

Brussels, 25 September, 2019

The DRIVER+ project successfully conducts its last Trial in Eisenerz, Austria

The last Trial of the DRIVER+ project took place on 12-14 September 2019 in the Austrian region of Styria, gathering more than 80 participants from all over Europe including local civil protection practitioners and volunteers, solution providers, observers, press and project partners. The objective of the Trial was to identify and test innovative crisis management solutions to improve the management and monitoring of volunteers in a crisis situation.

DRIVER+

DRIVER+ is an EU-funded project aimed at stimulating the uptake of innovative solutions by practitioners to improve Europe's resilience to crises and disasters. A total of four Trials and a Final Demonstration are taking place, involving a large number of practitioners from all levels of the Crisis Management ecosystem, to identify and assess whether a series of carefully selected innovative solutions can help them better manage such incidents. Trial - Austria was the last of four Trials conducted by the DRIVER+ project after three successful editions respectively held in Poland, France and The Netherlands.

Trial - Austria

The scenarios used in the previous Trials included a toxic chemical leak for Trial - Poland, a major wildfire for Trial - France and a serious flood for Trial - The Netherlands. Trial - Austria was organised by the Austrian Red Cross and the Austrian Institute of Technology (AIT) and featured a severe earthquake in the local region of Eisenerz with subsequent heavy rain. The situation was characterised by missing persons, casualties, collapsed buildings and blocked roads. Lifelines such as water, food, shelter transportation and medical care were disrupted while electricity and mobile networks were severely damaged. To adequately respond to a disaster of this magnitude, local and national emergency response organisations were mobilised and deployed on the ground including the Austrian Red Cross, fire brigades and military as well as citizen volunteers. In addition, and due to the expansion of the affected area and overwhelmed national response capabilities, the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism was activated. To support them in facing this crisis, Trial players had to optimise the use of [five innovative solutions](#) connected with each other through the DRIVER+ Test-Bed.

“We developed CrowdTasker to support interaction with volunteers during, before, and after a crisis. At AIT, we try to address contemporary socio-technical issues of community interaction in crises. This Trial was a great opportunity for us to test new approaches and corroborate the validity of existing components. The feedback we received was extremely valuable for future development,” explained Daniel Auferbauer, Junior Scientist, AIT Austrian Institute of Technology

Brussels, 25 September, 2019

IRONORE

The Trial took place simultaneously and in close coordination with IRONORE2019, an EU Civil Protection Exercise organised by the Austrian Red Cross, which also hosted Trial - Austria. National and trans-national emergency organisations participated with their volunteers and experts while making use of equipment, vehicles and tools in various simulated disaster scenarios. The exercise involved some 800 participants with a particular focus on Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) operations. While the Trial focused on identifying and testing innovative Crisis Management solutions, IRONORE was aimed at improving operational procedures in crisis situations.

“Of course, it was a great opportunity for us to have the Trial running in parallel to IRONORE. The Austrian Red Cross organised both events, which were ultimately aimed at improving Europe’s resilience against disasters, so we identified and exploited synergies as much as possible, ” added Camilo Palacio of the Austrian Red Cross and Trial Director.

Final Demonstration

After the four Trials, the next step in the DRIVER+ project in terms of assessing solutions will be the Final Demonstration on 27th to 29th November in Warsaw, Poland. The DRIVER+ Test-Bed components have been consistently improved since the first Trial. Hence, there has been a gradual and steady improvement in the way the DRIVER+ consortium has been conducting Trials and assessing new solutions. The Final Demo will be a culminating point, illustrating the lessons learnt and progress made in evaluating innovative crisis management solutions. More information on the Final Demonstration will be available on the DRIVER+ website very shortly.

The DRIVER+ project has received funding from the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under Grant Agreement no. 607798.

The opinions expressed in this document reflect only the author’s view and reflects in no way the European Commission’s opinions. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

