



European Committee  
of the Regions

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# Resilient Cities and Regions to protect Europe's citizens

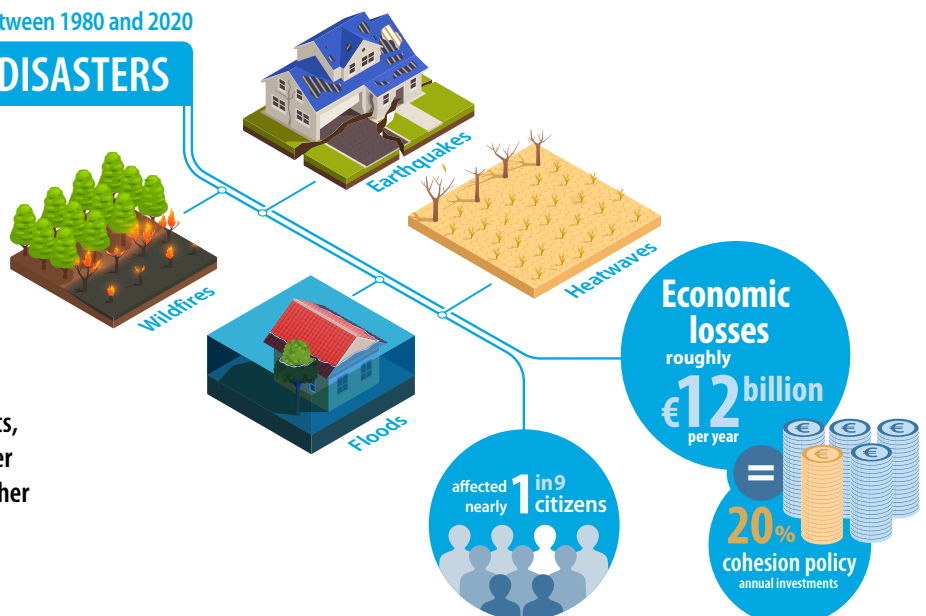
## Disasters affect people in Europe and cause economic loss

In recent years, Europe has been facing increasingly complex and interconnected crises including the COVID-19 pandemic, more frequent and more intense droughts, heatwaves, wildfires, floods, earthquakes, exacerbated by climate change, and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Disasters can have devastating physical, social, and financial effects, therefore we need to become better prepared to deal with these and other future crises.

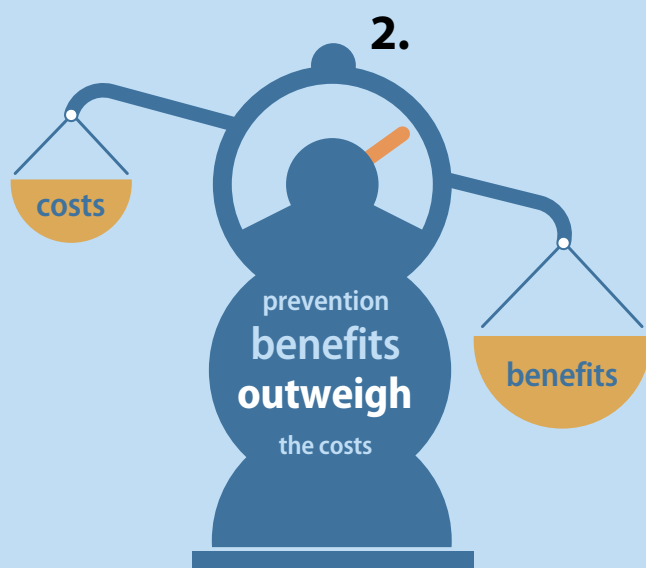
Between 1980 and 2020

**DISASTERS**



## Preparing for and dealing with crises

Communities are resilient when they are able to cope with shocks and disasters and minimise their impact, and recover from them and return to normal life as effortlessly and swiftly as possible.



1. Economic losses expected to reach **€170 billion** per year in the European Union if no action is taken

≈  
**2022**  
EU annual budget

3. **1 euro** used in disaster prevention and preparedness

could save us

up to **10 euros** in disaster response

“

The European Union must develop a regional and local **vulnerability scoreboard**, invest to reduce these vulnerabilities, strengthen healthcare systems and enable **young people** to have the right attitudes to face crises. It is about crossing the silos to build preparedness to and anticipation of crises across all European policies. **To do this, we need a platform where all the European actors concerned can exchange and create the common risk culture that we need.** ”

**Christophe Clergeau (FR/PES)**  
Opinion Rapporteur

## What is at stake?

We cannot know which crises will affect Europe, its cities and regions in future, but we do know who will be affected.

# The Committee of the Regions calls for action

- To develop, in close collaboration with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, a territorial **vulnerability scoreboard** to better understand and consider risks related to the vulnerabilities of local areas and populations.
- To invest in a new **societal preparedness** approach with emphasis on the civic, social and human dimension and with particular attention on the most vulnerable.
- To **engage young people** by educating children, providing trainings and first aid schemes, promoting voluntary civic engagement.
- To adopt a **72-hour strategy** for **dealing with crises** adapted to local specificities.
- To set up a **European risk and crisis school** to provide training pathways and develop professional frameworks and accreditation schemes.

## Encourages the Member States and local and regional authorities

- To put in place a **resilience strategy and local mobilisation platforms** to organise local resilience teams and prepare societies for crises, drawing on citizen engagement.
- To invest in **risk assessment**, using the vulnerability index developed by the Joint Research Centre as a basis at all territorial levels.
- To engage in **stress-testing** national, regional and local crisis alert and management systems and scenarios.

## Further calls on the EU Institutions

- To make crisis resilience and tackling social and territorial vulnerabilities a **political and a programming priority for cohesion policy**.
- To start a policy debate on the use of future cohesion policy to respond to such vulnerabilities based on the territorial vulnerability scoreboard.
- To adopt a **cross-cutting approach** to vulnerability and crisis preparedness, and to take account of the vulnerability scoreboard in other EU policies beyond cohesion policy.

### → Belgium: Wallonia

- Heavy floods in 2021, causing extensive infrastructure damages, evacuation of residents and loss of over 40 lives
- The region enhanced flood prevention and management mechanisms, strengthened early warning systems, promoted a better land-use planning, increased emergency response capabilities



### → Spain: Andalusia, Catalonia

- Heavy droughts in recent years, causing wildfires, water scarcity and negative impacts in agriculture
- Regions have invested in better water management plans, water reclamation, water saving practices, the improvement of water infrastructures and more efficient irrigation techniques, as well as freshwater ecosystem restoration



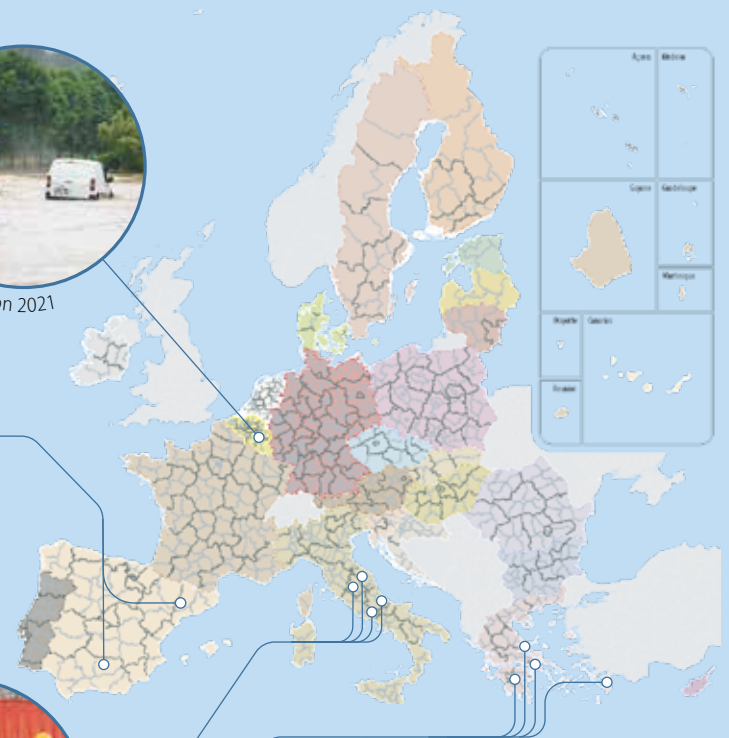
### → Italy: Marche, Umbria, Lazio, Abruzzo

- Recurrent earthquakes. In 2016: 6.2 of magnitude, loss of 300 lives, infrastructure damages, destruction of historical towns with the widest affected area and most of casualties in Marche
- The regions have conducted infrastructural reinforcement, developed early warning mechanisms, strengthened emergency response capabilities and knowledge sharing platforms



### → Greece: Attica region, Peloponnese, Evia island, Rhodes island

- Wildfires in 2021 in over 125.000 ha of forests, causing infrastructure damages, agricultural losses and displacement of citizens
- Regions have strengthened fire prevention measures, early warning and monitoring mechanisms, increased firefighting resources and enhanced emergency response coordination





**European Committee  
of the Regions**

The opinion was adopted unanimously on 24 May 2023 at the plenary session of the European Committee of the Regions

**Rapporteur**  
**Christophe Clergeau (FR/PES),**  
*Member of the Pays de la Loire Regional Council, France*

**Online version**



Created in 1994, after the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of 329 regional and local representatives from all 27 Member States, representing over 447 million Europeans.

Its main objectives are to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council have to consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union as a means of upholding EU law where there are breaches to the subsidiarity principle or failures to respect regional or local authorities.

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**Edited by Commission for Natural Resources of the European Committee of the Regions**

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