

Be Prepared and...Consider the Mapping

The Commission on Cartography in Early Warning and Crisis Management is an active group within ICA. It grew out of a Working Group established in 2005 to address specific concerns about the mapping response to disasters in tropical areas. Its work was well received and renewed in 2007, under the hard-working leadership of then ICA past-president Milan Konecny. It was awarded Commission status in 2011; its remit has extended globally and to address more issues, including conceptual and methodological aspects, human involvement (crisis impact on rescued people and children; end-user approach to map utilisation), participation in global initiatives, and technological developments (including field sensors).

The Commission has promoted and participated in many meetings around the world in recent months. The Commission chair delivered a keynote on 'Ubiquitous Mapping for Early Warning and Crisis Management' at the event called Researching Spatial and Social Aspects of Disaster Management, which was organised by the Hungarian CASCADOSS Association in May 2013 in Budapest. In the following month, the Commission chair addressed a geoinformatics conference in Kaifeng, China, which was attended by Chinese and other renowned GIS experts, on the topic of 'Early Warning and Disaster Management', noting the impact of VGI and cartography on the role of contemporary GIS in disaster management.

In August 2013, the Commission was invited to a Special Seminar in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Discussions led by Hasan Jamil (deputy surveyor general) were wide and addressed the needs of special groups (e.g. children, the elderly) during emergency situations. Visits were made by Commission members to the Malaysian Center for Geospatial Data Infrastructure – where discussions included updates on the use of INSPIRE and GMES in Europe, and the role of cartography – and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in the country's new national administrative capital, Putrajaya.

The 2013 ICC in Dresden was a further opportunity to disseminate the work of Commission members with a number of papers presented at dedicated, well-attended, sessions. Also in Germany, the November 2013 Cartographic Colloquium of the German Cartographic Society in Berlin heard Dr Christophe Lienert (vice-chair of the Commission) deliver a paper on 'Methods and Applications in the Real-time Mapping' which included crisis management.

Furthermore, a couple of workshops were held by the Commission, one in Wuhan (December 2013) and the other, as part of InterExpo GeoSiberia 2014, in Novosibirsk (April 2014). The former attracted a number of leading Chinese experts in disaster management whilst the latter, organised by the Commission, the Siberian State Academy of Geodesy (SSGA) and International Society of Digital Earth (ISDE) in cooperation with sister societies, was titled 'Early Warning and Crises Management in the Big Data Era'. Papers addressed topics ranging from specific flooding case studies to the handling of big data in the geoinformation environment. Local participation from students and professionals was encouraged in both workshops and attendance levels were gratifyingly high. Having also contributed in 2013 to the UN-sponsored publication titled *The Value of Geoinformation for Disaster and Risk Management (VALID)*, it is clear that the Commission is conducting high-profile work.