

Baltic Excellence Programme on Climate Change and Resilient Societies

Tinglev, Denmark, 18-20 November 2019

Summary

As part of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Baltic Excellence Programme/the Baltic Leadership Programme took place from 18 to 20 November 2019 at DEMA Emergency College in Tinglev, Denmark.

The 3-day programme included presentations, workshops, exercises and scenario group work for the participants. Speakers and instructors were drawn from academia, emergency management agencies, Red Cross and municipalities in the Southern part of Denmark. Their presentations dealt, from different angles, with the challenges posed by climate change – the more frequent and damaging occurrence of extreme weather and how to address these challenges.

Professor Karsten Arnbjerg-Nielsen, Department of Environmental Engineering, Technical University of Denmark, gave an introduction to current research on climate change and its impact on global as well as local scale. A key point in regards to climate change was that the planet has endured variations in climate before, but this time we are more than seven billion people, many of whom are living in vulnerable areas of the earth. At the same time, most societies are still growing their populations and in many places their standard of living and consumer patterns will perpetuate the problem, instead of solving it. Scientists are deeply worried and are warning about the development and risks associated with climate change. Quick adaptation measures in order to reduce consequences, was one of the professor's primary recommendations.

[Climate change: What's coming and what do we prepare for - K. Arnbjerg-Nielsen](#)

The Emergency Management Cycle, presented by Course Moderator, Henrik G. Petersen, Head of Department, DEMA, gave an overall perspective of the correlation between planning and preparedness, and on the Shield Models revolving around the four disaster management phases; Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.

[Climate change and resilient Discussion Framework - Henrik G. Petersen](#)

Senior Advisor from the Council of Baltic Sea States secretariat (CBSS), Andriy Martynenko, presented the ongoing work within the CBSS joint position on enhancing cooperation in the civil protection area and adapting local and EU policies in a regional context where improved practice could be linked to policy.

[EUSBSR Policy Area Secure & CBSS CPN - Andriy Martynenko](#)

A visit to the municipality of Sønderborg and a presentation from the municipal administration of Aabenraa gave hands-on perspectives on obstacles and solutions to climate adaptation on a local municipal level. Focus was on flooding and heavy rain affecting cities and infrastructure in low areas. Both municipalities used action-oriented planning involving the use of action cards, providing answers to the essential questions of prioritization: what are we going to save, and in which contingencies do we take which specific actions to save it.

Speakers from Sønderborg gave a comprehensive overview of bureaucratic and political processes related to adaptation investment. Building the required coordination and prioritization internally among different branches with different interests and focus has taken time to get right, but is improving.

Aabenraa presented their combined efforts for dealing with flooding. The municipal administration has worked with long-term adaptation measures to protect low areas prone to flooding. Also, new initiatives in the emergency management plan has ensured that every relevant party knows their task, is involved, and can be reached when necessary.

Coping with increased flooding in Aabenraa

On the issues of coping with extreme drought and wild fires in the Baltic region, Master Sergeant Kent Ballhorn from DEMA, gave an insight into his comprehensive work on developing a fire prediction system; [brandfare.dk](#). The system based on The European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) was developed in cooperation with the Danish Meteorological Institute (DMI) and the Association of Danish Fire Services. In addition, he shared his experience with reaching out to local populations through social media. During the extraordinarily hot summer that hit large parts of Europe, in 2018 Mr. Ballhorn created a Facebook group aiming to raise awareness of the potential risks from wildland fires.

Coping with severe drought and wildland fires in BSR - K. Laursen Ballhorn

Colleagues from Hamburg – Frederik Kötke, Head of Analytical Task Force and Julian Blumenstock, Emergency Specialist – presented the city of Hamburg's measures to cope with flooding, including legal framework and their risk assessment cycle. Hamburg was presented as an example of a proactive and forward-looking city with architectural solutions and a strong focus on adaption and preparedness in case of flooding or other disasters. The public is informed in a timely fashion of flooding via leaflets, telephone hotlines, showcases on the pedestrian bridges and by use of warning buses and other vehicles. Among many proactive measures used in Hamburg were dykes, walls, pumping stations and sand depots along the dyke lines.

Flood Protection in Hamburg - Kotke & Blumenstock

From Saint Petersburg University of State Fire Service of EMERCOM, Senior lecturer, Dmitriy Krylov shared a Russian perspective on the handling forest fires. The authorities make use of a “Forest

Watch System” – comprising video monitoring systems, aviation patrolling and space monitoring systems among other things. In the fighting of forest fires they use fast-hardening foam, artificial precipitation, and other kinds of new technologies.

Risk Management specialist Sefik Muhic from Frederiksborg Fire and Rescue Services, Denmark, presented the EU funded Cascade Project focusing on development of risk assessments, guidelines and online tools.

Project Assistant Katie Goldie-Ryder from the CBSS secretariat presented key points from the recently published report on the Sendai Framework in the Baltic Sea Region. The aim has been to provide an overview of the implementation of the framework, focusing on good practices and strengthening the work. The report shows a deeper need with integrating climate change risk into the existing risk assessment methodologies. This approach is closely linked to the aim of the Cascade project, namely to adapt existing risk assessment methodologies to the climate change context. The collected data also showed how disaster risk reduction is not a top political priority in the Baltic Sea region. However, there is a shift from disaster management to management of risks and a strengthened focus on prevention and to address risks. The recommendation was to further strengthen public and political support on a cross sectorial level.

The Sendai Framework in the Baltic Sea Region - Report

Programme Manager at Red Cross Denmark, Susanne Behrendt and Reader at University College Copenhagen, Nina Blom Andersen gave an insight into their research results related to volunteers and civil society. They showed how cooperation between civil society organizations and authorities can be both rewarding and challenging in their own respect, as can work with volunteers and other engaged citizens in different aspects.

Cooperation between citizens, authorities and CS Nina Blom Andersen

During the course two practical exercises with group discussion were carried out. The exercises gave the participants an opportunity to engage in dealing with crisis management on a practical level, and on engaging citizens in severe weather related incidents, incl. perspectives on volunteers.

Anticipation in crisis management Pandora Cell Korslund&Bille

Engaging and mobilizing citizens Behrendt&Andersen

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The Baltic Excellence Programme was three days of new knowledge, net-working and interesting discussions with active and engaged course participants. The seminar all in all highlighted how multilateral cooperation remains essential to managing disaster risks; and perhaps increasingly so in light of the challenges posed by climate change.