

CIVIL PROTECTION IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: A SPECIAL FOCUS ON ITALY-UN DISASTER COOPERATION



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Abstract

Although the Italian civil protection system proves to be substantially tailored on the national specificities and shows unique characters deeply rooted in **the country's history**, it has recently manifested a strong external dimension. Over the last two decades, the Civil Protection Department (CPD) has, in fact, been growingly involved in a number of international crises, humanitarian assistance missions and complex emergencies carried out on a multilateral basis - fact which has inevitably required coordination with the UN system, which is the most involved organization in the mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery of disasters around the world.

This report is a first effort to empirically analyze the current relations between Italy and its national disaster agency (namely the CPD), with the two most relevant UN agencies, committed in disaster response and disaster prevention, that is to say the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the UN Secretariat for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

To this end, the report addresses the following questions: What initiatives (norms, institutions, joint activities) have been undertaken by the Italian Government, and specifically by the Italian CPD, to cooperate with the global level and to adapt to UN standards as to regards both the dimensions of disaster response and disaster preparedness and reduction?

In addressing these questions, this report argues that despite being Italy one of the biggest UNOCHA's donors, cooperation between the CPD and the UN is rather limited, on the front of disaster response, due to the fact that, in most of international assistance missions, the Department has participated under the EU CPM umbrella, with the consequence that it was the latter having the primary responsibility to coordinate with UNOCHA. Conversely, cooperation with UNISDR is a more stable feature of contemporary CPD's external relations and Italy has undertaken remarkable institutional innovations, in terms of instruments as well as activities to make progress on the reduction of disaster risk and foster the implementation of the UNISDR Hyogo Framework of Action (2005-2015).