

Feasibility study for large-scale evacuation of the Rhine region



Do the communities in the Rhine Valley need an internationally coordinated flood-evacuation plan? EBP determined the extent to which a large scale evacuation of the region's residents is feasible and identified various strategic and environmental factors that will need to be taken into consideration.

The international Flood Response Exercise carried out in 2013 demonstrated that the countries in the Rhine Region are insufficiently prepared to carry out a well-coordinated evacuation of their various communities along the Rhine. EBP was therefore commissioned to determine whether a well-coordinated, large-scale precautionary evacuation of the Alpine Rhine Region is feasible and whether the development of a common plan is necessary.

The relevant authorities in the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Austrian State of Vorarlberg and the Swiss Canton of St. Gallen have little experience of large-scale evacuation operations. The first step was to determine the type of evacuation that would be investigated, as well as the factors which would need to be taken into consideration. The general situation in the Rhine Valley was then assessed on the basis of the relevant parameters and the results were used to develop various evacuation scenarios.

Analyses of large-scale evacuations carried out abroad (e.g. in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and in flooded communities along the Elbe and Danube Rivers in 2013) as well as planning guidelines issued by the Swiss Federal Office of

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Civil Protection were used to identify success factors for large-scale evacuation operations.

The results of the feasibility study indicate that a large-scale, internationally coordinated evacuation of the Rhine Valley in the event of flooding is essentially feasible. The study also identified various fields of activity and outlined possible evacuation strategies.

The feasibility study serves the countries along the Rhine as a basis for more detailed evacuation planning. EBP will continue to provide support in the overall planning process.

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