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**EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT
(EUR-OPA)**

**66TH MEETING
OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS**

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE OFFICE
PARIS, FRANCE**

12 JUNE 2015

CONCLUSIONS

1. WELCOME AND ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

As an opening statement, the Chair, Mr. Tony Varo (Monaco), welcomed the Permanent Correspondents (see Appendix 2 for the list of participants). He recalled the content of the proposed agenda, which was adopted with no changes (cf. appendix 1 for the final agenda).

2. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR, THE DELEGATIONS AND THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Chair gave the floor to the Executive Secretary who briefly recalled some developments within the Council of Europe pertinent to the Agreement.

He announced that the Executive Secretariat had recently received the decision from Spain that it regretfully had to withdraw from the Agreement due to budgetary cuts within the Ministry in charge of paying the contribution to the Agreement – namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He also informed that Turkey has decided to become a major contributor within the Council of Europe, upgrading its contribution to the level of the other major contributors (France, Germany, Italy, Russian Federation and the United Kingdom). Consequently, as member of the Agreement, Turkey's 2016 contribution will be aligned with that of the Russian Federation which at present is the only other major contributor to the Agreement.

In financial terms, these two announcements will not imply major cuts in the actual budget but simply some adjustments.

Lastly, he informed the participants of future changes in the Agreement's staff as Ms Linda Rollin will retire in October 2015 after serving as assistant within the Agreement since its creation back in 1987.

3. RECALL OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

The Executive Secretariat recalled the main topics addressed at the previous meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents. It was recalled that the meeting elected a new Chair, Mr Tony Varo (Monaco). A significant part of the meeting was devoted to the discussion of the actual participation of the Agreement in the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, in particular through the adoption of Resolution (2014) 1 emphasizing the commitment of the Agreement to participate in the Sendai Framework implementation adopted on that occasion. A special session on evacuation, based on experiences of floods and nuclear accidents, allowed interesting issues related to evacuation to be identified that can be addressed in the future by the Agreement. The work of the Executive Secretariat on most vulnerable people (people with disabilities on the one hand and migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on the other) as well as the results of the coordinated programmes for 2012-13 developed by the network of Centres were discussed. Finally, the decision to re-establish a first meeting of the Committee in spring was adopted.

4. EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRES' RESULTS IN 2014 AND ACTIVITIES PLANNED IN 2015

Based on the document AP/CAT (2014) 11 rev, the Executive Secretariat gave a brief report on the main partial results of the projects supported during 2014, the first year of the biennium 2014-15, and briefly presented the final results expected in 2015. The presentation was done according to the three lines of action taken from the Medium Term Plan 2011-15:

Line of action 1: Information

- Geophysical Monitoring of Landslides and Man-Made Structures: search of forerunners
New techniques for monitoring landslides were defined and checked in identified test sites in France and Georgia in order to propose an improved decision support system in 2015.
- Methodology for creation of the complex emergency alerting system
Main methodological guidelines to set up an emergency alerting system have been identified and the final version of the methodology will be presented in 2015.
- Contribution to the care of a potential risk: heat waves
More related to climate events, the project wished first to identify through a seminar the threats of potential heat waves and is now developing ways to handle that emerging risk.

Line of action 2: Knowledge

- Fire Management in Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites and Protected Areas
The project identified the forest fires' risk level of main world heritage sites in the Agreement and a pilot project in Mount Athos is on-going to check the validity of the approach.
- Contribution to fundamental studies in seismic processes
The link between ground motion parameters variability and stress release variability was investigated as it impacts the predicted hazard level
- Knowledge diffusion on nuclear safety based on lessons from Chernobyl and Fukushima
To promote the value of the existing booklet on nuclear hazard, two seminars (one in Russian and another in English) were organised and an Arabian speaking seminar is planned for 2015.
- Vulnerability assessment of Historical Centres and safe evacuation in case of earthquake
A method to assess historical centres' vulnerability to earthquakes has been outlined and a database able to collect monuments' assessed vulnerability is under preparation.
- Distance Automatic On-line Monitoring of Buildings and Engineering Frames
The draft version of methodology was completed in 2014 and the feedback from other Centres will be used to produce the final version in 2015
- Integration of Triggering Factors in European Landslide Hazard Mapping
The revised European susceptibility map including lithological information and national zonation for Romania, France and Georgia were prepared and are under preparation for Morocco.
- Assessing drought recurrence using nonlinear approach
The data collected was used to calculate Standardized Precipitation Indexes that serve as a drought measure and will allow future drought recurrence to be identified.
- Global change, cultural heritage and smart cities
The training session of 2014 held in Ravello placed particular emphasis on the usage of new technologies and a final seminar in 2015 will summarize the recent advancements on the topic.

- Coupling terrestrial and marine datasets for coastal hazard assessment and risk reduction. Monitoring of rocky coastal erosion using laser techniques and GPS were continued both in Normandy and Malta while guidelines for preparing susceptibility maps were identified.

Line of action 3: People

- National Strategies for alerting authorities and the population in the Balkans
The analysis of actual national strategies in Balkan countries allows their main components to be identified and emphasises the importance of the alerting aspect.
- Measures to solve trans-boundary heavy pollution of the Kura river
The Tbilisi and Baku Centres had collected the pertinent data in 2014 and the analysis of this information will enable prevention measures to reduce pollution on the Kura river to be identified.
- Be Safe Net: protect yourself from hazard
The revision to better adjust the content to the planned secondary school competition in 2016 was carried out and the competition's questions and rules will be completed in 2015.
- Identification and risk awareness of pupils in case of flood
The way the flood risk is addressed at school level in Moldova, Bulgaria and Ukraine has been analysed and it will lead in 2015 to a set of proposals on how to better inform the pupils.
- Public Awareness and Education Tools for Risk Reduction and Preparedness to Earthquakes
The collection of existing earthquake school initiatives in countries potentially affected by Vrancea earthquakes will allow general guidelines on earthquake risk awareness to be defined.
- Inform and involve the population in seismic and tsunami risks prevention
Following previous work on actual risk identification in historical cities, action to inform the population in two Portuguese cities was developed and will be extended to Moroccan cities.
- Involvement of citizens in the decision-making process against man-made disasters
A questionnaire to collect national experiences was diffused in order to identify general guidelines to increase the potential involvement of citizens in emergency plans.
- Informative material concerning Earthquake Protection Measures for people with disabilities
Focusing on people with intellectual deficiencies, it has produced easy-to-read and Makaton versions of information material on earthquakes, yet to be reviewed after testing in institutions.
- Involving people with disabilities in disaster planning and preparedness
The preparation of specific information material in Armenia for people with disabilities and their involvement in national civil protection will serve as examples for other countries.
- Soft skills in disaster preparedness and relief
A draft booklet has been prepared in 2014 as a basis for training on that topic and a first international training course has taken place recently in the hope of holding a second one at national level.

The Executive Secretariat highlighted the increased collaboration between Centres, with various projects involving several Centres for their implementation. It also raised the question on the number of projects to support in the future. Too many projects may enable a large range of topics to be covered but at the same time this reduces the overall visibility of the Agreement's action.

The UN-ISDR representative asked about the involvement of local authorities in the projects related to cultural heritage. The Executive Secretariat remarked that cities' data are usually used as study cases but in general no local authorities have been involved directly (except in the project on seismic and tsunami risks prevention). It valued the possibility to collaborate in the future with cities that have joined the UN-ISDR Making Cities Resilient.

The UNESCO representative asked about the availability of the databases generated by the different projects. He also remarked that the Besafenet initiative will be a contribution to the Global Worldwide Initiative for Safe Schools and can benefit from external evaluation. The Executive Secretariat informed that in principle there is no confidentiality on the data collected but that has to be checked with each project coordinator. Regarding the Besafenet initiative, the difficulty to promote formal curricula on hazards was recalled and the launch of the competition is precisely a way to have feedback on the actual content of the website.

The Russian delegate informed that at national level, a particular programme is developed at school level to teach basic behaviour in case of risk and suggested to liaise with the Moscow Centre to incorporate that experience in the Besafenet initiative.

The Luxembourg delegate raised the question of the external evaluation of the work done by the Centres as well as the lack of information on concrete results associated to the projects. The Executive Secretariat recalled that the evaluation has to be adjusted and the main criteria used are the novelty of the topics addressed and the usability of the results obtained. The Executive Secretariat will request the Centres to make an increased effort to obtain more user-oriented final products and to update their websites to ensure that their actual results are made more visible.

5. ACTIVITIES IN 2015 MANAGED BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

- Participation to the 3rd United Nations World Conference on DRR, 14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Japan

The Chair recalled that the Sendai Conference mainly highlighted 4 topics: evaluation of the HFA, objectives for SFDRR, guidelines on the role of States on prevention (including most vulnerable people), four priorities (knowledge, governance, investment, response) for SFDRR 2015-30. Ms Albritto informed that a presentation and a short document summarizing the key elements of SFDRR are available online and an all-States reading which took place in Geneva generated a document.

The Executive Secretariat recalled the participation of the Agreement in the Sendai Conference. As agreed at the previous meeting of the Committee, a leaflet on the actual achievements on the future four topics of the SFDRR was produced and distributed. The Executive Secretariat also made presentations in various special sessions: disabled people, human rights and nuclear hazards. Finally, a general statement on the commitment of the Agreement to support the SFDRR was also delivered at the plenary session.

- Involvement in the European Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction

The Executive Secretariat recalled its involvement in the EFDRR as co-secretariat with the UN-ISDR Europe Office and the European Commission. The annual meeting will be organized in October in Paris: a preparatory meeting held in February confirmed the need to work on a European roadmap

for the implementation of SFDRR to avoid as far as possible any overlap between stakeholders. The Executive Secretariat remains involved in the two currently active working groups (namely review of the EFDRR functioning and the link between climate change and DRR).

- Toolkit Release Workshop (21 May 2015, Council of Europe Office, Brussels, Belgium)

The Executive Secretariat recalled the previous stages of the work, in particular the December 2014 workshop in Brussels as well as the collaboration with the Latvian presidency of the EU, which led to the final workshop where the Toolkit, based on 7 success factors and the various disaster cycle phase, was officially presented. Ms Albrito highlighted the role of the Agreement's work on the topic and hopes that the work will continue to develop. The Executive Secretariat informed that if the final outcome was the Toolkit, it will be maintained by the University College of London and thus Permanent Correspondents are called to continue contributing with their experiences. The Chair raised the issue of translating the Toolkit and the Executive Secretary proposed to consider its feasibility later in the year.

- Work on migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the context of major risks prevention and management (working group meeting, 11 June 2015, Paris Office)

The Chair emphasized the link between this work and that of previous work carried out regarding disabled people. Both address the special needs of vulnerable groups and the need to involve several external partners in order to arrive at a comprehensive approach. Following a first workshop in June 2014 which already identified some challenges, the Executive Secretary remarked that it is an important aspect to handle. The new working group will meet in September to validate the questionnaire prepared by the Executive Secretariat which will be sent to the Permanent Correspondents to collect their own experience on the topic and identify national experts. A final conference will be organized towards the end of 2016 to present the concluding results of the working group. Mr Feider remarked that an accurate definition of migrants is essential to obtain effective results and Mr Feunteun also emphasized the need to involve the migrants in the process.

- Preparation of the Besafenet school competition 2016

The Executive Secretariat recalled that the Besafenet website was reviewed in order to adjust its content to serve as a basis for an online competition addressed to secondary schools, scheduled to take place but which must be announced at the beginning of the school year. After a discussion on the most appropriate persons to diffuse this information, the decision was taken to approach Ministries of Education indirectly through the Permanent Correspondents as they can better publicize it. Mr Garevski also suggested involving the mayors of cities and several countries asked to inform the Ministries of Foreign Affairs as they can diffuse it among the most pertinent national entities.

- Workshop on Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction for Sustainable Development for South-East Europe (Belgrade, Serbia)

The Executive Secretariat finally informed of the organization (in collaboration with IUCN and within the framework of PEDRR) of a regional seminar to be organised, most probably in Belgrade late September 2015, based on a previous seminar organized in Tbilisi back in 2012 for the Caucasus region. The goal is to emphasize the potential role of eco-system based approaches to DRR with a special focus on two hazards affecting the area, namely floods and forest fires.

6. DISCUSSION ON THE MEDIUM TERM PROGRAMME 2016-2020

The Executive Secretariat invited the Permanent Correspondents to provide their comments on the first draft MTP which presents the potential topics of interest for the next 5 years' activities of the Agreement.

- Impact of the new priorities identified at the Sendai Conference

The document provides important background information such as the HFA achievements, the new SFDRR objectives, the previous Medium Term Plans achievements as well as other International Organizations projects. The Executive Secretariat noted that, in spite of the new developments at international level, the general principles defining the Agreement's work are still effective, and therefore not necessary to change its actual mandate. The UNISDR representative welcomed the effort to move from guidance to implementation, recalling the crucial role of national platforms and of accurate success indicators.

The document proposes to focus mainly on the four objectives of the Sendai Framework and especially on their specific international component. Based on the actual mandate of the Agreement, several possible points of contribution are highlighted: increase technical and scientific knowledge, foster cooperation between national authorities, increase awareness and information among the population, make people both individually and collectively an active player in all DRR phases.

- Discussion on the contribution of the coordinated programmes to the MTP

The Executive Secretariat emphasized the need to better articulate the competences of the specialised centres and the actual needs of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents. Taking into account the remark of the Ukrainian representative, the Chair noted that such concrete domains have to be defined essentially by the Permanent Correspondents. The proposal of identifying few topics on which the Centres could concentrate their work appeared to be a very positive move towards streamlining the Agreement's work.

The Armenian representative stressed the importance of the outcomes of the Centres' network activities but also noted the difficulty to develop trans-boundary projects. The Executive Secretariat pointed out that the centres can develop methodologies on various topics but the actual implementation is only possible through the respective authorities. It implies considering a more effective way to present projects' results to be used later on by the respective authorities.

- Discussion of the main topics to include in the MTP 2016-20

The Chair opened the floor for comments. Concerning Climate Change impact and the role of private sector, it was pointed out and it was suggested to consider them case by case when a specific issue requires it. The active participation of the Permanent Correspondents also appeared as essential for collecting good practices in order to identify gaps to be addressed by the Agreement. The Azeri representative also highlighted as important topics disaster preparedness and response and the increased use of new technologies in DRR.

In line with the remark of the Bulgarian representative stressing the importance of clearly identifying the final beneficiaries to make projects as useful as possible, the Executive Secretariat recalled that the aim of the new Medium Term Plan is precisely to focus on final beneficiaries, roughly split into two groups:

- The authorities, which can benefit from more technical information that can increase preparedness to disasters;
- The population, which requires more practical information on how to react to disasters.

Concerning the first group, the Agreement can develop useful knowledge for a better preparation to risks by ensuring that technical and fundamental research has a concrete impact on operational work. It can also scale up bilateral cooperation achievements to a multilateral level, taking into account both the technical and the legal constraints for such cooperation.

Concerning the second group, alongside with the adequate tools for children (a captive group), a major challenge for the Agreement is the definition of specific tools for awareness-raising of adult population awareness-raising is a major challenge. The potential role of media (TV, newspapers but also social networks) in that domain has to be explored. Recognising the overall progress achieved since 1987, the Chair remarked the need to use better new technologies.

Due to the lack of time for further discussion, the Executive Secretariat proposed to collect all the comments sent by Permanent Correspondents before the next Bureau in late September in order to prepare a final draft to be discussed at the next Committee of Permanent Correspondents' meeting.

- Ministerial session and adoption of the MTP

The Executive Secretariat recalled that the Medium Term Plan is traditionally adopted at a Ministerial Session but due to the withdrawal of a first candidate to host it, a new call for candidatures to host the Ministerial Session in 2016 was launched.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

8. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Following the participants' request to be informed of the dates of the next meeting well in advance, the Committee decided to hold its next meeting on 29 and 30 October 2015 in Paris.

APPENDIX 1

AGENDA

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

AP/CAT (2015) OJ 04: Draft Agenda

2. RECALL OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

AP/CAT (2015) 03: Report of the 65th Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents, 27-28 November 2014, Paris

3. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR, THE DELEGATIONS AND THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

4. EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRES' RESULTS IN 2014 AND ACTIVITIES PLANNED IN 2015

AP/CAT (2014) 01 bil.: Activities supported within the Coordinated Projects for 2014-15

AP/CAT (2014) 11rev bil.: Results obtained in 2014 within the Coordinated Projects for 2014-15

5. ACTIVITIES IN 2015 MANAGED BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

- Participation to the 3rd United Nations World Conference on DRR, 14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Japan
- Involvement in the European Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction
- Toolkit Release Workshop (21 May, Council of Europe office, Brussels, Belgium)
Major hazards and people with disabilities: A toolkit for good practice
- Work on migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the context of major risks prevention and management (working group meeting, 11 June, Paris office)
- Preparation of the Besafenet school competition 2016
- Workshop on eco-DRR for the South East Europe region (Belgrade, Serbia)

6. DISCUSSION ON THE MEDIUM TERM PROGRAMME 2016-2020

- Impact of the new priorities identified in the Sendai Conference
Sendai Declaration
Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
- Discussion of the main topics to include in the MTP 2016-20
AP/CAT (2010) 05 rev.2: Medium Term Plan 2011-2015 "Working together in Europe and the Mediterranean for the prevention of disasters, preparedness and response"
AP/CAT (2013) 02 rev.: Guidelines for the 2014-15 Programme of Activities
AP/CAT (2015) 04: Executive Secretariat proposals for the 2016-20 Medium Term Plan
- Discussion of the coordinated programmes contribution to the MTP
- Ministerial session adoption of the MTP

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

APPENDIX 2

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