ENSURE- Enhancing resilience of communities and territories facing natural and na-tech hazards
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Since a long time vulnerability is a key concept in disaster literature. Nevertheless the majority of studies and grants have been allocated to hazards related research, neglecting the influence of vulnerability of exposed systems on the death toll and losses in case of natural or man made disasters. There is the need to better identify and measure also the ability of menaced and affected communities and territorial systems to respond. This is the starting point of the ENSURE project. The overall objective of ENSURE is to structure vulnerability assessment model(s) in a way that different aspects of physical, systemic, social and economic vulnerability will be integrated as much as possible in a coherent framework. The ENSURE approach starts from the recognition that for all considered hazards most of damages and most of vulnerabilities arise from the territory, including artefacts, infrastructures and facilities. They may well represent its material skeleton: physical vulnerability is therefore entirely contained at a territorial level. Other vulnerabilities, such as systemic, economic and social have interactions with the territory, but cannot be entirely determined at a territorial level. The project will start by assessing the state of the art in different fields related to various vulnerability aspects as they have been tackled until today in Europe and internationally. The core of the project consists in integrated models comprising already existing models to assess vulnerability and develop new ones for those aspects that have been neglected until now. The research objective is therefore to achieve progress with respect to each individual sector of vulnerability and to enhance the capability of assessing interconnections among them in a dynamic way, identifying driving forces of vulnerability, that make communities change for the good or for the worse as far as their ability to cope with extreme events is concerned.

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Start date 01/06/2008
End date 31/01/2011
Duration 32 mesi
Project cost 1.81 million euro
Project Funding 1.39 million euro
Subprogramme Area Frame for better vulnerability assessment
Contract type Small or medium-scale focused research project