

27 August 2025

EENA response to EU consultation on European climate resilience and risk management integrated framework

The increasing frequency and severity of climate-related disasters underline the urgent need for comprehensive crisis preparedness across all levels of society. While mitigation and adaptation remain the primary responses to climate change, it is equally essential to prepare for the inevitable emergencies that will continue to arise.

The importance of preparation was tragically demonstrated during the October 2024 Spanish floods, where over a year's worth of rain fell in just 24 hours, and 232 people lost their lives. Similarly in August 2025, Cyprus was hit with its worst wildfires in decades, resulting in several lives being lost. Although such events will inevitably become more common due to climate change, their societal cost can be significantly reduced through robust societal preparedness measures, such as by ensuring that public warning systems not only exist, but are implemented effectively.

In Valencia, while a public warning system existed, delays in issuing warnings and a lack of public understanding on the actions they should take to protect themselves contributed to a higher death toll. For example, some individuals tragically lost their lives after entering underground garages to save their vehicles, a decision based on online misinformation that could have been avoided with better communication and education on safe behaviours before the flooding, or through public warnings with advice during the floods. In Cyprus, the failure to implement a mobile based public warning system in any format was similarly linked with the subsequent loss of life.

To ensure that public warning systems can contribute to increased societal preparedness and resilience, the Niinistö Report identified the following characteristics which effective systems should have:

- Multi-channel distribution;
- Geo-targeting;
- Clarity and brevity;
- Accessibility;
- Regular testing and updates; and
- Public education.

EENA supports these findings and recommends adding the following key elements:

- Clear activation procedures, ensuring consistency and speed during emergencies;
- Multilingual delivery, to reach non-native speakers and tourists;
- Full accessibility, including formats suitable for persons with disabilities.

Investing in societal preparedness, public and warning infrastructure, not only enhances immediate public safety but also strengthens societal awareness of the societal and personal dangers of climate change. This awareness may in turn result in people adopting more responsible approaches towards the environment, to mitigate climate changes' effects.

Improving societal preparedness and public warning systems is therefore not just a matter of public safety, but also a strategic investment in climate resilience and public trust.