

Brussels, 25 July, 2019



The 4th edition of the I4CM successfully took place in Copenhagen

The organisation of an annual Innovation for Crisis Management (I4CM) event is one of the key outcomes of the DRIVER+ project. Concerned with contributing to the development of a shared understanding in Crisis Management and related topics, this event provides an excellent opportunity to convene international participants, among whom a large number of local practitioners and solution providers. For its fourth edition, the I4CM event adopted “Volunteer Management in a Crisis Situation” as a focal theme, with special attention being paid to issues around organised volunteers and psychosocial support to volunteers. Held at the KOSMOPOL Centre in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 12 and 13 June 2019, it gathered more than 120 participants from 27 different countries.

For two days, participants had the opportunity to listen to thought-provoking speeches from on-the-ground practitioners and volunteers, to participate to different panel and workshop sessions and to get informed on the latest initiatives in the field of crisis management and disaster response.

Setting the scene, Nana Wiedemann, director of the Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), insisted in her keynote speech on the duty of care towards volunteers.

“It is important to remind the crucial role of volunteers in disaster response and to inform people working in the field about the tools that are available to better support these volunteers” said Nana Wiedemann, Director of the Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support at IFRC.

Throughout the conference, the IFRC conducted a series of talks and interactive sessions on the management and care of spontaneous volunteers, including a training workshop on psychological first aid (PFA) for staff groups and volunteers, which spanned over both conference days. Participants had the opportunity to learn more about the psychological and emotional distress that volunteers working in crisis management are often exposed to, and were made aware of the existence of some tools to better cope with these issues.

“Volunteers often go through very stressful situations and their emotional and psychological well-being is at risk. This issue is often underestimated by the general public and crisis managers. This is why the IFRC developed the ‘Psychological First Aid in Groups – support to teams’ training as part of the PFA Toolbox. This training offers crisis managers a set of and actions for how to provide care and support for staff and volunteers” said Pia Tingsted Blum from the Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support at IFRC.

The I4CM events also provide an occasion for delegates to learn more about the DRIVER+ project and its practical outcomes. To that regard, the sessions presenting the Trials, the pan-European Test-bed, the sustainability objective of the project through the setting of Centres of Expertise (COEs) as well as the Crisis Management Innovation Network Europe (CMINE) being the online and collaborative platform launched by DRIVER+, were particularly useful in informing participants about DRIVER+ advances. Their proactive format further allowed for rich interactions with the audience.

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“The CMINE has been expanding fast since its creation last December and we wanted to harness the I4CM and the stakeholders involved to keep the momentum going. The two CMINE workshops on floods and volunteer management were extremely valuable in terms of exchanges and inputs received and will feed onto the CMINE base of knowledge. The CMINE online platform (www.cmine.eu) will be a key element to foster innovation and build the community” stated Andreas Seipelt from ARTTIC, External Cooperation Manager of DRIVER+.

Similarly to previous I4CM events, a Market Place provided an opportunity for solution providers in the field of Crisis Management to showcase their results and products.

“I4CM events are always a great opportunity to meet crisis management stakeholders and raise awareness about new initiatives in the field. As coordinator of the BroadWay project, this allowed us to engage with new suppliers and make precious contacts!” said David Lund from PSCE.

Overall, the forum provided by the 4th I4CM to crisis managers and practitioners from all over Europe and beyond, to reflect on the challenges and opportunities related to volunteer management was considered a success. With the DRIVER+ project’s in its final year, this event also represented a timely opportunity to present the project’s numerous achievements and sustainability plans.

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