

PSCE Conference – side event workshop: “Beyond the technical: legal, political, social, and ethical considerations of transboundary cooperation”

Joint presentation between EU H2020 IN-PREP and HEIMDALL projects

Tuesday 4 June, 13:00-18:15

Imagine you had the perfect technical tool for planning, training and responding to transboundary crisis and disasters - what else would you need to make the technology work? What kinds of support would you need in terms of ethical guidance, policy recommendations, regulatory frameworks, and organisational standards?

The workshop took place on 4th June in Lancaster as part of the PSCE Conference, jointly organised by the EU-funded research projects IN-PREP and HEIMDALL. The focus of the event was on the broader dynamics that make technologies for preparedness and disaster risk reduction successful in transboundary crises. To this end, it brought together practitioners and experts from industry, government and academia involved in disaster planning, response and recovery.

The half-day workshop was organised in a series of group activities in order to slowly and methodically identify policy gaps, technical, legal, societal, cultural and ethical challenges, as well as potential recommendations to overcome them. After the formal introduction, the first group session aimed at gathering ideas about failures, flaws, defects, errors and other negative situations that could occur during crises and disasters. The goal was to discuss about contextual conditions that could make the ideal system for transboundary collaboration and crisis information sharing to underperform. Participants were divided into two groups and they moved from one group to the other in order to provide different insights and perspectives. At the same time, all their answers were written down in post-its used for the next exercise in which all the participants gathered to think and map out common themes among the issues, problems and challenges previously identified.

The second part of the workshop started with a short presentation of HEIMDALL and IN-PREP to provide context to the next activity that worked around designing scenarios in the future. Again, participants were split into two groups and discussed about processes, regulations, policies and other recommendations that could support technologies for collaborative transboundary work. Although the objective was to concentrate the debate around both platforms, participants were free to think about other tools as well as to focus on problems and challenges beyond those previously identified. Both groups articulated actionable solutions and developed a story behind them. Finally, both case studies were presented explaining why, what and how their solutions would be useful and contribute to make transboundary preparedness and disaster management tools successful.

The workshop closed with some comments emphasising the value of the event as well as with some remarks regarding the importance of taking into account ethical, societal, cultural, legal and political/policy challenges for the successful implementation of technologies for collaborative transboundary planning and disaster response.