

Summary

Research question, operationalisation and context

On 1 October 2010, the Security Regions Act (*Wet veiligheidsregio's*, Wvr) entered into force. The main objective of the Wvr is to improve disaster and crisis management in the Netherlands. The Act serves to bring the fire services, medical assistance, disaster and crisis management under a single regional administrative control.

The introduction of security regions prompted considerable political and administrative debate. Above all, the policy of 'extended local governance' received criticism for not assuring democratic accountability. As a consequence, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (*minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties*, BZK) promised the Senate of the Dutch Parliament (*Eerste Kamer*) to evaluate the Act two years after its introduction.¹

The Research and Documentation Centre (*Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum*, WODC) of the Ministry of Security and Justice (*Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie*, VenJ) asked Andersson Elffers Felix (AEF) to evaluate the Wvr. The central question is: To what extent does the Wvr fulfil the expectations regarding its intended purpose (specifically, achieving an efficient and effective organization of the fire services, medical assistance, disaster and crisis management under a single regional administrative control) and what are the experiences of the actors involved?

The central question was subdivided into four categories:

- Research concerning the formation of the Wvr (policy theory);
- Research concerning the factual functioning of the Wvr system in practice;
- Research concerning the expectations of the actors involved before the Wvr came into force and their subsequent views on how it functions;
- Research concerning relevant future developments and their implications for the Wvr.

This legislative evaluation focuses on the system of disaster and crisis management.

- Disaster: a major accident or other event in which the lives and the health of many people, the environment or major material concerns are gravely harmed or at risk, and requiring a coordinated, multidisciplinary deployment of services or organisations from different disciplines to mitigate the risk or the harmful consequences.
- Crisis: a situation in which a vital interest of society is, or is likely to be, affected.
- Disaster management: the full range of measures and facilities, including the preparatory measures, that the public authorities of a municipality or a security region implement in response to a disaster, to prevent a disaster, or to limit the consequences of a disaster.
- Crisis management: the full range of measures and facilities, including the preparatory measures, that the public authorities of a municipality or a security region implement during a crisis to maintain public order.

A variety of research methods were used to evaluate the Wvr:

¹ *Kamerstukken I*, 2009/10, (Eerste Kamer, T01126, no 17, p. 744).

- Study of relevant documentation: to examine the assumptions and the functioning of the Wvr in practice;
- Interviews: to identify the assumptions on which the Wvr is based, the factual functioning of the Wvr in practice, and how the latter is viewed by the actors involved (each component corresponding to different stages in the research process);
- Expert sessions: Several sessions were organised to test and to deepen the understanding of the preliminary findings;
- Survey research: to inventory the experiences of different actors regarding the functioning of the Wvr in practice.

The Minister of Security and Justice will offer the legislative evaluation to the Evaluation Committee of the Security Regions Act and the System of Disaster and Crisis Management, that is, the Hoekstra Committee (*Commissie Hoekstra*). The main task of this Committee is to advise the Minister of Security and Justice about the functioning of the Wvr and about the broader Dutch system of disaster and crisis management. That advice focuses on the current and future requirements that the Wvr and the system of disaster and crisis management ought to satisfy, and offers recommendations for the improvement of the current system. Aside from this evaluation report of the *administrative system*, the Evaluation Committee also bases its advice on the results of the State of Disaster Management 2013 (*Staat van de Rampenbestrijding 2013*). The latter is a report by the Safety and Justice Inspectorate (*Inspectie Veiligheid en Justitie*) on the *operational performance* of the security regions.

As the Wvr took effect relatively recently, it would be premature to formulate definitive conclusions about the societal effects of the Act. It is, specifically, too early to determine whether the Wvr has resulted in improved assistance in the event of fires, disasters and crises, and whether citizens are presently better protected against risks than in the situation prior to the Wvr. These matters are explicitly beyond the scope of this evaluation.

The Security Regions Act

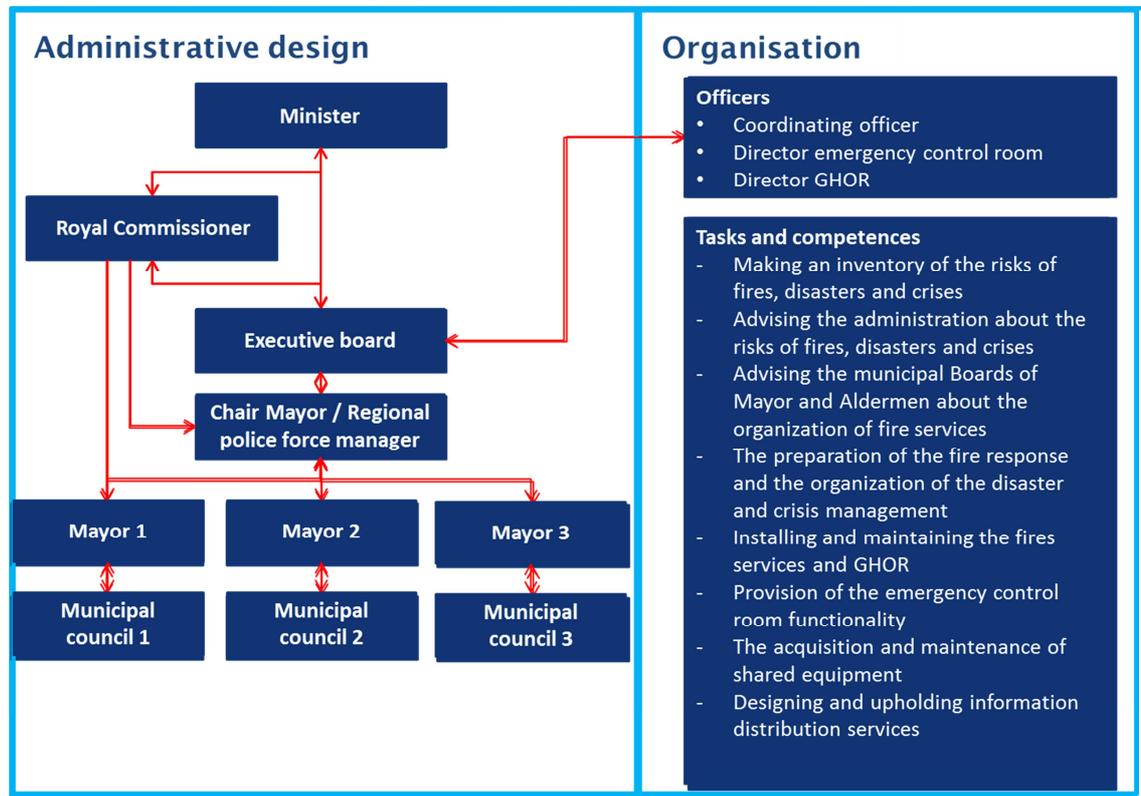
The end of the Cold War led to a new form of disaster and crisis management. Previously the Civil Defence Services (*Dienst Bescherming Bevolking*) had that responsibility, but the new disaster management organisation has to be able to operate on a scale from 'small to large' events.

The Wvr allocates the competencies which are necessary, from the legislator's perspective, for the preparation and management of fire services, disasters and crises. The Wvr also transfers tasks and duties from the municipal Boards of Mayor and Aldermen (*Colleges van B&W*) to the boards of the security regions. Security regions are organised in accordance with the model of extended local governance: municipalities are obligated to collaborate in public bodies on the basis of the Joint Arrangements Act (*Wet gemeenschappelijke regelingen*). Twenty-five security regions were introduced in the Netherlands, in accordance with the division of police regions at the time. The board of a security region consists of the mayors of the municipalities involved. The regional police force manager of each police region functions as chairman of the board of the security region as well.

In the Wvr existing laws have been merged, including the Fire Services Act (*Brandweerwet*), the Disasters and Major Accidents Act (*Wet rampen en zware ongevallen*) and the Medical assistance during accidents and disasters Act (*Wet geneeskundige hulp bij ongevallen en rampen*). Figure 1 gives an overview of the administrative design of security regions (on the

left) and a description of the officers and tasks and mandate of the security regions (on the right), during the preparatory (or 'cold') phase.

Figure 1: Administrative design of the security regions



The Wvr came into force on 1 October 2010. On 1 January 2013 the act was amended, establishing the Institute of Physical Security (*Instituut Fysieke Veiligheid*, IFV) as well as determining that as from 1 January 2014, all tasks of the fire services are to be transferred from the municipal to the regional level.

The policy theory behind the act

- The core of the Wvr can be traced back to the Cabinet position on security regions from 2004 (*Kabinetsstandpunt veiligheidsregio's 2004*). Since the start of the new millennium, this Cabinet position has formed an important basis for the organisation of the preparation against disasters and crises.
- Since the start of the new millennium, the introduction and development of security regions has been seen as a solution for **three domains**:
 - The improvement of the preparation for and management of disasters, in particular in response to the firework disaster in Enschede (2000) and the café fire in Volendam (2001);
 - Managing 'modern crises', following among other things the attack on the WTC towers in New York, the efforts against the avian influenza and the imminence of a SARS epidemic;
 - The quality of fire services.

- The policy theory behind the Wvr can be divided into **five categories of measures**:
 - Administrative control: extended local governance, administrative responsibility for the preparation for disasters and crises, a single point of supra-local authority during disasters and crises, and directing the emergency control room;
 - Scale: up-scaling to 25 regions and congruence between all emergency response services and the scale of the police;
 - Organisation: requirements for different columns (mainly medical or 'white', fire services or 'red', and municipal or 'orange'), the emergency control room and the cooperation with vital partners during crises;
 - Performance: minimum requirements for the functioning of the main structure for disaster management;
 - National aspects: monitoring to safeguard the public interest, and the form of the Minister's systemic responsibility.

- Various acts have been combined in the Wvr, including the Fire Services Act. The Wvr allows much room in the organisational design of a large variety of elements. For example, how the different columns are organised within security regions and how they cooperate is not stipulated by the Act – aside from a number of criteria – to leave room for regional customisation. Furthermore, the Wvr stipulates few to no rules regarding inter- or supra-regional cooperation. The Wvr does however set demands for the design of the main structure of the crisis organisation. Additionally, the Wvr contains operational provisions for the fire services.

- Various **dilemmas, tensions and inconsistencies** can be found in the policy theory and the Act:
 - It is unclear what is meant by 'security regions': an executive organisation, a body for multidisciplinary cooperation, or both? The Wvr allows for different interpretations.
 - The Act chooses semantically for 'extended local governance' (cooperation among municipalities through joint arrangements), but at the same time it imposes significant form requirements.
 - The Wvr allows for choice and regional customisation on many points, yet for some aspects detailed norms and provisions are set, without explicating the grounds for this differentiation.
 - The security regions are based on the scale of the existing police regions to accommodate coordination among emergency services and a congruent administrative control. The Act contains several safeguards to ensure multidisciplinary coordination, but the legislator has not opted for an integration of administrative boards.
 - In theory, the Wvr also focuses on crisis management, but in fact it is mainly oriented on 'classic' disasters within the domain of emergency services.
 - The Act offers little guidance regarding the responsibilities at the supra-regional and national levels.

- Since the Wvr came into force, many policy developments have occurred. A significant number of these developments may be perceived to be in accordance with the Wvr and the underlying policy theory, such as the development of the IFV and the development of principles for civilian care and supra-regional cooperation. The plans to create congruence between the municipal healthcare services (*Gemeentelijke Gezondheidsdiensten*, GGD) and the creation of supra-municipal services accord with the basic idea of the policy theory regarding the security regions. However, there are also developments that are not congruent with the original intentions of the Wvr. This mainly concerns the re-scaling of the

police to create ten regional police units – which has voided the originally targeted congruence with the emergency services and administrative boards in 25 regions - and the creation of a national emergency control organisation.

Conclusions per theme – functioning of and experiences with the Wvr

Operational performance

- Due to the short period of time since the Wvr took effect and the limited empirical evidence, it is too early to conclude whether the Netherlands has become more capable of coping with disasters and crises on a large scale.
- The State of Disaster Management 2013 does indicate general progress in the quality of the preparation for disasters and crises. At the same time, the Inspectorate concludes that none of the security regions meet all the criteria as established in the Wvr.
- Incident evaluations demonstrate that there is still much room for improvement in the actual response to disasters and crises. Recurrent bottlenecks include: the process of up-scaling, information management, the functioning of the emergency control room, the registration of victims, and the (crisis) communication.
- The findings of the Inspectorate as well as the findings regarding the management of incidents illustrate a mismatch between the requirements imposed by the Act and the genuine bottlenecks regarding multidisciplinary action during disaster and crisis management. Some bottlenecks are not or barely addressed by the Wvr (e.g. the connection with the national level). A comparison of other components of the Wvr reveals significant differences in the level of detail in the Act. For instance, the articles on victim registration are of a more general nature than those on the composition of the policy and the operational teams, without empirical indications of problems that might warrant such a distinction. In general, there is much room for improvement in the factual operation within the prescribed main structure.
- Based on the evaluation of disasters and crises, it is questionable whether compliance with the current legal requirements provides a sufficient basis for an adequate disaster and crisis management.

Administrative control

- The choice for extended local governance of the Wvr has several objectives. However, there are multiple views on whether these objectives have been achieved. How the executive boards function varies widely among the security regions. One reason for this is that mayors do not devote much attention to disaster and crisis management; it certainly receives less attention than the public security domain. The board of a security region appears to be sufficiently equipped to enable it to run the organisation of the security region. Mayors get to know each other through the board, which is important since personal contacts are essential during disasters and crises.
- There is strong evidence that the single point of authority, in the form of the mayor who chairs the board of a security region, contributes to decisive and adequate action when required. A broad consensus exists on the need to allocate the single point of authority and the enforcement power to the chairman of the security region.

- When chains other than the emergency services need to be involved, the system of up-scaling functions less well. This is most apparent with respect to the public security chain: the Act requires scaling up to a Regional Policy Team (*Regionaal Beleidsteam*, RBT), while this is not always necessary. Besides, it is unclear how the RBT relates to the public security triangle of authority that comprises the mayor, the police and the Public Prosecution Service.
- The local democratic legitimacy for security regions is very limited. The security regions aim to involve municipal councils in the discussions about the priorities and policies of the region, yet in practice the two organs are apparently too far apart to ensure solid democratic control. The mayor needs to report to the council about his role in the security region just once or a few times a year.
- The Act includes a planning cycle with a risk profile and a policy plan as the instruments for defining the policy of the security regions and the monitoring and control thereof by the municipal councils. This cycle is a step ahead with respect to the former set of instruments, which encompassed a higher level of administrative costs. However, the experiences with the risk profile as an instrument for democratic control are not very encouraging; the instrument is perceived to be very technocratic. The policy plan is generally viewed in a more positive light.
- Since the Wvr prescribes the regional division and the composition of the board, the municipal council is only left with the budgetary right (*budgetrecht*) as an actual instrument of power. Despite the fact that the Wvr formally allows for the pursuit of autonomous policy (e.g. by exerting influence in the planning cycle and by local assessment of national norms for performance), experiences indicate that there is hardly any room for policymaking at the local level.
- Although it is very limited in the present system, the relationship between the municipalities and the security regions is significant. The security regions need to present their policy to, and align it with, the municipalities. Consequently, security regions are forced to maintain a day-to-day and administrative relation with the municipalities. The current model stimulates the security regions to maintain an active network with municipalities in general and with the local fire services in particular.
- The Wvr does not include measures defining the administrative control and responsibilities when a disaster or crisis crosses the borders of the security region. This deficiency in practice poses serious risks to the functioning of the management during actual disasters and crises ('warm phase'). The recommendations of the Administrative Working Group on Supra-regional Cooperation (*Bestuurlijke Werkgroep Bovenregionale Samenwerking*) form important supplements to the existing instruments.

Scale

- With the introduction of the Wvr the scale of the security region was designed to correspond with the same regional level of the formal police corps. Choosing this scale has led – in combination with other measures – to an improvement of quality, an increase in expertise, greater operational decisiveness, and more effective disaster and crisis management.

- With the formation of the regional police units, the management responsibilities of the police have been embedded at the national level. The authority of the mayor in the chain of command remains the same. Intensive cooperation between the police, the fire services, the GHOR and the municipalities remains a goal of the Wvr. Many of the safeguards to reach that goal have been adjusted to suit the introduction of the Police Act 2012 (*Politiewet 2012*). These include, for example, the territorial congruence of external borders, the alignment of planning (policy plan/crisis plan), the personnel union between the chairman of the security region and the regional police force manager / the board of the security region and the regional police board, and the conclusion of cooperative agreements. The new situation is still too fresh to evaluate the results. However, the Safety and Justice Inspectorate states in the State of Disaster Management 2013 that it is clear that the police will be concerned mainly with forming the National Police in the near future, and with the organisational and other consequences that come with it. The Inspectorate terms it a risk that there will be less time to thoroughly contemplate the future role of the police in crisis management.
- Since the police organisation has been scaled up to ten regions, the question becomes whether the security regions should follow that same scale. The research does not warrant conclusions in that direction: the security regions are still developing their organisations, working processes and networks. Further up-scaling might upset this process.
- With regard to medical assistance, congruence with the GGD-regions has been accomplished. The relationship between the GHOR and the Regional Dialogues for Acute Care (*Regionale Overleggen voor Acute Zorg, ROAZ*) is a complicating factor in the cooperation in the care domain.
- The regional implementation services (*Regionale uitvoeringsdiensten, RUDs*) are still in an early state of the development process. The cooperation with the security regions still contains too many ambiguities – for example on the question to what extent congruence will be realised – to speak of any (potential) quality improvements as a result of their functioning on a supra-local scale.
- Outside the scope of the emergency services there are many organisations that fulfil important roles in disaster management, but with which congruence does not exist and cannot be accomplished easily (for instance the water boards (*Waterschappen*) or the Ministry of Defence). For these organisations, the re-scaling to 25 regions has been an improvement with respect to the previous situation, where they had to reach agreements with individual municipalities. In practice, however, cooperation with parties that act on another scale does not come naturally.

Organisation

- Regarding the design of the organisation of the security region, the Wvr sets demands on just a number of parts. This has led to differentiation in the forms of organisation. There are differences in the body of tasks, size and design of the organisation, the interpretation of tasks in terms of policy, the manner of multidisciplinary cooperation, the management structure and the relationship with municipalities. These differences in design arise from administrative considerations on the regional levels.
- In general, most actors on the regional level are satisfied with the functioning of the different organisational designs of the security regions. The freedom regarding

organisational design has allowed each region to make its own assessment regarding the optimal design of the security organisation, without resulting in unrecognisable or unjustifiable organisational forms.

- It is a different situation when these organisational differences affect the operational phase. During disasters or crises, organisational differences (such as the distribution of responsibilities) may impede cooperation with and between security regions, especially if valuable time is lost in getting to know each other's organisations. With regard to this point, 'unité de doctrine' is necessary; also regarding the division of responsibilities between collaborating security regions.
- The regionalisation of the fire services has had a favourable effect on the level of training of personnel. A (feared) decline in the number of voluntary fire-fighters has not taken place. The number of non-operative personnel has increased.
- By making the director of the GHOR the director of the public health services (GGD) as well, this position has been strengthened, enabling a better operational coordination of the work procedures of the security regions, the national health services and the GHOR. The different legal forms used to establish coherence between the public health services and security regions does not seem to lead to problems in practice.
- The organisation of municipal tasks does not receive enough attention in the Wvr. The municipal officers in particular have insufficient (legal) position. It is moreover problematic that in most regions these tasks are assigned to the municipal secretaries, as a secondary task.
- One of the objectives of the Wvr was to grow towards one multidisciplinary emergency control room under the administrative control of the security region. Given the developments within the domain of the emergency control room, this option is no longer feasible. The creation of a new transition plan is still in progress. Ideas on the position of the emergency control room and the role of the control room operator remain under development, both for mono- and multidisciplinary processes.
- The organisation of the cooperation between vital crisis partners and the security regions is in progress, albeit a type of cooperation that for now exists mostly 'on paper'. The organisational form that the Wvr has chosen in this regard – which does not enforce a specific type of cooperation but leaves the responsibility to shape it to the security regions – is sufficiently obligatory to promote cooperation.

Performance

- To achieve a satisfactory fire services response and disaster and crisis management, the Wvr formulates norms which ought to be pursued to offer a 'uniform minimum level of safety and basic care' (as stated by the Memorandum of Explanation, *Memorie van Toelichting*). These minimum requirements mainly relate to the input requirements of the organisational design of the disaster management. Based on the findings of the Inspectorate, it can be stated that performance requirements regarding disaster and crisis management (in terms of objectives to be achieved) are virtually lacking. Furthermore, as a result of the integration of the Fire Services Act in the Wvr, there is a disproportionate amount of attention for the fire services. Although a separate assessment of this (mono-

disciplinary) column falls outside the scope of this evaluation, it may be concluded that there is little view on the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the fire services.

- The requirements concerning the main structure and the related emergency response times in the Security Regions Decision (*Besluit veiligheidsregios, Bvr*) are too strongly geared to classic disasters in which the fire services play a central role. The way the Bvr stipulates the emergency response times is too one-dimensional: they are treated too emphatically as the crucial performance indicator. This is a conclusion that is shared by the Safety and Justice Inspectorate.
- The professionalism requirements contained in the Security Regions Personnel Decision (*Besluit personeel veiligheidsregios*) offer a good basis for the qualifications of the personnel for the security regions. However, in practice they do not function as desired due to their formulation. How the qualification profiles for policy functions are formulated has little to no value.
- The structure of up-scaling generally works well for the disaster management domain. The required main structure, however, is too inflexible when it comes to the required presence of aforementioned officers. In practice there is room for interpretation as to the right moment to scale up, but an additional legislative restriction does not seem the right solution here.
- The formal route of up-scaling through the Minister, who needs to formalize the additional assistance, works well in general. In crisis situations, direct action may be called for with a subsequent formalization of the up-scaling to enable the allocation of resources for the associated costs afterwards. In practice this process does not lead to problems.
- The role of the security regions in risk and crisis communication, as well as their advisory function, has not sufficiently come to fruition in the past few years. One of the main reasons is that, formally, the tasks in this domain are not solely allocated to the Wvr. From the analysis of recommendations based on evaluations after disasters, it appears that there are no rules regarding the registration of victims.
- Aside from formulating minimum requirements, the Wvr aims to have the security regions give further substance to the rules themselves, by adapting them to their own situation and in doing so, contributing to the desired level of safety. Parallel with the improvement of the minimum requirements, efforts have been made to formulate norms, requirements, standards and instruments - both inside security regions and in the national structures. These developments can have a positive effect on the quality of disaster and crisis management. However, it is apparent that these developments have been hampered by recurrent questions on the extent to which professional norms (or 'soft law') are weighed administratively, are democratically legitimate and enforceable, and who is responsible for the financial consequences. The development of the security regions will benefit from a clearer division of responsibilities between municipalities and the national government.

Financing

- The security regions are funded largely locally, and to a small extent nationally. However, the comparative level of local and national funding does not correspond with the extent to which the security regions are controlled by local or national obligation. In practice, tasks, policy and implementation of the security regions are mostly controlled by national policy.

The hybrid funding structure is mainly at odds with issues that demand national coordination (for instance in the field of information management), but that need to be funded locally.

- Over the last ten years, the expenditure of municipalities and the national government on disaster and crisis management has doubled. A significant part of this increase lies outside the sphere of influence of the municipalities (the main financial contributors), such as new collective employment agreements (*CAO-afspraken*). Besides, personnel costs have risen. Part of this increase in costs is the augmentation in the share of management and policy staff.
- It is unclear whether the cost development was autonomous (that is, inevitably following external developments) or whether it went hand in hand with an increasing effectiveness.²
- The national government and the municipalities have only limited control over the development of expenditure in this domain. At the national level there is limited insight and monitoring, and managing the costs is only modestly pursued. Municipalities (and their councils) feel they have little room to influence the costs; on the one hand because they are under the impression that the work of the security regions is determined nationally (which is not entirely unfounded), and on the other hand because of the joint administrative control over the security regions that is shared with other municipalities.

National aspects

- The Minister of Security and Justice is responsible for the system of disaster and crisis management. On the basis of the advice of the Administrative Working Group on Supra-regional Cooperation, a national Coordinated Regional Incident Response Procedure (*Gecoördineerde Regionale Incidentbestrijdingsprocedure*, GRIP Rijk) was established following the industrial fire in Moerdijk. The advices concerning up-scaling have by now been implemented by the National Handbook Crisis Decision-Making (*Nationaal Handboek Crisisbesluitvorming*) and via the Ministerial Committee of Crisis Management (*Ministeriële Commissie Crisisbeheersing*, MCCb).
- The Minister of Security and Justice is allowed to impose national objectives on the basis of the Wvr, yet has not used this power since the Wvr became effective (in line with the assurances that were made). At the moment there is no overarching policy agenda by the national government. The government is however concerned for the improvement of the fire services and their training, disaster and crisis management through for instance the IFV, supra-regional cooperation, expert regions, vital sectors and cooperation with the Ministry of Defence. Furthermore, since 2012 joint priorities have been formulated in cooperation with the Safety Council (*Veiligheidsberaad*).

² An assessment of the efficiency of the expenditures is beyond the scope of this evaluation. The Netherlands Court of Audit (*Algemene Rekenkamer*) has begun to research the efficiency of the expenditures of the security regions.

- The responsibility for crises which are not part of the domain of physical security is distributed across several ministries. For the security regions it is difficult to know who to contact, while those ministries in turn have insufficient grasp of the security regions. In addition, friction and/or overlap exists between the general column (of which the security regions are a part) and the authorities of the functional columns (for instance concerning water, energy or transport). The Minister can use governmental representatives (*Rijksheren*), such as the King's Commissioner (*Commissaris van de Koning*, CdK), to assuage these tensions, yet they have a limited role within the current organisation for crisis management.
- The King's Commissioner can fulfil a role for the security regions, for example by monitoring and encouraging cooperation between municipalities, on the basis of his knowledge on the relations between the municipalities. The feasibility of this model depends on the relationship between the municipalities, the security regions and the King's Commissioner. The security regions that operate at the same level as the province are much at risk of finding that activities overlap between their chairman and the King's Commissioner. The role of the King's Commissioner varies significantly among the provinces. The national government manages the activities of the King's Commissioner to a limited extent and there is only limited support from the municipalities and the security regions for the way this role has been assigned.
- To fulfil his responsibility for the system, the Minister of Security and Justice can request the services of the Safety and Justice Inspectorate. The Inspectorate assesses the security regions on the basis of the legal framework at its disposal. The bottlenecks regarding the level of coverage and detail of the rules (see the above) then become apparent. The Safety and Justice Inspectorate has the authority to report, but is not permitted to use sanctions such as warnings and strict supervision, comparable to the Health Care Inspectorate (*Inspectie voor Gezondheidszorg*, IGZ). The Minister may intervene in case of neglected duties, but this is seen as a (too) strict instrument and is therefore rarely used.
- The Safety Council was also established to enable *bottom up* national coordination. Experiences with the Safety Council vary considerably. The national government wishes to have a partner that can make binding agreements, but the Safety Council cannot fulfil this role, especially due to the limited democratic legitimacy of the chairman. The added value of the Safety Council mainly lies in its function as a platform that enables administrative support for professionals in the field.
- The establishment of the IFV can also be explained in this light. The IFV is expected to play an important role in the further development of this domain. Presently it is unclear whether the IFV will succeed in its endeavour.

Main conclusions

- The measures of the Wvr have formally taken effect only recently, and the security regions are still very much under development. Moreover, important systemic changes are taking place in the immediate vicinity of which the effects cannot yet be assessed. Another result is that in some cases the original policy theory is no longer appropriate. In many ways it is therefore too early to draw definite conclusions on the effects of the Wvr. Notwithstanding that reservation, conclusions can certainly be drawn on how the security regions are developing.

- The most significant value of the Wvr lies in the laying down of **authorities and enforcement power** as well as in defining a supra-municipal **scale**. As a result, triggers for improvement have been created and the possibility has arisen to work on a qualitatively better preparation at a supra-municipal level. Security regions are at present the uncontested answer to the need for better preparation and actual responses to serious disasters that warrant supra-local control, expertise and assistance. The Wvr moreover illustrates how the disaster management organisation functions and identifies where room for improvement exists. Compared to the situation before the introduction of the security regions, these are significant improvements.
- The Wvr has the largest impact on the quality of (preparations for) classic **disaster management**. The instruments of the Wvr are best suited for these objectives. Regarding the other two matters for which the Wvr is meant to be a solution – better (administrative control of) fire services and effective management of modern crises – the effect of the Wvr is less clear.
- With regard to **fire services**, regionalisation potentially has positive effects on matters such as available knowledge, expertise and level of training. On the other hand, the regionalisation of fire services has led to more complex administrative control and more distance from the municipalities. Even though an assessment of this (mono-disciplinary) column by itself falls outside the scope of this evaluation, it can be concluded that there is little grasp of the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the fire services.
- A multidisciplinary and intersectoral approach in the security regions is a precondition to genuinely improving the preparation for **crises**. Presently the development of security regions is too closely intertwined with the development of the fire services, and more attention is required for other emergency services and external partners. Also the connection with the national level deserves extra attention.
- On the question of how the model of **extended local governance** works out, a nuanced answer is in order. The controlling and framework-setting role of municipalities is limited in practice, but not without significance. A possible design with full national administrative control and direct financing by the national government is likely to have the undesirable effect of an even less substantive relationship between the security regions and the municipalities.
- From the analysis of the functioning of the system (which identifies recurrent bottlenecks in the evaluations of disasters and trainings), it can be deduced that on a number of important matters (most importantly information management), **more (national) control and coherence** is called for. Also the further development of the professional columns remains in need of national stimulation.
- The **increased costs** in the last ten years (as well as the lack of insight into the underlying causes) are a reason to be extra critical of the current administrative model and the possibilities that it offers to steer toward efficiency.
- The debate has tended to emphasise the cooperation with an **up-scaled police** (and the question whether the security regions ought to follow this scale). This research does not support moving the security regions in that direction: the regions are still developing their

organisations, working processes and networks. Further up-scaling might upset this process.

- This evaluation warrants a review of the **division of responsibilities** between the administrative layers, a partial simplification and a clearer distinction between the responsibilities of the national government versus those of the municipalities. Here lies an invaluable task for the security regions (board and professionals): to jointly take more responsibility for the substantive development of the domain.