EENA Operations Committee Document

VOST: Crowdsourcing and Digital Volunteering
in Emergency Response

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2
EENA Operations Document – VOST: Crowdsourcing and Digital Volunteering
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Table of contents

1   Executive Summary

Volunteering in emergency response and civil protection has evolved in the last years, and now includes new means of collaboration such as crowdsourcing initiatives through Social Networks.

This document introduces one of these new ways of volunteering, the digital one, specifically through the example of international Virtual Operations Support Teams (VOST) and their proven track record in supporting Emergency Services (ES) and Public Authorities in doing Social Media for Emergency Management (SMEM).

As all EENA Operations documents, recommendations and requirements are detailed too.

Acronyms:
- A2C: Authorities to Citizens
- ES: Emergency Services
- ERO: Emergency Response Organisations
- PSAP: Public Safety Answering Point
- FRS: Fire and Rescue Services
- EMS: Emergency Medical Services
- POL: Police Services
- SM: Social Media
- SMEM (*MSGU*): Social Media in Emergency Management (*Médias Sociaux en Gestion d'Urgence*)
- PIO: Public Information Officer
- POC: Person of Contact
- VOST (*VISOV*): Virtual Operations Support Team (*Volontaires Internationaux en Soutien Opérationnel Virtuel*)
- VOSG: Virtual Operations Support Group
- HR: Humanity Road
- OSM: Open Street Maps
- DHN: Digital Humanitarian Network
- SBTF: Stand-by Task Force
- THW: *Technisches Hilfswerk* (German Federal Agency for Technical Relief that belongs to the Ministry of the Interior)
- COGIC: *Centre Opérationnel de Gestion Interministérielle* (Operational Crisis Centre for Public Security of the French Ministry of Interior)

2   Introduction

During emergencies and disasters, the challenge is to cope with either the lack of information or an information overload. The social media world with its crowdsourcing approach has options to offer to overcome this issue, through the digital volunteers. VOST and other groups can provide support in hoax and abusive behaviour detection, in monitoring multiple channels, in amplification of information, and can perform specific missions and tasks requested by an agency or emergency response organisation (EROs), including sometimes even taking over SM accounts in crisis situations. Building on the relationships and the agreements established with digital volunteers before the emergency can greatly benefit all parties during a crisis.

They can help Emergency Services (ES) in several ways:
- Monitor and collect online information, filter, evaluate it and forward it to ERO's through a Person of Contact (POC)
- Share useful information with citizens & amplify dissemination of key messages
- Provide useful advice to both citizens and crisis managers
- Support in information verification, rumour detection & correcting misinformation
- Perform specific missions assigned by EROs.
- Helping EROs, if necessary, by taking over their communication with the public during emergencies

An example is best to show how digital volunteers can be a great support for EROs:
- After the Brussels attacks in March 2016, the Belgian Crisis Centre communications team, supported by Team D5 and also French authorities and VISOV (French-speaking VOST), among others, led the communication with the public after the bombings (a complication was added to the already critical situation when telephone communications were heavily disrupted, so people turned to social media for information and for letting others know how they were).
- A team was in charge of monitoring and analysing information available online and also in the traditional media (TV, radio, print). The information analysis task was performed in the shadows with 45 volunteers active and communicating via a chat room dedicated to the situation. Tasks were split, so all channels (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Periscope, etc.) could be covered. The team used an online collaboration tool, to classify and analyse relevant information collected according to 3 categories: information, behaviour and sense making. Once the information was processed, it was transmitted to the spokespersons and communicators to define the communication strategy and the appropriate actions.
- A dedicated team helped in the implementation of the communication strategy, while access to the Twitter and Facebook accounts of the Crisis Centre were given to members of the Belgian "Team D5" who were activated to support. Having a good online reputation, and an active presence in Social Media, the Crisis Centre provided fast and accurate information, security advice and guidance, and practical information using diagrams when possible. Information was disseminated in French and Dutch, and often in multiple other languages as well.

Means for crowdsourcing and digital volunteering

Emergency Services and Public Authorities can get valuable support from digital volunteers such as international VOST[1], the Belgian Team D5, Red Cross and their DiGIDOCs (i.e. "*Observatorio digital en el Centro de Operaciones de Cruz Roja Española*"), and also Digital Humanitarians such as DHN[2], SBTF[3], HR[4] and others.

There are of course other types of crowdsourcing efforts to support public safety at different levels, for instance through apps such as GoodSAM[5] that alerts trained volunteer first responders to Cardiac Arrest in their vicinity,

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[1] http://www.vosg.us
[2] http://digitalhumanitarians.com/
[3] http://www.standbytaskforce.org/
[4] https://www.humanityroad.org/
[5] https://www.goodsamapp.org/

or Qwidam[6] that supports public warning activities, or through Waze[7] that can provide valuable traffic information to ES.

3   Social Media for Emergency Management (SMEM)

Emergency Services all across Europe are active in Social Media, using one or more channels to communicate with the public; Some use it as bidirectional channel, but not all of them do, like one of the most successful accounts in Europe, the Spanish National Police Twitter account (@Policia), which has +3M followers, but it does not publicly follow any other account and promotes other channels for two-way interaction with the public.
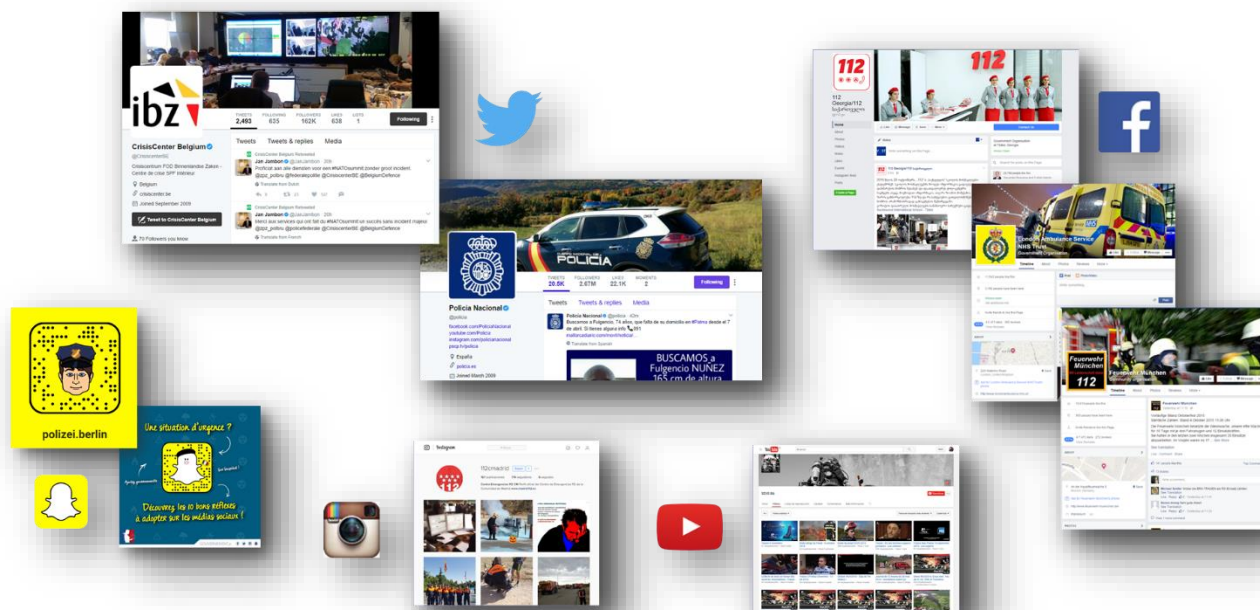

Examples of Authorities to Citizens communication using Social Media

We have also noticed a fast increase in the Social Media presence of public authorities, in terms of ES presence and also in terms of channels used. For example, the regional Fire Brigades in France have expanded their use of Social Media exponentially in less than a year (Source David Maillefaud - @dmaille26)

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[6] http://www.qwidam.com/
[7] https://www.waze.com/
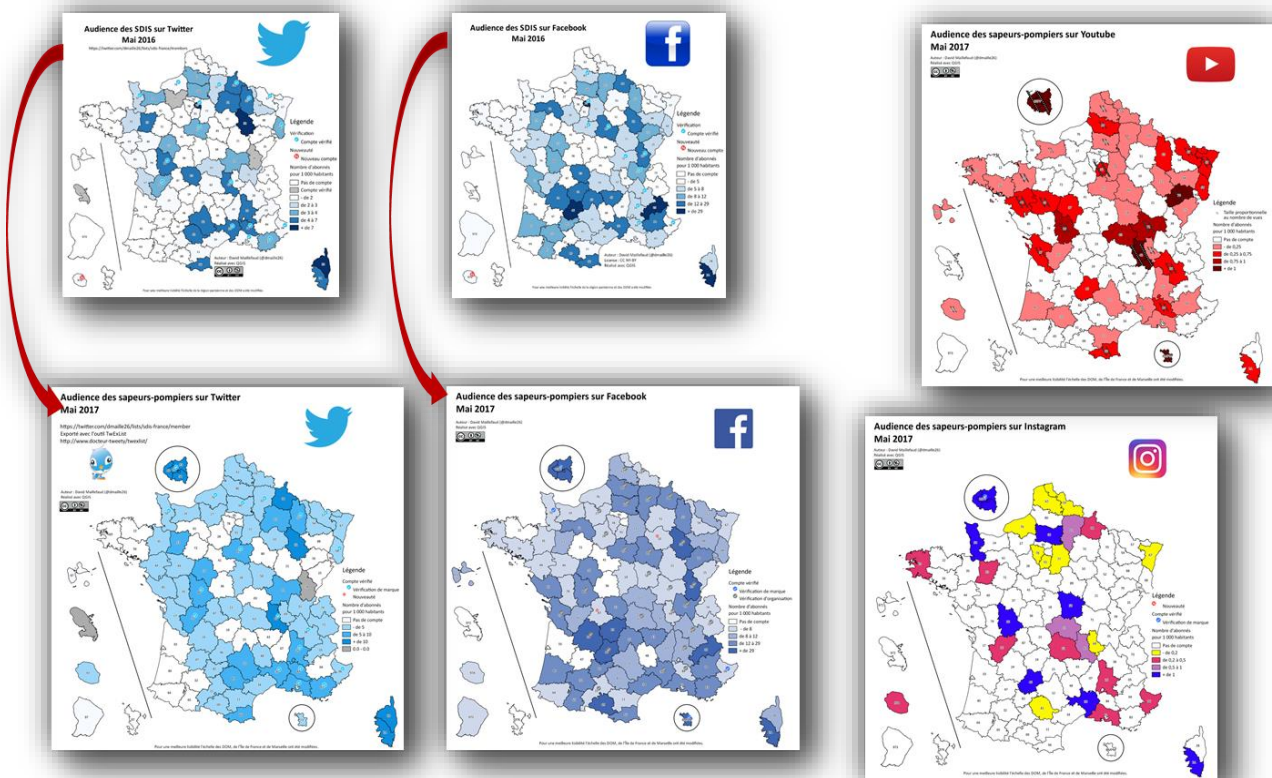
Growing SM presence among FRS in France (05/ 2016 vs. 05/2017)

And new channels keep being added to the already quite diverse domain, such as Snapchat (i.e. the Polizei.Berlin account)

3.1 How can Social Media be used in Emergency and Crisis situations?

Social Media can be an Information Tool for ES, providing **education** (pre-emptive work; advisory channels), a **tactical tool** in operations when used to alert citizens, informing about situation follow-up, distributing safety advice, also through live reporting of ongoing incidents (i.e. using Periscope). Also, Social Media has proved extremely useful for cases of missing persons.

Yet EROs need to stablish and maintain online **reputation**, and get support from influencers (including news outlets!), as people and news outlets expect **near real-time** and reliable information. In emergency and crisis situations, centralized information from a reliable source is needed (with a team behind it); preferably using infographics, pictures, videos, links to extended information, and considering not only citizens, but also potential visitors (multi-language information).

However, it is not unusual to make mistakes: too many official sources and hashtags, lack of coordination and information or information provided late, and inevitably hoaxes appear sooner rather than later.

Social Media can also be a **powerful Management Tool** to collect relevant information on ongoing events (using monitoring tools), monitor mentions, and engage with users, detect areas needing special attention and uncoordinated offers of assistance, detect and fight hoaxes, and more.

Also important to consider is the need for a **team** of people monitoring **different channels**; supported whenever possible by **tools and/or volunteers**. Some EROs refuse to monitor SM because of added workload and liabilities, since assistance requests using SM may not be supported and are actively discouraged. Let's also not forget that people may post relevant information in SM before dialling 112, and in many recent crises, people were asked to favour SM for non-emergency calls.

The reality is that often ES must face a lack of support from news outlets: ongoing police operations may be put at risk due to excess information in SM, and unfortunately, often with a lack of sensitivity or respect for victims.

Also, rumours and hoaxes in SMEM are **time consuming** for Emergency services. On the **EmerGent**[8] project we have discussed false rumours on SM and their impact and they feature strongly in the **Guidelines** [9]produced as part of the project for both ES and citizens.

EmerGent Guidelines for Citizens: Original file, and adapted by DGVOST

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[8] http://www.fp7-emergent.eu/
[9] http://www.fp7-emergent.eu/guidelines/

To fight against false rumours during the latest terrorist **attacks** (fake hostage situations, fake attacks on other cities, false suspect naming, false victim search, false witness reports…), **digital volunteers** are helping detect and fight false rumours in support of authorities; i.e. VOST Spain museum of hoaxes[10].

Existing tools for detecting and fighting hoaxes include reverse image searches, user reporting and more, but let's hope technology will come up with a way to **detect and flag** falsehoods in the future. And of course, **EDUCATION** is key!
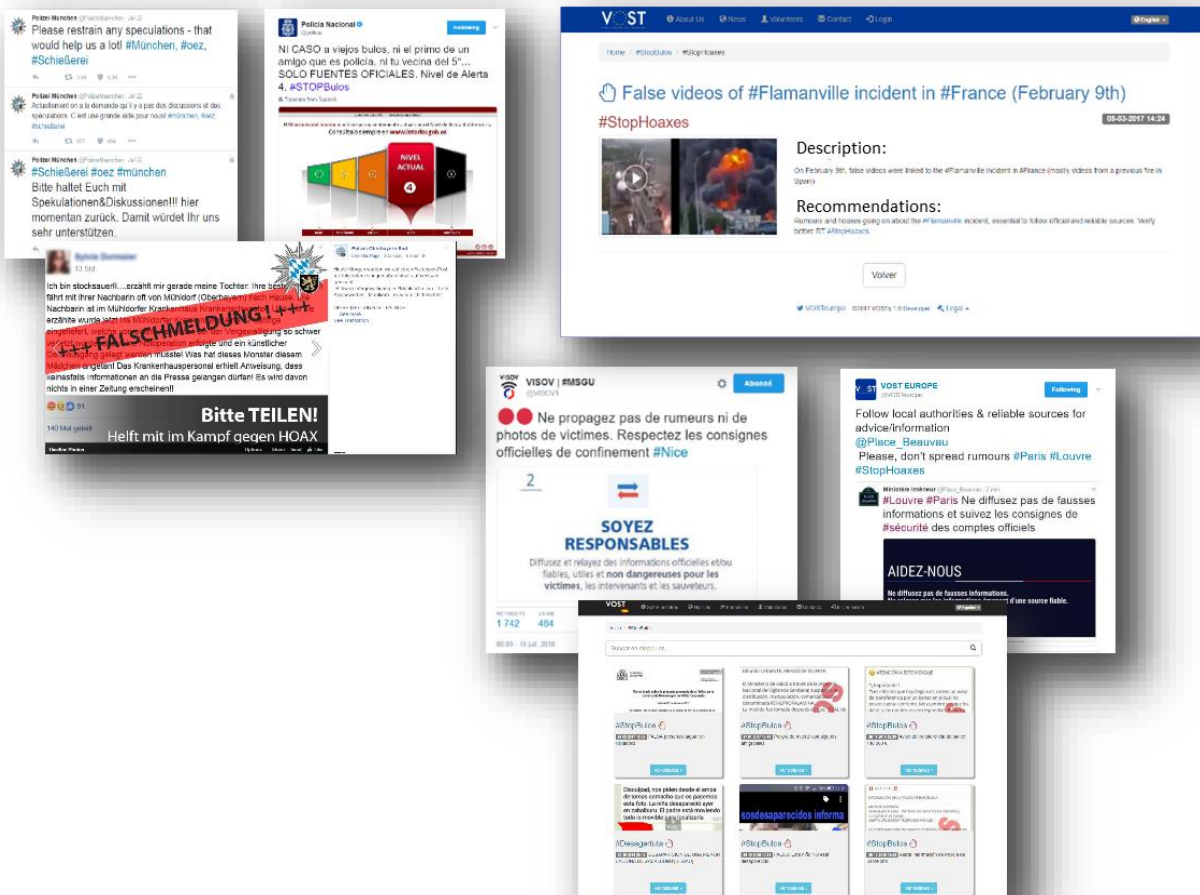
The fight against hoaxes in Social Media

There is plenty of reading material about how hoaxes and rumours developed in recent relevant events in Europe, like the ones provided by Nicolas Vanderbiest[11] (in French)

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ES and public authorities can get support also from **Tech Companies such** as Twitter and its Disaster Response Programme, Facebook and its Safety Check framework, Google and its Crisis Response Tools, and more. In fact, they are being proactive (offering help to EROs, i.e. Brussels, Nice, Munich, Berlin, London, Manchester, Barcelona…), providing tools for non-profits at no-cost, and providing tools for abusive / malicious user reporting. And of course, EROs expect to have their accounts verified.

Remember: ES can get valuable support from **digital volunteers** such as international VOST[12], the Belgian Team D5, Red Cross and their DiGIDOCs (i.e. "*Observatorio digital en el Centro de Operaciones de Cruz Roja Española*"), and overall DigiHums (DHN, SBTF, Humanity Road, OSM community…). Although such organisations most times collaborate with EROs under agreements, there may be cases of ad-hoc, un-coordinated / opportunistic helpers ("spontaneous volunteers") with rather aggressive behaviours that need to be managed.

3.2 Team D5 (Belgium – Crisis Communication)

Promoted in 2013 by Belgian authorities, through the federal Crisis Centre, and officially sanctioned to support regions and cities, it is a network of experts to provide support with information to citizens on a voluntary basis; +30 people all across Belgium, extensively trained, strong background in crisis communication and emergency planning. They can be activated when needed to operate on-line (sometimes on-site) under responsibility of local authorities in charge of events. Their activations include of course the Brussels attacks, big accidents, severe weather situations, and other.

Source: Benoît Ramacker, spokesperson of Team D5 (@BenoitR_D5)

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[12] https://vost.es/in Spain, http://www.visov.org/ in France, https://www.facebook.com/VOSTde/ in Germany

3.3 International Virtual Operations Support Teams

A Virtual Operations Support Team (VOST) as applied to emergency management and disaster recovery is an effort to make use of new communication technologies and social media tools so that a team of trusted agents can lend support via the internet to those on-site who may otherwise be overwhelmed by the volume of data generated during a disaster.

Most of the times VOSTs are activated to perform specific functions in support of affected organisations & jurisdictions. In those cases, each VOST has a Team Leader that reports directly to the affected organisation/jurisdiction, and other VOSTs may provide additional surge support if needed. Some of the VOSTs can also self-activate on occasions.

As additional VOSTs are established, a VOS Group (VOSG) may be established to coordinate the work of the VOSTs to maintain an effective span of control. The VOSG has a Group Supervisor that reports to the affected organisation/jurisdiction. The VOST Leaders report to the Group Supervisor[13].

The following map shows the current network of existing VOSTs across the world, with new teams being created in Europe and the Americas.
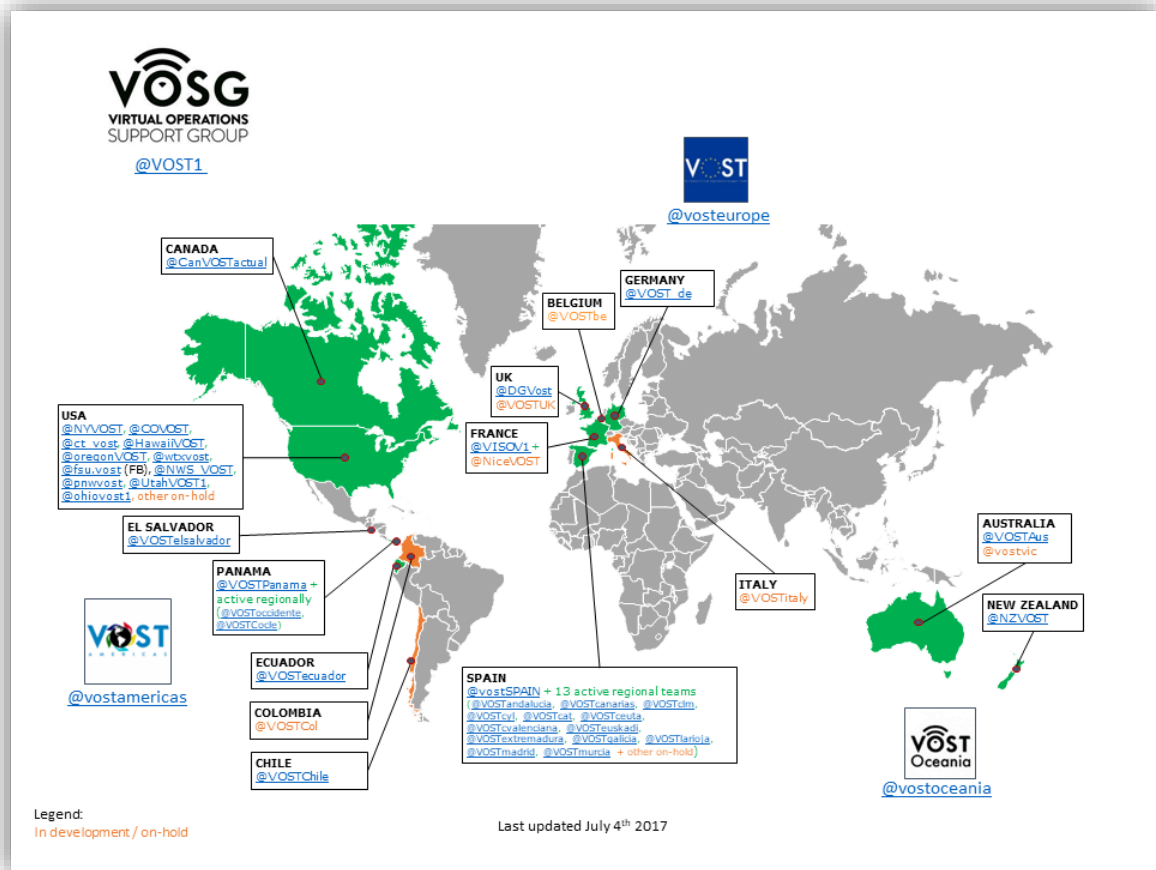
Source: @VOSTEurope

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[13] http://vosg.us/

VOSTs are teams of trusted agents who support on-line and via SM those who may otherwise be overwhelmed by the volume of information generated during crisis situations. Teams are formed by experts in public safety, communications and IT, supported by an expanding network of VOST influencers and guided by strong ethical considerations and confidentiality.

They can help by doing **Civil Protection on-line**, supporting affected organisations & jurisdictions through formal agreements with EROs and Public Authorities at different levels, and can be self-activated or activated upon request to perform tasks that include Social Media monitoring and amplification, and specially detecting and fighting hoaxes. Also, providing useful and educated advice, and more.

VOSTs have a limited presence in Europe, with active teams mostly in Spain, France and Germany for the time being. However, during crisis situations, the Virtual Operations Support Group (VOSG) Global Advisory Council, acts as the coordination body for surge support for teams in three regional centres[14]: VOST Americas, VOST Oceania and VOST Europe.
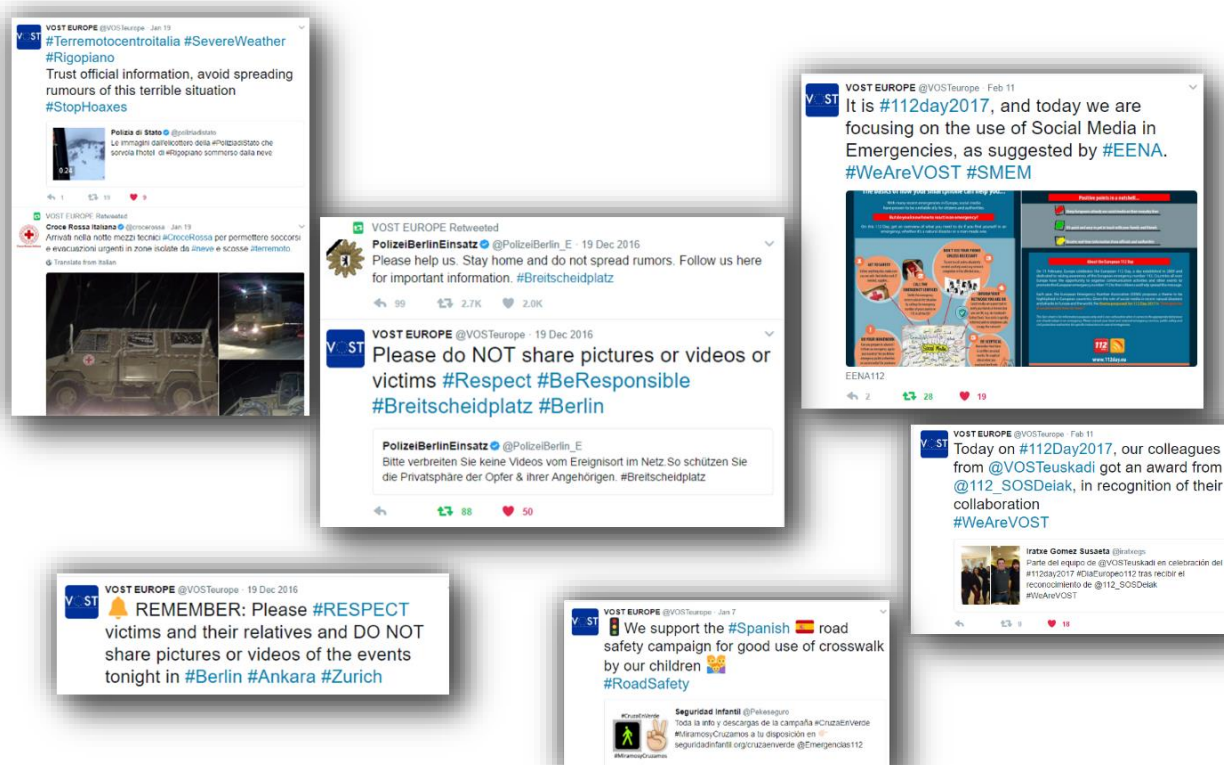
Sample of Tweets and Retweets by @VOSTeurope

In recognition of their work, VOST Spain (with all its regional branches) has been awarded a Civil Protection medal[15] by the Spanish Ministry of Interior.

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[14] http://vosg.us/active-vosts/

[15] http://vosg.us/blog/2017/06/16/vost-spain-receives-the-bronze-civil-protection-merit-medal-espirituvost-vostspain-smem-vost/

16

Some of the Spanish VOSTs have signed collaboration agreements with public authorities (the latest one being an agreement between the Government of the Canary Islands and VOST Spain[17]), and in some cases also with private organisations (i.e. the agreement between Petronor and VOST Euskadi[18])

The French speaking VOST (VISOV), created in 2014, has already signed formal conventions with multiple public authorities, including the French Ministry of Interior's Directorate of Civil Protection and Crisis Management (July 2016[19]), which means they can be activated to support the COGIC – The Operational Crisis Centre for Public Security of the French Ministry of Interior).

Activation on 20th April 2017 following the attack in Parisian Champs Elysées

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16 https://twitter.com/vostSPAIN/status/875676831483129860

17 http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/boc/2017/197/008.html

18 http://petronor.eus/es/2016/01/petronor-firma-un-convenio-de-colaboracion-con-vost-euskadi-en-materia-de-emergencias-y-proteccion-civil/

19 https://twitter.com/VISOV1/status/755066994030997505

After a year and a half of preparation, the German VOST of THW took its first assignment[20] on July 1st 2017 (THW[21] is a German Federal agency that belongs to the Ministry of the Interior, and 99 percent of its members are volunteers).

Some VOST volunteers also collaborate with other crowdsourcing initiatives, such as the Open Street Maps (OSM) community, which help produce very useful maps.
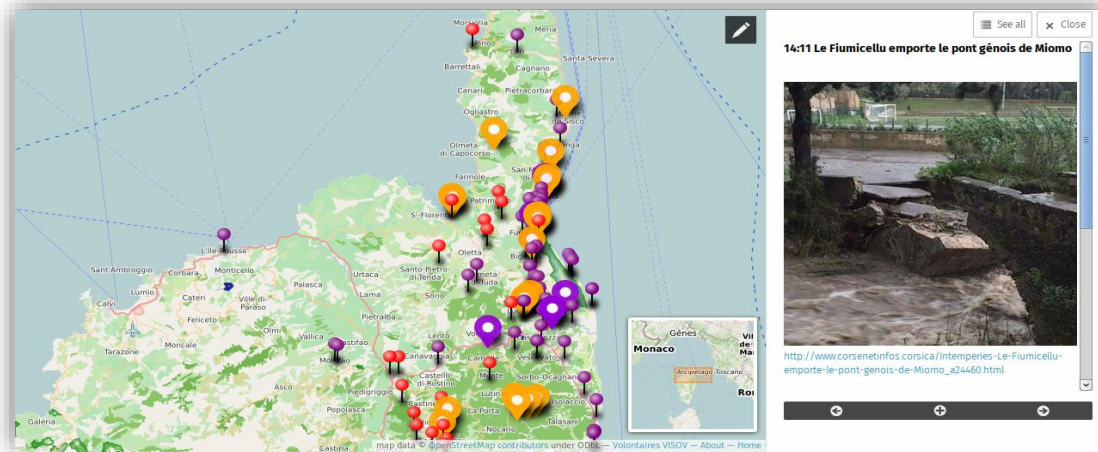
uMap for November 2016 floods in Corsica (source: VISOV)
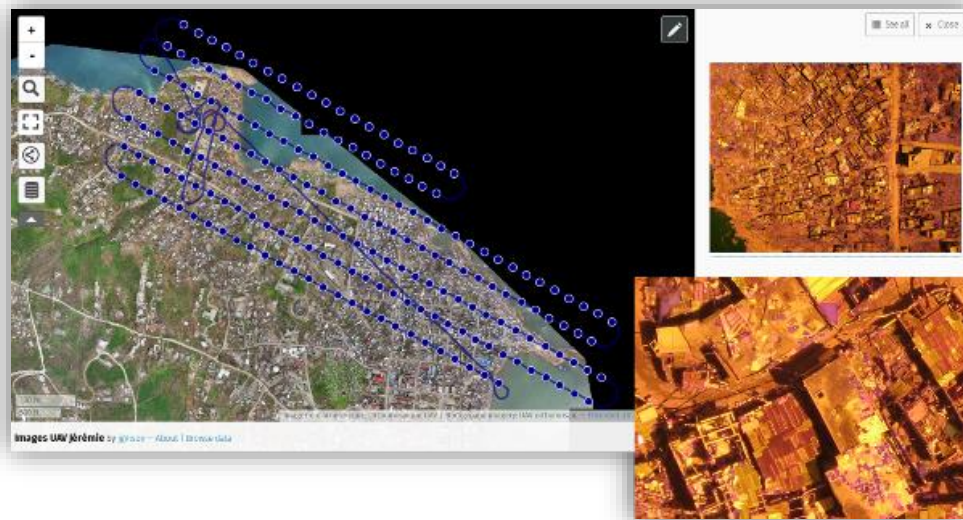
Drone Orthomosaic of Jérémie, Haiti, after Hurricane Matthew (source: VISOV)

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[20] https://www.lv-nw.thw.de/SharedDocs/Meldungen/THW-LV-NW/DE/Einsaetze/2017/07-Juli/01_erste_etappe_tour_de_france.html
[21] https://www.thw.de/EN/THW/Overview/overview_node.html

4   Digital Volunteering with VOSTs

Not all VOST organisations operate in the same way, nor have the same structure. People with the right skill-sets and backgrounds can become volunteers of existing teams, or join other people / organisations to create new teams to support their local Emergency Services.

4.1   How to become a VOST volunteer?

Start by contacting VOST in the region through Social Media (view active VOSTs here), or through specific contact forms such as:
- VOST Spain: this form
- VISOV: this form

If there is no VOST in the region, people should contact the continental hub (**VOST Europe**[22], **VOST Americas**, **VOST Oceania**) or the **global VOSG alliance.**

All candidates will be asked to comply with confidentiality and ethical requirements, and will need to go through a specific training.

4.2   How to create new VOS Teams?

New VOST teams can created by following some simple guidelines:
- Get together a team of people with different but complementary profiles and backgrounds.
- Make sure the team is backed by Emergency Services in the region
- Make sure the team contains expertise in public safety and security, civil protection, crisis communication, social media, and overall IT skills.
- And of course make sure the members of the team are reliable and committed.

New teams should apply to become an official VOST; The Global Advisory Council will review each application and a probation period may be established.

Once the official VOST accounts are created, they can start doing Civil Protection online; they should always bear in mind that a good reputation is everything, and it's best to ignore "trolls".

Also, it is generally recommended that VOST registered legally in their region, i.e. as a registered non-profit in the form of a civil protection association, for instance, and that all volunteers are duly insured, either as part of a bigger organisation they belong to, or as an independent organisation linked to civil protection.

Example: how VOST was born in Germany

The early history of the German VOST began in summer 2013 when several countries of Europe were hit by heavy rain that caused floodings in Central Europe. During the event disaster management authorities realised that more and more people relied on Social Media - especially via mobile devices - to gain information on the current situation and help each other. Nevertheless at this point the Civil Protection was not able to continuously extract useful information from this data stream because there was a lack of know-how, staff and tools. The founding members of the German VOST met at DGSMTech[23] (a German Organisation for the Promotion of Social Media and Technology in Civil Protection), and shortly after VOST Germany was formed, plans were made to become an official unit for Civil Protection. In spring 2017 the THW decided to start a pilot project by integrating this VOST into their structure, which will end on December 31st, 2017. For half a year the operational procedures and information aggregation capacities will be tested in this pilot project.

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[22] https://www.vosteurope.eu/contacto

[23] http://dgsmtech.de/

The team is called THW VOST, and it currently includes 17 members with Emergency Services / Civil Protection background (there is no possibility of adding more members during the pilot). The VOST relies on Skype as a general discussion medium for regular meetings (every couple of weeks) where working issues are raised and topic-based presentations are hold. A Telegram group is used for daily and/or ad-hoc discussions. There is also a Telegram-based alerting channel.

Web-based tools	Description
TweetDeck[24]	Account & Hashtag management (manually)
TinEye[25]	Reverse Image Search
ScatterBlogs[26]	Automated Social Media Analysis
Slack[27]	Team-Messaging Software with Channels
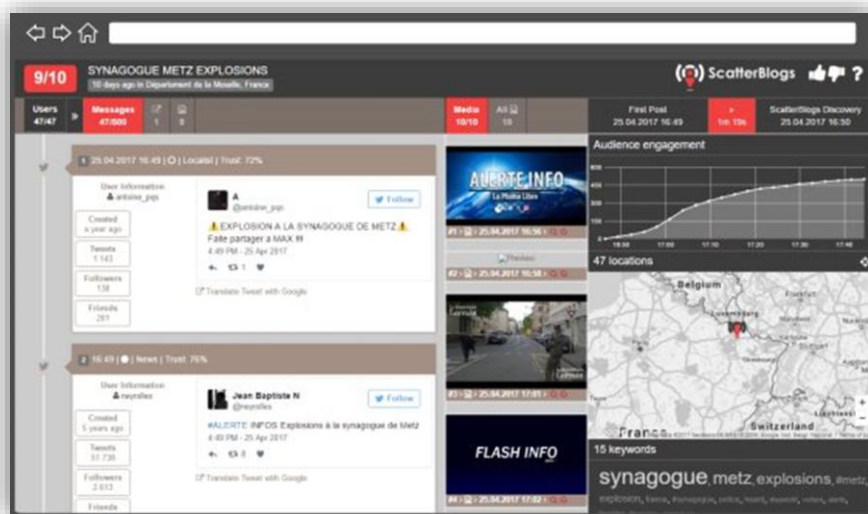
Example: Combined use of Scatterblogs and TinEye, with calculated Trust-Score

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[24] tweetdeck.twitter.com

[25] www.tineye.com

[26] www.scatterblogs.com

[27] https://slack.com/

Local sections with volunteer based structures build up in a region are the foundation of THW's operational resources. The concept of digital volunteers does not fit into that functioning. Hence THW has created a "virtual city" for the THW VOST. Once the pilot ends, the continuation of THW VOST will be evaluated.

As of October 2017, they've had 4 official operations (3 national and 1 international).

4.3   Emergency Services and VOST

ES and Public Authorities can team up with existing VOST teams and also support the creation of new teams. Emergency Services can also support or promote the creation of new teams, either within an existing structure (i.e. THW VOST in Germany) or as an independent entity, as did the Dumfries and Galloway Local Resilience Partnership (including Dumfries and Galloway Council and Police Scotland) to create **DGVOST**[28].

DGVOST will be activated only by an official process and in accordance with the instructions of Police Scotland or Dumfries and Galloway Council, and it was first deployed in 2015. During 2016, the deployment of the VOST was reviewed by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland and found to be "innovative and an effective means of communicating with the public during emergency situations and is an example of effective practice."

It is strongly recommended to establish collaboration agreements with clear requirements (i.e. the agreements between French VISOV and regional and national organisations in France), as activity can be based in different models:
1. Business as usual, with regular online presence. This is a good practice to establish a good reputation.
2. Activation in crisis situations only, either by self-activation or prompted by ES / Public Authorities (i.e. for specific missions linked to crisis situations)
3. A combination of both

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[28] https://dgvost.uk/2016/12/vost-history/

5   Examples of VOST activity

Some VOST have a regular activity, and others only activate during crisis situations, even to follow specific mission assignments. The promotion of the use of social media in emergencies and disasters is one of the basic activities carried out.

5.1   Severe weather and other natural disasters

Possibly the most common type of information provided by VOST teams is linked with Severe Weather (wind, rain, snow, thunderstorms, floods, avalanches, extreme heat, etc). Using pan-European and national official sources, information is regularly provided.
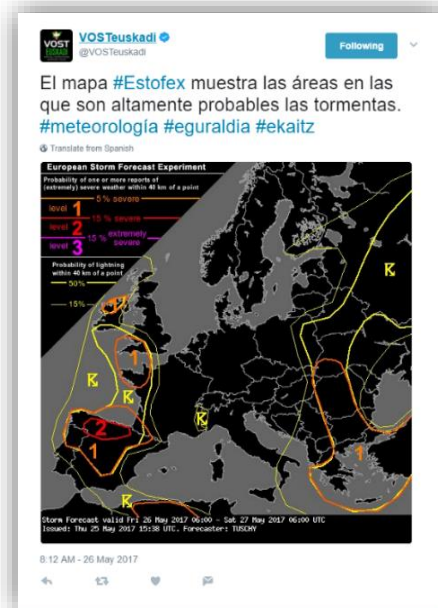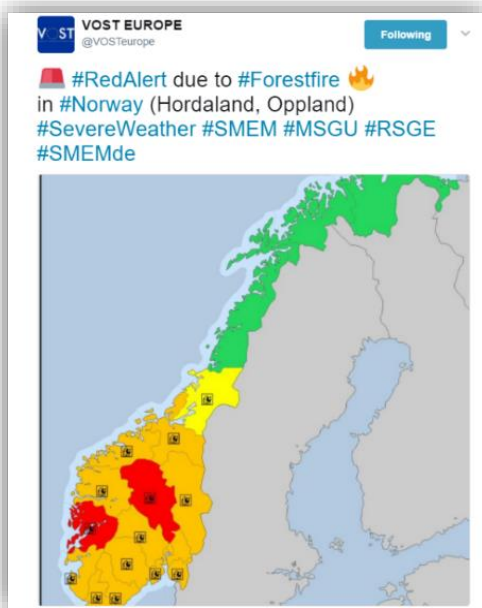
When disasters like the latest category 5 hurricanes in the Caribbean (and ex-hurricanes in Europe), or Earthquakes in Central Italy occur, and unless there are local VOST teams in the affected area, VOST teams usually amplify and translate official information from local authorities and provide links to useful tools and information, and even produce collaborative maps:
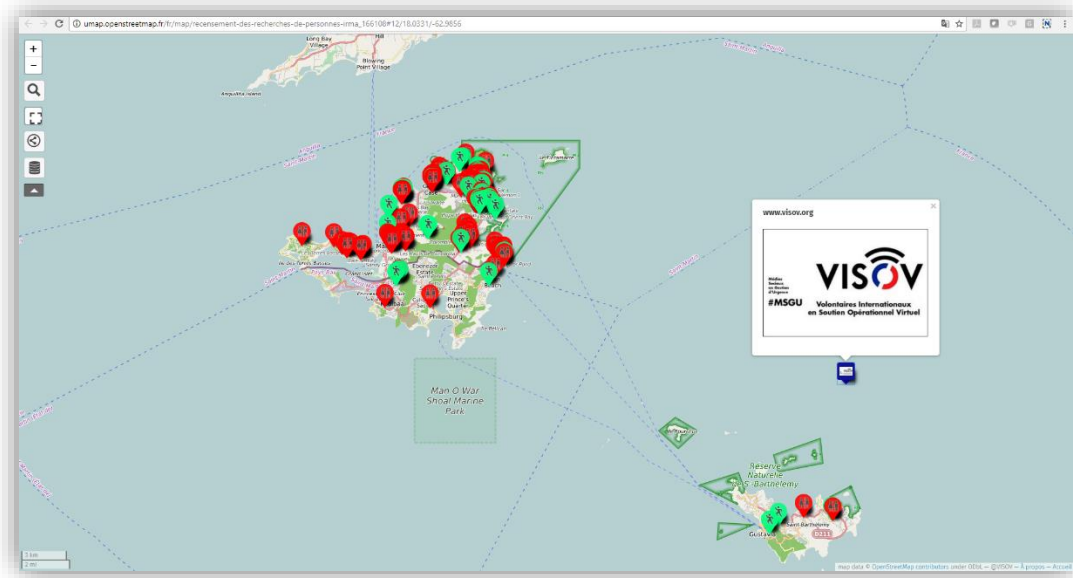
Hurricane IRMA 2017: VISOV collaborative map (OSM) - missing people[29]
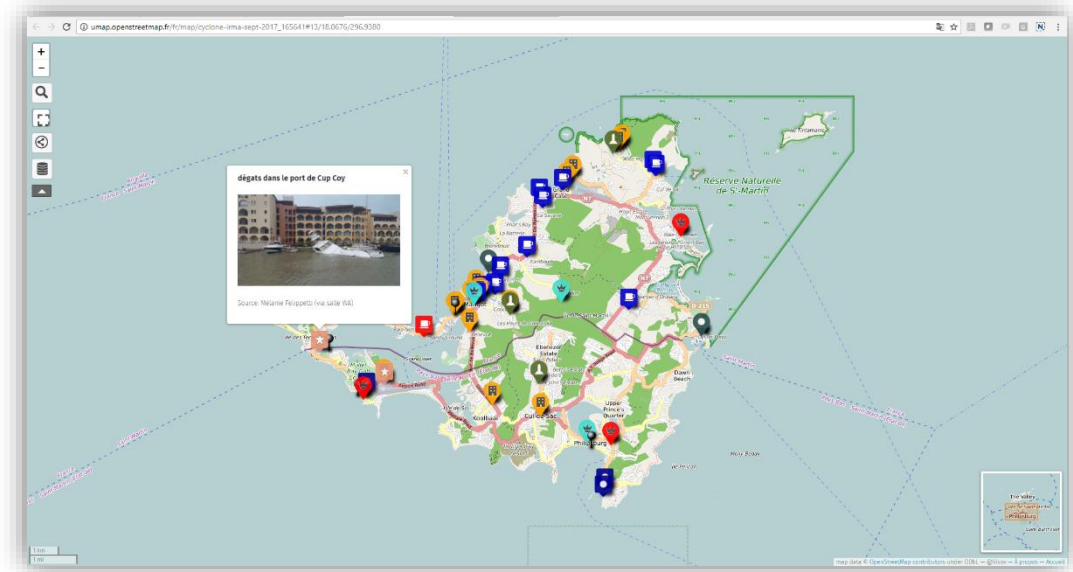
Hurricane IRMA 2017: VISOV collaborative map (OSM) - resources and images[30]

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[29] https://twitter.com/VISOV1/status/906055111016894464

[30] http://umap.openstreetmap.fr/fr/map/cyclone-irma-sept-2017_165641#13/18.0676/296.9380

VostChile
@VOSTchile

Mapa con información georeferenciada de los #refugios en los distintos países ante la llegada del Huracán #IRMA google.org/crisismap/2017... RT!

VOSTamericas, VOST Panamá, VOST EUROPE, Geól. Sergio Almazán, Tweet Quake, NodoRiesgo, Google en español, CrisisMapAlerts and City of Miami

VISOV | #MSGU ✓ @VISOV1 · 23h
🚨🚨🚨le #Safetycheck semble avoir été activé . Partage du lien ci-après. #Irma #Ouragan #HurricaneIrma #StBarth👉m.facebook.com/safetycheck/le...
🌐 Translate from French

Safety Check
Connect with friends and loved ones during a disaster.

La Radio Météo, qwidam, Gouvernement and 4 others

💬   ♻ 52   ♡ 20   ✉

VOST EUROPE @VOSTeurope · Jan 19
#Terremotocentroitalia #SevereWeather #Rigopiano
Trust official information, avoid spreading rumours of this terrible situation #StopHoaxes

Polizia di Stato ✓ @poliziadistato
Le immagini dall'elicottero della #PoliziadiStato che sorvola l'hotel di #Rigopiano sommerso dalla neve

↩ 1   ♻ 19   ♥ 9

VOST EUROPE Retweeted
Croce Rossa Italiana ✓ @crocerossa · Jan 19
Arrivati nella notte mezzi tecnici #CroceRossa per permettere soccorsi e evacuazioni urgenti in zone isolate da #neve e scosse #terremoto
🌐 Translate from Italian

VOST EUROPE Retweeted
VOST Australia @VOSTAus · Mar 28
For emergency assistance in floods and storms - telephone 132500, report online at 132500.qld.gov.au/ses-webapp/ or use the SES App

↩   ♻ 6   ♥ 1   ✉

5.2 Serious accidents

When serious accidents occur, VOST try to provide information that is reliable and respectful, asking the same for every other entity.

5.3 Terrorist attacks

Of course, in case of terrorist attacks, VOST teams are usually active in monitoring and amplification of information. It may also happen that they are activated by Public Authorities with whom they have signed agreements.

5.3.1 Nice attack (June 2016)

VISOV teams had been on alert during the EURO 2016 football competition, and during the festivities of July 14th, so they quickly detected a situation, and contacted the French Interministerial crisis management and operational centre COGIC (*Centre Opérationnel de Gestion Interministérielle de Crises*). Very shortly after confirming the attack, the VISOV virtual room was activated in terrorist attack ("*attentat*") mode.

Other than relaying information to the authorities (through a shared dashboard), main efforts were put on relaying official and verified information to the public, detecting and fighting rumours and hoaxes in different channels, and asking for respect for victims and police operations (one of their tweets hit 570K views). They kept relaying official messages until 7AM the next morning.

VOST Europe and other VOSTs supported too, amplifying the dissemination of information and advice.

5.3.2 Munich and Berlin attacks (July and December 2016)

Having no official activity in Germany at the time of the attacks, and given the great communication work being done by the Munich Police first, and Berlin Police next, VOST teams (including VOST Europe) limited their public activity to relaying official and trustworthy information, safety advice and practical information, and asking the public to follow official accounts, being respectful of victims and police work, and detecting hoaxes.

The German VOST[31] was then under development supported by DGSMTech e.V[32], with volunteers coming from different FRS, Red Cross, and others. During the Berlin attack its volunteers communicated internally using Telegram.

5.3.3 Westminster attack (March 2017)

In London, the Metropolitan Police (@metpoliceuk) led Twitter communications. London Ambulance Service (@Ldn_Ambulance) or London Traffic (@TfLTrafficNews) were also communicating, but those accounts were well in tune with the main one. Neither MetPolice not LAS issued a Twitter Alert, yet both services have it as part of their offer.

Having no active VOST in the UK, VOST Europe and other teams did mostly amplification, and disseminated advice from Foreign Offices.
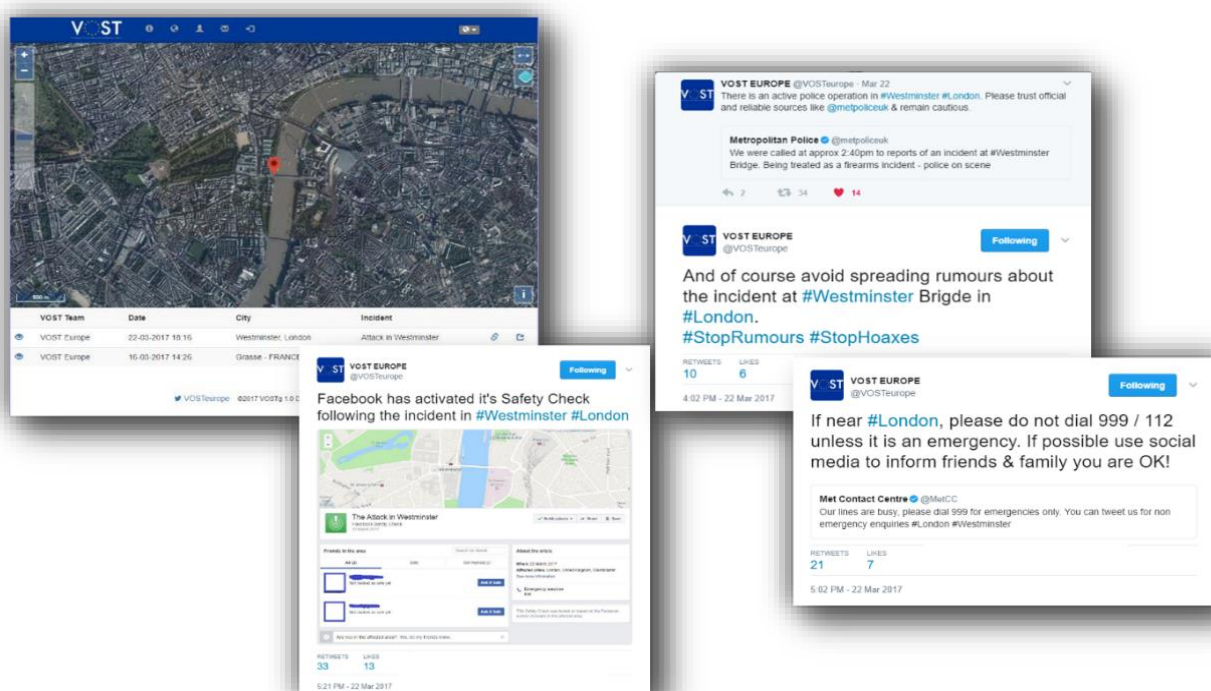
5.3.4 Barcelona and Cambrils attacks (August 2017)

On the afternoon of the 17th August 2017 and the early morning 18th August, two attacks happened in Catalonia, Spain; the 1st attack happened shortly after 17:00h in Barcelona, and the 2nd around 01:30 in Cambrils. Local security and emergency services did an outstanding communication job, specially through the Twitter accounts of the regional Civil Protection[33], the regional 112 PSAP[34] and the regional Police[35].

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[31] http://vostde.de/
[32] http://dgsmtech.de/
[33] https://twitter.com/emergenciescat
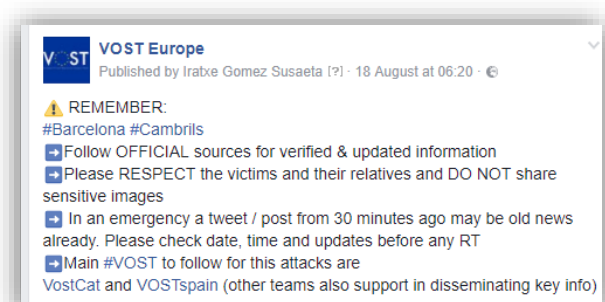[34] https://twitter.com/112
[35] https://twitter.com/mossos

Two VOST were directly affected by the event: @VOSTcat[36] (the regional VOST in Catalonia), and the Spanish Federation @VOSTspain. They were of course supported by other regional VOSTs and also by @VOSTEurope, for instance.

All these VOSTs were self-activated, while the same time keeping direct contact with public authorities though dedicated channels (i.e. WhatsApp Groups), and the key activities were focused on the provision and amplification of accurate and official messages and advice in multiple languages, and of course fighting hoaxes and rumours.

EENA Operations Document – VOST: Crowdsourcing and Digital Volunteering
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6   EENA recommendations

Many of the recommendations listed below are outcomes of the EENA Members Workshop 2017[37], which contained a session about SMEM and another one about VOST.

Stakeholders	Actions
Emergency services and Public Authorities	Define Social Media Guidelines and Frameworks; SMEM must be a team effort, and part of a social media strategy. Define a single main reference account with a proven reputation and pre-stablished social media presence for crisis situations. This way both media outlets and the public will go to them for trustful information
	Near-real time official information and periodic press reports (on-site, on-line) are key. Provide advice (safety tips etc.), practical info (affected transport networks), recovery and follow-up guidance. Worry about hoaxes, ask for respect to victims and for police operations, etc. Facilitate upload of pictures and videos from witnesses. Share good things too (solidarity, happy ending stories…).
	Engage with the likes of Twitter, Facebook and Google in an official manner. They can really help
Digital Volunteers	Form teams of complementary skills and backgrounds. Define and comply with clear ethical guidelines. Define clear roles and responsibilities, and distribute efforts.
	Establish agreements with ES and Public Authorities; Provide advice and support to Emergency Services
	Register the VOST legally in your region, i.e as civil protection associations and/or federations, if possible.
	Have digital volunteers insured, either as part of the bigger organisation they are associated with, or as an independent organisation.
Emergency services, Public Authorities, Digital Volunteers	Develop guidelines and templates for collaboration between Emergency Services and Digital Volunteers. Setup a « Code of Conduct » for digital volunteers
	Be aware of the fact that a legal framework could be counter-productive in this quite new field
Industry, research organisations, Digital Volunteers	Benchmark of existing and new tools that could help VOSTs at their work. Use tools that can be shared with others, and collaborate with other networks
EENA	Provide a space to collect information about: • Existing organisations and their basic functioning • Agreement templates / models • Best practices and checklists
	Produce case studies and other practical documents.
All	Get involved in the EENA SMEM Working Group

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[37] http://www.eena.org/events/eena-members-workshop-meet-your-mep-2017#.We9NZ2iCyUk

7   References

- EmerGent project:
  - o   http://www.fp7-emergent.eu (@FP7_EmerGent) and http://112.social/ (@112social)
  - o   Full version of the Guidelines to increase the benefit of social media in emergencies (here)
  - o   Short version of the Guidelines for Emergency Services (here)
  - o   Summary of the Guidelines for Citizens (here)

- Relevant articles and reports:
  - o   14 lessons from communications during the recent Manchester Attack: https://danslee.wordpress.com/2017/05/29/long-read-14-comms-lessons-from-the-manchester-bomb-attack/
  - o   22 page After Action Report about NYVOST's support of the FDNY Incident Management Team's response to the Second Avenue Building Collapse in March 2015: http://vosg.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2ndavenyvostaarrr-150703103450-lva1-app6892.pdf

- Other Social Media guidelines and resources (sample):
  - o   English language collection (http://socialmediagovernance.com/policies/);
  - o   German language collection (www.social-media-guidelines.com/beispiele/) ;
  - o   FRS: (www.berliner-feuerwehr.de/fileadmin/bfw/dokumente/Download/2012/2012_01_SM-Guideline.pdf ;
  - o   EMS: (www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/talking_with_us/freedom_of_information/classes_of_information/idoc.ashx?docid=91379600-f0ae-4862-9dee-6263c0a1886a&version=-1);
  - o   POL: (www.polizei.nrw.de/koeln/artikel__7012.html) ;
  - o   "Using Social Media for Enhanced Situational Awareness and Decision Support" (DHS 2014) [French adaptation: « *Utilisation des Médias Sociaux en Gestion d'Urgence pour améliorer la connaissance de la situation et l'aide à la décision* » (VISOV 2015)]
  - o   52 tips for social media disaster management #comms #smem [French adaptation: *52 conseils from Down Under, pour utiliser les médias sociaux en urgence* (Partie 1 & Partie 2)]

- Tweetchats:
  - o   #smemchat (in English): Fridays from 12:30-13:30 EST. Participants from USA & CAN mostly (sample: https://storify.com/crisiswhisperer/smemchat-10-28-16)