

Europa Re is conducting a Country-Wide Flood Assessment in the Aftermath of the Recent Natural Disaster in Republic of Serbia

27 May 2014 - The May 2014 flooding in the Republic of Serbia has caused devastating loss of life and economic damages. Quantifying and inventorying losses is vital to prioritizing response and preparing for future impacts when flood waters or mudslides are still present. There is no better way to delineate the effects of flooding than through aerial photography complemented with ground surveys to collect high-resolution photographs and measure flood depth. Such data provides a reliable record of where the damage was at a given time.

In this context, Europa Re has responded to the Serbian flood by undertaking a country-wide flood assessment to capture the extent and severity of the disaster. The collected data will be utilized to produce flood damage estimates and validate catastrophe models used in underwriting and pricing of flood products developed by Europa Re for the Serbian insurance market and other Europa Re member countries in the region. To assist Europa Re with collection of aerial data, a Belgrade-based mapping company MapSoft has been commissioned to capture aerial imagery over the designated areas of interest defined by a review of various news and media reports, flood hazard maps and local information on the worst affected areas. A series of 15 cm high resolution digital aerial images was collected on May 23, 2014 by a DiMAC Ultralight camera and geo-referenced by GPS/INS data coming from the camera during the flight. The aerial images will be then analysed by ImageCat, a US-based risk-management consultancy, which will develop an integrated GIS footprint of the May 2014 floods. This is the first time such a detailed post-catastrophe image capture initiative has been commissioned in the region.

On May 23, 2014, Europa Re also mobilized ground damage survey engineers which had been trained and commissioned by the company prior to the event. Over the last few days, the team of 9 survey engineers has surveyed high water marks and noted flood lines in communities at various locations in Serbia affected by flooding of the Sava river. GPS coordinates noted by surveyors will tie the aerial photographs and information to locations that will be used to assess damage and validate Europa Re flood model. Locations for the survey have been identified by referencing probabilistic risk models, media reports and video footage, and interviewing local citizens for insights about flood impacts.

The critical images and datasets collected during the survey will be used to forecast financial payouts in case of a future flood event of this size and scale, thus providing insights into how the Europa Re insurance program and initiatives can help homeowners and businesses. The initiative will also provide valuable lessons and benefits for the Serbian Government which will soon obtain a detailed damage assessment report that can be used for raising donor aid and aiding the country's post-disaster recovery efforts.



In conclusion, Europa Re would like to express its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Republic of Serbia for its invaluable assistance in enabling a swift collection of airborne imagery and the organization of the ground surveys.

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