



DISASTER PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVE

SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

**Working Table III meeting, Belgrade
May 29, 2006**

The Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative in South Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE), as a regionally owned initiative, continues to provide a framework and a platform for South Eastern Europe nations to develop programs and projects leading to strengthen institutional capacities and abilities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to natural and man-made disasters. It fosters the development of a cohesive regional strategy for disaster prevention and preparedness and further promotes collaboration and coordination across borders in SEE region. The DPPI SEE is an active instrument in the overall Stability Pact objective of regional cooperation and enhanced regionalisation.

Progress report

In the period from the last Stability Pact SEE Regional Table and Working Table III Meeting (November 2006), the following steps promoting regional ownership and further DPPI SEE regionalization have been undertaken, in accordance with the XI DPPI SEE Regional Meeting (Belgrade, October 20 – 21, 2005) conclusions and recommendations:

- the **Institutional Working Group** has been established with a mandate to work on the further institutionalization and regionalization of the DPPI SEE, and to draft an Institutional Legal Framework, defining future DPPI SEE tasks and focus areas, legal status, structure and the DPPI SEE member countries resource commitment, including financial, personnel and in-kind contributions;
- members of the IWG have been appointed by the DPPI SEE member countries and the first Institutional Working Group meeting took place in Sarajevo on February 14, 2006, when Bosnia and Herzegovina assumed the chairmanship of the IWG;
- under the leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina, supported by SP SEE HQ expert and the DPPI SEE Secretariat, the first working draft of the “**Upgrade of the Bucharest Declaration on Cooperation in Disaster Preparedness and Prevention in South Eastern Europe**” has been developed;
- this draft has been presented at the XII DPPI SEE Regional Meeting (Dubrovnik, March 23 – 24, 2006) and is now under consideration and deliberation of the DPPI SEE member countries, including the suggestion to change the name of the document into the Institutional Framework instead of Institutional Legal Framework;
- comments will be considered and discussed at the next IWG meeting tentatively scheduled for June 2006, with an aim to, using this first working document as a basis, negotiate and develop mutually acceptable binding document to be officially signed in the forthcoming period.

During reporting period, the DPPI SEE **donors, Norway, Switzerland and United States of America**, met twice (on December 14, 2005 in Brussels and on March 22, 2006 in Dubrovnik) discussing program, organizational, administrative and budgetary issues.

The **XII DPPI SEE Regional Meeting** took place in Dubrovnik, Croatia from March 23 -24, 2006. Next to the DPPI SEE member countries (11 of them), 2 donors countries (Norway and Switzerland) participated at the meeting. The DPPI SEE partners from several international organisations (IFRC, SRSA, DEMA, EADRCC, EWI) and RACVIAC, representatives of Parliaments of Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, and other invited DPPI SEE stakeholders were also present at the meeting. The XII DPPI SEE Regional Meeting discussed the topics of the DPPI SEE transfer to full regional ownership, reviewed past and agreed on future program activities. The Report on the XII DPPI SEE Regional Meeting is available at www.dppi.info.



Regional projects facilitation and implementation

Disaster Management Training Program continued to be implemented in accordance with the approved 2005 and 2006 Work Plan through 3 training events organized during reporting period, with participation of 58 participants in total, all from the SEE countries. Pursuant to the XI DPPI SEE Regional Meeting conclusion and recommendation, the Assessment on the DMTP has been carried out in January and February 2006, with support and fruitful cooperation received from all interested parties. The XII DPPI SEE Regional Meeting accepted the Report on DMTP Assessment as a guideline to develop an improved DPPI SEE training program for 2007 and onwards and decided to establish a **Training Working Group** with the mandate to discuss the recommendations in the assessment report, to discuss the compilation of needs and capacities, as well as member states' recommendations, to introduce a system of uniformed and standardized evaluation questionnaire for participants to DMTP events, to propose guidelines for the development of the training plan for 2007 onwards. The first meeting of the TWG has been scheduled for 17 May 2006.

As a follow-up of the XI DPPI SEE Regional Meeting conclusions and recommendations, Hungary, as a lead country, supported by the DPPI SEE Secretariat, continued coordination and further improvement of the proposed **Establishment of Emergency Response Units (ERU) in case of floods in countries of the Sava-Danube Basin Project**. The general and working plan of activities has been developed, accepted and confirmed in written form by all countries interested to participate in the project, followed by the establishment of the **ERU Working Group**. The ERU WG had its first meeting in Budapest on March 10, 2006 and the outcome was adoption of the ERU Work Plan and Timeline (available at www.dppi.info). Pursuant to the ERU WG meeting conclusions, Albania and Macedonia have been invited to join the ERU project and take part in its realization. Both countries have confirmed their inclusion in the project. As per accepted ERU timeline, the next ERU WG meeting is tentatively scheduled for the beginning of June 2006, followed by the **DPPI SEE Conference on Floods Management** tentatively scheduled for September 2006; the Training for the ERU Operation Officers/Team Leaders tentatively scheduled for November 2006; and the Initial, Main and Final Planning Conference to be concluded with the **Joint ERU Exercise** tentatively scheduled for February, May and September 2007 respectively. Activities to secure donor funding for this project are underway.

As reported in the previous semi-annual Report, the **Border Crossing Protocols/Procedures**, as a follow-up of the Joint Fire-Fighting Unit (JFFU) project, have been developed and agreed upon at the expert level. The XII DPPI SEE Regional Meeting underlined the importance of the signing of the Border Crossing Protocols without further delay and all four parties expressed readiness to utilize additional efforts to accelerate the acceptance and signing of the Protocols.

The implementation of the **Harmonization of seismic hazard and risk reduction in countries influenced by Vrancea earthquakes** has been successfully carried out by Moldova (as a leader) together with Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey and supported by the Science for Peace Program of the NATO Public Diplomacy Division. Responding to the expressed interest, further discussions have been undertaken with Moldova, NATO and the rest of the SEE countries to explore, define and negotiate the most suitable modalities to replicate this project to the rest of the SEE region.

Networking of the DPPI partners

The broad cooperation and coordination with international agencies and other related initiatives has been enhanced during reporting period. Information on future plans and program activities has been exchanged with the UN (UN-OCHA and UNDP), EC (ECHO and DG Environment), NATO (CEP, EADRCC and Science for Peace Program), the IFRC, CMEP, CEI, SRSA, DEMA, RACVIAC, Cetinje Parliamentary Forum, EWI and others, exploring the possibilities for more closer cooperation.

The International **Conference on Disaster Preparedness in South Eastern Europe** has been organized jointly with the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies and in



cooperation with the National Protection and Rescue Directorate of Croatia with more than 80 participants from 11 SEE countries and 18 international organisations and initiatives. The Conference goals were to provide national perspectives on the current status of disaster preparedness in the region, to identify disaster preparedness and emergency response roles and responsibilities, to discuss the need for civil-military cooperation and to ascertain further crisis response and consequence management challenges. The Conference has been assessed as successful and further collaboration with the GMC will be explored. Furthermore, similar opportunities to joint efforts with other regional initiatives, organizations and agencies will be investigated in order to promote experience exchange and information sharing, and to rationalize the usage of already scarce resources. The first next opportunity of such joint efforts would be participation of the DPPI SEE experts at the Seventh Meeting of the Presidents and Members of Parliamentarian Committees of the Cetinje Parliamentary Forum, tentatively scheduled for the end of June, 2006.

Conclusion

In the region where because of the geography and political borders disaster have a regional dimension, the DPPI SEE has developed over the past years into an effective consultative and coordinative mechanism enhancing disaster preparedness and prevention in case of natural and man-made disasters in South Eastern Europe.

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In Sarajevo on April 28, 2006