



European Union



Union pour la Méditerranée
Union for the Mediterranean
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The Hashemite
Kingdom of
Jordan

20210403

Preparatory Working Group meeting: Volunteers in Civil Protection

19 October 2020, VTC Interational Platform



FINAL REPORT

Contents

Summary	3
1. Introduction and Background	5
a. Context.....	5
b. Aim of this working group	6
c. Organisation of the meeting.....	7
2. Exchanged ideas and innovative approaches	7
d. Key intermediary findings:	7
e. To summarise:.....	9
3. Lessons learned & Overall conclusions: Volunteerism as a priority	11
a. Lesson learned:.....	11
b. Conclusions:.....	12
4. Follow-up and action proposed	13
a. Main points:.....	13
b. Other priority actions;	13
Annex 1. Proposed discussion document for the Working Group meeting.....	14
Annex 2. Proposed action plan.....	17
Annex 3. Meeting agenda and contributors	20

Summary

The UfM toward a new strategy: Promoting Civil Protection Volunteers

The UfM's Directors General of Civil Protection have recognized the decisive importance of engaging citizens in Disaster Risk Management and build-up effective and operational civil protection volunteers' teams.

Current disaster risk reduction strategies aim to foster the resilience of the public. Volunteers in Civil Protection and Disaster Risk Management are a valuable resource to overcome crises.

The objectives of the Preparatory Working Group 'Volunteers in Civil Protection' are to propose initiatives for the development of volunteers in civil protection, and levers for recruiting and capturing volunteers invested in a more resilient society.

The broad consensus that has emerged is that Volunteerism is a priority in Civil Protection. As a result, relevant proposals and recommendations are suggested:

- Strengthening citizens' awareness and involvement in disaster prevention, preparedness and response by empowering Volunteers and Youth;
- Enhance bilateral and/or international cooperation in Mediterranean area to enable the sharing of experience in volunteerism, including available training material, sharing of experience from NGOs in disaster risk management;
- Develop Preparedness for response;
- Promote communication tools on Volunteering in Civil Protection;
- Built efficient volunteer networks able to deal with the health crises like the current COVID-19 pandemic situation;
- Develop volunteers' teams management in order to prevent and fight Marine Pollution;
- Promote the interchange of experts in the field of Volunteering in Civil Protection;
- Support any further initiatives in the Euro Mediterranean area.

Key lessons learnt:

- **Volunteers help build social solidarity and integration**, bringing people together at times of difficulty and giving them a role in their own recovery. This is even truer in the context of **health crisis, as the COVID-19 pandemic** for example.
- **Volunteers extend the reach of governments** during disasters, providing services they would not be able to afford otherwise, such as round-the-clock early warning systems.
- The recent major oil spill incidents have shown that the **successful management of volunteers used in response to coastal pollution** is of paramount importance to support development of a faster and more efficient response to marine pollution incidents.

Key conclusions:

- Volunteers play a **key role in Disaster Risk Management**. They are an invaluable resource. Civil protection authorities must intervene to protect, promote and recognize volunteers' organisations.
- **Enhance the resilience of all involved actors** such as authorities, emergency services and mainly the affected population in the various phases of the disaster life cycle.
- Volunteers organisations involved in civil protection (e.g. volunteers firefighters, Red Cross local groups...) are very effective for these tasks.

Proposed actions/follow-up:

- Developing **strong local first response networks**.
- Volunteers must have a clear, meaningful and acknowledged role within the national and local system and **a clear legal framework** is indispensable to secure their activities.
- **Joint exercises** with national authorities.
- Improve the way to use **volunteers in situations of marine pollution**.
- Joint **inter-regional projects/initiative**.
- Encourage *cross border cooperation*/ development of international, regional and national programs.

1. Introduction and Background

a. Context

The Union for the Mediterranean's Directors General of Civil Protection met under the co-presidency, on 11 and 12 February 2019 in Barcelona¹, and have recognized the decisive importance of **engaging citizens in disaster risk management and build-up effective and operational civil protection volunteers' teams**.

In line with these recommendations, two preparatory working groups were held to discuss the themes of "Volunteers in Civil Protection" and "Engaging citizens in disaster risk management". The two preparatory working groups met on 19 and 20 October 2020 via videoconference, with the final workshop set to take place in 2021.

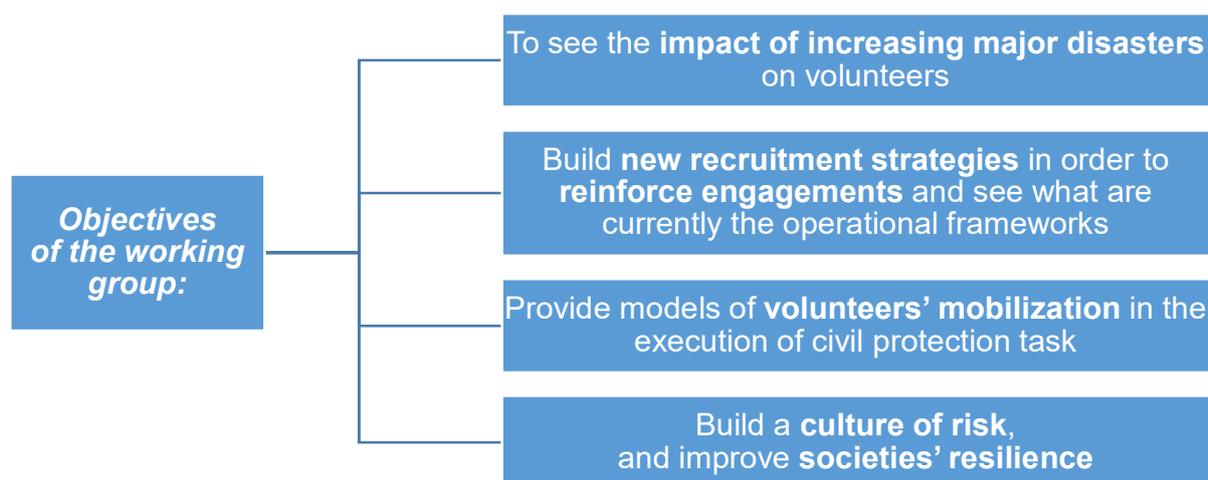
The first working group focused on the role of volunteers in civil protection as a key factor to reinforce and support the action of public emergency services. In fact, a well-informed and aware population has a greater chance to survive in the face of a disaster.

Therefore, the second working group examined how to involve citizens in disaster risk management and how populations can be the first responders when a crisis occurs.

Both working groups have agreed to identify and develop action-based methodologies that involve all social categories, including youth, women, people with disabilities and the elderly.

The proposals issued by working groups **should be endorsed in a form of Action Plan** for future implementation. The working group will report to the Directors General of the Union for the Mediterranean.

The final Action Plan may be endorsed in the framework of a Ministerial (TBC) meeting, which could be organised at a later stage.



¹ <https://ufmsecretariat.org/directors-general-of-civil-protection-meeting/>

Effective local civil protection services and volunteers' groups for common emergencies are **key factors in case of disasters**. That is why, it is important to develop and promote citizens' participation, and in particular by encouraging youth engagement in order to instil a safety culture and raise awareness of risks.

With regard to the integration of volunteers into civil protection, the options range from integration on a case-by-case basis as spontaneous first responders, to more structured integration through the training of volunteers for specific tasks or full integration as a professionally trained civil protection operational base.

b. Aim of this working group

The aim of this working group is to provide ways of improving Civil Protection in times of crises.

In fact, multiple factors are affecting the outbreak of disasters:

- **Climate change** is leading to an increase in the frequency and the intensity of natural disasters. These natural emergencies show us that states are insufficiently prepared for extreme and complex disasters. In fact, such events can cause both immense economic and human losses and can have a long-term social impact on the affected area. Floods, storms, earthquakes, droughts, forest fires and volcanic eruptions are among the most devastating types of natural disasters.
- **Man-made disasters** including explosions, major fires, aviation, shipping and railway accidents, marine pollution, oil spills or release of toxic substances into the environment are becoming increasingly frequent and severe.
- **COVID-19 crisis** has also highlighted how the consequences of catastrophes for human health, the environment, society and the economy can take on unprecedented proportions.

The impact of these threats on populations and infrastructures can have a regional, national and even cross-border impact. Prior to the intervention of public civil protection services and international assistance, experiences have shown that key factors to limit the impact of these diseases are founded on operational emergency responses plans that already exist at regional or local levels.

c. Organisation of the meeting

The meeting was divided in five sessions themselves divided into three parts:

1. Preliminary considerations based on the discussion paper (referents' presentation)

2. Exchange of views and establishment of priorities based on the discussion paper

3. Session's conclusion

The goal of each session was to identify concrete priority actions.

2. Exchanged ideas and innovative approaches

d. Key intermediary findings:

1	Volunteers play a vital role during the whole cycle of emergencies situations
2	Volunteers in Civil Protection and disaster risk management are more than needed to build solidarity and resilience among society and are a valuable resource
3	Key role of the volunteers to inform their communities on the issues of awareness raising and risk preparedness
4	The involvement of citizens in disaster risk management is a key factor to save lives
5	Ways to grow and maintain an efficient Volunteer Network in Civil Protection: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Investing in youth and in the diversity of the society: use existing volunteer organisations that are in the civil protection system or are supporting i.e. support could be provided in organisational, educational, financial and any other way within the framework of their work with youth.✓ The goal is the mobilisation of volunteers.
6	In case of oil spill, volunteers have an important role in the response activities for coastal clean-up. In this situations volunteers could be involved in in response but in more administrative or logistical areas without exposing them to the risk of chemical incidents Appropriate management of volunteers is crucial in term off chemical skills to ensure that the volunteers are not affected.

7	It is essential to define the roles of the available workforce according to the existing profiles, the corresponding “chain of command”, and the assessment of the required logistical arrangements as well as liability.
8	Trained volunteers are a driving force for community. Volunteers must be adequately trained and equipped.
9	The retention of volunteers remains a long-term challenge
10	Volunteers should be integrated in government actions
11	Volunteers based organisations must be protected legally by integrating them within legal framework of the country.

The working group meeting allowed drawing a clear picture of the organisational, operational and legal framework in the different countries referring to **the issues of awareness raising and preparedness.**

Discussions with referents and participants led us to the following observation: climate change is making natural disasters worse and more likely. Floods, storms, earthquakes, tsunami, droughts, forest fires and volcanic eruptions are among the most devastating types of natural catastrophe.

Man-made disasters including explosions, major fires, aviation, shipping and railway accidents, oil spills or release of toxic substances into the environment are becoming increasingly frequent and severe.

COVID-19 crisis has also highlighted how the consequences of catastrophes for human health, the environment, society and the economy can take on unprecedented proportions.

The impact of these threats on populations and infrastructures can have a regional, national and even cross-border impact.

The involvement of volunteers in Civil Protection are more than needed. In fact, improving techniques and operational frameworks are keys in light of global challenges that we are currently facing.

The emergencies the Mediterranean region faces are common and have cross-border implications, which require a joint effort and a common agenda on disaster risk management at regional and sub-regional levels.

Since the public plays an important role in risk prevention and preparedness for emergencies, citizens can be the first responders to disasters. **The involvement of citizens in disaster risk management is a key factor to save lives, particularly for vulnerable groups.**

Investing in youth and trained volunteers as a driving force for community service are crucial elements to build solidarity and resilience among societies. Digital and physical volunteers can play a vital role during a whole cycle of an emergency.

In term of **prevention and response to Marine Pollution**², Volunteering can be an important aid, through spontaneous offers or an integrated approach using pre-identified skilled volunteers.

Nevertheless, there are a number of essential aspects, which must be considered to benefit in the most appropriate manner from this resource and to be prepared for managing the contributions of a large number of volunteers.

An oil spill always creates an emotional shockwave amongst the community, which translates for many citizens in an urge to assist in the clean-up operations. Authorities are quite often taken aback by this sudden afflux of volunteers, which, if not correctly addressed, could have an adverse cascading effect on the crisis management.

Volunteering is an act of highly commendable citizenship with the understanding that the authorities should remain in charge of the overall operations and, in this context, it is their responsibility to accept, select, train, assign duties to the volunteers in accordance with the actual needs, and taking into account the potential resulting liabilities. In particular, it is the authorities' responsibility to **ensure that adapted health and safety measures are in place** and enforced, and that volunteers are not exposed with inadequate protection to substances that could result in health hazard.

It is essential to define the roles of the available workforce according to the existing profiles, the corresponding "chain of command", the assessment of the required logistical arrangements as well as liability and reimbursement related matters.

All operational, logistical and organisational issues must be taken in count to consider volunteer contribution as an additional asset within oil spill response national systems.

e. To summarise:

- **The role of the volunteers to inform their communities:** It has been one of the greatest assets and one of the greatest strengths of the volunteer role in COVID-19. An informed volunteer can be of extreme importance to reduce the risks taken by the communities, informing them and creating a safe environment. This also strengthens the reach, and the level of intervention that an organisation can have.
- **The importance of well-trained volunteers:** It is, without a doubt, the most effective tool. It values their work, their expertise and allows him to be of extreme importance in other fields of action.
- **Volunteer based organisations must be protected legally and integrated in government actions.** The time that a volunteer gives to do his work must be meaningful. Involvement is not enough. Government structures must integrate even more this kind of assets into their operational framework, so that these organisations can grow in numbers,

² <https://www.rempec.org/en/our-work/pollution-preparedness-and-response>

in force and in skills. They must also be protected by law, so they can work with the necessary legal security, making even more valued the work that he develops.

- **Volunteers support for coastal pollution response** represents a key resource in terms of both quantity and quality³. However, the higher the number of resources involved in operations, the more complex the management of the response activities and therefore the more organised the operations should be. Indeed, volunteer involvement requires additional logistical and organisational organisation.

The integration of volunteers in the response can be done in two different ways:

- A pre-organisation integrated in the emergency plan, through known NGOs and organisations.
 - A spontaneous system through new volunteers to be integrated during the emergency.
- Volunteers' **rights, responsibilities and insurance schemes** must be clearly defined. This includes reflection on the administrative position of volunteers, giving them a regulatory framework, an insurance policy, etc.

The goal is the mobilisation of selected volunteers for the execution of a specific task within the context of the whole crisis and disaster relief effort.

- **Volunteers in civil protection and disaster risk management are a valuable resource.** Therefore, it is necessary to build a well-suited organisational and operational framework for volunteering.
- Volunteers' **rights, responsibilities and insurance schemes** must clearly be defined. This includes reflection on the administrative position of volunteers, giving them a regulatory framework, an insurance policy, etc.
- **Volunteers must be adequately trained.** Volunteers must have the proper equipment, whether protective clothing or communications tools.
- The laws and policies affecting volunteers are different in almost every country, and even in different regions of the same country. Governments can and must do more to explore the legal mechanisms that protect volunteers in emergencies.

The retention of volunteers remains a long-term challenge, such as: enhance volunteer organisations as part of civil protection system, exemption from bureaucratic regulations that make voluntary work more difficult, recognition, allowances, salaries, pension provision or bonuses, agreements with employers or administrations, tax benefits, supplementary health insurance, bonus points for university entrance, medals, congratulation letters, etc.

³ <https://www.posow.org/themes-1/oiled-shoreline-clean-up>

3. Lessons learned & Overall conclusions: Volunteerism as a priority

a. Lesson learned:

A major concern of current crisis and disaster management approaches is to **enhance the resilience of all involved actors** such as authorities, emergency services and mainly the affected population in the various phases of the disaster life cycle.

It is important to capitalise on the commitment of citizens and to offer opportunities to integrate them in the existing civil protection/disaster management systems in the countries. Intergenerational solidarity has made it possible to maintain strong links between people. **Young people** have been particularly involved and are a target audience for becoming civil protection volunteers. The social media campaigns are useful tools to inform the public on how to behave during disasters.

Intergenerational solidarity maintains strong links between people. Young people may be particularly involved and are a target audience for becoming civil protection volunteers. The social media campaigns are useful tools to inform the public on how to behave in disasters.

In a context of increasing disaster and crisis, **volunteers help build social solidarity and integration**, bringing people together at times of difficulty and giving them a role in their own recovery. This is even truer in the context of **health crisis, as the COVID-19** pandemic for example.

Volunteers extend the reach of governments during disasters, providing services they would not be able to otherwise afford, such as round-the-clock early warning systems.

Based on both governmental institutions and strong volunteer organisations, Mediterranean and European countries could provide **a comprehensive emergency response system**.

Therefore, current disaster risk reduction documents aim to foster the resilience of the public while at the same time relieving emergency and humanitarian organisations from an uncoordinated influx of information or spontaneous volunteers.

As one strategical effort, countries must provide and develop opportunities **for new and advanced forms of citizen's participation** by developing a multifaceted range of voluntary engagement. In the order of preparedness measures, the recruitment of volunteers to mobilize them in the case of a hazardous event is a significant factor to match the requirements of crisis and disaster management.

Countries must explore how to ensure an **optimal protection of volunteers**. On the legal side, organisations might need to ensure volunteers privately, i.e. by procuring an all-in insurance. To avoid many risks a priori, it would be reasonable to follow a strategically approach by defining a limited area of assisting as well as riskless activities for those volunteers being not protected by insurance.

Furthermore, **equality between different social groups has to be ensured**. This encompasses several aspects, e.g. developing **special offers to female volunteers** and the creation of adequate recruitment.

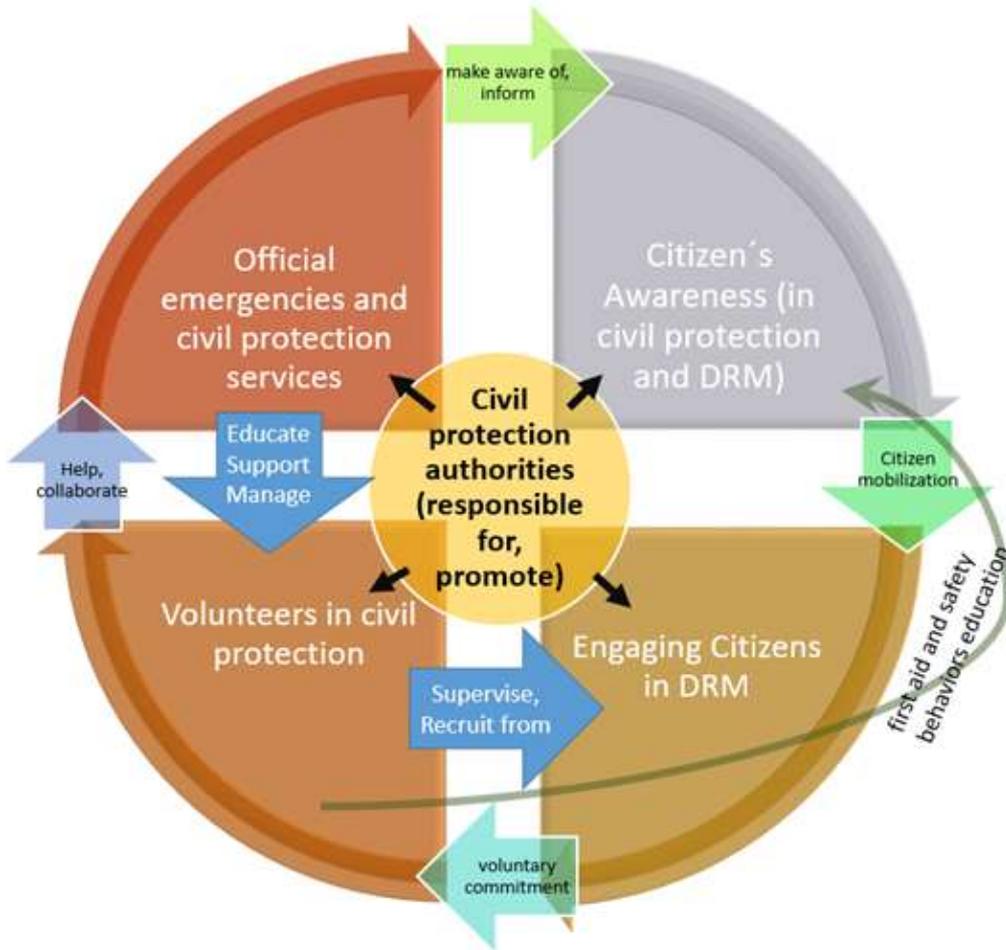
The individual structures and procedures of different organisations with voluntary engagement will require **specifically adapted concepts and solutions**.

Governments should also continue to **strengthen the legal protection of volunteers**.

b. Conclusions:

Population prevention and preparedness to face disasters and emergencies stress the need for public information but also for safety behaviours and first aid education.

Every facet is connected to each other, including public rescue services.



It is therefore important that the authorities in charge of civil protection understand these relations and that they facilitate the synergy of all the actors.

Overall conclusion:

Volunteers play a key role in Disaster Risk Management as well as in response to Marine Pollutions. They are a precious resource. Civil protection and marine authorities must intervene to protect, promote and recognize volunteers' organisations.

4. Follow-up and action proposed

a. Main points:

- ✓ Developing strong local first response networks.
- ✓ Volunteers have to have a clear, meaningful and acknowledged role within the national and local system.
- ✓ Joint exercises with national authorities.
- ✓ Joint Inter-regional projects/initiative.
- ✓ Encourage cross border cooperation/ development of international, regional and national programs.

b. Other priority actions;

- ✓ Developing better/new communication tools to reach population and raise awareness, including women and vulnerable people.
- ✓ Having good operational and legal framework in place including:
 - Inclusive recruitment policy and insurance scheme;
 - Trainings and deployment procedures for volunteers;
 - Clear strategy to attract, recruit and maintain volunteers;
 - Defined roles between professionals and volunteers;
 - Lifelong, structural and vocational educational training (VET) training.
- ✓ Adapting, improving, trainings, introducing new tools, technologies (apps, online training etc.).
- ✓ Develop tools and resources to retain volunteers (remuneration, recognition, medals etc.).
- ✓ Develop networks of volunteers including in marine pollution.
- ✓ Develop and promote an organised civil participation, creation of a volunteer observatory or advisory group in order to have a strong organisational and operational framework.
- ✓ Level of training must be adapted to risks (including recent pandemics experience), specialization, supervision, financing, logistics, infrastructure, innovation aspects of training, etc.
- ✓ Create a database on trainers and volunteers within the Mediterranean region.
- ✓ The health crisis linked to COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of having a civil protection system that is complementary to the health system, this further stressing the importance of inter-institutional cooperation.
- ✓ Volunteer based organisations must be protected legally and integrated in government action.

Annexes:

Annex 1. Proposed discussion document for the Working Group meeting

This document serves as basis for discussion at the meeting and will be further developed reflecting participants' inputs during the meeting and comments received afterwards. The document should be finalised prior to the final Working group meeting, taking place in 2021.

The actions proposed under this working group will be complementary to the work carried out under all three other working groups (*i.e. preparing for efficient mutual assistance in the Euro Mediterranean area; ii. Engaging citizens in disaster risk management; iii. Civil protection volunteers*) identified in the recommendations of the UfM Director Generals meeting⁴ (February 2019) and in the Action plan of the Preparing for efficient mutual assistance in the Euro Mediterranean area⁵.

1. Introduction

Climate change is making natural disasters worse and more likely. These natural catastrophes can cause immense economic and human losses. Floods, storms, earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, forest fires and volcanic eruptions are among the most devastating types of natural catastrophe.

In addition, man-made disasters including explosions, major fires, marine pollution, aviation, shipping and railway accidents, oil spills or release of toxic substances into the environment are becoming increasingly frequent and severe.

Not to mention public health emergency such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of these threats on populations and infrastructures can have a regional, national and even cross-border impact.

Prior to the intervention of public civil protection services and international assistance, experience has shown that a crucial factor to limit the impact of these disasters is founded on a strong local first response services network.

Effective local civil protection services and well-trained and coordinated volunteer groups for common emergencies are a crucial factor when disasters strike. It is important to develop and promote an organised civil participation, in particular of young people in this field.

The Union for the Mediterranean Civil Protection Director Generals' of the partner countries recognized the crucial importance of engaging citizens in disaster risk management and build-up effective and operational civil protection volunteers system.

⁴ <https://ufmsecretariat.org/directors-general-of-civil-protection-meeting/>

⁵ <https://ufmsecretariat.org/mutual-assistance/>

The UfM Working Group will discuss the challenges and concrete actions to be taken to support efficient development and sustainability of volunteerism in civil protection and disaster risk management. These actions will be proposed to the Senior Officials meeting for possible implementation at national, sub-regional, and/or regional levels.

The disasters that countries of the Mediterranean basin may experience are common and may have cross-border implications whatever their origin: natural (earthquakes, forest fires, floods, flash floods, tsunamis, landslides, storms, health emergencies etc.) or man-made.

Their occurrence and scale can profoundly and lastingly affect the continuity of activity in geographical areas of varying size.

On top of that, marine pollution can have a long-term adverse effect on the coastline environment and wild life.

The enhancement of human potential will facilitate the levels of commitment, integration, training and sustainability of models for the development of volunteering in civil protection and disaster risk management in the Mediterranean area.

Given the fact that population plays an important role in risk prevention and preparedness for emergencies and considering that, citizens are usually the first responders to disasters, a second work group based on **“Public awareness in civil protection”** has been set up. The objectives and outcomes of the two working groups are strongly interlinked.

2. Civil Protection Volunteers

A major concern of current crisis and disaster management approaches is to enhance the resilience of all involved actors and mainly the affected population in the various phases of the disaster life cycle.

This approach requires a comprehensive emergency response system and the commitment of strong volunteer organisations.

Mobilising volunteers in the case of natural and man-made disasters is an important factor that could be an added value in disaster risk management, especially when addressing the needs of the most vulnerable people.

There are various examples⁶ of involving volunteers in disaster risk management. There are different approaches to mobilize volunteers, in conventional or non-conventional ways. Increasing

⁶ <https://www.posow.org/>
<http://pprdsud3.eu/en/homepage/>

limitations of existing systems involving volunteers stress the importance of searching for new, alternative and sustainable ways on how to involve people in civil protection and volunteerism in disaster risk management.

The health crisis linked to COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of having a civil protection system that is complementary to the health system, this further stressing the importance of inter-institutional cooperation. In addition, COVID-19 pandemic stressed a challenge with the resilience of hospitals or other health facilities, including patient transport and the availability of unaffected human resources to ensure business continuity.

By definition, this pandemic has affected the entire planet and put many of our health organisations under stress. Civil protection actors had to cope with multiple actions in many countries, mobilisation of volunteers has ensured link with the population. During the COVID-19 pandemic, citizen initiatives were created and all generations were able to mobilise help for the most vulnerable people in the situations that had not been anticipated.

It is important to capitalise on the commitment of citizens and to offer opportunities to integrate them in the existing civil protection/disaster management systems in the countries. Intergenerational solidarity has made it possible to maintain strong links between people. Young people have been particularly involved and are a target audience for becoming civil protection volunteers. The social media campaigns are useful tools to inform the public on how to behave in disasters. In addition, they could also play a role in encouraging young people to volunteer, e.g. the Virtual Operation Support Teams (VOST) initiative⁷, where volunteers help officials to prevent and face disasters.

IPCAM and IPCAM II: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/financing-civil-protection-europe/selected-projects/increasing-preparedness-0_en

⁷ VOST TEAM: <https://www.vosteuropa.eu/>

Annex 2. Proposed action plan

The actions proposed to be taken forward on a regional level and in partnership between the countries concerned are:

	Proposal of actions/activities to be implemented	Level of implementation	Organisation/Country supporting the implementation
1	<p>Strengthening citizens' awareness and involvement in disaster prevention, preparedness and response by empowering Volunteers and Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering volunteers • Promote civic engagement.in the field of volunteering in Civil Protection and marine pollution • Volunteers have to have a clear, meaningful and acknowledged role within the national and local system 	National, sub-regional and/or regional	UfM Member States UfM Secretariat European Commission PPRD South
2	<p>Enhance bilateral and/or international cooperation in Mediterranean area to enable the sharing of experience in volunteerism, including available training material, sharing of experience from NGOs in disaster risk management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the different models of volunteerism in the region from parallel volunteerism structures to the full integration of volunteers in the Civil Protection services. • Enable the sharing of this experience in volunteerism and the experience from NGOs in disaster risk management • Develop common training material • Drawing up a guide of good practices • Encourage cross border cooperation/ development of international, regional and national programs • Promote, facilitate and manage a network of experts in Civil Protection volunteering. 	National, sub-regional and/or regional	UfM Member States UfM Secretariat European Commission PPRD South NGOs

3	<p>Develop Preparedness for response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a database on trainers and volunteers within the Mediterranean region. • Conduct Training plans and exercises for headquarters for training of leaders and specialists in Volunteering and promote volunteers in the chain of command • Conduct large-scale Civil Protection exercises on a regular basis in which volunteers can also participate. 	National sub-regional and/or regional	UfM, EUCPM, PPRD programmes, IAEA, IFRC.
4	<p>Promote communication tools on Volunteering in Civil Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue increasing interoperability, use of common standards and language • Build regional communication and information campaign • Share Communication tools • Write and share Guides to good practice • Introduce new communication technologies (apps...) • Develop tools and resources to retain volunteers (remuneration, recognition, medals etc.) 	National sub-regional and/or regional	UfM Member States UfM Secretariat European Commission PPRD NGOs
5	<p>Built efficient volunteer networks able to deal with the health crises like the current COVID-19 pandemic situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce inter-institutional cooperation. 	Sub-regional and/or regional	WHO, REMPEC, IFRC,
6	<p>Develop volunteers' teams management in order to prevent and fight Marine Pollution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-identify NGOs • Built procedures to request cross-border or regional support • Consolidate regional Oil Spill Volunteers database 	National sub-regional and/or regional	CEDRE REMPEC UCPM funded projects e.g. POSOW Project West MOPoCo
7	<p>Promote the interchange of experts in the field of Volunteering in Civil Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The availability of experts capable of organising and coordinating volunteer's teams is important. • In order to enable an efficient selection of the experts required, it is essential to agree on common selection criteria 	Sub-regional and/or regional	UfM Secretariat European Commission
8	<p>Support any further initiatives, together with the "Engaging citizens in DRM" WG and "Preparing for efficient mutual assistance in the Euro Mediterranean area" WG.</p>	National sub-regional and/or regional	UfM Secretariat European Commission

In the scope of implementing these actions and activities, where appropriate, UfM support may be requested at a later stage and a larger scale (institutional framework, policy dialogue and funding). However, this dynamic should not stop there.

One question deserves to be asked: as a new stage, should the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) take the lead in civil protection cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region?

In line with this ambition, the UfM could strengthen regional cooperation in civil protection and implement concrete actions with a tangible impact.

For example, the creation of an "Office for Civil Protection, Volunteer Development and Public Awareness of Disaster Risk Management" would make sense, under the aegis, for example, of a charter signed by all Member States.

Annex 3. Meeting agenda and contributors

- Welcome remarks by Mr. Ilkka Salmi, Director, Preparedness and Prevention (DG ECHO B) and Acting Director, Emergency Management (DG ECHO A)
- Opening speech Ms. Marisa Farrugia, ambassador, Deputy Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean
- Setting the scene by chair Ms. Julia Stewart-David, Head of Unit, Civil Protection Horizontal Issues (DG ECHO)

- **SESSION 1: In a context of threats and increasing risks of major disasters and crises, why the support of volunteers' teams is a key factor to reinforce the action of public emergency services.**
 - o Moderator: Lieutenant-colonel Christophe Marchal (France)
 - o Referents: Lt. Colonel Khader Mohammad Obeidat (Jordan), Ms. Ronit Bar (Israel), Mr. Oriol Vilalta (PPRD South III)

- **SESSION 2: Volunteers in civil protection built up and recruitment strategies**
 - o Moderator: Lieutenant commander Aurelio Soto Suarez (Spain)
 - o Referents: Colonel-major Mohamed Ben Brahim (Tunisia), Mr. Thierry Girard (Red Cross), Ms. Valentina Atanasovska (North Macedonia)

- **SESSION 3: Examples of organisational and operational framework for volunteering**
 - o Moderator: Mr. Giovanni De Siervo (Italy)
 - o Referents: Commandant Meriem Yahiaoui (Algeria), Colonel Owda Younis (Palestine), Captain Christophe Larue (France)

- Resumption of the work following a lunch break: Ms. Nacira BOULEHOUAT, Head of Unit, Prevention and Disaster Risk Management (DG ECHO B2)*

- **SESSION 4: Initial preparation, training and development of volunteers**
 - o Moderator: Captain Laurent Alfonso (France)
 - o Referents: Mr. Florian Weber, Federal Agency for Technical Relief (Germany), Lt. Colonel Sébastien Alvarez (France), Mr. Lorenzo Massucchielli (IRC)

- **SESSION 5: Mobilization of volunteers for the execution of civil protection task**
 - o Moderator: Ms. Silvia Negro Alousque (Spain)
 - o **Topic 1: Volunteer's contributions to survey and clean oiled or polluted shoreline** - Referents: Mr. Gabino Gonzalez, REMPEC, Mr. Nicolas Tamic, CEDRE (France), Commandant Kamal Ebnyaich (Morocco)
 - o **Topic 2: Volunteer's role in the context of health crisis, as the COVID-19 pandemic for example** - Referents: Mr. Carlos Teixeira (Portuguese Red Cross), Ms. Adrienne Rashford (WHO), Ms. Mirna Abu Ata (UNDRR) , Mr. Zahi Chahine (Lebanon)
 - o **Topic 3: Volunteer's fire services role in major forest fires prevention and suppression** - Referents: Mr. Mario Starčević (Croatia), Ms. Radina Hadzhieva (Bulgaria), Lieutenant Idan Braun (Israel)