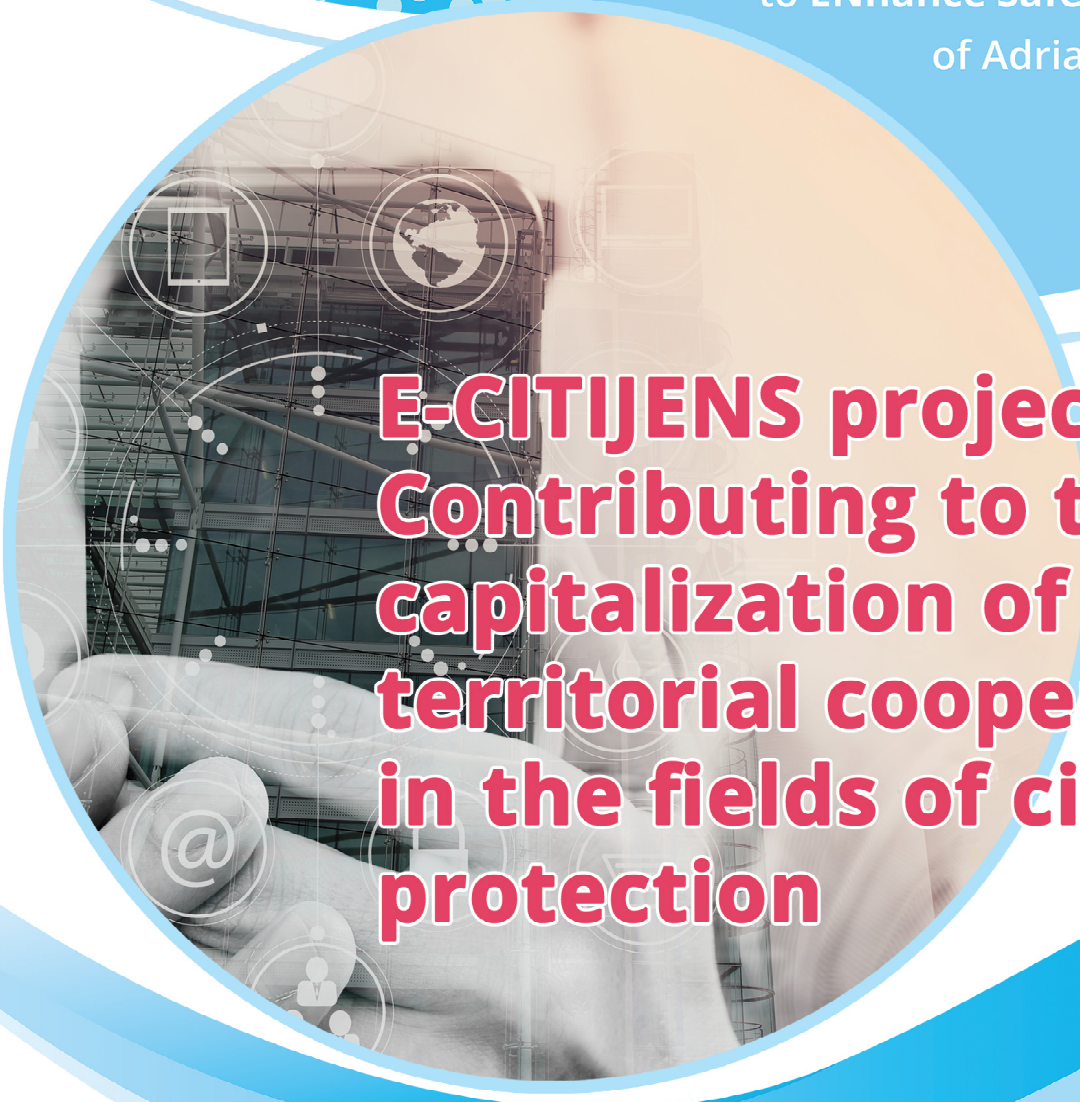


E-CITIJENS

Civil Protection Emergency
DSS based on CITizen Journalism
to ENhance Safety
of Adriatic Basin



**E-CITIJENS project:
Contributing to the
capitalization of
territorial cooperation
in the fields of civil
protection**

#EDSS

INCREASING SAFETY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA BASED TOOLS

Deliverable «Publications and booklets», WP 2 Communication Activities.

Activity 2.2 Media Relations, printed promotion documents and publications.

Partner in charge of WP: Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (PP7).

Partner in charge of publication: Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, Molise Region, Eurelations EEIG.

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Project Title: Civil Protection Emergency DSS based on CITIZen Journalism to ENhance Safety of the Adriatic Basin

Project Acronym: E-CITIJENS

Source of financing: 2014 - 2020 Interreg V-A Italy - Croatia CBC Programme

Call: Call 2017 Standard

Priority Axis: Safety and resilience

Specific Objective: 2.2 Increase the safety of the Programme area from natural and man-made disaster

Project ID: 10187823

Duration: 01.01.2019 – 30.06.2022

Total budget: 2.846.100,00 €

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF): 2.419.185,00€

Partnership

Lead Partner: Molise Region (IT)

Partners: P1 Split and Dalmatia County (HR)

P2 Veneto Region (IT)

P3 University of Split (HR)

P4 EEIG EuRelations (IT)

P5 University of Bologna (IT)

P6 Pescara Municipality (IT)

P7 Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (HR)

P8 Zadar County Rural Development Agency (HR)

P10 City of Dubrovnik (HR)

Project communication channels:

www.italy-croatia.eu/web/e-citijens

Facebook - Twitter - LinkedIn - YouTube

The purpose of this publication is to analyse the contribution of the E-CITIJENS project to the capitalization of Interreg cooperation focused on resilience and safety as defined in the priorities of the Interreg Italy-Croatia Programme 2014-2020.

The process of capitalisation is very useful to both Programme structures and beneficiaries to provide a comprehensive overview of the knowledge and experiences achieved, while making the thematic contribution and added-value of cooperation clear. With this publication we want to:

- Benchmark knowledge and experiences and consolidate the work done;
- Improve performance and delivery;
- Make the capital, know-how and results more accessible and transferable to others;
- Help communication and awareness raising about achieved results.

The E-CITIJENS project established practices to ensure capitalization of Interreg cooperation. In a nutshell, four points can be highlighted to make clear and visible the contribution of the E-CITIJENS to the Programme's priority axis on safety and resilience. These are:

- The establishment of a winning partnership with both administrative units in Italy and Croatia dealing with civil protection activities;
- The creation of a three-languages EDSS platform to support civil protection in a better crisis management and to improve Civil Protection cooperation in the area, implying a strong engagement of citizens, including their proactive participation awareness raising activities and in demonstrative and pilot actions;
- The engagement of local and regional decision-makers and endorsing a Adoption Plan based on an Emergency Services Regulatory Framework which includes the use of the EDSS Platform and the establishment of a Cross-Border Functional Centre as a hub of exchange of information on emergencies that may pose common threats;
- The importance given to internationalizing results as well as to creating synergies with other Interreg projects aimed at a greater transferability of results beyond the cooperation area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overall objective

The objective of the E-CITIJENS project is to increase the safety of the Croatian and Italian Adriatic basin from natural and man-made disasters by enhancing Civil Protection's capacity at reducing disaster risk through an innovative emergency management system capable of harnessing the potential of social media networks

Specific objectives:

- equip the Civil Protection with an advanced and efficient Emergency Decision Support System (EDSS), based on a semantically enriched web platform integrating institutional data sources, local sensors and real-time updates voluntarily provided by citizens via the social media (citizen journalism)
- raising citizens' awareness of their role of «active sensors», while stimulating them towards a responsible use of social media during emergencies
- harmonise the Civil Protection Regulatory System in Italy and Croatia by identifying similarities and differences, critical issues to be dealt with, and by developing common technology-based operational models

E-CITIJENS main activities:

- A scientific analysis of current risk scenarios, emergency management legislation and social media applications to model a «social media based» Civil Protection emergency management system in three target risk categories: *floods, forest fires, earthquakes*
- Developing, testing and releasing a «social media based» Emergency Decision Support System (EDSS) platform also through 6 pilot deployments, simulations and exercises, aimed at assessing available methodologies, monitoring systems and technical knowledge across the cooperation area
- A Citizenship Awareness Raising Campaign targeting 150.000 people through a sustained programme of events including 12 Info Days and 30 Work Cafes, and participation in several international conferences in order to reach out to the widest scientific and civil protection community

- Definition of an Emergency Services Regulatory Framework and final Adoption Plan by directly involving local/regional elected members and public officials as well as representatives of civil protection and other emergency structures in 6 capacity building workshops

Main project outputs:

- A «social media based» Emergency Decision Support System (EDSS) platform, a Civil Protection Emergency System Model and a Cross-border Functional Centre, representing operational instruments to ameliorate the efficiency of emergency management
- A Citizens Participatory Awareness Raising Framework and a Cross-border Emergency Services Regulatory Framework, representing permanent guidelines for future actions and measures

General Background

The Italy-Croatia area is particularly prone to frequent and various natural and man-made disasters that can cause significant human losses, damages to the environment and infrastructures. Civil Protection is called to develop operational strategies, methodologies and tools to respond to challenges that by their nature do not know borders. The Republic of Croatia and the Italian Republic have long-term cooperation in the field of civil protection, as they are neighbouring countries that have common risks such as earthquakes, floods, fires pollution and accidents at sea. This is the basis for further improving bilateral cooperation aimed at developing new emergency management capacity, under the Interreg Cross-Border Cooperation Italy-Croatia Programme.

The Programme enables regional and local stakeholders to exchange knowledge and experiences, to develop and implement pilot action products and services, to support investments, to test the feasibility of new policies. In the 2014-2020 programming cycle, Priority Axis "Safety and Resilience" supported investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches, and to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems. Under this priority, Specific Objective 2.2 supported cooperation for the development of common tools and schemes for monitoring risks and managing emergencies.

This is the context in which the E-CITIJENS project was designed and implemented.

Analysis of capitalization

In order to examine the role of the E-CITIJENS project had in contributing to the capitalization of territorial cooperation in the fields of civil protection, as especially linked to the active engagement of citizens, we compared the project against a previous Interreg Italy-Croatia project, READINESS. The analysis of capitalization brings to the conclusion that E-CITIJENS project can be seen as a capitalization best practice of civic engagement in emergency situations.



Project name READINESS Resilience Enhancement of Adriatic basin from fire and Seismic

Lead Partner Molise Region (IT) – III department policies and development

Partners Dubrovnik and Neretva County; Marche Region - Education Vocational Training Guidance and Territorial Services Unit; Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region - Civil Protection; Split-Dalmatia County; EURelations European Economic Interest Grouping; Zadar County.

Website <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/readiness>

Implementation period 01.01.2018 - 30.06.2019

Main topic Mitigating the exposure of citizens to fire and seismic hazards by means of improved joint emergency services response and innovative crisis management procedures. The project capitalized the methodologies, best practices and results of a previous IPA Adriatic project called HOLISTIC

Main results 3 Thematic enhancement and adaptation reports - 1 Pilot Operational Plan Framework - 6 Pilot Deployment of Civil Protection and Volunteers Advanced Training - 6 Pilot Deployment of Citizen Promptness Raise Awareness - 1 Report on implementation and evaluation of pilot deployment - 1 Transfer plan of policy recommendations - 6 Regional one day training workshops



Project name E-CITIJENS Civil Protection Emergency DSS based on CITIZen Journalism to ENhance Safety of Adriatic Basin

Lead Partner Molise Region (IT) - Civil Protection

Partners Veneto Region - Civil Protection; Split-Dalmatia County; University of Split - Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Geodesy; Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna; EURelations European Economic Interest Grouping; Municipality of Pescara; Adriatic Ionian Euroregion; Zadar County Rural Development Agency – AGRRA; City of Dubrovnik.

Website <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/e-citijens>

Implementation period 01.01.2019 - 30.06.2022

Main topic Increasing the safety of the Croatian and Italian Adriatic basin natural and man-made disaster by improving monitoring and emergency management measures based on the active involvement of citizens. It pursued this goal through the creation of advanced and efficient decision support system (EDSS) which, harnessing the characteristics of the social media network, was aimed at significantly enhancing Civil Protection's capacity in reducing disaster risk.

Main results 1 "social media based" Civil Protection Emergency System Model - 1 Citizens Participatory Awareness Raise Framework - 1 "social media based" Emergency Decision Support System platform - 1 Cross-border Functional Center - 6 Pilot Deployments - 6 regional two-days training workshops - 1 set of Capacity Building training lessons and manuals - 1 Emergency Services Regulatory Framework - 1 Transfer intervention of ESR Framework - 1 Civil Protection Adoption Plan

Establishing a winning partnership

READINESS and **E-CITIJENS** are thematically and methodologically linked: both focus on risks that are common to Italy and Croatia (forest fires, earthquakes) and put a great emphasis on cross-border cooperation aimed at improving joint emergency response and innovative procedures. As compared to **READINESS**, the **E-CITIJENS** project involved a higher number of regional and local administrative units that deal with civil protection in Italy and Croatia (Molise Region, Veneto Region, Municipality of Pescara, Split-Dalmatia County, Zadar County and City of Dubrovnik) and saw their proactive cooperation in the creation, testing and release of a common EDSS platform. The involvement of EuRelations EEIG guaranteed continuity with **READINESS** and the exploitation of its results in **E-CITIJENS**, giving impulse to the innovativeness of project's desired outputs. Furthermore, the involvement of academic partners, the Universities of Bologna and the University of Split, was crucial to model a new civil protection emergency system, to provide information and training to target groups as well as to share results with the specialized and scientific community. The focus on communication and dissemination, also a crucial element of the **E-CITIJENS** project, was entrusted to the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, one of the key networks of local and regional authorities in the Adriatic Ionian area. Without the establishment of such **winning partnership** and without the expertise and commitment of each project partner, the **E-CITIJENS** would have not reached the results and the impact obtained.

Putting citizens at the center of an innovative, "social media-based" emergency decision support system

Both **READINESS** and **E-CITIJENS** projects had a strong focus on civic engagement and on promoting communication among civil protection and citizens, **through awareness raising actions**¹. While **READINESS** involved mostly young citizens in education and training activities, the **E-CITIJENS** extended engagement actions to a wider target group (including university students and adults). Citizens were mobilized to assume the role of "active sensors" of emergencies and to participate in the fine-tuning of a modern emergency decision support system based on an online EDSS platform, providing Civil Protection with key, real-time and place-based information via their social media profiles. The **EDSS platform**

¹ A separate publication about the different activities carried out as part of the «Citizens Awareness Raising Campaign» is available on the project's website: <https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/e-citijens>.

was designed to integrate social media-based information to other, official sources of emergency data (resource centres, sensors networks). For this reason, a particular emphasis was put on informing citizens about the **responsible use of social media during emergencies**. Citizens were also actively involved in open **demonstrative and pilot actions** aimed at testing the EDSS platform by simulating emergency scenarios. These simulated events allowed to make citizens aware of the crucial moment in which they would provide civil protection operators with real-time, place-based alerts through their activity on social media and, thus, to understand themselves as integral part of the emergency decision-making process. For these reasons, the EDSS platform can be considered the step forward in a better emergency management based on citizens' active participation through the social media, according to the so-called "citizens journalism" paradigm.

Engagement of decision-makers

Last but not least, the E-CITIJENS promoted the **engagement of local and regional decision-makers** in endorsing the project outputs. By means of capacity building actions representatives of local and regional authorities were proactively involved in real-time simulations of the EDSS platform. The workshops were also designed to provide a comparative analysis of Italian and Croatian legislation and of the main challenges to the adoption of the EDSS platform, as examined in a common **Emergency Services Regulatory Framework**. Also, the establishment of a **Cross-Border Functional Centre** as a hub for the exchange of data and experiences on common emergencies and threats was promoted. Capacity building workshops were streamed online on the project's official [youtube channel](#).

Decision makers were also involved in the final Cross-Border Conference held on 14 June 2022 in Dubrovnik. The Conference "The social media-based Emergency Response Decision Support System" was focused on presenting local and regional stakeholders, including decision-makers, civil protection officials and experts the results of the project and closed with the signature of a common Adoption Plan Protocol.

The feedback received during these meetings and at the Conference show that the hypothesis of **mainstreaming** the E-CITIJENS tools into public policy is concrete, as regions and local authorities are attracted by the possibility to use them.

Transferability of results beyond the cooperation area

During the implementation of the project, the scientific partners supported the partnership in **transferring knowledge, experience and results** to the international specialized and scientific community. In 2019 and 2021, the E-CITIJENS project was presented at the [TIEMS Annual Forum](#) by the University of Split. The project Lead Partner, Molise Region presented the main results of the project at the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction ([EFDRR 2021](#)), at the [REMTECH EXPO 2021](#) and the [ASITA National Conference](#) «Geodata and models for urban and regional planning». The University of Bologna presented a publication at the International Conference on Safety and Environment in the Process & Power Industry - [CISAP 10](#). Beyond the scientific community, the project was made known to stakeholders in the cooperation area, through the participation in the [FIRESPELL International Conference](#) on Disaster Management.

Molise Region created synergies with the Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro [TO BE READY](#) project. By transferring knowledge, tools and experiences, these actions help sustain project results after the closure of activities and extend its impact beyond the Italy-Croatia cooperation area. The TO BE READY project aims at enhancing prevention and preparedness measures regarding natural and man-made risks in Albania, Italy and Montenegro through joint protocols and ICT tools. Thanks to the synergy between TO BE READY and E-CITIJENS, the Molise Region extended the operability of the EDSS platform to include a wider area of Molise. Also, TO BE READY adopted 5 workstations where civil protection operators will use the EDSS platform and is creating two mobile apps that will interoperate with it. The project acquired 5 workstations. The Molise Region is also working to creating a fruitful synergy with the Interreg ADRION [TransCPEarlyWarning](#) project, which was presented at the E-CITIJENS final Cross-Border Conference held in Dubrovnik.



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