

Programme "Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters" (PPRD South)

**Launching of the materials produced in the framework of the Lebanese project
"Edugames for Children"**

UNESCO Palace
Wednesday 7 December 2011

**Speech by Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst,
Head of the Delegation of the European Union**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Raymond Khattar, Director General of the Civil Defence representing the MoIM
Representatives of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Lebanese Armed
Forces, Internal Security Forces,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is clear that climate change is a serious threat which demands an urgent response,
and we are all well-aware that decisive, robust and early action far outweighs the
economic costs of inaction.

For these reasons, the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of civil protection is
an area in which the common interest of both Northern and Southern Mediterranean
partners is evident. The advantages of working together on this issue are clear as this
cooperation directly benefits both the people and institutions throughout the region, by
helping to both prevent disasters and (if they do occur) to act to reduce their negative
impact through better preparation and responsiveness.

The Programme PPRD South ("*Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and
Man-made Disasters*") is the most tangible example of cooperation in this field. The
programme is involved in risk assessment, prevention and preparedness. It aims to
foster a culture of prevention rather than response. So far its results have been

significant. Mediterranean partners have successfully worked together to create a permanent network of national Civil Protection focal-points, a GIS-based Mediterranean Risk Atlas, a Euro-Mediterranean Civil Protection Operational Manual. They have also implemented a wide range of awareness-raising activities, such as the one that bringing us together today.

I welcome events such as this as they represent an opportunity to remind people that if we work together we can take steps to prevent and reduce the impact of both natural and man-made disasters.

Disasters can be reduced substantially if people are well-informed about measures they can take to reduce their vulnerability. In this regard the awareness raising activities undertaken in Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Jordan and Montenegro as part of the PPRD Programme are a first step to pave the way for more ambitious work in this area – indeed they are the first such activities undertaken as part of an EU-funded civil protection programme.

And I am particularly proud that Lebanon has been one of the most active countries in this cooperation aimed at teaching children, in a creative and engaging way, how to avoid and react against dangers they could face in their daily lives: from dangers caused by the natural environment to risks caused by the domestic environment. I really hope that the 125,000 children that will benefit for these educational games will be the first group of a broader audience to be reached by an ever greater cooperation in disaster risk management.

Indeed, these first efforts as well as the work developed through other projects, such as the development of a National Response Plan for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear hazards, show the daunting magnitude of the work still to be carried out to adequately protect the people in Lebanon and in the Mediterranean. Nonetheless, these are initial fruits that we are looking forward to nurture and develop in the future, in partnership with all the Lebanese authorities involved in disaster risk management.

I therefore would like to thank the PPRD South team and all of you for your contribution so far, and wish all of us every success in facing the challenges that still lie ahead in this increasingly unpredictable natural environment.

Thank you

Background

On the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in the field of Civil Protection

Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of Civil Protection (CP) started in 1998, under the umbrella of the Barcelona Process, with two EU-funded programmes: a 5-year Pilot Programme which aimed at improving cooperation in the area of civil protection between EU Member States and the 12 Mediterranean Partners, and the “Bridge” programme, whose objective was to improve the reciprocal knowledge of and strengthen political confidence among the regional Civil Protection partners.

On the Programme PPRD South

Building on those experiences, with a budget of **5 million Euro**, the 3-year EU-funded Euromed Programme for *Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters* (PPRD South) aims at further improving and building on the results achieved by the previous two programmes by contributing, in particular, to the development in the Mediterranean region of a civil protection culture based on prevention rather than response. PPRD South is a regional programme, launched in March 2009. It is **managed by a consortium led by the Italian Civil Protection Authority, together with the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the Civil Protection Authorities of France, Egypt and Algeria**. The Programme works jointly with the National Civil Protection Authorities of the **beneficiary countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Turkey, Israel, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro** and observer countries of Mauritania and Libya.

The purpose of the Programme is to contribute to the development of improved civil protection prevention, preparedness and response capacities at international, national and local levels. These objectives are pursued through four broad areas of activity aimed at:

Risk assessment - By developing national and regional risk assessment tools such as risk review, risk maps, CP Operational Manual.

Prevention and preparedness - By organising training workshops, study visits and technical assistance, by sensitising the creation of national platforms for disaster risk reduction and by supporting regional cooperation.

Response - By improving the coverage and the coordination of existing warning systems and of the relevant operational centres and implementing simulation exercises.

Information/communication - By improving the information and awareness of affected populations regarding risk exposure, prevention and response.

On the awareness raising activities implemented through the PPRD South

In line with the third priority of the Hyogo Framework for Action, according to which disasters can be reduced substantially if people are well-informed about measures they can take to reduce vulnerability and are motivated to act, PPRD South is implementing – for the first time for an EU-funded civil protection programme – several awareness-raising activities, with an allocated budget of 200,000 euro.

The budget was divided among **5 selected countries (40,000 euro per project): Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and Montenegro**. The activities funded have been

designed in close collaboration between the respective National Civil Protection Authorities and the PPRD South team. For some of the countries involved, this was the first time they were conducting awareness-raising projects.

In general, **children and housewives, considered amongst the most vulnerable in society, were chosen as direct beneficiaries of the projects. The awareness campaigns focused on all types of accidents in the home, hygiene and health risks, and risks of disasters such as earthquakes, floods and fires.**

The number of direct beneficiaries of the 5 projects is estimated at around 145,000 people: 125,000 school children in Lebanon, through the distribution in schools of as many CDs with edu-games; 1,700 housewives participating in 19 seminars and more than 1,000 students trained in schools in Jordan; 5,000 school children trained in Montenegro; 1,800 people including housewives attending seminars and students taking part in training in Egypt; and 10,000 students trained in the Palestinian territory. Other indirect beneficiaries: members of the public at large reached through the various projects' media alerts and campaigns.

Other EU efforts

Other EU projects contributing to increase prevention, preparedness and response capacities at both the regional and national levels (in both institutional and operational terms), are:

- "Strengthening National Infrastructure related to Lebanese Trade and Border Control": implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the project aims at strengthening the Lebanese borders for the control of CBRN substances and at improving the national response to hazards presented by such materials. (2008-2012, 2.1M €)
- "Establishment of a regional CBRN Centre of Excellence" in the Middle East, in relation to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear risks (regional project funded by the IfS).
- "Towards Developing and Implementing a National Strategy for Forest Fire Management in Lebanon", implemented by the Lebanese NGO AFDC (2008-9, 350,000 €).