

## **Collaborative Governance and Emergency Management: A Case Study of Latvia**

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### **Abstract**

Emergencies – crises, disasters and catastrophes – cannot be managed by individuals or one organization, collaborative actions are needed. In the context of this paper, a two-part research on collaborative governance and emergency management in Latvia has been carried out. This research is important because due to extreme weather conditions even “safe” countries should be able to deal with frequently recorded emergencies. It also contributes to the literature on emergency management in the context of Europe. The method of a case study was employed for this qualitative research seeking to clarify the situation and provide answers to the research question. The research showed that much attention is being given to coordinating emergency management systems in Latvia. The new Civil Defence and Disaster Management Law is the legal basis for collaborative actions but it should be amended to ensure not only formal but also practical collaboration.

**Keywords:** collaborative governance, emergency management, Latvia.

### **Introduction**

Dealing with emergencies is not an individual action because the scale and complexity of an emergency can exceed individual capabilities. Public administration plays an important role in drawing up plans for the first response to emergency situations. However, often we see that public administration can be overwhelmed by an emergency. There can be a lot of factors that contribute to unpreparedness of public administration, sometimes it is a lack of understanding of the importance to be prepared for an emergency, sometimes it is the country’s socio-economic situation. No matter what the reason is, when overwhelmed other actors, non-governmental organizations, have to get involved in lending a

hand and helping the affected community return to normality as soon as possible. To make that happen effective communication and cooperation must be established well in advance. Such collaboration can be beneficial not only in times of emergencies but also before they strike, during the process of planning, risk reduction and fostering resilience via information sharing, coordination and trust building.

Unfortunately, in the domain of emergency management it is quite common that emergency planning and preparedness are neglected. Since emergencies – crisis, disasters and catastrophes – are “low probability-high consequence” events, public administration organizations, businesses and civilians might not deem it rational to spend time, money and energy to prepare for something that “might never happen”. This can create apathy, that can be reinforced by both too many warnings that eventually numb the public (N. Kapucu, 2008) or what could be called “the boy who cried wolf” effect and also by little or no past experience with various types of emergencies that can create the “since it has never happened before, why should it happen now” mindset. This can lead to overconfidence, a lack of expertise and material, technological and human resources, inappropriate planning, coordination and communication, and many other issues, that undermine effective and efficient actions in times of need. A lack of proper action in an emergency situation can further lead to a diminished trust in authorities and calls for someone to take responsibility for the failings.

This paper aims to explore the practices of collaborative governance and types of participants involved in the domain of emergency management

in the case of Latvia. This topic is worth looking into it. Firstly, recovering from an emergency situation – crisis, disaster or a catastrophe – can take a lot of resources, especially monetary, that could be better allocated to other activities or needs so it is only rational to try to avoid or mitigate potential losses in advance. Secondly, extreme weather conditions become increasingly more frequent, even countries that have thus far managed without planning preparedness for extensive disasters will need to address this issue in a not so distant future. Thirdly, even though dealing with an emergency is, first and foremost, a task for local task authorities of the affected community, national level authorities lay out the foundations for emergency preparedness and management via laws, strategies, resource allocation, cooperation agreements, etc. This means that the general tone or an attitude towards emergency management is dictated at the national level. Usually the government and its resources get involved only if the local authorities are overwhelmed and conditions are met in order to receive additional aid. Fourthly, it is also beneficial to examine this case in the context of policy learning. Changes – or their absence – in collaborative practices can serve as an indicator of whether governments are learning from past experiences – changes in laws and policies have been made, new parties have been involved in collaboration, research has been carried out, etc. And, finally, being informed about the existing situation allows to identify the areas that need improvement what, in turn, helps diminish vulnerability and improve preparedness at local, regional and national levels.

This paper seeks to explore collaborative governance in the domain of emergency management through the case of Latvia. It is expected that this paper will contribute to the existing literature on collaborative governance in the domain of emergency management in the context of European countries. This article also hopes to contribute to the literature on emergency management in the context of Latvia, since here research regarding emergency management is quite underdeveloped, and foster further discussion both locally and abroad regarding collaboration and emergency management. It is expected that this research will also allow to identify the areas that need improvement. It must be noted that terminology poses certain difficulties when it comes to analysing policy documents, since in Latvian “cooperation” and “collaboration” have the same translation – “sadarbība”.

## **Emergency management and collaborative governance**

As with many concepts in social sciences, here too a single definition of the term is lacking. For example, collaborative governance (collaboration) can be defined more broadly as “a way of working with diverse stakeholders to co-create enduring solutions to our most complex issues, problems and dilemmas” (Twyford, Dengate, Hardy, Waters, & Annells, 2011), or as “the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished” (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012), or in a more constricted context as “a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets” (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 544).

According to the third definition, public sector organizations are the ones to make the first step and treat other involved stakeholders, e.g. regional or local authorities and NGOs as equals when it comes to making a decision. And “the focus of collaboration is on public policy or public management” (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 545). This means that the decisions or policies are to be made via compromise, and not adversarially (in the “winner-takes-all” fashion), nor “unilaterally or through closed decision process, typically relying on agency experts to make decisions (Futrell, 2003; Willias and Matheny, 1995; Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 547). In the context of this article, however, a simple definition provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the United States of America, which defines collaboration as “the process by which two or more entities make a formal and sustained commitment to work together on a common mission” (FEMA, 2013, p. 39) will be used. This definition was chosen since it is provided by and for practitioners – people, whose daily work consists of researching, mitigating of and responding to various levels of emergency situations.

Collaboration and cooperation are not synonyms, even though sometimes in the literature these terms are used interchangeably. Cooperation is defined as “when each member of the team openly works toward a common purpose or benefit but there is no expectation of shared work (quid pro

quo)” (FEMA, 2015). For example, cooperation is when two or more organizations share the same information on their social media sites to catch a criminal [a common purpose – no shared work], while collaboration would be working together to develop standard operating procedures or protocols for dealing with potential attacks [common purpose – shared resources (time, expertise, information, etc.)].

Collaboration *per se* is generally seen as a good thing, since working together helps to identify and target important and complex problems, fosters agreement and acceptance amongst involved parties, promotes learning and shared experience, and can help boost organizational capacity (Wanna, 2008). However, it also presents certain challenges: the unwillingness of government organizations to share their power and accountability, accountability becoming blurred, which can lead the involved parties to blaming each other in case there are issues of failure, the decision-making process could be slowed down, some of the involved parties might not feel that the decisions made are not binding to them and, in worst cases, collaboration can be used to persuade other important stakeholders on a decision or a course of action, that has already been agreed upon, via manipulation making them feel that the decision was their own (Wanna, 2008). In the domain of emergency management collaboration can be seen as very useful since emergencies – crises, disasters and catastrophes – are wicked problems that require many stakeholders from various sectors to collaborate, communicate and coordinate in order to deal with the situation expeditiously and minimize the amount of material and human life loss. In the context of this paper the term “stakeholder” refers to all interested parties – private citizens and their groups, non-governmental organizations, private organizations and public administration organizations of various levels.

Collaboration is used in many aspects of public life: local service delivery (Hilvert & Swindell, 2013), generating knowledge for research and improved decision-making (Kapucu, 2014), healthcare and technological innovations (Lang, 2016; Ngar-yin Mah & Hills, 2014), pursuing social equity (Jos, 2014) and civic festivals (Cabral & Krane, 2016) just to name a few. In the domain of emergency management collaboration is regarded as very important for managing emergencies effectively and efficiently. A lot of attention is being paid to building networks as an important driver of collaboration (Kapucu & Hu, 2014; Kapucu, Augustin, Garayev & Augustin, 2009; Kapucu & Garayev, 2011) and the challenges and needs these networks pose in the context of leadership during emergency situations

(Huxham & Vangen, 2016; Kapucu, 2011; Waugh & Streib, 2006). And, since networks are such an important part of managing emergencies, the issue of evaluating the network performance in order to better understand and explain the reasons for both success and failure in various contexts (Nohrstedt, 2013) and, since emergency management deals with practical literature, a big part of the literature is dedicated to research and sharing of practical lessons learned regarding existing arrangements and devising new and/or improved activities and strategies (Carmody, 2008; FEMA, 2013; Kapucu, 2008). It must be noted, however, that most of this literature concentrates on cases and experiences in countries outside of Europe, mostly the United States of America, leaving a considerable “knowledge gap” when it comes to Europe. It must be noted, however, that not having a clear, prescribed set of activities creates issues when it comes to comparing various approaches and evaluating them in order to find an optimal course of action.

## Research design

In the context of this paper, a two-part research question is posed: Which 1) types and 2) activities of collaboration can be identified in the domain of emergency management in the case of Latvia? This paper uses a case study method in order to gain an overview of the existing situation in the selected case – Latvia – in the context of the research question posed. In order to answer the research question posed, a document analysis method was employed. The documents analysed include laws, policies, yearly reports, reports on policy implementation, strategies of particular organizations, cooperation agreements, reports by local and international researchers. The sources described above provide *prima facie* evidence of if and how collaboration takes place in the domain of emergency management in Latvia. Since this research does not aim to explore causalities but rather is diagnostic in nature, no dependency relationships are defined. In order to answer the research question posed, the following tasks were outlined: 1) to construct a theoretical framework; 2) to provide a brief system context of the selected case; 3) to gather information from qualitatively examined the above mentioned types of documents, and 4) to draw conclusions from the information gathered.

## Theoretical framework

In emergency (aka disaster) management, a four phase disaster cycle is used to break down any particular incident and help managing it by assigning a set of tasks or activities in each phase. This helps

the process unfold as smoothly as possible. The four phases (Beinaroviča, 2014; Coppola, 2006; Kapucu, 2008; Sundar & Sezhiyan, 2007) are:

1) response – the mobilization of first responder forces, technical and material resources in order to help the affected community with search and rescue and to satisfy their basic needs for food, water, shelter, etc. In this phase non-governmental actors (non-governmental organizations, private voluntary organizations, professional associations, donor agencies, private businesses, etc.) can play an important part in providing personnel – both trained professionals and civilian volunteers – resources, helping with support operations, such as handing out food, providing both, survivors and first responders, with safe and clean water, clothes, sanitation, assisting first responders in the field, providing medical supplies, etc. A good example of this kind of organization is the Red Cross. Private businesses, e.g. can help by volunteering their workers, e.g. engineers, equipment, resources to help clean up the affected area. These non-governmental actors can also be essential in providing care for animals and pets of the affected community members;

2) recovery – in this phase the damage done by the incident is being assessed, people are accommodated in temporary housing if needed, repairs are being carried out in order to return to normality as soon as possible. This phase also entails activities aimed at helping overcome the psychological trauma created by the incidents. This refers to both, the affected community and their relatives and the first responders involved in dealing with the consequences of the incident or working search and rescue. In this respect non-governmental actors and community groups can prove to be quite useful in helping with locating relatives of survivors or providing counselling and support regarding grief and trauma, for example, the clergy or professional associations of mental health professionals, e.g. the American Counselling Association. This is especially important when it comes to preventing suicide and helping people deal with the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Non-governmental actors can also help with rebuilding the affected community by organizing of and participating in joint work, donating money, materials and/or work.

3) mitigation – addresses the tasks of analysing the incident, its causes, the performance of the stakeholders involved – first responders, ministries, public administration organizations, community, non-governmental actors, etc. – in helping to deal with the aftermath in order to lessen the uncovered deficiencies and improving overall resilience. This can happen, for example, through

official government inquiry or academic research consulting practitioners, specialists – both local and foreign – and survivors. This can lead, for example, to adjustment of existing or development of new emergency management policies, strategies, instruction manuals, etc. and new organizational bodies. Non-governmental actors play an important role in this context since they can provide neutrality and specialist expertise that is crucial for investigating the disaster. Law professionals, e.g. can help the affected community by providing pro-bono legal representation.

4) preparedness – encompasses activities aimed at disseminating knowledge and the lessons learned to the appropriate audiences in order to foster proactivity, preparedness and resilience. This can be done through, for example, joined simulation exercises of various public administration organizations, educational seminars in schools, various emergency drills, etc.; non-governmental actors can also help with educating the public, e.g. as is done by the Red Cross via organizing First Aid Games for school youth. Collaboration is especially important in the case of organizations of increased risk – those that work with hazardous materials, e.g. nuclear or chemical plants. These organizations need to work closely with the fire and rescue departments, regulatory agencies and other relevant parties via, e.g. regular sharing of information and joint training exercises.

“Particular agencies or groups are associated with these emergency management phases” (Kapucu, 2008, p. 244). As the author notes, that is not a bad thing, since having particular expertise can prove beneficial in providing leadership regarding particular activities in specific stages of the emergency management cycle. However, “it can result in the exclusion of other perspectives, to the detriment of a holistic disaster management approach” (Kapucu, 2008, p. 244). This is why, in order to add another dimension to the case study, the types of participants involved in the collaboration activities for emergency management will be looked at. One can distinguish between four types of collaboration: 1) intergovernmental collaboration involving different agencies and players, 2) collaboration between various governments at different levels, 3) collaboration between governments and external third-party providers of goods and services and 4) collaboration between governments and individual citizens/clients” (Wanna, 2008, p. 6). Type 1 collaboration includes collaboration between government ministries or municipalities and, e.g. fire and rescue services or various subordinate agencies or institutions; Type 2 includes collaboration between

governments of differing jurisdictions as well as international collaboration between governments and organizations; Type 3 includes collaboration at various government levels government organizations with non-governmental and private organizations; while Type 4 includes collaboration of various governments and government organizations with experts, practitioners and researchers. Emergency management requires all four of these interactions to take place in order to be successful. Emergencies are characterized by very little amount of time when it comes to making decisions. This means that pre-existing protocols or plans of roles, communication, subordination, standard operating procedures, etc. can help lessen the confusion, prevent information from “getting lost” and help create a certain sense of control in a situation seemingly takes it away. A good example of such protocols is the TRIAGE system, which clearly defines how medical professionals should operate in mass casualty disasters in order to help as many people as possible with the limited resources available.

The majority of the activities associated with establishing collaboration in the domain of emergency management are to be carried out during the phases of mitigation and preparedness. The reason for that is quite simple – during an emergency situation there is simply no time for that. In an emergency decisions need to be made in a very short amount of time, there is also not much time to mobilize resources and personnel because people are suffering right now. These activities include: reaching a consensus regarding understating the problem and ways of solving it, building alliances, defining common goals and priorities, defining roles and responsibilities, joined planning, conducting joined training exercises for professionals and educational campaigns for the wider public, developing communication systems and protocols, conveying necessary analysis of past experiences and various assessments (e.g. needs, risks, capabilities, etc.) (CDC, 2012; FEMA, 2013).

Also both, collaboration and emergency management activities are carried out not in a vacuum. System context – a concept borrowed from the Integrative Framework of Collaborative Governance created by Kirk Emerson, Tina Nabatchi and Stephen Balogh (Emerson et al., 2012) – refers to all of the influences that exist in a particular context that might have an impact on how collaborative governance is organized and implemented. These include historical, socio-economic, legal, cultural and other factors. This factor or dimension cannot be neglected, since it provides context and promotes a better understanding of why things, in this case collaboration, happen the way they do.

### **System context: in brief**

Latvia is located in a seismically stable region and generally does not experience many or severe emergency situations. The Index for Risk Management (INFORM) ranks Latvia as 170<sup>th</sup> (out of 190) with a score of 1.5, which classifies it as a “very low risk” country (INFORM, 2016). It is most exposed to floods and scores poorly in such categories as corruption perception, domestic food price volatility, government effectiveness and investment into healthcare (INFORM, 2016). However, it must be noted that the data available do not paint the whole picture. The data on emergency situations and statistics is fragmented and difficult to find. A lot of resources must be devoted to gain even an approximate picture of the situation. And the available data have quite a few “holes”. For example, the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) created by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) has listed only 8 emergency situations in Latvia since 1990 (CRED, n.d.) and does not include, for example, a tragic fire in a social care centre in 2007 that cost 23 lives (LETA, 2007) or the spring floods and the fire of the president’s castle in 2013.

In Latvia, two levels of emergency management can be distinguished – notational level and municipality level. Civil defence (emergency management) is regulated by the Civil Defence Law passed in 2007 which is a “mixture of one level or institution centric coordination (Prime Minister’s Office) and a combination of multi-level inter-agency preparedness and response” (Hellenberg & Visuri, 2014, p. 4). The Civil Defence Law outlines the structure and organization of the civil defence system, its main tasks and management, it also outlines the tasks of the parties involved – government organizations, fire and rescue services (VUGD), the tasks and rights of municipalities, businesses and civilian citizens (LR Saeima, 2006). It also regulates cooperation with the armed forces, planning for and financing of civil defence, educational activities, involvement of various stakeholders as well as providing humanitarian aid to other countries that have been struck by a disaster (LR Saeima, 2006). Although almost all government ministries are to be involved in the development of emergency management and planning activities and policies, the vast majority of responsibility falls under the jurisdiction on the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), since police, Security police and VUGD are subject to MoI. In the domain of emergency management, the operations are carried out by VUGD with the help of emergency medical services and the military, when and if needed.

The year 2013 can be characterised as crucial in the context of emergency management in Latvia. Three major emergency situations tested the capacity of organizations tasked with emergency management – spring floods, fire in the president’s castle in June and the Maxima supermarket collapse in November. The damage caused by these three emergencies was estimated around 40 million Euros (Beinaroviča, 2014; BNS, 2014). 54 people lost their lives in the supermarket collapse and one person drowned in the floods (Beinaroviča, 2014). Many more were injured. In sum, the events of 2013 required the involvement of many government agencies and exposed many vulnerabilities in emergency preparedness and management in Latvia, e.g. the Civil Defence plan did not include structural collapse as an existing hazard, the outdated equipment of fire and rescue services, the general unpreparedness of the people that manifested as dismissing emergency alarms, lack of inter-organizational trust and communication, faulty infrastructure and lack of learning from past experiences (Beinaroviča, 2014). These events might not seem very disastrous in comparison with the hurricane Katrina or the recent earthquakes in Italy. However, disasters are a social construct and the perception of an emergency situation depends heavily on such aspects as, e.g. historic experience and the socio-economic situation. In Latvia’s case, these events focused a lot of attention and promoted calls for change.

While this paper was written, there were significant changes. On 1 October 2016, a new Civil Defence and Disaster Management Law entered into force. This law adds the regulations on risk assessment, evacuation, coordination between ministries, the tasks and rights of municipality chairman/leader, the review of the functioning and the compliance of the civil defence system (LR Saeima, 2016). However, this new law does not regulate voluntary involvement in emergency (or disaster) management. It also does not mention collaboration or cooperation with any non-governmental actors.

## Findings

In Latvia, the identification of collaborative efforts regarding emergency management first and foremost meets with the difficulty of terminology. In Latvian both “collaboration” and “cooperation” translate into the same word – “sadarbība”. So the actions reported were assessed based on their “spirit” – whether they are aimed at sharing work, information, responsibility, etc. as was described in the section on emergency management and collaborative governance. It must be noted that in

many instances the term “sadarbība” is not used at all. The documents use the term “coordination”, which is not a synonym to “cooperation” or “collaboration”. Coordination is directed towards efficiency: “coordination looks to inform each unit or part of the whole as to how and when it must act. [...]. Unlike coordination, collaboration seeks divergent insight and spontaneity, not structural harmony” (Denise, 1999, pp. 2-3). So, in short, coordination is about making sub-units in the same domain, in this case – emergency management – look the same, while collaboration encourages using existing differences as means of producing a new outlook, new perspectives, etc.

In the domain of emergency management, preconditions for collaboration as well as already existing collaborative activities of various types in the particular case of Latvia, can be identified:

Type 1 or intergovernmental collaboration involving different agencies and players. Here, the biggest emphasis is on coordination. At national level (ministries and their subordinate institutions), activities are mainly constrained to sharing of information via reporting to the MoI on activities in the domain of emergency management as well as propositions for improving the existing civil defence plan (LR Saeima, 2006). However, in practice it is quite difficult to identify whether these activities are taking place and to what extent, provided they do happen, the information and recommendations are taken into account, since: a) these reports are not made public by the ministries and b) the latest available version of the civil defence plan is the one accepted in 2010 and lost its validity in 2011 (LR Iekšlietu ministrija, 2010). The new Civil Defence and Disaster Management Law of 2016 formally expands coordination and so also creates basis for collaborative efforts by requiring almost all of the ministries to conduct risk assessment in their respective domains, based on which further emergency planning is to be conducted. It also states that the person tasked with managing the relief efforts “has the right to involve government and municipal institutions, legal and private persons, as well as their resources” (LR Saeima, 2016) into the elimination of consequences created by the disaster. The new Civil Defence and Disaster Management Law of 2016 also provides a formal basis for collaboration of this type by stating that the respective ministry or municipality “by involving institutions subjected to it, other ministries and government and municipal institutions are to carry out risk assessments, define preventive, preparedness and response activities, develop domain’s policy documents and identify

and calculate the resources needed for managing of disasters” (LR Saeima, 2016).

Type 2 or collaboration between various governments at different levels. Here as well an emphasis is put on the “sameness” of the system. Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 423 define the structure, development and approving of municipality civil defence plans (LR Ministru kabinets, 2007). These regulations basically give the municipality a template to fill out in order to construct a local emergency management plan. However, these regulations also include collaborative dimension. The emergency management plans in a municipality are to be developed in collaboration with local VUGD structural unit and after VUGD has approved the final version of a particular plan, neighbouring municipalities are allowed to combine their emergency management plans into a single emergency management plan (LR Ministru kabinets, 2007). This promotes building of alliances, sharing of resources, information, experience and expertise, which are essential for collaboration and collaborative governance. This can also be seen in practice, where several municipalities have combined their efforts and created joined civil defence councils, e.g. Rēzeknes county and Viļānu county municipalities, and Daugavpils city, Daugavpils county and Ilūkstes county municipalities (Daugavpils pilsētas dome, 2009; Rēzeknes novada dome, 2009), as well as joined civil defence plans, e.g. Ciblas, Kārsavas, Ludzas and Zilupes county municipalities, Preiļu, Riebiņu, Aglonas and Vārkaavas county municipalities (Ludzas novada pašvaldība, 2011; Vārkavas novada pašvaldība, 2009). These plans clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved as well as what resources are to be involved in managing emergency situations.

Collaborative activities can also be identified regarding international level. For example, humanitarian aid was provided to Bulgaria, Ukraine, Slovenia and Greece (VUGD, 2016c), VUGD representatives took part in various meetings, e.g. the meeting of the Directors-General of the Rescue services of the Baltic States, or the meeting of the European Commission civil defence working group (LR Iekšlietu ministrija, 2014), or the meeting of European Commission Civil defence committee in Brussels (VUGD, 2016b). VUGD operatives also take part in various educational courses offered at international level. Various projects directed toward cross-border collaboration have also been implemented, for example, Collaboration in the domain of cross-border civil defence in the Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus region (LR Iekšlietu ministrija, 2014) or The development of joined Latvian-

Lithuanian technical support team (VUGD, 2016b). VUGD also takes part in planning for and hosting international training exercises, e.g. LatMODEX 2016 (VUGD, 2016a) or BaltFloodEx 2012 (VUGD, 2010). It must be noted that when it comes to various projects regarding collaboration, only activities of international level are reported (VUGD, 2014, 2015, 2016b).

Type 3 or collaboration between governments and external third-party providers of goods and services. Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 423 also prescribe a similar template of creating an emergency management plan alongside the one directed at municipalities. The new Civil Defence and Disaster Management Law of 2016 does not mention collaboration or cooperation with non-governmental organizations or any non-governmental sector stakeholders, except for those operating facilities of increased danger (e.g. chemical plants). At this level, however, many practical collaborative efforts between many stakeholders can be identified, for example, organizing joined civil defence training exercises (Lidosta Liepāja, 2016; Notiek civilās aizsardzības mācības, 2016; Rīgas Brīvostas Pārvalde, 2016; Ventspils pilsētas dome, 2013; VUGD, 2012). In 2014 13 and in 2015, 6 practical training exercises were organized (VUGD, 2016c, p. 11). Both Civil defence laws (2007 and 2016) require VUGD to collaborate with the managements of businesses and facilitates of increased danger in developing their emergency management plans as well as assessing them and their compliance.

When it comes to collaboration with non-governmental organizations, very little information is available in the domain of emergency management. For example, the Latvian Red Cross does not even list MoI or VUGD as their partners in collaboration (Latvijas Sarkanais Krusts, n.d.). Only voluntary organizations (national context) mentioned in the yearly reports of VUGD are the voluntary fire fighters’ organizations.

Type 4 or collaboration between governments and individual citizens/client. When it comes to collaborating with individual citizens, e.g. researchers, experts or practitioners, no information is available.

Additionally, when it comes to involving stakeholders in the decision-making process some concerns are raised. The new Civil Defence and Disaster Management Law received many criticisms and recommendations regarding its contents and formulation (LPS, 2014; Pietiek, 2016; Pilseta 24.lv, 2015). The objections include calls for a clearer definition of competencies, leadership, operative actions, sharing of information and many more

(LPS, 2014). Despite all of that this law was passed in the summer of 2015 (BNS, 2015). The fact that the recommendations made were not taken into account can be established, for example, by comparing the list of recommendations made by Latvia's Municipality Union (LPS) and the current wording of the law. One can see that the law is published without correcting, adjusting or clarifying the aspects LPS has pointed out as being problematic. Additionally, the fact that the law does not assign additional state level funding to municipalities in order to implement civil defence activities raises suspicions about the involvement of municipalities and other stakeholders being purely "cosmetic".

## Conclusion

The Civil Defence Law of 2007 tasks ministries, governmental organizations, municipalities and businesses to conduct emergency management and planning activities. Very little attention is paid to collaborative activities. In Latvia's case the main emphasis is on coordination – making sure that the system looks the same on every level and in every context. Despite that, collaborative activities at various levels can be identified, with most prevalent being on joined training exercises and international collaboration. Some municipalities (e.g. Daugavpils city and Daugavpils region, Ilūkstes region, Preiļi region, Vārkava region, Ludza region, Dundaga region) also have taken advantage of legal regulation allowing joining of civil defence plans and creating joined civil defence councils. This is especially beneficial for those municipalities that are already struggling with financing their basic functions, e.g. healthcare, transportation, administration and education.

The new Civil Defence and Disaster Management Law, that has entered into force on 1 October 2016, still places emphasis on coordination between various government organizations and levels. However, it also formally lays out foundations for more potential collaboration by encouraging such activities as joined risk assessment and planning. The future will show how this new law will be implemented practically – whether risk assessment will be made public, whether joined discussions of plans and activities will take place, whether assessments of training exercises will be made public, how the issues of clarification, responsibility and financing will be resolved, etc.

So, regarding the research question which 1) levels and 2) activities of collaboration can be identified in the domain of emergency management in the case of Latvia – the following answer can be provided: 1) research suggests that in the domain

of emergency management in the case of Latvia 3 types of collaboration can be identified: type 1 or intergovernmental collaboration involving different agencies and players, type 2 or collaboration between various governments at different levels and type 3 collaboration between governments and external third-party providers of goods and services. An inability to identify type 4 collaboration could be explained with the overall underdevelopment of research in the domain of emergency management in Latvia. Regarding the second part of the research question – activities of collaboration – research suggests the following answer: joined training exercise for professionals (first responders), private organizations/businesses and municipality organizations, sharing of information, experience, expertise and resources by collaborating with and consulting VUGD on the development of civil defence plans as well as municipalities coming together and creating joined civil defence management councils and plans, assessments of training exercises and recommendations for future improvements made by VUGD.

Finally, regarding the areas that could benefit from improvement, research indicates the following: firstly, collaborative decision-making. As the information suggests, MoI has not taken into account recommendations and complaints made by LPS when submitting the Civil Defence and Disaster Management Law for adoption. This, in addition to no extra funds being assigned to municipalities for performing emergency planning and management activities, serves to indicate reluctance to share authority and resources. Secondly, developing research in the domain of emergency management. Without having a clear understanding of what needs and what does not need to be improved or changed one cannot hope to create evidence-based policies that will work in real-life conditions. Additionally, this can help foster an understanding of the importance of emergency management and the benefits provided by collaborative efforts. Thirdly, less emphasis on coordination and more on actual collaboration needs to be placed since coordination aims to ensure "sameness" or structural harmony, which can lead to overlooking perspectives that could help identify existing vulnerabilities and weaknesses. A crucial part of this would be inter-organizational trust building. The spring floods of 2013 served as a bright example of the deficiencies in this area: in the case of Pļaviņi, an emergency meeting of the Crisis Management Council was conducted only after the Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development visited the site and informed the Prime Minister that the situation is indeed critical and action

is needed immediately not on Monday (Beinaroviča, 2014). Fourthly, learning from foreign experience. Latvia has comparatively little experience with managing emergencies, so learning from the mistakes of others can not only help identify areas in need of improvement in the existing system but also help avoid losses should an emergency strike. Additionally, even though VUGD operatives and representatives take part in many training activities and meetings at international level, the information provided does not indicate what happens to the information and knowledge gained through these activities.

Overall, research leads one to conclude that the domain of emergency management in Latvia has not yet “grown-up” or “evolved” enough to understand the mechanisms and benefits of collaborative governance. Several reasons for this can be proposed: firstly, a relatively “safe” geographic location. The absence of large scale natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis or hurricanes, creates a certain sense of being very safe. Secondly, a lack of past experience with large scale peacetime technological and man-made disasters also contributes to apathy towards emergency preparedness. That, in turn, fosters the mind-set of “this can never happen to us”. As a result, it does not seem rational to spend time, money and energy on elaborating preparedness measures. Thirdly, an academic outlook on the issue is almost non-existent. A lack of research creates knowledge gaps and diminished understanding of the existing situation. This is reinforced by a lack of up-to-date information, e.g. the policy documents and plans regarding emergency management are sometimes 4 or 5 years old. Fourthly, the ever-changing agenda ensures that there are many issues competing for the attention of both policymakers and the general public. As a result, e.g. changes in the tax policy, corruption scandals or cutting the salaries of teachers or doctors take precedence over some hypothetical disaster. As a result, not only it seems irrational to devote resources to preparing for these low-probability events, people also forget negative past experiences since they are distracted by the ongoing events.

As it always is with policy change and implementation, in this case too, time is needed. Consequently, monitoring of and research on future developments in the domain will be needed to evaluate the progress of collaborative efforts or lack of them. However, one cannot ignore a certain issue when it comes to researching this topic. Most of the information – documents – analysed above have been created by the organizations themselves. Meaning, one cannot forget that they

have an inherent risk of painting the organizations and their activities in a more favourable light. As a result, a lot of time, resources and access would be needed to construct a more objective account of the situation. And even then a certain level of bias is unavoidable due to behavioural peculiarities of humans. Unfortunately, an alternative method of acquiring information is quite grim: a medium or large scale disaster – an event that would overwhelm the capabilities of government organizations and demand the involvement of non-governmental actors, allowing the observation and analysis of practical collaborative efforts and activities. Since this kind of scenario is what should be avoided for obvious reasons, one is left to hope that the public administration organizations of Latvia will draw lessons from foreign experiences and foster both collaborative efforts and academic research before a disaster strikes.

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## Kollaborative Steuerung und Notfallmanagement: Eine lettische Fallstudie

### Zusammenfassung

Notfälle - Krisen, Desaster und Katastrophen - nicht von Einzelpersonen oder einzelne Organisationen verwaltet werden, weil komplizierte Probleme sind, die Zusammenarbeit von vielen Teilhabern erfordern. Leider ist im Bereich der Notfall-Management ist es nicht ungewöhnlich für die Notfallplanung und Vorsorge vernachlässigt zu werden. Da Notfälle Ereignisse von „geringe-Wahrscheinlichkeit-hohe-Folgen“ sind, Organisationen der öffentlichen Verwaltung, Unternehmen und Zivilpersonen halten es nicht für rational Zeit, Geld und Energie in Etwas, das „vielleicht nie passieren wird“ zu investieren. Dies kann zu Selbstüberschätzung, mangelndes Fachwissen, materiellen, technologischen und personellen Ressourcen, unangemessene Planung, Koordination und Kommunikation, und viele andere Probleme führen, die effektive und effiziente Verwaltungsmaßnahmen in Zeiten der Not untergraben.

Im Rahmen dieser Arbeit wird eine zweiteilige Forschungsfrage gestellt in Bezug auf 1) die Arten und 2) Aktivitäten der gemeinschaftlichen Verwaltung, die im Bereich des Notfallmanagements in Lettland identifiziert werden können. Um die Forschungsfrage zu beantworten, die Fallstudie Methode von Lettland wird benutzt. Der theoretische Rahmen wird aus dem Katastrophenmanagement - Zyklus konstruiert, der wird mit Aktivitäten und 4 Typen der gemeinschaftlichen Verwaltung kombiniert werden. Kurzer Systemkontext wird auch zu Verfügung gestellt. Schwierigkeiten kann man identifizieren in der ersten Linie in Bezug auf der Terminologie. In Lettisch „Kollaboration“ und „Kooperation“ haben dieselbe Übersetzung.

In Bezug auf die Forschungsfrage die folgende Antwort kann man geben: 1) im Bereich der Notfall-Management im Falle von Lettland 3 Arten/Typen der Zusammenarbeit/Kollaboration können identifiziert werden: Typ 1 oder der zwischenstaatlichen Kollaboration

unter unterschiedlichen Agenturen und Spielern, Typ 2 oder die Kollaboration zwischen verschiedenen Regierungen auf verschiedenen Ebenen; und Typ 3 Kollaboration zwischen den Regierungen und externen Drittanbietern von Waren und Dienstleistungen. Die Unfähigkeit Typ 4 Zusammenarbeit zu identifizieren könnte man mit der Gesamtunterentwicklung der Forschung im Bereich des Notfallmanagement in Lettland erklären. Die folgenden Aktivitäten der Kollaboration in Notfallmanagement würden identifiziert: verbunden Trainingsübungen für Profis (Ersthelfer), private Organisationen / Unternehmen und Gemeinde-Organisationen; Austausch von Informationen, Erfahrungen, Know-how und Ressourcen; indem Beratung von und Zusammenarbeit VUGD (Feuerwehren und Rettungsdienste) in der Entwicklung Zivilverteidigungsplänen. Mehrere Kommunen nützen auch die Möglichkeit Zivilschutz Management Räte und Pläne zu verbinden. VUGD geben bekannt auch Einschätzungen von Trainingsübungen und Empfehlungen für zukünftige Verbesserungen.

Obwohl der neue Zivilschutz und Katastrophenmanagement Gesetz ist nur erst vor kurzem in Kraft getreten (01.10.2016), kann man schon jetzt Probleme identifizieren: Abneigung Autorität und Ressourcen zu teilen von der Seite des Innenministeriums und der Regierung, Mangel an Forschung, Betonung auf Koordination und nicht Kollaboration. Insgesamt gibt es Potenziell für Entwicklung von gemeinschaftlichen Verwaltung in dem Bereich des Notfallmanagements in Lettland. Aber nur Zeit und weitere Forschungen werden zeigen ob und wie der neue Gesetz umgesetzt wird und welche Auswirkungen wird es auf die Aktivitäten der gemeinschaftlichen Verwaltung haben.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Notfallmanagement, gemeinschaftliche Verwaltung, Lettland.