

ПРОГРАМА ЗА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНА ПОДДРШКА
PROGRAMI PËR MBËSHTETJE PARLAMENTARE
PARLIAMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS





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DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS

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FOREWORD

Recent events have highlighted an increasing number of disasters caused by both natural and man-made hazards: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, migration flows, the global energy crisis, geopolitical instability, and more. These events confirm the need to actively engage all stakeholders within global society in efforts to decrease and mitigate emerging risks, while simultaneously building societal resilience and local communities. These realities explain why the SENDAI Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for Years 2015-2030 stresses the need for the entire global governing system to get involved in identifying and countering such hazards. It also stresses the need for institutions to be better at forecasting, analyzing, preventing, and combatting risks and hazards, while entrusting the resilience of critical societal functions and systems and providing necessary services for the citizens. Transformational approach towards the disaster risk management from **reactive**, focused only on the response, and on competencies of a narrow circle of institutions; into **proactive**, the focus is on prevention and mitigation and competencies of *Whole of Government* and *All of Society*, **includes also the parliaments which, on the global plane, play an increasingly important role in the construction of resilient and sustainable society.**

For this reason, the *SENDAI Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030*¹ invites parliamentarians to support the goal of disaster reduction by either adopting new legislation, or amending existing legislation, creating national strategies on disaster risk reduction, increasing financial resources to reduce risks and having oversight over the responsibilities of the Governments for disaster risk reduction.² The Framework encourages the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) and other relevant regional bodies and mechanisms for parliamentarians to continue the support and lobbying for disaster risk reduction and strengthening of national legislative frameworks.³ On the other hand, the IPU, in 2019, passed a resolution inviting members of Parliament (MPs) to include disaster risk reduction into their activities to achieve progress towards global, sustainable, and resilient development goals.

In the national context of disaster risk management, an important role belongs to the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia, which, as the legislative pillar of one of the three powers in the state, has certain competencies and responsibilities. The Parliament played an important role in building resilience throughout society and within local communities, primarily through the adoption, implementation, and oversight of legislation; like the National Strategy for Protection and Rescue. The Parliament also extended the duration of the declared crisis situations. The Parliament played an important role during the 2007 crisis, after widespread forest fires impacted nearly half of the country's territory and population. The wildfires occurred amidst the ongoing migrant and refugee crises of 2015, as well. During 2021, multiple crisis situations were declared simultaneously: the refugee crises on the country's northern and southern borders; the COVID-19 pandemic, and the forest fires in the eastern part of the Country during the summer. Still, with regards to the contemporary

¹ https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf

² SENDAI Framework for disaster risk reduction 2015 – 2030. Articles 27 (e), (i), (h); 48 (h).

³ SENDAI Framework for disaster risk reduction 2015 – 2030. Article 48 (h).

frameworks and mechanisms for sustainable development, the competencies and activities previously exhibited by Parliament are insufficient and it is critical to broaden them to further expand the capacities and knowledge of parliamentarians and other relevant parliamentary staff .

The aim of this handbook is to strengthen the role of Parliament in managing disaster risks by raising the awareness and increase knowledge on these issues and for Members of Parliament to improve their role and develop a more effective use of existing oversight mechanisms. This handbook explains the significance of disaster risk reduction and where parliaments have possibilities to contribute towards it while also recommending a list of measures that parliamentarians may implement. These measures are defined according to the five areas that the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the IPU list as competencies of parliament. The handbook is aligned with the SENDAI Framework, existing national frameworks of policies and legislation, and is aimed towards assisting parliamentarians in North Macedonia before, during and after crises and disasters to carry out activities that would contribute towards reducing risks and consequences of these events and to participate in the adoption of inclusive solutions that build societal resilience. Throughout the handbook, for some of the five roles of parliamentarians potential activities are indicated for each of the three phases of disaster risk management: before, during, or after a disaster occurs, while for some, the activities are valid in all three phases.

This handbook's approach and methodological framework are comprehensive - using a combination of qualitative and quantitative tools. The development of this handbook for parliamentarians included a content analysis, a comparative analysis, and a qualitative design. The *content analysis* included an overview of all available documents, reports, and information regarding disaster risk management. The *comparative analysis* featured a desktop review of related materials and documents, while the *qualitative design* gathered data from key sources by using semi-structured interviews and consultations with representatives of multiple political parties, including VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM, DUI, Alliance of the Albanians and Democratic Renewal of Macedonia and Democratic Alliance.⁴ This portion of the handbook's development also identified lessons learned and good practices from the international community.

⁴ The findings and recommendations from the consultative meetings with MPs are given as Annex 5 to this document

ABBREVIATIONS

VMRO-DPMNE	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity
DPR	Directorate for Protection and Rescue
DRM	Democratic Renewal of Macedonia
DUI	Democratic Union for Integration
IDSCS	Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” – Skopje
IPU	Inter Parliamentary Union
NDI	National Democratic Institute
UN	United Nations
PSP	Parliamentary Support Programme
SDSM	Social-Democratic Alliance of Macedonia
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TFFU	Territorial Firefighting Unit
UNDP	United National Development Programme
UNDRR	United National Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
USD	US dollars
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
CCM	Center for Crisis Management
CUP	Center for Change Management

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. What is the hazard profile in the Republic of North Macedonia?

The hazard profile of North Macedonia consists of a number of natural and man-made hazards. These include earthquakes, floods, fires, extreme temperatures, hailstorms, landslides, droughts, epidemics, industrial accidents caused by explosions and other technical and technological reasons, road, rail and air traffic accidents, accidents in mines, spillages of oil and oil derivatives, and other toxic chemicals, explosions of gasses or flammable liquids, and more.

- *Floods are one of North Macedonia's dominant disaster risks, as characterized by their frequency and their impact on society and the economy. The highest number of human casualties (22) was a result of a torrential flood in the city of Skopje in August 2016. Floods in 1995 caused upwards of 245 million USD in damages, while the floods during 2015 and 2016 caused total damages of 177 million USD.*⁵
- *Incidents of forest fires are increasing in incidence and impact; specifically, on the country's nature and biodiversity (forest fires in the Summer of 2007 covered almost half of the territory of the country and population, and the cost was more than 13 million Euro⁶, while the events during the summer of 2021 caused damage of 37,3 million Euro.*⁷
- *Weather-related events are on the rise, with larger magnitudes, while earthquakes have potentially the largest impact on the country and the citizens in terms of loss of lives and long-term damage. The Skopje earthquake of 1963 caused a loss of 1,070 human lives, with 3,300 individuals being injured, and damages being assessed around 5 billion USD, while the earthquake of September 2016 caused damage of 10 million USD.*⁸

Throughout the course of the year there are many events that are smaller in scope and consequences that still have a large influence on societal resilience, exhausting the limited resources and capacities of many local communities. This trend is expected to continue, especially when keeping in mind the increasing average global temperature, the anticipated consequences of climate change and related extreme events⁹, deteriorating environmental conditions, and intensive urbanization. During the last few years, the country has encountered many emerging risks and threats, such as the migrant and refugee crises, which have been ongoing since 2015. Enormous air pollution in larger cities throughout the country (For example, the European Environment Agency makes an assessment that the exposure to particles is connected to 3,400 untimely deaths and cumulative loss of 33,900 years of life in North Macedonia in 2019, and on the basis of the State Statistics Office, 5,8% of all death cases in 2020 are due to respiratory diseases)¹⁰ and the COVID-19 crisis, have both had an unprecedented

⁵ Popovski, Vasko. *Public Policies Study on Inclusion of Disability in Decreasing Disaster Risks in the context of the Republic of North Macedonia*. UNPRPD MPFT, UNDP. 2023. page 1. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/wa9neewv>

⁶ https://issuu.com/zambak69/docs/arm_vo_sprav.so_pozari_vo_2007

⁷ State Statistics Office *Announcement: Forest fires damage (June - September 2021 зогина)*. 23.12.2021. Available at: http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2021/5.1.21.15_mk.pdf

⁸ International Disaster Database EM-DAT https://www.emdat.be/emdat_db/

⁹ Gjurgjevik, Vladimir. *Climate projection report changes and for changes in the extreme climate events in the Republic of North Macedonia*. UNDP. 2020. page 4. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yc3r4yaa>

¹⁰ <https://www.osce.org/blog/530551>

impact on Macedonian society. (Between 2020 and 2021, there were 348,276 infected with the virus and 9,672 deaths from COVID-19 in North Macedonia¹¹, as well as estimated cumulative of 3.7 billion USD)¹². The country is also facing an increasing number of cyber attacks and threats, such as the Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack on State Electoral Committee website during the elections in July 2020¹³, threats sent by e-mail, threats of bombs set in schools, and more. Between October 2022 and March 2023 alone, there were 876 instances of such threads on an educational institution and 42 threats on other public-facing institutions¹⁴ or spreading fake news and misinformation.¹⁵

1.2 The Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia and disaster risk management

In the Republic of North Macedonia disaster risk management¹⁶ is implemented comprehensively, through the systems for crisis management, and for protection and rescue, as well as through other areas and competencies. The Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia (known as The Parliament throughout the remainder of the text) is the pillar of one of the legislative branch, which is one of the three branches of government in the country. The Parliament has certain competencies and responsibilities related to disaster risk management. Parliament's role was critical in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the pandemic tested the structure of the country's crisis management system. The attention brought upon the system led to a series of recommendations from external stakeholders with the goal of enhancing the system, making it stronger for civilians and the country. In the analysis *North Macedonia Crisis Management Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak*¹⁷, it is recommended that there be better specified oversight of issues based upon an issue's respective committee. For example, the execution of the National Security Strategy should be overseen by the Committee for Defense and Security, as it is most knowledgeable about these areas. Or, as related to COVID-19, the Committee for Health should tackle COVID-19 health-related issues or the Committee for Economic Affairs should take charge of job loss and unemployment caused by the pandemic. This recommendation, in addition to improved law-making procedures, and improved applications of existing supervisory mechanisms available to Parliament, like oversight hearings and field visits, would greatly improve Parliament's ability to tackle large-scale disaster-related issues.

*If you want to learn more about risk disaster management and the role of the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia, more information are available in ***Annex 3***.

¹¹ <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/mk>

¹² *Social and Economic Evaluation of the COVID-19 impact in North Macedonia*. UNDP. June 2020. p. 8.

¹³ <https://tinyurl.com/2scfm639>

¹⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/2xpctac5>

¹⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/2xpctac5>

¹⁶ See Annex 1 – Terminology.

¹⁷ Magdalena Lembovska, Zoran Nechev, Jim Ruf *North Macedonia Crisis Management Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak*, National Democratic Institute, 2021, please see <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/WEB%28ENG%29Crisis%20Management%20%20Assessment%20%281%29.pdf>

Another analysis, *Preparing for the Next Crisis: Developing a More Efficient System for Crisis Management in Macedonia*, conducted through the Parliamentary Support Program ¹⁸, defined a number of recommendations, such as:

- Including the participation of Parliament's representatives in a working group dedicated to reforming the crisis management system, organizing informative briefings on the group's progress, and presenting analysis before key parliamentary committees;
- Encouraging the codification of disaster management-related lessons learned to develop institutional memory for future disaster-related responses;
- Requesting health, economic, and security-related committees to develop studies on the consequences of COVID-19 on their related areas;
- Implementing an annual, national exercise to test the decision-making process in crisis management events, including each government ministry and all of Parliament.

Considering these recommendations, in order to both reduce and mitigate the consequences of emerging risks and hazards, and to provide timely, efficient and effective response and recovery, it is necessary to implement adequate policies for disaster risk management. In this sense „in addition to their legislative, budget and oversight functions, **parliaments play the role of bridging the gap between government, civil society and constituents**- - giving Parliament the duty to represent and incentivize participation across all societal sectors. *This is critical when it comes to risk reduction; COVID-19 demonstrated that in this era of systemic risk, no-one is safe until everyone is safe.*¹⁹

2. PARLIAMENTS AND RISK OF CATASTROPHES MANAGEMENT ON THE GLOBAL SCALE

2.1. General information

Parliament plays a crucial role in ensuring that the Government takes adequate steps to prevent and deal with crises and disasters, while also making sure communities are adequately prepared to respond to these instances. In that sense, the IPU, during its 141st session in Belgrade, Serbia (13 – 17 October 2019) adopted the **Resolution on Dealing with Climate Changes**²⁰ which calls upon **all parliamentarians to incorporate disaster risk reduction strategies in order to fulfill the Paris Agreement's Sustainable Development Goals**.²¹ The resolution also calls for parliamentarians to cooperate with their governments to ensure all parties interested in implementing the Paris Agreement be able to contribute, meaning that civil society, youth, and other groups should also be involved in disaster risk management strategies. Additionally, all parliamentarians are encouraged to call on

¹⁸ <https://tinyurl.com/bdhdx2fr>

¹⁹ <https://tinyurl.com/y2wvbmah>

²⁰ <https://www.ipu.org/event/141st-assembly-and-related-meetings#event-sub-page-20419/>

²¹ <https://tinyurl.com/y2wvbmah>

their governments, in line with the SENDAI Framework, to support the development of comprehensive national mechanisms aimed towards resilience and improved preparedness.

Globally, the theme of participation of parliaments in disaster risk reduction has not generated substantial traction, but within the comprehensive approach of participation of all levels of government and all institutions in risk reduction, adequate mechanisms and solutions can be identified. Parliaments are, on the global scale, among the key institutions responsible for the practical implementation of global mechanisms and the framework for sustainable and resilient development, making it necessary that the obligations stemming from global mechanisms for sustainable and resilient development (SENDAI Framework, Sustainable development agenda 2030, The Paris Climate Agreement etc.) are legislated, financed and implemented on the national level.

*If you wish to learn more about the global mechanisms for sustainable and resilient development and about the role of parliaments in their provision and implementation, more information is available in **Annex 2**.

Example of good practice

The Parliamentary Protocol on Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Changes: Aligned with the SENDAI Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 attempts to steer parliamentary work so that it can respond to the national needs for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate changes. It also strives to support the contributions of legislators in implementing the SENDAI Framework and to provide tools that parliaments will use to strengthen the resilience and capacity in adapting to climate changes. The contents of this document are in line with the four priorities of the SENDAI Framework and are presented as a parliamentary protocol which contains a set of activities that parliamentarians may take in order to incorporate disaster risk reduction into legislative measures, to contribute towards strengthening of the capacities for disaster risk management and reduction in their respective countries, and to promote capacity building as a response and adaptation to disasters and impacts of extreme events related to climate changes. Countries from North and South America have the possibility to use this protocol as a practical tool.

Source: UNDRR <https://tinyurl.com/2p8js4e7>

2.2. Competencies where the parliaments have possibilities to contribute to disaster risk reduction

UNDRR and the IPU have set the foundation for proactive participation of parliaments in managing disaster risk by adopting ten tools for parliamentarians²² who are dedicated to building a sustainable and resilient society through five thematic areas. According to UNDRR and the IPU,, parliamentarians can advocate for DRR in their roles as legislators, budget allocators, reviewers and approvers, financiers, overseers of government activities,

²² IPU, UNDRR. *Disaster Risk Reduction to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals A toolkit for parliamentarians*. IPU, UNDRR. 2021. Available at <https://tinyurl.com/4dh6avuy>

and constituency representatives.²³ Main competences where parliaments have capabilities to contribute towards disaster risk reduction are²⁴:

- *Enacting laws;*
- *Carrying out oversight;*
- *Participating in the creation of budgets;*
- *Representing, and;*
- *Advocating.*

3. ROLE OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND ACTIVITIES OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

3.1. Introduction

In line with the purpose of this handbook, this chapter presents the role of the Parliament as expressed through the role of the parliamentarians in the three segments of a crisis or a disaster i.e., before, during and after. In addition to this, such activities correspond to the four stages of disaster risk management i.e., the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, as shown in the table below. The designated activities are established according to the general needs for implementation of the general competences and the role of parliamentarians, and also according to the five competencies and the aforementioned ten tools of the UNDRR and IPU.

Table 1 – Activities of parliamentarians before, during and after the crisis/disaster and the four stages of disaster risk management

Prevention/Preparedness	Response	Recovery
Before crisis/disaster	During the crisis/disaster	After crisis/disaster
General competencies and the role of parliamentarians		
Enacting law		
Performing oversight		
Participating in the adoption of budget and funds		
Representing		
Advocating		

²³ Ibid. page 11.

²⁴ Ibid. pages 11 – 15.

3.2 General competencies and the role of parliamentarians

This section makes an overview of the general competencies of the Parliament and the role of parliamentarians in disaster risk reduction, related to the implementation of general measures and activities, in order to ensure continuity in their work.

Before crisis/disaster

- Request to become acquainted with the hazards and risks profile of the City of Skopje and the Centar Municipality and the plan for protection and rescue for the Parliament building;
- If available, participate in an orientation training for protection and rescue from the Parliament building, as organized by the parliamentary staff, and in cooperation with the DPR and the Regional Branch in the Centar Municipality. If such an activity is not planned, initiate it;
- Every parliamentarian has the right to receive an emergency kit²⁵ containing the necessary equipment for protection and personal protection during the first hours after an event;
- If interested, request to participate in a training on handling a fire extinguisher, or in provision of first aid - activities that would be implemented in cooperation with Territorial Firefighting Unit (TFFU) Skopje, Directorate for Protection and Rescue (DPR) and the Red Cross;
- If it is taking place at least once a year, participate in an organized drill for rapid evacuation of the facility, in line with the plan for protection and rescue of Parliament. If such an activity is not planned, initiate it by requesting the signature of several parliamentarians, through the parliamentary caucuses or the specific working body;
- If the Plan for Extended Action of the Parliament²⁶, in the case of a larger scale disaster, it is necessary that you are familiar with it. If it is not enacted, initiate a procedure for its drafting and adoption on your own motion, in an initiative of several parliamentarians, through the parliamentary caucuses or the competent working body;
- One member of the Committee for Defense and Security, from the ranks of members of the Committee who belong to the largest opposition political party, participates in the work of the Steering Committee;
- Initiate a procedure for Parliament's work in a hybrid or online regime;
- In a case of a crisis or disaster, if you feel the need, request psychosocial assistance, which could be provided by licensed professionals in psychology, or by the professional teams of the Red Cross.

Example of good practice

During the COVID-19, in order to enable the Parliament's operation in an online regime, Chile amended its Constitution.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/r2swynph>

²⁵ An example of emergency kit can be found on the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/4b7tpbud>

²⁶ **Plan for extended operation of the Parliament** or a similar plan, means a plan that would comprise the aspect of extended functioning of the Parliament, performing its competencies and providing the necessary services in the given circumstances.

3.3 The five competencies in disaster risk reduction and the role of parliamentarians

1. To adopt laws – The basic competence of parliaments is to adopt laws i.e., to enact legislation with clearly defined roles and competencies for all entities and to revise and amend the existing sectoral legislation. Amendments to existing legislation, in this context, should be to integrate disaster risk reduction in developmental sectors and strategies, to reflect international obligations the country holds, and to utilize the most recent knowledge and results of scientific research.²⁷ It is particularly important to also integrate adapting to climate change in order to keep society informed about climate and disaster risks. The Parliament is a representative body of the citizens and holds the legislative power, and within its remits, it is enacting laws and provides authentic interpretation of laws and ratifies international agreements.²⁸ Consequently, the parliamentarians have the possibility, within the process of enacting legislation, to contribute actively to disaster risk reduction and building resilience of the society as whole. The following activities are identified as the best practices globally - before, during and after crisis/disaster:

Before crisis/disaster:

- Request to improve your existing knowledge level on disaster risk management i.e., on the global framework for sustainable and resilient development, global and regional trends for resilience building, and national contexts. This can be implemented through information sharing discussions and presentations, by representatives of the Center for Crisis Management, Directorate for protection and rescue and similar entities, and also by projects dealing with mitigating climate risks and disaster risk that may be funded by bilateral or multilateral donors;
- Participate in a one-day training about the role of parliamentarians in disaster risk reduction on the basis of this handbook;
- Request that focused professional training and coaching be organized for the members/ deputy members of the specific working bodies, such as the Committee for Defense and Security by the aforementioned entities;
- If you are a member or a deputy-member of the specific working body, – Committee for Defense and Security, you can request to become acquainted with the national and/or local risks and hazards profiles, for the purposes of bringing risk-informed decisions and acts, through presentations and sharing the Assessment of the threats to constituencies across North Macedonia;
- It is necessary for the Parliament to establish a thematic collection of publications on disaster risk reduction in the Parliamentary library, including also an electronic collection of documents and information, in

Example of good practice

In 2020 the European Parliament enacted the European Climate Law, which obligates the EU institutions and member-states to make progress regarding the adaptation capacity, resilience strengthening and vulnerability to climate changes reduction. The existing legislation and EU policies to include the disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate changes are updated, as well.

Source: the EU <https://shorturl.at/bfhKX>

²⁷ IPU, UNDRR. *Disaster Risk Reduction to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals A toolkit for parliamentarians*. IPU, UNDRR. 2021. page 16. Available at <https://tinyurl.com/4dh6avuy>

²⁸ <https://www.sobranie.mk/nadleznosti-na-sobranieto.nspix>

order to have smooth access to global documents and national strategies, laws, programmes and plans for disaster risk reduction;

- Members and deputy-members in the working bodies, as well as other parliamentarians, should request an overview and assessment of the legislation on disaster risk reduction in the countries of the region, EU-member states and at the EU-level, as well as of good practices from other countries about legislative solutions for disaster risk management in order to improve the national legislation. The implementation of this activity could be assisted by external collaborators, the Parliamentary institute, the line (sectoral) institutions or non-governmental organizations;
- Participate actively in exchange of information, good practices and lessons learned with representatives of parliaments from the region and from the IPU, and also within the parliamentary groups for cooperation with other parliaments, regarding the process of adoption and enforcement of legislation on disaster risk reduction and the role and the experience of the parliaments;
- Become acquainted with the development and the adoption of national strategies on disaster risk reduction, as one of the goals of the SENDAI Framework, through consultations with the line institutions, the national coordinator for disaster risk reduction, UN representatives, UNDRR and UNDP;
- Become acquainted with policies and normative acts on climate change, for instance the legal, strategic and institutional frameworks, national plans and contributions, biannual reports, and more. This can be implemented through information sharing discussions and presentations, by representatives of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, other entities and non-governmental organizations, or the web-portal klimatskipromeni.mk, as well as projects for mitigation and adaptation to climate changes, funded by bilateral or multilateral donors;
- When able, promote the gathering and systematization of information and data about disaster risk and adaptation to climate change on the national and sectoral level, broken down by gender and other cross-referencing factors, such as age, source of subsistence, socio-economic status and ethnic affiliation of the population.²⁹ This will contribute towards creating and implementing policies that will be informed by and will include the gender aspects and needs of persons with disabilities, but will also contribute to the creation of accessible and just solutions for the environment. Natural disasters, a changing environment, dislocation and climate-driven violence are having outsized impacts on women and girls and underrepresented communities including but not limited to ethnic and religious minorities and people with disabilities;³⁰
- Become acquainted with the ways to establish financing mechanisms that could be strengthened through legislation, such as through disaster funds or loans and insurance. Once determined, then decide how these options will be communicated and made available to individuals with greater vulnerabilities,³¹ through consultations with the line institutions, UN representatives, UNDRR and UNDP, other international financial institutions or non-governmental organizations;
- Strengthen cross-sectoral coordination through consultation meetings and briefings with competent institutions, entities dealing with disaster risk reduction, and non-governmental and international organizations;

²⁹ ParlAmericas. UNDRR. *Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*. 2019. Available at: https://parlAmericas.org/uploads/documents/ENG_Protocolo_DRR_Online_Version.pdf

³⁰ <https://www.ndi.org/what-we-do/environmental-governance-and-resilience>

³¹ ParlAmericas. UNDRR. *Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*. 2019. Available at: https://parlAmericas.org/uploads/documents/ENG_Protocolo_DRR_Online_Version.pdf

- Members and deputy members of the Committee for Defense and Security, or of other working bodies of importance for disaster risk reduction, can request data and information from bodies of civil service and other relevant organizations. When holding meetings about disaster risk reduction and management, members can also invite academics, experts, public employees, representatives of municipalities, of the City of Skopje, of public enterprises, trade unions and more, to express views on issues and risk reduction;³²
- Members and deputies of the Committee for Defense and Security, or of other working bodies of importance for disaster risk reduction, can establish working groups to examine issues or prepare legal acts related to disaster risk reduction. The members of the working groups should be selected from among the parliamentarians, experts, public workers, as well as from state administration bodies. They should act within the framework of the working body and they need to submit a report on their work to the working body;³³
- Ensure that the introduction and the rationale to the draft law include aspects of disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate changes, when possible. Suggest that new legislative solutions, or amendments to the existing ones are in line with the SENDAI Framework and the global sustainable development network, and that they are inclusive, taking into consideration the needs and interests of all of society, and particularly of the most vulnerable;
- Participate actively in the organization and implementation of public legislative debates on matters and issues related to draft-laws on disaster risk reduction or the need to enact a new law in this area. Another way to get involved is to assist in initiating additional activities for the Committee for Defense and Security, for other committees or for the Parliament, whereby the draft-law is amended. Witnesses who are presenting facts and opinions on a particular law could, in this case, come from the ranks of parliamentarians, government representatives, representatives of entities within the system for crisis management, such as those who work in protection and rescue, academia, think tanks, citizens' associations, representatives of interest groups, and citizens. Associations of citizens could make a statement regarding the draft laws between the first and the second reading, but they could also continue advising the parliamentarians when they make decisions, such as when a draft law enters the stage of a second reading;³⁴
- Initiate and participate actively in the procedure for the adoption of a resolution or recommendation regarding the disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate risks;
- Initiate and actively participate in information-sharing processes that are submitted by the government and other authorized sponsors (such regulatory bodies, the State Audit Office, and others). For example, references could be made to the Final Report from the Performance Audit "System for Crisis Management and Fire Protection" from December 2022³⁵ or the final report from the performance audit "Economic Measures of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia to Deal with the Crisis Caused by the

³² Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia (Consolidated text), Article 122. Available at: <https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Delovnik%20na%20RM/DelovniknaSRMPrecistentekstAvgust13.pdf>

³³ Rules of Procedures of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (consolidated version), article 127.

³⁴ NDI. *Process of public debates. Guide for parliamentarians and the parliamentary staff*. 2011. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/4phy6nu3>

³⁵ State Audit Office. *Final report from performance audit "System for Crisis Management and Fire Protection" 02 2022 00 08. 2022*. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yxn8wurn>

Covid-19 Virus“ of April 2022³⁶, as well as information submitted by the Government to parliamentarians, upon their request;

- Participate in the procedure for the ratification of international agreements³⁷ and be informed regarding disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change and how each topic plays into the discussions;
- Members and deputy members from the Committee for Defense and Security can request that representatives of this working body be included in the work of the working group on reforms to the system for crisis management, and to inform, on a regular basis, the Committee and the Parliament about the progress and the end result.

At the time of a crisis/disaster:

- Initiate a *procedure to establish ad-hoc working bodies to operate during a crisis or disaster* and participate in their work if their establishment is needed for specific aspects of dealing with the crisis or disaster;
- Suggest or actively participate in an expedited procedure to adopt a law when it is necessary to prevent and remedy larger disruptions to the economy, or when it is required by the interests of the security and defense of the Republic, or in cases of large natural disasters, epidemics, or other extraordinary and urgent needs;
- Participate actively in procedures for extending the declared crisis situation within the country, when necessary. This can be done by requesting additional information from the CCM regarding the need for resources to be deployed, budgeting costs for resource deployment's extensions if needed, as well as other matters related to the crisis situation;
- Together with 29 other parliamentarians, propose that a state of emergency be proclaimed across the territory of the Republic or a part thereof.

Example of good practice

The Parliament of New Zealand established a Committee for Rapid Response to the Pandemic already in the first days, in March 2020.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/r2swynph>

After crisis/disaster:

- *Propose or participate actively in the procedure for the adoption of a lex specialis law on recovery, in an expedient procedure, when it is necessary to regulate and implement recovery policies, as well as solidarity assistance to affected population, and in particular to vulnerable groups;*
- *Through participation in specific committees, you can contribute to the codification of lessons learned and good practices from the ways in which the crisis or disaster was dealt with;*

Example of good practice

After the floods of May 2014, the neighboring Serbia adopted the Law on Rehabilitation After the Floods in the Republic of Serbia.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/53e3p7uk>

³⁶ State Audit Office. Final report from performance audit „Economic Measures of the Government of RNM to deal with the crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus“ 02 2021 00 60. 2022. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/auyynz49>

³⁷ <https://www.sobranie.mk/nadleznosti-na-sobranieto.nspix>

2. To carry out oversight– Parliamentary oversight is the key role that parliaments can play when working towards disaster risk reduction. The oversight activities may be implemented periodically, in order to track the implementation of legislation or particular programming initiatives of resilience building, or after a crisis or state of emergency was declared as a result of a catastrophic event. The oversight mechanism is particularly useful to analyze the situation or event, identify the weaknesses and challenges, formulate recommendations, identify good practices and lessons learned, as well as follow-up amending and improving the legislative framework for improved results in disaster risk management and implementation of competencies and mandates (terms of reference). The UNDRR and IPU toolkit stipulates that when carrying out the oversight role, parliamentarians need to have clear understanding of the competencies according to the normative framework for disaster risk reduction and of the enforcement of the relevant laws; transparency and accountability are included within the framework of policies and laws on disaster risk reduction; access to information is provided in a timely manner; all parliamentary parties are included; the units of local self-government are invited on as-needed basis; the perspectives and needs of the vulnerable categories of the population are included; preparedness to detect potential corruption and to call for Government's accountability, if this is the result of the oversight. At any rate, the oversight is not an investigative procedure.

The Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia is carrying out political control and oversight of the Government and of other holders of public offices that are accountable to the Parliament.³⁸ In this process, the following mechanisms are available: oversight hearings, inquiry hearings through ad-hoc inquiry committees, field visits, parliamentary inquiries (questions) and interpellation. From past practice, the oversight mechanism has not been activated, on matters of disaster risk reduction, despite the fact that there have been initiatives to activate it before, such as after the catastrophic flood in Skopje in August 2016 or during the crisis situation declared to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless, owing to particular political influences, they did not take place.

Consequently, parliamentarians have the possibility to contribute actively to disaster risk reduction and building societal resilience. The following activities are identified as the best practices on the global and the national plane before, during and after a crisis/disaster:

- Build substantial partnerships and cooperation with the independent oversight institutions in order to provide for the routine exchange of information related to the implementation of disaster risk reduction

Example of good practice

After the Big Earthquake in 2011, the Government of Japan produces, every year, a White Paper on disaster management and sends it to the Parliament. The White Paper includes an overview of disasters which took place, various statistical data and the disaster management measures that the Government is taking, the continuous efforts to improve the system and legislation which reflects the lessons learned, transparency and accountability.

Source: <https://shorturl.at/vxzBZ>

Example of good practice

In the Parliament of Georgia, in September 2020, the largest opposition party initiated an interpellation procedure to the Government, regarding the economic consequences of COVID-19.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/r2swynph>

³⁸ <https://www.sobranie.mk/nadleznosti-na-sobraniето.nsp>

management in order to ensure access to economic and fiscal data, to inform the committees performing the oversight;³⁹

- Request that a supervisory hearing be organized, or participate in it, to examine the work of the Government regarding disaster risk reduction, and/or the implementation of the laws adopted by the Government, as well as the impact of government officials and servants in the execution of their legal mandates. In this, there can be an investigation into whether the existing legislative framework is complied with, and whether it is serving the public interest;
- Request that ad-hoc inquiry committees be established, or participate in their work, to deal with the issues of disaster risk reduction;
- Initiate and/or participate in a field visit/debate where the discussion is on the specific implementation of policies dealing with crisis or disaster and there is a possibility to gather and share information and to hear statements of various witnesses. It is particularly important if the debate is taking place at a relevant location (for instance, in a region affected by torrential floods, or landslide) and within a community exposed to the risk;
- Parliamentary inquiries are another kind of oversight mechanism, and parliamentarians should use it to ask questions to the President of the Government, a member of the Government and other holders of public offices who are responsible to the Parliament regarding matters from their remit, or works from their remit in disaster risk reduction and climate changes adaptation. Such examples are questions asked regarding the declared energy and heating crisis situation;
- Submit an interpellation regarding the performance of a specific holder of public office, the Government and/or any member thereof individually, and/or regarding matters related to the operation of state bodies, and regarding the management of disaster risks.

3. To participate in the adoption of the budget and other financial instruments – This function refers to the adoption of the budget and the development of financial strategies and instruments informed about disaster risk reduction in order to finance long-term investments for risk reduction. These strategies include funds for the oversight of gathering data, reporting, and the enforcement of regulations at all levels of government, as well as integration of disaster risk reduction in the decisions on public and private investments in order to deliver risk-informed investments. Part of the framework of this function includes the processes and activities of parliamentarians, as related to the budget debate, the framework's adoption and the monitoring of its implementation, as well as the financial framework for investments into disaster risk reduction. During the procedure for the adoption of the budget or for its rebalancing, the parliamentarians have the important role of correctors of the Government and the Ministry of Finance, whereby, through their active participation and advocacy, they could influence that funds allocated to disaster risk reduction. The influence of parliamentarians may also lead to an increase in reactive financing, where financing for dealing with crises and disasters becomes available in response to these instances occurring. Here, the dominant share of funds may be earmarked for the prevention of existing risks or for mitigating the consequences of emerging risks, but can be reallocated depending on the circumstances. Such actions also ensure that secure investments will be risk informed.

³⁹ NDI.USAID.IRI *The role of the parliament in fiscal policy during an emergency situation: Lessons learned on planning emergency situation*. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2ck4spu5>

The Parliament is responsible for establishing public taxes; enacting the budget of the Republic, and developing the final financial statement of the budget while determining the reserves of the Republic.⁴⁰ During the procedure for adoption of the budget, it is necessary to pay attention to the following aspects (listed below), in order to enact a budget that will encompass both prevention and mitigation of the existing and emerging climate risks and disaster risk, while contributing towards the comprehensive build-up of community and societal resilience.

Before a crisis or disaster:⁴¹

- Understand the procedures for decision-making, the deadlines, the involved institutions and key outcomes of each stage in the budget cycle; familiarize yourself with the structure and contents of the budget circular and document, in order to have easier and more effective participation in the process of its enactment;
- Establish early communication with ministries and with other budgetary organs, in order to include the parliamentary contribution, before tendering the annual state budget for the approval of the Parliament;⁴²
- Identify whether the foreseen budget is a result of the risk and hazards profile in line with the national assessment, including climate scenarios⁴³, and whether it is supporting the action plans to the developmental strategies and plans for adaptation;
- Identify whether the planned budgetary funds are allocated for *reactive* programmes i.e., for dealing with crises and disasters, or *proactive*, i.e., for prevention and adaptation to climate changes. You can do this by looking at the overview of items and the earmarked purpose of the funds;
- Request or produce an overview of funds budgeted for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation during a period of at least five recent years, in order to analyze the trend of public funding of these areas;
- Identify the budget amount earmarked for disaster risk reduction and climate changes adaptation and calculate their relative percentage of the total proposed budget, in order to monitor the budgeting of such areas, as well as their prioritization;
- Identify what portion of the budgetary funds planned for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change are earmarked for the needs of the vulnerable population of citizens. Usually, they are involved in all programmes, and there could also be specialized programmes adapted to their needs and capabilities, in order to improve their resilience;

Example of good practice

During the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to ensure extraordinary and stimulative support to the severely affected communities and sectors, the budgetary procedures were temporarily modified. In Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, the customary process of budgetary planning for the fiscal year was temporarily set aside, in order to resolve the direct extraordinary needs for budget allocation, which became prominent as a result of the pandemic.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yc23zem5>

⁴⁰ <https://www.sobranie.mk/nadleznosti-na-sobraniето.nspx>

⁴¹ Such activities can be implemented through information exchanges and presentations, and through analyses produced in cooperation with the parliamentary staff, associates, the Parliamentary Institute, representatives of Ministry of Finance and the competent institutions, non-governmental organizations, chambers of commerce, as well as international organizations that are implementing projects of similar profile.

⁴² NDI. USAID. IRI. *The role of the parliament in the fiscal policy at times of an emergency situation: Lessons learned on planning emergency situations*. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2ck4spu5>

⁴³ Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning. *4 National plan for climate changes*. 2023. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/mwy6kbwz>

- Identify the exposed and vulnerable regions, sectors, communities and categories of the population which need investment in resilience building. Starting point are the risks and hazards assessments, documents in the area of climate changes, sectoral strategies, programmes and plans;
- Check whether evaluation criteria and management of the impact of disaster risk and climate change are included in commercial operations and public investments to ensure that the investments are resilient in the long-term, and also resilient to the most severe impacts of the climate;⁴⁴
- Identify whether assessment tools and methodologies on the investment priorities, for example, a Cost Benefit Analysis, were used during determining the budget funds needed for implementation of various programme;
- Check if there are budgetary funds foreseen for implementation of the existing or new national developmental strategies and plans for adaptation, etc. Only if funds are allocated could they be executed within the foreseen deadlines, and the expected results achieved;
- Identify whether there are earmarked budgetary funds to meet the obligations of the country within the global framework for sustainable and resilient development and international agreements related to disaster risk reduction. In many cases, the state is not meeting its financial obligations stemming from membership in international organizations or obligations on the basis of such global mechanisms and this practice can potentially have a negative impact of the financing of disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate changes country-wide;
- Promote the mechanisms for risk transfer by providing for subsidized costs of insurance from disaster risk and ensuring there are mechanisms to support the vulnerable sectors and population;
- Initiate more involvement of the private sector and joint investments in disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate changes;
- Identify the key stakeholders of civil society, including research and analytical centers (think-tank) and academic institutions, which have the expertise in economic and fiscal policy, in order to make it possible for their expertise to inform the work of the Parliament and its committees;⁴⁵
- Check whether the budget has funds that were not programmed, items with illogical amounts, etc., which are related to disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate changes;
- Submit amendments to proposed budget items if needed in order to finance resilience building in the society and the communities through disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate changes;
- Participate in the procedure for budget adoption;
- In the procedure for rebalancing of the budget, all or some of these steps are repeated, or new steps are introduced, depending on the identified needs and the specificities of the procedure for rebalancing of the budget.

During a crisis or disaster:

- *Participate in procedures for rebalancing of the budget in line with the needs to deal with the crisis or disaster;*
- *Participate in developing, adopting and monitoring of programmes for state of emergency, to ensure that they are geared towards those that are most affected and are minimizing the unnecessary spending and corruption;⁴⁶*

⁴⁴ ParlAmericas. UNDRR. *Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*. 2019. Available at: https://parlAmericas.org/uploads/documents/ENG_Protocolo_DRR_Online_Version.pdf

⁴⁵ NDI.USAID. IRI. *Role of the Parliament in fiscal policy, during an emergency situation: Lessons learned on planning emergency situations*. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2ck4spu5>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

- Consider including mandatory and routine requests for reports on the policies for fiscal reliefs in state of emergency in the legislation that enable approval of costs related to such policies;⁴⁷
- Incentivize communication of understandable and accessible information on budgetary provisions for a state of emergency, in order to improve transparency and accountability, in terms of both the contents of the budget and the budgeting process.⁴⁸

Post crisis or disaster:

- Participate in a procedure for rebalancing of the budget in accordance with the needs to recover from the crisis or disaster;
- Propose a creation of funds for urgent cases and post-disaster reconstruction, with a special focus on the most vulnerable communities;⁴⁹
- If necessary, initiate a framework of granting budgetary funds for solidarity assistance to the most vulnerable categories of affected population;
- In a case of post-disaster reconstruction, ensure that the principle Build Back Better is included in the budget investments, by informing them;
- Participate in field visits to locations of recovery in order to gather information and insight into the recovery activities for the affected areas and populations.

4. To represent – Parliamentarians, as elected representatives of their constituencies, have the possibility to represent their needs and priorities in disaster risk reduction, ensuring that they are included in corresponding policies and measures. Additionally, the parliaments are responsible for ratification and oversight of the fulfillment of countries' obligations stemming from international agreements and mechanisms, and in this respect, the parliamentarians can ensure that the implementation of the related policies and measures represents the needs of the citizens and relates to all categories of citizens. Parliamentarians, through their role in such processes, contribute to the exercise of the two fundamental principles of reducing disaster risk, as follows: whole of government and all in the society, through multi sectoral consultation and coordination, including the Government on the national and the local levels, private sector, non-governmental organizations, academia, scientific and research organizations (think tanks), associations of citizens, and more.

In the execution of this function, some of the activities are implemented in Parliament, and some are outside of it, providing for interaction and collaboration with

Example of good practice

National platforms to reduce risks of disasters are multi-sectoral fora which include the key stakeholders in respective countries, through exchange of knowledge, information, good practices and lessons learned, coordination and cooperation, to contribute jointly towards the strategic progress in reducing the risks in corresponding countries. In some of them, such as India, the parliaments are actively involved and contribute towards building the resilience of the society and communities.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/mt4tnshn>

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ ParlAmericas. UNDRR. *Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*. 2019. Available at: https://parlAmericas.org/uploads/documents/ENG_Protocolo_DRR_Online_Version.pdf

various entities and citizens to build resilience. In this, parliamentarians can contribute to the promotion of inclusion of all within Society as it relates to disaster risk reduction, by implementing the following activities that are identified as the best practices on the global and the national arena before, during and after crisis/disaster:

- *Initiate or take part in organizing public debates on disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change and the fulfillment of the obligations of the state in the context of global mechanisms, together with the key entities, non-governmental organizations and associations of citizens;*
- *Initiate the establishment and/or participate in the work of parliamentarian's club /informal groups for promotion of the resilience building agenda, which could also implement activities to raise the awareness of other parliamentarians, adoption of inclusive strategies, laws, and more;*
- *Participate in a thematic session to celebrate the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, on 13 October every year, which will focus on the progress in building resilience of the society and communities, as well as some specific aspect of disaster risk reduction, according to the annual programme of UNDRR;⁵⁰*
- *Participate as representatives of the Parliament or as members and deputy-members of the Committee for Defense and Security, in the work on the National Platform for Disaster Risk reduction;*
- *Participate as representatives of the Parliament or as members and deputy-members on the Committee for Defense and Security in the activities of various working groups, expert debates, and more;*
- *Build partnerships with non-governmental organizations in order to involve the public in the development of inclusive policies through improved discussion and communication and adoption and implementation of solutions that will contribute towards building resilience of the whole of society.*

Another aspect of this function consists of contacts with the citizens in the electoral districts, whereby one day in the week is planned for contact with citizens and voters in each constituency. Use these contacts also in relation to disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate changes through:

- *Informing about local situations and needs;*
- *Communicating the level of involvement of citizens in risk reduction;*
- *Promoting the inclusion of women and members of other vulnerable categories of the population, in order to decrease their vulnerability and to increase their resilience to crises and disasters, encourage their participation in the processes of policy-making and carrying out activities on the local, and even on the national levels;*
- *Encouraging education and the involvement of the youth as agents of building resilience and developing political culture, in order to reduce the risks of crises and disasters;*
- *Sharing informative materials and publications to reduce the risks in the electoral districts;*
- *Informing citizens about the activities undertaken to reduce risks;*
- *Contributing to calming the situation by communicating reliable and timely information and by providing psychological support to the affected population;*

⁵⁰ <https://iddrr.undrr.org/>

In cases of restrictions, as the ones during the COVID-19 pandemic, provide for virtual meetings/consultations with the citizens in your constituencies, or organize them in accordance with the current restrictions and distance protocols.

Have more presence on social media and utilize the chat tools, or live broadcasts of discussion.

Example of good practice

During the COVID-19 Morocco provided encrypted communication with the citizens, via the WhatsApp platform.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/r2swynph>

5. To advocate –Parliamentary advocacy and raising awareness on disaster risk reduction are essential for building a culture of resilience within society and communities. Advocacy needs to contribute a proactive approach towards disaster risk reduction, for national, regional, and international cooperation, as well as comprehensive incorporation of disaster risk reduction in the plans to adapt to climate change and development, while also prioritizing the initiatives that will increase effectiveness and sustainability.⁵¹ In this context, parliaments can cooperate with other national parliaments and international organizations to share best practices and coordinate efforts to manage disaster risk across borders. Parliamentarians can raise awareness about disasters, risks, and the importance of preparedness and response to disasters, through awareness-raising campaigns, informing the media and similar communication channels and through the implementation of the following activities that are identified as the best practices on the global and national level before, during and after crisis or disaster:

- Initiate or participate in formulating good practices and lessons learned from past crises, emergencies and catastrophic events, and the role of the Parliament;
- Participate in broadcasting of thematic programs via the Parliamentary Channel, in order to raise the awareness of the citizens and reduce the risks and adapt to climate change;
- Actively participate in dialogues⁵² with representatives of civil society, international organizations and the private sector to reduce the risk of disasters and adapt to climate change. Within the dialogue, it should be considered how strategies to reduce and adapt will consider the different exposures, vulnerabilities, and capacities of women, men and elderly, individuals with special needs, and others. It should also relate to strategies to promote significant participation of such groups and individuals in reducing the risks;
- Participate actively in local activities to build capacities for disaster risk reduction, such as training, coaching, conferences, tactical drills, TV shows, debates, and more to raise the awareness and knowledge of the local population;
- Participate actively in information sharing and awareness raising on exposure and vulnerability to risks of their local electoral constituents;
- Contribute towards the development of international and cross-border cooperation to reduce disaster risk and adapt to climate change by sharing the lessons learned and good practices from other countries, establishing a network of parliaments to build resilience to climate and disaster risks in Western Balkans/ Southeastern Europe, encourage active participation in cooperation with the parliaments of other countries and work of the Inter Parliamentary Union, and more;

⁵¹ IPU, UNDRR. *Disaster Risk Reduction to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals A toolkit for parliamentarians*. IPU, UNDRR. 2021. page 16. Available at <https://tinyurl.com/4dh6avuy>

⁵² ParlAmericas. UNDRR. *Parliamentary Protocol for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*. 2019. Available at: https://parlAmericas.org/uploads/documents/ENG_Protocolo_DRR_Online_Version.pdf

- Participate as representatives of the Parliament in global events, such as the Global Platform to reduce disaster risk, which takes place every two years;
- Initiate and participate actively in the adoption of resolutions on building resilience at the regional, national, and local levels;
- Contribute towards the fight against fake news and misinformation by checking the source and credibility of the information, and transmitting timely and reliable information before, during and after the crisis or disaster.

Annex 1 – BASIC TERMINOLOGY

Other accidents are events that are a result of certain omissions and mistakes in the performance of everyday economic and other activities, as well as negligent handling of dangerous substances in their production, storage, and transport (fires, large accidents in the road, rail, and air traffic, mine accidents, industrial accidents caused by explosions etc. technical and technological causes, radioactive rainfall, dust, and residue, spillage of oil and oil derivatives etc. poisonous substances, explosions of gasses, flammable liquids and gasses, as well as other combustible materials that, mixed with air, create explosive compounds and other explosive materials of a larger scale). (Law on Protection and Rescue - consolidated text, article 2, paragraph 1, line 2)

Protection from natural calamities and other disasters is taking organizational, and technical measures and using technical instruments for immediate personal and collective protection of people, animal and plant life, property, cultural heritage, and the environment, from the consequences caused by natural calamities and disasters. (Law on Protection and Rescue - consolidated text, article 2, paragraph 1, line 4)

Exposure is the presence of people, material goods, natural assets, systems, facilities, or other elements in the danger zones, which are, by virtue of their presence and their own vulnerability, subject to potential losses, damages and negative influences. (Decree on the methodology for the preparation of the assessment of the threat to the security of the Republic of North Macedonia from all risks and dangers, its content and structure, the method of storage and updating, as well as the determination of the subjects in the crisis management system to whom a full or extract is delivered from the assessment. Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No: 128/23, article 2, para 1, line 4)

Catastrophe is a serious disruption in the functioning of a community or the society, of any range, due to dangerous events that interact with the circumstances of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, which leads to one or several of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts. (UNDRR, <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster>)

A crisis is a phenomenon that endangers fundamental values, lasting and vital interests, and aims of the country and jeopardizes the constitutional order and security of the Republic. (Law on Crisis Management 29/05, article 3, para 1, line 4)

Crisis situation is a situation caused by risks and hazards which could jeopardize the assets, health, and life of humans and animals, and the security of the Republic, the prevention whereof and/or dealing with requires the use of a larger scope of resources. (Law on Crisis Management 29/05, article 3, para 1, line 5)

Disaster Risk Reduction aims at preventing the emerging and decreasing the existing disaster risk and managing the remaining risk, which contributes to strengthening of resilience and consequently achieving sustainable development. (UNDRR, <https://tinyurl.com/ubdb2xhc>)

Prevention is a collection of planned, organized and institutionally managed activities aiming at reducing or completely avoiding the unfavorable impacts of dangers and accidents and disasters related to them. (Decree on the methodology for the preparation of the assessment of the threat to the security of the Republic of North Macedonia from all risks and dangers, its content and structure, the method of storage and updating, as well as the determination of the subjects in the crisis management system to whom a full or extract is delivered from the assessment. Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No: 128/23, article 2, para 1, line 7)

Natural hazards are earthquakes, floods, landslides, avalanches and sludges, black ice, hail, drought, which are natural, uncontrolled forces that endanger the environment, life and health of people, material assets, animal and plant life and cultural heritage (Law on Protection and rescue - Editorial (unofficial) consolidated text, article 2, para 1, line 1)

Hazard is a natural phenomenon, human activity, technical-technological breakdown or another occurrence which might cause: loss of life, injuries or other health impacts, property damage, loss of means of subsistence and services, societal and economic disturbance, as well as damage to the environment. (Decree on the methodology for the preparation of the assessment of the threat to the security of the Republic of North Macedonia from all risks and dangers, its content and structure, the method of storage and updating, as well as the determination of the subjects in the crisis management system to whom a full or extract is delivered from the assessment. Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No: 128/23, article 2, paragraph 1, line 2)

Resilience is the capability of the system for crisis management, the local community or the society that is exposed to dangers, to show resistance, to absorb the negative impacts, to adapt to changes, and to begin a process of recovery from the effects of the danger, timely and efficiently, by maintaining and restoring their fundamental structures and functions. (Decree on the methodology for the preparation of the assessment of the threat to the security of the Republic of North Macedonia from all risks and dangers, its content and structure, the method of storage and updating, as well as the determination of the subjects in the crisis management system to whom a full or extract is delivered from the assessment. Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No: 128/23, article 2, paragraph 1, line 8)

Vulnerability is the presence of special features, specifics, and circumstances related to the individual, community, systems or facilities, which make them susceptible to the negative impacts and damaging effects of a particular danger. (Decree on the methodology for the preparation of the assessment of the threat to the security of the Republic of North Macedonia from all risks and dangers, its content and structure, the method of storage and updating, as well as the determination of the subjects in the crisis management system to whom a full or extract is delivered from the assessment. Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No: 128/23) article 2, para 1, line 3)

Disaster Risk Governance consists of the system of institutions, mechanisms, policies, legislative frameworks or arrangements to lead, coordinate, and oversee the disaster risk reduction and related policy areas. (UNDRR, <https://tinyurl.com/yvrzjyem>)

Risk is a combination of several interdependent factors that have an impact on the probability that a particular hazard might grow into an accident or disaster and for its negative consequences to take place. (Decree on the methodology for the preparation of the assessment of the threat to the security of the Republic of North Macedonia from all risks and dangers, its content and structure, the method of storage and updating, as well as the determination of the subjects in the crisis management system to whom a full or extract is delivered from the assessment. Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No:128/23, article 2, paragraph 1, line 1)

Rescue means taking specific measures, activities, and procedures to protect people whose lives or health are threatened, animals, plants, assets, and cultural heritage from the consequences of natural calamities and other accidents. Law on Protection and Rescue - consolidated text, article 2, paragraph 1, line 5)

Crisis management is a complex of measures and activities undertaken, of a preventive and reactive nature, by which the competent institutions in this country are aiming to eliminate all sources of threats to security of the citizens or to reduce their impact to tolerable scales (Vladimir Petrevski, Vladimir Kuculovski. *System for Crisis Management: Handbook for the citizens*. UNDP. 2010)

Disaster Risk Management is the application of policies and strategies for protection from the new disaster risk, reducing the existing disaster risks and managing the residual risk, contributing to the resilience and reducing disaster-related losses. (UNDRR, <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster-risk-management>)

Annex 2 – PARLIAMENTS AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION ON THE GLOBAL LEVEL (MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE GLOBAL MECHANISMS)

1. SENDAI Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030

SENDAI Framework is a global framework for disaster risk reduction, adopted at the Third Global UN Conference on Disaster risk reduction, which took place in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015. Its main aim is the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses of lives, means of subsistence and health, in economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of individuals, businesses, communities, and countries. This establishes a modern basis for resilient development of countries and territories globally, by shifting the paradigm from *disasters management* towards *disaster risk management* for the existing and future risks, which leads to building resilience as the main goal which needs to be achieved by 2030. It has seven objectives and four action priorities, which contribute towards preventing the new and reducing the existing risks, by including disaster risk reduction in all development sectors, programmes and policies. Although it is a voluntary, non-obligatory agreement, it calls upon the involvement of the All of Society, where governments will have a primary role in reducing disaster risk.⁵³

⁵³ Popovski, Vasko. *Public Policies Study on Inclusion of Disability in Decreasing Disaster Risks in the context of the Republic of North Macedonia*. UNPRPD MPFT, UNDP. 2023. page 7. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/gxBU2>

As it was already highlighted above, **SENDAI Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030** plays an important role in the inclusion of parliaments in disaster risk reduction on the global plane. „*The Parliaments and parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to catalyze, adopt and oversee legislation and policies on disaster risk reduction and their impact on the local levels. The SENDAI Framework explicitly calls upon the parliamentarians to adopt a new, or to amend the existing legislation on disaster risk reduction, to allocate budgetary funds for this purpose and to call on the Governments to responsibility to protect the public*“.⁵⁴ In this context, and in order to improve the contribution towards risk reduction, the parliamentarians, in the course of the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the goals from the *SENDAI Framework in May 2023*⁵⁵ called for the need to develop a roadmap for the financial sectors, on how to include the systemic risk, to build capacities for the decision-makers for decisions on disaster risk reduction, to establish parliamentary committees for the purposes of risk reduction, or to establish working groups, to improve legislation in order to increase the responsibility of corporations in terms of investing in renewable sources of energy regarding fossil fuels, and to produce and communicate sustainable financial reports, and for timely collection and exchange of disaggregated data to take risk-informed decisions.

2. Sustainable Development Agenda 2030

Sustainable Development Goals are plans on how to achieve a better, more sustainable, and more resilient future for all. With a total of 17 goals, 169 targets, and 230 indicators, SDGs focus on three key areas: (i) no poverty; (ii) protecting the planet from degradation, at the same time ensuring that the economic, social, and technological development is taking place in harmony with the nature; and (iii) promoting universal peace and just and inclusive societies. “In this way, achieving any of the 17 goals can improve the resilience of persons with disabilities to cope with the disasters.”⁵⁶ Climate activities and reducing disaster risk are cross-sectoral issues, that are explicitly mentioned in SDG **13**⁵⁷ on dealing with climate changes and their impacts and SDG **11**⁵⁸ on inclusive, safe, elastic, and sustainable cities. These two goals are relevant also in order to include disability in disaster risk reduction, i.e., SDG **11** “is also identifies the populations at risk, including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, and SDG **13**, in addition, is promoting strengthening capacities for effective climate changes – related planning and management that is involving the women, youth and local and marginalized communities – this would encompass also the persons with disabilities“.⁵⁹ Further on, they contribute towards the achievement of many other goals.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/y2wvbmah>

⁵⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/yr3y9fca>

⁵⁶ Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery. *Disability Inclusion in Disaster Risk Management Promising Practices and Opportunities for Enhanced Engagement*. GFDRR. 2017. page 24. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/3mwta9z6>

⁵⁷ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>

⁵⁸ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11>

⁵⁹ Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery. *Disability Inclusion in Disaster Risk Management Promising Practices and Opportunities for Enhanced Engagement*. GFDRR. 2017. page 24. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/3mwta9z6>

⁶⁰ Popovski, Vasko. *Public Policies Study on Inclusion of Dissability in Decreasing Disaster Risks in the context of the Republic of North Macedonia*. UNPRPD MPFT, UNDP. 2023. page 8. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/gxBU2>

The Parliaments play an important role in the fulfillment of the **Sustainable Development Agenda 2030**⁶¹ through systematic engagement of parliamentarians in national efforts for localization of the global goals into practices on the national level, their implementation and monitoring of the realization. Thus, for instance, the primary role of parliaments is seen in the following aspects of their competences⁶²:

- *Enacting laws (revising the existing, or adopting a new framework of policies and legislative framework is necessary to attain the Sustainable Development Goals), budgeting for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (it is crucial that the parliamentarians are involved in the process of adoption of the annual budget, from development, through approval and all the way to oversight, ensuring that no-one is overlooked and left behind in the budget programmes);*
- *The oversight of the sustainable development policies (the parliamentarians have the obligation to oversee the implementation of policies and measures to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, where they can ensure accountability of the executive branch, using various means, including legislation and a number of ongoing oversight activities);*
- *Representing the interest of the citizens (the parliamentarians are representatives elected in direct and democratic elections by the citizens and they need to ensure that the laws, policies and practices aiming at attaining the sustainable development goals are incorporating the interests and needs of the citizens);*
- *Collaboration and coordination with all stakeholders in the process of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and localization (aiming at full inclusion and participation of all, the parliament needs to ensure that the local authorities and entities are included in this process).*

On the other hand, the Sustainable Development Goal number 16 (Peace, justice, and strong institutions) is of crucial importance for the role of parliaments in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all, and building effective, responsible and inclusive institutions at all levels. In this sense, the indicator 16.7 calls for ensuring responsible, inclusive decision-making at all levels, where all stakeholders participate and are represented.

3. Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement aims at a significant increase in climate action, and at more comprehensive impacts of dealing with climate change, in order to protect development and to eradicate poverty. Specifically, it has the aim of significantly reducing the risks and climate change impacts and incentivizing climate resilience. “Of relevance in this context, is the acknowledgment in the preamble that climate change is a “concern of humankind,” and that in taking action on climate change, parties should also consider their obligations with respect to the human rights of people in vulnerable situations, including persons with disabilities “.⁶³ Articles 7 and 8 are explicitly focused on adaptation to climate changes and disaster risk reduction. Namely, article 7.1 refers to improved capacity for adaptation, strengthening the resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change, and article 8.1 on preventing, minimizing and dealing with losses and harm and negative impacts of

⁶¹ <https://northmacedonia.un.org/mk/sdgs>

⁶² <https://agora-parl.org/resources/aoe/sdgs-and-role-parliaments>

⁶³ Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery. *Disability Inclusion in Disaster Risk Management Promising Practices and Opportunities for Enhanced Engagement*. GFDRR. 2017. page 27. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/3mwta9z6>

climate change. Specifically, article 8 establishes a “global aim for adaptation is strengthening the adaptive capacity, strengthening the resilience and reducing the vulnerability to climate changes, in order to contribute to sustainable development”.⁶⁴ According to this, areas of cooperation and improved understanding, action, and support could include early warning systems; preparedness for emergencies; slow-starting events; events that could entail irreversible and lasting losses and damage; comprehensive risk assessment and management; capacities for insurance against risks, combining the climate risks; Insurance solutions; non-economic losses; and resilience of communities, means of subsistence, and eco-systems. These areas of cooperation and facilitation are in correlation with the priorities in the SENDAI Framework and Sustainable Development Goals, as shown in the table below.⁶⁵

In addition, parliaments are crucial also in the context of climate change and the implementation of measures for mitigation and adaptation. “Parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to ensure effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and increasing global ambitions by influencing their national agenda for climate changes”.⁶⁶ This can be observed through the prism of the following competencies and activities. For instance, the parliaments ratified *the Paris Agreement* (in our country, it was ratified in 2017), they are improving the legislation dealing with climate change, and are contributing towards greater transparency and accountability in the execution of the related activities within the framework of their oversight functions. Also, the parliaments can establish mechanisms to receive information from their governments regarding the results of the Conference of Parties of the Paris Agreement or to examine the preparedness assessments and the adequacy of the national policies or regulations to implement the long-term climate strategies and nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement.⁶⁷ Also, the parliaments have an obligation for individual participation to combat climate change by taking measures to mitigate and adapt, by implementing structural and non-structural measures (see the frame above).

Example of good practice

The Interparliamentary Union identified 10 actions for green parliaments. Such actions encompass three categories: institutionalization of greening the parliaments, greening the way the parliaments and their members are working, and incentive to a culture of sustainable changes. In follow up, the 10 actions ensure specific entry points for more sustainable parliaments, leading by example with regards to climate activities.

Source: IPU <https://tinyurl.com/bdcnxt7y>

⁶⁴ WB Group. *LIFELINES The Resilient Infrastructure Opportunity*. 2019. page 27. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2bv7hdmd>

⁶⁵ Popovski, Vasko. *Public policies study on the inclusion of disability in the disaster risk reduction in the context of the Republic of North Macedonia*. UNPRPD MPFT, UNDP. 2023. page 9-10. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/gxBU2>

⁶⁶ <https://www.iied.org/helping-parliamentarians-drive-national-climate-change-policy>

⁶⁷ [https://www.parlAmericas.org/uploads/documents/Global Parliaments and the Paris Agreement ENG.pdf](https://www.parlAmericas.org/uploads/documents/Global%20Parliaments%20and%20the%20Paris%20Agreement%20ENG.pdf)

Example of good practice

The Study to improve the emergency and crisis preparedness procedures within the European Parliament and the EU institutions, the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the AFCO Committee, analyzes the obstacles to democratic, transparent and efficient decision-making in emergency situations at the EU level, with a specific focus on the European Parliament. It provides a systematic overview of the role and the functions of the Parliament, as well as the inter institutional cooperation during the recent crisis situations and it ends with proposals on how to improve the existing structure and the internal procedures of the Parliament.

Source: European Parliament <https://tinyurl.com/2zme6ajx>

Annex 3 - NATIONAL FRAMEWORK TO REDUCE THE DISASTER RISK, AND THE ROLE OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

In the Republic of North Macedonia, disaster risk reduction is managed comprehensively, through the crisis management, and protection and rescue systems, and through other areas and competencies. In the context of this document, the competencies of the Parliament in crisis management, protection and rescue and other areas are provided below.

- **The Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia (2018)**⁶⁸ does not stipulate a direct provision on disaster risk management; however, article 125 establishes that the Parliament is able to declare a state of emergency through a regular procedure, in the case of a natural disaster or an epidemic. An extraordinary situation is taking place with the occurrence of large-scale natural disasters or epidemics. The presence of a state of emergency on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia or any segment thereof is established by the Parliament, upon a proposal of the president of the Republic, of the Government, or of at least 30 parliamentarians. The decision establishing the presence of a state of emergency is passed by a two-thirds majority vote, out of the total number of parliamentarians, and has a validity of a maximum 30 days. If the Parliament cannot convene, the decision on the presence of a state of emergency is brought by the president of the Republic, who submits it to the Parliament for confirmation, as soon as it is capable of convening. According to Article 126, when there is a state of war or emergency the Government, pursuant to the Constitution and the law, is passing decrees with the force of a law. The power of the Government to enact decrees with a force of a law lasts until the end of the state of war or emergency, which is decided by the Parliament.
- **Crisis management** – Pursuant to Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Law on Crisis Management⁶⁹ the Parliament is among the institutions that make up the system of crisis management. Within its competencies, the Parliament appoints one member to Committee for Defense and Security from the ranks of the

⁶⁸ <https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Odluki%20USTAV/UstavSRSM.pdf>

⁶⁹ Law on Crisis Management (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia“ No. 29/2005, 36/2011, 41/2014, 104/2015 and 39/2016)

members of the Committee from the largest opposition political party, to participate in the work of the Steering Committee, which is a Government's body for coordination and management of the system for crisis management (article 13). The Evaluation Group is submitting the analyses, recommendations and conclusions to the Parliament, as well (article 19, para 1). On the other hand, the Parliament also has a role to play regarding the decision to declare a *crisis situation*. The Government is taking a decision about the presence of a crisis situation, is deciding on the region encompassed by the crisis situation and is, correspondingly, activating the mechanisms to resolve the crisis situation, and then, regarding the activities related to that decision, within 48 hours orally, and once a week in writing, informs the Parliament (article 31, paragraphs 1 and 2). The Government, not later than 30 days after the finalization of the activities established in the decision to declare a crisis situation, produces and sends to the Parliament a written report (Article 31, para 3). If there is a need for it to last for longer than 30 days, the Government needs to seek approval from the Parliament to extend the duration or to propose that a state of war or state of emergency be declared. The Parliament may request an oral or written report on the situation in the area of crisis management (article 31, paragraphs 5 and 6).

- **Protection and rescue** – According to Article 5 of the Law on Protection and Rescue⁷⁰, when exercising its role in protection and rescue, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia is enacting the National Strategy for Protection and Rescue, for a period of 5 years, and it decides on the number of funds for the purposes of protection and rescue and it declares the Day of Protection and Rescue.
- Regarding **other areas of importance**, in the segment of public health and healthcare, there are no special activities foreseen, while in the environment protection, the Parliament can draft, amend and/or adopt strategies, programmes and plans (Law on the Environment, article 5, para 2, line 33)⁷¹, the Parliament is receiving from the Government the Annual Report on the Quality of the Environment, as well as the Environment Report: Indicators (Law on the Environment, article 45, para 3), it is reviewing the National Strategy on Sustainable Development (Law on the Environment, article 186, paragraph 2), parliamentary Committee for Equal Opportunities is involved in the promotion of leadership roles for women for climate action⁷² and recommendations to improve the implementation of the draft Action plan for Gender Mainstreaming in Climate Changes Policies, improved implementation of the draft Action plan for gender mainstreaming of the climate change policies, were a topic for a public debate in the parliamentary Committee for Equal Opportunities.⁷³ In the context of spatial planning, the Parliament is establishing the Draft Spatial plan (Law on Urban Planning, article 30, para 1)⁷⁴ and is enacting the Spatial Plan within six months after it has been submitted by the Government (Law on Spatial and Urban Planning– consolidated text, article 41, para 1 and 2), and is also recipient of the annual report on the execution of the Spatial Plan submitted by the Government (Law on implementation of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Macedonia, article 7, para 1).⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Law on Protection and rescue (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 36/04, 49/04, 86/08, 124/10, 18/11, 41/14, 129/15, 71/16, 106/16, 83/18, 215/21)

⁷¹ Law on the Environment (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 53/2005)

⁷² <https://tinyurl.com/22sbwcvj>

⁷³ <https://tinyurl.com/5hwuczfk>

⁷⁴ Law on Urban Planning (Official Gazette of RNM No. 32/20)

⁷⁵ Law on execution of the spatial plan (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, 39/04)

Annex 4 – LAWS AND SECONDARY LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Law on the Environment (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 53/2005).

Law on Protection of the Population from Communicable diseases (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 66/04, 139/08, 99/09, 149/14, 150/15 and 37/16).

Law on Healthcare – Editorial (unofficial) consolidated text (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 37/16).

Law on Protection and Rescue (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 36/04, 49/04, 86/08, 124/10, 18/11, 41/14, 129/15, 71/16, 106/16, 83/18, 215/21).

Law on Public Health – Editorial (unofficial) consolidated text (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 37/16).

Law on Firefighting - Consolidated text (Official Gazette of PM, No. 168 од 21.11.2017).

Law on Social Protection (Official Gazette of RNM, No. 104/19).

Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination (Official Gazette of RNM, No. 258/20).

Law on Crisis Management (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia“ No. 29/2005, 36/2011, 41/2014, 104/2015 and 215/21).

Law on Urban Planning (Official Gazette of RNM No. 32/20).

Law implementing the Spatial Plan (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, 39/04).

Rulebook on Urban Planning (Official Gazette of RNM No. 225/20).

Decree for the Methodology to develop the assessment of the threats to the security of the Republic of North Macedonia from all risks and hazards, its content and structure, storing and updating, as well as establishing the entities in the system for crisis management that are sent the full assessment or an excerpt from it (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No. 128/231).

Decree implementing the measure for protection and rescue – the evacuation of the population (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 101/10).

Example of good practice

The Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia is actively engaged in the process of drafting of the new *National Developmental Strategy*, with two parliamentarians who participate in the multisectoral Steering Committee of the National Developmental Strategy, and with participation of parliamentarians in visionary workshops, active participation in expert debates, and information sharing about the activities carried out.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/mvj6ss5n> and <https://tinyurl.com/2x35w8ux>

ANNEX 5 – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS WITH MPS

Within the framework of the task of preparing a disaster risk management manual for the Members of Parliament of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, in the period from April 5 to July 25, 2023, meetings were held with representatives of the parliamentary groups of Alliance for Albanians, Democratic Union, DOM, DUI, SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE. Subsequently, existing gaps have been identified and recommendations for the next period have been formulated, some of which have been incorporated into the text of the manual, and some of which can be implemented in the following project interventions or through the work of the Assembly.

Identified gaps

- *MPs are not sufficiently familiar with the aspects of protection and rescue in case of natural and man-made hazards, they do not participate in rapid evacuation exercises or in similar activities to deal with crises and disasters.*
- *They are not familiar with the business continuation of the Assembly in case of crisis or disaster or with the alternative place of work and work procedures.*
- *They are insufficiently familiar with modern trends and mechanisms for reducing disaster risks and adapting to climate change.*
- *There is no possibility of working in hybrid or online mode, which inhibits the work of the Parliament in conditions of a pandemic crisis or other disaster.*
- *Assembly's facilities are not sufficiently accessible for persons with physical disabilities.*
- *No expert support is provided to MPs on how to deal with citizens and various vulnerable groups in the event of a crisis or disaster.*
- *The decisions to declare a state of emergency made by the President of the Republic have not been confirmed by the Assembly as soon as it was able to meet according to Article 125, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia.*
- *Decrees with legal force passed by the Government according to Article 126 of the Constitution during the declared state of emergency during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic have not been submitted to the Parliament and have not been evaluated.*
- *Despite the request of certain MPs/parliamentary groups, no oversight hearing was held on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- *The Human Rights Committee, whose competence includes aspects of the management of disaster risks and crisis situations, does not function sufficiently.*
- *Protocols and standard operating procedures for handling crises are missing.*
- *In general, the Assembly is exempted from the main processes for reducing risks from disasters, ie. for crisis management and protection and rescue.*
- *MPs from the responsible working body, ie. The Committee for Defense and Security or representatives of the Parliament are not involved in the reform processes of the crisis management system.*

- *The materials for the extension of a declared state of crisis insufficiently elaborate the need for extension without specifying sufficient details, specifying the necessary resources and the costs of their engagement, the plans for dealing with the crisis, etc. This procedure is understood as pro forma, that is, the Parliament is required to vote on the decision at the request of the Government, without prior detailed elaboration or discussion. The aspect of the duration of the declared state of crisis was also emphasized, ie. it is extended for six months without that term being foreseen by a legal or by-law decision.*
- *The accountability of the Government and state institutions regarding the resources in dealing with crises and disasters is insufficient, and this is characterized by insufficient information about the procedures, the resources engaged and the funds spent.*
- *The mechanisms for supervision that the Parliament has in terms of dealing with crisis situations and disasters are also insufficiently used. And in the event that a supervisory hearing is requested, often for political reasons, it does not receive sufficient support from a larger number of MPs from different political parties. Field discussions/visits are not used as a tool, both due to lack of resources for implementation and lack of interest.*
- *Parliamentary questions are the most effective oversight mechanism so far, but they are limited and cannot be used enough, i.e. as much as there is interest on the part of the deputies.*
- *Inquiry commissions are difficult to function and are often blocked due to different party interests, despite the lack of work regulations and a defined budget.*
- *The budget procedure is not sufficiently clear and comprehensible, especially with regard to individual programs, as the six-digit analytics are not clearly presented, but only the three-digit ones.*
- *The Parliament's resources for a greater role of MPs in disaster risk management are insufficient.*
- *Insufficient education of parliamentary assistants, parliamentary services and the Parliamentary Institute in the field of disaster risk management.*
- *Lessons learned, good practices and evaluations of past events are not codified as a basis for improving the system.*
- *The Assembly is not sufficiently involved in the work of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction as a national forum for networking of all institutions and interested parties for the advancement of disaster risk management.*
- *Greater participation in the field of informal groups.*

Recommendations for the next period

- *Active participation in protection and rescue education, organization and participation in training exercises and protection and rescue activities.*
- *Adoption of the Plan for business continuation of the Parliament and acquaintance of the deputies with it.*
- *Sensitization and education of MPs and services about global and national mechanisms and frameworks for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change, for sustainable and resilient development.*
- *Providing expert support to MPs on how to deal with citizens and various vulnerable groups in the event of a crisis or disaster.*
- *Regulation of the procedure for extending the declared state of crisis and determining the deadlines.*
- *Active use of the supervisory mechanism, especially for the use of public funds and subsequent adoption of conclusions in order to improve the situation in thematic areas.*

- *Improving budget literacy and knowledge of MPs in order to screen existing budget frameworks and improve investment in preventive policies and practices.*
- *Due to the strategic importance of the reform process of the crisis management system, it is necessary to open a debate in the Parliament.*
- *Codification of lessons learned, good practices and adoption of crisis and disaster management evaluations.*
- *Holding a Thematic Session of the Assembly in order to mark October 13 - the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction. This year the theme is "[Fighting inequality for a resilient future](#)".*
- *Networking of parliaments from Southeast Europe in the segment of disaster risk reduction and possible establishment of ie. centers/commissions of excellence where each parliament would cover a specific area of disaster risk management.*

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ПРОГРАМА ЗА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНА ПОДДРШКА
PROGRAMI PËR MBËSHTETJE PARLAMENTARE
PARLIAMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

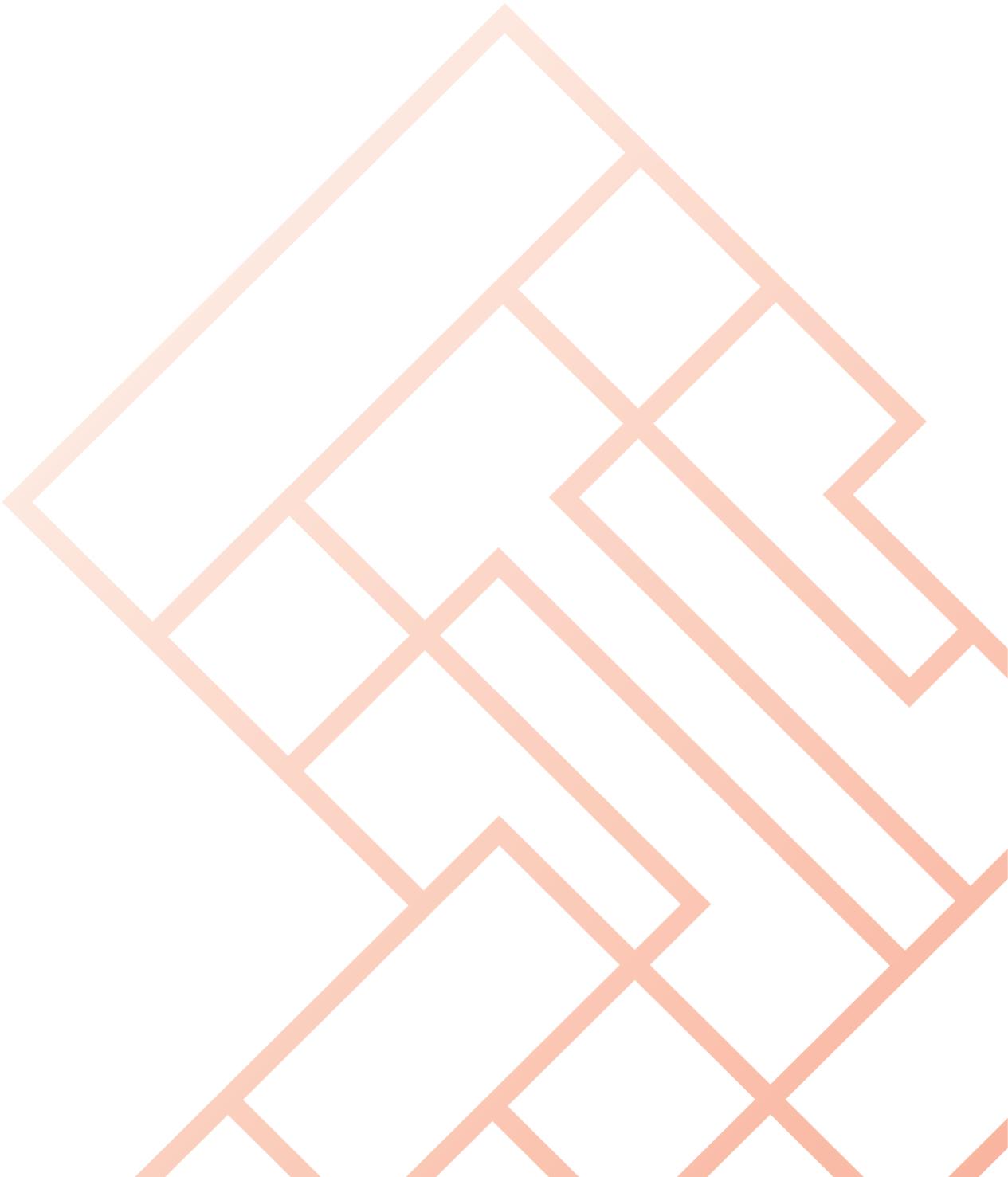


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