



PRESS RELEASE

6 December 2019

EU DRIVER+ Multinational Final Demonstration held in Poland and The Netherlands judged big success

The final crisis management demonstration staged by the DRIVER+ project held in Poland (with additional remote input and participation from The Netherlands) from 26 to 28 November has been judged a big success, achieving all its key goals.

The three-day event saw Crisis Management Module teams from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, The Netherlands and Austria, along with EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre and EU Civil Protection Teams, simulate the deployment and use of firefighting teams and assets from the donor countries to a fictional country - 'Driverstan' - where persistent wildfires had overwhelmed local resources, and at one stage also threatened a refugee camp, requiring an orderly evacuation.

All the issues associated with the movement of teams across borders were 'played' with high degrees of realism, along with the gathering and integrating of up-to-date fire imagery, terrain and other data required to support firefighting teams and commanders both on the ground and in off-site command centres.

The objective was to use and evaluate (using the project's Trial Guidance Methodology) the various technological solutions for creating and sharing across agencies and borders a dynamically updated Common Operational Picture (COP). Delivering such a COP is the key to efficient, successful crisis management because it optimizes the effectiveness of the limited resources available.

The solutions used by the various crisis management teams were: Socrates OC from GMV, vieWTerra Evolution from VWORLD, CrisisSuite from Merlin Software, Drone Rapid Mapping from Creotech Instruments and the Field Reporting Tool developed by the European Commission Joint Research Centre. Each of these solutions was integrated using the DRIVER+ Test-bed Technical Infrastructure.

The solutions used were independently assessed by observers and participants, a key objective of the DRIVER+ project.

This Final Demonstration event represents the culmination of several years of conducting Trials, intense hard work and best practice development by many different members of the pan-European EU-funded DRIVER+ project.

The main organiser and the leader of the preparation process of the Final Demonstration was the Space Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences supported by the Main School of Fire Service in Warsaw, working closely with the DRIVER+ team.

The Final Demonstration took place in three different locations at the same time: The Space Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Main School of Fire Service, both in Warsaw/Poland, and the Safety Region Haaglanden in The Hague/The Netherlands.

DRIVER+ is a pan-European project designed to build Europe's resilience to climate-related crisis situations, such as wildfires and flooding, as well as other threats such as earthquakes, industrial accidents and terrorism.

A key focus is helping crisis management organisations evaluate and select the best (technological) solutions for supporting enhanced emergency management, based on clear, objective criteria (using the Trial Guidance Methodology). **Drones, advanced crisis management solutions and cross-border cooperation all featured strongly in the Final Demonstration and evaluation.**

<https://www.driver-project.eu/>

Marcel van Berlo (TNO), the DRIVER+ project's technical coordinator, said: 'The final demonstration in Poland and the Netherlands was the last in a series of Trials executed within the framework of the DRIVER+ project. There were two key objectives.

'1. This Final Demonstration was expected to be the most mature of the DRIVER+ Trial series, since it was based on the final version of the project's Trial Guidance Methodology and the Test-bed Technical Infrastructure, two of the DRIVER+ project's key outputs. The Final Demo addressed the needs of the main end-user – the European Union's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC).

'The ERCC is the heart of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, coordinating the delivery of assistance to disaster-stricken countries (such as relief items, expertise, civil protection teams and specialised equipment). Thus, the Final Demonstration directly addressed the pan-European approach towards which the DRIVER+ project has been aiming for the past years.

'The DRIVER+ project has been exploring, testing and promoting new ways to manage crises of various kinds, by assessing in realistic, practical and multinational Trials a number of innovative solutions, using the newly developed Trial Guidance Methodology and Test-bed Technical Infrastructure.

'2. The second key objective was to demonstrate the outcomes of the DRIVER+ project and to sustain its results.

'Outcomes that were demonstrated included the DRIVER+ Trial Guidance Methodology, and the Test-bed Technical Infrastructure. Other key project outputs such as the Portfolio of Solutions, and the Crisis Management Innovation Network Europe (CMINE) will be promoted at the project's Advanced Crisis Management Conference in Brussels from 19 to 20 February 2020.'

Karolina Trzebińska, one of the organisers of the Final Demonstration and a project specialist at the Space Research Centre in Poland, said: 'This closed event for high level crisis management practitioners was intended to promote the idea of trialling and Centres of Expertise (another key project output). The Space Research Centre and the Main School of Fire Service plan to benefit from the extensive knowledge gained through participation in DRIVER+. We also signed a joint declaration to become a Centre of Expertise, supporting the sustainability of DRIVER+ project outcomes.'

'To this end, SRC is involved in a number of activities, especially in cooperation with the Central European Drone Demonstrator in Poland (the national establishment for demonstrating and testing of drone applications), aiming at testing, assessing and developing best practices for the use of aerial drones for crisis management, rescue operations and public safety. SRC also intends to actively support development, testing and assessing arrangements for air space (air traffic) management enabling the use of drones for crisis-related operations.'

'Last but not least, SRC may also act as a Centre of Expertise for testing new GIS geo-information products and services, based on satellite imagery (especially from Copernicus), along with images and videos from drones, and any possible combinations thereof, building upon the knowledge gained from several ESA, EU and national projects related to downstream Earth Observation development.'

The project partners and associated specialists and solutions providers will be outlining the DRIVER+ project and Final Demonstration findings at the final conference in Brussels on 19-20 February 2020. They will be also supporting broader dissemination of the results through an active programme of media activities, publications and online and social media promotion.

((ends))

For further information contact:
Stephen Prendergast
DRIVER+ Dissemination and Communication
communication@projectdriver.eu
prendergast@arttic.eu

DRIVER+ Background information

Governments and populations are increasingly aware of the threats to public safety posed by climate change, in particular wildfires and flooding. DRIVER+ is a pan-European project tasked with promoting major new, science-based improvements in Crisis Management (CM), to improve response to natural disasters and other threats.

The project's scope includes the promotion and trialling of advanced technologies and other CM solutions in realistic scenarios, the development of scientifically based trial methodologies (the Trial Guidance Methodology and the Test-bed Technical Infrastructure), plus other key project outputs such as the Portfolio of Solutions, the Crisis Management Innovation Network Europe (CMINE), and the establishment of a pan-European network of Centres of Expertise.

This project has received funding from the European Union's 7th Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration under Grant Agreement (GA) N° #607798

((Captions – image))

1. ((DRIVER+ Modules)) Modules teams representing Poland, Bulgaria, Austria and Romania, simulating the deployment of national Crisis Management teams to 'Driverstan', the scene of large-scale wildfires.

2. ((DRIVER+ News)) Module teams from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, The Netherlands and Austria, along with the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre and EU Civil Protection Teams, simulated the deployment and use of firefighting teams and assets from the donor countries to a fictional country - 'Driverstan' - where persistent wildfires had overwhelmed local resources. **EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre and EU Civil Protection Teams**, plus the Safety Region Haaglanden in The Hague/The Netherlands, were also involved in the trial.

3. ((Refugees)) At one stage during the exercise wildfires also threatened a refugee camp, shown in virtual reality, requiring an orderly evacuation.

4. ((Signing)) The signing of the joint declaration for the Polish Space Research Centre to become a DRIVER+ Centre of Expertise. Signatories - Professor Iwona Stanisławska, Director of the Polish Space Research Centre, and Dr. M.P.W. (Marcel) van Berlo, Program Coordinator for the DRIVER+ project.