

CO-DEAL NEWSLETTER

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND RESILIENCE
THROUGH NATIONAL TRAINING

August 2026 | Issue 3

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PORTO'S MEETING

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On **6–7 November 2025**, the CO-DEAL partners met in **Porto, Portugal**, for the project's **2nd Transnational Project Meeting**. The meeting provided an opportunity to review the progress of the project, discuss the development of the training materials and scenarios, and coordinate the next steps for the following phase.

Partners also addressed the **integration of the different project resources, dissemination activities and future collaboration opportunities.**

One of the central elements developed during the meeting was the set of situations to be represented in the **CO-DEAL interactive training application: floods, wildfires, blackouts, heatwaves, pandemics and cyberattacks.**



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CO-DEAL' TRAINING

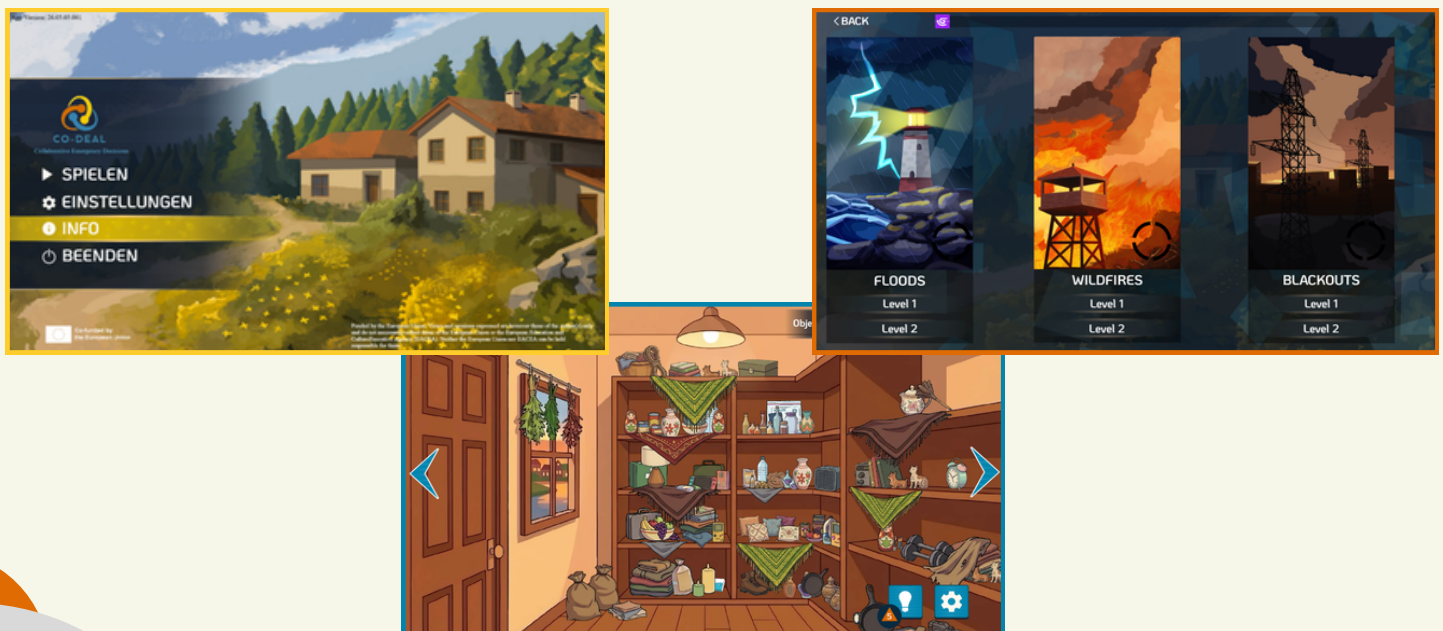
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In this sense, **CO-DEAL** is developing an interactive web-based training application designed to help users explore how communities can prepare for and respond to different types of crises. Through realistic crisis scenarios, users will have the opportunity to **face different situations, consider alternative responses and explore the consequences of their decisions.**

The application includes different crisis scenarios and encourages users to **respond to uncertainty, prioritise needs and communicate effectively.** Its aim is not only to increase knowledge about emergencies, but also to support the decision-making, communication and coordination skills that may be needed during a real crisis.

The application aims to provide a practical and engaging training experience while encouraging reflection on how citizens and communities can respond more effectively to different emergency situations.



FIRST FEEDBACK FROM CO-DEAL USERS

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The first evaluation of the CO-DEAL interactive scenarios has provided very encouraging feedback. A total of **79 users from Germany, Greece, Portugal and Lithuania tested the training environment and shared their impressions of the experience.**

Participants particularly valued the realistic situations, practical activities, variety of scenarios, different role-based perspectives and engaging game-based approach. Their feedback highlights the potential of the CO-DEAL scenarios as a practical tool for exploring how people can prepare for and respond to different types of crises.

A participant from Portugal explained: 

"I liked the different characters and the engaging stories. Each scenario placed the characters in specific situations, which allows us to have a greater understanding of how to react and deal with different contexts in our daily lives."

A participant from Lithuania also highlighted the relevance of the scenarios: 

"The topic is very relevant for today. People really need to know how to behave better during such extreme events."

This feedback will guide the next phase of development. **The CO-DEAL partners will continue improving the platform performance, navigation, interactivity, feedback mechanisms and language versions, building on the aspects users valued most during the first evaluation.**



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WHY THESE SCENARIOS MATTER

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The positive feedback received during the first evaluation also highlights the importance of working with realistic and relevant crisis situations. The six scenarios included in the CO-DEAL training application reflect challenges that European communities are already facing.

Recent events across Europe show how floods, wildfires, blackouts, heatwaves, infectious-disease

outbreaks and cyberattacks can disrupt everyday life and require rapid responses from citizens, organizations and public authorities.

Although their causes and consequences differ, all of them highlight the importance of anticipation, effective communication, coordination and the ability to make decisions under rapidly changing circumstances.



FLOODS

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In February 2026, **Storm Leonardo** brought **exceptional rainfall and serious flooding to Spain and Portugal**. Southern Spain was particularly affected, with Andalusia placed under high-level weather warnings and thousands of people evacuated. In Grazalema, Cádiz, extraordinarily intense rainfall caused widespread flooding and ultimately **led authorities to evacuate the entire town**. Portugal was also affected by flooding, **evacuations and at least one fatality as the storm crossed the Iberian Peninsula**.



Only a few weeks later, **Lithuania** faced its own flooding challenges. In March 2026, **spring floods affected several parts of the country**, particularly western and northern Lithuania. **The Minija River overflowed in areas such as Priekulė and Gargždai**, while in Šilutė District around 43 homesteads were affected and **several roads were submerged**. Ice jams further complicated the situation by preventing water from flowing normally towards the Curonian Lagoon and **increasing river levels**.

FLOODS

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These events demonstrate how **flooding can emerge under very different circumstances**. For example, intense Atlantic storms in southern Europe or snowmelt, overflowing rivers and ice jams further north. In both cases, **floods can rapidly restrict mobility, isolate homes, threaten infrastructure and require authorities to make difficult decisions about warnings, evacuations and emergency assistance**.



WILDFIRES

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The summer of 2026 brought another **intense wildfire** season to southern Europe. In late July, **Greece, France and Spain** were **simultaneously battling major fires under conditions of extreme heat, dry vegetation and strong winds**. Greece experienced particularly difficult conditions on Crete and in the Peloponnese, where **three firefighters lost their lives and evacuations were ordered as flames threatened communities**.



The emergency extended well beyond Greece. **In France, large fires forced extensive evacuations and burned tens of thousands of hectares, while Spain continued fighting numerous active fires in different regions.** At the same time, **strong winds in Greece complicated aerial firefighting operations, and more than a dozen villages on Crete, Paros and Andros had to be evacuated.** In some areas, people had to leave threatened locations by sea when conditions made other options difficult.

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Wildfires are particularly challenging because circumstances can change within minutes. Wind direction may make previously safe roads dangerous, smoke can reduce visibility, and emergency services must simultaneously protect settlements, organise evacuations and distribute limited firefighting resources.

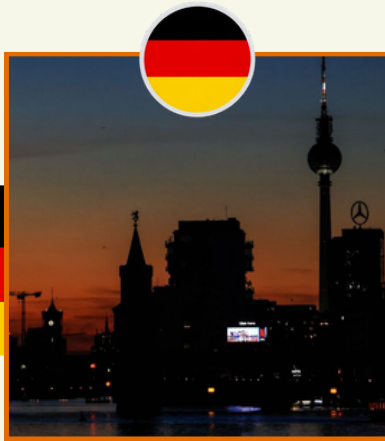


BLACKOUT

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In January 2026, a major power outage affected southwest Berlin after a fire damaged high-voltage infrastructure. Approximately 45,000 households and 2,200 businesses lost electricity, affecting around 100,000 people. The outage continued for several days during freezing winter temperatures and became Berlin's longest blackout since the Second World War.



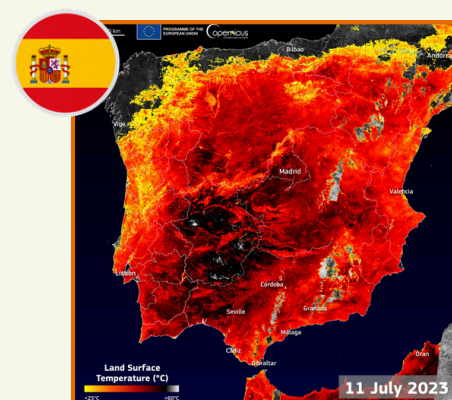
The incident demonstrates that a **blackout** is much more than a temporary loss of lighting. Electricity supports heating, telecommunications, internet access, healthcare, businesses, payment systems and numerous public services. When electricity disappears for an extended period, disruption in one infrastructure can therefore spread quickly to others, producing a cascade of secondary consequences across a community.

HEATWAVES

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At the end of June 2026, **Lithuania experienced an exceptional heatwave. Temperatures reached 36.3°C in Druskininkai**, establishing a new national record for the highest June temperature ever measured in the country. In Vilnius, temperatures reached 33.6°C on 28 June, the highest June temperature recorded in the capital in more than 250 years of meteorological observations. **Lithuania also recorded its warmest June night on record, with temperatures in Ventė remaining above 24°C.**



The same period of extreme heat had particularly serious consequences elsewhere in Europe. **Between 20 and 28 June, at least 3,700 excess deaths were reported in France, Belgium and the Netherlands.** France recorded more than 2,000 excess deaths, Belgium around 1,200 and the Netherlands approximately 480, with older citizens particularly affected. The heat also placed additional pressure on healthcare services and infrastructure.

HEATWAVES

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Unlike floods or wildfires, heatwaves often develop without dramatic scenes of physical destruction. Nevertheless, their health consequences can be substantial, especially for older adults, people living alone, outdoor workers, people with chronic illnesses and households without adequate cooling.



PANDEMIC

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The **COVID-19 pandemic** also demonstrated the importance of continuously **improving preparedness for large-scale public-health emergencies**. Across Europe, countries such as **Italy, Spain and France** experienced **severe pressure on hospitals during the first waves of the pandemic**, while many healthcare systems faced **shortages of medical supplies, including masks, protective equipment and testing materials**. Although the acute phase of the pandemic has passed, its effects continue to influence healthcare systems, public institutions and communities across Europe. **Many countries also faced difficulties in protecting vulnerable groups and communicating clear and consistent information to the public.**



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These consequences were not caused only by the virus itself. They also highlighted the need to strengthen preparedness, coordination between institutions and the flexibility of emergency plans. For example, in Italy, hospitals in northern regions such as Lombardy were rapidly overwhelmed during the first wave, requiring authorities to **reorganise healthcare services and introduce strict measures at short notice**. In Spain, the pandemic placed considerable **pressure on hospitals and care homes, particularly affecting older people and other vulnerable groups**. In many cases, authorities had to develop procedures while the crisis was already unfolding, while citizens had to adapt rapidly to changing restrictions, recommendations and levels of risk.



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More recently, in May 2026, an outbreak of **Andes hantavirus** was detected aboard a **cruise ship carrying passengers and crew from 23 countries**, including nine EU/EEA countries. The outbreak resulted in **13 cases and three deaths and required international contact tracing and coordination between health authorities**. Although the outbreak was contained and the risk to the general European population remained very low, it showed how **international mobility can rapidly turn a local infectious-disease event into a cross-border public-health challenge**.

The incident also highlighted the importance of **early detection, information sharing and coordination between countries when an emerging infectious disease is identified**. Passengers had already travelled to different destinations, meaning that health authorities had to rapidly identify contacts, exchange information and monitor potential cases across borders.



CYBERATTACKS

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In September 2025, a **cyberattack** affecting software provided by Collins Aerospace disrupted check-in and boarding systems at several major European airports, including Brussels, London Heathrow, Berlin and Dublin. Automated check-in and baggage systems became unavailable, forcing airports and airlines to adopt manual procedures and causing **flight delays and cancellations**. Brussels Airport even asked airlines to cancel a substantial proportion of departures while disruption continued.



The event demonstrated one of the vulnerabilities created by increasingly interconnected digital infrastructures. **An attacker does not necessarily need to compromise every organisation separately. Disrupting a shared technology provider can create problems simultaneously across multiple organisations, cities and countries.**

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The same challenge extends well beyond aviation. Hospitals, municipalities, transport systems, telecommunications and emergency services increasingly rely on shared digital infrastructure. **Cyberattacks therefore need to be considered not simply as an IT problem, but as a continuity and community-resilience problem. Organisations need to know which services must remain operational, what alternatives are available and how communication and coordination can continue if normal digital systems become inaccessible.**

