

Strasbourg, 23 October 2019

AP/CAT(2019)09

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT

MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

Paris - 16 October 2019

MEETING REPORT

**Meeting of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents
Paris - 16 October 2019**

Participants:

Ana Freitas (AF): Chair of the Bureau
Nataša Holcinger (NH): Bureau member
Jeyhun Isgandarli (JI): Bureau member
Gianluca Silvestrini (GS): Secretariat
Catherine Emezie (CE): Secretariat

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The agenda was adopted as it appears in Appendix I.

2. STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that the delicate situation between the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE and the Russian Federation was resolved before summer and EUR-OPA received the 2019 Russian financial contribution in July.

From January 2020, EUR-OPA will welcome a new Executive Secretary as GS moves to other functions within the same Department of Culture, Nature and Heritage and a new assistant will be replacing Pauline Cadeac.

3. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2019

3.1. Statutory meetings [AP/CAT\(2018\)16](#)

CE recapped the decisions taken during the last meeting of Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Centres (6-7 November 2018, Zagreb, Croatia) and pointed out the follow-up initiatives on the decisions taken.

3.2. Specialised Centres AP/CAT(2019)01

CE gave an overview of the expected results of the EUR-OPA projects funded in 2019. It was suggested that specialised centres could be encouraged to further work on the prevention of disasters, e.g. promoting green islands in cities to mitigate heatwaves and impact on inhabitants, as well as spatial planning measures for risk reduction etc.

GS explained the importance of the specialised centres' database to give visibility to the projects funded by EUR-OPA as well as to allow them to upload publications and scientific reports on their works. This database is accessible to other scientists, interested stakeholders and general public. It was proposed that EUR-OPA could have a scoring system based on deliverables and measurable impact of projects. New expertise is also required to cope with new challenges and innovative projects, and project planning should also reflect the needs and priorities of the countries. Initiatives could be clustered in order to have beneficial results overall, ensuring impact and visibility.

<p>Decision: Directors will be asked to present their project achievements in 2019 and to make proposals for the new 2020-2021 project phase at the upcoming Joint Meeting. Permanent correspondents will prioritise the main topics for the projects to be funded in 2020-21.</p>

3.3. Operational Activities

BeSafeNet Olympiad on “Better knowledge against disasters”

The Award ceremony was held in Strasbourg on 12 June 2019 during the Steering Committee meeting on Culture, Heritage and Landscape in order to give visibility to the BeSafeNet online platform and the importance of promoting risk culture at every level. The second Olympiad will be held on 28 February 2020. NH will mention the forthcoming Olympiad to principals from 25 secondary schools during a forthcoming meeting in Zagreb.

Conference on vulnerable groups and disaster risk reduction

Baku, Azerbaijan 18-19 September 2019

Jl informed the Bureau members about the outcomes of the national workshop on *“Human Rights and Disasters: inclusion of vulnerable groups in DRR”*. The Workshop was organised by the Ministry of Emergency Situations in collaboration with the EUR-OPA Secretariat and attended by national stakeholders as well as the Heads of Offices of UNICEF and IOM. The outcome of the workshop was 30 practical recommendations based on Azerbaijan needs and priorities, which were clustered into the following categories:

- i) legislative/policy or coordination
- ii) data collection and use for preparedness and response
- iii) capacity development and specialized training of first responders
- iv) public awareness and education

GS thanked Jl for his idea and proposal to organise the workshop on this important topic which could be a source of inspiration to also other member States.

NH informed the Bureau of their planning for a conference on investments in inter-sectorial cooperation in DRR to be organised during the Croatia’s chairmanship of the European Council in 2020. It was suggested that EUR-OPA could contribute to this subject e.g. investments in protection of cultural heritage from hazards. .

Decision: as a follow-up to the Workshop in Baku, identify and set up a pilot project in cooperation with UNICEF, IOM based on one or more of the above-mentioned categories.

Potential synergies between EUR-OPA and the Bern Convention

Climate change is of worldwide increasing concern presently. EUR-OPA and the Bern Convention are exploring the possibility of creating synergies on environment-based adaptation and nature-based solutions to mitigate the impact of climate change, protect biodiversity and reduce risks. The potential synergies are presented in this document [T-PVS/Inf\(2018\)11](#).

GS briefly presented the results of the Joint meeting of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks and on Biodiversity and Climate Change, organized in the framework of the Bern Convention with some EUR-OPA experts, in Trondheim, Norway, on 3-4 October.

One of the proposals suggested to test the usefulness of nature-based solutions through pilot projects in protected areas for environment conservation and disaster risk reduction.

Experts from the Bern Convention and EUR-OPA, together with local stakeholders and managers of protected areas could join forces and work together in the pilot project.

Decision: The recommendations resulting from the meeting in Trondheim will be circulated to EUR-OPA member States. This was received as a concretely important initiative to be proposed at the next Joint Meeting.

Global Forum on DRR

GS debriefed about his participation in the Global Forum on DRR held in Geneva on 14-17 May 2019 to promote and give visibility to EUR-OPA work and to networking. It was highlighted that the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction will take place in Portugal, in 2021, and the possibility of organize the 14th Ministerial Session of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement back-to-back with the European Forum was also discussed. AF informed that this proposal would have to be submitted for the consideration of Portuguese governmental authorities.

Abhilash Panda (UNDRR) will attend the Joint meeting to present information about the upcoming European Forum for DRR to be held in Portugal in 2021.

4. PROGRAMME OF WORK 2020-2021 [APCAT\(2019\)04](#)

GS presented EUR-OPA's draft programme of activities for 2020-21 and proposed two options: a) to continue funding all projects presented by the Specialised Centres or b) to prioritise topics in order to allocate more substantial funds to selected projects, ensuring impact and visibility.

Some new projects could be identified in collaboration with the Bern Convention and by setting up a small group of experts with different expertise who could work in collaboration with the Directors of the Centres in an innovative manner to face the new challenges caused by climate change and increase of natural hazards.

The Bureau supported the idea to prioritise topics and allocate the limited EUR-OPA funds to selected projects which could involve several Specialised Centres as well as new partners and experts.

As regards, the next EUR-OPA ministerial session to be organised in 2021, it could be organised back-to-back with the forthcoming European Forum for DRR to be held in Portugal in 2021. This opportunity would also serve to strengthen synergies between different regional events and EUR-OPA and give greater visibility. The date and location have yet to be confirmed by the Portuguese authorities.

5. A brief overview of the 2020-2021 budget and expected results was given by CE. It was pointed out the loss of the Turkish financial contribution of 325k euro/year, following the withdrawal of Turkey from EUR-OPA in January 2019.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GS informed the Bureau about EUR-OPA's cooperation with the Governance department of the CoE in response to a request from the Greek government for assistance on the setting up and management of emergency shelters. This project is mainly funded by the European Union.

7. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next CPC Bureau meeting will be held in Strasbourg in April 2020 in order to introduce the new EUR-OPA staff to the Bureau members.

The Bureau meeting at the beginning of October 2020 could be held via video conference to reduce the expenses and the time of members for traveling

Armenia has offered to host the Joint Meeting in 2020. The CPCs will discuss this opportunity at the Joint meeting.

Appendix I

To add the Agenda