cooperation in dealing with civil emergencies and improving its related capacities, all oriented to a better dealing with the whole spectrum of disaster management. In this respect, smart choices regarding capacity pooling and sharing with other region and neighbor countries, will result in capacity enhancement and significant cost savings.

2. INTRODUCTION

Albanian civil emergency system has evolved over the time in a nonlinear way. Progress has been followed time after time by pauses, even setbacks. This fact and the lack of sufficient data make the analysis of this system difficult. Disaster Risk Assessment of 2003 and the National Civil Emergency Plan of 2004 (NCEP-04) were two very important steps in laying out the foundations for this process, while several projects sponsored by the World Bank, UN and EU, between 2010 and 2014, focused on capacity assessment and capacity building, were significant steps ahead, which provided also very valuable information in the way how this system works in Albania and what are the still remaining weaknesses.

2.1 Disasters Evidence and Some Related Problems

During the past several decades, in average, Albania has been hit by about one major disaster per year. In 30 years, between 1980 and 2010, 23 major disaster events have been recorded. Of these, nine were flood events, four were earthquakes and three related to extreme temperatures. During this period, 163 people were killed, while nearly four million people have been affected.¹

The impact of disasters in Albania are significantly compounded by a relatively high degree of poverty, lack of infrastructure maintenance, unsafe building and land use practices, linked to rapid urbanization, exploitation of natural resources (overgrazing of pasture, overexploitation of forests and riverbeds, etc.) as well as some other consequences of the transition from a state-controlled economy to a free-market one². In addition, it is the lack of material resources and the low level of coordination between different agencies with legal responsibilities in civil emergencies, while education and information systems lack the necessary comprehension and effect on state agencies and Albanian population at large.

2.2 Cultural Context

The behavior of the general population in Albania often contributes to, rather than reduces, the effects of disasters. This is clearly evidenced in the above mentioned uncontrolled urbanization of the last two decades. Another challenge is the dominant "command mentality"³, instead of mentality of openness, initiative, coordination and cooperation. In addition, there is no solid culture of volunteerism among the population of Albania. All these cultural features are mainly explained with the influence of the long dominating "centralized state approach" of the past. Actually, among the civil society organizations (CSOs) the Albanian Red Cross (ARC) is the only volunteer organization in country having real capacities and networked structure with an impact in cases of civil emergencies.

¹ IPA Assessment, 2011 (Here should be noted that the economic cost of the drought event of 1989, that affected about 3.2 million people, has not been calculated, bid).

² See more at: IFRC, "Legislation and DRR at the community level – Albania", 2011.

³ Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb. 2013

3. RISK AREAS AND POTENTIAL DISASTERS IN ALBANIA⁴

Albania is a disaster-prone country. It ranks as one of the countries in the world with the highest economic risk from multiple hazards, with 86% of total territory prone to two or more disasters where 88.5% of GDP is generated. Economic losses from disasters caused by the impact of natural hazards in Albania, during 1974-2006 are counted to average USD 68.7 million per year, equal to roughly 2.5% of the Albania's GDP.⁵ Between 1989 and 2006, earthquakes and floods constituted respectively 17% and 31% of the total disaster occurrences in Albania.⁶ Albania ranks 41st in the world in terms of vulnerability to landslides, 43rd in terms of earthquakes and 58th in terms of drought risks.⁷

Hazards of natural origin which Albania is exposed to are: geologic (earthquakes, rock falls and landslides); hydro-meteorological (flooding and torrential rains, droughts, snowstorms, high snowfall, avalanches and windstorms); biophysical (forest fires and epidemics); while the ones of manmade origin consist on: dams burst, floods and technological risks. Albania is also exposed to several environmental problems and the continued existence of high-risk areas (hot spots) with respect to environmental pollution.

Albania is characterized by a high rate of seismicity. Together with some other countries of the east and southeast Balkan, it experiences almost annual occurrences of at least one earthquake of magnitude ≥ 6.5 . Seven largest cities at risk in Albania constitute more than 75 percent of the urban risk. About 10% of the Albanian territory is considered "unstable", prone to landslides caused by natural factors.⁸

The Albanian river system poses the highest risk of flooding to the country. Floods are more frequent during the November–March period, when the country receives about 80–85 percent of its annual precipitation. Flooding of the Albanian West Plain (in the worst scenario of the last 100 years) would adversely affect: 20 Districts; 341 villages; 110 Communes; 85,500 buildings (covering 7,900,000 m²); 565,000 people.⁹ In January 2010, flooding in the Shkodra and Lezha regions inundated about 14,000 hectares and 1200 buildings, while about 12,000 people had to be evacuated from their homes.¹⁰ In February 2015, there were about 3,000 hectares and more than 600 buildings inundated in the western and southwestern part of Albania, affecting about 42,000 people while about 600 families were evacuated.¹¹

Presently there are 630 dam reservoir systems in the country, of which 307 are recognized as either high dams (height ≥ 15 m) or large dam reservoir systems.¹² Migration and urban expansion have led to increased concentrations of populations and material property in such downstream areas. The burst of eight high dams located in the central Albania, could affect the entire towns of Elbasan, Lushnje and Divjakë (respectively over 100,089, 37,829 and 10,000 inhabitants).¹³

Snowfall risk occurs mainly from November to March, in the mountainous northern, northeastern, southeast and southern parts of the country. Typical high snow hazards are road blockage (due to the lack of maintenance and poor conditions of roads) and avalanches. The population residing in these areas (at least 30 cm snow-depth) ranges from about 12% (355,000 people) to 32% (1 million

4 For this section a valuable information has been taken from: two seminars organized by the MoI and World Bank with all DRR&CP stakeholders in Albania, 2013; UNDP (CADRI) DRR Albania's capacity assessment report, 2011; Albanian National Civil Emergency Plan, 2004; World Bank "Natural Disasters Hotspot – A Global Risk Analysis", 2005.

5 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb. 2013

6 Ibid.

7 UN (CADRI) DRR Capacity Assessment, 2011, p5.

8 NCEP, 2004, p.57.

9 Ibid, p.61

10 International Conference, "...Changing Risks", Padua, Italy, 2014

11 <http://www.agroweb.org/?id=10&l=273&ln=sq>

12 Albania has the most dams per 10,000 population in the world The height of the majority of dams ranges from 10–30 m (524 dams) to 30–60 m (77 dams). Six dams are higher than 60 m, of which two are higher than 100 m (the Koman DAM, 115 m and the Fierza Dam, 167 m). Fierza Dam is the highest of this type in Europe (more at NCEP-2004, p.63).

13 NCEP, 2004, p.63

people).¹⁴ Such situations last longer than 30 days, posing to the population affected, serious problems of food and medical support.

Forests occupy roughly 29% of Albania which is one of the Mediterranean countries most affected by forest fires. The total area burnt (both by human and natural causes) during 2007 reached 127,000 ha, but was significantly less in 2008, with about 19,254 hectares.¹⁵

Concerning epidemic risks, situation is relatively favorable due to permanent control and implementation of preventive measures. Even though, a number of problems still arise due to unsolved hygienic-epidemiological conditions that result in infectious diseases, water, air and soil pollution, inadequate district microbiological capacities, etc.¹⁶

The technological hazards for Albania are considered to be: industrial pollution, toxic wastes, transport accidents, factory explosions¹⁷ and chemical spills. Particularly hazardous materials and substances, kept in unsuitable conditions in different parts of the country, constitute a real risk for technological disasters.¹⁸

Underlying risk factors - such as the economic situation, damaged infrastructure and communication means, mass migration (with its direct consequence of population concentration in unsafe urban areas and buildings boom) as well as other factors related to misuse of forests, natural sources of water and environmental pollution, increase vulnerability of the population and the economy in general.

4. LEGAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Constitution of Republic of Albania in articles 170 and 174 addresses the issues of state of emergency and disasters, the acts issued and the measures taken under these circumstances. In addition, Albania has the law "On Civil Emergency Service"¹⁹ and the National Civil Emergency Plan.²⁰ There are several other laws and governmental decisions (CoMs), concerning particular aspects of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Civil Protection (DRR&CP), such as: "Criteria of Declaring the State of Emergency"²¹; "Protection from Fire and Rescue"²²; "Citizens' Involvement in Civil Emergency"²³; but actually none of them deals adequately with the disasters' "recovery" phase. In addition, the existing laws do not list critical services or infrastructure functioning of which is essential in an emergency.²⁴ Concerning the legal framework "[...the law] *implementation is a huge challenge due to various reasons, including funding*"²⁵. However, national authorities are becoming more aware of the need to develop long-term risk reduction approaches. The main challenge is increasing the level of understanding, in order to link the DRR perception of "disaster response" with "risk reduction". This needs to be addressed in long-term development plans.²⁶

After several attempts, finally a draft strategy has been prepared in Albania with respect to the DRR&CP. Based on the "draft for discussion", published by the GDCE, the vision to be achieved, through the Strategy is: "*Albania to be a safe place for all citizens to live, work and visit*"²⁷. Based on

14 Ibid, p.67-68

15 UN (CADRI) DRR Capacity Assessment, 2011, p8.

16 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb.2013

17 The 2008 explosion at an ammunitions dump near Tirana caused 26 deaths, injuries to over 300 people, the destruction of 2,300 buildings and the displacement of 4,000 people.

18 NCEP, 2004, p.72

19 Law 8756/2001

20 Adopted by CoM Decision 835/2004

21 CoM Decision 664/2002

22 Law 8756/2001, amended by Law 11/2013

23 CoM Decision 533/2003

24 Actually, the draft-law (waiting for adoption), Article 10.1, defines a list of critical infrastructure in case of civil emergency.

25 UN (CADRI) DRR Capacity Assessment, 2011, p.4.

26 Ibid, p.10

27 Albanian Draft Strategy for DRR&CP, 2014-2018, p.6

the draft strategy, this vision is to be achieved through two ways: 1) development, integration and poverty reduction; 2) building and strengthening the adequate emergency response capacities at national, district and local level.²⁸ The draft strategy lays out also the guiding principles to be followed during the whole process for preparing and dealing with civil emergencies: a) building on and strengthening of the existing systems and capacities; b) comprehensiveness and inclusiveness; c) adaptation to climate change; d) economic development; e) enhancing accountability. In this context a common vision must be established in Albania (still missing). Government agencies at national, regional and local levels, as well as non-governmental actors, must understand the need to work together. This will reduce the risks and consequences of disasters. Crucially, the population should be educated to understand what they themselves can do to either reduce the likelihood of a disaster, or increase their family's ability to cope in the event of a disaster.²⁹

The NCEP-04 is one of the key tools to translate the strategic vision into practical activity. It defines the organization of the national system of management for civil emergencies as well as the responsibilities and interaction at national, regional and local levels. It also covers public information, international assistance, financial implications, disaster assessment and reporting, cooperation with NGOs in such situations, etc. It is essentially a coordination tool.³⁰ However, till now, even though DRR&CP has been translated in some sectoral strategies, policies, or action plans, the adopted approach is not organic and DRR&CP is not yet fully integrated into sectoral and multi-sectoral plans.³¹

Albania does not yet have a National DRR&CP Platform as a "*nationally owned and led multi-stakeholder forum*"³². It should be understood as a national responsibility and an interdisciplinary and interagency process, with positive effects in decision making and participation of all relevant actors, currently in place or which might emerge in the future. The Platform should be driven by the fact that the "Risk Reduction" is a long-term process, linked to sustainable socio-economic development of the country (even a prerequisite for that).³³

Since the Law "On Civil Emergencies" and the NCEP-04 were enacted before the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) of 2005³⁴, both these documents lack reference to some of the guiding principles of the latter, as well as the practical means which the HFA considers as crucial for achieving disaster resilience. The current demarches to update the legal framework and the national plans related to DRR&CP should align with the HFA's goal to substantially reduce disaster losses, through building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. In particular, revision of these documents should adopt the HFA priorities such as: a) making the DRR a national and local priority with strong institutional basis for implementation; b) building the culture of safety and resilience at all levels; c) reducing the underlying risk factors; d) strengthening disaster preparedness for effective response at all national levels.³⁵

So far, when dealing with the DRR&CP, the Albanian institutions have paid more attention on response and less on other DRR&CP components.³⁶ On the other hand, there has been a disconnection between Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Civil Protection (CP) giving much more priority to the latter. In fact, DRR and CP *belong together – as complementary measures which must be taken in order to increase Albania's resilience in the face of disaster*.³⁷

28 Ibid.

29 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Apr. 2013.

30 NCEP-04, p.5-6.

31 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Apr. 2013.

32 <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/national-platforms>

33 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Apr. 2013.

34 The World Conference on Disaster Reduction was held in January 2005 in Hyogo, Japan, and adopted the Framework for Action 2005-2015 - Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. It provided a unique opportunity to promote a strategic and systematic approach to reducing vulnerabilities and risks to hazards. It underscored the need for, and identified ways of, building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters.

35 See more at: Hyogo Framework for Action, <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/hfa>

36 DRR&CP components: a) prevention and mitigation, b) preparedness, c) response and d) recovery. For a more information about the definition and tasks for each of the DRR&CP phases, please refer to Albanian NCEP, 2004 and The UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction, 2009.

37 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Apr. 2013.

The most important requirement for sustainability on DRR&CP is ownership. As mentioned earlier, the Albanian legal framework concerning the DRR&CP and the NCEP-04 define the roles and responsibilities of the Albanian institutions in three levels: central, district and municipality/commune. However, no decision power (in terms of disaster management) is being given to municipality/commune level.³⁸

Due to a conceptual flaw, what many in Albania call "risk assessment" is usually just "hazard mapping" that does not include "a clear analysis with different disaster scenarios and the level of exposure of people and their assets to each of the scenarios"³⁹. "Early Warning" (EW) is understood as warning about an imminent accident or disaster. There is no clear system of a long term risk monitoring in order to identify developing trends and provide EW information to national authorities so that they can be addressed by the country's various development plans. There is a need for a database that compiles all data on regional disaster risks, impacts and losses, and it needs to be regularly updated by local authorities.⁴⁰

A new culture of safety and resilience should be instilled not only into all levels' institutions but into the Albanian population as well, because it "lacks awareness of DRR, as a result, risks and vulnerabilities are not well understood"⁴¹. Furthermore, chaotic urbanization, usually in disregard of the seismic code application and risk zoning, the lack of maintenance for the drainage systems, etc, all increase the disasters' occurrence and consequences. On the other hand, both, the lack of insurance culture and the lack of public/private insurance scheme negatively impact the recovery of the disaster affected area/population. Related to the latter, among the Albanian population "there is an expectation that once a disaster damages houses, goods, crops and cattle, the government will allocate emergency funds to compensate losses"⁴², while (based on the Albanian legislation) compensation possible is up to 40% of the losses.

Another conceptual (but also practical) problem in dealing with the DRR&CP in Albania is the fact that, despite the fire fighting and hospitalization capacities, nearly all the other capacities are allocated to the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF). Differently than other countries, in Albania, the AAF is basically the first and the most reliable responder in civil emergencies. From a DRR&CP perspective, despite the "militarization" of the disaster response operations, causing several other institutions to remain in a marginalized role, it has produced difficulties when the Albanian operating forces have to cooperate with international organizations and their capacities sent for assistance in Albania. On the other hand, in case of any contribution to other disaster affected countries of the region, the military nature of the Albanian capacities might cause some legal, emotional or even interoperability implications to the hosting country.

5. ALBANIAN INSTITUTIONAL SETTING FOR CIVIL EMERGENCIES⁴³

The Civil Protection System in Albania consists of permanent and temporary structures at central level, district and local level. There are about 20 agencies/institutions at central level, and about 15 organizations at district/local level which are regularly involved in DRR&CP activities. At each level there is at least one temporary structure - the Inter-ministerial Committee, at central level, and the Civil Emergency Commission, at region/municipality/commune level. Besides government organizations, there are tens of relevant NGOs acting in this field. However, the DRR&CP system in Albania remains highly centralized. Regional and local governments do not receive sufficient fund-

³⁸ With the exception of Tirana municipality, which has the authority for decision-making.

³⁹ See more at: UN (CADRI) DRR Capacity Assessment, 2011, p.12.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.12

⁴¹ Ibid, p.14

⁴² Ibid, p.17

⁴³ Information for this section was taken from: Albanian National Civil Emergency Plan (NCEP) 2004; IPA Beneficiary Needs Assessment for Albania, 2011, Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, 2013, etc.

ing and in practice are excluded from decision-making.⁴⁴

At the national level, the Council of Ministers (CoM) approves the strategies, policies, plans and programs concerning DRR&CP measures. In addition, it leads and coordinates the activities of all the institutions involved in a civil emergency. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) translates the policies into plans and executes them during civil emergencies. The General Directorate for Civil Emergencies (GDCE) is the key institution for disaster management. It cooperates with central institutions and structures, involved in civil emergencies and monitors the state of the emergency in the entire territory of Albania. The National Operations Centre for Civil Emergencies of GDCE plays an active role through all stages of civil emergency management. It is staffed and functions in a 24/7 regime and monitors the situation in the entire Albanian territory. Civil Emergency Offices and fire stations in districts report directly to this centre.

Line ministries are responsible for planning and managing of civil emergencies according to their scope of activity. Their activities are incorporated in all the stages of the emergency management cycle and, as appropriate, they play a leading or supporting role, depending on the nature of the emergency.

The prefects, the mayors and the heads of commune, are responsible for planning and coping with civil emergencies at district, municipality or commune level, respectively. Under their chairmanship, the Civil Emergency Commission is established, with the main task to coordinate all activities of the local government unit responsible and voluntary organizations, involved in emergencies. In each of the 12 districts, a Civil Emergency Office (2 people) is in charge for planning and coordination of emergency response. They are all linked with the fire-services' radio network. Communes and municipalities appoint persons in charge of civil emergencies (double duty in addition to other tasks).⁴⁵

The Albanian Fire and Rescue Service placed under the MoI, employs about 700 personnel. It is organized in 45 stations (6 in Tirana) with 74 firefighting engines (12 in Tirana).⁴⁶ The forestry service has insufficient permanent staff to tackle wildfires. The Forest Fire Service is expected to become sufficiently effective with the already establishing of a National Forest Fire Management and Coordination Centre followed by 50-100 forest firefighter teams.⁴⁷

Supporting the population in case of a disaster is part of the AAF mission. Despite that, an entire unit, namely "The Regional Support Command" (RSC)⁴⁸ is dedicated solely for DRR&CP operations.⁴⁹ The AAF provide a significant part of the civil protection capacities (in some cases, the AAF are the only responder, while the RSC provides the bulk of these capacities).⁵⁰

Despite the improving capacity of the institutions involved in DRR&CP, the GDCE in particular, the so far civil emergency situations in Albania have shown the difficulty of the latter to bring together all the relevant actors in dealing with such situations. That is mostly due to its actual place, within the MoI, with the associated limitations in exerting a strong coordination role (let alone a leading role) among other institutions. A proposal to place it at a new position under the CoM is yet to be materialized.⁵¹

Another problem with the Albanian institutions in their dealing with DRR&CP is their structure duplication. E.g. there are two commissions dealing with civil protection.⁵² The meteorological and hydrological services are represented by three different institutions: the Institute of Geoscienc-

44 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb. 2013.

45 The municipality of Tirana has a full time Civil Emergency Officer.

46 In addition of that there are 17 other firefighting engines in the AAF (out of which 12 ones newly acquired).

47 Each of them comprising 6 firefighters with vehicles and equipment (still to be materialized) able to cover 10 to 20,000 hectares of forest (per each) - Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb. 2013.

48 Brigade level until recently and now a reinforced battalion unit within the AAF Support Brigade.

49 The AAF are involved in search and rescue, evacuation, treatment of injured persons and their transport in the areas after recovery in cooperation with the MoI, ASP and Ministry of Health (NCEP, 2004, p.77).

50 For more information concerning the unique contribution of the AAF see: NCEP-04, p.43-45

51 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb.2013.

52 Law on Civil Emergency Service, 2001, Articles 6,7,10. In the draft Law on CP they will remain as "Civil Protection National Committee" and "Commission of Risk Forecast and Assessment"

es (part of Tirana Polytechnic University), the Military Meteorological Service (under the Albanian MoD) and the Meteorological Service of the Tirana International Airport. Private companies are also active in the field of meteorology, but “*data collection and sharing is one of the major challenges*”⁵³.

6. ALBANIAN CAPACITIES FOR CIVIL EMERGENCIES

The principal operational DRR&CP forces in Albania are provided by⁵⁴:

- Armed Forces (AAF).
- Directorate of Fire Protection and Rescue.
- The Ambulance Service (“Urgency Service”).
- The State Police (ASP) and other Police units.
- General Directorate of State Reserves.
- Units specialized in mines and technical response.
- Monitoring and operational supportive structures

6.1 Early Warning capacities

The Institute of Geosciences manages both the seismological and the meteorological networks.⁵⁵ The seismological network is presently composed of 13 stations plus 34 stations of the “Albanian Strong Motion Network”.⁵⁶ A new, fully integrated digital seismograph system using the satellite communication is now under operation as well.⁵⁷ The seismologist staff has received training from NATO but more training is needed as the existing seismologists (6 people) are graduated in mathematics, physics, civil engineering, etc. The other challenge is the downsizing of Institute’s staff – from approximately 70 to 25 peoples now. No staff member is currently employed to cover 24/7/365 services.⁵⁸

The national meteorological observation network consists of 7 automatic (not on-line) weather stations, 15 agro-meteorological stations, 2 marine meteorological stations, 110 manned climate stations (observations only 3 times per day; reports monthly) and 15 rain gauge stations. Albania does not have weather radars, lightning data or upper air observations available. Meteorological data is not yet shared through the WMO GTS system.⁵⁹ The Institute’s operational staff (meteorology and hydrology) has good scientific background and knowledge, but very limited human resources to produce weather forecasts, to participate in the DRR, and to produce critical data for risk analyses of hydrometeorological extremes and to operate an adequate early warning system.⁶⁰ All in all, the hydrological and meteorological observation network is at lower qualitative level than in the EU countries, and the absence of numerical weather prediction models represents a serious impediment to the EW.⁶¹ The Ministry of Health has an EW mechanism in case of epidemic outbreaks. A permanent observation-signalization network is available in fire-endangered forests of the country (with several fire towers per district) and is operated by the forest service during the fire season.⁶²

Following the EU rule for an operational common emergency number “112”, a feasibility study has been undertaken in Albania supported by the World Bank. Implementation of the “112” emergency

53 UN (CADRI) DRR Capacity Assessment, 2011, p.13.

54 NCEP, 2004

55 A meteorological network is managed by the Military as well.

56 16 digitally upgraded SMA-1 accelerographs, 10 CMG-5TD systems and 8 CMG-5T sensors (IPA assessment, 2011).

57 IPA assessment, 2011, p.11.

58 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb.2013

59 IPA assessment, 2011, p.10 and the Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb.2013

60 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb.2013.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

communication system is now dependent on finding financing in the sum of almost €18 million.⁶³

6.2. Response Capacities⁶⁴

Response capacities are provided by different disaster related agencies, among which, as already mentioned, the bulk of them is to be provided by the AAF. For better management they could be grouped in several main categories:

a) Life services:

Evacuation: 16 vehicles (about 500 people/one lift); 17 helicopters⁶⁵ (small to mid-size, about 90 people/one lift); about 65 small motorboats.⁶⁶

Shelter: tents for 17,000 people (the AAF) plus some shelter capacities provided by the ARC.

Medical evacuation: 178 ambulances (from the MoH, spread across 36 districts where the hospitals are located, 11 of them in Tirana) plus 12 ambulances from the AAF.

Food: bakery – 2 mobile units (2,400 kg/day) cooking – 12 mobile units (3,000 rations/day) plus 3 kitchen trucks (900 rations/day)

Potable water supply: 7 tankers (total 67mt) and 11 pumps (total 12m³/hour)

Water purification: 2 units (6,000 l/hour)

Personal hygiene: 2 shower units (200 people/day, in addition of some stationary facilities that can be established out of disaster area, after 72 hours of "state of emergency" declaration)

b) SAR 6 units⁶⁷ for earthquake/flood/fire disasters; 2 helicopters (from the AAF) for air/sea accidents; 4 boats (from the AAF) for sea accidents.

c) NBC: protection/decontamination: 6 vehicle units (detection); 1 team (25 people for decontamination).

d) Hospitalization: 1 field hospital (50 beds from the AAF) plus 50% of local hospitals (1,000 beds).

e) Transportation: 90 vehicles (including tipper trucks, in total about 600 mt/lift from the AAF).

f) Firefighting: 74 engines (out of which 12 in Tirana) and 738 personnel (out of which 107 in Tirana) plus 12 from the AAF.

g) Earth/snow moving: 13 units (total 650 m³), and 11 tracked bulldozers (total 350 m³)

h) Power generation: 8 units (from the AAF, total 1400 KW).

Beyond numerical figures, a general conclusion expressed by several specialists is that the Albanian DRR&CP capacities, both quantitatively and qualitatively, are inadequate. Especially in some specific areas such as ambulances and firefighter engines Albania is behind some other European countries comparable in territory and population. Thus, comparing between Albania and Estonia reveals that, for the whole country, one firefighting engine serves respectively 37,000 persons (in Albania) and 6,000 persons (in Estonia), while in their capitals these figures are respectively 52,000 and 33,000 persons. Considering the medical aid, for the whole country, one ambulance serves respectively 17,800 persons (in Albania) and 12,700 persons (in Estonia), while in their capitals these figures are respectively 57,000 and 24,700 persons. In addition, a significant part of the DRR&CP equipment in Albania is obsolescent (e.g. the firefighting engines acquired during 60s). Another problem with the DRR&CP equipment in Albania is the level of technical readiness, which due to permanent problems related to funding and maintenance schedule discipline, remains relatively low (between 60-70%).⁶⁸

63 Ibid.

64 See more at: NCEP-04, section 6.12.

65 Out of each 12 military helicopters, 3 helicopters belong to the MoH Hel.Unit (55-60 missions/year), Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb.2013.

66 Out of each, 50 motorboats (capacity 12 people/each) provided by the WB project of AL DRMAP, stationed in Shkodra and Fier districts (interview with a GDCE official).

67 Out of each 2 units from the AAF

68 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb.2013.

6.3. Training Capacities

In fulfilling its obligations, deriving from the Law on Civil Emergencies (Article 8.5) over recent years, the MoI has designed and implemented the National Civil Emergency Training Curriculum, comprised of eight training manuals, in line with national and international civil emergency standards and guidelines, has undertaken training activities and organized conferences at the national and regional level. Through the "Training of Trainers" initiative, Albania now has its own core group of civil emergency trainers.⁶⁹

The GDCE has a national training centre, which, so far, is being focused more on training of fire-fighters.⁷⁰ It is offering training to private sector, as well, in issues relating to fire. Actually there are plans to expand the training centre capacities in order to provide training on all civil emergencies and DRR. On the other hand, the Albanian Red Cross is active through its 4 training centers for volunteers.⁷¹

In addition, several exercises have taken place so far, coordinated mostly by the Albanian General Staff, with the participation of other stakeholders for different scenarios (floods, fires, etc). Despite positive results, they have indicated the lack/difficulty of establishing and maintaining effective cooperation among all actors involved.⁷²

The attempts to reach the communities are sporadic. Periodically, the Institute of Public Health (within the MoH) has developed some leaflets on disaster prevention and preparedness, but the MoH does not have a DRR policy, therefore its distribution is not systematic. The school curricula currently have neither DRR nor health emergency related courses. There are some attempts to integrate disaster preparedness and environmental awareness in schools, but teachers have not been trained in its facilitation. Leaflets on fire, earthquake and flood preparedness have been distributed in schools, but not in a systematic way and the school coverage was only partial. Currently, the Ministry of Education is developing a new strategy that foresees the integration of disaster preparedness elements into the school curriculum.⁷³

6.4. Financial Resources

Based on the current law "On Civil Emergency..." the state budget is the "primary financial resource for civil emergency planning and crisis management"⁷⁴, while the MoI and other ministries, should have an annual budget for civil emergencies. There are 4 types of budgetary provision for this reason: the emergency budget of the MoI, the emergency budgets of local government, reallocated budgets of line ministries and the CoM Reserve Fund.⁷⁵ Most of the funds are allocated for disaster preparedness and post-disaster recovery. These budgets are primarily intended for emergency situations, although there are training and development budgets within line ministries that include DRR elements. In overall terms, the financial means for DRR in Albania are extremely limited, particularly at the local level.⁷⁶ Furthermore, there is no clear indication in the actual law on the amount or percentage of the state budget allocated for the DRR&CP. In the new draft law the section is substantially improved as it is mentioned that line ministries and central institutions should have a separate budget line for Civil Protection at the rate of 0.3 to 1 percent of their total budget (hopefully also for DRR aspects).⁷⁷ The draft law also mentions the need for local governments to receive financial support from the central government for civil protection work, but also the obligation to use some of their incomes. At the municipal level, 3% of the budget is available to compensate its

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

72 Interview with a GS official.

73 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Apr.2013.

74 Law on Civil Emergency Service, 2001, Articles 31.1

75 The CoM Reserve Fund for emergency operations consists of 1.5% of the annual state budget (Albanian Draft Strategy for DRR&CP, 2014-2018, p.9).

76 IPA Assessment, 2011, p.8.

77 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb. 2013.

citizens for the DRR-related losses, which practically is significantly lower than the compensation level of 40% provided in the draft law.⁷⁸

6.5. Other Capacities

The participation of civil society in civil emergency situations is focused to disaster response. The ARC, with its 90,000 members and a pool of 2,500 trained volunteers that can support emergency relief operations, is the biggest volunteer organization in the country. The ARC structure against disasters is organized on two levels: the central level, which manages the main human and material resources and the local/district level, where 39 disaster-trained volunteer teams, each comprising between 25 and 30 people, have been established throughout Albania. The ARC has developed capacities to assist 8,000 people during one month, in case of any disaster. In the event that their disaster resources are insufficient, the ARC can launch an appeal through the IFRC. The ARC's activities against disasters are focused on disaster needs assessments, first-aid, healthcare, hygiene issues, social issues and public awareness on DRR. The ARC is equipped with a radio communications system and has one central and three regional training centers. It owns a 2,200 sqm warehouse in the centre and three others in the regions of 300 sqm each.⁷⁹

Other NGOs such as Caritas, Mother Teresa Organization, etc, tend to concentrate on providing relief supplies.⁸⁰

6.6. Capacities Earmarked for Contributions Abroad

Rationale behind dedicating some capacities for contributions abroad is the complementarity, which brings to pooling and sharing of these capacities with other countries. Starting with analysis on the most regionally needed capacities, the process is supposed to follow with the decision made on the concrete capacities which Albania could build, supported afterwards with plans and concrete steps to build these capacities and keep them in a reasonable state of readiness, as well as other resources (financial in particular) to maintain these contributions abroad for a certain period. Capacities earmarked for civil emergency contributions abroad, should be the first to participate in multinational exercises, taking place in Albania or abroad, as an invaluable opportunity to test their operational utility and readiness. Naturally, under the "single set of capacities" concept, they could be drawn from the above mentioned capacities, with some extra training, necessary for operating in an international environment. Actually, based on the official documents and interviews conducted for the purpose of this study with informed persons in the GDCE, it appears that such decisions have not been made yet.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid..

7. SWOT ANALYSES

SWOT⁸¹ analyses conducted so far in Albania, in the context of different undertakings,⁸² have provided valuable information concerning the gaps/weaknesses as well as the strengths and opportunities of Albania, in its coping with the DRR&CP challenges. Despite the DRR&CP capacities, these analyses have paid special attention to some conceptual and structural issues, which also influence the whole DRR&CP system in Albania.

7.1. Gaps/Weaknesses

Albania's institutions, conceptually and practically, tend to adopt a reactive rather than a proactive attitude in dealing with DRR&CP, as such, they largely focus on preparedness and response and much less on prevention/mitigation and recovery.

One of the main gaps is concerning DRR&CP implementation measures. The DRR is not yet integrated into national, communal and sector policies because of the lack of appropriate mechanisms to drive this agenda.⁸³ There is also a gap in the legal provisions and obligations of line ministries/ other organizations vis-à-vis DRR&CP and the GDCE. Communication between governing bodies and the local population need also be improved.

Some other problems are related to the inadequacy of: a) forecasting techniques; b) environmental control measures; c) training for emergency personnel and population in prevention/protection measures; d) participation of local communities in DRR&CP; and e) market mechanisms to help buffer against disasters and the expansion of risks.

Further gaps are the absence of DRR&CP related education curricula from the elementary to the high school level, the lack of an adequate 24/7 early warning system and the lack of insurance system involvement in DRR.⁸⁴

7.2. Strengths and Opportunities

The country has a legal and policy documentation that provides a framework for future DRR actions. The 2003 Natural Disaster Risk Assessment Study and the NCEP-04 provide qualitative and quantitative information about the main hazards, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the Albanian institutions in dealing with these situations. The government has recognized that mechanisms for establishing good DRR practices are needed, although these are not yet fully in place.⁸⁵

Even though the high level decision-makers have been focused so far on disaster response, again it is an increased tendency to put other aspects of DRR in political agendas as well. The World Bank project of Disaster Risk Mitigation and Adaptation is expected to improve, or establish, crucial DRR elements like the insurance system's involvement in DRR, euro-code adaptation, adequate hydro-meteorological monitoring system, etc.⁸⁶

Above all, it is noteworthy that the disasters of the last couple of years, mostly of flood nature and large magnitude, despite their impact to the economy, have indicated a certain capacity of the Albanian relevant institutions to manage them. The lessons learned from them and an increasing ability of these institutions to cooperate with each other and better respond to the occurred disasters, are a good basis for future challenges of these nature.

81 SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

82 Particularly during the preparation of the new document of the National Security Strategy, 2014 and IPA funded assessment on Albania's DRR needs, 2011.

83 IPA assessment – 2011, p.16.

84 Ibid .

85 See more at: IPA assessment-2011, p.16.

86 For more information on this 4-year project (2009-2013) see at: WB-P110845, p.2-3.

8. REGIONAL COOPERATION IN CIVIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Due to several geo-factors, the Western Balkan countries share similar disaster risks. Many disasters are cross-border in their effects, e.g. hot dry weather, flooding, wild fires, or earthquakes, so there is much to be gained from a regional approach to DRR. Naturally, sharing the same risks, neighbors may be having sometimes as much trouble as the requesting country, rendering them unable to spare capacities for assisting other countries in need. Even though, a regional approach with pooling of resources could result in significant cost savings for each country, as not every country would need to store up all the necessary materials, nor do they need to train highly specialized response units for every kind of disaster.⁸⁷ Such cooperation would be of most value in the areas of vulnerability assessment and information, regional monitoring and early-warning for hydro-meteorological and seismic events, capacity building for prevention of infectious diseases, climate change impact mitigation, as well as institutional cooperation of disaster related agencies.⁸⁸ Pre-disaster contacts and communications may be achieved through inter-agency meetings, joint planning and training exercises and routine sharing of information and reports. In essence, any activity conducted in a pre-disaster phase that builds trust, friendship and professional working relationships between key disaster personnel will facilitate improved disaster response.

Some of the most distinguished regional initiatives on DRR, where Albania is a party, are: the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE); Adriatic – Ionic Initiative; Civil Military Emergency Preparedness for South East Europe Council (CMEP-SEE); South Eastern Europe Simulation Network (SEDM–SEESIM); Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) etc. In general, their stated goals are to support the (member) countries to develop/adopt disaster emergency legislation, regulations and codes, in line with guidelines and common international practices. Actually they are mostly of network nature, serving as facilitators for the exchange of information, experiences, best practice with respect to DRR. From the outset, their focus has been limited on preparedness. Practically, when the civil emergencies have occurred, disaster affected countries, in order to augment their response forces and measures, have preferred to contact other countries bilaterally, based on their bilateral agreements, rather than going through cumbersome and time consuming procedures of the regional/multilateral DRR mechanisms.⁸⁹

The DPPISSEE⁹⁰ is “*the only regionally owned initiative in SEE*”⁹¹ in the area of DRR, but due to the lack of financial⁹² and other resources, the lack of developed system of exchange of information, as well as the fact that a number of DPPI parties are also members of the EU Mechanism and are obliged to exchange information through the EU MIC⁹³ till now, the most important DPPISSEE activities have been different training programs and some joint exercises.⁹⁴

With regard to the DRR&CP regional cooperation, one of the most serious shortcomings is ownership. Despite some UN, World Bank or EU supported initiatives, most of the rest are organizations per se, rather than being seen as necessities of the region countries in their dealing with natural disasters. As such, neither financial/material resources, nor tangible capacities have been adequately allocated/developed so far in their framework.

In 2007, the World Bank, the WMO and the UNDP initiated the South Eastern Europe Disaster Risk Mitigation and Adaptation Program.⁹⁵ That aims at developing and/or strengthening of national capacities in: 1) disaster risk management, institutional capacities and governance; 2) hydro-mete-

87 Seminar with the Albanian DRR&CP stakeholders, Feb. 2013

88 Ibid.

89 Interview with a GDCE official.

90 See more at: <http://www.dppi.info/>

91 Zelimir Kesetovic, “Regional Organization Study (DPPISSEE)”, 2013, p.33

92 25,000 Euro, per each member country, per annum (MoU of DPPISSEE, 2013, Article 11).

93 Zelimir Kesetovic, “Regional Organization Study (DPPISSEE)”, 2013, p. 21.

94 Interview with a GDCE official

95 Beneficiary countries of this initiative include Albania, BiH, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey

orological services; and, 3) financial risk transfer mechanisms, to assist countries in reducing risks associated with natural hazards.⁹⁶

The World Bank is actively contributing to DRR goals in Albania, through different projects, among which, the most important one is the Albanian Disaster Risk Mitigation and Adaptation Project (ADRMAP), of about USD 10 million with the Mol as the main coordinator.⁹⁷ Since March 2014, Albania is benefiting from the data, provided for the whole region by DEWETRA⁹⁸, one of the most advanced systems for hydro-meteorological risk management.⁹⁹

From 2011, under IPA programs, many seminars, workshops and table top exercises, as well as several field exercises have been organized regionally, related to civil emergencies of various scenarios, such as earthquakes (Slovenia) floods (Croatia) etc. A team from different Albanian institutions with responsibilities in DRR&CP has regularly taken part in these international training activities.¹⁰⁰

The International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent (IFRC) has been active in several regional DRR initiatives, especially in "Preparedness" (with training) and "Response", while the private sector has not been part of these initiatives on a permanent basis, but has offered support to "Disaster Response", on a case-by-case basis.¹⁰¹

Regional co-operation for monitoring and river management is important for Albania in the case of the Drin River which is the longest one and the most important for Albania in terms of energy production. Its two tributaries flow in the territory of Kosovo and Macedonia before meeting in the Albania's territory to create the Drin River. To the northwest, Shkodra Lake and Buna River are shared between Albania and Montenegro. There are several projects dealing with monitoring for these river systems, but considering the massive floods of the recent past (where Albania had to bear the brunt of them) more should be done in terms of "mitigation", "preparedness" and "response" between the four countries of this region.

As domestic resources do not yet meet international standards, Albania has regularly turned to the international community for assistance, using both the NATO Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) and the EU Mechanism (monitoring and information centre, MIC). During the wildfires of 2007, floods of January and December 2010 and winter emergency in February-March 2012, a total of twenty-two countries, plus a number of international organizations and NGOs, provided assistance of various kinds. All of Albania's direct neighbors, except Montenegro, provided assistance at one time or another.

Some other agreements have been signed so far on a trilateral basis such as: the agreement between Kosovo's Emergency Management Agency, Macedonia's Crisis Management Centre and Albania's GDCE, on emergency and relief operations. Related to it, a joined declaration and a program for regional cooperation in the field of crisis and emergency management was signed by the Mol-s and MoD-s of the respective countries, and supported by the USAID.¹⁰²

In terms of bilateral cooperation, Albania has established bilateral agreements in field of disaster/crisis response with Italy, Austria, Greece¹⁰³; Croatia (two agreements);¹⁰⁴ and BiH¹⁰⁵. Agreements are in process with Turkey, Montenegro and Macedonia.¹⁰⁶ A close cooperation has been established also between military meteorological services of Italy and Albania since August 1997, par-

96 IPA assessment, 2011, p.21.

97 This project has 5 components: 1) Disaster Risk Management and Preparedness - USD 4.89 million; 2) strengthening of the hydro-meteorological services - USD 2.09 million; 3) development of building codes USD 0.36 million; 4) catastrophe insurance - USD 2.65 million; 5) project management – USD 0.01 million (IPA assessment – 2011, p.15) .

98 DEWETRA - a real time integrated system, at the Italian Prime Minister Office, for risk forecasting, monitoring and prevention. It has been developed as a tool to support civil protection operations in Italy and abroad

99 International Conference on Analysis and Management of Natural Hazards", Padua, 2014.

100 GDCE, HFA monitoring report, 2011-2013

101 Interview with GDCE and ARC officials.

102 Signed in December 2012, in Pristina (GDCE, HFA monitoring report, 2011-2013)

103 Since May 2005

104 Signed in Feb.2010 and Sep.2012.

105 Since May 2013

106 GDCE, HFA monitoring report, 2011-2013 and Albanian MFA, "Bilateral agreements" (in Albanian).

ticularly in exchanging data for weather forecasting.

So far, there is one occasion when Albania provided civil emergency assistance abroad. It sent 5 SAR teams (20 people altogether), with necessary equipment (including 5 evacuation motorboats and one ambulance) to assist BiH, during the flood situation of May 2014.¹⁰⁷ In their 8-days operation, the Albanian forces evacuated 290 people.¹⁰⁸ In addition to that, several months later, the Albanian government donated €100 thousands to each of Serbian and BiH governments.¹⁰⁹ Regarding this civil emergency situation, an interesting action was initiated by the civil society in Albania, in order to aid the affected population in Serbia. It was run on a volunteer basis by students, graduates and youth activists, organized as a loose network, through social media forums, but also through printed posters exposed in some of the main areas of Tirana to attract the attention of a broader population. The aid consisted mostly of canned food, hygiene equipment, warm clothes and covers.¹¹⁰ Another NGO, the Albanian Youth Council, in cooperation with some supermarkets in Albania, organized food gathering. All the aid items were delivered to the affected areas through the ARC

Albania-Kosovo cooperation has witnessed an increasing development during the last decade (especially after declaration of the Kosovo independence, in February 2008) including DRR&CP. Some concrete positive steps have been made so far in this regard. Kosovo assisted Albania during the floods of 2010, 2011 and 2015. The most significant assistance was in 2011, when two SAR teams (16 persons) were sent by the Kosovo Security Forces to Albania with supporting equipment (vehicles, 4 motorboats, etc). On the other hand, since January 2015, firefighter personnel from Albania are attending a 3-month course in the Regional Fire Fighting Training Facility (RFFTF), in Kosovo. Being recently built with the US support, training in RFFTF is foreseen as a lasting cooperation between Albania and Kosovo, due to the high standards of training facilities this centre provides. On the other hand, Albania will provide training facilities for flood situations, an obligation still to be accomplished.¹¹¹

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Albania is a disaster-prone country. Disasters' impact is significantly exacerbated by the rapid urbanization, associated with unsafe building and land use practices, lack of infrastructure maintenance, uncontrolled activity against nature and overexploitation of natural resources, as well as other consequences of the transition from a state-controlled economy to a free-market one.

Despite the Albania's noted progress in dealing with civil emergencies, more should be done with regards to updating of the legal framework, enhancing doctrinal concepts and implementation plans, improving institution-specific contribution and participation, strengthening inter-agency cooperation, and building the appropriate capabilities to deal with each of the DRR&CP component.

In its drive for completing and improving its national DRR&CP capacities, Albania should gradually reduce the "military portion" of them. "Demilitarization" of the DRR&CP measures will give the other central and local institutions, with legal obligations in DRR&CP, the space to best play their role during pre-disaster and disaster time. On the other hand, reducing the military footprint in case of providing assistance for other countries will make the Albania's civil emergency contributions and cooperation with these countries more acceptable.

107 <http://www.telegrafi.com/lajme/ushtria-shqiptare-niset-drejt-bosnjes-dhe-serbise-78-11888.html> and http://social.smashsolutions.com/video-feed/ZTf_M-D6SQk

108 Interview with a GDCE official.

109 The Albanian CoM decision No.631, dated 01 Oct. 2014.

110 Concerning the echo of this initiative in electronic and printed media see: <http://inserbia.info/today/2014/05/story-about-true-friendship-how-young-albanians-helped-serbia-and-bosnia/>

111 Interview with GDCE and Firefighting Directorate officials.

Considering the actual stage of DRR&CP related institutional and operational capacities, Albania cannot tackle alone a major disaster (natural or manmade). From a “cost-benefit” perspective, this is not advisable as well. Considering that and the fact that most of disasters are cross-border in their effects, the solution is a better cooperation with other countries of the region and larger international organizations (UN, WB, EU). Particularly a regional approach in pooling of resources would result in more effective DRR&CP measures and significant cost savings for each country.

The so far DRR&CP regional cooperation lacks the necessary level of ownership. Despite some UN, World Bank or EU supported initiatives, most of the rest are “organizations per se”, with no effective mechanisms for dealing with natural disasters. Neither financial/material resources, nor tangible capacities have been adequately allocated/developed so far, in their framework.

Regional cooperation can be strengthened through inter-agency meetings, joint planning and training exercises and routine sharing of information and reports. In essence, any activity conducted in a pre-disaster phase that builds trust, friendship and professional working relationships between key disaster personnel will facilitate improved disaster response.

Despite Albania-Kosovo ethnic/cultural links which have nurtured a good bilateral cooperation in several areas, till now, DRR&CP cooperation has not exploited all the potentials. Due to Albania – Kosovo geographical proximity which causes some disasters to affect both countries, it is of mutual importance and benefits, enhancing DRR&CP bilateral cooperation between them.

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ACRONYMS

CADRI	(UN) Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative
DPEC	Drejtoria e Përgjithshme e Emergjencave Civile
GTS	Global Telecommunication System
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
KKSH	Kryqi i Kuq Shqiptar
KM	Këshilli i Ministrave
MB	Ministria e Brendshme
MC	Mbrojtja Civile
MM	Ministria e Mbrojtjes
MSH	Ministria e Shëndetësisë
OJQ	Organizatë Jo Qeveritare
PKEC	Plani Kombëtar i Emergjencave Civile
RRF	Reduktimi i Rrezikut të Fatkeqësive
SAR	Kërkim-Shpëtim (Search and Rescue)
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

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INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND MEDIATION

The **Institute for Democracy and Mediation** (IDM) is an independent non-governmental organization founded in November 1999 in Tirana, Albania. It works to strengthen the Albanian civil society, to monitor, analyze, and facilitate the Euro-Atlantic integration processes of the country and to help consolidate the good governance and inclusive policymaking. IDM carries on its objectives through expertise, innovative policy research, analysis, and assessment-based policy options.

IDM's choice of activities to achieve its strategic objectives is an effort to go beyond simple one-time delivery projects. They form part of a continuing struggle to strengthen shared values and efficient interactions across the broad spectrum of political and non-political actors in Albania. IDM is dedicated to developing a profound understanding of contemporary challenges so as to shape sustainable reforming strategies and public policies in key socio-economic and political development pillars and to advance regional cost-effective approaches in support of crosscutting cooperation initiatives of key actors based on comprehensive research, policy assessment and multifaceted analysis.

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