

## DRIVER+: a pan-European approach for resilience in Crisis Management



**After two years of devastating forest fires that caused tragic numbers of casualties and immense economic losses across Europe, how can Crisis Management practitioners become more resilient in preventing and fighting greater, more unpredictable threats?**

This is the challenge that Driving Innovation in Crisis Management for European Resilience (DRIVER+) wants to address. This European demonstration project intends to strengthen Crisis Management capability development by setting up a pan-European Test-Bed for practitioners to evaluate innovative solutions towards tackling ever more complex disasters. One of the major components of DRIVER+ is its series of four Trials, where practitioners assess innovative solutions in the context of a simulated disaster scenario.

Following a successful first Trial held in Poland in May this year where practitioners assessed three solutions in a scenario of an industrial chemical spill, DRIVER+ organised its second Trial in October at the premises of Entente Valabre, a Fire-fighters training, testing and research public organisation located near Aix-en-Provence in France. Trial 2 puts its focus on interoperability and on how innovative solutions could improve cooperation and coordination between different organisations and agencies from different countries in the context of a large-scale crisis situation.

The scenario, based on a large forest fire threatening an urban settlement and a chemical plant, was entirely played out in a virtual environment, where the practitioners assessed four innovative solutions selected in an open call. The practitioners involved included several French and Italian firefighters, the French environmental protection agency and the Italian Red Cross.



During the Trial, the scenario sessions ran both without and with the use of the solutions. During the sessions, the players exchanged communications, carried out risk assessments and analyses of the situation, created a shared situational awareness and coordinated their responses. In the course of the session based on the threat to the chemical plant, two of the four selected solutions were assessed: CrisisSuite from Merlin Software and Life-X COP from Frequentis.

CrisisSuite allows operators to share information to improve situational awareness during a crisis. This tool allows users to “log information about the current situation, the assessment of the situation and the decisions and actions taken. Actions can automatically be sent down the chain of command to the people responsible for executing these actions”, according to Merlin’s René De Jong. Users can thus create logbooks and situation reports to be shared with all participants involved.

Life-X COP (Common Operational Picture) “serves the purpose of collecting information and presenting it on a map, allowing all the people involved to share the same, up-to-date information”, according to Hannah Goeritz of Frequentis. Life-X COP was used to visualize information elements on a map, providing practitioners with geographic indications of the risks they are facing and of the assets and resources deployed. The Trial scenario also allowed the solutions to export information to each other, so for example Situation Reports (“SitReps”) from CrisisSuite could be included in the Life-X COP maps.

Two other solutions were assessed during Trial 2: MDA Command & Control from Magen David Adom Israel and Social Media Analysis Platform (SMAP) by Thales.

MDA Command & Control allows “for faster localisation of the incident and better understanding of the situation on the scene, as photos and videos are shared” and features the capacity “to track every unit during the mission and to manage vast numbers of resources”, according to MDA’s Chaim Rafalowski. This solution was assessed in the context of managing emergency responses and transport of victims.

SMAP was assessed in the context of a growing role for social media in Crisis Management. The Trial 2 scenario involved a number of social media posts related to the disaster and SMAP was evaluated for its effectiveness in filtering thousands of posts to find those directly relevant to the incident. SMAP can help find relevant information faster and detect a sudden increase in the use of certain keywords, thus improving preparedness and early warning.

Practitioners consider there is an added value to the solutions trialed, namely that they make information exchanges “faster and clearer” between organisations, as pointed out by Geoffroy Samour of DREAL, the French government’s environmental protection directorate. The Trial 2 scenario was played out over the course of three days, which included training for the solutions and the necessary debriefings.

DRIVER+ follows a methodology based on a continuous learning process. The project’s four Trials are major milestones and contribute towards demonstrating its approach to Crisis Management. The next Trial will take place in The Netherlands in May 2019 and will further develop practitioner’s capacities in

response to a large flooding and contribute to a shared understanding in Crisis Management across Europe.



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