



## UNDP and GIES Mark First 2007 Promotion of EMS Scuba-Divers With a Media Demonstration on the Black Sea Coast



*Scuba divers rehearsing an emergency intervention.*

**Eforie Nord, 27 July 2007** - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations/Ministry of Interior and Administration Reform (GIES-MIAR) held a practical exercise and a media event at a training facility on the Black Sea Coast.

Since the 2005 extensive floods, UNDP has strengthened its collaboration with GIES-MIAR and has continued to diversify the scope of its projects in order to respond to additional challenges. Global climate change and increase in population density are two major factors which make people more vulnerable to natural disasters. In 2006 alone, 16,350 Romanians were evacuated due to flooding and landslides. In all, rainstorms flooded 608 villages and landslides impacted 279 villages. 3,337 households were damaged, 1,357

were destroyed, and over 160,960 hectares of farm land was damaged. The overall losses were estimated at over 274 million USD.

In 2005, with UNDP support, 12 high-speed rescue boats were procured on an emergency basis and the first 12 professional rescue teams were trained, playing a crucial role in saving lives during the floods. In 2006, through the "Capacity Development for Crisis Situations" project, 36 scuba-divers received specialized training. Also, a manual for rescue operations in aquatic environments was produced and distributed, equipment was provided to EMS teams and training centers, and water pumps were procured as emergency assistance during the Danube floods.

"The new project, 'Capacity Development for Emergency Situations', jointly implemented by UNDP and GIES with a 1 million USD funding from the Romanian Government, is the living proof of our excellent cooperation," stated Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative.

This new initiative continues an already established partnership on training emergency personnel in highly specialized areas and on improving intervention equipment and capability, with an emphasis on water-related disasters. "As an amateur scuba-diver, I can tell you that a professional diver doesn't reach mastery overnight. Periodical re-training and experience that comes in time are critical for the long run. Equally, quality diving equipment and accessories play a crucial role in successfully conducting under-water operations and emergency intervention", added Ms. Jung.

The current project will also provide adequate diving sets for rescue divers, and will strengthen the intervention procedures to fit local conditions in various Romania counties.



*Scuba divers bringing an 'injured' colleague ashore.*



*Group photo of participants.*

The ceremony garnered wide media coverage and enjoyed great public interest. It was attended by numerous personalities including the Canada Ambassador, Peru Ambassador, Dănuț Culețu, Prefect of Constanța County, Liviu Viorel Nemeș, First Deputy, GES/MIAR, Mihai Marius Dan, General Director, Medical General Directorate (MIAR); Subcommissioner Jean Danuț Cărbunaru, General Directorate for Information and Public Relations (MIAR); Colonel Neculai Coman, Deputy of the Chief Inspector; Constanța Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (MIAR); Chief inspectors of Călărași, Ialomița, Brăila and Tulcea County Inspectorates for Emergency Situations (MIAR); Mr. Dumitru Petcu, General Director of "Ana Yacht Club" marina, representatives from Eforie mayoralty, technical staff from various national and local organizations and

members of the press and television. The new scuba divers will start working as soon as their official certificates were issued.

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