



Danube
River Region
Resilience
Exchange
network



Funded by European Union

4th Annual Practitioner Forum
Towards a Regional Cooperation
Framework
17-18/11/2022
Report

Budapest Firefighter Association

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Basic information

Organizers: **DAREnet** – Danube River Region Resilience Exchange network
H2020- SEC-21–GM-2016/2017
PROFOUND - Procedures of Rescue Organizations in Flood Operations Unified in the Danube Region
UCPM-2020-EX-AG
EUSDR PA5 DMWG - EU Strategy for the Danube Region | Environmental Risks Priority Area | Disaster Management Working Group

Lead organizations: Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW)
ARTTIC Innovation GmbH (AI)
Budapest Firefighter’s Association (BTSZ)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT/EUSDR PA5 DMWG)

Date: **17-18 November 2022**

Venue: 17 November 2022:
Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade
Budapest, Bajza u. 44.
H-1062, Hungary

18 November 2022:
Anna Hotel Budapest
Budapest, Kelenföldi út 1-13.
H-1115, Hungary

Description of event

The final joint event of the PROFOUND and DAREnet projects aimed to evaluate the project's results, and discuss further steps.

The event aimed to bring together key disaster management stakeholders from the Danube River Region, therefore the following participants were invited to attend:

- Partners of the PROFOUND project;
- Participants of PROFOUND exercise (key personnel from teams);
- Members of DAREnet Exchange of Expert Programme;
- Members of the DAREnet project;
- Members of the EUSDR PA5 DM-WG;

A short video was disseminated after the event.

Agenda

Wednesday, 16 November 2022		
Time	Item	Speaker(s)
Until evening	Arrival of DAREnet, PROFOUND, DMWG core group in Budapest	
20:00	Informal dinner	
Thursday, 17 November 2022		
Time	Item	Speaker(s)
8:30-9:30	Transfer and arrival	
10:00-10:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome and Keynotes from the Coordinators <i>Zsolt Kelemen, Budapest Firefighter Association</i> <i>Regine Gerhards, THW</i> Meeting objectives and housekeeping <i>Kinga Perge, Budapest Firefighter Association</i> 	THW, BTSZ, EUSDR PA5 DMWG, AI
10:45-12:45	<p>Towards a regional cooperation framework in the Danube region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EUSDR PA5 DMWG - State of play <i>Zsolt Kelemen, Chairman of EUSDR PA5 DMWG</i> Mapping of regional cooperation concepts in Europe (state-of-the-art report) <i>Dr. Viorel Arghius, APELL</i> Presentation of Baltic regional initiative <i>Taina Hanhikoski, Finnish National Rescue Association</i> CTIF Danube Group introduction <i>Croatian Firefighter Association</i> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Including coffee break)</i></p>	BTSZ, EUSDR PA5 DMWG, AI, APELL, Finnish National Rescue Association, Croatian Firefighter Association
12:45-13:45	Lunch break	
13:45-14:30	<p>Regional cooperation at operational level in the Danube region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights of PROFOUND regional flood-response exercise <i>Kinga Perge, Tamás Endrődi, Budapest Firefighter Association</i> Cornerstones of regional cooperation: Cross-border partnerships and the RISKHUB SKHU project <i>Zsolt Kelemen, Budapest Firefighter Association</i> 	BTSZ, EUSDR PA5 DMWG, AI, TBD
14:30-16:15	<p>Group discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic 1: Regional framework and preparedness activities at Danube regional level Topic 2: Cross-border cooperation 	All

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic 3: Standards and procedures of (volunteer) organizations <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Including coffee break)</i></p>	
16:15-17:00	Introduction of results of group discussions	
17:00-17.15	Closing of day	
<i>Ca. 17:30</i>	Walk or transfer to Danube river	
<i>18:30</i>	Boat tour on the Danube River and dinner	
Friday, 18 March 2022		
Time	Item	Speaker(s)
Parallel sessions		
09:00-10:00	DAREnet General Assembly	DAREnet partners
10:00-12:00	<p>Way forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to sustain the DAREnet Partnership? <i>EUSDR PA5 & DAREnet</i> What is planned for the EUSDR PA5 DMWG in the framework of the new PAC project? <i>EUSDR PA5</i> What funding opportunities can be expected to support disaster management activities and regional cooperation? (Horizon, DG ECHO, INTERREG A) Presentation of Follow-up meeting <i>DAREnet</i> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Including coffee break)</i></p>	All
12:00-13:00	Lunch	
13:00-14:00	Transfer to the Hungarian Parliament	
14:00	Guided tour at the Hungarian Parliament	
Afternoon	INTERREG A (cross-border cooperation) meeting	(SK, SRB, HU partners only)
18:00-20:00	Dinner	

Hybrid-style meeting

Due to the situation caused by COVID-19, and other factors the event was organized in a hybrid way. While there are no formal restrictions in place in Hungary, the safety and health of project partners is of paramount importance, and the organizers decided to allow online participation.

The chosen venue provided the necessary protocols for hosting business meetings, and regularly disinfected the surfaces.

Report

DAREnet Project and EUSDR PA5 DM-WG joint meeting

The event started with the meeting of the DAREnet (Danube River Region Resilience Exchange network) and the EUSDR PA5 DM-WG (EU Strategy for the Danube Region Environmental Risks Priority Area 5 Disaster Management Working Group) members. Its aim was to provide the stakeholders with an update on the common ambitions of DAREnet and EUSDR PA5 DM-WG, as well as to define and discuss the Roadmap of the project and to ensure its sustainability in the future.

The General Assembly was opened by Ms. Kinga Perge, Project Coordinator at the Budapest Firefighter Association, MFA EUSDR PA5 Senior Advisor. She proceeded to explain the objectives of the meeting. These were the following:

- Discuss the state of regional cooperation in the Danube Region, and possible improvement avenues
- Review the state of play in our Danube Region
- Share the results of recent projects and research activities
- Discuss the most important aspects of regional cooperation, find areas to improve upon in group discussions



Following the general introduction of priorities, Ms. Kinga Perge gave way to Mr. Zsolt Kelemen, President of the Budapest Firefighters Association, Chairman of DM-WG and DiMaND/PROFOUND Project leader. He welcomed the participants from both the projects and the working group, and gave his keynote speech about the Activities and objectives of the DMWG and the aims of the workshop. Mr. Kelemen is the project director of both DiMaND and PROFOUND projects. In his speech Mr. Kelemen briefly introduced the Disaster

Management Working Group and its activities. He stated that the initial intention was to have at least one organization from the governmental and one from the non-governmental side. The variety of the organizations show that there is a great need for such networks in the region. Many members are also project or strategic partners of the PROFOUND project. Broadening the membership and involve additional countries is one of the aims.

He introduced the relevant PA5 action (Action 3 from the Action Plan of EUSDR): "Strengthen disaster prevention and preparedness among governmental and non-governmental organizations". The PROFOUND project is directly linked to "3.1 Support joint preparedness activities of disaster response actors (professionals and volunteers at the operational, tactical and strategic level". One of the main IT development of PROFOUND project is linked to "3.4. Innovation and technology to support disaster response (VR, drone, IT solutions, mapping)". One such IT solution to be expanded upon, and disseminated is the MobileApp. (Volunteer Event Manager). The application has been received well by project partners during the FSX of PROFOUND. Further use of the application is in the interest of all stakeholders.



Mr. Kelemen proceeded to talk about the objectives of the DM-WG. These are the following:

- Building a network with authorities and (volunteer) non-governmental organizations
- Develop recommendations for volunteer organizations involved in disaster response in the Region
- Joint activities to improve interoperability
- Identify existing practices, procedures and training methods:
 - Harmonized operating procedures
 - Standardized training (distance learning tools, training of trainers, practice, exercise)
- Capacity building to increase effectiveness of interventions

- Support the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (DG ECHO) in cross-border and regional level disaster management

The importance of good cooperation and coordination between governmental and non-governmental actors cannot be overstated. Thus, as mentioned before, the DM-WG is actively seeking out members from both sectors, to further the aims of the EUSDR PA5 strategy.

By developing recommendations for volunteer organizations involved in disaster response in the region, we can smooth the path to a regionally interoperable disaster response network, capable of disaster rescue operations anywhere in the region.

Mr. Kelemen also talked about the joint activities to improve interoperability such as exercises and joint standardized trainings. To that end, Exchange of Experts within DAREnet, as well as Training of Trainers within PROFOUND and RISKHUB were conducted since the last Practitioner forum back in March that was held in Plovdiv. He also stressed the importance of continued capacity building, as the ever changing requirements of our region, be it due to climate change or a war in our neighborhood, demands constant improvement and variety of equipment.

Mr. Kelemen then stressed the importance of a stable funding source, and expressed his joy at the variety of funding sources the DM-WG is working with or worked with on different projects. Such as:

- Horizon2020: DAREnet
- DG ECHO: DiMaND, PROFOUND
- International Visegrad Fund: WILDFIREX
- Western Balkan Green Center: PREP-R
- INTERREG SKHU: RISKHUB
- INTERREG DRP: InDiMaND
- INTERREG DTP: EUSDR PA5 PAC2/PAC3

Mr. Kelemen then gave an update on the Terms of References, which is already under authorization, and the TMF, which has a clear concept and its Pillars and Horizontal dimensions are done. He then proceeded to explain the issues and difficulties faced today: The economic situation is deteriorating, and the inflation has reached a point where capacity building is affected too. He also talked about the continued work of the DM-WG in assisting the refugees from Ukraine, a topic touched upon in detail in Plovdiv. After this, Mr. Kelemen concluded his presentation by thanking the participants for being present either online or in person.

After Mr. Kelemen, the stage was given to Ms. Taina Hanhikoski, Senior Specialist of International Relations at the Finnish National Rescue Association. She joined the forum online, and proceeded to talk about the disaster and rescue challenges Finland and the Baltics Region is facing, and their experiences on the matter. She stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation between regional stakeholders, and improving macro-regional cooperation. This can be achieved through increasing institutionalization.

To that end, a new project was launched. The “Baltic Youth for Resilient Society” (BYFORES) which has support from the CBSS, consists of volunteers and local authorities. Ms. Hanhikoski stressed, that there are no quick fix solutions, and the role of human resources is crucial, but as with all projects worthwhile, time and action will bring success.

After Ms. Hanhikoski’s presentation, a Letter of Intent was signed in Budapest by Vice President László Bérczi, PhD on behalf of CTIF Danube Countries Working Group and by Zsolt Kelemen, Chair of Disaster Management Working Group of EU Strategy for the Danube Region Environmental Risks Priority Area with a view to strengthening collaboration within the Danube Region in the areas below:

- consulting on European legislation;
- exchange project and survey results, statistics and publications;
- exchange project-related information (e.g. newsletter and media releases);
- invitations to relevant meetings and conferences (at the parties' own cost).

President of four national firefighter associations have already counter-signed this Letter of Intent:

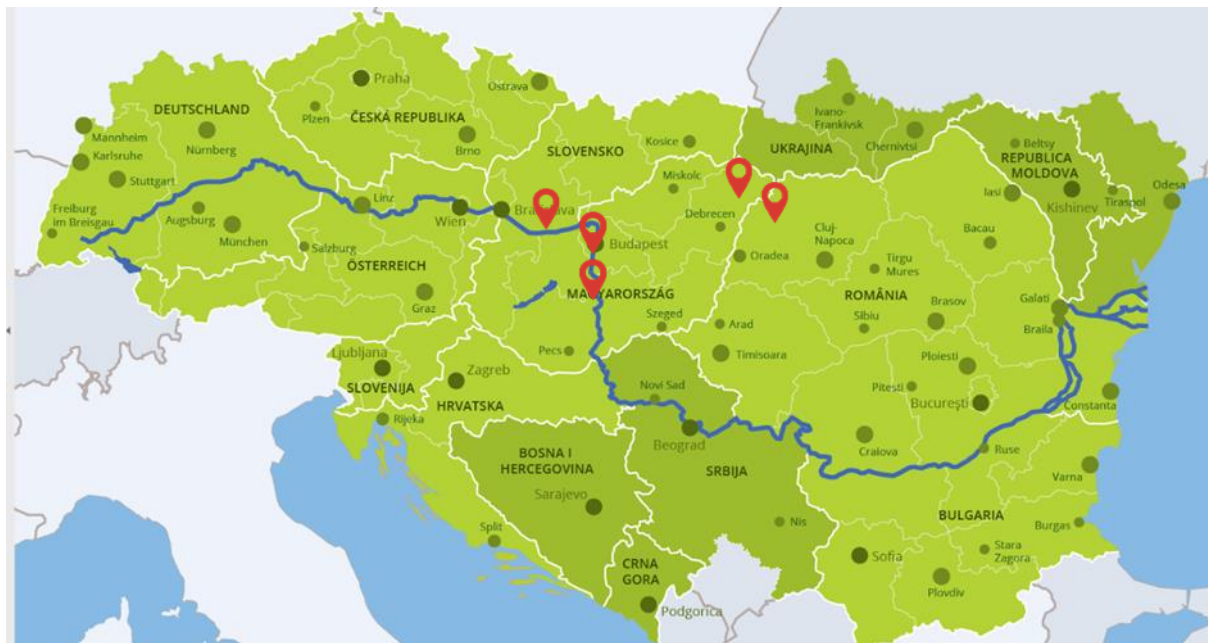
- Mr. Ante SANADER, President of the Croatian Firefighter Association;
- FF. BG. Tibor DOBSON, President of the Hungarian Firefighter Association;
- Mr. Dragan ĆAPIN, President of the Serbian Firefighter Association;
- Janko CERKVENIK, President of the Slovenian Firefighter Association.

The counter-signatures from CTIF President, CTIF Danube Working Group Secretary, and Presidents of the Austrian Firefighter Association, and the Slovakian Firefighter Association will take place later. The signing of this Letter, is in accordance with the aims of the EUSDR PA5 DM-WG as stated during the meeting in Plovdiv in March this year.



Regional cooperation at operational level in the Danube region

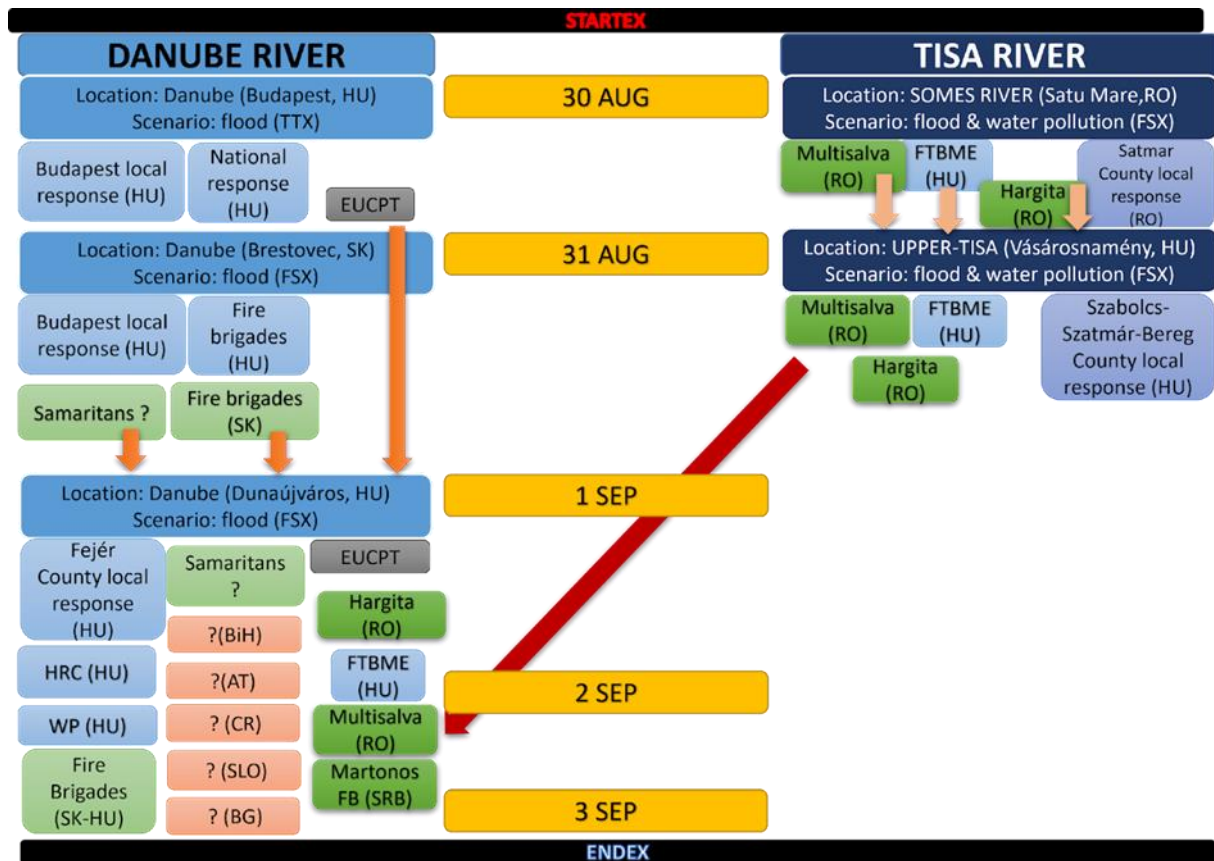
After the lunch break, Ms. Kinga Perge took the stage to talk about the recent PROFOUND FSX that took place through late August and early September.



She stressed that, the PROFOUND project aims to improve the cooperation between non-governmental response capacities involved in flood response in the Danube Region, establishing and exercising a common framework for training and deploying in synergy with the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Its main activity is to organize a large-scale, multiple location flood response field exercise which aim was successfully completed in August/September.

The scenario was as follows:

- After heavy snowing during wintertime in the Carpathians, March brought rainy spring to the Danube Region. The early summer arrived with heavy rains which affected the area again. Since the soil couldn't lead away that amount of water, the rainy season resulted in flooding on both Danube and Tisa River and their tributaries at the same time.
- The Danube flooding affected many countries in the Danube Region, however, due to the parallel flooding of the two largest rivers of Hungary resulted in a large scale emergency which require all available national assets, but also the assistance from neighboring countries and the EU.
- Support will be needed in Upper-Tisa Region
- Support will be needed at certain sections of Danube River
- The affected countries will trigger the UCPM



Ms. Perge stressed the importance of Participant-driven exercising where the Exercise Control was given by MAGOR NGO Association for Disaster Response and the opportunities were provided for the participants, but crucially the decisions were made by the participants themselves. Ms. Perge then proceeded to talk about the highlights of the exercise itself. About the fact that in total 200 hours of work went on at 46 worksites by 473 responders. The largest exercise by volunteers in the region to date!

Ms. Perge has highlighted that while there were logistical difficulties along the way, the exercise was a success, and it was the largest field exercise organized and participated in by solely volunteer organizations, which is a great achievement and is something to be proud of. The video showcasing the exercise was also shown to the participants of the forum.

PROFOUND FSX Evaluation

After Ms. Perge, Mr. Tamás Endrődi, leader of the Evaluation team from DAREnet has given his presentation about the evaluation process and results of the PROFOUND FSX. He explained that there were three phases to the evaluation process:



Evaluation of the planning phase

During the preparation period the evaluation coordinator was working closely with the rest of the project team in order to have a full overview of the activities. The feedback was given after each activity by the evaluation coordinator in order to ensure the improvement of activities. As a result, the feedbacks were integrated into one report which than can be used in future projects and activities.

Evaluation of the exercise

Questionnaires were developed separated for each target group which was used by each target group during the exercise through a mobile app. It was designed to fit to the tasks which is fulfilled by each group: EXCON, Venue Management, Observers, Key personnel from participating teams.



Analysis of results

Analysis of the results were completed and recommendations were prepared and shared during the way forward meeting, which was the last but most important part of the Evaluation. Based on that the next steps were discussed and defined, lessons learnt was shared among the participating volunteer rescue organizations..

Mr. Endródi has referred the participants to a detailed presentation he gave about the results of all phases in Brestovec, Slovakia in September during the way forward and evaluation seminar. All in all he, and the evaluation team was very satisfied with the results of the exercise, the conduct of participants and organizers, even as he acknowledged that there is always room for improvement.

Reducing Risks by Improving Interoperability between Slovakia and Hungary for Better Preparedness

Mr. Kelemen returned to present the highlights of the RISKHUB project. The aims of the project included:

- Preparing for climate-change related risks
- Capacity building
- Improve the cooperation between Slovakian and Hungarian firefighters
- Develop supporting assets for trainings, exercises and response

During the capacity building 5 minivans, 4 hybrid trailers, 1 rescue boat and PPE equipment was purchased by project partners, and used in subsequent trainings, exercises as well as kept in working order for future use in real life emergencies.

The developed e-learning modules, which have some shared content with PROFOUND e-learning modules, were used to train the participants of the project before the FSX held between 26-29 of May 2022.

Mr. Kelemen proceeded to talk about the sustainability of the project's results. The e-learning modules will remain available for future trainings of new volunteers, the developed MobileApp will assist volunteer organizations in coordinating their response, and keep track of their capacities. Mr. Kelemen also stressed that, continued capacity building is necessary, as well as a biannually held exercise to further improve interoperability between Hungarian and Slovakian volunteer firefighters.

Group Discussion (Workshop)

After the brief introduction of the scenario, the participants were asked to organize themselves into three groups and have a station to start on. Each of the three stations were eventually visited by all groups. The following questions were asked at the stations:

Topic 1: Regional framework and preparedness activities at Danube regional level

- How could an effective regional cooperation framework look like? Which elements should it include?
- What type of preparedness activities should be organized at regional level? Should they be harmonized?
- What do you think about large-scale regional exercises with multiple countries involved?

Topic 2: Cross-border cooperation

- Apart from the presented cross-border initiatives, are you aware of any other relevant in the field of DM? What are the specialties, why are they unique?
- Do you see a need in institutionalized cross-border cooperation in the Danube region? If yes, in which areas?
- Between which actors would you see a need for institutionalized cooperation (purely governmental / non-governmental or between the both named)?

Topic 3: Standards and procedures of (volunteer) organizations

- Are you aware of any gaps/shortcomings?
- How to facilitate harmonization of standards and procedures of (volunteer) organizations for more effective cross-border cooperation

The results of the workshop are as follows:

Topic 1:

The participants all agreed that regional level cooperation and coordination is a must have, as while several bi-lateral agreements between countries are in place, they are either too general or limited to certain domains.

Elements of regional level cooperation framework:

- **Cross-border cooperation:**

Cross-border cooperation is the cornerstone of regional cooperation framework. However, it was mentioned that there is a lack of clear cross-border communication rules, also simple instructions/trainings for practitioners are needed. It was suggested that national governments should provide an official permission/legal framework for the cross-border dialogue for organizations which are involved in disaster response. It was also observed that on a regional

level, cross-border cooperation in the area of Preparedness and Prevention should be improved, often due to the fact that the competences of regional/local authorities are different.

- **Network of contact points:**

The participants suggested to compile a **list of entities** who act as contact points for each country/organization (NB: the framework is available at the portal of DiMaND: <https://disastermanagement-danube.net/countries-organizations/>). They also suggested such list of contact points could be organizations as well as persons (experts, individuals). This means that for an official **organizational network** contact points should be appointed by the member organizations, however, an **expert network** might be also needed. Often partnerships came together as individuals have personal relationships and they bring together entities to cooperate. It is also important to have a **coordinator** for the network, as without such role, the progress is not possible. It is also important to clarify the roles of the members, the tasks and the objectives. The groups agreed that they must have a **common goal, and drive**, but the **diversity and shared values** of capacities are the **strengths of our Danube region**.

- **Common terminology:**

In the participants' opinion a common understanding of terms must be established. It can be achieved through translation to the languages of countries, so they can be compatible with each other. This would greatly improve the interoperability and support common understanding. (NB: Collecting the terms have started as part of the work of DiMaND project: <https://disastermanagement-danube.net/glossary/>).

- **Knowledge sharing:**

The groups agreed that establishment of communication guidelines, as well as sharing experiences and knowledge through Exchange of Experts (EoE) or Training of Trainer (ToT) programmes are essential, and should continue. The communication guidelines should focus on how to share and what type of information. Sharing information within the network also supports keeping the interest of the members to stay tuned.

- **Inventory of capacities:**

The groups suggested that an inventory of capacities which are available for international deployment would be beneficial.

Preparedness activities:

- **Exchanges:**

As suggested, the preparedness should include exchanging best practices and lessons learnt, as well as sharing experience between interested parties. The focus of these exchanges can also include comparison of training and response systems. The exchanges can follow a certain structure, which can be implemented in different countries too, as a replicas of a workshop or event with pre-set agenda.

- **Train of Trainers:**

The training of trainers activities should result in a trainers network, who can act as multipliers. They can share their views with each other and visit each other's countries. In the meantime, it is important keep the network open for new members to join.

- **Exercises:**

The groups were all in agreement, that annual exercises would be beneficial for all involved. The exercises should focus on the changing climate and related hazards. It was also a conclusion that specialized exercises are also needed, which might be reduced in size but focus on a target rescue group. It was also mentioned that there's a risk in large scale exercises for certain groups as they might have too high expectations when it comes to reality. On the other hand, these exercises are highly motivational for rescuers.



- **Education:**

It was recommended that Union civil Protection training for the Danube region would be beneficial, possibly with special focus on our regional issues and hazards, also processes and cooperations.

- **Capacity building:**

Sharing the opportunities for capacity building would be highly beneficial for the members of the network. It is important for the organizations to be able to improve assets, tools.

Topic 2:

The following existing cross-border projects/initiatives were mentioned by the participants

- 1) R-Plan between Slovakia and Czech Republic – UCPM supporting harmonized threat assessment (ends 2022)

2) Stream (Bulgaria/Romania) – Interreg 5A project: capacity improvement of search & rescue divers.

3) JVSL (Bulgaria/Romania) – Interreg 5A project: Common risk analysis and action plan; cross-border volunteer training.

4) Meteoalarm (WMO funded): Cross-border collaboration of meteorological initiatives

5) UNECE: Transboundary Accidents: Reporting of accidents: Exchange of good practice in emergency planning for rivers and lakes, incl. training

6) IPA (EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance): Adaptation of standards for future EU Member states

Overall, the groups agreed that lower level (not multinational, but bi-trilateral) cross-border cooperation is also important, and can contribute immensely to the disaster response readiness of volunteer organizations. Trainings, and exercises on a smaller scale are more feasible to maintain on a regular basis and are cheaper too.

Topic 3:

The groups found that in order to develop a good standard operating procedure (SOP), workshops with experts from relevant fields will be needed. New procedures, communication structures will have to be developed, preferably on an online platform. Those working on the SOP will need insider information on each team's inner workings. The participants agree that an SOP is good to have, but sometimes it is unrealistic to follow it step-by-step in a real life scenario. Perhaps a less restricting guideline could be developed and harmonized first, and if it works fine, then the experts involved could proceed with the development of a unified regional SOP. But even then, countries have different equipment and capacities, and will not be able to follow the same SOP to the letter. So the standards for the would be SOP will have to be adjusted accordingly. Also every group found that there should be a heavy focus on the safety and security procedures, to mitigate the risk of injuries for the rescuers during their interventions.



DAREnet General Assembly

The second day began with a DAREnet GA meeting. Here the results of the Project were discussed and a way forward discussion also took place. All WPL and DNCs gave a status report of their respective countries network and their activities.

At the GA, the participants were given a general update on the progress of the project. The concluded activities based on knowledge exchange programs, such as the Exchange of Experts, were a success, and have ended by the time of the GA. The participants all agreed that such programs need to continue, their results and effects followed up on, and studied in the coming months and years.

The project's communication update was also presented (WP7). The social media presence should be maintained, and as the project closes in February next year, it should still be as active as possible. Until the closing of the project, if anyone needs it, Mr. Balázs Kern can offer assistance with communication related issues.

The project will have one last report. In preparation for that, members should double check the goals, deliverables and the finances of their respective sections (WP8).

After the general part of the meeting concluded, the countries present gave their own update on the project's state.

Austria:

- No major activities
- Final event will be held in February

Slovakia:

- The network is large, 58 members and all sectors are represented well
- Despite the large size, the activity of the membership is not high
- Next meeting will be held in Munich (and a small number of Slovakian members will be present)
- The reason for the inactivity of the Slovakian membership should be found out

Hungary:

- The members of the HCPA (Hungarian Civil Protection Association) gave their update
- The resources are scarce, as the pandemic and the war in Hungary's neighborhood have depleted both the human and equipment aspect
- The business environment is also unstable, inflation remains high. This means that capacity building is slowing down
- Despite this the activities of the HCPA are going forward steadily
 - Network expansion

- Supporting the realization of project aims through publication, social media presence, research and expertise
- Participation in local and regional exercises such as the PROFOUND exercise

Croatia:

- Gathering input from members is still ongoing
- Two major events remain, one for national and one for international stakeholders. Dates are not set yet

Serbia:

- There was a Panel Discussion in Belgrade recently. The focus was high capacity pumping
- Between the 26th and 27th of January 2023 there will be a new Panel about the prevention and rescue from floods, as well as the problem with ice on the Danube River

Romania:

- Participated in local civil protection exercises
- Held several meetings with national DAREnet members

Bulgaria:

- Conducted two meetings with local municipalities' associations
- The sharing of DAREnet network achievements and knowledge is continuous

Ms. Perge (BTSz), DNC member and PA5 senior advisor, inquired which of the DNCs are interested in joining the DM Working Group of the EUSDR PA5. She confirmed that the DMWG aims to become more inclusive with regard to the RDI topics raised by its members and external DRM stakeholders (see also the PA5 Roadmap). The idea is that the partnership can be sustained by the DMWG and keep the network alive. Planned activities are kept general on purpose to provide the focus points with a maximum of flexibility in the first 3 years. For this reason, the Roadmap has been conceived as a rolling document.

The DMWG already provide support to sustain the DAREnet network: Recently submitted proposals are a good indicator that the network is alive. The proposals received funding from different sources. And running projects are co-funding their work within the network. The main purpose and added value of the network is to collect ideas and to provide a common platform for dissemination and information sharing.

Ms. Perge also reminded that a European Civil Protection Knowledge Network is being constructed and may help to sustain the outcome and results of DAREnet (together with CMINE). The ÖRK, NARVB, HCPA have already joined the PA5 Disaster Management Working Group. All other DAREnet partners are invited to join as well.

ARTTIC recommended revisiting the results achieved by DAREnet (roadmaps, knowledge base, in particular the practitioner initiatives) and to use them as a source of information to feed PA5 Roadmaps and Action Plans. PA5 could be an accumulator of information and channel them to funding bodies to take them into account for future funding programmes.

Partners' first feedback to the proposed continuation via the PA5 Disaster Management Working Group:

- Hungarian Civil Protection Association: Yes, participation would be very important to promote future volunteer networking events/activities, and that's the reason why they are already members.
- APELL: Confirmed interest to sustain its national network; also trans-Danubian network should go on; APELL will support both.
- The ÖRK meeting representative was not authorized to confirm more active participation (ÖRK is already a member organization of EUSDR PA5 DMWG), the official ÖRK representative decides on the level of involvement.
- Croatian DNC: In principle, they are interested in being part of any kind of networking activity.
- Serbian MoI: They confirmed their interest in joining the DMWG.

Ms. Perge will circulate the Terms of Reference of PA5 DMWG for information. There are different opportunities to get involved. For the organizations which are involved in disaster response, it is a possibility to join the Disaster Management Working Group upon invitation from PA5. Ms. Perge will send out to all network partners, who are not yet members, an invitation together with additional information material.

Next steps

Based on the discussions held at the 4th Annual Practitioner Forum, the actions to be taken were identified.

Actions:

- Map the way for further regional cooperation, concentrating on interoperability and sustainability
- Prepare the final reports of the Projects
- Continuous involvement of experts from the field of science
- Support the use of new technologies by seeking for funds and opportunities to generate projects
- Raise awareness about the outcomes and achievements of the projects
- Share good practices from the 4th Annual Practitioner Forum with partners