21st European Week of Regions and Cities 2023

Session Concept Note

Bridging the Gap in Cross-border Cooperation: Societal Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction

10 October 2023, 14:30-15:30
Silver hall, SQUARE Brussels Meeting Centre

Organisers: UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and European Committee of the Regions (CoR)

Background

The European Week of Regions and Cities (#EURegionsWeek) is the biggest annual Brussels-based event dedicated to cohesion policy. It is a platform to discuss common challenges for Europe’s regions and cities and examine possible solutions by bringing together a diverse community of speakers and participants – politicians, decision-makers, experts, practitioners, civil society, academia, the EU institutions, the media and providing a neutral space for capacity-building, learning and exchange of experience and facilitating cooperation and networking between regions and cities.

In parallel, the international community celebrates the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction on 13 October 2023. This international milestone will accompany the important discussions taking place in the context of EWRC and will provide a global relevance to this session’s focus on social resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

About the Session

While there is increasing awareness of the cross-border implications of disasters, European cities, municipalities and regions still face difficulties in collective response to natural hazards and climate-induced disasters. Between 1980 and 2020, disasters affected nearly 50 million people in Europe and caused roughly €12 billion in economic losses annually. The session aims to seek practical ways to enhance societal preparedness while addressing vulnerabilities to reduce the risk and impact of disasters. It will mainly focus on how to strengthen cooperation among the cities and regions where the degree of understanding and infrastructures as well as the tools and capacities at their disposal may vary; and fill the gaps between the reality on the ground and different governance levels.

Format: In person

Language: English with French interpretation

Audience: > 100 persons

Guiding questions

- What are cities' and regions' main challenges and barriers in building cooperation and collective response to climate-induced and natural disasters?
- How can we address the different levels of understanding, infrastructures, and capacities in the regions to ensure a “whole-of-society” approach?
- What are the successful practices of cross-border cooperation in disaster risk reduction in the city, and what lessons can we learn from them?
- What role can scientific technology and innovation play in facilitating cross-border

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cooperation and reaching the last mile on the ground, including the vulnerabilities?

- What financial mechanisms and resources are available to support cross-border cooperation initiatives for enhancing societal resilience and disaster risk reduction?

**Programme**

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<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Opening and setting the scene</td>
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<td>35 min</td>
<td>Panel Discussion</td>
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<td><strong>Ms. Malgorzata Bartyna-Zielińska</strong>, Head of the Environment and Climate Department, City of Wroclaw, MCR2030 Resilience Hub</td>
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<td><strong>Ms. Harriet Tiemens</strong>, Director of the Green Metropolitan Region of Arnhem-Nijmegen</td>
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<td><strong>Mr. Christophe Clergeau</strong>, Member of the European Parliament, former European Committee of the Regions Rapporteur</td>
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<td><strong>Moderator: Mr. Andrew Bower</strong>, Country Support Programme Manager, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<td>15 min</td>
<td>Q&amp;A session</td>
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<td>Closing</td>
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**Contact Information**

For further information of the session, kindly contact Ms. Yigyeong Oh (Yigyeong.oh@un.org) or visit [the event website](#).