



## **Coping with floods during and after the 2002 event in the city of Dresden, Germany**

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During August 2002 and again in March 2005 as well as in April 2006 the city of Dresden was hit by floods. The flood in 2002 was an extreme event, only comparable to flooding in 1862 and 1890 in Dresden. The flood discharge in 2006 was the second highest discharge since 1940 at the Dresden gauge although its return period was only about 15 years. This special situation enables a comparison of the preparedness of authorities and households in the flood endangered city of Dresden in 2002 after a long period of relatively low flood discharges and in 2005/2006 just a few years after a severe flood event. Before August 2002, the flood risk awareness and flood preparedness of authorities and households in Dresden was low. The inundation channels and the Elbe river bed had not been maintained well. Just 13% of the households had undertaken building precautionary measures. The severe flood situation as well as the low flood preparedness led to tremendous damage, e.g. losses to residential buildings amounted to 304 million EUR. After 2002, the municipal authorities in Dresden developed a new flood management concept and many households were motivated to undertake precautionary measures. 67% of the households had actually undertaken building precautionary measures before the floods in 2005 and 2006. Flood damage was significantly lower, due to the less severe flood situations and the much better preparedness. It is an important challenge for the future to keep preparedness at a high level also without recurrent flood experiences.