

Brussels, 13 August, 2019

## **TRIAL Austria: Five innovative crisis management solutions will be tested in Eisenerz**

*On 12-14 September 2019, a three-day exercise in Austrian Eisenerz will evaluate new solutions for crisis and disaster management*

Earthquakes occur in Europe on a daily basis. For the month of July 2019, no less than 27 earthquakes, ranging from a magnitude of 4 to 5 have been recorded, most of them located in South-East Europe (source: Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology). Although events of this magnitude seldom produce severe damage, the old continent has a long lasting history of devastating earthquakes wreaking havoc on populations. 10 years ago, in 2009, approximately 300 people died in a quake that devastated the region around the city of L'Aquila in the Abruzzi Mountains in Italy. Going back more than 100 years, on December 28, 1908, a massive quake rocked southern Italy and left about 95,000 people dead in the Sicilian port city of Messina and in the Region of Calabria.

In order to enhance European resilience and preparedness against disasters, the DRIVER+ project will conduct a simulation exercise on 12-14 September 2019 in the region of Eisenerz, Austria, to assess five innovative crisis management solutions in an earthquake scenario.

### **DRIVER+**

DRIVER+ (Driving Innovation in Crisis Management for European Resilience) is an EU funded project, helping Crisis Management practitioners find the best ways to address disasters that require complex responses. A total of four Trials and a Final Demonstration will take place within the project's lifespan, actively involving Crisis Management practitioners in order to identify and assess innovative solutions that could potentially meet their expectations and cover a series of pre-identified operational or training gaps. Three Trials were successfully conducted in Poland, France and The Netherlands, Trial Austria being the 4<sup>th</sup> and final Trial of the project.

All DRIVER+ Trials are prepared, executed and evaluated in line with the Trial Guidance Methodology (TGM) with the support of the Test-bed infrastructure and the Trial Guidance Tool (TGT). These three closely linked components have been specifically developed to assist Trial organisers to conduct a simulated crisis as realistically as possible. The descriptions of the tested solutions are stored in the DRIVER+ Portfolio of Solutions (PoS), an open online database, which also contains valuable information on other existing solutions. The PoS is available to view online at <http://pos.driver-project.eu/>.

### **The Trial**

The main focus of Trial - Austria is to identify and test solutions to overcome any possible shortcomings in the management and monitoring of volunteers on the crisis scene in terms of location, tasking, capabilities and duration of operations, but also in the ability to merge disparate data sources in real time

Brussels, 13 August, 2019

(e.g. visualisation of resources, tactical situation, critical assets map, damaged objects/infrastructure etc.) to support incident commander decision making and exchanging crisis-related information.

The Trial will also evaluate solutions for providing psychosocial support and interaction with volunteers. Finally, the exercise will attempt to validate the methodology and solutions produced by the DRIVER+ project to benefit and enhance in a systematic way the already existing best practices of organising exercises, trials and tests.

The Trial - Austria will take place simultaneously and in close coordination with IRONORE 2019, the EU co-financed federal exercise of the Red Cross in Eisenerz. National emergency organizations will be present with their volunteers and experts while making use of equipment, vehicles and tools in simulated disasters scenarios.

Following a call for applications, the following five solutions have been selected to be tested during the Trial:

- **CROWDTASKER**, from the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology, enables crisis managers to instruct large numbers of non-institutional (either spontaneous or pre-registered) volunteers with customizable tasks, contextual information, warnings and alerts, as well as to crowdsource information from them
- **AIRBORNE & TERRESTRIAL SITUATIONAL AWARENESS**, from DLR, is composed of several individual components and tools, providing aerial images and additional data, information layers relevant for crisis management and accurate situational awareness
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID (PFA)**, from the Danish Red Cross, the scenario enabled PFA training provides knowledge on what PFA is, guidelines on how to perform PFA and an experiential training package to build the capacity of first responders and their leaders to deliver quality PFA
- **VIEWTERRA Evolution**, from VWORLD, forms a combined “GIS & Simulation” suite of products allowing civil responders to rapidly build a virtual 4D representation of any potential crisis area on earth. These solutions provide a common operational picture to both the crisis center and the rescue units out in the field
- **ASIGN PRO**, from ANSUR, reduces disaster response time by better situational understanding with high precision mission critical geo-spatial photo and video communication with very low capacity needs. ASIGN PRO also supports tracking, geo-zones, assessment templates, UAV operations as well as mobile satellite communication when needed

### The Trial Scenario

The central area of Austria is struck by a heavy earthquake and subsequent heavy rains. The local region of Eisenerz (in Styria, Austria) is significantly affected with missing persons, casualties, collapsed buildings, blocked roads, and endangered industries. Inhabitants have left their houses, afraid of aftershocks and collapsed buildings and have to spend days outdoors due to the lack of temporary shelter and blocked

Brussels, 13 August, 2019

roads. There is a disruption of lifelines such as water, food, shelter, transportation and medical care, while electricity and mobile networks are severely damaged.

All local and national emergency response organisations have been deployed on site (Austrian Red Cross, fire brigades, police and the army). However, due to the rapid expansion of the affected area and overwhelmed national response capacities, the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism is activated. International assistance is requested to support medical treatment, water purification as well as search and rescue operations. Due to the difficulty of accessing the affected area and considering the impact of the disaster, there is an urgent need for humanitarian assistance and assessment. A large number of volunteers and rescue equipment is needed to deal with the increasing number of affected people and there is an urgent need for the management of spontaneous volunteers present on the ground.

The scenario will require a commitment of stakeholders from every Crisis Management level and from all the agencies participating in the response: Austrian Red Cross, Austrian Fire Brigades, Police, Army, decision-makers and authorities. Other emergency response organisations from neighbouring countries are expected to participate following the procedures from the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). Actions will be taken by the stakeholders in a realistic information environment, based on currently available means, crisis management plans, rescue procedures and good practices of participants.

For further information, please visit the project website at <https://www.driver-project.eu/> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TrialAustria>. More information on IRONORE at [www.ironore.eu](http://www.ironore.eu).

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