



DISASTER MANAGEMENT
TRAINING PROJECT

EVENT REPORT

ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSE

with emphasis on terminology in the field of civil protection/disaster management
Ig, Slovenia
13 – 18 November 2011

1. Topic and Objective of Event and General Information

This training was Slovenian contribution to the Disaster Management Training Programme of the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE) for 2011 and was organised by the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief (ACPDR) in cooperation with the School of Foreign Languages, Ministry of Defence.

The training was held at the Training Centre for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief at Ig, near Ljubljana.

The course was intended for senior civil protection operational experts or advisers for international affairs that need to understand the documents and communication in English language, particularly when they are involved in communication/correspondence in relation to provision of mutual assistance in disasters.

Candidates at **level B2** were eligible for this course. They were asked to take the online test in advance. Basic computer skills were obligatory.

The language of the training was English and no translation was provided. Working documents and handouts were also in English.

A maximum of 12 participants could be accepted, 2 per country. Applications were considered on a first come-first served basis.

The aim of the course was to provide participants' with training in writing, speaking and reading skills and to improve their knowledge of terminology from the area of Disaster Management.

After the course, participants should:

- Be familiar with the basic terminology used in disaster management.
- Learn the terminology used in relevant documents and correspondence.
- Be able to read documents and other texts related to this field, understand key points and most details.

- Be able to understand authentic European Commission Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) messages, assessments and situation reports.
- Be able to write MIC messages, assessments and short situation reports, based on given scenarios. Participants will be able to express ideas in a properly organized manner demonstrating a suitable control of basic grammatical structures.
- Be able to identify and correct language mistakes in the above mentioned correspondence.

The course comprised 33 hours and was divided into 2 parts:

1. Contact hours (25 hrs)
2. Self study (8 hrs)

1. Contact hours were intended for class instruction. Participants were working with their teachers 5 hours per day.

2. Self study time was dedicated to:

- Homework assignments.
- Skills improvement. Participants were able to work in a specially designed virtual classroom which provided them with online resources. These enabled each participant to work on the area(s) s/he needed to improve. The virtual classroom also provided additional vocabulary exercises to revise the vocabulary taught. During the self-study time, participants were assisted by one of the teachers.

2. Lecturers

Lecturers were the following English language instructors: Tadeja Hafner, Dubravka Zupanec and Katarina Fink, all from the School of Foreign Languages, Ministry of Defence.

3. Participants

Course was attended by 11 participants from 8 countries:

1.	Albania	Mr. Bledar Lisha
2.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Predrag Slijepčević
3.	Bulgaria	Mrs. Evgeniya Vladimirova
4.	Bulgaria	Mr. Georgi Gatev
5.	Croatia	Mrs. Nataša Holcinger
6.	Croatia	Mrs. Dajana Tokić
7.	Macedonia	Mr. Živko Stavreski
8.	Macedonia	Mrs. Aleksandra Pop-Icova
9.	Republic of Serbia	Mrs. Jelena Dimić
10.	Slovenia	Mrs. Darja Adam Pak
11.	Turkey	Ms. Esra Tosunoglu

4. Problems and solutions

- The most evident problem for the teaching team was the participants' different levels of proficiency in English. With their proficiency ranging from beginner to advanced, it was not possible to tailor the course to every participant's language needs.

Despite the fact that all the participants were cooperative and willing to participate in all the activities, teachers were busy bridging the gap between the beginner, lower-intermediate and advanced participants. Consequently, the language requirements of the intermediate students, the original target audience of the course, could not be properly addressed.

From the teachers' point of view it is therefore necessary to make everybody concerned aware of the course joining instructions and the language requirements set there. The more homogeneous the participant group, the better the language problems within the specified professional area can be addressed and the more effective the course can be.

5. Opinions of participants

At the end of the course the participants were asked to evaluate the course by filling in a pre-prepared end-of-course critique. The questions included referred to the classroom hours as well as to the self-study work in the online classroom.

All participants agreed that their English had improved in that week. Eight participants said they had learned a lot of new vocabulary from their professional area. Most participants emphasised that the parts of the course that were most useful to them were vocabulary training, MIC terminology and written assignments. For the next course participants recommended more language input and the use of different materials (like excerpts from bilateral agreements, governing clauses related to facilitation of transport, etc.). Some participants suggested to include more speaking activities.

In their comments on the online classroom, participants agreed that the materials found there were useful and easy to use. The majority of the participants felt they had enough time for the activities in the virtual classroom. Suggestions for improvement included more assignments, especially more listening tasks.

In the summary of their comments 8 participants stated they would definitely recommend this course to their colleagues. Overall the participants expressed their satisfaction with the course, with the materials included as well as with the way the course was conducted. However, their comments do suggest that their very different levels of English influenced the work and prevented some participants from gaining more.