



Joint Position on Enhancing Cooperation in Civil Protection Area

15th Meeting of Directors General for
the Civil Protection in BSR

15TH MEETING OF DIRECTORS GENERAL FOR THE CIVIL PROTECTION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

JOINT POSITION ON ENHANCING COOPERATION IN CIVIL PROTECTION AREA

The 15th Meeting of Directors General for Civil Protection in the BSR welcomes recommendations on further enhancement of cooperation in the civil security developed within the EUSBSR PA Secure and invites all networks and expert groups dealing with civil protection in the BSR, in particular the PA Secure Steering Group and CBSS CPN, to organize cooperation in the following priorities:

- 1) **Building a common societal security culture.** The strategic objective is to build common attitudes towards societal security threats and a shared understanding of prevention, preparedness, and response as well as recovery processes in connection with disasters. The concept of ‘societal security’ should be a basis for developing common societal security culture, as this concept is regionally and globally well standardized.¹
- 2) **Combining national efforts in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.**² The implementation of the framework should also serve as a platform for extending cooperation between national, regional and local governments as well as civil society organizations. We call all stakeholders involved in these efforts to establish a regional framework for risk assessment as well as regular exchange of best-practices related to DRR strategies.
- 3) **Strengthening cross-sectorial cooperation in CBRN(E) preparedness.** This is an area where more cooperation is needed, in particular increasing the exchange of best practices, lessons learnt, workshops, and exercises. The operational cross-sectorial cooperation in the response and recovery phases remains a challenge that needs an appropriate reply in terms of joint training and exercises, and sharing best practices. These efforts should also include cooperation between civil protection and law enforcement agencies in the transnational context, focusing on best practices.
- 4) **Increasing involvement of the local authorities and civil society organizations.** Enhancing resilience towards natural and man-made disasters can be provided only in cooperation with local governments, their services and agencies, as well as with citizens’ associations. These structures are key partners in prevention activities, raising public awareness regarding hazards, preparing and mobilizing resources in emergencies as well as making recovery processes well-tailored to genuine needs and actual delivery conditions. A strong partnership between professional civil protection agencies, local governments, and civil society organizations will create a solid foundation for societal security in the BSR.
- 5) **Seeking more funds for macro-regional civil security cooperation from a broad range of EU programmes.** External funding opportunities have become more important than ever due to budgetary restrictions in the Baltic Sea States. The macro-regional approach helps align EU programmes to act together on major shared goals. In order to counteract limited funding sources for transnational cooperation, Member States and relevant civil protection agencies should foster the establishment of a dialog with relevant programmes. Many current challenges in the BSR can be addressed more efficiently by increased transnational cooperation.
- 6) **Initiating projects as platforms for innovation and cooperation.** The aim is to create a more robust BSR project generation system focusing on shared interests and ensuring that joint projects are meeting relevant needs and are well anchored in each organization. Projects need to be treated

¹ ISO (ISO/TC 223) and the European CEN (CEN/TC 391) and Horizon 2020 research program “Secure Societies” administered by DG Home. Several Northern European countries’ research funding institutions as well as NORDFORSK (under the Nordic Council of Ministers) have adopted the concept to organize their respective security and safety programmers. Also see “Societal Security: An emerging field of scholarship underpinning practices in the Baltic Sea Region,” in *The Baltic Sea Region: Hard and Soft Security Reconsidered*. Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 2016.

² UNISDR *Sendai Framework. Words Into Action*. <http://www.preventionweb.net/drr-framework/sendai-framework/wordintoaction>

as development processes and as tools for improved transnational cooperation. Their function is to achieve tangible results and provide organizations with changes improving their *modus operandi*.

- 7) **Utilising research and project results effectively through better coordination.** The strategic objective is to make sure that research and project results are effectively incorporated into the national systems. All efforts should aim at conveying effectively the findings and results of research projects to practitioners in order to contribute to an improvement of their everyday work. Institutionalization of the BSR research-user network can be considered in coordination with stakeholders such as NordForsk and the EU's Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre.
- 8) **Developing demand-driven and well-tailored training and education.** The Baltic Leadership Programme of 2013-17 should be continued and developed amongst the lines as decided during 14th Meeting of Directors General for the Civil Protection in the Baltic Sea Region in Gdańsk on 8-9 June 2016. Additional training programmes may be developed for specific needs.

We invite all agencies participating in the Civil Protection Network, and the EUSBSR PA Secure, as well as in other regional cooperation constellations, to work together in order to accomplish objectives of this Joint Position. All stakeholders are encouraged to contribute to the development of cooperation framework and implementation instruments. In order to structure cooperation aimed at achieving the listed priorities, i.a. the Action Plan on Enhancing Cooperation in the EUSBSR Policy Area Secure has been elaborated. It is one of the implementation tools of the Joint Position (see Appendix 1). The Action Plan is an open document that will be actualized according to the needs and resources of the countries in the BSR.

12th May 2017
Keflavik, Iceland