Blog Post 1: Beyond the Tech: Why PANTHEON is Built With First Responders, Not Just For Them

In the world of technology, there is a well-known gap between the products developers create and the actual needs of the people who use them. In disaster management, this gap can have critical consequences. First responders—like firefighters, police, and paramedics—operate in high-stress, complex, and decentralized environments. A tool that isn't built with a deep understanding of their world risks becoming a burden rather than a help.

This is why the PANTHEON project is built on a "participatory design process," a core concept explained in our **Deliverable D3.2: Report on Participatory Design Process**. Instead of building a platform and then showing it to first responders, we are co-designing it with them from the very beginning.

The Challenge: A Decentralized System

Our initial research (in WP2) confirmed that disaster management in our pilot regions of Greece and France is highly decentralized. Multiple agencies, from different ministries and at different levels (national, regional, local), must all work together. This complex structure often leads to challenges in coordination, communication, and information sharing.

A "one-size-fits-all" technology cannot solve this. The PANTHEON system must be flexible, interoperable, and, most importantly, trusted by all the different organizations that will use it.

Beyond Professionals: Including the Community

This participatory process goes beyond just professionals. A key finding from our research is the need to actively involve the community, especially **vulnerable groups**. These groups—such as the elderly, children, people with disabilities, and migrants—are often disproportionately affected by disasters.

By including them in the design process, we can:

- **Address their specific needs** (e.g., accessible evacuation routes, warnings in multiple languages).
- **Recognize their unique knowledge** of their own communities.
- **Build resilience from the ground up**, fostering trust between citizens and authorities.

In our next post, we'll introduce the key stakeholders we are engaging with—from high-level administrators to on-the-ground first responders and community groups.