

V. CIVIL PROTECTION

Read the final recommendations of the meeting here:



Regional cooperation on civil protection is one aim of the Barcelona Process to promote peace, stability and security in the Mediterranean. Moreover, with an increasing number of forest fires, floods, earthquakes, marine pollution, pandemics, and other catastrophes across the Euro-Mediterranean area in the last few years, cooperation among UfM Member States in civil protection enjoys high levels of political support.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the need to build stronger regional civil protection services and networks, which will benefit not only countries on a national level but also as a region through resource and knowledge sharing.

2008: the turning point for civil protection in our region

In the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, which launched the UfM in 2008, Civil Protection appeared already among the major regional projects that were to shape the mandate of the organisation:

Until 2008, civil protection cooperation on a regional level in the Mediterranean had mainly been funded by the EU and realised through two subsequent programmes under the auspices of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). Generally speaking, the two Euromed programmes are seen as a success in terms of the high number of realised activities and participating states. The first Euromed programme aimed at promoting cooperation in the field of civil protection was launched in 1998 following a joint proposal by Egypt and Italy.

2009: Clearing the path for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation

In October 2009, the Directors-General of National Civil Protection Authorities of the 27 EU Member States and the 14 Mediterranean and Balkan Partner Countries of the UfM (Albania, Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey) met in Brussels for a Steering Committee meeting to discuss and approve the action plan for the third Euromed civil protection programme was launched. It is called the “Euromed Programme of Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters” (PPRD South).



The global landscape is littered with examples of the devastation caused by man-made and natural disasters. The effects of climate change are evident for all. The Mediterranean region is particularly vulnerable and exposed to such disasters. A joint Civil Protection programme on prevention, preparation and response to disasters, linking the region more closely to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, is, therefore, one of the main priorities for the region.

— Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean
Paris, 13 July 2008



2019: Steps towards a new era of Civil Protection across the region

On the impetus generated hand in hand by the UfM Secretariat and the European Commission, the Directors-General of Civil Protection of the UfM Member States gathered on 11 February 2019 at the UfM headquar-

ters, in Barcelona, almost a decade after their last meeting. The Director-Generals launched a reflection to develop an action plan for strengthened Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on prevention campaigns, emergency response and crisis management.

Indeed, the meeting aimed to facilitate thematic discussions focusing on common humanitarian aid and crisis



Zoom on UfM projects

PPRD - SOUTH

Location

Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya*, Morocco, Palestine, Syria* and Tunisia

How?

Strengthening prevention capacities of the Southern Mediterranean Partner Countries

Reinforcing operational assistance & response capacities of Southern Mediterranean Partner Countries

Supporting Civil Protection authorities to be better equipped with communication tools to reach out the population on emergency procedures and promoting volunteer programmes

PPRD-South - Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-Made disasters in Middle East and North Africa Partnership Countries is an EU Programme that has been running since 2009, and which is today in its third phase. The project's overall objective is to contribute to increasing resilience and reducing the social, economic and environmental costs of natural and man-made disasters in the Mediterranean Southern region. The project has two specific objectives:

1) National approaches to disaster management are further developed, based on prevention, mitigation, and preparedness rather than on response, with the involvement of all relevant governmental actors as well as of civil society stakeholders;

2) Intra-regional, and where appropriate regional, coordination and cooperation is enhanced, in order to have coordinated responses of countries of the Mediterranean Basin affected by the same disaster; and institutional cooperation between the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism and the EU South partner countries' civil protection agencies is strengthened.

PPRD III in figures: Cooperate regionally to better protect locally (2018-2021)

5M €

Total project amount funded by DG NEAR under the European Neighborhood Instrument

3rd phase

of the PPRD South project, launched on 1 February 2018

36 months

duration of the programme



The EU Civil Protection Mechanism offers a framework to work together to prevent, prepare for and respond to major disasters. Common joint regional exercises and training on floods, forest fires, earthquakes, medical, maritime, have been done and allowed us to put together our strengths and train together to reach a stronger response in case of disasters. This partnership and solidarity among all UfM Member States should be strengthened further.

—Christos Stylianides,
European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid
and Crisis Management (2014-2019)

States could play a key role in coordinating common responses to crises and cooperate on risk assessment, disaster prevention, preparedness and planning.

2020-2021: Developing the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Protection Action Plan

In 2020 and 2021, the UfM Member States progressed on the recommendations of the Directors-General 2019 meeting to continue working together to enhance their cooperation on disaster risk management, with the UfM providing a valuable platform for Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on civil protection, by facilitating links between the political and operational levels.

In collaboration with the European Commission, the proposed three Working Groups (i) Preparing for efficient mutual assistance in the Euro-Mediterranean area, (ii) Engaging citizens in disaster risk management, and (iii) the role of volunteers in civil protection, have been successfully convened by the UfM Secre-

tariat, with their respective final reports completed.

Proposed action plans for the Working Groups have been developed for discussions and follow-up. The meetings further assessed the needs and objectives of the future PPRD programme in the region.

In this sense, a new phase of the PPRD MED(iterranean), funded by the EU, will be presented in 2022 and will start in early 2023, with new partner countries, namely Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Mauritania. With a budget of 3 millions euros for three years, the main objectives of this new phase will be to (i) build sustainable capacities of civil protection institutions; (ii) strengthen interlinkages between governmental actors, civil society stakeholders and the scientific community; (iii) enhance regional and sub-regional coordination, institutional and operational cooperation between the Southern Mediterranean Partner Countries with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

The next meeting of the UfM Civil Protection Directors-General, which should be held in the last quarter of 2022, will be the moment that sets the next steps in this new phase of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and partnership.

Sources:

- "Civil Protection: The New Dimension of Mediterranean Security" by Niklas Bremberg, IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2010
- <https://www.euneighbours.eu/>
- <http://pprd3.luciole.com/en/homepage/>

Read more about the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Protection Action Plan:



Engaging Citizens in Disaster Risk Management - Final Report



Volunteers in Civil Protection - Final Report

Mediterranean human story

LAURENT ALFONSO

Captain Professional Firefighter and Foreign affairs officer at the Directorate General for Civil Security and Crisis Management of the French Ministry of Interior

Captain Laurent Alfonso was seconded to the UfM Secretariat by France to support the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on civil protection and assist the organisation in the preparations of the next UfM Civil Protection Directors-General meeting. As an expert in the European Civil Protection Mechanism, he has worked in many countries as a trainer in operational management and command, forest fires, communication and prevention.



Captain Alfonso is a "glass half full" type of person and likes to see the opportunities lying beneath the challenges. For instance, he is intimately convinced that countries from the Southern rim of the Mediterranean, who started to feel the negative impact of climate change sooner than other regions, can bring a great deal of knowledge when it comes to resilience capacities.

Read more on Captain Alfonso's insights on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in Civil Protection **here:**

