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Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economiques
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English - Or. English

**PUBLIC GOVERNANCE AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE
PUBLIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

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LEADERSHIP DURING CRISIS

Meeting of Senior Officials from Centres of Government: Leadership in Managing Risk

Vienna, 28-29 September 2006

This document provides background information for Session 4 on Thursday 28 September from 16:30 p.m. to 18:00 p.m.

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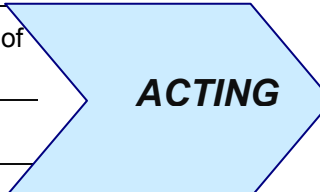
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Session 4 Leadership during crisis

Session 4 keyword

Aim	To assess the relative importance of leadership from the Centre of Government when managing crises.	
Outcomes	Identify the key characteristics of effective leadership during crises.	

Key issues	Elements	Questions for discussion
1. Key challenges of crisis leadership	<p>Leading the way out of a crisis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership, public expectations and trust • Five critical tasks for leaders: sense making, decision making, meaning making, terminating and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do CoGs provide leadership in crises? How do they ensure that all stakeholders, private sector partners and government units are clear about their roles and responsibilities during a crisis?
2. Recognising and managing a crisis	<p>History will judge: foresight, ingenuity and integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis? What crisis? Organisational and cognitive barriers to crisis recognition • Deciding to act: information overload and decision paralysis • Who is in charge? Coordinating crisis response (government, businesses, civil society) • Ensuring flexibility without undermining accountability and transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the characteristics and components of a good team for handling a crisis at the Centre of Government? • What is the respective role of political leaders and senior civil servants in managing crises? • How do CoGs ensure effective public communication by leaders during crises? • How can Centres of Government ensure international coordination to detect rapidly escalating crises, avoid under- and over-response and limit spill-over effects on other countries?
3. Effective leadership and communication	<p>Maintaining public trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is happening? The role of leaders in framing a crisis • Credibility in crisis communication: role of reputation, professionalism, clarity, rapidity • Who was to blame? Ending a crisis and ensuring accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can international crisis co-ordination be improved?

Five key tasks of crisis leadership	
sense making	Ensuring that policy makers understand what is going on and what might happen next
decision making	Shaping overall direction and coherence of collective efforts to respond to the crisis
meaning making	Actively framing public understanding of the crisis to ensure that collective efforts to manage the crisis are enhanced
terminating	Accounting for actions taken and bringing crisis to closure
learning	Drawing lessons and grasping opportunities to repair or reform

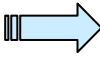


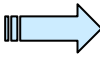

Protecting the rule of law during a crisis: checks & balances

- Time limits
- Internal supervision
- Hierarchical supervision
- Instant independent supervision
- Approval from above
- Informing the public
- Review
- Documentation
- Indictment

Source: based on Swedish Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) (2005), p. 37

In a liberal democracy, public leaders must manage a crisis in the context of a delicate political, legal, and moral order that forces them to trade off considerations of effectiveness and efficiency against other embedded values – something leaders of non-democracies do not have to worry about.

*“We want interlocking government not interlocking government in dealing with crisis”
Prof. Bengt Sundelius, Research Director, SEMA*

Paradoxes of crisis communication		
Calming/warning paradox		Convincing people that the risks are small while simultaneously preparing them for the worst
Target group adaptation paradox		Tailoring information to specific groups' needs may be most effective but lead to credibility problems if perceived as 'mixed messages'
Information culture paradox		An organisational culture of secrecy may face challenges when obliged to cooperate & communicate with more decentralised and open organisations.
Information requirement paradox		Complete disinterest may give way, instantly, to huge demands for information.
Credibility/vigilance paradox		Over-reliance on highly credible authorities may dampen public readiness.

Source: based on Swedish Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) (2003), p. 13

Main source: Boin A., Hart P., Stern E. and B. Sundelius (2005) *The Politics of Crisis Management: Public Leadership under Pressure*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (unless otherwise noted).