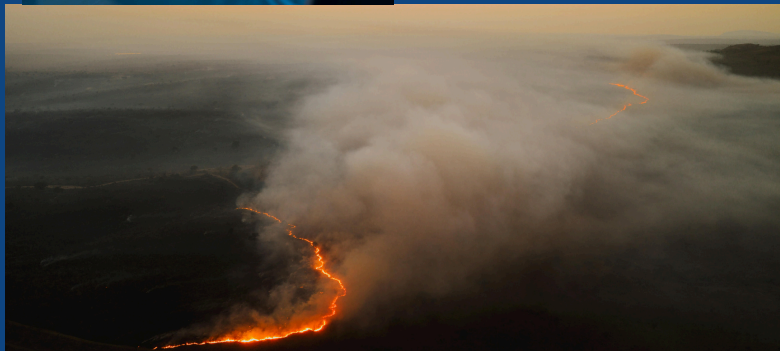
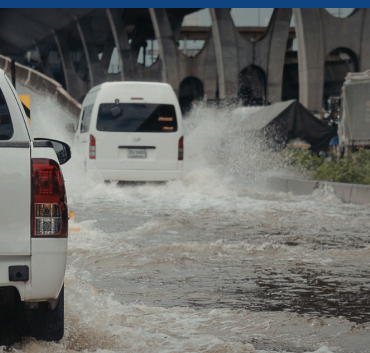




PREPAREDNESS GUIDANCE FOR AGGREGATES PRODUCERS



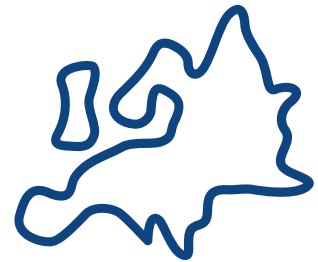
Preparedness Guidance for Aggregates Producers

1. Introduction

The aggregates industry provides the **essential raw materials that are fundamental to Europe's economy**, infrastructure, and daily life. Sand, gravel, crushed rock, recycled, manufactured and marine aggregates are not only the building blocks of construction but also vital resources in times of crisis. Whether responding to natural disasters, supporting public health, or enabling reconstruction, aggregates producers play an essential role in maintaining societal resilience.

In recent years, Europe has faced a growing number of disruptive events—from extreme weather and wildfires to pandemics, cyberattacks, and geopolitical instability. Each of these crises presents unique challenges to the operations of aggregates producers, from workforce safety and supply chain disruptions to environmental risks and regulatory demands. At the same time, they also highlight the indispensable contribution of our sector in keeping societies connected, protected, and prepared for recovery.

In this context, the **Commission** published the report



"Safer Together: Strengthening Europe's Civilian and Military Preparedness and Readiness"

This comprehensive strategy emphasizes the urgency of enhancing the EU's readiness for modern threats, advocating for increased investment in defence and crisis management. The key recommendations in relation with the Aggregates Industry, are the need to an increased crisis readiness by improving the coordination between civil and military sectors and by strengthening the EU's security infrastructure, a defence & infrastructure development boosting production of defence capabilities and ensuring resilience of critical infrastructure (energy, transport, communications).

This Preparedness Guidance aims to provide aggregates producers with a clear framework for understanding their role in different crisis situations, anticipating potential impacts, and strengthening resilience. By taking proactive measures and integrating risk management into daily operations, our industry can continue to serve as a reliable partner to communities, public authorities, and Europe's broader economy—even in times of uncertainty.

The aggregates industry, which supplies essential materials for construction, plays a pivotal role in crisis preparedness and response:



Extreme Weather Events (Floods and Droughts)

Role: Aggregates producers supply essential raw materials for a) an efficient water collection and distribution infrastructure, minimising network losses; b) water containment and channelling preventive water infrastructure, especially in areas identified as being at risk of potential flooding; c) emergency infrastructure and flood protection barriers, and d) reconstruction efforts. Armourstone, crushed rock, sand, and gravel and the products such as concrete and asphalt are critical for repairing roads, levees, and drainage systems. The protection of coastlines against the effects of rising sea levels and storms is another area where aggregates are essential.

The aggregates industry can make a decisive contribution to maintaining river capacity by obtaining authorisation to extract unwanted sediment accumulations. Quarries located near rivers can act as potential water reservoirs in cases of drought or, conversely, as elements that dissipate water surges in cases of flash flooding.

Impact: Floods may disrupt quarrying operations, damage stockpiles, destabilise quarry faces and interrupt transport routes. Droughts can restrict water availability needed for processing and dust suppression. Contingency water management and site resilience planning are key. Companies need flood measures on site and emergency evacuation plans.



Wildfires

Role: Aggregates are vital for rebuilding destroyed housing, public buildings, and transport infrastructure after wildfires. Ponds in aggregates extraction sites might also serve as safe zones or water sources for firefighting operations. Heavy mobile machinery from aggregates extraction sites can also help to create firebreaks in emergencies.

Impact: Wildfires can threaten sites directly, endanger staff, and cut access to facilities. Smoke and fire damage can halt production and logistics. Producers need fire-prevention measures on site and emergency evacuation plans.



Pandemics

Role: During health crises, aggregates producers ensure the continuity of supply for critical infrastructure such as hospitals, energy facilities, transport systems and for many key critical industries. Reliable materials delivery underpins resilience.

Impact: Reduced workforce availability, supply chain interruptions, and restricted mobility can slow production. Maintaining health protocols, digital coordination, and flexible staffing strategies helps preserve operations.



Cyberattacks

Role: Aggregates producers, though not always seen as digital targets, are crucial to infrastructure and therefore potential victims of cybercrime. Secure IT systems protect production schedules and supply reliability for society.

Impact: Attacks can paralyze logistics, billing, and even automated processing equipment. Cybersecurity investment, staff training, and backup systems are essential parts of preparedness.



State of War or Armed Conflict

Role: Aggregates are essential resources—both in times of peace and in periods of conflict preparation. Aggregates play a critical role in strengthening a nation's resilience before, during, and after war. In wartime, aggregates are indispensable for civil protection (shelters, emergency facilities, and infrastructure repair), strategic mobility (roads, bridges, airfields, and ports), and military operations (bunkers, trenches, sandbags, coastal and anti-tank barriers, port expansion, defence manufacturing, and military housing). After conflict, they are fundamental to reconstruction and the restoration of normal life. The sector thus underpins national resilience and recovery efforts. Moreover, industrial sands and micronized aggregates are crucial in metal casting for military components and for a wide range of defence-related products.

Impact: Supply chains may collapse, sites could be requisitioned or damaged, and workforce availability and safety becomes critical. Foreign workers might return to their home countries while national workers might be recruited to armed forces. Preparing for these scenarios means to review who of the workforce is indispensable to maintain operations. Similar reviews should be done with the availability of machinery since those might have to be taken over by the armed forces, according to national legislation. Producers should plan for continuity under resource scarcity, secure critical inventories, and cooperate with civil protection authorities.



Transversal support in emergencies

Role: With a network of over 26,000 aggregate sites across Europe, the sector is uniquely positioned to provide rapid and effective support to local and regional authorities, as well as to civil protection and emergency services. In extreme disaster situations, the industry can immediately mobilise its heavy machinery—such as lorries, loaders, backhoes, bulldozers, suction pumps, and forklifts—and deploy its skilled operators to assist during the most critical initial phases. This rapid response capacity enables urgent restoration of essential infrastructure, reconfiguration of waterways, removal of debris, mud, and detritus, and the creation of firebreaks and access routes for emergency operations.

Impact: Efficiently organised chains of command are vital to coordinating aid during the onset, progression, and aftermath of catastrophic events. Centralised coordination ensures that resources are prioritised to safeguard human lives and minimise material damage. Establishing clear, pre-defined protocols between public authorities and aggregate companies is therefore crucial to guarantee a swift, structured, and effective emergency response.

Conclusion

Aggregates producers are silent enablers of resilience in crisis situations. By ensuring continuity of production and supply, they help society withstand, respond to, and recover from emergencies. Adequate and reasonable access to resources that guarantees the availability of significant reserves of aggregates, proactive risk management — covering infrastructure resilience, workforce safety, digital security, and emergency coordination — will strengthen the sector's role as a cornerstone of Europe's preparedness.