

November 2024

# Newsletter CINDEX

Dear Members,

7th MI (International Mobility) newsletter to inspire you.

This time, we come back to the crisis simulation exercise at the CDCS (Crisis and Support Center) and especially to the exclusive interview with its director, **Mr. Philippe Lalliot**

Delphine Douroux, CINDEX Director

Laurent Mereyde, CSI President ( CINDEX International Security Commission)

# Mr Philippe Lalliot, CDCS Director since July 2023



*On November 5, 2024, in an exclusive interview with CINDEK, Philippe gives us a behind-the-scenes look at the CDCS (Crisis and Support Center)*

# Could you remind us of the CDCS missions ?

The CDCS has 2 main missions: Protection of French nationals abroad and Coordination of French humanitarian aid. It is a young institution, created in 2008 on the initiative of Bernard Kouchner to provide France with a sustainable and professional crisis management instrument.

In 15 years, the resources allocated to the CDCS have continued to grow as the number, duration, severity and complexity of crises in the world have increased. The resources of the CDCS have thus increased from about twenty agents in 2008 to more than 110 today and its annual budget has been multiplied by 10 over the same period to reach more than 250 million€ this year.

A particularity of the CDCS is that it manages crises from upstream to the end of the crisis, up to the "early recovery" stage, i.e. up to 12 to 18 months after its acute phase, before the development aid instruments take over. This system distinguishes us from all our partners who separate, by entrusting them to different structures, the consular mission for the protection of their nationals from the humanitarian mission.

The advantage of our system, which is of increasing interest abroad, judging by the growing number of visits by foreign delegations to the CDCS and requests for bilateral cooperation, is that it allows us to have a global vision and consistent crisis management.

The disadvantage is the workload weighing on the CDCS teams, initially designed to manage two crises at the same time, which is far below the current workload plan.



# What is the organization of the CDCS? (1/2)

The CDCS is made up of 3 operational centers: a situation center under the direction of Fabrice Fize, whom you know well at CINDEK; an operations center that manages both collective tragedies, up to evacuations, and individual tragedies, including deaths and disappearances said to be worrying abroad, and finally a humanitarian and stabilisation center, in charge of relations with humanitarian NGOs and humanitarian aid operations. In addition, there is a health unit with 4 doctors, a psychologist and a nurse, a liaison magistrate and a department in charge of administration and budget, including all the essential issues of accountability.

The CDCS is thus distinguished by the great diversity of profiles, backgrounds and skills of the agents who make it up. This wealth, which is the most powerful source of its effectiveness and the real reason for its success, is also a reflection of the relationships we are building with our many partners: the Ministry of the Armed Forces, in particular the CPCO, the Ministry of the Interior, in particular the Civil Security, the Ministry of Health, in particular its DGS, and the Ministry's operators (AFD, Expertise France), local authorities, humanitarian actors, including a hundred NGOs. And of course, we don't forget the companies and their foundations, with whom we want to further strengthen our relationships.

# What is the organization of the CDCS? (2/2)

The CDCS is in fact a “packager”, offering a framework for interministerial coordination, more broadly for the coordination of the State's resources, a place for exchange, dialogue and cooperation between all the skills necessary for the effective management of a crisis.

The CDCS, in its two consular and humanitarian dimensions, is in a way the "emergency unit" of the Quai d'Orsay.

Its trademark, in addition to its total availability, 7 days a week 24/24, is its great responsiveness. We have 2 teams on call at all times and are able to set up a crisis unit in less than an hour.

This is why we are placed **directly under the authority of the Minister and his Chief of Staff**. The hierarchical line cannot be shorter.

# What are the main challenges that the CDCS has had to face since the beginning of the year?

They are of several kinds, even if our workload plan is intimately linked to current events. I will distinguish 3 main ones:

First, to cover more and more crises, which last longer and longer, with an increasingly high level of violence. Of course, we think of the most media-friendly crises, in Ukraine, Gaza or Lebanon, but there are also crises that the media only deal with sporadically, in Sudan or the Sahel, or even forgotten crises such as in Burma or Haiti. The needs are no less pressing and our interests no less important;

secondly, to better anticipate future crises and to better prepare for them, both in Paris and in the diplomatic and consular network, which remains exceptionally dense and of exceptional quality. It is a challenge of working methods, training of our teams, innovation, especially for our analysis instruments. This is why we are forging partnerships with institutions at the forefront of their respective fields of expertise, for example with BRGM for seismic risk, IRSN for nuclear risk or CNRS for major fires;

and finally, a budgetary challenge in a very difficult period for our public finances. France provides its nationals abroad with a level of assistance that very few countries in the world have. In recent years, it has also become one of the 10 largest international donors of humanitarian aid. This comes at a cost, but at the end of the day, the security of its expatriate communities, its rank, the defence of its interests and the promotion of its values are at stake.



# How would you define the relationship between French companies and the CDCS?

I think it is excellent, made up of regular meetings, nourished by the sharing of information and the exchange of experiences, not theoretical but as close as possible to the realities on the ground, particularly in terms of security, because for me it is a two-way relationship.

It must be further strengthened. There are several instruments that can help us do this. For example, the use of the Travel Advisories, which are a mine of information for companies operating abroad. These tips, certified ISO9001, are continuously updated. For example, more personalized, tailor-made advice when signing a new contract.

We also have special meeting moments, such as our annual event with companies. The last one took place on May 30, 2024 [16th CDCS-Enterprises Security Meeting]. I am also thinking of the crisis simulation exercises, such as the one organized on November 13 with the CINDEK, but also of the regular, and often informal, contacts with the security departments of companies to discuss specific situations, or of our participation in the CINDEK Security Commission and the meetings that you organize in the event of crises in a country.

**As you can see, our relations are close and trusting on highly sensitive subjects that can affect a company's activity abroad, or even its viability, and the security / safety, including physical safety, of its employees. These are all incentives to further strengthen our collaboration.**

# Fabrice Fize, head of the Situation Center



## What is the role of your entity?

Its first activity concerns security monitoring, provided 24/7 by a team of 17 people operating on a rotating basis. The scope of this monitoring is particularly broad, since it covers any security event likely to endanger our nationals abroad (natural disasters, terrorism, armed conflicts, crime in particular). Our coverage is worldwide, except for France, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior.

This same team provides a telephone hotline to answer questions from our nationals but also from our partners and embassies/consulates outside the Ministry's working hours.

Our second and most visible activity is the production of travel advice sheets, which benefit from a ISO9001 certified process that guarantees the reliability of the information produced.

The Partnerships Unit, which you know well, is responsible for coordinating our network of partners among the security departments of companies, operators and NGOs.

Finally, the Situation Center builds and updates with the posts (embassies and consulates) the security plans of the French communities around the world. It is a finesse work that is updated frequently, depending on the type of threat.





# What is your role in crisis management?

The CDCS is responsible for preparing embassies and consulates for crisis management, which is a major challenge for the Ministry. The increase in crisogenic events has reminded us of the need for each post to maintain a crisis system in operational condition in order to provide the required assistance to the French and protected communities. Since 2021, the CDCS has implemented a systematic campaign to prepare positions for crisis management, the purpose of which is to test their crisis system by carrying out an independent exercise.

Preparation for crisis management is also done at the headquarters. In conjunction with the Human Resources Department, numerous crisis management training courses have been organized for agents going abroad, in particular for security officers and consuls general. Awareness-raising and training sessions on telephone response are also dedicated to the ministry's pool of volunteers.





# and what about the companies?

For the companies, we organize tabletop case studies with about twenty participants from the security departments. These are not crisis exercises where each protagonist plays a role in a crisis cell, but work in small groups to reflect on the strategy to adopt in the face of the problems posed by a crisis. This collegial work makes it possible to promote exchanges and the sharing of experiences.

We propose to think from two crisis scenarios of different natures. The participants, divided into groups to allow for cross-reflection, are accompanied in these reflections by CDCS agents from different departments (doctors, emergency management, situation center, individual affairs, etc.).

These exercises are designed to test companies and maintain their level of readiness. They are an opportunity to identify any organizational or operational deficiencies and to discuss the processes put in place.





# 2024 themes: climatological event and multifactorial security event



The crisis exercise organized for the benefit of some twenty representatives of French companies took place on 13 November. These were two case studies; **The first scenario was a large-scale climatic event and the second scenario a multifactorial event.** These scenarios were chosen, on the one hand, because they represent the current difficulties that we are all facing and are therefore very realistic and, on the other hand, because they offer the opportunity to illustrate the coordination of the different units that make up the CDCS (CDCS doctors, Individual Affairs Unit, etc.) as well as the different actors involved.

In addition, the Situation Center is aiming to enlarge the scope of risks and to develop new expertise, for example seismic, nuclear or related to the repetition of large fires, for which we work with major specialized institutions (BRGM: Bureau des Recherches Géologiques et Minières, IRSN: Institute for Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety, AFPS: French Association of Earthquake Engineering, CNRS).







# Fabrice Fize

## Advice for the Companies

1

The 1st one is to follow the recommendations of the Security departments in your companies, whose word is, rightly, more and more listened to.

The 2nd one is to prepare: carry out crisis situation exercises, to be ready if necessary... because reflexes are lost quickly.

2

3

**Finally, it is extremely useful to carry out systematic return of experience, both hot and cold (1 month after the crisis). If these Retex are implemented with careful attention to listening and progress, it is an essential element to improve and put in place the appropriate corrective measures.**

*Within the CDCS, we do this systematically in writing in each department of the crisis unit and then we share it at the global level in order to be constantly improving.*

# Message from Laurent Mereyde, President of the CSI



The relationship between the CDCS and the International Security Commissions of the CINDEX is a long-term one.

Indeed, when the CSI was created in 2004, we had several state entities capable of taking our problems into account. The Army Ministry through the COIA and the CPCO, provided us with substantial assistance on crisis issues, the Ministry of the Interior with the SCTIP (International Police Technical Cooperation Service) also supported us, but the relationship with these two major ministries was not institutionalized as it was to become with the establishment of the Crisis Centre (which was to become the CDCS) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Europe.

**The severity and frequency of crises: the creation of a dedicated entity in conjunction with companies becomes obvious.**

For CSI members, the creation of the CDCS was a high point: we finally had a dedicated, specialized entity whose relationship with companies would be part of a specific framework. If in the first years its resources, especially human resources, were limited, the strength of the commitment and the sincerity of the convictions of the team members more than compensated for the weakness of the workforce.

These ties that unite us are based on a few fundamental values:

**The desire to help women and men in the best possible way** faced with difficult situations. For the CSI members: they are employees and their families, for the CDCS they are nationals. In the end, they are the same people.

**Trust and preservation of confidentiality** through the commitment to respect the word given. We didn't need a formal empowerment process to work in trust, that's a specificity of the community we form.

**Pragmatism** in the search for joint solutions. We exchange with sincerity and humility by indicating our strengths and weaknesses, our possible means, our expectations but also our doubts.

# Over the years and feedback, our relationship has evolved...

CSI members unanimously consider the CDCS to be "one of them". The CDCS agents participate in the debates of the quarterly commissions

The table presenting the assessment of **Country Risk** on a common scale is an essential tool. This same reference system saves us precious time to better identify the areas on which our anticipation efforts and vigilance must be exercised.

Pays	Niveau Risque R1;2;3;4	Nombre Sociétés	Nombre de commentaires
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"Spot" calls. A situation is deteriorating in one part of the world, we are able to organize a call or a video call in less than two to three hours. CSI members concerned with the subject and the CDCS provide insight and can benefit from an overview of the situation. The average duration of a call/video call is 30 minutes.

## The Crisis exercise: an important moment of our relationship!

On the professional level: **We test the effectiveness of our procedures, particularly in terms of data compatibility and speed of decision-making processes.**

On a personal level: **We accept not to appear "at the top" of what we can be in a current situation. The benevolence and trust that quickly put us at ease and we move forward to improve.**

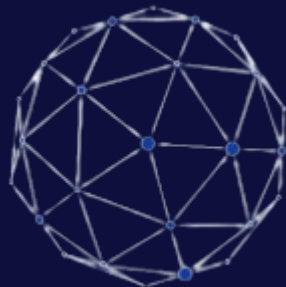


## A word of conclusion...

The relationship between the CDCS and the CSI is, for me, a reference of pragmatism and complementarity between the State and the Companies. The sustainability of this relationship is based, beyond the institutional framework, on the commitment of women and men who are committed to a common objective: to preserve safety!

Laurent Mereyde

*Thank you*



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