

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

Strasbourg, 6 July 2006

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Or. E.

**OPEN PARTIAL AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF, PROTECTION AGAINST  
AND ORGANISATION OF RELIEF IN MAJOR NATURAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL  
DISASTERS**

**11<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Session of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards  
Agreement (EUR-OPA)  
Marrakech, Morocco, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**on**

**DISASTER RISK REDUCTION THROUGH EDUCATION AT SCHOOL**

The Ministers,

A. Note that the effect of disasters can be reduced if people are aware of disaster risks, prepare for them and know how to act in emergency situations.

B. Are aware that the school and other educational structures are a very appropriate environment to promote citizens' education on disaster reduction given its role in people's education. They recognise that children and adolescents are more receptive to this type of learning than other population segments and that they can thus convey messages of safety and good practice to their parents and family.

C. Believe that education to risk reduction should be an important part of national strategies and campaigns on education for sustainable development carried out in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

D. Note that the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) has always given priority to initiatives for the development of programmes on awareness and education to risk, which are fundamental elements of a culture on risk that lead to prevention and to the resilience of communities. In this context they note with satisfaction the progress made in the construction of the Agreement's website on education to risks (Be-Safe-Net) and the pilot projects and experiences on this topic carried out in several States which may be extended to all the member States of the Agreement.

E. Wish to contribute,

- with regard to the Agreement, to the implementation of chapter 3 of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 "*Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels*", and
- with regard to European States, to the implementation of the Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

F. Welcome the World Disaster Reduction Campaign (2006-2007) of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) launched in co-operation with UNESCO under the theme "*Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School*" and express their support for a firm involvement of the Agreement and its activities in the campaign. In this context they take note of the conclusions of the International Congress on Education and Training on Disaster Prevention (Madrid, 26-28 September 2006).

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

- I. Examine in detail at national level their programmes on risk education at school level to assess whether they provide the knowledge and practice needed by children to be safe from disaster risks.
- II. Consider drafting and implementing a national strategy on education for disaster reduction through the collaborative effort of different Ministers and experts in a multi-stakeholders platform, taking into account as appropriate, international recommendations, experiences and standards.

In the drafting and implementation of national strategies, member States are in particular recommended to:

1. Integrate disaster risk reduction into all relevant subjects, programmes and courses at school and provide specific subject programmes, courses and practical activities on risk reduction, both in formal school curricula and in vocational or extra-curricula activities.
2. Promote that knowledge transmitted on disaster risk reduction covers all risks possibly incurred by children and in particular:

- the causes, the origin and the effects of disasters (both natural and technological hazards)
- the methods of protecting people by planning, preparedness and prevention
- the type of life-saving behaviour in case of emergency.

Ensure that such knowledge does not remain purely theoretical but that it also involves preparedness, action and appropriate practical exercises.

3. Encourage the whole school community to participate actively, at all levels, in disaster reduction, focusing on the particular risks of each school and its surrounding community and fostering dialogue, collaboration and involvement of professionals (i.e. firemen or civil protection personnel), local authorities and risk experts. In this context, encourage in particular parents to be involved in education for disaster risk reduction so as to raise their own awareness of risk and to keep themselves informed on the correct behaviour to adopt in an emergency situation.
4. Promote teacher training in disaster risk reduction by putting at their disposal the necessary information, courses and incentives.
5. Promote the elaboration and exchange of relevant educational materials such as films and other visual aids, pedagogic and didactic publications, manuals and brochures, case studies and other suitable educational tools, using as appropriate new information technology and experiences from other schools or countries.
6. Promote research and innovation on education for disaster reduction, supporting pilot projects in schools and publishing and extending positive experiences.

7. Support international co-operation on education for disaster reduction, in particular through the work of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), UNESCO, ISDR and other fora.
8. Encourage educational experiences on disaster reduction at schools to also be used to assess the safety of school buildings against major hazards, drawing the attention of authorities to the need for making, where necessary, the school safer for children and the school community.
9. Encourage the appropriate bodies to provide adequate financial means to implement the above measures by the development or reinforcement of appropriate mechanisms.

Furthermore the Ministers **RECOMMEND** that member States and observer States inform the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the Agreement by the end of 2007 of the measures taken to implement the above recommendations.