

PSCE COMMUNICATION

on « *Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change* »

In the line with its long-standing commitment to provide **critical insight into Public Safety and Disaster Response (PPDR) since 2009** and following its very recent **support to the European Commission (EC)'s «Green Deal** » as well as its [decision to take action](#) accordingly, **Public Safety Communication Europe (PSCE)** reacts today to the EC's « [Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#) ».

PSCE fully **supports** the general ambition of the **new EU Strategy** on Adaptation to climate change and **builds its position** mainly in relation to the «*forging a climate-resilient union*» section - its expertise area – and on these specific points:

1) Knowledge on climate change and adaptation

PSCE aligns itself with the new EU Strategy of improving knowledge and managing uncertainty. Because «**decision-making and acting in the face of climate uncertainty can be facilitated by anchoring decisions in the latest science**», we always try, in the frame of our regular events, to **give the floor to key experts in their domain** to ensure the latest science to be visible (Luc Feyen, researcher in the EC's Joint Research Centre (JRC), who is part in the in [PESETAS program](#), took the floor in our last PSCE online conference last 19-20 January, for example).

In addition to science, **operational experiences** are an important part in the knowledge on adaptation, and **PSCE**, as a network of Users, Researchers and Industrials, always aims at **consulting and gathering all the perspectives**; from its last conference, polls pointed that (i) **science** is not considered enough and a better communication on it must be done, (ii) the

number of volunteers is too low to support the professionals' actions sufficiently, (iii) and **community resilience** must be built to make society more prepared to climate change.

2) Improvement of adaptation strategies and plans

PSCE aligns itself with the new EU Strategy aim of more systemic adaptation. We agree that «**adaptation strategies at all levels must be effective and based on the latest science**» and this informs our contribution to **EU strategic documentations** like the Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (DRMKS)'s Report 2020 «[Science for disaster risk management 2020: acting today, protecting tomorrow](#)» - section 3.4.4 Communication Systems within section 3.4 Critical Infrastructures.

Climate change is global and will affect all sectors of our economy and of our lives, a transboundary challenge that requires transboundary collaboration. PPDR organisations are not only there to respond to crisis but also to **better prepare for crisis**. Therefore, adaptation strategies and plans should include the need for new technologies, reinforced equipment and training of practitioners to enable them to perform as well as possible their missions. **PSCE** pledges to contribute to **mobilizing research and fostering innovation to enhance PPDR capabilities**, such as early detection, effective management of resources, understanding the risks of domino effects, enhanced cooperation between organisations and cross-borders.

Finally, **PSCE** fully supports the strengthening of the **EU Civil Protection Mechanism**, which will allow a faster and more effective European solidarity operations in response to large-scale transboundary emergencies or disasters. The deployment of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism is crucial to better face national and cross-border threats and reinforce the capabilities of the EU. The system is a key player to support its members in case of crisis: **The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)** for ensuring rapid deployments of emergency support, the **Copernicus Emergency Management Service** for mobilizing geospatial technologies so useful to civil protection operations, the **European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP)** for enabling better planning and coordination, **Prevention and preparedness activities** for mitigating the effects of disasters, and the **rescEU reserve** –European reserve of

resources – are essential to enhance both the protection of citizens from disasters and the management of risks.

The establishment of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) will also contribute to reinforce our preparation and response to cross-border threats and emergencies.

3) Local, individual and just resilience fostering

In its latest update of the definition of resilience, **DG Echo** provides a comprehensive definition of its various components: **resilience is the ability of an individual, a community or a country to cope with, adapt and recover quickly from the impact of a disaster, violence or conflict.** Resilience covers all stages of disaster, from prevention (when possible) to adaptation (when necessary) and includes positive transformation that strengthens the ability of current and future generations to meet their needs and withstand crisis.

Resilience does not mean to recover and come back to a previous situation but contains this element of **adaptability and transformation**. It is about anticipating and planning, absorbing, and resisting, finally transforming and recovering from the effects of a hazard. Resilience is also a **multi-factor process**: from individual behavioral to organizational, technical, or even legal components must be managed to raise the level of resilience and diminish the losses caused by disasters. This becomes a **learning process** which shall be supported, and it must be a just process, where the needs of the disadvantaged are understood and addressed.

Adapting the capabilities of PPDR organisations is essential to improve the **response capacity**. Developing sensors to predict disasters, providing body sensors to improve the safety of first responders, adding and better analyzing information to get the most accurate common operational picture, ensuring the resilience of communication networks, improving cross border cooperation to join forces, and so on, are essential. **PSCE** is supporting actively the national and European efforts that are demonstrated in the different **EU funding streams** (Horizon Europe on Civil security for Society and its dedicated calls on Disaster-Resilient Society for Europe).

PSCE is actively engaged in developing such perspectives through its involvement in **EUfunded projects**: **BroadWay** (to develop technologies that enable a pan European interoperable broadband mobile system for PPDR), **BroadGNSS** (for a Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) of Deployed Applications, Synchronisation and Monitoring of Critical Mobile BroadBand Communication Infrastructure and Information Assets for PPDR), **Search and Rescue** (for the Early location of Entrapped victims under Collapsed Structures and Advanced Wearables for risk assessment and First Responders Safety in S&R operations), **Respond-A** (to build next-generation equipment tools and mission-critical strategies for First Responders); and through the organisation of **events** gathering hundreds of participants and making links among its members and the community in general like [PSCE Conference](#) (19-20 January 2021), [People with Disabilities in S&R operations workshop](#) (30 March 2021), **EndUser Requirements and Beyond** internal workshop with experts (14 April 2021), [Transboundary Resilience webinar](#) (10 June 2021).

4) Reduction of climate-related risk

«**Climate adaptation action must better leverage synergies with broader work on disaster risk prevention and reduction**». Both provide a range of complementary approaches to managing climate risks in order to build resilient societies. **Better coherence** in terms of practices, standards, guidance, targets, resources and knowledge could be achieved by closer coordination at national level, EU level (under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism), and internationally (under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction). That is why **PSCE** develops **advocacy on Climate Crisis PPDR** based on «The European Green Deal» communication as well as «The New Industrial Strategy for Europe» to deepen systemic understanding of the climate and environmental crisis and the required response across all relevant activities.

Also, **PSCE** contributes for the awareness of **digital transformation** and its benefits in order to reach the **Green Deal objectives**. Digital technologies are a critical enabler for attaining the sustainability goals of the Green Deal in many different sectors. In PPDR, we will make sure that all our members and stakeholders are aware of this importance. **PSCE** is eager to apply

incoming measures from the European Commission to ensure that digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, 5G and the Internet of Public Safety Things can accelerate and maximize the impact of policies to deal with climate change and protect the environment.

Finally, both very symbolically and concretely, **PSCE** has been invited by the EC to apply for being a **Climate Pact Ambassador** for the term of one year, **to reach out** to people and/or organisations who are not yet involved in climate action, **to inform, inspire and support** climate action within their communities and networks, **to lead** by example in climate action and in environmental protection, **to become a bridge** between civil society, public safety community and the European Commission.

With this declaration, **the members of the PSCE Network support the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to climate change and commit to contribute to forging a “climate-resilient” society.**

Every semester, we review our programme of action and adapt it, as necessary.

Brussels, May 2021, **PSCE Network**