



# Procedures and Methodologies for the Management of Natural Disasters in Cyprus

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# Disaster Management

- natural and man-made hazards threaten people, property, the environment and cultural heritage
- climate change will increase disaster risk amplifying the impacts of extreme weather events, floods, droughts and wildfires, unless adaptation and mitigation measures are undertaken



# The Role of Ministry of Interior

- the Ministry's effort, responsible for the coordination of local authorities and communities, is to reduce the exposure and/or vulnerability to such hazards
- to build the capacities for response and recovery, and to act during or immediately after a disaster
- to restore livelihoods, health and systems of a disaster-affected community



# For Civil Infrastructure

- the Ministry is responsible for the legislation for urban planning, as well as building regulations
- compulsory implementation of Eurocodes
- legislation regarding dangerous structures and cooperation with Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber for a proposal for regular inspections for buildings



# The Role of Ministry of Interior

- the Ministry works together with the Water Development Department for the implementation of the European Directive 2007/60/EC and the Cyprus Law on Floods
- the Flood Risk Management Plan for 2022-2027 includes 41 actions: 7 prevention actions, 26 protection actions, 7 preparedness actions and 1 recovery and review action
- measures can be both structural and non-structural



# The Role of Ministry of Interior

- competent authority for the implementation of the Directive is the Water Development Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment
- coordinating authority, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Flood Risk Management Plan, is the Ministry of Interior



# The Role of Ministry of Interior

- based on National Plans, depending on the event, the Ministry coordinates and supervise the actions of the involved Ministries, Departments and Services, in order to manage the consequences of a catastrophic event, and to provide relief and assistance to those affected



# The Role of Ministry of Interior

- to manage emergencies efficiently, a great number of services are involved, according to the area of responsibility or expertise, e.g., Public Works Dept, Electromechanical Services Dept, Police, Fire Service, National Guard, Health Services, Electricity Authority of Cyprus, Water Boards etc.





# Plan Activation

- activation is based on the intensity and extent of the phenomenon and its consequences
- regarding the Ministry of Interior, the District Administrations, the Civil Defense and the Game Fund are heavily involved under the coordination of the Administration of the Ministry of the Interior



# Civil Defence

- provide first aid, rescue, care, feeding and temporary housing of the affected
- undertake support and assistance to other Governmental Services involved



# Game Fund

- protection and policing of buildings and facilities
- assistance in setting up assembly areas and caring for evacuees
- provide availability for personnel, means and equipment for extinguishing fires



# District Administrations

- carry out assessments of damage to infrastructure of state responsibility as well as private property in Municipalities and Communities of their province, and inform the Ministry's Administration
- if the event is of small-scale, the District Administration will take all necessary measures, or if needed, with the aid of the Ministry's Administration



# District Administrations

- for small scale events, usually a small number of group of civil engineers and technical engineers, will proceed with the assessment of damages of buildings by filling a dedicated form
- collect also information about ownership, insurance etc.
- use guidelines from the Ministry's Administration



# Policy for Natural Disasters

- Decision of the Council of Ministers of 2004 on floods, strong winds and tornadoes
- the restoration of damages to state infrastructure is the responsibility of the Government, while for infrastructure of semi-state Organizations or Local Authorities, it is decided by the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance



# Policy for Natural Disasters

- financial assistance is given to low-income pensioners and public assistance recipients, to repair damage to their home and equipment
- the total income of the family (together with state benefits) does not exceed €875 per month



# Policy for Natural Disasters

- financial assistance to uninsured homeowners, equal to 80% of the amount of the estimated damage (the financial assistance can not exceed €8,750)
- The group of engineers will estimate the financial aid based on the criteria





# Policy for Certain Disasters

- for large scale events like earthquakes, fires, floods or other disasters because of the progressive and dramatic change in climatic conditions, Council of Ministers' Decisions are taken as an exception to the current Policy of 2004, based on specific criteria
- Head of Coordination: Minister of Interior



# Policy for Certain Disasters

- the restoration of damages to state infrastructure is the responsibility of the Government
- for private infrastructure, financial aid is provided, based on approved criteria



# Categories – Specific Criteria

- residences (owned/ rented, insured or not, under construction, country houses, etc.)
- home equipment
- business premises
- business equipment
- vehicles (private/ for business etc.)



# Example

- up to €10,000 damage assessment, is paid
- (plus) up to €50,000, additional 80%
- (plus) up to €100,000, plus 50%
- (plus) up to €150,000, plus 30%



# Example

- for business premises only, up to €250,000, additional 20%
- limits: €150,000 for residential, €250,000 for business premises, €5,000 for private vehicles and €10,000 for business vehicles



# Example

- ...but it depends on the scale of the event...
- For example, there were cases e.g. for the 1995 earthquake, when the government funded the construction of 1 to 4 bedroom new houses



# Policy for Certain Disasters

- the group of engineers, depended on the scale, will be assembled by governmental officers, or from the private sector in cooperation with the Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber
- the engineers will hand all the assessments to the District Administration. After analysis, the District Officer will notify the Minister regarding the scale of the event and the suggestion (or not) for exception from Policy



# Policy for Certain Disasters

- with the approval of relative Council of Ministers' Decision, the required funds will be secured, and the persons affected will be notified for the available financial aid, based on the criteria included in the Decision
- an objections committee in the District Offices will examine the cases of objections submitted regarding the financial aid provided





# Policy for Certain Disasters

- in the case of earthquake, a rapid visual check performed from groups of engineers will categorize the buildings based on structural safety
- engineers will be involved for temporary works if needed to ensure the structural safety of infrastructure
- Civil Defence will provide for temporary housing



# Policy for Certain Disasters

- a reassessment will take place from another group of engineers, in cases of buildings that were considered unsafe due to structural defects
- if the second group of engineers characterize the building as a dangerous structure, the Building Control Authority is notified as well for actions based on building regulations



# Comment

- basically, due to the small scale of Cyprus compared to other countries, the direct involvement of centralized bodies is not adopted
- similar practice and methodology for disasters, as for earthquake in Greece
- ...but there are differences (e.g., for floods certain areas are affected, more frequent)



# Comment

- time pressure for group of engineers to provide results
- need to encourage insurance schemes
- need to use more technological solutions for the swift assessment of the area affected and the scale of the event
- need to simplify methodology



# Further Actions

- need to improve methodology
- need for training of engineers (government and private sector) for assessment processes
- cooperation with other countries to learn lessons
- need to introduce ICT solutions for assessments, reporting and analyzing data



# Thank you

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