



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 13/09/2016

## **Disaster management leaders discuss in Paris how to improve prevention and reaction against extreme weather events**

- The International workshop “**Increasing Resilience to Natural hazards through Information and Communication Technology**”, organised on 14-15 September 2016 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, will bring together policy-makers, emergency service providers and science and technology experts from different European countries to discuss key issues and deficiencies in disaster risk reduction.
- The workshop is organised by UNESCO under the European Commission-funded innovation project “Improving Resilience to Emergencies through Advanced Cyber Technologies” (I-REACT), which aims to use new information and communication technologies to support the entire emergency management cycle in case of floods, wildfires, and other extreme weather events.

**Paris, France, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016.**

Extreme disasters such as fires and floods cause thousands of deaths and serious economic losses around the globe. In the past 10 years, according to the United Nations, extreme events cost up to 1.7 trillion of dollars and caused 0.7 million deaths. Besides, with the ongoing rise in global temperatures due to climate change, extreme weather events and their consequences will become more and more frequent.

In order to respond to this growing problem, the I-REACT consortium is holding an international workshop to exchange ideas, identify deficiencies and improve current systems for disaster risk reduction. The workshop will gather civil protections, emergency responders, policy-makers, emergency service providers and science and technology experts from different European countries.

The event, hosted by UNESCO, is a milestone of the innovation project I-REACT. The project brings together 20 partners from 9 European countries to develop an emergency management system leveraging on new information and communication technologies, crowdsourced data and technologies such as augmented reality.

The two-day workshop in Paris is built upon an interactive framework in which emergency responders and international advisors will interplay with I-REACT system developers, providing feedback on how the system should be conceived, designed and developed in order to better tackle the hazards at stakes - mainly floods and wildfires. In particular, the event is aimed at how to bridge the gap between innovative solutions and end users in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) due to the lack of information, the inherent complexity of modern tools of and poor interoperability.

The workshop is consistent with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which stresses the importance of using appropriate communications, geospatial and space-based technologies together with their related services to strengthen the use of mobile phone networks to support national measures for successful disaster risk communication, as appropriate and in accordance with national laws.

Fabrizio Dominici, I-REACT project coordinator stresses out that “fostering discussion between the different players in the emergency management process is essential to collectively increase the resilience of societies”. In this sense, “the workshop in Paris will serve to identify venues in which I-REACT will contribute to improving prediction and management of natural disasters in real scenarios such as those faced daily by authorities, civil protection services and first-responders”.

## **Contact**

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