

Project "GRADE - Joint risk prevention and management system for Gradinari - Malu - Byala communities for a safe and developed cross-border region"

ROBG-126

Cooperation Strategy

The major natural and man-made disasters often surpass the borders of a single country. Although cooperation is central to the organisation of many social systems, relatively little is known about cooperation in situations of collective emergency. A country hit by a disaster can launch an appeal to the international community for help when it is unable to handle properly with the consequences. The EU, through the EU [Civil Protection Mechanism](#), can act as the facilitator element in the cooperation's efforts between countries and organisations to respond to the aid appeal. The cooperation is also essential to the prevention, and the exchange of good practices in prevention and preparedness is the backbone of such cooperation. Enhanced communication systems are a cornerstone of the international cooperation that is essential for an effective response in case of emergency situations. An effective cooperation and communication between stakeholders during times of crisis are of the utmost importance.

Cross-border cooperation is a type of mutual cooperation, between two border regions. An effective cross-border cooperation depends on coordinating all the actors involved in this process, but also on the cooperation on all levels, doubled by the existence of an adequate legal framework.

Project GRADe has been created and implemented to improve the joint risk management in target area through increasing the tactical and operational levels of coordination, to enhance the joint work, equipment and human resources, along with raising awareness among communities upon preparedness and prevention of risk situations. Implemented by three cross-border communities, Gradinari Commune, Malu Commune and Byala Municipality from two cross-border regions - Giurgiu County and Rousse District, project GRADe has increased coordination among partners, provided specialized equipment and trained human resources for an effective planning & communication.

The procurement of specialized equipment through project GRADe has unconditionally lead to increasing the response capacities in case of emergency situations for the three partners, to identifying, analyzing and establishing of joint specific measures for the prevention of risk disasters al cross-border level, as well as developing of joint cooperation concepts in case of cross-border and regional emergency situations, through providing on the basis of reciprocity of human resources and equipment in crisis situations.



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For a more efficient cross-border cooperation, relevant stakeholders have been involved in the project, public institutions and private companies to facilitate the dialogue between them and to build up preparedness for natural disasters.

Although it already exists a cooperation agreement between the two regions, Giurgiu - Rousse, cooperation procedures can be made between local public authorities and local public and private institutions from the two regions.

Through project GRADe, besides specialized equipment, human resources have been trained in order to be better prepared for an intervention in case of emergency situations, joint applications have been organized with the themes "Fires", "Floods", "Winter", specific for each community in the project, and mobile phones and radio stations have been procured for a better communication before, during and after and emergency situations. The mobile phones are going to be used by the volunteers that have been trained and the radio stations are going to be given and used during an emergency situations by the relevant actors that are going to intervene.

The cross-border cooperation is aimed at ensuring that population in both countries can have access to the best prevention strategies and be fully prepared.

For a better cooperation between the two regions, between the project partners, as well as with the relevant stakeholders involved, a permanent communication will be maintained regarding the possible risk situations that might occur depending mainly on weather factors and period of the year. Through the website that has been created in the project, partners will be able to upload information regarding the local risk situations and type of interventions made in order to share their good practices and experiences. Also, for the cooperation to be efficient joint intervention exercises will have to be made in order to involve the volunteers and relevant stakeholders in an emergency situation, one at each beneficiary's location.

Relevant stakeholders that have been involved in the project are:

- Waters management institutions
- Environmental agencies
- Emergency situations organizations
- Weather forecast institutions
- Local police forces
- Health/ medical emergency units
- Social services suppliers
- NGOs
- Local private companies from Byala, Gradinari and Malu serving the local committees for emergency situations



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According to each country's legal framework, each local public authority and each stakeholder, public or private, has certain obligations and attributes with regards to intervening in an emergency situation, or they can only act through a request from the national or regional public authorities. A joint partnership in the field of early warning and risk management will be signed between the three communities and relevant stakeholders involved in risk management system from the two counties. The relevant stakeholders involved will intervene in accordance with their legal attributes.

One of the important components of the early warning system is the notification of relevant structures and individuals to take urgent operational response measures, including warning the population from the expected risk areas, possible evacuation and other preparation and response measures to avoid human casualties and minimize damage as much as possible.

A sound cooperation between all the actors involved before, during and after an emergency situation has to be based on the reciprocal aid, on the main purpose of getting through it with as little damage as possible and on learning from previous experiences to act better next time.

