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

**64TH MEETING
OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS**

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE OFFICE
PARIS, FRANCE**

24-25 OCTOBER 2013

CONCLUSIONS

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1. WELCOME AND ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

Mr Feider, Vice-Chair of the Committee, welcomed the participants and recalled that the sudden death of the present Chair of the Committee, Mr Damir Cemerin, was the sad reason he was chairing the present meeting. He hoped to be able to chair in the same spirit as Mr Cemerin had always done. After praising the contribution of the late Mr Cemerin to both the Agreement's activities and disaster risk reduction throughout Europe, all participants observed a minute's silence in memory of their departed colleague.

The Chair then gave the floor to Mr Fernandez-Galiano to explain the recent staff changes in the Agreement. He informed that the Council of Europe wanted to reinforce its democracy component and he was asked to become the head of the Democratic Initiatives Department, which covers several sectors and among them the EUR-OPA Agreement. As a consequence, he will continue to act as Executive Secretary ad interim of the Agreement but with a lesser degree of involvement than in the past.

He hoped that such greater integration will help to increase the visibility of the work of the Agreement within the Council of Europe as a whole. He also presented the other changes in the staff: the departure of Ms Caroline Siebecke to a different department and the nomination of Ms Mechthilde Fuhrer as another Deputy Executive Secretary. Mr Fernandez-Galiano was congratulated by the Permanent Correspondents for his nomination and they also warmly welcomed Ms Fuhrer.

The Chair presented the draft agenda (see appendix 1) which was adopted without any amendments.

2. SPECIAL SESSION: Including People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response

- ***Context***

The Executive Secretariat recalled that following the adoption of the Ethical Principles on Disaster Risk Reduction and People's Resilience in 2011, the Committee decided in 2012 to focus part of the Agreement's future work on addressing the issues related to most vulnerable groups, such as disabled people, displaced people and children. Such a choice appears quite promising as up till now disabilities have not very often been taken into account in disaster risk reduction and furthermore the issue is in line with the overall priorities of the Council of Europe.

A survey to identify what has been done to date on that topic was launched by sending a questionnaire to the Permanent Correspondents. The evaluation of the results by two eminent experts, Prof. David Alexander and Mr Silvio Sagromola, showed the lack of actual initiatives in that domain and led them to define some guidelines to promote disability inclusiveness in disaster risk reduction. The subject is important enough to merit more than a Recommendation and the Agreement will continue to work on it through the setting up of a Working Group to identify concrete associated actions. The involvement of disabled people themselves is important in such a process as they can contribute actively to providing solutions: a co-operation with Civil Protection authorities is needed to avoid them having less rights than other people.

In the meantime, more political advocacy will be continued through a proposal to include this topic as an important component of the future HFA2. Within the Council of Europe, cooperation will be continued with the Social Cohesion and Integration Division (Directorate of Human Rights and

Antidiscrimination, Directorate General of Democracy), whose Action Plan has so far largely ignored this specific issue.

- ***Presentation by Prof. David Alexander***

Professor Alexander, one of the co-authors of the report “Including People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response”, reviewed its main conclusions. He recalled that 15% to 20% of the population can be considered as facing some kind of disability, an important part of the total population is thus concerned by the possible lack of specific adequate measures. The survey revealed that very little is done actually: few good practices could be identified through the questionnaire. That phenomenon is not specific to Europe and we must consider that fact as a positive challenge rather than as a problem. The goal is to ensure that the population is not disadvantaged and due to their disabilities, it’s impossible to improvise when the disaster happens: detailed prior planning is necessary, also taking into account the diversity of possible disabilities.

As he pointed out, usual procedures defined for the population assume that people have some basic abilities, such as walking, listening and seeing: that is partially untrue for disabled people and requires evaluating specific approaches for such persons. He also emphasized the importance of local level actions, as they are more close to the potential beneficiaries, but within an adequate supporting national framework. The evacuation phase is obviously very important but other phases of disaster risk reduction must be taken into account: training and exercising is also crucial and, in order to be prepared for coming events, prevention is also essential.

Based on the actual situation, the two experts defined associated guidelines and, taking these into account, drafted the recommendation presented to the Committee. Finally, he emphasized the importance of going beyond conceptual approaches by identifying concrete actions to actually improve the resilience of disabled people.

- ***Discussion of the report and guidelines***

The Chair opened the discussion by emphasizing the innovative aspect of defining accurate procedures for disabled people. He recalled the need to bring together Civil Protection professionals and disabled people to achieve that goal. He also valued the additional information provided by participants in the workshop (“Including People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response”, 22-23 October 2013, Paris) and their fruitful discussion which suggested that the work be continued related to that topic towards more concrete actions.

Mr Bara remarked that in fact more than two partners as other stakeholders are involved (such as Finance Ministers and municipalities) as the budgetary issues are also important and local authorities are essential to identify actual needs. Mr Badalyan pointed out that the concrete involvement of disabled people in emergency services as a good way to ensure their specific needs are correctly addressed.

Taking into account the conclusions of the workshop, the participants agreed that the disabled people issue should be explicitly included in the next HFA2 and the National Platforms could be a privileged tool to identify additional good practices and/or to develop concrete actions at national level.

- ***Adoption of the Recommendation 2013-1***

Following the previous discussion, the Chair recalled that the revised Recommendation (see appendix 3) had to be approved by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents: the Recommendation was adopted without any further changes.

3. RECALL OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

The Executive Secretariat briefly recalled the main topics discussed at the 63rd Meeting in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in October 2012. The participation of the Agreement in the 4th International Disaster and Risk Conference, (Davos, 26-30 August 2012) and in the 3rd meeting of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (Dubrovnik, 1-3 October 2012) was discussed as well as the involvement in the Hyogo Framework of Action European progress review for 2011-13.

The Audit Committee Chair informed on the three audits carried out in 2012: ISPU (Belgium), ECPFE (Greece) and ECNTRM (Russian Federation). The necessary adjustments to the initial budget for 2013 due to France's withdrawal were adopted in order to preserve as much as possible the activities. An important decision was also taken: to support the development of initiatives on improving disaster risk reduction in certain vulnerable groups: disabled people, displaced people and children. Finally, the chair and vice-chairs of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents were re-elected.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR, DELEGATIONS AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

- ***Earthquake early warning and decoupling of main utility systems: a two-countries' initiative (Mr Iuliu Bara, Directorate of European Territorial Cooperation, Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Administration)***

Mr Bara presented the transboundary project, involving local authorities and NGOs of Romania and Bulgaria, to quickly react to Vrancea earthquakes. The idea of the project is to build a system of seismic stations in both Romania and Bulgaria to detect primary waves that arrive before the destructive waves emitted by an earthquake. A possible added difficulty is related to the structure of local power in both countries: Romania is organized in counties (with a high decentralization) while Bulgaria is organized in districts (dependent from central authorities). The goal is to use the short delay between those two waves information (between 25 and 40 seconds) to take immediate action to reduce harm through stopping utilities. As the events have a common source but different systems exist in both countries, such a system implies an automatic exchange of information between the two countries.

He also discussed the potential wider use of such an information system. It could be used to inform the population via SMS but this possibility is very much related to the awareness and the ability of the population to use such information. In response to the remark by Mr Garevski that even such short information can allow people to protect themselves, Mr Alexander pointed out that it depends crucially on the building behaviour to shakes while Mr Dritsos remarked that the actual distance from the epicentre is also an essential point. Finally, Mr Badalyan suggested promoting adequate skills within the population in order to be able to use such information.

Mr Bara concluded by highlighting the possible opportunity for Centres to contribute to such initiatives and the Chair remarked that this suggestion is an interesting proposal to be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Directors of Centres. The Executive Secretariat emphasized that the project presented illustrates the importance of cross-boundary issues, a domain where the possible scope of the Agreement's actions remains to be defined. It also pointed out the possible link with the project developed in 2012-13 on public information on Vrancea earthquakes.

- ***Next Steps on the HFA2 Process (Ms Stefanie Dannenmann - Di Palma, UNISDR Europe)***

Ms Dannenmann-Di Palma presented the time frame for setting up the future framework for action on Disaster Risk Reduction to be adopted at the Third World Conference in Sendai (Japan) in March 2015. Many consultations had already taken place worldwide and a synthesis report had already been presented at the Global Platform in Geneva in May 2013. The post 2015 framework for action will consider a strategy over a longer term, probably 20 years instead of the 10 years schedule of HFA. It should also achieve a greater coherence with Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 Development Agenda.

In Europe, much work has been done nationally or through the European Forum but a more political meeting is needed to support the on-going process. To that end, UNISDR Europe will invite all concerned European Ministers to a meeting in April/May 2014 in Brussels as June 2014 is the deadline for contributions before the first meeting of the Drafting Group. Another important date for European countries will be the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction to be hosted by Spain in autumn 2014. The final draft of the new framework will be available in November 2014.

Based on the time schedule presented, the Executive Secretariat highlighted the possible internal agenda to better interact with that process leading to the adoption of HFA2. The meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents planned in October/November 2014 should agree on the position of the Agreement at the Third World Conference, taking care to avoid any possible conflict with national positions from its member countries. In line with that worldwide supported new framework, the next Ministerial Session (October 2015) should adopt a specific new medium term plan 2015-20 for the Agreement.

5. INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

- ***Fourth Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (19-23 May 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)***

With 3,500 participants from 172 countries and 856 organizations, the last Global Platform before the Sendai World Conference (March 2015) was a privileged place to discuss the results of the HFA2 Global Consultation. The report on the post-HFA dialogues highlighted among other topics: the integration between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction; the importance of community-level involvement and the governance and accountability issues. A special focus was also devoted in the Global Platform to economic implications of disasters and the role of the private sector in disaster risk reduction.

The Agreement actively participated in various sessions: the consultation on HFA2 with heads of Intergovernmental Organizations; the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction session where the European HFA 2012-13 progress review was presented; the various PEDRR activities where the Agreement's report on Ecosystem Based Risk Reduction was launched. A statement at the plenary was delivered to confirm the commitment of the Agreement to HFA, highlighting some priorities for HFA2 such as the link with climate change adaptation or the governance issues in disaster risk reduction.

- ***St Petersburg International Economic Forum (St Petersburg, 20-22 June 2013)***

This major Economic and Business Forum held annually brings together government and business leaders but also voices from academia, the media and civil society to identify and deliberate the key challenges facing contemporary economies. In that context, a special session on The Economics of Managing Major Catastrophes was organised by EMERCOM Russia and hosted by Minister V. Puchkov,

who invited the Agreement to participate in the panel discussion. The goal of the session was to discuss the growing financial consequences of disasters and promote the cooperation of private and public sectors in reducing them. The main outcome of the debate was to emphasize that private decisions are indeed crucial to both reduce huge losses and support public decisions in disaster risk reduction.

- ***Fourth meeting of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (Oslo, 23-25 September 2013)***

Twenty eight countries were represented at the European Forum which renamed its yearly “Award of Local Change” as the “Damir Cemerin Award” in honour of the long-standing commitment to disaster risk reduction of our late colleague. The Agreement, through its Executive Secretariat, presented its latest activities and participated in the work of the two active working groups: one on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction integration (which presented its final report) and the other on the role of local authorities (which presented an interim report). A third working group was launched and will be devoted to governance and accountability. Finally, a new peer-review in Finland was announced for early November. Ms Shashkina, currently a member of the team conducting that review, informed the participants on the first outcomes and encouraged them to participate in such an exercise.

- ***2nd GRF One Health Summit 2013 (Davos, 17-20 November 2013) and Special Session at IDRC 2014 (Davos, 24-28 August 2014)***

The Executive Secretariat informed on its future participation in the 2nd GRF One Health Summit to present the project on People with Disabilities and Disaster Preparedness and Response and to chair a special session on environment and health. It also announced the cooperation with GRF Davos to organize a Special Session devoted to disabled people and DRR during their forthcoming International Disaster Reduction Conference 2014 (Davos, 24-28 August 2014), recognizing the Agreement as a major player in that field.

- ***UNECE/FAO Regional Forum on Cross-boundary Fire Management (Geneva, 28-29 November 2013)***

An increased vulnerability of all countries to forest fires can be expected in the future due to climate change and also to changes in land use. Consequently, the Agreement has supported a project for 2012-13 by the Global Fire Monitoring Centre of Freiburg (Germany) on that topic which has indeed served as preparatory work to the development of specific guidelines for international cooperation in fire management and recommendations for a regional agreement on cross-boundary cooperation in fire management which will be discussed at the forthcoming Forum. Mr Bara remarked that such field cooperation between neighbouring countries is essential but requires a legal framework to be deployed due to its multilevel character. Several participants noted that bilateral agreements already exist but generally only at the national level.

6. EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRES' ACTIVITIES

- ***Meeting of the Directors of Specialised Centres of the Agreement (Paris, 4-5 December 2012)***

The Executive Secretariat recalled that it was decided in 2012 to move the yearly meeting usually held in February 2013 to December 2012 in order to be able to discuss the advancement of the projects in 2012 and the possible adjustments to 2013 tasks due to 2013 budget modifications before their actual launch in the first trimester of 2013. That meeting was also used to launch a first discussion on the possible trends concerning 2014-15 suggested domains of action: some key issues (such as the cross-boundary

issues, climate related risks or multi-risk approaches) were proposed by the directors of centres as main challenges for the future.

- ***Evaluation of the 2012 activities and activities scheduled in 2013***

The Executive Secretariat remarked that the evaluation of 2012 activities was a partial assessment as only a mid-term review was available and often background work is necessary for more concrete proposals in the second year of the project. It also recognized that some delay in launching the associated activities arose from the necessary adjustment of initial proposals and the setting-up of administrative procedures. Concerning 2013 activities, it recalled that they are mainly a follow-up of 2012 activities and only minor adjustments in the projected results are expected due to the aforementioned implementation delays in 2012. A complete assessment of the biannual projects will only be possible after the analysis of final reports to be submitted by mid-December.

Based on the partial reports received on 2012 activities (available online on the website of the Agreement), the Executive Secretariat reviewed the main result achieved in 2012 by each project and also highlighted the final result expected in 2013:

Line of action 1: Information

Study of optical fibre technology usage and multi-sensors monitoring for the development of a landslides' early warning framework; Draft content in English of the Surviving disasters booklet; Preparation of guidelines for international cooperation on fire management.

Line of action 2: Knowledge

Draft guidelines on defence of rural population against forest fires; Development of real time telemetric monitoring system of large constructions; Methodology definition and national assessment of landslide susceptibility in 3 countries; Draft on structural interventions design for seismic protection of monuments; Development of risk/vulnerability maps of tsunamis and sea level rise for 2 coastal areas; Study on regional variability of source parameters on ground motion variation; Terrestrial and marine data collection through 2 coastal areas' studies; Analysis of the links between Climate Change and development in the Arctic region.

Line of action 3: People

Launch of the multilingual Besafenet website and leaflet; Final version of special tests for assessment of schools' safety; Revised version of the booklet on nuclear hazard information; Methodology and data collection for the socio-economic impact of tsunami risks on coastal areas; Collection of pertinent data in 4 countries affected by Vrancea earthquakes; Test of draft material for disabled people in a specialized centre; Identification of principles to involve communities in emergency situations.

In view of the large range of projects supported, the Chair recognised the richness of dealing with the diverse competences within the Specialized Centres but he emphasized the need for a greater convergence of the projects to achieve a better visibility of their results. Ms Bernaerts remarked that past experiences showed that it is indeed possible to use the capacities of Centres also in projects outside their usual competences. She also appreciated the greater involvement of Permanent Correspondents in decision making concerning supported projects, as illustrated by their consultation on the draft programme of activities 2014-15 before its discussion at the Bureau's meeting in August.

As Mr Dritsos raised the question about the possible support of projects developed by only one Centre, the Executive Secretariat pointed out that the choice is tricky as it must evaluate primarily the contribution of the proposed project to the overall objectives of the Agreement: if single Centre projects

are not excluded, the international cooperation goal of the Agreement favours the support of projects involving various international partners in order to define more generally valid proposals.

Mr Feunteun asked about the participation of Specialised Centres in European projects and the Executive Secretariat informed that some of them participate individually but not as the network of Specialized Centres of the Agreement. Following the suggestion by Mr Bara to use the annual funds to support the preparation by Centres of proposals for outside financing, the Executive Secretariat remarked the need of the Agreement to develop its own objectives and not rely on potential outside financing to achieve them. The Chair also remarked the difficulty of the Executive Secretariat to deal with the huge administrative burden associated to such European programmes. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that a discussion at the Director of Centres meeting on the external financing issue could be useful.

7. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2014 AND 2015

- ***Draft budget for 2014***

The Executive Secretariat presented the draft budget and remarked that there is no major change with respect to 2013 except for the new constraint imposed by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe: a zero nominal growth which implies a real-term decrease of less than 2%. As for the previous year, the associated adjustment will be made on operational expenses in order to preserve the amounts devoted to activities. It must be noted that the zero nominal growth will probably be reconducted in 2015 and imply a new decrease of budget in real-terms.

- ***Discussion of the guidelines for the 2014-2015 programme of activities***

The proposed biannual programme of activities must remain within the general framework defined by the Medium Term Plan 2011-15 and structured along three main lines of action: Information sharing, Knowledge diffusion and People involvement. The 2014-15 programme must also pave the way to the new Medium Term Plan 2015-2018 to be adopted at the Agreement's Ministerial Session in 2015. It also takes into account that it will be mainly carried out through the implementation of coordinated projects and must rely to a great extent on actual Specialized Centres' competences.

Following the invitation to Permanent Correspondents to comment on the initial draft, several topics were suggested by them for more concrete emphasis in the biennium: Cross-boundary studies, Governance issues, Evacuation, Financial implications of disasters, Psychosocial support. The Executive Secretariat had adjusted accordingly some entries but no major changes were necessary as these proposals can easily fit in the initial sections identified: the evacuation and psychosocial issues can be embedded in the post-disaster section, the cross-boundary and governance issues in the authorities' cooperation section while the financial implications did not appear to the participants as a short-term priority for the Agreement.

- ***Initiatives on displaced people and risk reduction***

The document on most vulnerable populations adopted in 2012 highlighted displaced people among its main targets. Taking into account the necessity to continue in 2013 to work on people with disabilities in order to achieve more concrete proposals in that field, the Executive Secretariat launched the discussion on more concrete expectations of delegations on results of the work on displaced people. It proposed to initiate it in 2014 by focusing first on major conceptual aspects and then identify possible good practices in the field by means of contributions from Permanent Correspondents and other stakeholders. The participants raised the question of the precise definition of displaced people, a point that the planned

report will address, and the need to consider possible previous work in the field by other organisations dealing with refugees (such as Red Cross, UNHCR, ...).

8 ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRS OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

Mr Michel Feider (Luxembourg) was elected as Chair and Mr Victor Poyarkov (Ukraine) and Ms Olga Shashkina (Georgia) as Vice-Chairs.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

10. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Executive Secretariat proposed to maintain October or November as dates for what is now an annual meeting of the Permanent Correspondents. Concerning the location for the meeting, the Council of Europe premises in Strasbourg or Paris are always available but experience proves the interest of organizing the meeting in one of the member States. In order to define more concrete dates and receive possible proposals to host the next meeting in one of the member countries, the Committee decided to fix the end of April 2014 as a deadline for feedback from delegations on these two topics.

APPENDIX 1:

AGENDA

THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

AP/CAT (2013) OJ 5: Draft Agenda

2. SPECIAL SESSION: Including People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response

- Speech of Mr Michel FEIDER, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Permanent Correspondents
- Speech of Mr Eladio FERNANDEZ-GALIANO, Executive Secretary a.i. of the Agreement
- People with Disabilities and Disaster Preparedness

AP/CAT (2013) 09: Including People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response

Presentation by Professor David ALEXANDER, Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction, University College, London

- Discussion of the guidelines and adoption of the recommendation

AP/CAT (2013) 10: Draft Recommendation 2013–1 on People with Disabilities and Disaster Risk Reduction

3. RECALL OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

AP/CAT (2012) 20: Report of the 63rd Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents, Dubrovnik, 4-5.10.2012

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR, DELEGATIONS AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

- Earthquake early warning and decoupling of main utility systems: a two-countries initiative
Presentation by Mr Iuliu BARA, Directorate of European Territorial Cooperation, Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Administration
- Next Steps on the HFA2 Process
Presentation by Ms Stefanie DANNENMANN - DI PALMA, UNISDR Europe

5. INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

- Fourth Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (19-23 May 2013, Geneva, Switzerland)
 - Participation to the European HFA progress review
 - Contribution to the PEDDR initiative
 - Consultations on a post-Hyogo Framework of Action
Statement of the Agreement at the Plenary Session
- St Petersburg International Economic Forum (St Petersburg, 20-22 June 2013)
- Fourth meeting of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (Oslo, 23-25 September 2013)

- 2nd GRF One Health Summit 2013 (Davos, 17-20 November 2013) and Special Session at IDRC 2014 (Davos, 24-28 August 2014)
- UNECE/FAO Regional Forum on Cross-boundary Fire Management (Geneva, 28-29 November 2013)

FRIDAY, 25 OCTOBER

6. EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRES' ACTIVITIES

- Meeting of the Directors of Specialised Centres of the Agreement (Paris, 4-5 December 2012)
AP/CAT (2013) 07: Conclusions of the meeting
- Evaluation of the 2012 activities and activities scheduled in 2013
AP/CAT (2013) 01 bil.: Activities supported in 2012 and planned for 2013

7. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2014 AND 2015

- Draft budget for 2014
AP/CAT (2013) 08: Draft budget for 2014-15
- Discussion of the guidelines for the 2014-2015 programme of activities
AP/CAT (2013) 02: Guidelines for the 2014-15 programme of activities
- Initiatives on displaced people and risk reduction
AP/CAT (2012)16: Improving DRR in certain vulnerable groups

8 ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRS OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ARMENIA / ARMENIE

Mr Stepan BADALYAN
Director of the European Interregional Scientific and Educational Centre on Major Risk Management,
23 Nalbandyan Str., 0001 YEREVAN, Republic of Armenia
Tel.: +374 10 54 49 92
E-mail: ecrmeurope@gmail.com

AZERBAIDJAN /AZERBAIJAN

Mr Jeyhun ISGANDARLI
Senior Advisor
The Ministry of Emergency Situations
M. Mushfig str., 501st block, Baku, Azerbaijan
Tel: +994556464748
Email: jeyhun.isgandarli@fhn.gov.az
Web: www.fhn.gov.az

BELGIUM / BELGIQUE

Madame Monique BERNAERTS
Directeur Planification d'Urgence, Service Public Fédéral Intérieur, Direction Générale Centre de Crise
Rue Ducale, 53, B-1000 Bruxelles
Tel. +32 2 2 506 47 70 Fax +32 2 506 47 09
E-mail : monique.bernaerts@ibz.fgov.be;

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE ET HERZEGOVINE

Ms Olga SLAGALO
Senior Associate for Cooperation with International Institutions and Organizations
Ministry Of Security of Bosnia And Herzegovina
TRG BIH 1, Sarajevo
Tel: +387 33 492 735 / Fax: +387 33 492 795
Email: Olga.Slagalo@msb.gov.ba
Web: www.msb.gov.ba

BULGARIA / BULGARIE

Ms Lilyana TODOROVA
Expert
International Cooperation, NATO, EU & Humanitarian Operations Unit
DG Fire Safety and Civil Protection, MoI
Republic of Bulgaria
Tel. +359 2 960 10 253
Fax: +359 2 962 5127
E-mail: l.todorova@cp.government.bg

CHYPRE / CYPRUS

Mr George GEROSIMOU
Senior Civil Defence Officer, Ministry of the Interior –
Civil Defence Headquarters, P.O. Box 23830, T.T. 1686 NICOSIA
Tel. +357.22.403413/49.92.57 Fax. +357.22.31.56.38
Email: ge.cd@cytanet.com.cy;

GEORGIA / GEORGIE

Ms Olga SHASHKINA
Chief Specialist

Environmental Policy & International Relations Department
Ministry of Environment Protection of Georgia
Tel: + 9955 99924141
email: o.shashkina@moe.gov.ge; olga.shashkina@hotmail.fr web: <http://moe.gov.ge/>

GREECE / GRECE

Prof. Stefanos DRITSOS
European Centre on Prevention and Forecasting of Earthquakes (ECPFE)
Xanthou 32, Athens 15451
Tel: 00302106725233
Email: dritsos@upatras.gr
Web: www.ecpfe.oasp.gr

LUXEMBOURG

M. Michel FEIDER
Directeur de l'Administration des Services de Secours, Administration des Services de Secours, 1, rue
Robert Stumper, L - 2557 LUXEMBOURG
Tel.: +352.49771-406 Fax. +352.49771-771
E-mail : michel.feider@secours.etat.lu

MALTA / MALTE

Mr Natalino BEZZINA
Manager, Civil Protection Department
Ta' Kandia, L/O Siggiewi
Tel: 00356 2393 0000 ; 00356 7942 3133
Email: natalino.bezzina@gov.mt

MOROCCO / MAROC

M Azelarab EL MOURAOUAH
Coordonnateur, Euro-Mediterranean Centre for the Evaluation and Prevention of Seismic Risk
(CEPRIS)
Angle Avenue des Forces Armées Royales et Avenue Allal El Fassi, Hay Ryad
B.P.8027, 10102 Agdal Nations Unies, CP 10102 Rabat, Maroc
Tel. +212.537.77.86.74 - (212 667 066 441) Fax +212.537.77.13.34
Email: elmouraouah@cnrst.ma; directeur@cnrst.ac.ma; elmouraouahaz@gmail.com

PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO / PRINCIPAUTE DE MONACO

Lieutenant Colonel Tony VARO
Chef de Corps des sapeurs-pompiers de Monaco
11 avenue du Port, MC - 98000 MONACO
Tel: +377 93 15 60 00 / 60 16 Fax: +377 93 15 60 08
E-mail : tvaro@gouv.mc

PORTUGAL

Ms Ana FREITAS
Head of the International Relations Unit, Autoridade Nacional de Proteção Civil
Av. Do Forte em Carnaxide, LISBON
Tel: +351964407858 E-mail: Ana.freitas@prociv.pt

ROMANIA / ROUMANIE

Mr Iuliu BARA
Consilier evaluare examinare, Directia de Afaceri Europene,
Compartimentul Strategia UE pentru Regiunea Dunarii
Strada Apolodor nr. 17, Latura Nord, Sector 5, București, 050741 - RO
Tel: 037 211 1582, Fax: 037 211 1441
Email: iuliu.bara@mdrap.ro; baragyula2004@yahoo.com

RUSSIAN FEDERATION / FEDERATION DE RUSSIE

Mr Alexey SKANTSEV

Second Secretary/Representative of EMERCOM of Russia
Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union
31-33, Boulevard du Régent, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 502 17 91 / Fax : +32 2 513 76 49
Email: skantsev@yandex.ru Web: <http://www.en.mchs.ru/>

REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO / REPUBLIQUE DE SAINT-MARIN

Monsieur Alessandro BARELLI

Centre Européen pour la Médecine des Catastrophes (CEMEC)
Via Scialoja 1, Cailungo 47031 SAN MARINO
Fax. +378 99 45 35 / Tel. +378 90 37 06 E-mail : cemec@iss.sm / a.barelli@tox.it

"THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA" / "L'EX-REPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE MACEDOINE"

Mr Mihail GAREVSKI

Professor, Director of the Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology, (IZIIS),
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Salvador Aljende St. 73, POBox 101, 1000 SKOPJE
Tel: +389.2.310.77.01 / +389 2 310 77 02 Fax: +389.2.311.21.63
E-mail: garevski@pluto.iziis.ukim.edu.mk

UKRAINE

Mr Viktor POIARKOV, Executive Director of the European Centre of Technological Safety,
TESEC, P.O.B. # 13, KYIV-110 03110, Ukraine
Tel. : +38.050.312.40.24 / +380.44.332.59.05 Fax. : +380.44.270.85.90
E-mail: poyarkov@i.kiev.ua

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS / ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES

NATIONS UNIES : I.S.D.R. - STRATEGIE INTERNATIONALE DE LA PREVENTION DES CATASTROPHES UNITED NATIONS : I.S.D.R.- INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION

Ms. Stefanie DANNENMANN-DI PALMA

Programme Officer
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
Rue Montoyer 14, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 290 2589
Fax: +32 (0)2 290 4950
Email : dannenmann@un.org

EXPERT

Prof. David ALEXANDER

Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction, Room 29, Second Floor
South Wing, University College London, Gower Street, LONDON WC1E 6BT, United Kingdom
Office tel: 0044 (0) 203 108 11 09
Mobile: 0044 (0) 744 965 74 82
Email: david.alexander@ucl.ac.uk

COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OF THE EUR-OPA MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT / SECRETARIAT EXECUTIF DE L'ACCORD EUR-OPA RISQUES MAJEURS

Mr Eladio FERNANDEZ-GALIANO, Secrétaire Exécutif *ad interim* / Executive Secretary *a.i.*
Democratic Governance Directorate
Tel. : +33 3 88 41 2259 Fax: +33 3 88 41 2787
E-mail : eladio.fernandez-galiano@coe.int

Mr Francesc PLA, Adjoint au Secrétaire Exécutif / Deputy to the Executive Secretary
Democratic Governance Directorate
Tel: +33 3 90 21 4930 Fax: +33 3 88 41 2787 E-mail : francesc.pla@coe.int

Ms Mechthilde FUHRER, Adjoint au Secrétaire Exécutif / Deputy to the Executive Secretary
Democratic Governance Directorate
Tel: +33(0)3 90 21 49 98 / Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 2787
E-mail: mechthilde.fuhrer@coe.int

Ms Linda ROLLIN, Finances and Administration
Democratic Governance Directorate
Tel. : +33 3 88 41 2937 Fax. : +33 3 88 41 2787
E-mail : linda.rollin@coe.int

OBSERVERS / OBSERVATEURS

FRANCE / FRANCE

M Jacques FAYE
Chef du bureau de l'information préventive, de la coordination et de la prospective
Ministère du développement durable (DGPR/SRNH/BIPCP)
Grand Arche - Paroi Nord, 92055 La Défense Cedex, France
Tel: +33 1 40 81 88 75
Fax: +33 1 40 81 20 95
Email: jacques.faye@developpement-durable.gouv.fr
Web: www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr

EUROPEAN FORUM FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT / FORUM EUROPEEN POUR LA GESTION DES CATASTROPHES AU NIVEAU LOCAL ET REGIONAL

Mr. Jan MANS, President, European Forum for Local and Regional Disaster Management
Herdenkingsplein 25 D, NL – 6211 PX MAASTRICHT
Tel. +31.6.387.59.603
E-mail: janmans@home.nl; jan.mans@gouda.nl

Mr. Harrie JEURISSEN, Secretary General, European Forum for Local and Regional Disaster
Management, Herdenkingsplein 25 D, NL – 6211 PX MAASTRICHT
Tel. +31.6.23.24.15.70
E-mail: harrie.jeurissen@hotmail.com

AFPCN - ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE POUR LA PREVENTION DES CATASTROPHES NATURELLES / FRENCH ASSOCIATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF NATURAL DISASTERS

M. René FEUNTEUN
Membre de l'Association Française pour la Prévention des Catastrophes Naturelles (AFPCN)
19 avenue du Maine – 75015 - Paris
Tel: 33(0)1 45 49 88 36
E-mail: Rf.k@orange.fr

INTERPRETERS / INTERPRETES

Mr Paul BELOPOLSKY - belopolsky.paul@gmail.com
Mr Jan KROTKI - jan.krotki@gmail.com
Ms Fanny CROISET - f.croiset@aic.net - f.croiset@gmail.com
Ms Catherine HESS - catherine.hess@wanadoo.fr
Ms Tatiana BODROVA - tgogenmos@noos.fr
Ms Tatiana JAUVERT - tjauvert@hotmail.com

APOLOGISED FOR ABSENCE/ EXCUSES

ALBANIA / ALBANIE

Mr. Alfred OLLI, General Director, General Directorate of Civil Emergencies, Ministry of Interior, Sheshi "Skënderbej" Nr. 3, TIRANA, Albania
Tel. +355 4227 3191 Fax. +3554233090
E-mail: alfred.oli@moi.gov.al; ollialfred@yahoo.com

AZERBAIDJAN /AZERBAIJAN

Mr EtibarI MIRZEYEV, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Emergency Situations
M. Mushfig str., 501st block, Baku
Tel: +994125120430
Email: jeyhun.isgandarli@fhn.gov.az Web: www.fhn.gov.az

CROATIA / CROATIE

Mr Josip SAJKO, Republic of Croatia, National Protection and Rescue Directorate
Nehajska 5, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 3855 900 / Fax: +385 1 3855 935
Email: josip.sajko@duzs.hr

ITALY / ITALIE

Mr Luigi D'ANGELO, Civil Protection Department, International Relations Unit
Via Ulpiano 11 - 00193 Roma
Tel: +39 06 68 202522 / Fax: +39 06 68 20 40 47 Email: international@protezionecivile.it

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA / REPUBLIQUE DE SERBIE

Mr Predrag MARIC, Assistant Minister and Head of Sector for Emergency Management
Ministry of Interior, 31, Omladinskih brigada str., Belgrade, Serbia
Tel: +381 11 2282 911 / Fax: +381 11 2282 911 Email: predrag.maric@mup.gov.rs

SWEDISH CIVIL CONTINGENCIES AGENCY

Ms. Mette Lindahl Olsson, Head of Natural Hazards & Critical Infrastructure Section
Risk & Vulnerability Reduction Department, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
65180 Karlstad
Tel: +46 10 - 240 51 27 / mob + 46 70 - 622 04 90 E-mail: mette.lindahl-olsson@msb.se

UNESCO

Mr. Alexandros MAKARIGAKIS, Chief of Unit a.i., Cross-Cutting Thematic Unit on Disaster Risk
Reduction, UNESCO, Rm B3.19, 1 Rue Miollis, 75015 Paris, France
Tel + 33 (0) 1 456 84 178 Mob: + 33 (0) 695905937 Fax : + 33 (0) 1 456 85 821
E-mail : a.makarigakis@unesco.org

APPENDIX 3:

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT (EUR-OPA)

Recommendation 2013 - 1 of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on the inclusion of people with disabilities in disaster preparedness and response,

adopted at the 64th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), Paris, France, 24-25 October 2013.

The Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA),

- A. Recognising that people with disabilities have a fundamental right to a degree of protection against disasters that is comparable with that enjoyed by the rest of the population and in other terms offers a satisfactory level of preparedness;
- B. Mindful that in most European countries awareness, planning, assistance, training and specialised emergency assistance to people with disabilities would benefit from significant improvement;
- C. Desirous to promote a more integrated, efficient and effective approach to the problem of ensuring that people with disabilities in Europe are protected against emergencies and disasters;
- D. Taking note with satisfaction of the report "Including People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response" by Prof. David Alexander (Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction, University College London) and Mr Silvio Sagramola (Director of the Centre National Disability Information and Meeting Centre, Luxembourg), and of the "Guidelines for the Treatment of People with Disabilities During Emergency, Crisis and Disaster Situations" by the same authors.

Recommend that member States of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA):

1. Integrate specialised measures for people with disabilities into national disaster risk reduction policies, planning processes, training curricula and emergency response practice, favouring, as appropriate, investment in long-term strategies that would reduce the vulnerability and exposure to disaster of people with disabilities;
2. Design and promote national programmes and standards for the protection, rescue and care of people with disabilities when and where they are at risk of disaster;
3. Design and promote measures at the community level through local administrations and civil protection services, making use of local organisations that provide care and representation to people with disabilities;

4. Ensure that people with disabilities are included in the entire disaster risk reduction process and that, wherever possible, their viewpoints are taken fully into account;
5. Ensure that education and training for the protection and assistance of people with disabilities are firmly in the mainstream curricula for incident, crisis and disaster management and response;
6. Support the efforts of the Agreement to promote inclusive disaster risk reduction for people with disabilities in its member states mainly through the promotion of adequate regulations, the sharing of expertise, the organisation of training programmes and the promotion of good practice.

And invites the Secretariat to submit the above Recommendation to the Committee of Ministers for information and possible distribution to all member States of the Council of Europe.