



## Get Airports Ready for Disaster Program held in Sarajevo

**Sarajevo, 1 June 2023:** The three-day event of the internationally recognized training program Get Airports Ready for Disaster (GARD Plus) was concluded today in Sarajevo. The aim of the program is to strengthen resilience to disasters caused by natural hazards (floods, earthquakes, fires, and landslides), in which airports play a critical role in channeling humanitarian teams and relief goods quickly to people and communities in need. The GARD program was conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the first time in 2018. The kick-off phase of the program was presented by the Deutsche Post DHL Group (DPDHL) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) together with Sarajevo International Airport, the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as humanitarian response experts.

GARD Plus is a follow up measure initiated by Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-Eastern Europe (DPPI-SEE) and the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is an opportunity for the country and Sarajevo International Airport to conduct a review of the original recommendations from local participants, and for all to prepare for the simulation exercise called DPPI-FLEX at the end of 2023. Bosnia and Herzegovina is vulnerable to natural and climate related hazards such as floods, landslides, earthquakes or wildfires. Recently heavy rainfall has battered parts of the country. In 2014, the flood that impacted parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina caused heavy destruction. Sarajevo Airport played a key role in flying in relief supplies from abroad.

"The Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina considers that the prevention and reduction of the risk of disasters is one of the key issues of the security of the country and the region. This is confirmed by the floods, fires, and earthquakes that Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries in the world are exposed to. By joining the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, Bosnia and Herzegovina became part of the European concept of the protection and rescue system, which provides new inputs and obliges us to develop the system in accordance with the standards and procedures applied in the EU countries," said Mr. Samir Agić, Assistant Minister of Protection and Rescue Sector, Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



“During times of emergency and disaster airports are key to ensuring emergency aid is received in a timely manner and we are pleased to be able to partner with DPPI-SEE and Sarajevo Airport to deliver this workshop and share our knowledge and experiences with the national Disaster Management Experts,” said Kim Melville, Vice President of Humanitarian Affairs for Deutsche Post DHL Group.

“The unprecedented complexity, severity, and scale of the risks and crises we now face calls for enhanced preparedness to minimize the risk of disaster and save lives” said Stanislav Kim, UNDP Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Advisor for ECIS. “Building the capacities of airports and all institutions involved to act quickly and effectively respond to crises not only benefits the communities they serve, but allows countries to continue along their paths towards resilient and sustainable development, undeterred by crisis.”

Over 25 participating officials and experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as disaster management specialists from member states of DPPI-SEE in Southeast Europe, joined the GARD Plus workshop led by Deutsche Post DHL Group and UNDP experts. During the program, participants were guided by trainers to conduct a self-assessment of the progress since 2018 at the Airport and update specific recommendations to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina is kept up to date and well-prepared for any potential disasters. The disaster management specialists will also take these lessons learnt and apply them to a real-life scenario in a regional simulation exercise that will be conducted at the end of 2023.

“Sarajevo International Airport is recognized and defined at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a point of departure and arrival point when it comes to major crisis situations,” said Zoran Dragičević, Director of the Security Sector at Sarajevo International Airport. “Adequate and, above all, professional response to this obligation and privilege requires, first of all, reliable personnel and material and technical potential. We can very responsibly point out that we are ready to respond at any time to the demands that are in front of us, because we are sure that our decades of experience, which is woven into various action plans in crisis situations, will be accompanied by a motivational factor for our airport employees. The expansion of our capacities in the



infrastructural context gives us additional assurance that we will not disappoint the expectations brought by possible crisis situations, we are ready to tackle any situation and justify the trust that has been placed in us as a company.”

“Airport preparedness plays key segment in all possible major disasters that could affect Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that context it’s crucial to prepare for and test the process behind requesting, sending and absorbing international assistance. The specificity of this particular workshop is that it has been followed by other DPPI SEE member states as well who have sent their representatives to Sarajevo. With that we are creating preconditions for replication of the workshop to other airports in the region of South East Europe in the years to follow,” expressed Vlatko Jovanovski, Head of the Secretariat, DPPI-SEE.

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You can find the press release for download as well as further information on [www.dpdhl.com/pressreleases](http://www.dpdhl.com/pressreleases)

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