

Enhancing risk governance by addressing key risk communication barriers during the prevention and preparedness phase in South Tyrol (Italy)

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As recently pointed out by the European Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Center, a good risk governance can only be achieved through effective communication among the different risk governance actors “working together to build trust, common understanding and alignment in an open, timely and problem-solving mode” (Bruinen de Bruin *et al.* 2020: 533). As well known, efficient risk communication should be set in quiet times (Pedoth *et al.* 2021). To address this, our contribution presents an explorative study to identify what kind of challenges and barriers can be acknowledged in the internal (among institutional actors) and external (between institutions and the population) risk communication linked to prevention and preparedness in “quiet times” in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano (Italy). After having identified a broad range of main actors, we undertook 20 semi-structured interviews to institutional actors, key informants and practitioners. Our main findings show a complex picture. First, a diffuse trust and reciprocal support have been reported among the different actors as positive factors. This, combined with excellent emergency management and the lack of major emergencies/disasters in the recent past, have instead led to potential barriers to an integrated risk communication strategy, due to a perceived sense of safety. Consequentially, it has emerged the need for more risk training/education and the establishment of a working group or dedicated staff in the field of risk communication; and, above all, the challenge of aligning different actors’ risk awareness by acting on institutional and public risk culture. The study is part of the Interreg Italy-Austria project RiKoST (Risk Communication Strategies), that aims at developing targeted risk communication tools, contents, and strategies to improve collaboration among public organizations and with external experts dealing with risk management in South Tyrol and Carinthia.

Bruinen de Bruin, Y., Vetere Arellano, A.L., Begg, C., Dechy, N., Donovan, A., Kalinowska, K., Petrenj, B., Resch, C., Tulonen, T. (2020): Linking actors, sectors and governance levels. In: Casajus Valles, A., Marin Ferrer, M., Poljanšek, K., Clark, I. (eds.), *Science for Disaster Risk Management 2020: acting today, protecting tomorrow*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, doi:10.2760/571085.

Pedoth, L., Carnelli, F., Koboltschnig, G., Krenn, P., Rudloff, A., Gallmetzer, W., Macconi, P. and Marangoni, N. (in press): Improving risk communication strategies through public awareness and engagement – insights from South Tyrol and Carinthia. In *Protection forest as Ecosystem-based solution for Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR)*, M. Reich, *et al.* (eds.), IntechOpen (Working title).

Organizational learning and change during the "Blue Skies"