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Or. English

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

**MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALISED CENTRES OF THE EUR-OPA MAJOR HAZARDS  
AGREEMENT**

**AGORA BUILDING, ROOM G04**

**STRASBOURG**

**MONDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER - TUESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2013**

**CONCLUSIONS**

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## **1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA** *AP/CAT (2013) OJ 6: Draft Agenda*

The Chair of the meeting, Mr El Mouraouah, welcomed the participants and gave the floor to the Executive Secretary a.i. to inform on the main changes in the Agreement since the last meeting of Directors of Centres.

Mr Fernandez-Galiano informed of the changes within the Executive Secretariat: the departure of Caroline Siebecke to another department, the arrival of Mechthilde Fuhrer as new administrator and his own nomination as Head of the Democratic Initiatives department.

The latter fact allows him to remain as Executive Secretary a.i. since the Agreement is in fact encompassed within this entity. It also explains the enlargement of the work of the Agreement to other domains, such as disabled people or migrants, in synergy with other units of the DG Democracy (ex: disability, cultural diversity). He finally informed that the budget 2014-15 has been adopted and as no new withdrawal from Agreement had taken place, the total amount for projects remains almost unchanged in 2014.

Mr Chelidze raised the problem of refugees and Mr Fernandez-Galiano confirmed that this topic is included in work of the Executive Secretariat planned in 2014.

## **2. EVALUATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF 2012-2013 PROJECTS**

The Chair gave the floor to the various coordinators of the projects to briefly present the main outcomes of their projects in 2013:

- Using information to save lives and help victims

The “MULTI-SENSOR TECHNOLOGIES FOR EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS OF LANDSLIDES AND MAN-MADE STRUCTURES” project (coordinated by the Strasbourg centre) has proposed a methodology to collect information on displacement through an array of sensors and to propose the most adequate way of using the various types of techniques to the different types of monitoring. The additional information collected could be of great value for decision taking: results should be used by risk managers to take decisions such as the evacuation of population.

The “SURVIVING DISASTERS” project (coordinated by the San Marino centre) has achieved its goal to produce a booklet on basic useful information to properly deal with different possible emergencies. The booklet of 38 pages is available in 7 languages (English, French, Italian, Russian, Georgian are already published and Arabic and Armenian versions are under preparation). The main challenge is to diffuse the content among the general public and the Maltese centre asked about the best way to distribute such material. All participants agreed that Internet is a privileged way to make it accessible and allows easy adjustment of its content to each specific country.

The project on a “REGIONAL AGREEMENT ON FIRE MANAGEMENT TRANS-BOUNDARY COOPERATION” (coordinated by the GFMC, Freiburg) has a more political aspect as it wished to propose a cooperation tool to countries based on a background document. The preparatory scientific work developed in 2013, materialized in the "White Paper on the State of Wildfires

and Fire Management in Forests and other Vegetation Resources in the UNECE Region", has served to pave the way for a proposal on an international mechanism for enhancing fire management capacities of countries submitted at the UNECE/FAO regional Forum. The Moscow and Baku centres outlined their interest in the results obtained.

- Using knowledge to reduce vulnerability

The "DEFENSE OF RURAL POPULATIONS, SETTLEMENTS AND OTHER ASSETS AGAINST WILDFIRES AND SMOKE POLLUTION" project (coordinated by the Freiburg centre) has materialized in guidelines aiming at enhancing capacities for local decision makers and end users through the production of a document explaining in an easily understandable language and action the globally available comprehensive scientific and technical knowledge on the subject. The draft document is currently available in English and Greek and its actual use in communities has already been tested in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

After focusing in 2012 on the definition of a low cost system for monitoring dams, the "REAL-TIME TELEMETRIC MONITORING/EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS OF LARGE ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTIONS" (coordinated by the Tbilisi centre) has tested the method in the Enguri dam in Georgia and the other centres involved participated in that test but at different levels. If the Moscow centre informed that they have developed their own methodological document that can be used as basis for an international standard, the Sofia centre has managed to perform a test nationally but raised as problems the reticence of governments to allow international exchanges of the resulting data (considered as strategic) as well as the insufficient budget to actually implement the test phase. For such a technically complex project, the Kiev centre suggested defining a shorter conclusion document to allow other possible partners to consider participating in the actual test of the methodology.

The "PAN-EUROPEAN AND NATION-WIDE LANDSLIDE SUSCEPTIBILITY ASSESSMENT" project (coordinated by the Strasbourg centre) has carried out several trials to validate the first European Landslide Susceptibility Map produced with the aim of solely representing the propensity of the terrain to generate landslides. A proposal for climate-physiographic terrain delineation in terms of landslides for the European territory was also presented and susceptibility modelling was performed individually for each zone. Typologically-differentiated national scale maps were created for Georgia, Romania and France as pilot study cases and a survey on Risk Assessment Methodologies developed for landslide management from an operational point of view for the different member States of the Council of Europe was launched.

The Athens centre, as coordinator of the project "SEISMIC PROTECTION OF MONUMENTS" informed of the preparation of a regulatory document for the design of structural interventions in monuments in earthquake prone areas based on relevant documents already developed in Greece and in Italy. The final document reviews the available tools for assessment as well as their respective limitations, points that were discussed with the other partner centres in a final workshop in December 2013. Armenian experts elaborated the "Preliminary scale of seismic Intensity based on analyses of damages of the Armenian churches" and Italian experts also produced a study on "The force of vernacular: Seismic-proof technologies, typologies and artisan know-how in the historical built up environment along the Amalfi Coast, Italy".

In addition, as coordinator of the “ASSESSMENT OF INTERVENTIONS IN EARTHQUAKE PRONE AREAS” project, the Athens centre presented a common Document for the Assessment and Interventions on Reinforced Concrete and Masonry Buildings, According to Eurocode 8-Part 3 finalized by the Relevant Scientific Committee. A Workshop was held in Athens in April 2013, with the contribution of ECRP Sofia, Bulgaria and ECBR Bucharest, Romania. The main aim of the Workshop was to exchange experience and opinions, to present Case Studies as well as proposals for further improvement of the Code.

The project “UNDERSTANDING AND QUANTIFICATION OF NATURAL HAZARDS” coordinated by the Walferdange centre aimed at improving scientific knowledge in three domains: one dealing with the link between variability observed in earthquake ground motions on regional scale and variability of source characteristics of the earthquakes; another working on the installation of a seismic network providing observations of the whole of Luxemburg; finally, one processing seismological field data collected at the Nyiragongo volcano to better understand the dynamics of its permanent lava lake. In response to the question of the Tbilissi centre on its participation in the Global Earthquake Model (GEM), the Walferdange centre informed that Luxemburg is not yet a participant in that project.

The Valletta centre coordinated the “RISK AND VULNERABILITY MAPS FOR SELECTED COASTLINES IN MALTA AND TURKEY WITH REGARD TO TSUNAMIS AND SEA LEVEL RISE” a project finalized in 2012. The study on vulnerability is based on two main categories (physical and human based parameters) and impacts are based on physical and human influence parameters classified in 5 different categories: Coastal Erosion, Flooding due to Storm Surge, Inundation, Salt Water Intrusion to Groundwater Resources, Salt Water Intrusion to River/Estuary. That indicator based model will help decision makers and authorities to take decisions to prevent the coasts from being defeated and sometimes losing against the sea level rise scenarios.

The “COUPLING TERRESTRIAL AND MARINE DATASETS FOR COASTAL HAZARD ASSESSMENT AND RISK REDUCTION IN CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS” project, also coordinated by the Valletta centre, provides a significant opportunity for scientific discussion regarding the integration of terrestrial and marine data in the context of coastal hazard assessment in the Maltese archipelago and relevant outputs to be compared with those of the Normandy case study. To involve and sensitize public institutions and stakeholders towards aspects of landslide hazard and risk, meetings have been organized in Malta. The centre recognized that the objectives were too ambitious and it thus needs to be developed in the future to obtain tangible results, namely detailed hazard mapping, with special reference to landslides and coastal erosion, useful for decision makers.

The Moscow centre, as coordinator of the “NEW GLOBAL CLIMATE CHALLENGES AS A RESULT OF INCREASED DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARCTIC TERRITORY” project, recalled that one of the new issues is the permafrost melting and its impact on infrastructures. The analysis gave rise to the conclusion that special safety measures should include a system of monitoring and forecasting of dangerous phenomena, an alert system for informing the population of the emergencies and adequate emergency response forces (location, composition and equipment) to improve response in emergency situations. The results were used in the report by Emercom Russia at the International Conference “The Issues of Emergency Management in the Arctic. Oil Spills Prevention and Response” (Naryan-Mar, Russian Federation, August 2013). At the request

of the Rabat centre for more concrete illustrations, the Moscow centre proposed to prepare a brochure on the actual results.

The Biskra centre, in charge of the coordination of the “TRAINING ON CLIMATIC RISKS MANAGEMENT” project, informed that the training course focused in 2013 on arid areas and associated flash floods and was successful (60 requests to participate for 25 participants). The course conclusions suggested an approach establishing a scientific methodology of prevention and risk management by devoting a specific training per risk, allowing better analysis of the risk and knowledge on methods and tools as well as their actual implementation as a follow-up. The presentation led to a discussion on the sources of climate change and the way to deal at local level with global change: the Valletta centre pointed out that, irrespectively of the sources, we have to deal with its consequences.

The “CLIMATE CHANGE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE” project, coordinated by the Ravello centre, materialized in a training course focusing on the specific impact of global change on cultural heritage. This impact is due not only to the slow evolution of climatic parameters and of pollution (temperature, air humidity, rain, wind, sea level rise, etc) but is also affected by the increase of the number and intensity of devastating events (such as storms, hurricanes, floods, heat waves, droughts, frost...). The success of the course relies on the originality of the subject and the diversity of the international training staff as well as the quality of the selected students.

- Placing people at the heart of disaster risk reduction

The Brussels centre, coordinator of the project “ANALYSIS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES INVOLVEMENT IN MAJOR HAZARDS MANAGEMENT”, informed that its implementation was reduced to making it available online. The reason for the difficulty to further the project is linked to the absence of concrete contributions by new countries which were contacted to enrich the actual data available. Based on the available information, the document analysing the national contributions was reworked to become the final report of the project. Nevertheless, the collection of good practices could be a goal in the future in order to diffuse models even if, as pointed out by the Bucharest centre, local authorities have quite limited resources to implement them.

The Nicosia centre, coordinator of the “BE SAFE NET - PROTECT YOURSELF FROM HAZARD” project, recalled the launch of the associated website in several languages during the 25th anniversary. To foster the usage of the website, it was decided to launch in 2015 an Online competition between schools based on the material available on the website. All the participants highlighted the potential role of such an initiative to raise risk awareness among the population. The Ravello centre suggested that the local level identification of risks could be a goal for BeSafeNet but the Valletta centre remarked that it implies identifying the specific local vulnerability while the present goal is to provide common general information on hazards.

The Yerevan centre, in charge of the project “EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS TO RAISE AWARENESS AND IMPROVE PREPAREDNESS TO DISASTERS”, prepared a set of educational material aiming to raise awareness and preparedness to disasters in particular in schools and other educational institutions. The final version of the methodology for teaching the course “Basic knowledge on safe life activities in extreme situations” was completed in Russian. The final version of “Special Tests to assess safety of schools and other educational institutions” was completed in English to serve as a basis for each pilot school of “Plans and Guidelines” to

increase safety. A final version of the “Extreme psychology” brochure was completed in Russian to improve psychological abilities to face disasters. Pilot versions of universal teaching material “First Aid Manual (Atlas)” and a “Memorandum first aid pocket book” were completed in Russian to widely diffuse basic knowledge on first aid administration.

The Kiev centre recalled that the booklet produced within the project “NUCLEAR HAZARD. CHERNOBYL AND FUKUSHIMA: LESSONS FOR PUBLIC AWARENESS” which it coordinated was now available in 10 languages. The next step is to motivate people to use such material to inform themselves and also to use other resources to implement it (through training sessions or via internet). The Sofia centre remarked that the material produced has been well valued by local authorities while the Baku centre informed that the booklet will be disseminated by the Minister of Environment. The Chisinau centre highlighted that the material was not designed in order to scare people but rather to inform them.

As coordinator of the “COASTAL AREAS MANAGEMENT AGAINST SEISMIC AND TSUNAMI RISKS: SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT” project, the Lisbon centre presented the work carried out in Portugal (Lagos and Cascais) and Morocco (Tangier and M’Dieq). It recalled the important role of Professor Mendes Victor in launching it and highlighted the role of local authorities in the success of the project, an aspect that remains to be worked out in the future. Other local stakeholders (such as the schools) had proved already their interest in the project as well as the involvement of Permanent Correspondents. Taking advantage of that presentation, three Centres (Tbilisi, Ravello and Rabat) wished to pay a special tribute to the late Luis Mendes Victor who has been one of the pioneers in the domain of coastal hazards and also one of the founding fathers of the Agreement.

The Bucharest centre, coordinator of the project informed that the Centres involved gathered information on the past impact of Vrancea earthquakes in their respective countries (Moldova, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania) and identified the associated educational material available in each country concerning such earthquakes. Unfortunately, no common educational material, based on the individually collected information, was developed and consequently the expected dissemination among school students and population was not possible.

The project “DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION-EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ON AWARENESS AND PREPAREDNESS TO AN EARTHQUAKE AND ON RULES OF BEHAVIOR FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES” coordinated by the Yerevan centre produced a pilot version in English of the “Manual on preparedness and behaviour rules for people with disabilities, especially children, if an earthquake is real or seems imminent”. It is designed for three categories of people: impaired mobility, impaired vision and impaired hearing. A specific document “Plan for a specialized institution where the people with disabilities, especially children, are given care” and a new document “Awareness-raising of the people with disabilities (preparedness and rules of behaviour) as an integral part of disaster preparedness and response” were also produced.

Finally, the Baku centre who coordinated the project “PREPARING COMMUNITY TO EMERGENCY SITUATIONS THROUGH RISK CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY” informed of the conclusions of a scientific-practical conference organized in November 2012 which noted the importance of the evaluation of the human factor. It requires increased attention to the development of the preparation of the population to emergency situations and their protection.

Short-term training courses must be organized to train people in regions, free guide books must be prepared and diffused and mass-media (especially TV programs) must be used.

- General discussion on the actual outcomes

Based on his experience as auditor of the centres, Mr Goerens recalled some common needs for all projects to be fully used by other stakeholders. The work in one of the two official languages is necessary to allow other centres to contribute to the projects or to be able to use the results. The applicability of the results obtained to various situations has to be clarified in order to promote their adoption. The diffusion of the results obtained to the pertinent people means they should be available in various languages. Finally, a contact person should be provided for each project in order to request him/her for further information when necessary.

The Kiev centre pointed out that to improve the implementation of coordinated programmes, clearer milestones for each partner must be set up in order to ensure the quality of the final results. The Yerevan centre remarked that any centre needs to work already on the specific topic addressed by a coordinated programme in order to make a useful contribution, explaining thus the coexistence of projects at different levels according to that expertise.

The Executive Secretariat confirmed its willingness to support the diffusion of the results obtained in the coordinated programmes and asked the centres to prepare their future reports on the programmes' results in a way which will facilitate their use by other stakeholders (for example by placing the more technical results as appendices).

### **3. DISCUSSION OF THE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME 2014-2015**

#### ***AP/CAT (2013) 2: Guidelines for the 2014-15 programme of activities***

The Executive Secretariat recalled the new financial constraints imposed by the decision of zero growth of the budget in the Council of Europe which is also applied to the Partial Agreements. It emphasized its commitment to preserve the amount devoted to activities as a crucial point to achieve the Agreement's goals. It also provided some precision on the redefinition of priorities in the new biennial programme 2014-15 with respect to the previous biennial programme 2012-13.

The participants discussed the implications of this new biennial programme on their planned activities. A first topic that raised questions was the cross-boundary studies to be developed. The concept seemed unclear to some centres and the Executive Secretariat emphasized that it concerns risks that can simultaneously affect various neighbouring countries. The Moscow centre supported a joint approach to work on issues at trans-boundary level.

Another topic much discussed was the work related to most vulnerable people, and in particular people with disabilities. The Executive Secretariat informed on the results of the workshop organized in October and the setting up of a working group on that specific topic and invited the interested centres to participate. The Athens and Yerevan centres confirmed their interest to contribute through its future work by developing adapted material for people with disabilities.

Centres can also be a privileged way to collect pertinent information concerning their own country's policy in that field. The Executive Secretariat also informed of the interest of other external partners, such as UNESCO which plans to develop a smartphone software in that domain.

A final topic discussed was the request to further develop general methodologies that can be applied in all member states. The Moscow centre suggested to work on a common methodological approach of risk analysis and to discuss the concept of acceptable risk, a proposal supported by the Valletta centre. However, the Kiev centre pointed out that the definition of acceptable risk depends essentially on the economic situation of people while the Ravello centre highlighted that the multiplicity of existing concepts of risk can be a major obstacle to such an approach.

#### **4. ACTIVITIES PROPOSED FOR 2014 AND 2015 AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION**

Due to a lack of time, the Executive Secretariat briefly recalled the different projects proposed by the centres along the three lines of action:

- Using information to save lives and help victims
- Using knowledge to reduce vulnerability
- Placing people at the heart of disaster risk reduction

An open discussion on the respective interest to join the projects presented by the Executive Secretariat took place among the participants.

In view of the segmentation of the projects, the Skopje centre proposed to consider the setting up of a single macro-project (such as a forest fire information system or a damage assessment methodology) with a split of the production of the associated deliverables between all the centres. The discussion highlighted several problems to such an approach, such as the potential lack of technical knowledge by many centres on the specific chosen topic or the difficulty to exchange data often considered strategic between countries. A reduced multiplicity of projects around a few common topics seems more adequate in order to efficiently involve all the centres.

Concerning the proposed projects on people with disabilities, the Bucharest Centre pointed out that the legal status of people with disabilities is an important issue. The San Marino Centre insisted on the need to consider explicitly the psychologically impaired people. The Moscow centre remarked that two elements have to be clearly differentiated in every project: the principles developed and the associated techniques used.

More generally, the Bucharest centre insisted that it is crucial to inform people of pertinent data to enable them to react adequately. Along this line, the Kiev centre wishes to make people aware of emergency plans while the Yerevan centre proposed as a basis its methodology for a national campaign of information in Armenia.

In order to increase the actual impact of the results obtained, the Rabat centre suggested promoting the projects among concerned authorities to involve them in its implementation. The Tbilisi centre also proposed to use the Prevention Web of UNISDR to publicize the work done.



Reacting to centres wishing to participate on several projects, the Valletta centre remarked that the wish to join a certain project has to be clarified in order to precisely give more coherence to the project itself.

The Executive Secretariat welcomed the expression of interest by new centres to join projects already proposed and asked the Centres to formalize their commitment by contacting the coordinator of each project to adjust the initial proposals submitted.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The participants proposed some possible improvements for the future activities of the Centres. Taking into account the short time available and the amount of information to be delivered, the Maltese Centre suggested changing the structure of the meeting in order to foster the dialogue between Centres on future work rather than concentrating on past discussion. The Ravello Centre also suggested narrowing down the extent of the supported projects by launching a kind of call for tender among the Centres on some topics only, to be defined in advance by the Executive Secretariat in agreement with the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

Mr Goerens raised the problem of the final evaluation of the projects and emphasized that it should be ultimately done by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents. On more managerial issues, the Kiev Centre pointed out that a clearer procedure for managing and financing the projects grouping together several partners should be defined to facilitate the job of the project coordinator

The Executive Secretariat acknowledged the issues raised by the Centres and committed itself to propose another format for the next meeting in 2014 and to explore alternative approaches but pointing out however several unavoidable administrative and financial constraints to any change of present procedures.

## **7. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS OF CENTRES**

Mr Tamaz Chelidze, director of the European Centre for Seismic and Geomorphological Hazards (GHHD, Tbilisi, Georgia) was elected as Chair of the meeting of Directors of Centres and Mr Jean-Philippe Malet, director of the European Centre on Geomorphological Hazards (CERG, Strasbourg, France) was elected as Vice-Chair.

## **8. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Executive Secretariat proposed to organize the next meeting of the Directors of Centres in Strasbourg in December 2014 to discuss the actual results of 2014 activities and to consider the potential impact of the post 2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction due to be available at that time.

**MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALISED CENTRES OF THE EUR-OPA MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT**

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE, AGORA BUILDING, ROOM GO 4, STRASBOURG**

**MONDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER (9.30 A.M.) - TUESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2013**

**AGENDA**

**1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA**

*AP/CAT (2013) OJ 6: Draft Agenda*

**2. EVALUATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF 2012-2013 PROJECTS**

*AP/CAT (2013) 1: Activities supported in 2012 and planned in 2013*

- Brief presentation by the coordinators of their projects by line of action:
  - Using information to save lives and help victims
  - Using knowledge to reduce vulnerability
  - Placing people at the heart of disaster risk reduction
- General discussion on the actual outcomes
- Discussion of implementation issues

**3. DISCUSSION OF THE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME 2014-2015**

*AP/CAT (2013) 2: Guidelines for the 2014-15 programme of activities*

- General trends in the Council of Europe
- Redefinition of priorities within the activities of the Agreement

**4. ACTIVITIES PROPOSED FOR 2014 AND 2015**

*AP/CAT (2013) 12: Activities proposed within the coordinated projects for 2014-15*

- Brief presentation by the coordinators of their projects by line of action:
  - Using information to save lives and help victims
  - Using knowledge to reduce vulnerability
  - Placing people at the heart of disaster risk reduction
- Coordination discussions by projects  
Discussion between project coordinators and potential partners of the projects

**5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2014-15 ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRES**

- Summaries of the discussion groups
- Proposed work plan for 2014-15

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**7. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS OF CENTRES**

**8. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS**

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