



Strasbourg, 10 December 2019

AP/CAT(2019)12  
Or. English

## **European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)**

### **Joint Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Specialised Centres**

#### **Meeting Report**

5-6 November 2019  
Council of Europe Office, Paris

*Document prepared by the Secretariat  
of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement*

*This document will not be distributed at the meeting. Please bring this copy.  
Ce document ne sera plus distribué en réunion. Prière de vous munir de cet exemplaire*

**Tuesday 5 November 2019**

## **WELCOME ADDRESS**

The EUR-OPA Executive Secretary, G. Silvestrini, welcomed the participants. He relayed the apologies of J. Isgandarli, Permanent Correspondent (PC, Azerbaijan) and Prof. J. Goldammer, (Director of the GFMC, Germany) for not being able to attend the meeting due to other obligations. N. Holcinger (Croatia), chaired the first day of the meeting as A. Freitas (Portugal) was only available to participate on the 6<sup>th</sup> due to other commitments. He also welcomed the new permanent representatives attending the joint meeting for the first time.

### **1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA [AP/CAT\(2019\)OJ04](#)**

G. Silvestrini introduced the agenda and duly informed the participants about the aims of the meeting. S. Badalyan (PC, Armenia) requested to make a presentation on the World Congress on information Technology (WCIT). It was agreed to add this topic under *Item 7: A.O.B.* The agenda was adopted with this amendment (Appendix I)

### **2. STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

G. Silvestrini recapped the latest developments at the Council of Europe and the impact on EUR-OPA. The standoff between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation was resolved in June 2019 and this resulted in the payment of the Russian Federation's financial obligations to the Council of Europe and EUR-OPA. This is a significant development as the Russian Federation contributes 325K to EUR-OPA's budget. He recalled that the withdrawal of Turkey from the Agreement in January 2019 had led to the loss of 325K in annual contributions.

From January 2020, EUR-OPA will welcome a new Executive Secretary and G. Silvestrini will be reassigned to other functions within the same Department of Culture, Nature and Heritage. EUR-OPA will also recruit a replacement for P. Cadeac, the former assistant.

N. Holcinger expressed regret at the news of G. Silvestrini's imminent change of functions. She thanked him for his contribution and dedication to EUR-OPA and wished him well in his new role.

### **3. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2019**

#### **3.1. Statutory meetings:**

C. Emezie recalled the main decisions of the last Joint Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and the Directors of the Specialised Centres held on 6-7 November 2018 in Zagreb, Croatia (*meeting report [AP/CAT\(2018\)16](#)*). She also summarised the main decisions of both meetings of the Bureau of Permanent Correspondents held on 29 April 2019 via video conference and on 16 October in Paris (*meeting reports [AP/CAT\(2019\)02](#) and [AP/CAT\(2019\)09](#)*).

#### **3.2. Specialised Centres:** The directors shared the achievements of 2019 projects as well as proposals for 2020-2021 projects (*compilation of project proposals [AP/CAT\(2019\)01Rev](#)*).

**Presentations:** G. Silvestrini invited, especially the permanent correspondents to pay careful attention during the presentations by the directors in order to participate in the important discussion on the programme of activities for the next biennium 2020-2021. He stressed the importance of prioritising projects in the light of reduced financial resources.

## **ALGERIA: N. Bouchahm (former) M. Belhamra (new director, CRSTRA)**

In 2019, CRSTRA focused on developing scientific and technical research and conducting ecological monitoring through continuous observation, as well as the creation of a scientific and technical database at the level of arid and semi-arid territories (the Saharan and steppe regions) covering more than 2 million km<sup>2</sup>, or more than 85% of Algeria. The centre's work includes the management of heatwave and risk adaptation strategy for drought and fragile eco-systems. They participated in pluri-disciplinary research studies in arid regions under the threat of desertification or drought. New methods were explored and information campaigns were staged through hosting open days, organising international seminars and awareness campaigns. The centre also produced several

publications including the Algerian journal dedicated to heatwave in arid regions and several scientific articles on heatwaves, silting and floods. CRSTRA collaborated with CUEBC, Italy on the "Local Knowledge and Media Against Natural Disasters" (IKMeFiND) project and prepared an inventory of local know-how in the fight against degradation caused by heatwave. Data acquisition posed problems due to the high cost of data e.g., lack of data on human mortality due to heatwave related complications.

In 2020-2021, CRSTRA will continue to collect data on temperature in order to update the database in Algeria and update the guidebook on local know-how on mitigating temperature. CRSTRA will continue developing interactive cartography depicting heatwave and flood zones. The centre expressed an interest in collaborating on BeSafeNet but felt that this would not be possible in 2020 due to constraints related to time and resources. ([Link to presentation](#)).

### **ARMENIA : S. Badalyan (ECRM)**

ECRM developed a detailed methodology and action plan to prepare and regularly hold national and municipal campaigns to inform, raise awareness and promote adequate behaviour during emergencies for different groups of the population. The methodology covers all the actions the government and various institutions should undertake in emergencies and is contained in a manual on preparedness for people with disabilities, children and vulnerable groups. It is particularly useful as many communities are cut off from the central authorities due to lack of skills and technology, as was the case during the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. He stressed the importance of understanding human rights in emergencies, how constitutions work, what is required and what can be incorporated into the constitution. ECRM organised awareness raising events on safety in schools with the participation of students, parents, teachers, local officials, the media and school administration to ensure that all stake-holders could come together in any emergency. S. Badalyan was invited as a specialist to the EU, to conduct a research comparing Armenian laws and regulations with EU emergency laws. He pointed out that this exercise could provide a good basis for cooperation with other countries in order to see how their respective legislation and constitution protect citizens in emergencies. This type of study could be extended across the EUR-OPA countries. A. Micallef (ICoD, Malta) thought that this idea could offer a concrete opportunity for collaboration.

### **CYPRUS: D. Christou (European Centre for Disaster Awareness - BeSafeNet)**

BeSafeNet is an online tool dedicated to the promotion of risk culture among populations and to disseminate information on disasters. D. Christou presented the results of the highly successful BeSafeNet 2019 Olympiad on "Better knowledge against disasters". 700 students and 100 teachers were reached across 10 EUR-OPA member States. An award ceremony was organised for the 3 winning teams (Romania 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, Albania 2<sup>nd</sup>) during the meeting of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) on 12 June, in Strasbourg. The students and teachers were delighted, expressed enthusiasm and shared useful feedback during their meeting with the BeSafeNet team. They also had the opportunity to participate in a guided tour of the EU and CoE institutions. E. Sever expressed his pride given that schools in Romania came 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the competition. G. Silvestrini mentioned the active collaboration of CoE's Education Department on the olympiad. D. Christou informed participants about the next olympiad scheduled for 28 February 2020 and reminded that it was very important to disseminate the information as widely as possible. ([Link to 2020 Olympiad factsheet](#)). The BeSafeNet website is now translated into 4 languages thereby reaching a wider network. The BeSafeNet website is undergoing updating with the addition of fire and landscape hazards and will add more hazards in the near future. G. Silvestrini thanked the BeSafeNet Board members for their contribution. D. Christou also presented the BeSafeNet project during the workshop on *Human rights approach in disasters: Inclusion of vulnerable groups in DRR*, held on 18-19 September in Baku, Azerbaijan. N. Fassiaux, (PC, Monaco) remarked that although information about the competition was widely disseminated in Monaco, the Olympiad coincided with school holidays in Monaco and this would be the case again in 2020. ([Link to presentation](#)).

### **FRANCE: J-P. Malet (European Centre on Seismic and Geomorphological hazards -CERG)**

CERG was involved in 2 projects as partner to ICoD (Malta) and GHHD (Georgia) projects. The telemetric early warning system (EWS) project with GHHD involved positioning sensors and developing cost-effective technology for the monitoring of precipitation, floods, landslide and rockfall initiation in real time. They developed and tested low-cost camera systems used to monitor displacements and acceleration of landslides and rockfalls by fixing cameras in front of slopes.

Importantly, this energy conserving data acquisition system was developed by CERG and GHHD from scratch.

In 2020, a 4-5 day training on low cost surveillance systems will be organised in the French Alps for undergraduate scientists, engineers and university lecturers, for which CERG has already secured EU sponsorship. This collaboration has been recognised by the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA) and the European Space Agency who will now validate satellite projects based on sensors developed by CERG/GHHD in order to densify the network. A compilation of guidelines to set up a low-cost surveillance system over the last 7 years will be published and disseminated. A. Balducci (PC, San Marino) expressed an interest in expanding this project. J-P. Malet explained that new monitoring networks are being set up and collaboration could be envisaged. ([Link to presentation](#)).

### **GEORGIA: T. Chelidze (Geodynamical Hazards of High Dams - GHHD)**

In addition to the collaboration with CERG on telemetric EWS, GHHD participated in the [NATO Advanced Research Workshop G5566](#) held on 8-10 October in Tbilisi, Georgia. The workshop addressed how civil protection services in the Caucasus can enhance their capacity to mitigate geohazards. GHHD also partnered in the *Dams and seismicity project for safe and efficient management of hydropower reservoirs (DAMAST)* with the Karlsruhe Institute for Technology, Germany. GHHD has obtained the patent for Georgia explaining that it would cost more to get an internationally accepted patent.

2020 will focus on satellite data using prediction research for floods and collaborating with Germany on a project using technology to understand how dams affect the earth's crust and how to predict future behaviour on the basis of long-term monitoring. The Executive Secretary remarked on the potential for collaboration between Russia, France, Georgia and other countries interested in developing EWS, as there is an increasing need for such technology. He reminded about the importance of narrowing the gap between scientific research and implementation by civil protection and decision-makers of national authorities. Directors were encouraged to transmit such significant results to the relevant ministries. ([Link to presentation](#)).

### **GREECE: S. Karma (European Centre for Forest Fires - ECFE)**

S. Karma presented the 2019 activities recollecting a year of intense fires and prolonged drought in Greece. Countries such as Norway, Sweden, Scotland also experienced wildfires which resulted in the prolonged distribution of smoke harmful to the respiratory system, adversely affected wildlife and biodiversity as well as increasing pollution as far as Athens. In the light of this, ECFE established a project on *Fine and ultrafine particles from forest fires* in Central Evia, Greece to seek ways to protect the population against exposure to toxic smoke inhalation, especially vulnerable groups. S. Karma presented a [case study](#) entitled *Challenges and lessons learned from past major environmental disasters due to technological or wildland urban interface fire incidents* was published in the 2019 edition of the Global Assessment Report. S. Karma also participated in the Workshop in Baku with a presentation entitled *Coping with disaster risks focusing on vulnerable people* as well as the Joint meeting of the groups of experts on protected areas held on 3-4 October in Trondheim, Norway, as part of ECFE's dissemination and networking strategy. ([Link to presentation](#)).

### **GREECE: L. Peli (European Centre on Prevention and Forecasting of Earthquakes - ECPFE)**

L. Peli presented 2 activities of ECPFE for 2019: Activity 1, was on the expansion of the pre-earthquake assessment methodology for monuments. A data site was filled in for 2 further categories of monuments; stone arch bridges and temples sub assemblages. Activity 2 focused on the development and evaluation of a seismic vulnerability assessment model of the historical centre of Lefkas through analysis of the characteristic buildings. ECPFE Carried out a review of existing bibliography on double-bearing systems and an estimation of seismic hazard of Lefkas town. Most buildings in Lefkas town have been designated as representative of earthquake-resistant constructions by the European Council Heritage Unit.

Projects in 2020-21 will concentrate on the pre-seismic assessment of traditional dwellings and a vulnerability assessment of monuments in the historical centre of Rhodes. In November 2021, an evacuation simulation drill is planned in partnership with ECFE and the National and Kapodistrian university of Athens. Russian Federation mentioned it had adequate technology to measure and monitor seismic resistance and lifetime effect of strains of buildings based on data from sensors which measure buildings vertically and horizontally, the ground as well as the foundation of buildings. Greece expressed its interest to collaborate further. ([Link to presentation](#)).

## **ITALY: F. Ferrigni (European University Centre for Cultural Heritage - CUEBC)**

In 2019, the Local Knowledge project activities included carrying out an assessment of evidence in local media prior to and after disasters, implementing the Amalfi Coast Protect Your Territory (PYT) guidelines and drafting of the PYT Pages guidelines. CUEBC analysed the local risk culture and media in the Amalfi Coast based on risk reports by online newspapers and the response of the local authorities. The most frequently searched topics were illegal waste disposal, dangerous roads and hydrological instability. According to an analysis, the most important sources were ordinary citizens, organisations, wide media coverage. The most frequent channels through which to publicise local risks were campaigns by committees, organisations and social media. Although many disasters occurred in the Amalfi Coast in 2019, they were not reported in the local media. CUEBC published a procedure to produce PYT Pages which includes a [report form](#).

In 2020-2021, CUEBC plans to connect PYT Pages with the local civil protection authority and publicise the use of PYT Pages by involving educational establishments. CUEBC proposed to collaborate with the Cyprus centre as PYT Pages is an effective tool for dissemination of information in local communities and to the competent authorities depending on the risk category. ([Link to presentation](#)).

## **LUXEMBOURG: M. Feider (European Centre for Geodynamics and Seismology - ECGS).**

M. Feider presented ECGS achievements on behalf of A. Oth who was unable to attend the meeting. The ECGS project activities centre on the introduction of satellite technologies and specialised radar measuring. As Luxembourg is not exposed to serious seismological risks, ECGS concentrates on the Verunga volcanic province in East of Congo, where there is very active movement, in partnership with Belgium. At the foot of the volcano is the Goma region with 1000 inhabitants who are exposed to the risk of volcanic activity. ECGS hopes to set up an EWS for volcanic eruptions as a preventive measure. Focusing on monitoring a lava lake which shows periodical dynamics which are measured, ECGS operates a network of 17 satellite stations in partnership with Belgium and the local authorities. In 2019, Rwandese authorities also requested for a measuring network, to be installed and interconnected with the Congo to allow data exchange on the volcano. ECGS took part in international studies focusing on the monitoring of volcanoes.

The activities will continue in 2020-2021. He suggested that the project in Congo could serve as a base to build on in the Mediterranean. ([Link to annual report](#)).

## **MALTA: A. Micallef (The Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Insular Coastal Dynamics - ICoD)**

In 2019, ICoD continued developing vulnerability assessment towards the eventual identification of risk in partnership with CERG (France), University of Modena, Italy and an expert from Portugal. ICoD carried out a review of methodologies to estimate vulnerability assessment e.g., social, economic and physical vulnerability assessment and looked at how to apply the chosen techniques in selected coasts in Malta to collect data. A workshop on Coastal Vulnerability Assessment was held on 2-3 July, in Caen, France and resulted in the review of several methodologies and identifying a methodology which could be applied in the field. This involved ICoD looking at several indicators such as land use, economic activities in the area, transport networks, utilities i.e., electrical and other power sources as well as social vulnerability indicators. Furthermore, ICoD partnered with BeSafeNet to provide material on tsunamis, sea-level rise, storm surges and in the overall preparation of MCQs for the 2020 Olympiad. A. Micallef believes BeSafeNet could provide a mechanism for bringing together and showcasing many activities of the Agreement. As partner to the Coastal Resorts Risks project (CERU, Portugal), ICoD prepared beach signs, leaflets to be handed over to tourism authorities and resort hotels in beach areas in order to raise awareness.

In 2020-21, ICoD will move from susceptibility to hazard and risk mapping. ([Link to presentation](#)).

## **MOLDOVA: A. Bantu (European Centre for Mitigation of Natural Risks - ECMNR)**

A. Bantu projected images showing devastation caused by flooding in Moldova. ECMNR has proposed various strategies and programmes to manage flood emergencies. A. Bantu stressed the need to promote a risk culture and to educate people at every level – from preschool to university, vulnerable groups, teachers, co-ordinators, instructors and volunteers living in flood prone zones and society as

a whole so as to raise awareness about the potential risks and work towards adequate behaviour during floods. ECMNR collaborated with EUR-OPA centres in Bulgaria, Ukraine and Romania in bringing together schools in order to define preventive measures and best practices to respond to the growing threat of floods. Guidelines on strategies and instructions were detailed in handbooks and brochures that were distributed to educate the population on management of flood risks. The project aimed to educate citizens through international seminars, workshops sharing EU best practices, fact sheets, guidelines, as well as through fostering dialogue and solidarity among the population. The expected results were achieved overall as the project provided a platform to share information and build the capacity of instructors. ([Link to presentation in Russian](#)).

### **MOROCCO: N. Jabour (Centre Euro-Méditerranéen pour l'Évaluation et la prévention du risque sismique - CEPRIS)**

CEPRIS partnered with CERU (Portugal) and ICoD (Malta) on the Beach Risks project. N. Jabour began by showing images exposing the devastating effects of tsunamis and storms which occurred around Rabat in November 2018. He also shared the results of Tsunami impact studies undertaken in Assilah city Northern Morocco 2017. The centre conducted tsunami evacuation exercises in Rabat with schools at beach level with the participants moving to a higher ground. He showed participants pictures of the tide-gauge and data acquisition instruments which provide information to harbour authorities and other agencies and ships. They also conducted tsunami warning transmission exercises within the framework of the North East Atlantic Region. ([Link to presentation](#)).

### **PORTUGAL: P. de Teves Costa (European Centre on Urban Risks - CERU)**

CERU coordinated the Beachrisk project and partnered with ICoD (Malta) and CEPRIS (Morocco). The main objective of 2019 is to involve the local population, associations and the authorities responsible for safety along the beaches in the implementation of mitigation measures to ensure they are informed and ready to react in tsunamis or other beach risks e.g., solar exposure, unstable cliffs and dunes, rip currents etc. Information leaflets and other documentation were produced and disseminated and information sessions were organised to raise awareness amongst the older generation and the population in general and promote participation. A Workshop on *Beach and coastal resorts risks* was held on 12-13 September, in Lagos, gathering representatives of several civil protection institutions and associations from different municipalities. Moreover, warning signs were tracked and evacuation signs were put up along several beaches e.g. in Porto Mós, Lagos. CERU also participated in activities commemorating the 1969 earthquake in Portugal. ([Link to presentation](#))

In 2020 CERU will organise the 2<sup>nd</sup> International conference on urban risks (ICUR2020). ([Link to presentation](#)). CERU will also continue to work on tsunami warning and evacuation signalisation. This project was referred to as one of the best collaborative activities among the EUR-OPA specialised centres.

### **ROMANIA: E-S. Georgescu (European Centre for Buildings Rehabilitation - ECBR)**

In 2019, ECBR coordinated the project on seismic risk preparedness and DRR training for vulnerable groups, students and volunteers. This parallels the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> priorities of the Sendai Framework for DRR; promoting a risk culture and fostering the populations active participation. ECBR also organised several training seminars in September for volunteers and students who would eventually train other citizens. ECBR actively participated in several conferences including the *UNESCO International platform for reducing earthquake disasters (IPRED)*, held on 11-12 June 2019 in Bucharest. Results obtained in 2019 include the transfer of knowledge to the population thereby increasing resilience and promoting adequate behaviour.

In 2020-2021, ECBR will use knowledge from the EUR-OPA specialised centres to ensure earthquake resilience of important community buildings. The centre will collaborate with the appropriate ministries to implement a new government strategy (MDRAP) which mandates all schools constructed before 1978 to undergo a risk assessment and classification by 2021. ECBR will also address Sendai Framework priorities for action in the medium term plan. ECBR will collaborate/exchange experiences with ECPFE (Greece) on training of local government officials for implementation of the new government strategies (MDRAP) and in 2021, on reducing risks in hospitals and other medical facilities. ECBR will continue to prepare publications and training materials for earthquake preparedness in the next biennium. ([link to presentation](#))

## **RUSSIAN FEDERATION: S. Kachanov (European Centre for New Technologies of Risks Management - ECNTRM)**

S. Kachanov presented the 2019 achievements of the project on *Technologies for collective procession of spatial data to identify manmade or natural threats*, citing the lack of existing effective technologies for collecting and analysing large volumes of data. The project aims to bring together civil protection authorities/agencies and local volunteers who can offer information prior to or during emergencies. The project recognises the importance of establishing a network of users handling information through crowdsourcing. Data from many existing systems are given to a group of volunteers to analyse and process it using best practices and contemporary methodologies. Crowdsourcing as a technique is widely used in decision-making in various areas e.g., tracking criminals. It involves setting up a special portal to allow volunteers process data and analyse or confirm the existence of a specific threat. This helps the authorities improve how they react to emergency situations and is particularly useful in emergencies such as floods, fires – situations in which information evolves quite rapidly. Unlike spatial monitoring, crowdsourcing allows for a quicker monitoring of events and information exchange by people on the ground who then pass on information to the volunteers. The technology can be used to monitor cultural heritage for example and could also present opportunities for collaboration with other EUR-OPA centres e.g., training specialists from other countries. S. Kachanov invited EUR-OPA to a seminar to be organised in June 2021 focusing on comprehensive safety and also to present the crowdsourcing technology. S. Badalyan fully supports the research and expressed his readiness to work with ECNTRM. As this is a continuous education programme, ECNTRM will continue working on this project in 2020-21. ([Link to presentation](#)).

## **SAN MARINO: A. Balducci (European Centre for Disaster Medicine - CEMEC)**

In 2019, CEMEC continued to work on the AIDYOU multitask, multilanguage phone app which is now available in several languages.

In 2020, CEMEC plans to set up an International Training School on Maxi Emergencies in collaboration with several intergovernmental agencies. The main idea is to homogenise training structures at national level and to establish a database for guidelines. The school will offer residential courses to students and volunteers in the national branch offices. As setting up involves a multi-stakeholder approach, CEMEC seeks partners and sponsors to invest in the programme, mainly the EU. Expected results include the creation of national civil protection guidelines and the exchange of experiences. ([Link to presentation](#))

In spring 2020, CEMEC in collaboration with Campania Region will organise a conference mainly for EUR-OPA member States on *Emergencies and disaster: experiences compared. How to increase resilience in the population?* in Naples and will pay for 2 representatives per country to attend. Further discussions centred on how to eventually establish guidelines in the light of many already available civil protection guidelines and how/whether to train international experts in addition to the network of experts in EUR-OPA countries. It was mentioned that in the EU, there are no uniform/clear definitions of civil protection as each country implements it in their own respective ways. This project generated a lot of interest and presents an opportunity for the member States to participate mutually and collaborate. The Executive Secretary requested more information so as to lay out a road map and a project proposal, and to also help structure the conference scheduled for spring 2020. ([Link to presentation](#)).

At the end of the presentations, G. Silvestrini thanked the directors for their excellent work. The presentations brought to light the wealth of potential for cooperation on new larger projects on topics of common interest on one of the Sendai Framework priorities e.g., a project on cultural heritage could be developed in collaboration by Greece, Russian Federation, Italy and Portugal. Another possibility could be a project on considering local knowledge in emergency strategies.

### **Decisions:**

- C. Emezie will distribute the standardised project template for 2020-21 proposals.
- The directors would decide in which areas to pursue collaboration on larger projects, on the basis of the priorities established by the Permanent Correspondents.
- The centres will decide between themselves on the coordination and the partner roles.
- The new project proposals must be sent by the coordinator centre to the Secretariat by 15 December 2019 at the latest.

### 3.3. Operational activities in 2019

#### Promoting a risk culture among populations

- 3.3.1 **BeSafeNet:** Participants were informed about the results of the 2019 BeSafeNet Olympiad and the award ceremony which was hosted during the meeting of the Steering Committee for Culture Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) on 12 June in Strasbourg. *Factsheet* [AP/CAT\(2019\)11](#).

### Wednesday 6 November 2019

- 3.3.2 **Workshop on inclusion of vulnerable groups in DRR:** The Executive Secretary summarised the aims and conclusions of the workshop held on 18-19 September 2019 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The workshop, organised by the Ministry of Emergency Situations in Azerbaijan gathered international partners (UNICEF and IOM), government and stakeholder representatives, EUR-OPA experts, NGOs and representatives of people with disabilities. It aimed to take stock of challenges in Azerbaijan and proposed possible solutions through establishing guidelines to protect the vulnerable groups, migrants and disabled groups. During the brainstorming session, the participants came up with 30 practical recommendations which were clustered into 5 categories:

- i) Legislative/policy/coordination
- ii) Data collection and use for preparedness and response
- iii) Capacity development and specialised training of first responders
- iv) Public awareness and education
- v) Effective implementation and monitoring

As a follow-up, different inter-ministerial coordination groups will be set up at local, national and regional level through 5 working groups for each topic that was identified as a priority for Azerbaijan. A pilot project would also be elaborated by the Azerbaijan government to concretely test in the field the desired objectives together with an action plan as a follow-up (*Agenda* [AP/CAT\(2019\)OJ05](#). *Concept note* [AP/CAT\(2019\)10](#). *Meeting report* [AP/CAT\(2019\)08](#)).

G. Silvestrini explained that EUR-OPA should maintain as a priority the inclusive and human rights approach which considers the most vulnerable groups (children, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers), also through partnerships with other international organisations e.g., IOM. EUR-OPA responded to a specific national request to organise this workshop because of the high number of displaced persons and willingness of the authorities to protect vulnerable groups from major hazards. It provided an opportunity to showcase EUR-OPA's actions and know-how in this field. A proactive approach was encouraged e.g., to identify the partners/entities in each member State with whom we can share the workshop report as a follow-up.

**Decision:** the workshop meeting report will be circulated to all the member States and participants are encouraged to widely distribute the report.

- 3.3.3 **Synergies on climate change:** G. Silvestrini informed participants about a study undertaken by an external consultant to identify opportunities for potential synergies between EUR-OPA and the Bern Convention. A database of experts was set up to engage in activities on climate change mitigation and adaptation. He referred to the four expert's recommendations which propose to increase investment in environmental-based adaptation and nature-based solutions to adapt to climate change, mitigate natural disasters and develop synergies between EUR-OPA and the Bern Convention.. A concrete example on landscape fire management was given as a potential area where synergies could be developed.. (Refer to pp20-25 of [T-PVS/Inf\(2018\)11](#)).

- 3.3.4 The Executive Secretary informed participants about the Joint Meeting of Groups of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks and on Biodiversity and Climate Change, held on 3-4 October in Trondheim, Norway. Participants discussed nature-based solutions and of the role of protected areas in the face of climate change. Several EUR-OPA experts also attended the meeting. The meeting resulted in a recommendation to be adopted by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on *Nature-based*



*solutions and management of protected areas in the face of climate change.* Point 12 of the draft recommendations stemmed from the Executive Secretary's request to also address risk reduction by considering local knowledge, thereby providing a concrete example of common objectives with EUR-OPA. The meeting was summed up as a great experience and EUR-OPA's contribution was regarded as vital. G. Silvestrini also invited UNESCO to join forces to identify topics of common interest where both organisations could collaborate. ([Link to the agenda T-PVS/Agenda\(2019\)9](#)).

**Decision:** Once the Recommendation is adopted by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on 3-6 December 2019, it will be disseminated to CPCs and directors of centres.

### **Involvement in international initiatives in 2019**

3.3.5 G. Silvestrini debriefed about EUR-OPA's contribution to the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held on 14-17 May in Geneva, Switzerland. UNDRR is responsible for organising this biennial global platform which serves to take stock of the implementation of the Sendai Framework on DRR. It equally presents an opportunity to give visibility to EUR-OPA's work. Several EUR-OPA Permanent Correspondents also attended the forum. The Global assessment report was presented at this forum and included the ECFF [case study](#) entitled *Challenges and lessons learned from past major environmental disasters due to technological or wildland urban interface fire incidents*. EUR-OPA's official [statement](#). UN Global Platform [website](#). The [proceedings](#) in several languages. The Sendai Framework monitoring [snapshot](#) of Europe and Central Asia.

## **4. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2020-21 [AP/CAT\(2019\)04](#).**

4.1 The Executive Secretary invited participants to discuss priority topics for the 2020-21 Programme of Activities and consider how to adapt working methods in order to maximise EUR-OPA's diminishing resources and concretise the impact of EUR-OPA's work.

### Permanent Correspondents have to:

- a. Promote and raise the political profile and visibility of EUR-OPA projects, by taking part in international events as well as assuming a more proactive role.
- b. Contribute, intervene and make proposals, be responsible for specifying the topics or projects for EUR-OPA's Programme of Activities on a quadrennial basis based on Sendai priority actions.
- c. Disseminate the results of all the specialised centres' projects and research in order to fill the gaps between decision makers and scientists.
- d. Strengthen the interface between science and implementation of project results through the production of standard setting documents. Refer to documents showing links between priorities of national bodies and EUR-OPA's contributions.
- e. Continue to invest in modern, cost-effective projects centred on vulnerable groups. Identify at least one pilot project in this category in collaboration with other partners e.g., IOM, UNESCO etc. focusing on children (e.g. promotion of DRR in schools, training on risk preparedness for teachers etc.), migrants, asylum seekers, and people with disabilities.

### Directors of centres have to:

- f. Identify topics of common interest e.g., fire, heatwaves and floods, earthquakes and landslides, or cultural heritage and promotion of local risk culture to foster populations' active participation. Introduce new and innovative pilot projects and better promote the cross-sectorial topics.

Open possibilities to other external experts e.g., on floods, landslides, fires etc. at the initiation phase of pilot projects in order to widen the circle of expertise.

Consider setting up working groups composed of the director of centre and external experts.

- g. Contribute to projects outside the scope of EUR-OPA's network in order to lend their expertise.
- h. Send their 2020-21 project proposals to the Secretariat by 15 December 2019 at the latest.
- i. Research new solutions and emphasise a larger EUR-OPA impact. Refer to standard setting documents norms and rules.
- j. Be prepared to respond to cascade effects of hazards in general in addition to the defined priority areas.
- k. Contact D. Christou directly if interested in collaborating on the BeSafeNet project. Submit 12 questions for any hazard to D. Christou and also suggestions as to how to restructure, improve, enrich and harmonise the format of questions etc.
- l. Take advantage of a EUR-OPA member State' chairing the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to propose an initiative on disaster risk reduction and to give visibility to the Agreement and its specialised networks.. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the GFMC, proposed to the Greek Chairmanship to organise a High-level Consultation on Enhancing Governance in Landscape Fire Management in autumn 2020. If this proposal is retained by the Greek authorities, EUR-OPA will collaborate with the GFMC and other interested partners to organise a high-level event. The UNESCO representative was invited to envisage and encourage collaboration on similar projects.

**Decision:** The list of EUR-OPA and Bern Convention scientific experts who replied to the Council of Europe call for experts will be circulated to the participants.

**Major events outside of field projects** include the CEMEC (San Marino) International Training School in maxi emergencies and the proposal by ECNTRM (Russian Federation) to organise a 72-hour training on *Fire safety and civil protection* at the Moscow Academies of Science. ECNTRM would also like to send their own specialists to other countries in scientific programme exchanges. This matches the San Marino proposal which was perceived as a great opportunity.

**Decisions:**

- Set up a working group with few interested representatives from EUR-OPA and other international organisations, to organise an international conference in April 2020 in Naples, Italy, to discuss the opportunity of setting up an International Training School in maxi emergencies and related topics
- Examine opportunities for synergies between Russian Federation and San Marino in the training of different target groups besides civil protection.
- EUR-OPA will set aside a modest budget for the international event in Naples because Italian regional authorities will provide the necessary funds. There is potential to showcase the wealth of knowledge EUR-OPA has accumulated through its network of specialised centres who could be involved and designated to teach specific topics e.g., CRSTRA (Algeria) could share its expertise on drought and heatwaves and give specific examples of interventions with the local population.

- 4.2 CERU (Portugal) informed participants about an International Conference on Urban Risks (ICUR2020) to be held on 25-27 June 2020 in Lisbon, Portugal. A variety of international high-profile speakers will be invited as well as members of a scientific committee from across the globe. P. De Teves Costa requested a modest financial support from EUR-OPA for the participation of directors of centres as each participant is liable to pay fees in addition to the travel costs. The subjects will be varied and pertinent to EUR-OPA'S work. It would also present an opportunity to showcase EUR-OPA's work. [The first announcement and conference website.](#)

**Decision:** EUR-OPA will allocate a small budget in order to support the participation of some directors of centres. Participants were asked to disseminate this information in their country.

- 4.3 A. Panda (UNDRR) informed the participants about the planning and preparations for the next European Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) to be held in autumn 2021 in Portugal and the EFDRR 2021-2030 Roadmap. The next roadmap will cover a period of 10 years *and* [review](#). A. Panda summarised the results of the 2018 EFDRR which gathered representatives from 55 European countries. The outcomes of the last EFDRR can be consulted on their dedicated [website](#). A. Freitas informed the participants about the plans for the event and how EUR-OPA could contribute to this. The next global platform will take place in 2022 in Indonesia. A. Panda shared the agenda of the EFDRR. The expected outcomes include a political declaration of the stakeholders. Working groups will be set up to consider member States priority topics. For the next steps, please refer to the [presentation](#)
- 4.4 The Executive Secretary proposed to organise the next EUR-OPA Ministerial Session back-to-back with the EFDRR in autumn 2021 in Portugal, in order to take advantage of the presence of the ministers attending the Forum and give more visibility to EUR-OPA. On this occasion, EUR-OPA's Medium Term Plan 2021-25 would be set by the Ministers for the next 5 years with an emphasis on collaboration and synergies between EUR-OPA and the EFDRR 2021-30 road map. The Permanent Correspondents, Ana Freitas (Portuguese chair) and A. Panda (UNDRR) agreed with the Secretariat proposal.

**Decision:** EUR-OPA's next Ministerial Conference will take place back-to-back with the EFDRR in autumn 2021 in Portugal.

## 5. BUDGET FOR 2020-21 [AP/CAT\(2019\)05](#)

C. Emezic presented the EUR-OPA 2020-21 budget to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers by the end of the year emphasising the need to translate EUR-OPA activities and results into concrete proposals and recommendations that policy makers can implement in the member States. Overall, the 2020 budget recorded a 2% inflationary increase.

## 6. ELECTION OF THE CPC CHAIR AND TWO VICE-CHAIRS

The Permanent Correspondents were invited to elect the Chair and two Vice-Chairs according to Article 4 of the *Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents* [AP/CAT\(2007\)32](#) and Article 7 bis "Bureau": *the Committee shall set up a Bureau whose members shall be the Chair, the two Vice-Chairs and the previous Chair.*

D. Reynolds (Slovak Republic) proposed N. Holcinger (Croatia) as the new Chair. I. Boukis (Greece) proposed M. Mala (Cyprus) as Vice-Chair. V. Poyarkov (Ukraine) proposed A. Balducci (San Marino) as Vice-Chair. All the proposals were accepted and a new bureau constituted. A. Freitas was thanked for her contribution and hard work as previous Chair of the Bureau.

### **Decision:**

The EUR-OPA Bureau is composed by four members:

- N. Holcinger (Croatia) as a Chair
- M. Mala (Cyprus) as a Vice-Chair
- A. Balducci (San Marino) as a Vice-Chair
- A. Freitas (Portugal) as previous Chair

## 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Participants were invited to raise any other issues to be discussed. Armenia presented a project on involving students in creative activities in the field of DRR through information and engineering technologies. Y. Badalyan shared information about a World Congress on Information Technology which took place in Armenia on 6-9 October 2019 gathering participants from 70 countries. 280 schools took part in this congress and this event provided an example of how to integrate school activities into DRR. ([Link to presentation](#)).

ECPFE and EUR-OPA were partners to the Greek Assistance Emergency Sheltering Programme with the CoE Good Governance team. EUR-OPA provided support during the peer review process.

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

S. Badalyan (Armenia) requested to host the 2020 Joint Meeting in Yerevan, Armenia (1<sup>st</sup> week in November 2020). He offered the possibility to visit schools and also government officials. His invitation was accepted.

## **9. TRAINING FOR DIRECTORS OF SPECIALISED CENTRES**

Directors were informed that due to a technical problem of the collaborative platform, the project templates will be submitted by email. Project proposals should be submitted to the Secretariat by 15 December 2019 at the latest. [Link to database](#) [Project templates](#) [Platform Guidelines](#)