

Annex 4: Interview transcript example

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10:45-11:35

(8)

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Ok, so I made a small introduction of you and of your activities, so now if there are some main issues you would like to address. #00:00:19-1#

(Tess: ok, the first is we want to have a good understanding of what is the role of the prefect in the management of flooding and landslides) #00:01:09-9#

Again there is the county committee for emergency situations... the same issue that we have discussed yesterday at ISU, which is led by the prefect. #00:01:24-7#

Which includes, which involves both... which includes this committee includes besides the prefecture, county council, ISU, includes also all the actors from politic...not politic, ... state institutions including large factories, large institutions and including the military, the second division Gettica (check spelling) #00:02:19-0#

The president of this county committee is the prefect and the vice president is the president of the county council, so they are leading all the activities of the others. #00:03:20-5#

So actually the role of ISU, which is part of the prefecture at county level, is to provide the permanent secretariat for this committee (other people enter) #00:03:42-2#

So the role of ISU, is to provide the permanent secretariat of this committee and all the potential threats... are being analysed by some support groups, are called support groups, support groups for chemical accidents, support groups for landslides, support groups for floods which includes...for earthquakes as well, for fires as well and they include trained personelle in each field. #00:04:30-4#

(comment from Mrs. Nastase) And each support group is led by the member of this committee for emergency situations, by a member of the county committee for emergency situations (talking in the background) #00:04:58-0#

And the structure of this support group is members and consultants, so it includes members and consultants. #00:05:18-0#

And the consultants can come from any other, I don't know, potential field of interest, not field of interest, institution interested in the particular field. #00:05:28-0#

(Kathrin: and the support groups are supported by...?) #00:05:29-9#

They have members and consultants, the support groups have members and consultants. #00:05:38-0#

(Kathrin: no, no no what you said before in the beginning, by persons, by single persons?) #00:05:46-5#

No, each support group is led by one person which is the member for the county committee for emergency situations and each group is formed out of ...(Kathrin: members...) members and external consultants. #00:06:03-3#

(Tess: ok, and this is for the case of an emergency yes? But, before an emergency occurs, what would be their role, do they have a role in prevention?) #00:06:19-4#

Yes. #00:07:01-3#

The idea would be that the same structure happens at the level of commune. Each commune has a committee for emergency situations which is led by the mayor of that particular commune and now coming back to the question of whether they are involved in prevention the answer is yes. They are involved in prevention, intervention and recovery. (Tess: ok) #00:07:31-0#

The idea, the way in which this kind of committees are activating is this one, any inhabitant, any person, signals something, transmits it to the communal committee. The communal committee transmits the information to ISU, ISU transmits the information to the county committee which in case the problem or the amplitude of the event it's larger, informs the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Should I repeat... (Tess: person communicates to the commune...) To the communal committee which communicates to ISU which transmits to the county committee which in case it is requested, informs the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Tess: and this is for anything including an issue regarding monitoring of the situation?) Anything, yeah anything. I mean people are allowed to inform about anything that they... #00:10:09-1#

And during the winter time, a certain part of the county committee for emergency situations is represented by winter commandment, it is called winter commandment, winter headquarters, because you know that here there are many problems with the blizzards, I told you. Therefore, a specific group of people during the winter, works only on this topic. #00:10:53-4#

And whenever the amplitude, the magnitude of the event, overpasses somehow county level, either the prime minister or the minister of internal affairs or the minister of public works can call all the prefects for a video conference and they had to attend such a conference. #00:11:55-8#

And regarding the hydro-meteorological hazards, everything more or less is based on the warnings which are issued by the... (Tess: Meteo) exactly, by the meteorological survey #00:12:18-0#

And the idea would be that when these warnings are issued by the meteorological survey, they send the first... they send the news here to the county committee for emergency situations and the county committee through ISU send the information to all the potentially affected communities through ISU through the volunteering services at each commune. So this is a top-down approach in such a case. The warnings from the field are bottom-up from the locals to the high authorities. This is the other way around, from the high authorities to the local level. #00:13:47-1#

As regarding the finances, which are allocated for each intervention, if there is an intervention which takes place along national roads, the finances are provided by a national company, a national authority which manages the national roads, then at the county level, there is the county council which pays for all the procedures which are taking places along county roads and for communal and forest roads it's a matter of each municipality of each commune to provide the funding. #00:15:24-3#

Like, for example in all the other countries, like in the US again, if the situation imposes, they ask for interventions from the police department, gendarmerie and even the army, in the worst case scenario even the army can be involved. #00:15:59-3#

For being a very good one, our system was implemented also in the United States and Germany... but as a joke. (interviewee says, and New Orleans...(also as a joke)). #00:16:23-3#

(Tess: so then, if they have then.. they indirectly communicate information with them, is there any other example they have with how they communicate with the public, trainings, awareness building, anything like this?) #00:16:55-8#

So actually, they are not involved directly, it is a matter of ISU to keep an eye on this preparedness including teaching facilities, assignment facilities, but it is a matter of ISU to deal with this directly. #00:18:06-2#

(Tess: and do they feel the population should have more information or do they feel that it's a...) #00:18:24-1#

Yes, they think that from both sides... (Mrs. Nastase responds as subprefect answers phone). The idea would be that the system works. Furthermore, they are...each time that such codes are being issued they are being broadcasted at all national and regional televisions, it is compulsory. They should have a breaking news announcement saying that... blizzard in these communes, blizzard in these communes. So they feel it is a good way to communicate in both directions from regional to local and from local to regional. And also in the meantime all the meetings for this county committee for emergency situations the representatives for mass media are invited as well.

#00:19:59-4#

(Tess: for what specifically are they invited?) I don't know for discussions, for whenever there is a potential threat, also the representatives of the mass media are represented for these discussions in the county committee for emergency situations. Whenever there is an announcement that there will be a flood, that there will be a blizzard, or heavy snowfall, and this committee is being formed or activated, they invite automatically representatives of the mass media. (Tess: ok) #00:20:34-9#

(Tess: and this would be the county council meetings or the...) The committee, the committee #00:20:40-6#

(Tess: ok...) #00:20:51-4#

(Tess: and the public, do you think the public would want anymore information, or do you think...) No, they said that they had a positive feedback from the public which is...yeah satisfied with what they have so far... (Tess: how do they get this feedback?) #00:21:04-2#

During the discussions that they have on field, and they address this issue. When they go field, within the technical groups, each time something happened they were asking the people if the information arrived in time and they said yes. (Tess: ok) #00:21:22-3#

In case there are victims, the ISU using the unique number 112 goes there without informing the county council for emergency situations... I mean, in such severe moments, they intervene without notifying the upper department which in such a case is the county committee that something happened, they just go there and intervene and if the number of victims is much larger then there is something which is called a red plan which is being implemented. #00:22:26-9#

And they intervene directly because in case of victims there is a minimum time which is allowed for them to intervene (Tess: 5 minutes?) Well, depends on the distance actually. #00:22:57-4#

Everything is calculated according to the distance, instead of wasting time looking for approvals or notifications or making notifications, they intervene immediately and then they can cover including medical problems since within ISU there are paramedics which are going with each vehicle. #00:23:29-1#

And they can use also helicopters if the situation is requesting that. #00:23:35-4#

(Tess: ok) #00:23:38-7#

And this, the use of helicopter, regardless of time it can be used during the winter, the summer, or all of the seasons or whenever necessary. #00:24:06-7#

The helicopter is used in case of medical emergencies or in case of floods which are occurring very fast and there are some people which remain isolated somewhat, it's also in case of snowfalls and not necessarily in the case of blizzards because if the wind overpasses a certain speed then (Tess: oh they can't...) they can't take off.
#00:24:50-6#

The only problem is that the finances for such investments is very low, I mean the level of financing is very low since they desperately need technical means they need newer devices, newer machines, newer vehicles, they need, they would need an own helicopter belonging to the county instead of the entire region, the entire region meaning more than... (Tess: development region) Exactly, the development region so there is one for each development region... (Tess: that means there are probably 8 in total for the entire country) Yeah, so they would need (Tess: wow) Yeah, so they would need one for each county. #00:26:03-9#

They feel somehow they are lucky since they are close to Bucharest still therefore they can address this issue to the authorities in Bucharest so they can help... 110 km takes some 10 to 15 minutes for a helicopter to be here. (Tess: ok) #00:26:37-1#

The idea would be that fortunately or unfortunately since the county contains all the relief forms also the have some problems which occurred now in the last years which would be wildfires... (others now enter and Mihai introduces us) #00:28:10-8#

...and therefore they are facing this new threat which was not mentioned that much and there is a problem with the road infrastructure which is very low, of a very low quality therefore they have a lot of problems in reaching the places which might be affected by wildfires, therefore they would need a better aerial survey of the entire area.
#00:28:37-6#

As regarding the landslides they are also performing some monitoring activities but that is just some rough, some rough estimation based on some wooden benchmarks, which are measured on the landslide itself and on the bedrock and they just measure easily the distance between this which is very very...(Tess: a rough method) Exactly, but it's cheaper. (Tess: yes) #00:29:35-2#

(Tess: and are there any other, talking about resources, are there any other resources in terms of having enough time to react or having personnel or...) #00:29:47-3#

Again, indeed the time of response should be improved but only within proper meanings. As for personnel, there is enough personnel to do that, but the equipment is old #00:30:24-8#

(Tess: ok) #00:30:29-7#

For example, whenever such an event is being signalled there is one team which goes there, has to go there immediately as the event is reported and they are using an old

fashioned 4W vehicle which is called an Arrow... It's a Romanian Hummer, Humvie
(laughter) #00:31:13-6#

Again, there is a problem of communication because there is no signal in all the places, there is no telephone signal but for that they are using some powerful radio stations, especially in the mountains (Tess: ok) #00:31:41-0#

He knows from the American movies, we just call Bruce Willis and everything is settled
(laughter) #00:31:50-8#

(Tess: and the coverage now?) #00:31:57-3#

No, so all the population gatherings, all the groups of people are covered either by telephone signal or by telephone signal. So, there are no villages, households, shelters, or whatever which are not covered. #00:32:36-7#

But in the areas without population there are a lot of places which they call it to be white spots in which there is no possibility of communication... (Tess: low populated areas...) Unpopulated areas (Tess: unpopulated areas?) Yeah, because where is population there is a signal of different kind. #00:33:07-0#

And the worst case would be that they use satellite communication. #00:33:21-4#

Basically, well the idea would be that this access by satellite is not open for the public you have to be part of the database which belongs to the defense, to the military to the army. And... #00:34:48-6#

Because they are using military satellites, not normal satellites, at least this is the case here that they are using, only the army is allowed to have access to satellite communication using military satellites. But they can use this in a worst case scenario by involving the army. #00:35:13-2#

So, again they are quite lucky since here the Gettica division which belongs to the army is the national headquarter for foreign military conflicts so all the Romanian soldiers which are involved in the army operations in Afghanistan or Iraq are commanded here in Buzau. So, this is lucky because they have also the possibility to use also their infrastructure. (Tess: ah ok) Since the national headquarter for foreign military conflicts of Romania is situated here in Buzau. #00:36:05-9#

(Tess: and I just wanted to ask for those who have joined us...) The idea would be should we finish the discussion with the subprefect or would like to move (Tess: if we can that would be...) to the other room and to have the discussion with them. (Tess: oh, I wasn't sure if it was up to us to say when) We are about to make this choice (Tess: ok, I have more questions for them and Kathrin would you also have questions for the subprefect? (Kathrin: umhm) So if we can continue discussion that would be helpful, we wanted to be flexible to their schedule so whatever is best for them) Ok. #00:37:25-8#

Would it be ok if we send by email, I will make the translation of the questions and you select the questions which you would like to ask and they will answer, they would appreciate it if they would be allowed to answer by email. (Tess and Kathrin: sure) So everything depends on your choice, whether you decide to stay in Romania after your PhD or not... (laughter) #00:37:51-1#

(Tess: it depends on how it goes while we are here, so far it goes very well) But you have a nice cozy place in the emergency framework, starting from landslide monitoring (laughter) because there is a meeting now he has to attend would it be ok if we send the questions by email (Tess and Kathrin: sure, umhm) and then we continue the discussion with another room with the rest of the people... would it be ok (both: sure) #00:38:54-0#

What was pretty much about, because Mrs. Nastase knows also these kinds of things...(Tess: there will be general questions, so if... things about involvement, one more question relating to the public, responsibilities, mitigation measures...) (Kathrin: my interest is more prevention related and planning related so if they know something, not so much emergency related so if they know something more...) #00:39:45-1#

(all packing up and leaving the room)