

THE EU POLICIES FOR DISASTER PREVENTION, RELIEF AND POST-DISASTER RECONSTRUCTION

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Outline

This workshop aims at building a significant body of research and policy-oriented knowledge about the role of the EU in the global response to disaster events. The specific focus will be on disaster prevention, relief and reconstruction efforts in both natural and man-made disasters. Prevention and relief policies differ significantly in the case of natural and man-made disasters. Yet, post-disaster reconstruction follows the same standards in both cases. A joint analysis of the two types of disaster policies will give a better definition of the EU role in this challenging field, especially since the EU Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) intervenes in both natural and man-made disaster events.

This is a salient theme in current global affairs. It is also of great concern to the EU policy-makers who aim at enhancing the EU capability of rapid and effective response to the serious crises and emergencies that may arise in any place throughout the world. Disasters can provide a key frame within which the multilateral role of the EU can be studied within the complex web of international actors involved. Thus, one can compare, assess and evaluate EU actions in a global context. Indeed, EU disaster response in the context of multilateral policies of international institutions is seen as forming an essential part of global disaster governance. In this light, EU disaster responses and disaster diplomacy will be analysed in order to create better understanding of EU presence in the governance of the global political system of disasters and in explaining the linkages between the world, state and local level disaster policies.

The background of this workshop lies in three issues envisaged in the existing wide and various literature and research about humanitarian and disaster policies. Firstly, public knowledge and understanding of EU disaster actions remain very limited. Even if some research centres analyse, evaluate and influence EU humanitarian policies, the lack of coordination and the scattering of such activities genuinely restrict progress in the debate. Secondly, only with the disasters in Bhopal (India, 1984) and Chernobyl (Soviet Union, 1986) a debate about risk and disaster prevention and post-disaster reconstruction started at international level. In this debate, principles such as risk vulnerability of modern societies, prevention sharing, and responsibility to protect became the foundations of multilateralism in this policy sector. Hence, better knowledge about the formation, operation, diffusion and change of the norms from these principles is needed to understand the nature and present state of contemporary global humanitarian policies and strategies. Thirdly, the

EU is acting in multilateral and multilevel settings. This leads to various challenges regarding cooperation among the involved actors. The EU has grown its engagement in carrying tasks in prevention and relief. On the other side, many states have created agencies of civil protection and have launched protection and relief programmes. The EU role and its impact on these programmes have not been thoroughly analysed.

Objectives

The workshop wants to attract contributions that aim:

- a. to make a thorough analysis of the EU role on disaster prevention, relief and reconstruction in a multilateral dimension
- b. to make a thorough analysis to the effectiveness and coherence of the EU choices in natural and man-made disasters
- c. to improve awareness among practitioners and citizens on the EU role in promoting human security and development.

Consequently, the contributions should take into consideration that macro, meso, and micro level disaster policies:

- a. Macro level analyses will focus on multilateralism as the emergent *modus operandi* for global disaster policies
- b. Meso level analyses will focus on the characteristics of the EU disaster policies and practices
- c. Micro level analyses will concentrate on the EU and global policies effect on states and local communities.

We welcome theoretical approaches to the analysis of multilateralism in global disaster policies together with institutionalist and rationalist approaches, political theory approaches for the analysis of EU policies, whereas at micro level we expect more empirical and bottom-up research approaches.

Participants

This workshop aims at attracting scholars working within EU policies in natural and man-made disasters with background in Political Science/International Relations and other social sciences like sociology, anthropology and economics. Scholars of Comparative Politics and Public Policies with interest in state disaster prevention and national emergency agencies are also very much welcomed. Practitioners in NGOs, EU officers, institutional stakeholders working with prevention, relief and reconstruction in natural and made-made disasters are also the kind of participants this workshop wants to attract. We expect papers that specifically investigate one of the three levels mentioned through in-depth or comparative analysis. In addition, we welcome papers that can combine the three levels through the analysis of specific and current case studies. So we would like to attract a wide range of papers: empirical cases that illustrate the EU role on disaster prevention, relief and

reconstruction; comparative studies that show the different level of analysis; theoretical papers that apply theories in explaining the role of the EU in natural and man-made disasters.

Key references

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