

## Executive summary:

Eyjafjöll's volcanic eruption, earthquakes in the Chengdu region, hurricanes in the United States of America, explosion of the Fukushima nuclear station after the tsunami, floods in France: each year has its crises generated by natural and/or industrial catastrophes. Some of them have thousands of victims, others none, but, because of the complexity of their consequences and of the interdependences of our modern societies, all of them force individuals and organizations both private and public to work together outside of their usual context. Hence, what precisely are the necessary conditions for these actors to work better together? How can we improve our efficiency at the management of crises?

First of all, we need to find the conditions which make the collaboration between private and public stakeholders efficient. Then, we must aim at finding the best ways to involve civil society as a whole through reinforcement of its resilience. Also, to reinforce the impact of these measures, to make them easier to understand and to be able to share them, we must put to better use the new information technologies rather than just putting up with them. Finally, each crisis should be used to look for improvements to our ideas so that instead of just returning to the identical situation present before the crisis occurred, we take into account the lessons learnt.

Due to its 'hexagon' and its ultra-marine territories, France faces almost all types of risks, both natural and industrial. As a consequence, the country already has robust organization to manage crisis. We therefore aimed at finding pragmatic ideas to improve our system rather than at a revolution. We have been inspired by what we have seen in the countries that we have visited (Germany, China, United States of America, Great Britain, Sweden, Italy) and by best practices observed in France which would worth being widespread.

Our recommendations are organized around four main ideas:

- **Be better prepared for the management of crises by improving relationships and by the preparation of public and private organizations.**

In France, the State is traditionally very present in crisis management – from the national level under the authority of the Prime Minister right down to the local level under the authority of the prefect of the department<sup>1</sup>. Because it is identical over the entire territory, this organization is clear and well-known by all the stakeholders. Nevertheless, because of decentralization laws empowering local councils' prerogatives, as well as various reorganizations at the State level seeking efficiencies and cost savings and also because of the increasing complexity of crises which call for a close partnership with private stakeholders, we now need to find new ideas to ensure good crisis management.

Let's improve together:

- By sharing common visions, references and language:
  - Put in place a global territorial organization for crisis management which would be able to face all types of crisis

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<sup>1</sup> In France, the prefect of the department is the local representative of the State

- Put in place a global planning system for crises of various natures.
- By performing exercises together before a crisis occurs in order to increase the level of confidence between public and private stakeholders:
  - During exercises, collaborate with the State's departments, territorial collectivities and private stakeholders so that they know each other before the crisis occurs
  - Develop trainings and awareness for the management of crisis.
- By implementing tools such as collaborative workspaces, databases and networks to exchange information:
  - Develop tools allowing the better sharing of resources
  - Develop tools enabling us to anticipate interdependency between different stakeholders of the crisis.
- By stressing on European and international cooperation:
  - Help cooperation between countries by defining a common signaling system on risks and developing cooperation inside "risks regions" as well as technical cooperation
  - Promote companies' initiatives to share information, competencies and resources to better face major risks.

- **Better involvement of civil society by developing its will and capacity for resilience:**

There are several surprising gaps. For instance, in spite of information on risks becoming more and more accessible through the internet and social networks, citizens do not seem to be better prepared to face them. Local councils must meet a growing number of obligations, but they can not always do, which creates a lack of preparation.. Moreover, except for firemen and some large non-governmental organizations such as the Red Cross, France lacks volunteers as well as the structures to organize them, compared to what we have seen in other countries. Finally, the current French protective insurance system does not really incite the population to take prevention measures and would probably be worth a few adjustments.

Let's improve together:

- By developing the resilience of civil society:
  - Promote volunteering
  - Increase the number of information sessions by volunteers aimed towards younger generations
- By developing the capacity for resistance within civil society:
  - Make the public and economic stakeholders more aware of individual protection measures and risk reduction
  - Consider implementing an adjustable system in the French Cat-Nat insurance premium in insurance policies to link the premium to individual risk and corrective measures taken by companies
  - Develop solidarity between citizens and between companies to increase the potential of civil society to react to events.
  - Encourage upturn in social and economic life by preparing the social dialogue which is necessary after a crisis.

- **Better communication and interactions by improving the usage of social medias and new technologies**

Although social networks and new technologies are massively used by population in a crisis situation there is a reluctance of public authorities to use them. As sources of information and privileged means of communication with the public, these new media should be taken more into account by the authorities to utilise their entire potential.

Let's improve together:

- By using social networks to optimize the flow of information with citizens:
  - Develop a strategy for crisis communication which would be open to the social medias
  - Centralize resources of crisis web-communications
  - Develop one sole information portal in case of crisis
- By using mobile technologies to optimize rescue of the victims:
  - Send alerts to the populations affected by the crisis.
  - Follow the population to better anticipate their needs.
  - Guide populations in real-time
  - Prevent the isolation of victims
- By increasing usage of information technologies best suited to facilitate crisis management.

- **Be better prepared for the management and the learning phase after the crisis has occurred by implementing a global and coherent approach from one crisis to the other:**

It is often hard to know exactly when a crisis ends although it is the beginning of an essential phase: post-crisis and reconstruction. This step is often forgotten in the crisis plan although it could help any organization which was involved to improve itself. This is the reason why it is important to include this step in the global crisis management planning. The planning should have a sense of continuity from the preparation to the post-crisis phase – i.e. the post-crisis phase starts immediately after the crisis ends until the preparation for the next crisis.

Let's improve together:

- By integrating the post-crisis phase in the crisis planning as a systematic step - just as important as all the others:
  - Include the post-crisis phase in the crisis management plans
  - Systematisation of an "anticipation" cell in crisis rooms, in order to evaluate as early as possible the various end scenarios of the crisis
- By implementing adequate structures:
  - Help employees by providing a wide assistance which enables them to dedicate their efforts to the activity of their companies
  - Help companies by facilitating the administrative processes aimed at business resumption
  - Help local councils by making known and coordinating their reconstruction process

- By encouraging objective lessons learnt:
  - Consolidate the lesson learning process
  - Professionalize the process of learning lessons, whose objective should be the improvement of processes and organizations rather than effecting sanctions
  - Improve the creation of exercises in the light of lessons learnt
- By promoting the restart of economic life:
  - Implement the necessary conditions to enable the population to come back to stricken areas by ensuring a prompt return to their economic activity
  - Take advantage of the questions that arise during reconstruction to build: turn crisis into opportunity.

Finally, we have also noticed that, in France, unlike what we have seen in other countries, guidelines for civil safety or crisis management are in general not supported by one department or one entity. Indeed, in the United States of America, in Great Britain, in Italy and in Sweden, agencies (FEMA and MSB) or administrations (Protection Civile and Cabinet Office) are well known and respected by all the stakeholders including the civil society. There is nothing similar in our country.

Yet, if we want to promote the idea that “civil safety is everyone’s concern”, it is important that such an entity exists, either in the form of an agency or in the form of general secretariat. This entity would coordinate stakeholders who participate in the crisis management and facilitate involvement of civil society by embodying crisis management in its whole. As a consequence, it would improve communication and avoid the issue of initiatives dispersing. In the end, this entity would also better follow up lessons learnt to better prepare the future.