



PSC Europe

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**A COMMUNITY APPROACH ON THE PREVENTION OF NATURAL AND
MAN-MADE DISASTERS.
PSCE POSITION**

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**A Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters.
PSCE position**

Public Safety Communication Europe Forum (PSCE) is a permanent autonomous organisation aiming at improving provision of public safety communications and information management systems and the safety of the citizens during crisis and emergency situations.

PSCE provides a unique common platform for researchers, industry and users enabling regular exchange of ideas, information, experiences and best practices.

Following its endorsement by the Board on 13 September 2010, **PSCE** welcomes the “**Draft Report on a Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters**”, adopted by the ENVI Committee on 22 June 2010 and would like to support its adoption at the Plenary session in September 2010.

PSCE would like also to comment on specific strategic issues having a direct link to the scope of its activities and expertise.

1. According to the Paragraph 6, the European Parliament:

“takes note of the proposal to set up a network made up of representatives of the various competent national services of all the Member States; stresses that this network should operate within the scope of the cooperation between national, regional and local authorities with responsibilities in disaster management, spatial planning and risk mapping and management; emphasises the role of this network in exchanging experience and prevention measures and in establishing a common methodology and minimum requirements for hazard and risk mapping at EU level; calls for the inclusion in this network of representatives from agriculture and for consideration also to be given to hearing UNEP, social and non-governmental organisations working in this area and other actors with links to and, therefore, a knowledge of the land;”

PSCE welcomes this proposal and fully agrees that this network should be opened to any other relevant stakeholder who could bring an added-value.

PSCE underlines the fact that the Paragraph 6 of the Draft Report builds on the recommendation stated in the “**Council Conclusions on a Community framework on disaster prevention within the EU**” (Council Conclusions) under the Paragraph 30 (letter “i”), which calls for the establishment of “*informal European network for disaster prevention composed of representatives of relevant authorities and where appropriate other stakeholders from relevant sectors.*”

2. According to the Paragraph 17, the European Parliament

“Stresses the need to create a suitable financial framework for disaster prevention, with adequate financial resources for preventing and combating disasters, that will strengthen and link existing instruments such as cohesion policy, rural development policy, regional policy, the Solidarity Fund, the Seventh Framework Programme and the Life+ programmes; asks that, in this context, prevention should be taken into account in the 2014-2020 Financial Perspective; calls on the European Commission to assess the possibility of proposing a more systematic pooling of available resources in order to strengthen the effectiveness of prevention mechanisms across the EU”.

PSCE also believes that sufficient funding should be allocated at EU level in order to effectively tackle existing shortcomings. However, some coordination efforts at EU level are necessary to avoid the scattering of these funds.

3. According to the Paragraph 25, the European Parliament:

“Calls on the Commission to support Member States in promoting awareness-raising campaigns for prevention and in adopting best practices, providing relevant updated information and training to the general public through channels that are easily accessible to all citizens on identified risks and procedures to be adopted when faced with natural or man-made disaster situations; urges that, in training schemes for populations, particular attention be paid to young people from school age on and to rural communities; in the context of public awareness-raising, stresses also the role of the European single emergency telephone line ‘112’ and the need to make it better known.”

PSCE perceives the information exchange flow, from both qualitative and quantitative point of view, as one of the crucial assets determining successful prevention of natural and man-made disasters. Therefore, comprehensive and straight forward communication should be facilitated through all levels of communication chain. In this context, well elaborated public warning policies should play a key role ensuring that the first responder – in most cases the general public – undertakes the correct decisions. Relevant training schemes and various awareness-raising campaigns, targeting citizens of all age categories, should not only teach how to passively respond to the danger but also create sufficient information background turning the general public into the active players of various disaster scenarios. Public warning policies should be constantly reviewed and regularly put into attention of the citizens.

4. According to the Paragraph 40, the European Parliament:

“Emphasises the importance of public research and development (R&D) in preventing and managing disasters and calls for increased coordination and cooperation between the R&D institutions of Member States [...]”.

It is important to note that the Council Conclusions call on the Commission to promote close cooperation between relevant research institutions and policy-makers, including official disaster management organisations, in order to enhance the transfer of knowledge from the research community to the policy level and to encourage the development of innovative technologies and methods.

PSCE fully agrees with the European Parliament's recommendations to the Commission to strengthen the cooperation in research and ensure appropriate funding while taking into account the user needs.

Moreover, **PSCE** would like to underline that in addition to political, financial and R&D support, organisations working in Public Protection and Disaster Relief need also availability of other resources, especially Europe-wide frequency spectrum for broadband communications to cooperate internationally in cases of natural or man-made disasters and thus provide affected population with best help and support.

PSCE believes that this Draft Report will contribute to a better anticipation and management of natural or man-made disasters occurring in the EU. **PSCE** hereby encourages the Members of European Parliament to support its adoption at the plenary session in September 2010.