



Strasbourg, 22 December 2015

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Or. English

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

**2ND MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES
IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT**

22 OCTOBER 2015

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE LIAISON OFFICE
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM**

REPORT

www.coe.int/europarisks

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting was opened by Ambassador Torbjørn FRØYSNES, Special Representative of the Secretary General, Director of the Council of Europe Liaison Office in Brussels. He welcomed the participants, stressed the importance of the topic and invited the members of the Working Group to exchange on best practices and to formulate General Recommendations for the EU Leaders' meeting to take place in Brussels on refugee flows along the Western Balkans route on 25 October 2015.

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The Draft agenda (*Appendix 1*) was adopted. A tour de table followed (*Appendix 2: List of Participants*)

3. THE EUR-OPA AGREEMENT: WORK ON VULNERABLE GROUPS AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: INTRODUCTION BY THE SECRETARIAT

Mr Eladio FERNANDEZ-GALIANO, Head, Democratic Initiatives Department, Acting Executive Secretary, EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, introduced the work conducted by the Council of Europe in the field of vulnerable groups, which emerged from the [Ethical Principles on Disaster Risk Reduction and People's Resilience](#), adopted in 2011. Adopting an intercultural lens helps us tackle issues related to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Ms Mechthilde FUHRER, Deputy to the Executive Secretary, EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, recalled the results of the work carried out in the project "People with disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response" and introduced the aims of this meeting. She also introduced the work to be carried out within the project (*Appendix 3: Concept Note*).

4. THE EUR-OPA AGREEMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE: MIGRANTS, ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES AS A FACTOR IN DISASTERS AND MAJOR HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT

Dr Bertrand PAUVERT, Research Institute CERDACC, France, introduced the results in reply to the Questionnaire on Migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees as a factor in disasters and major hazards preparedness and management launched in August 2015.

Several key points emerged from the responses of the EUR-OPA Permanent Correspondents. The overall conclusion that emerges is the lack of consideration of the specific situation of migrants during major disasters and crises.

- Fairly good knowledge of target populations.

If a majority of member States that responded have a satisfactory knowledge of the populations residing on their territory (population registers, databases), it seems that no institutional contact is actually established with the representatives of these populations. The departments responsible for emergency measures have neither produced information nor advice regarding the management of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees during major disasters or crises.

- Taking into account these populations in prevention plans.

While most countries have tools allowing foreign populations to properly access the emergency services (e.g. central processing of multilingual calls), less than half of the respondents reported the existence of special prevention measures dedicated specifically to these people (guides are available in several languages, they are often drafted for tourists). While the access to translators is widespread, none of the answers mentioned the organisation of training programmes for emergency services on this topic in recent years.

- Absence of associating the populations to prevention measures.

The respondents were not aware of the presence of officers from migrant populations in their emergency services. They have no interlocutors with these groups and have not sought to involve these populations in their reflections on disaster prevention. However, the majority of the respondents reported that the institutions responsible for these questions know about the existence of specific assistance measures for foreign populations during disasters and major crisis (noting nevertheless that these matters primarily come from NGOs or social services accompanying social aid).

- General provisional conclusions.

It seems that nothing is actually foreseen by the emergency services to mitigate the impact of disasters on migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. However, these considerations are undeniably necessary, not least for reasons of operational efficiency, in societies increasingly marked by the presence of significant populations of foreign origin.

Mr PAUVERT also presented the replies received on a similar Questionnaire, distributed by Ms SENATORE, Responsible of CERISC, from the French national fire and rescue services.

A short exchange of views followed. In fact, many more replies and examples of good practice are needed, from the EUR-OPA Permanent Correspondents, the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) and the Red Cross with its national and international branches and the Secretariat was requested to send them the Questionnaire.

5. CIVIL PROTECTION: MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Mr Georgi PETROV, Desk Officer, International Cooperation, NATO, EU and Humanitarian Operations Department, Ministry of Interior, Sofia, Bulgaria, informed the members of the Working Group about the activities and services of the State Agency for Refugees of the Republic of Bulgaria, Bulgarian Red Cross, as well as the activities and services provided to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers by the Directorate General Fire Safety and Civil Protection. The presentation showed statistics on the numbers of people looking for protection in Bulgaria over the last years, as well as their numbers in 2015 for every month (*Appendix 4: Presentation Georgi Petrov*).

Mr Sébastien LEBEL and Mr François-Xavier VOLOT, Civil Protection of Val d'Oise, France, shared their concrete experiences and came up with the following conclusions. It is important:

- to develop effective coordination between government departments and the relevant associations;
- to set up visuals (pictograms) allowing migrants a better understanding of the environment in which they arrive;
- to include in the welcoming procedure some risk awareness elements, such as brief evacuation procedures.

6. VULNERABLE GROUPS: MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES

Dr Francesc ARAGALL, President, Design for All Foundation, Barcelona, Spain, illustrated the connection between the project "People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response" and "Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the context of major risks prevention and management" using the Design for All approach. He explained that a key factor to be considered in the prevention phases is to realize that there are many aspects of human diversity that may influence the type of resources to be used and the way that assistance is provided. Certain limitations that people with disabilities may present would affect the emergency protocols while, at the same time, a high percentage of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers may be affected by disabilities.

Beyond disabilities there are also many aspects of human diversity that may have an influence on the emergency management: language skills, religious precepts, use or possession of mobile or smart phones, family structure, etc. These aspects that affect both disabled and non-disabled persons should also be taken into consideration in the prevention phases in order to adapt the response resources and protocols.

Many aspects of human diversity differ enormously from each other, such as from a geographical and social one, it is important that civil protection services analyse the aspects that may affect the way in which they reply. In order to exemplify a way to collect this data a form concerning human diversity, extracted and adapted from the HUMBLES method to put Design for All into practice, was presented (*Appendix 5: Presentation Francesc Aragall*).

As some of the participants mentioned that there are also other tools to collect this kind of information, it was proposed to collect and compile all of those available.

Ms Khadija QESMOUN, introduced the issue of how to provide expertise in the framework of the French NGO APAJH (Association for adults and youth with disabilities) in order to facilitate the arrival of refugees with disabilities. The Conference of INGOs wishes to mobilize medico-social networks to welcome effectively (thanks to its expertise, infrastructure and existing teams) the most vulnerable refugees, notably the elderly and people with disabilities throughout Europe. Furthermore, they aim at sharing within its network practical and inspiring examples of practices for institutions.

These findings were presented on 5 November 2015 in Dublin, Ireland, at the Conference "Promoting Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Ambitions, Impact and Challenges Ahead". The publication "Major Hazards and People with Disabilities. Their Involvement in Disaster Preparedness and Response" (2014), result of the EUR-OPA project "People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response", was also distributed to all the participants at that Conference.

7. SETTING THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORK ON MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT: INGO ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Likewise as to the work carried out by the INGO APAJH, Mr Daniel GUERY and Ms Isabelle LOSSEAU-SENY, presented the work of the INGO MIAMSI, an INGO suggests/proposes to look at the issue of migration in a complex manner for the best of all.

In December 2014, at the request of the Italian and Maltese sections of MIAMSI (INGOs of Christian inspiration aiming at educating people in political, social and associative positions as well as questioning their attitudes and behaviours), it was decided to organise a symposium on migration flows in the Mediterranean basin in Pozzallo on the south coast of Sicily, where regularly hundreds of people fleeing their country arrive: The Mediterranean: a road in the sea, migration of peoples, cultures, religions (*Appendix 6: Programme*).

Because this NGO aims to respect human rights as the dignity of the whole person, it has appeared necessary to involve its members in a thorough reflection on the conditions experienced by people migrating and the means implemented to accommodate them. The support of the Council of Europe, the patronage of the Secretary General, allowed taking into account this phenomenon by insisting on dialogue with all interested bodies and organisations.

Emergency management, the necessary protection of people, respect for each one, as well as the importance of working upstream are some of the aspects that will be studied during the symposium.

MIAMSI considers that its participation in this Working Group allows including a further dimension for the protection of individuals and groups (both on the arriving and the receiving

side): safety, health surveillance, communication, and understanding. The objectives of this Working Group join and strengthen the INGOs convictions: collaboration, mutual information, concrete actions to accept the current situation and to anticipate the expected behaviours as being crucial to form a common ground. For the INGO it is a major challenge which respects the values embodied by the Council of Europe, the European Union and the beliefs of its members.

Dr Diana REINERS, from the INGO AEDE reported on the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in Southern Italy: vulnerability and the reality of labour exploitation and on the research project Bitter orange (<http://bitter-oranges.com/exhibition/>).

In Italy, a large proportion of asylum applicants, as well as refugees, do not have access to basic protection, such as housing, food supply, medical care and social services. The non-compliance of member States to both standards of international protection and the EU RECEPTION CONDITIONS DIRECTIVE increases the vulnerability of refugee populations.

Left to their own devices, many African asylum seekers and refugees are exploited as day labourers in Southern Italian in the agriculture field. The extreme precariousness and the poor remuneration lead to deplorable living conditions. In Calabria, as in other regions, thousands of migrants, regardless of what their status is, sleep out-doors in self-managed tent camps and makeshift barracks. With regard to the implementation of disaster protection for migrants and refugees, it is necessary to:

- guarantee dignified and safe living conditions for refugees and asylum seekers by strengthening the capacity of housing and reception measures;
- ensure an NGO/INGO or state-supplied organisational structure to migrant shelters that is responsible for the implementation of disaster prevention and response;
- ensure access to health care on an everyday basis, as well as in the case of emergency.

8. PROJECT CONCEPT PAPER: MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of the EUR-OPA Committee of Permanent Correspondents invited the Secretariat at its last meeting (1 October 2015, Paris, France) to update the projects Concept Paper. The Secretariat presented the revised document for discussion and adoption.

The participants exchanged on the activities to be conducted within the project and the expected results and adopted the Concept Paper.

9. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Recommendations (*Appendix 7*) for its immediate implementation in view of the present migrant and refugee's crisis in Europe were adopted in view of the EU summit on migrants on 25 October 2015. These have been forwarded to key contacts in the EU Council Secretariat, the Luxembourg Presidency as well as the European Commission.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The participants were invited to send to the Secretariat all tools (plus the necessary links) they have knowledge of and or use in their work related to Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and DRR, e.g. Guidelines for transition or reception centres.

Furthermore, they were invited to send a link to all possible documentation that could be shared amongst the members of the Working Group.

11. DATES AND PLACES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS

The Working Group entrusted Mr PAUVERT to check with Ms SENATORE if her institution could host the Third Meeting of this Working Group. The next meeting of the Working Group shall be organised on 10-11 March 2016 in Aix-en-Provence, France.

A Round Table, gathering international organisations and European institutions, could be organised in Brussels in March 2016 on "Migrants, Asylum seekers and Refugees in the context of major risks prevention and management".

A Workshop on this topic is planned for spring 2016, a host country needs to be identified.

The Portuguese authorities have offered to host the Final Conference of the project in October 2016.

12. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

Mr Eladio FERNANDEZ-GALIANO closed the meeting at 17.00.

The findings of this meeting were presented on 2 November 2015 at the 67th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) in Strasbourg.

Appendix 1

Strasbourg, 20 October 2015

AP/CAT (2015) 08
Or. English

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT (EUR-OPA)

2ND MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

**22 OCTOBER 2015
(09:00-17:00)**

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE LIAISON OFFICE
AVENUE DES NERVIENS 85, 1040 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM**

AGENDA

www.coe.int/euoparisks

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AT 09.00

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

AP/CAT (2015) OJ: Draft Agenda

The second meeting of this Working Group will be conducted in English only.

3. THE EUR-OPA AGREEMENT: WORK ON VULNERABLE GROUPS AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: INTRODUCTION BY THE SECRETARIAT

Welcome address by Ambassador Torbjørn FRØYSNES, Special Representative of the Secretary General, Director of the Council of Europe Liaison Office, Brussels, Belgium

Mr Eladio FERNANDEZ-GALIANO, Head, Democratic Initiatives Department, Acting Executive Secretary, EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, will introduce the work conducted by the Council of Europe in the field of vulnerable groups: migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the context of major risks prevention and management.

Ms Mechthilde FUHRER, Deputy to the Executive Secretary, EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, will introduce the aims of this meeting.

4. THE EUR-OPA AGREEMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE: MIGRANTS, ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES AS A FACTOR IN DISASTERS AND MAJOR HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT

Dr Bertrand PAUVERT: Presentation of the results of the Questionnaire on Migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees as a factor in disasters and major hazards preparedness and management launched in August 2015.

5. THE NORTH-SOUTH CENTRE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Mr Niall SHEERIN, Deputy to the Executive Director a.i., will introduce the work of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, related to the project's topic.

Mr Daniel GUERY, INGO MIAMSI: An INGO suggesting looking at the issue of migration in a complex manner for the best of all

6. CIVIL PROTECTION: MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Mr Georgi PETROV, DG Fire Safety and Civil Protection, Ministry of Interior, Sofia, Bulgaria, will introduce the work carried out in Bulgaria on migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the context of major risks prevention and management.

7. EXPERIENCES FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION ON MIGRATION RELATED TO MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Ms Vera Goldschmidt (TBC), Senior Emergency & Post-Crisis Specialist, Regional Office for the EEA, the EU and NATO, IOM, will introduce this issue.

8. EXPERIENCES FROM THE RED CROSS RELATED TO MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Representatives from the Red Cross will present their experiences.

9. VULNERABLE GROUPS: MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES

Dr Francesc ARAGALL, President, Design for All Foundation, Barcelona, Spain, will illustrate the connection between the project “People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response” and “Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the context of major risks prevention and management” using the Design for All approach. He will speak on “Disaster Preparedness and Response” also including “Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees”.

Ms Khadija QESMOUN, INGO APAJH: Mobilize medical networks of disability and aging fields to welcome refugees

The findings of this Workshop will be presented on 05 November 2015 in Dublin, Ireland, at the Conference “Promoting Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Ambitions, Impact and Challenges Ahead”. The publication “Major Hazards and People with Disabilities. Their Involvement in Disaster Preparedness and Response” (2014), result of the project “People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response” (2013-2015) will also be distributed at that Conference.

10. SETTING THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORK ON MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Dr Diana Reiners, INGO AEDE:

- The situation of asylum seekers and refugees in Southern Italy: vulnerability and the reality of labour exploitation
- Bitter orange (<http://bitter-oranges.com/exhibition/>)

11. LUNCH BREAK FROM 13.00 - 14.30

12. PROJECT CONCEPT PAPER: MIGRANTS, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE CONTEXT OF MAJOR RISKS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

The Secretariat will present a document for discussion and adoption: Working Group: Terms of Reference, procedures, working schedule.

The participants will exchange on the activities to be conducted within the project and the expected results and will set a calendar of activities.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

15. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING AT 17.00

Mr Eladio FERNANDEZ-GALIANO will close the meeting.

The findings of this Workshop will be presented on 02 November 2015 at the 67th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA).

Appendix 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Experts

Mr Francesc ARAGALL

President, Design for All Foundation
C/ Piquer, 29, Baixos 1, 08004-Barcelona, Spain
Tel: +34 93 470 51 18 / Fax: + 34 93 371 76 49
Email: aragall@designforall.org
Web: www.designforall.org

Mr Bertrand PAUVERT

Institut de recherche CERDACC
Université de Haute-Alsace
2 rue des Frères Lumière - 68093 Mulhouse Cedex, France
Email: bertrand.pauvert@uha.fr

Mr Georgi PETROV

Expert, International Cooperation, NATO, EU and Humanitarian Operations Unit
DG Fire Safety and Civil Protection
Ministry of Interior, Sofia, Bulgaria
Tel: + 359 2 960 10 293
Email: gzpetrov.160@mvr.bg

Mr Daniel GUERY

MIAMSI - Section Europe
Tel: +33 (0)6 89 57 20 78
29 lotissement du Château, 55000 Savonnières devant Bar, France
Email: guery.daniel@sfr.fr

Ms Isabelle LOSSEAU-SENY

MIAMSI - Bruxelles
Rue du marteau, Bruxelles, Belgique
Email : isabelleseny@yahoo.fr

Ms Diana REINERS

AEDE
68 rue du Faubourg-National, 67000 Strasbourg, France
Tél: +33388326367
Email: diana.reiners@gmail.com

Ms Khadija QESMOUN

10 rue Charlemagne, 76600 Le Havre, France
Tel: +33 (0)6 76627044
Email: qesmoun.kh16@gmail.com

Mr Sébastien LEBEL

Président, Protection Civile du Val d'Oise
Administrateur élu au comité directeur de la FNPC - Correspondant fédéral Ile de France
Grande Couronne et Normandie
Protection Civile du Val d'Oise
95, rue du Mail, 95310 Saint-Ouen-l'Aumône
Tel: +33 (0)6 18 97 09 36
Email: sebastien.lebel@protection-civile.org
Internet: www.adpc95.org

Mr François-Xavier VOLOT

Vice-président, Protection Civile du Val d'Oise
Protection Civile du Val d'Oise
95, rue du Mail, 95310 Saint-Ouen-l'Aumône
Email: vice-president@adpc95.org
Internet: www.adpc95.org

International Organisations

Ms Vera GOLDSCHMIDT

Senior Emergency & Post-Crisis Specialist
Regional Office for the EEA, the EU and NATO
International Organization for Migration, Brussels, Belgium
Office: +32 2 287 71 22 / Mobile: + 32 470 130 339
E-mail: vgoldschmidt@iom.int; ROBrusselsEPC@iom.int
Web: eea.iom.int

Mr Luca ROSSI

Programme Officer
The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
UN House, 14 Rue Montoyer, 1000, Brussels, Belgium
E-mail: rossi@un.org

Council of Europe Secretariat

Mr Eladio FERNANDEZ-GALIANO

Head of the Democratic Initiatives Department
Acting Executive Secretary, European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement EUR-OPA
Tel: +33 3 88 41 22 59
Email: eladio.fernandez-galiano@coe.int

Ms Mechthilde FUHRER

Deputy to the Executive Secretary
European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement EUR-OPA 67075 Strasbourg Cedex,
France
Tel: +33(0)3 90 21 49 98 / Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 2787
Email: mechthilde.fuhrer@coe.int

Apologised

Lieutenant-Colonel Tony VARO

Président du Comité des Correspondants Permanents de l'Accord EUR-OPA
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
Email: tvaro@gouv.mc

Mr Alessandro BARELLI

President CEMEC, Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care, University Hospital "A. Gemelli"
Viale Colli Portuensi 537, I - 00151 Roma
Tel: +39 3489764322 - t+39 3489764322 - Fax +39 0635502878
Email: a.barelli@tox.it

Mr Hans DAS

Head of Unit A/5 – Civil Protection Policy, Directorate General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection – ECHO
rue de la Loi 86, 1049 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 29 86644
Email: hans.das@ec.europa.eu
Web: <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/>

Mr Badaoui ROUHBAN

Senior Research Fellow
Global Risk Forum Davos
3, rue Dulac, F – 75015 Paris, France
Tel: +33 6 82 29 86 14
Email: b.rouhban@gmail.com
Web: www.grforum.org

Ms Audrey MOREL SENATORE

Responsable du CERISC (Centre d'Études et de Recherches Interdisciplinaire sur la Sécurité Civile) – DEPRO
Dr en droit – Laboratoire d'Études en Droit de la Sécurité Civile (LEDeSC)
ENSOSP - 1070 rue Lieutenant Parayre - BP
20316 - 13798 Aix en Provence Cedex 03, France
Tél: +33 (0)4 42 39 05 28 - Fax: +33 (0)4 42 39 05 29
Email: Audrey.SENATORE@ensosp.fr

Mr Antoine GOFFINET

Fédération Nationale de Protection Civile
4, rue de la Batteuse
F 67220 STEIGE
Email: antoine.goffinet@orange.fr
antoine.goffinet@equipement-agriculture.gouv.fr

Dr John TWIGG

Co-Director
Centre for Urban Sustainability and Resilience
Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering
University College London
Email: j.twigg@ucl.ac.uk

Mr Alexandros MAKARIGAKIS

Chief of Unit on Disaster Risk Reduction (SC/DRR), Natural Science Sector, UNESCO
1, rue Miollis, B3.23, 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel: +33 (0)1 45 68 41 78/ Fax: +33 (0)1 45 68 58 21
Email: a.makarigakis@unesco.org
Web: <http://www.unesco.org/disaster>

Mr Mohamed HANNAN

Disabled People's International – Europe Region
5, rue de Poissy, 93240 Stains, France
Tel: +33 (0) 14 8 23 49 17 / Cell: +33 (0)26 76 22 06
Email: hannan@dpi-europe.org

Ms Hripsime TOROSSIAN

Chef de projet
Croix-Rouge française, Direction de l'Urgence et du Secourisme
98 rue Didot - 75694 Paris Cedex 14
Tél: 01 44 43 14 98 / Fax: 01 44 43 12 49
Email: Hripsime.Torossian@croix-rouge.fr

Ms Marie-France STEINLÉ-FEUERBACH

Université de Haute-Alsace
2 rue des Frères Lumière - 68093 Mulhouse Cedex, France
Email: mf.steinle@orange.fr

Mr Patrice DALLEM

Croix-Rouge française, Direction de l'Urgence et du Secourisme
98 rue Didot - 75694 Paris Cedex 14
Email: patrice.dallem@croix-rouge.fr

Mr Niall SHEERIN

Deputy to the Executive Director a.i.
Partial Agreement North-South Centre
Directorate General of Democracy
Council of Europe
Email: Niall.SHEERIN@coe.int

Appendix 3

Concept Paper on Vulnerable Groups: migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and disaster preparedness and response



APCAT2015_10_WG
_Migrants_ConceptPa



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_Migrants_ConceptPa

Appendix 4

The work carried out in the Republic of Bulgaria regarding migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, Mr Georgi Petrov, Bulgaria



PETROV Migrants
asylum seekers and r

Appendix 5

Human Diversity Table, Mr Francesc Aragall, Spain



ARAGALL Diversity
refugees Table.pdf

Appendix 6

The Mediterranean: a road in the sea, migration of peoples, cultures, religions
Pozzallo, Sicily, Italy, 20-22 November 2015



Programme Pozzalo
Novembre 2015 FR.p

Appendix 7

General Recommendations of the Working Group



APCAT2015_11_WG
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