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## **DRIVER+ - Driving European Innovation for Crisis Management**

Disaster risk changes constantly, accompanying the interconnected nature of our societies. The forest fires in Greece, Sweden and California last summer, which led to tragic numbers of casualties and threatened urban environments, demonstrate this reality and Crisis Management must keep up with this ever-growing risk. Resilience, cooperation and innovation are therefore key when it comes to tackling natural and man-made disasters and an EU project is trying to provide a way for practitioners and Crisis Management professionals to improve capability development and innovation management.

DRIVER+, (*Driving Innovation in Crisis Management for European Resilience*), financed under the EU's 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, intends to address the gaps reported by practitioners regarding threats, limitations in vulnerabilities assessment and insufficiencies in resource management when it comes to tackling disasters. DRIVER+ creates an environment for practitioners to assess their gaps and assess innovative solutions in simulated contexts, allowing them to better understand how new socio-technical innovations and solutions will best meet their needs when responding to disasters, both natural and man-made.

It is precisely with the risk of such large disasters in mind that the DRIVER+ project has been set up and shaped to involve and answer the needs of Crisis Management practitioners, who have been involved with DRIVER+ since the project's launch. A major demonstration of this are the project's four Trials, each dedicated to a different crisis scenario: industrial accident, wildfire, flood and earthquake. To prepare the Trials, practitioners identified a series of gaps between the risks they face and solutions available to them. A call for applications to select innovative solutions which are relevant to a given scenario.

The first DRIVER+ Trial took place in Warsaw, Poland, on 21-25 May 2018. The scenario was that of a chemical spill of toxic fluid affecting the nearby population, with the risk of spreading into more populated areas and neighbouring countries. Over sixty participants from all over Europe took part, including practitioners from the civil protection and crisis management sectors, solution providers, experts and observers. The activities were held at the Warsaw headquarters of Poland's Main School of Fire Service (SGSP) and included a virtual tabletop and a live field Trial at a nearby SGSP facility. The solutions trialled in Warsaw covered the setting up of a Common Operational Picture (which allows users to have a real time perception of the actions

of their counterparts across the border), simulating the dynamics of a flood in relation to the geography of the affected area and using drones to create a geometrically correct map of the affected area in a short time. An overview video of what happened at Trial 1 is available [here](#).

Facing the current scenario of wildfires affecting Europe, the second Trial of the DRIVER+ project assumes a very topical importance. Trial 2 took place on 22-26 October 2018 in the south of France, at the premises of Entente Valabre, a public Civil Protection support organisation located in the proximity of the city of Aix-en-Provence. The scenario was that of a large forest fire occurring in a cross-border Mediterranean environment and threatening wildland urban interfaces. Participants consisted of fire-fighters from France and (aerial) reinforcements and terrestrial units from a neighbouring country, environmental protection agencies, medical services organizations, decision makers and authorities. All levels of the command chain were played from the field command post (with the Incident Commander role) up to the zonal and national operational centres. The Trial 2 video is available through [this link](#).

Trial 2's goals were to improve cooperation and coordination between organisations and agencies from different countries. Interoperability was vital and practitioners assessed four solutions. The solutions of Trial 2 were based on: collecting and presenting all information on a map allowing the actors involved to share the same, up-to-date information; logging and assessing information about the crisis situation and delegating tasks to the entire team; setting up an integrated system that allows the dispatcher to receive all the critical information needed to manage the scene in the most efficient way; and processing a volume of data generated by social media allowing practitioners to be alerted to new developments as well as detecting false information.

In every Trial the solutions are connected to the Test-bed set up by DRIVER+. The Test-bed handles the virtual environment and scenarios of the Trials and links the solutions and simulators together. It also gives the users the tools and methodology to carry out the Trials and enables practitioners to compare results while using and not using the solutions trialled. A short animated video showing how the Test-Bed can help crisis management practitioners is available [here](#).

The way in which the selected solutions performed at the Trial will be included in the DRIVER+ Portfolio of Solutions, an online-based tool which has recently become available and open to contributions where data from the Trials and solutions will be

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accessible. This is part of an effort to build a European Crisis Management community whose members will learn from each other.

As a project that fosters continuous learning, the experience of each DRIVER+ Trial will feed the Test-bed and the solutions trialled will be part of the Portfolio of Solutions, ensuring that every aspect of the Trials will contribute towards building European resilience in Crisis Management. Two more Trials will be held in 2019, in The Netherlands (May 2019) and in Austria (September 2019).

For further information about the DRIVER+ project and its Trials visit [www.driver-project.eu](http://www.driver-project.eu).



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