



INTERPRAEVENT 2004

Riva del Garda - summit 26th May 2004

Introduction

During the tenth congress INTERPRAEVENT, administrators from Austria, Japan, Switzerland, Bavaria, Slovenia, Trentino, South Tyrol and Aosta discussed about problems, strategies, present activities and international cooperation in the field of natural disaster mitigation.

It was stated that especially rising vulnerability and climate change demands a great effort in protection against natural hazards. An additional problem is the fact that this increasingly complex task should be solved with less financial and personal resources. Based on their experiences and regional needs, all present countries introduced strategies respecting the aspects of sustainability, integral approach, and dialogue of risks.

It was stated that exchange of information on the international level is very important. The delegation from Germany - speaking in the name of the Alpine Convention - introduced the proposal for an International Platform for Natural Hazards. The delegation from Japan informed about an Internet Based Network on Sediment-related Issues.

Both proposals are welcome and accepted.

Findings

During the discussion, based on national reports, the delegations agreed upon the following main findings:

1. Protection Targets

Protection targets are oriented to avoid damages. The level of protection is defined by probability of recurrent events and differs regionally and according to the types of hazards as well as for the types of land use. Owing to the climatic change, it is extremely difficult to predict the probability of events. If human lives and / or their basic needs are endangered, this concept must be extended. To minimise the risk of loss of life the protection must be oriented also on extreme events.

2. Knowledge of hazards and risks

A basis for all actions is the outlining of the endangered areas in form of hazard maps. These will be used for the planning of protection works, spatial zoning, emergency operations and the information to the population concerned. Form and content may vary according to the regional needs.

3. Protection concepts

Sustainable development can only be achieved by an integrated approach. Therefore the concepts must include the long-term interests of all stakeholders accomplished by optimisation of structural and non-structural protection measures. Examples given emergency operations, object protection, spatial planning, insurance and early warning system.

4. Emergency operation

Recent extreme events gave evidence that prevention measures have limits. They also showed, that the possibilities of damages can be reduced effectively by intervention forces, like civil defence and fire brigades. To increase the effectiveness of these forces, the knowledge of the possible spatial extend of catastrophic events and a reliable forecast and warning system are necessary.

5. Risk dialog

In mountainous regions natural hazards are part of the nature and their effects can only be reduced by the above-indicated measures. All concerned parties must find a consensus on the necessary measures and must contribute to the success according to their capabilities. Risk dialog means also to find a right balance between fear, awareness and preparedness. Media play an important role in spreading information, in particular in case of ongoing event.



Follow up

On the background of the discussions and findings in the Riva del Garda Summit the following actions are recommended:

- | INTERPRAEVENT should deal with the findings of the summit, that means the protection targets, the knowledge of hazards and risks, the protection concepts, the emergency operation and the risk dialog.
- | INTERPRAEVENT should do this in the manner of the integrated approach on the background of sustainable development, respecting regional and cultural needs, in the mountainous regions.
- | A promising way to tackle the identified challenges is strengthening the international networks. Participants of 10 th INTERPRAEVENT congress are invited to be active in the International SABO Network on Sediment Related Issues.
- | In the consciousness of the highly efficiency of international networks and communication shown in the Riva del Garda Summit, the participants are convinced in the benefit of a yearly meeting. So it is proposed that INTERPRAEVENT organises a yearly meeting in the manner of the Riva del Garda Summit.
- | All participants of the Summit welcome deeply the efforts to create an international Platform on Natural Hazards and will support this idea.

Further information:

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