

*Enhancing Volunteer Awareness and education against Natural Disasters
through E-learning
(EVANDE)*

International Volunteers Meeting

**Città di Castello, Assisi, Bastia-Italy
3-4/6/2016**

MINUTES

The International Volunteers' Meeting gathered around 40 participants from Greece, Italy, Spain and Bulgaria, Italy on 3rd and 4th of June 2016, at the headquarters of the Centro Studi Villa Montesca, in Città di Castello, Italy. The aim of the meeting was the exchange of experiences among the civil protection volunteers coming from the EVANDE partners' countries. The participants were from all partners as well as staff and external collaborators of the Centro Studi Villa Montesca that are engaged in the project implementation.

3/6/2016

The meeting started on Friday 3/6/2016, according to the agenda. The director of Centro Studi Villa Montesca, **Mr. Fabrizio Boldrini**, along with the representative of the coordinating organization (Natural History Museum of Crete) and project assistant, **Ms. Eleni Spyridaki**, welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda of the meeting.

Mr. Fabrizio Boldrini presented the work of Centro Studi Villa Montesca, focusing on its civil protection initiatives and activities at local and European levels, while Ms. Eleni Spyridaki presented the main aims and activities of the EVANDE project.

Following these presentations, **Mr. Francesco Nocchi** (Responsible of the Civil Protection Department of the Municipality of Città di Castello) presented the civil protection framework in Italy. He analysed its legal and administrative aspects at national, regional and local levels and the challenges that result from its complexity. Furthermore, he presented the legal framework of volunteering in Italy and in particular the one that refer to the civil protection sector. In addition, he also presented the main features of the National Registry of Civil Protection Volunteers and the incentives given by the state in terms of reimbursement to the volunteers and their employers (in case the volunteers participate in civil protection operations). He also highlighted that all civil protection volunteering organizations act under the civil protection emergency plans of their territory.



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In continuance, **Mr. Sandro Busatti** (Responsible of the Civil Protection Department of the Municipality of Città di Castello), presented the main local and international civil protection activities of the Municipality of Città di Castello (e.g. educational projects for schools, international civil protection operations, etc). He highlighted the rapid response of the local civil protection system in cases of emergency, which is a distinguishing characteristic of the Umbria Region compared to other Italian regions. Finally, he commented on how important the collaboration among regions is and that he considers this collaboration as an advantage of the Italian civil protection system.

In the next presentation, **Mr. Giandomenico Pazzagli** (President of the Civil Protection Volunteering Association ALFA) presented how the human and material losses caused by the Irpinia earthquake in Italy contributed to the development of the legal civil protection framework at national level. Before the establishment of this legal framework, the lack of civil protection coordination had significant human life and material costs. In addition, he highlighted that the establishment of the legal framework on volunteering allowed also to volunteers (not belonging to the Fire Service) to participate in the civil protection operations. The legal framework on volunteering was the starting point for the community groups of civil protection to be created in Italy. Moreover, he explained the main civil protection challenges in Italy (such as floods and earthquakes) and presented the main local and international activities of his organization (e.g. the international operations in Cosovo, Albania, Ukraine, the collaborations with NATO, the participation in civil protection operations in Liguria, Toscana, Abruzzo, Emilia Romagna, the local training courses, etc). Finally, he highlighted how the spirit of social solidarity is the main motivation of civil protection volunteers.

The presentation followed was by **Mr. Tommaso Cecci** (Association ARI.R.E. of Radioamaterus Città di Castello). Mr. Tommaso Cecci explained the importance of the radio communication in case of emergency in contrast to the telephone communication. The radio communication permits multi-point communication and can also operate when the telephone communication is not possible during the emergency events. In addition, he presented the main national and local activities of his organization including the interventions during the earthquake in L'Acquila and emergency events in Città di Castello and the collaborations with the Municipality of Città di Castello and other organizations.

After the break, the delegation of the Beigua Park from Italy presented its members and their work. The coordinator of the delegation, **Ms. Giulia Castello** introduced the members of the delegation and presented the main civil protection activities of the Beigua Park and the civil protection challenges that their region, Liguria, is encountering. Additionally, she highlighted the fact that through the educational activities, the Beigua Park, aims to strengthen the collaboration among the volunteering groups and other small-scale entities active in its territory. In continuance, the representatives of the Municipalities of the Beigua Park (Arenzano, Mele and Sassello) presented their civil protection activities, structures and volunteering teams. In specific, **Mr. Edoardo Briasco** representative of the Municipality of Arenzano (GE), presented the vulnerabilities of the territory, the operation and the main activities of the

local fire-fighting group (e.g. their collaborations with local schools). **Mr Roberto Trebini**, the representative of the Municipality of Mele (GE), presented the aims and the main sectoral activities of the Municipal Civil Protection Group, focusing mainly on the fire-fighting work, the training activities and the importance of prevention. **Mr Giuseppe Salvo**, representative of the Inter-Municipal Civil Protection Group of the Municipalities of Stella, Sassello and Urbe (SV), pointed out how the unity of small community groups with few members led to the fully operated inter-municipal team. He also highlighted the presence of the Italian Red Cross in their wider territory.

In continuance, **Ms, Graciela Olivert** presented the Consorci de la Ribera, the partner organization she is represented as well as the members of the Spanish delegation. Following this, **Mr. Raúl Quesada, Mr. Vicent Civera and Mr. Miguel Angel Belenguier** representative of the Municipal Group of Civil Protection Volunteers in Valencia presented the civil protection system in Spain and the main activities of the organization. Civil protection structure in Spain coincides with the administrative structure and thus refers to the following levels: the state level, the level of autonomous communities and the local level. Local associations of volunteers mainly develop activities in the prevention and intervention sectors. The Municipal Group of Civil Protection Volunteers in Valencia work mainly on activities of prevention and education (e.g. first aid, security support during large-scale public events and festivities, organization of civil protection exercises, participation in exhibitions and open days, e-learning training, etc). **Mr. Raúl Quesada, Mr. Vicent Civera and Mr. Miguel Angel Belenguier** also highlighted the importance of the efficient collaboration of the emergency services.

The presentation of the Spanish delegation was followed by the Bulgarian delegation. The coordinator of the Bulgarian delegation and the representative of the Centre for Educational Initiatives, **Mr. Yassen Tsvetkov**, presented the members of the Bulgarian delegation. In continuance, he presented the Bulgarian United Rescue System; the legal framework and hierarchy of the responsible institutions of civil protection and the early warning system that can be used by individuals. Furthermore, he presented the Bulgarian strategy for the development of civil protection voluntary units (2012-2020) and its expected outcomes. The voluntary units are established by the Mayors. There is a state remuneration for volunteers attending civil protection trainings. Statistics about the profile, age and geographical origin of volunteers were provided as well, indicating a lack of young volunteers. In the next presentation, **Chief inspector Kostadin Chifligarov of Chief Directorate “Fire Safety and Civil Protection” – Ministry of Interior**, presented the main aims and activities of the non governmental organization “National Association of Volunteers in Bulgaria”. The association aims to create an active network of volunteers and to strengthen the collaborations among civil society entities and the state, particularly in the civil protection sector. Finally, **Mr. Yassen Tsvetkov**, presented the Voluntary Formation for Disaster Response of the Sofia Municipality, the biggest voluntary unit operating in Sofia, that takes part in the Bulgarian United Rescue System. He focused on its aims, organizational structure and civil protection activities in sectors such as training, prevention and response.



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After the lunch break, **Ms. Asimina Kourou**, representative of the partner organization Earthquake Planning and Protection Organization in Greece presented the Greek delegation, the profile of the organization, the civil protection system in Greece and the European Civil Protection Mechanism. She gave an overview of the work of the Earthquake Planning and Protection Organization in terms of aims, administrative structure, scientific committees and sectoral activities (including the training of volunteers such as the “Protect Myself and the Others” large-scale training project at national level. The General Secretariat for Civil Protection is responsible to plan and set-up the national policy and actions for civil protection. It is also representing Greece in the European Civil Protection Mechanism and coordinating the international assistance needed in cases of civil protection worldwide. The General Secretariat for Civil Protection is also operating a Register for civil protection voluntary organizations and experts volunteers. The European Civil Protection Mechanism is implementing the disaster risk management of the European Union. It funds a number of civil protection exercises annually. Mr. Kourou also provided examples of Greek participation in international assistance projects and information about the EU funded projects and the material support of the European countries through the European Civil Protection Mechanism aiming to address the humanitarian needs triggered by the refugee crisis in Greece.

In continuance, **Mr. Chatziemmanouil Georgios**, representative of the voluntary group PROTECTA of Heraklion, Crete, Greece presented the main reasons that lead to the creation of their team and their main principles and activities that include the participation in international civil protection exercises; the attendance of civil protection workshops of public agencies and organizations abroad; the organizations of workshops on earthquake and fire-fighting emergencies; road safety and first aid issues (particularly in schools) and other social events for the support of vulnerable social groups.

Mr. Euthimiopoulos Konstandinos, representative of the Greek Rescue Team, a national non governmental organization that operates a branch in Heraklion, Crete, Greece. Its members are certified volunteer rescuers and first aid provides. He presented the main profile, structure and actions of the organization at both national and local levels. He presented the memberships in national and international organizations and public bodies and the administrative structure that consists of specialized departments. He also highlighted how the training of their members is done and other activities for the support of people who suffer economically and socially in Greece.

Mr. Kiparakis George, representative of the Red Cross, Division of Samaritans Rescuers and Lifeguards/Branch of Heraklion presented the historical background of the organization; its main aims; the trainings and certifications that provides to its members; indicative examples of operations (e.g. actions for refugees, first aid and lifeguard provision, search and rescue operations, cooperations with national and international organizations and public bodies); the rescue and training profile of the members of their division and local department; examples of first aid, training,

communication and rescue equipment and the list of major disasters in Greece and abroad that Red Cross took part in.

Mr. Alatsakis George, representative of the Hellenic Fire Service Volunteers/Hellenic Volunteers Firefighters Union, presented the historical evolution of the legal framework of the Hellenic Fire Service in relation to the role of the volunteer firefighters. He stressed that since 2014, the Hellenic Fire Service has constituted the operational branch of civil protection in Greece. He presented the tasks; the rights and obligations; the ranking and certification system; the trainings and civil protection exercises; the volunteer fire stations, etc. He also presented the main role of the Hellenic Volunteer Firefighters Union and their membership in the National Volunteer Fire Council in USA.

Ms. Angeli Athina, representative of the civil protection volunteer group “Filius Zeus” from Archanes, Crete, Greece presented the main aims of the association, its organizational structure and board membership; how its members are trained; the main areas of civil protection intervention and activities (e.g. in forest protection, first aid, search and rescue, training and awareness-raising) and other social activities such as the support to vulnerable groups, the cooperation with public bodies and other volunteer groups. She also highlighted the main challenges and considerations including the need for training by state agencies, the strengthening of collaboration between the public institutions and the volunteers, the lack of financial support, etc.

After the end of the presentations, the participants were transferred to the Operational Centre of Civil Protection of the Municipality of Città di Castello. **Mr. Francesco Nocchi**, Responsible of the Civil Protection Department of the Municipality of Città di Castello and **Mr. Simone Forti**, Technician of the Municipality of Città di Castello guided the participants to the internal and external structures of the operational centre and explained how the centre works and showed the main technical equipment used. **Mr. Riccardo Bruzzichini**, President of the ARI R.E., Radiamateur in Emergency Association, presented how the radio-amateur centre (hosted within the Operations Centre) works, its equipment and history of operation. Participants were given the time to address questions related to the centre’s work.

After the visit to the Operational Centre of Civil Protection, the first day reached its end.

4/6/2016

In the morning of the second day, on 2/7/2016, the participants were transferred to Basilica of Assisi where they had a meeting with **Mr. Sergio Fusetti**, coordinator of the restoration projects of the Basilica. Mr. Fusetti guided participants to the spaces of the Basilica and explained them its history of construction in relation with the search of the tomb of Saint Francis through the centuries. He highlighted the importance of the frescoes presented in the Basilica since they demonstrate the development of the Italian art through the unique works of artists such as Giotto and Lorenzetti and represent a unique world heritage. Furthermore, Mr. Fusetti focused on the human



losses, material and cultural damage that have happened in the Basilica during the earthquakes, and in specific the earthquake of 1997. Finally, he explained how the restoration projects have been coordinated and stressed the importance of the support of the civil protection volunteers during the earthquake of 1997.

Following the visit to the Basilica of Assisi, the participants were transferred to the National Exhibition on Security and Emergency (**Expoemergenze**) in Bastia Umbra. They were offered a lunch and had free time to visit the exhibition and get informed about the ultimate technological and commercial advances in the civil protection sector.

In the evening session, an open to the public event was organized taking opportunity of the presence of the civil protection volunteers from the project countries. The session started with the participants' welcome by **Mr. Fabrizio Boldrini**, director of Centro Studi Villa Montesca. Mr. Boldrini presented the aims and main activities of Centro Studi Villa Montesca, particularly in relation to civil protection and introduced the visitors of the Expoemergenze to the main aims of the EVANDE International Volunteers' Meeting. He stressed the need to amplify the common civil protection activities so that they include current challenges such as the terrorism and the refugee crisis and highlighted the importance of volunteering along with the implementation of efficient European civil protection policies.

Mr. Alfiero Moretti, Chief Officer of the Civil Protection Service of the Region of Umbria, gave an overview of the development of the Italian civil protection system that evolved gradually as response to the earthquakes and other disasters that happened. He highlighted that initially, the political and administrative emergency response system had been quite slow while now the emergency response can be immediate and efficient. The volunteering efforts are also now more organized compared to the previous years. He stressed that the Region of Umbria is a pioneer on civil protection at national level and focused on the importance of prevention.

In continuance, a **video** on the collapse of the ceiling in the upper church of Basilica of Assisi that caused human loses, was show to participants in order for them to understand also the magnitude of the material damage caused.

After the video, **Ms Eleni Spyridaki**, representative of the coordinating organization Natural History Museum of Crete and project assistant, stressed the importance of the EVANDE International Volunteers' Meeting for the exchange of experiences among the civil protection volunteers and thanked the Expoemergenze Exhibition for hosting this session and offering to the volunteers the chance to get informed about the advances in the civil protection sector. She highlighted how the video showed completed the understanding of the magnitude of restoration and recovering efforts of the Basilica of Assisi that participants got to know through the guided visit offered by the coordinator of the restoring projects, Mr. Sergio Fusetti. She also communicated to the participants an emergency incident of civil protection happening at that time in the south of Crete, Greece related to the water rescue of around 600 immigrants and asylum-seekers.



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In continuance, **Ms Eleni Spyridaki**, repeated her presentation about the EVANDE project done in the first day, for the new visitors of the Expoemergenze Exhibition.

Mr. Francesco Lucaroni, representative of the Technical Logistic Section of Civil Protection of the Umbria Region, presented the system of civil protection of the Umbria Region. In specific, he presented the legal civil protection framework at regional level that regulates also the participation of civil protection volunteers. Moreover, he presented the administrative structure, the technical infrastructures and operational centres available for civil protection in the region, including the ones of third public parties such as the Fire and the Forest Services.

Following this session, the EVANDE national delegations of volunteers presented their examples of significant interventions in emergency.

Greek delegation

Mr. Simeonidis Charalambos, representative of the PROTEKTA Group of Heraklion, presented his experience in the sea rescue of refugees and asylum-seekers in the Greek islands, by the sailing boat “Oceanos” and the rescue ship “Aigis 1”. He highlighted the big number of people that managed to survive due to the rescue operations that happened under difficult weather and other conditions and the 17 projects that the rescue team had to invent and implement in order to deal with the emergency challenges. In addition, he commented that according to his experience, in order for a rescue operation to be successful, the communication among its members, the involved authorities and the rescue operation centre must be quick and effective. Moreover, the members of the involved parties must be properly educated and trained and share common international certification so that they use the same protocols.

Mr. Pakos Panagiotis, representative of the Red Cross, Division of Samaritans Rescuers and Lifeguards/Branch of Heraklion repeated the parts of the main information about the organization presented also by Mr. Kiparakis on the first day of the meeting in order for the visitors of the Expoemergenze to get informed about the profile of the organization. Additionally, he focused on the intervention actions taken by the organization in cases of emergencies such as forest fires, earthquakes, floods, incoming refugees and aquatic disasters. Furthermore, he presented examples of international civil protection projects in which the organization took part (e.g. Safe, Red Code, EU Poseidon, EU Prometheus, EU NEREIDs) and informed participants about the emergency response updates concerning the water rescue of refugees and asylum-seekers on the south of Crete, Greece. He stressed that due to the controls of flows of immigrants and asylum-seekers overland, new flows are being observed through the Mediterranean sea paths.

Mr. Alatsakis George, representative of the Hellenic Fire Service Volunteers/Hellenic Volunteers Firefighters Union, presented some main information about the volunteer firefighters including their tasks, training and certification system as well as their participation in operational exercises. Furthermore, he focused on the profile, training

and international memberships of the Volunteer Firefighters Special Unit, which was established in 2007. Finally, he presented some significant emergency interventions of the volunteer firefighters in Greece, in the ilieia-Peloponese region, in the Chios island and in the Ymitos region in Athens.

Spanish delegation

The presentations by the Greek delegation were followed by the Spanish delegation. The coordinator of the Spanish delegation and staff member of the partner organization Consorci de la Ribera, **Ms, Graciela Olivert** introduced the Spanish volunteers. A powerpoint presentation and a video on the emergency response to the Haiti Earthquake by the non governmental organization **IAE Rescue** was presented. Moreover, **Mr. Raúl Quesada Valero, Mr. Vicente Civera García and Mr. Miguel Ángel Belenguer Galindo**, representatives of the Municipal Group of Civil Protection Volunteers in Valencia, presented the emergency response in the case of a subway accident in Valencia in 2006. Information about the accident and the way the victims, the public agencies, the private actors and the civil protections groups responded to it were given also through a complete photographic gallery.

Italian delegation

The Italian delegation followed with its presentations. **Mr. Giorgio Orazi**, representative of the Municipal Group of Civil Protection Volunteers of Bastia Umbra, shared with participants his emotions and personal experience as civil protection volunteer who participated in the emergency response operations in the recent earthquake in Abruzzo region in Italy. He focused on the motivation of rescuers and the feelings shared between the rescuers/civil protection volunteers and the affected people.

In continuance, **Ms. Giulia Castello**, representative of the Beigua Park, presented indicative civil protection best practices adopted in the Liguria region, a region vulnerable to wild fires and floods. In terms of training, the best practice presented was the interregional civil protection exercise against forest fires among the Liguria, Piemonte and Lombardia regions. A video showing this exercise was show too. In terms of prevention, the best practice presented was the new alert system adopted by the Liguria Region in 2015. The system is composed by hydrogeologic and snow risk weather forecasts. The Beigua park has been promoting environmental education projects with schools in order to raise-awareness among students about this new alert system. Finally, the best practice on awareness-raising presented was public events for the International Day for Disaster Reduction organized by the Beigua Park.

Mr. Giuseppe Salvo, representative of the Wild Fires Office of Liguria Region described the vulnerability of the Liguria region in terms of wild fires and the existing collaboration with the neighbourhood regions in this sector. He stressed the importance of the conduction of civil protection exercises along with the development of civil protection protocols. He gave the example of two exercises conducted in the



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Liguria region, one for forest fires and another one for first aid provision. He focused on the conclusions drawn by these exercises, particularly in terms of the difficulties in the use of pilotless aircrafts (in cases of the forest fires exercise) by not fully trained people.

Mr. Roberto Trebini, representative of the Civil Protection Volunteering Group of the Municipality of Mele, presented his group and the training profile of its members. He also presented their experience in the emergency response operations in the cases of earthquakes in L'Acquila and Emilia Romagna; the prevention actions organized; the civil protection action plan of the Municipality of Mele and the risks per territory of the municipality.

Bulgarian delegation

Mr. Yassen Tsvetkov, representative of the partner organization Centre for Educational Initiatives and **Mr. Blagoy Toshev**, representative of the Voluntary Formation for Disaster Response of the Sofia Municipality, repeated the presentation on the organization done on 3/6/16, for the visitors of the Expoemergenze Exhibition.

Finally, **Ms. Eleni Spyridaki**, representative of the **EVANDE** coordinating partner **Natural History Museum of Crete** thanked the hosting organization Centro Studi Villa Montesca and the Expoemergenze Exhibition for the excellent organization and hospitality and all lectures and participants for their contributions and attendance. The meeting reached its end and thus participants had some time to guide themselves in the Expoemergenze Exhibition before departing for lunch.