

Working group CALRE 2017 “Natural disasters”

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Summary of activities

Introduction. The Plenary Assembly of CALRE, held in Milan in November 2016, has decided on the establishment of a new working group for the year 2017 on the topic of “natural disasters” and has entrusted the Legislative Assembly the responsibility for coordinating. Eight Italian and European Legislative Assemblies have joined the Group: the Parliament of Andalusia, the Parliament of Wallonia, and the Italian Legislative Assemblies of Veneto, Puglia, Calabria, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Umbria, Basilicata, Molise.

As we know, the issue of natural disasters is both topical and transversal, as it concerns several States which belong to the European Union. The Regions, which are closest the needs of citizens, are directly involved in the management of emergencies and have to face them with more and more inadequate resources. However, there is an increasing need to face these events with a programmatic approach to carry out prevention policies and to manage the emergency situations properly. For that purpose, mutual cooperation amongst different institutional decision-makers is essential in order to help develop strategies to face these natural disasters. The contribution of scientists and University research is critical in determining this preventative approach. Finally, the exchange of relevant experience amongst different Legislative Assemblies part of the working group, can highlight common problems and assist in the creation of strategies to face the events by shar good practices.

Purpose of the working group. The ultimate objective of the group is to identify the unresolved issues, to look at the instruments the European Union shall provide the States and the Regions and, if necessary, to submit the regional request to the European authorities in both prevention and restoration of damage compensation for the damage suffered.

Activities of the working group. Initially, a pool of technical experts was identified from Universities of Teramo, Chieti e Pescara, from two research institutes, National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology and Gran Sasso Science Institute, and from regional Government and regional Parliament.

The pool of technical experts has supported the CALRE working group with activities such as identifying patterns of the most frequently-occurring natural disaster throughout the European Union, and identifying require greater attention and confront possible strategies for prevention and response to these events. This was followed by the examination of the European legislation of reference with particular regard to instruments made available by the European Union to confront natural disasters, and the examination of the European legislation on State Aid in relation to forms of support granted to the business world in cases where such events occur. It has also been analyzed the United States model concerning natural disasters and us disaster law. At the same time, a **questionnaire**¹ was sent to the participating Legislative Assemblies to gather information on

¹ The results of the questionnaire are published on the website of CALRE at the following link:
http://www.calre.net.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/08_CALRE_EN_risultato_questionario.pdf

regional competences in this field; higher risk of territories of reference, most serious problems, best practices, possible proposals to be submitted to the European Institutions².

On 14th 2017 July at the headquarters of the Legislative Assembly of Abruzzo, in L'Aquila, a **workshop of the CALRE 2017 expert group "Natural Disasters"** was organised and have tabled the first scientific and legal contributions on the subject (such contributions are published on the website of CALRE at the following link: <http://www.calrenet.eu/natural-disasters-leader/#documentation>).

On 11th 2017 October, the first meeting of the working group took place in Brussels, at the headquarters of the Abruzzo Region, during which the results of the activities were presented. In addition to the members of the working group, the meeting was attended by the President of the Lombardy Regional Council, Raffaele Cattaneo, and Vito Santarsiero, councilor of the Basilicata Region, and by two researches of Joint Research Center (JRC), Fabio Taucer, Policy Officer, and Luciana Zanier, members States Policy Coordinator of Joint Research Center (JCR) .

The results of the activity. The reflection of the working group during this year of activity and, in particular, the insights of the scientific group, the screening of the European legislation by the technical group as well as the analysis and synthesis of the considerations expressed by the CALRE Assemblies in response to the questionnaire, have identified the needs and possible interventions that the European Union could put in place in the field of natural disasters.

The following are the steps needed for a resilient Europe in the field of natural disasters:

- 1. To introduce the same method for Risk.**
- 2. To provide measures against climate change.**
- 3. To legislate on risk prevention (in particular on prevention of certain types of risks such as fires and earthquakes).**
- 4. To legislate on containment of land consumption.**
- 5. To harmonise and make systematic the European disaster law.**
- 6. To increase the Solidarity Fund and to simplify the procedures for accessing it.**
- 7. To reconsider and to integrate the Article 50 of EU Regulation 651/2014 on exempted aid for damage caused by natural disasters.**
- 8. To Invest in research on natural disasters, in public information and in training of professionals in the field.**
- 9. Examine the possibility of introducing a Fund for the pre-disaster phase based on the model of the US experience.**
- 10. To use, through concrete actions, both the Structural and Investment Funds and all the EU beneficiary Funds, to face the issues related to natural disasters.**

The final document of the Group was presented by the President of the Regional Council to the Plenary Assembly of CALRE held at the Andalusia Parliament in Seville on 9 and 10 November 2017 (the document is published on the website of CALRE).

² The Legislative Assemblies that have replied to the questionnaire:

- for ITALY the Legislative Assembly of Abruzzo, the Legislative Assembly of Calabria, the Legislative Assembly of Marche, the Legislative Assembly of Molise, the Legislative Assembly of Puglia and the Legislative Assembly of Sardinia;
- for AUSTRIA the Legislative Assembly of Low Austria, the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly of Vorarlberg;
- for SPAIN the Basque Parliament, the Legislative Assembly of Castilla-La Mancha and the Legislative Assembly of Extremadura;
- for PORTUGAL the Legislative Assembly of Autonomous Region of Madeira.