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European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)

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

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

Meeting report

10-11 February 2022
09:30-16:30 CET

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

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Thursday 10 February 2022

WELCOME ADDRESS

Krzysztof Zyman, Executive Secretary of the Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) welcomed the participants to the 77th Joint meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents (CPC) and Directors of the network of specialised centres. Eighteen member States were present. The CPCs from Belgium, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, North Macedonia and Romania were absent. S. Badalyan (CPC, Armenia) apologised for his absence due to Covid-19 illness. D. Christou (Director BeSafeNet, Cyprus) participated on the first meeting day due to bereavement. P. Teves Costa (Director, CERU, Portugal) participated intermittently however, J. Ribero (CERU) participated on her behalf. A. Balducci (CPC, San Marino) participated intermittently due to illness. K. Zyman informed the participants that T. Braulio was currently on leave and Styliani Elmatzoglou is supporting the EUR-OPA secretariat in her absence.

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA [AP/CAT\(2022\)OJ02](#)

K. Zyman invited the directors of centres to begin the presentations of their project outcomes on the first day of the meeting if schedule permitted. The draft agenda was adopted with this slight revision.

2. STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Executive Secretary updated the participants on recent developments, sharing the milestones achieved by EUR-OPA in 2021 such as the successful Ministerial Meeting held on 24 November in Matosinhos, Portugal. He thanked A. Freitas (CPC, Portugal) for the efficient hosting of the meeting and the CPCs for their involvement. He expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the meeting. The Medium-Term plan for 2021-2025 (MTP) and two Resolutions were adopted, as was the Ministerial Declaration which provides a strong political statement and guidance for the Agreement's future. On 11 March, K. Zyman will present the outcome of the Ministerial Meeting to the Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment Rapporteur Group of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. This presents an opportunity to highlight the current priorities of the Agreement, take stock of the most recent achievements of the Agreement and engage with the ambassadors and deputies whilst hearing first-hand their opinions regarding how they see Agreement's contribution to achieve the Council of Europe's goals in future.

The meeting aimed to address four main points:

- i) The future direction of the Agreement under the framework of the new MTP. K. Zyman invited the CPC to guide the secretariat in its decisions relating to the priority themes over the next two years;
- ii) Election of a new Chair of the Committee, as the incumbent had served the maximum two terms as stipulated in the Rules of Procedure. K. Zyman thanked N. Holcinger for her role as Chair, particularly the support she had given to the Executive Secretary when he assumed his new function. He reminded that N. Holcinger would continue on the Bureau as ex-Chair in order to provide continuity in its functioning. He thanked A. Freitas whose role as ex-Chair had now ended. K. Zyman reminded the CPC of their responsibility to nominate candidates for election to the positions of Chair and vice-Chairs who constitute the Bureau of the Committee;
- iii) Creation of a Sub-Committee to Evaluate the Project Proposals submitted by the directors of centres. The Sub-Committee will forward all proposals to the CPC to decide how the grants are awarded, in line with the Rules of Procedure;
- iv) Presentation of the results of the 2021 projects and the 2022 project proposals by the directors of centres.

The Executive Secretary invited the outgoing Committee Chair N. Holcinger to address the meeting. N. Holcinger reflected on her work in her capacity as Chair, citing it as a great experience notwithstanding the frequent staff changes within the Secretariat. She looked forward to staying on as ex-Chair of the Committee.

3. FOLLOW-UP TO THE EUR-OPA MINISTERIAL MEETING: REFLECTION ON THE FUTURE OF THE AGREEMENT [AP/CAT\(2021\)11](#)

K. Zyman remarked on the encouragement and support voiced at the Ministerial Meeting for the Agreement's work, underlining its importance and recognising its contribution to global efforts to limit disaster and increase resilience. In particular, The MTP contains specific proposals guiding the Agreement on the way forward in the next years. Moreover, the Ministerial Declaration is a political statement containing additional proposals for further reflection. The recent Bureau meeting identified four priority areas for the Agreement in 2022-2023. These relate to the expectation outlined in the MTP that the Committee will continue to provide guidance in the form of recommendations and other tools that could be shared within the Committee and be useful or inspirational for other forums or countries to take them on board. K. Zyman invited the participants to also share their ideas and proposals with regard to where they see the Agreement going. The discussions should result in a decision for the secretariat, such as carry out a compilation of best practices, or engage an expert to examine and write a report on the best practices or a report on where the Agreement stands today on specific issues. These would serve as a basis for further reflection for the Committee, possibly to produce guidelines and a recommendation to the member States.

The four areas for further reflection are:

- Risk assessment tools and the protection of cultural heritage;
- Greater use of social and traditional media, big data and mobile communication, to support national measures for successful disaster risk communication. The [European Center for New Technologies of Risk Management](#) (ECNTRM) in Moscow has been working in this area using social media to identify in real time developing disaster and emergency situations and to alert authorities in brief time to respond to these emergencies. Similar work undertaken in other countries and procedures can be compared and the Agreement could benefit from developing this work further;
- Strengthening risk governance to manage disaster risk and reinforce the resilience of vulnerable groups. This work has already been initiated in the area of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and children through the BeSafeNet project run by the centre in Cyprus. Working with the elderly in this area could also be considered as part of the strategy to reduce the exposure of vulnerable groups to hazards;
- Best use of geospatial information technology and guidance methodologies and drafting a recommendation for research in these priority areas. Several projects have centred on geomorphological threats, landslides, coastal erosion etc. This work could be developed further in the work of the Committee.

The Executive Secretary urged the Committee to increasingly rely on the conclusions reached by the specialised centres' projects. The work should not only end with a narrative report circulated within the Committee but should include specific recommendations to the decision-makers. The Committee would follow up by adopting the recommendations.

A. Micallef (CPC, Malta and Director of ICoD) recommended as an effective way forward utilising work carried out in a country and aiming to replicate it in another country. For example, ICoD and CERG carried out a project on geomorphological hazards and sea-level rise in Malta and in Normandy, France. They created risk maps and developed or identified amongst many potential complex methodologies a way to simplify these methodologies in order to provide the risk maps. It would be of interest to find an opportunity to offer to replicate this in another country, thereby exporting from one country to the next the existing expertise and results through the Agreement.

K. Zyman agreed with A. Micallef's pertinent proposal and advised the Committee to reflect on the work done by the specialised centres. N. Holcinger also agreed with A. Micallef and suggested to maximise use of the centres' projects conclusions and lessons learned in creating recommendations for the countries, i.e., one topic per year. Similar topics could be combined to produce these future recommendations. She expressed her interest in continuing the discussions related to the greater use of media given the importance of communicating the work achieved to the various governments and the general public. Everything else could be combined in media as a topic, e.g., when a risk assessment is carried out, it is important to communicate the findings to the public. In order to strengthen risk governance, it is necessary to have everyone's understanding of the risks and the risk management cycle. The same applies to sharing geospatial information and technology. It may be possible to combine the results of the work of specialised centres.

J. Goldammer (Director of GFMC, Germany) informed participants that the GFMC in partnership with the Council of Europe had established a number of regional fire monitoring centres or fire management resource centres. There are currently three regional fire monitoring centres in Skopje (2010), Kyiv (2013) and in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (2015) which belongs to the OSCE. GFMC achieved this over several years through the projects promoted and financed by the Council of Europe. Sharing expertise, methodologies and policy advice is common in the network and this ensures means that the investments that have been made since 2010 are reaching not only the country hosting the activity but also other countries. A number of guidelines, methodologies have served to convene national round tables aimed at developing national fire management policies especially addressing the role of fire use and wildfire management at the landscape level, taking cross-sectorial approaches in fire management planning and land use planning. Evidently, the investments made over the years are still paying off. The advantage of having regional fire management resource centres during the Covid-19 pandemic was apparent because whilst physical meetings were not possible, within the regions limited activities could take place including local travel and physical meetings. Since the regional structures are now (autonomously) established, GFMC is not required to be present everywhere. There exists today eight fire management resource centres and five of them are located in non-member states of the Council of Europe.

F. Ferrigni (Director of CUEBC, Italy) stated the need to improve two aspects of risk communication. Decision makers generally prefer to fund initiatives which interest the media. On the Amalfi coast CUEBC worked with the local community to raise awareness about local risks and hazards. However, this knowledge was already out there and this knowledge could have been harnessed to mitigate these hazards. However, more needs to be done to motivate local decision makers to follow up on the identified threats. CUEBC set up a website which, people could use to flag hazards or the risk of landslides, earthquakes etc., and the local media did publish five articles spotlighting these hazards. For research projects, it is important to set down scientific methodological criteria which will govern the research and also work out how to display the research findings in the media spotlight. Risks linked to social networks and social media exist and should not be overlooked. One example is the prevalence of unreliable or false information being spread across networks. Exercising scientific control over what is published would be vital and the centres should constantly strive to secure greater media coverage for the projects whilst guarding against the spreading of false information by young people.

M. Dejeant-Pons suggested that it would be useful for each thematic centre to produce a booklet summarising the work done and produce guidelines accessible to the population. People generally are unprepared about how to react in the event of a disaster. This could also be useful for the media and a useful instrument for people since the Agreement works in a domain which although not mediatic by nature, still counts as a public service providing useful tools in case of disasters for prevention and resolving the two aspects. Each booklet could contain two chapters on prevention and the solution. F. Ferrigni added that it is the population who should be telling the decision makers what ought to be done to avoid disasters, i.e., by promoting different actions using social networks in addition to distributing brochures to inform the population. Local authorities need to tell the population what to do when disasters occur but the population should also communicate to the local authorities what should be done to avoid or mitigate disaster and not what should they do during a disaster. K. Zyman noted that this points to a two-way directional flow of information, adding that the Agreement could contribute to further reflection on this.

Decision: in summary, the Committee instructed the Executive Secretary to reflect on addressing two particular fields of interest identified in the MTP: a) geomorphological threats and geospatial technology which can address the threats, looking at methodologies and sharing information on the basis of work that has already been carried out and see how this can be replicated in other countries of the Agreement, and b) the use of traditional and social media in all its forms, big data and all that is currently available through modern technology to identify risks, produce guidelines, spread information amongst the population and have an interface between the public and the authorities on the best practices to prevent disasters from occurring and the measures to take when the disasters do occur.

1. BUDGETARY SITUATION

The Agreement has closed the 2021 accounts. Despite the restrictions imposed by Covid-19, the Agreement used 94% of its available funding. The level of spending shows dedicated work on the part of the specialised centres who have implemented activities with the available grants. K. Zyman reminded centres to keep the secretariat informed of any difficulties in spending grants well ahead of time. This allows the secretariat to reallocate the funds as funds returned in November cannot be reallocated. This partly explains the unused 6% of the budget. Another reason for the underspending is the fact that the Secretariat could not determine the full cost of the Ministerial Meeting beforehand. Eventually, the Agreement could not rely on the technical support offered by

UNDRR as their technology was mostly incompatible and would have made it extremely difficult to manage the meeting, technical control and the interpretation service from Strasbourg. Overall, the cost of the Ministerial Meeting was kept to a minimum.

4. ADOPTION OF THE 2022 BUDGET [AP/CAT\(2021\)12](#)

K. Zyman informed the participants that the Council of Europe now works on the basis of a four-year Programme and Budget 2022-2025, with specific budgeting and indicators for 2022-2023. The budgets reflect the proportions and funding that has been decided by the members states of the Agreement. EUR-OPA's total budget for 2022 is 701 800 euros for 2022 and 712 300 euros for 2023 to cater for inflationary adjustment increases. K. Zyman noted with satisfaction the Agreement's 24 dedicated member countries adding that he would continue to explore opportunities to seek new members where possible. For 2022, regarding the budget split, roughly the same amount of funds is available for the grants as last year. A second joint meeting will be organised in November, hopefully in person. The Bureau will meet remotely for the moment and staff missions remain on hold and travel is limited. There were no comments from the participants regarding budgetary questions.

5. PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION TO THE CPC BUREAU CHAIR AND VICE CHAIRS [AP/CAT\(2007\)32](#)

K. Zyman recalled the rules of the Committee as regards the Bureau's composition and the methods of election contained in Article 4.1 of the Rules of Procedure.

"The Chair and the Vice-Chairs of the Committee shall be elected by a two-thirds majority of members, at first ballot, and by a simple majority, at the second ballot. The term of office of the Chair and Vice-Chairs shall be one year and may be renewed once. If the candidates to the post of Chair and each post of Vice-Chair respectively are two or more, they shall be elected by secret ballot."

K. Zyman thanked N. Holcinger, for chairing the Committee for two terms. He invited the participants to propose candidates for the Chair and two Vice-Chairs. He clarified that the Vice-Chairs were eligible to continue in the post of Chair.

By acclamation the Committee elected M. Mala (Cyprus) Chair and A. Micallef (Malta) Vice-Chair. Given that no other candidates were proposed for the position of Vice-Chair, A. Balducci will continue on as the other Vice-Chair. K. Zyman commended the new Chair for her active participation in the BeSafeNet project and the Bureau and looked forward to continuing the Bureau's work with her.

<p>Decision: M. Mala was elected to the post of Chair of the Committee. A. Micallef was elected Vice-Chair of the Committee. A. Balducci remains as Vice-Chair. N. Holcinger maintains her presence in the Bureau as the former Chair.</p>

6. CREATION OF A SUBCOMMITTEE TO EVALUATE PROJECT PROPOSALS OF THE SPECIALISED CENTRES

K. Zyman referred the participants to Appendix 1 of the Rules of Procedure, page 10, under the headings "Terms of Reference" and "Composition":

1. Terms of reference

Terms of reference of the "Programme" Sub-Committee shall be to present to the Committee of Permanent Correspondents an assessment report on whether the programme proposals submitted by the various Specialised Centres of the Agreement accord with the priorities defined in the Agreement's medium-term plan. This report shall be accompanied by a proposal for the breakdown of the planned appropriation in the budget of the following year.

2. Composition

The Centres must present the material required for the examination and evaluation by the date determined in the "Programme" Sub-Committee and notified by the Executive Secretariat so that the Sub-Committee can present its report to the plenary committee in April of the current year."

In order to work in accordance with the rules of procedure, K. Zyman invited Committee members to come forward to work alongside him within the Sub-Committee to Evaluate the Project Proposals to examine the specialised centres' project proposals. A simplified list of the proposals received would be prepared stating the centre, title of project, a box to indicate if it meets the priorities of MTP, the amount of the grant requested and available funding. Thus far, only a few proposals have been received in 2022 so the creation of the Sub-Committee at this time is appropriate. Proper functioning of the Sub-Committee and efficient allocation of grants will require the submission of proposals in a timely manner. The Sub-Committee will proceed to examine the proposals as they arrive giving a deadline of end of February. This would allow for the preparation of such a funding list by the secretariat, following discussions with the Sub-Committee by the end of March and subsequently sending the Committee members a table summarising the project proposals received and amount of grants requested. The Committee of Permanent Correspondents will be given one week to indicate their support/opposition to the allocation of funding. The decisions will be taken by a two-thirds majority – if nine voices of opposition are not received, the funding will be granted to the centres that have submitted their requests by the end of February. Centres that do not meet the deadline will be given one month to submit their proposals, subject to the available funds. The Sub-Committee would mostly work through e-mail exchanges and online meetings. This process serves as an interface connecting the work of the Committee with the work of the specialised centres. It will also empower the governmental representatives to voice their opinions and make decisions within the Sub-Committee thereby avoiding a secretariat-driven Agreement. A minimum of three members are required to form the subcommittee for a three year term of office.

K. Zyman invited the permanent correspondents to signal their interest to join the subcommittee. A. Makarov accepted to work on the subcommittee and appreciated the opportunity to participate. N. Holcinger, expressed her willingness to join the Sub-Committee. A. Micallef urged to avoid a heavy handed approach i.e., audits of staff, premises, equipment, examination of methodologies etc. The process should only focus on the project proposals rather than the above-mentioned issues as was the case in the past. K. Zyman remarked that the Secretariat intended to examine the project proposals to verify that they align with the objectives of the MTP. For 2022, the end of March would be the deadline to decide on the awarding of grants to centres that submitted their proposals in February.

Decision: The new subcommittee is composed of A. Makarov (CPC, Russian Federation), N. Holcinger (CPC, Croatia) and the Executive Secretary. The deadline for the submission of project proposals was set for the end of March 2022.

7. REVISION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS [AP/CAT\(2007\)32](#)

The working group set up to revise the Rules of Procedure held an online meeting in August 2021 but required more time to discuss outstanding issues. The members hope to propose revisions to the Rules of Procedure and will meet in April in order to finalise their proposals. They will share their conclusions at the next meeting of the permanent correspondents.

8. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2021-2022

8.1. Statutory meetings

Joint Meeting of CPC and Directors of Centres, 16 September 2021: [AP/CAT\(2021\)09](#)

Ministerial Meeting, 24 November 2021: Meeting report [AP/CAT\(2021\)15](#) Ministerial Declaration [AP/CAT\(2021\)14](#)

Meeting of the CPC Bureau: [AP/CAT\(2022\)01](#)

8.2. Specialised Centres: results of 2021 projects and project proposals for 2022

European Centre for Disaster Awareness (BeSafeNet), Cyprus. [Link to presentation](#)

D. Christou presented the main objectives of the BeSafeNet project and its partners. The online tool aims to promote a risk culture among populations, particularly in secondary schools in the

member states. Although natural and technological disasters cannot be prevented, BeSafeNet aims to minimise the risk by providing reliable information on the causes and consequences of disasters. In 2021 BeSafeNet partnered with ICoD, Malta TESEC, Ukraine and CERG France. CEMEC, San Marino produced a paper on pandemics whilst ECPFE, Greece is currently finalising a paper on cultural heritage. The online Olympiad is on the theme "better knowledge against disasters". Overall, 135 teams from 92 schools in 12 countries participated in the competition, despite the Covid-19 restrictions. The students wrote [135 essays](#) on various hazards. A team of Afghan migrants from a refugee camp in Greece was also able to participate in the Olympiad. A virtual award ceremony was organised for the top three teams from Romania (1st), Croatia (2nd) and Romania (3rd).

In 2022, the online Olympiad will be held on 18 February at 9am CET. So far, over 150 schools have registered for this year's competition. It is hoped to organise a physical award ceremony in Strasbourg in 2022, if the sanitary situation significantly improves. The project team will continue to enrich the content of the BeSafeNet website by adding climate change to the list of topics on the website. Further information is available on the BeSafeNet [website](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

CERU proposed to translate the BeSafeNet website into Portuguese in 2023. This would also be beneficial for other lusophone countries. She will discuss further with D. Demetris and K. Zyman and look into the possibility of introducing other risks found in Africa and adding them onto the BeSafeNet website.

Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), Germany. [Link to presentation](#)

J. Goldammer summarised some of GFMC's achievements in 2021. In Ukraine, the project continued from the previous year. The overall idea was to develop a strategic plan for landscape level approach in fire management in forests, open lands and agricultural burning in the context of forest fire protection. This is in line with Ukraine's forestry 2030 strategy. In 2020, a working group was created in the parliament under the Ministry for Environment to develop this national strategy. A team of specialists from GFMC and the regional centre in Kyiv developed a draft of the strategy which went for a public hearing in the summer of 2021. There was broad acceptance of the idea to develop a wholistic landscape level approach in fire management in the future as no negative comments were received.

In 2021 GFMC through the regional centre in Kyiv conducted several trainings with local communities and NGOs in spite of the pandemic. This concept of working with local communities and NGOs was widely accepted in Ukraine. In the summer of 2021 it was encouraging to see the demonstrated willingness of civil society to contribute to wildfire prevention, preparedness, and initial self-defence. Clearly, this does not replace the role of responsible public services like forest services or the emergency services. But it is important that through these activities, doors are opened to those who are most affected by fires or also starting fires in the agricultural context. This theme was addressed at the World Forum for Democracy (WFD) held at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, to which GFMC was invited. The WFD on "Can Democracy Save the Environment?" afforded an opportunity for GFMC to defend the premise that civil society should take responsibility to participate in preparedness and prevention of disasters and work with the authorities.

In Greece, GFMC was tasked to set up and chair an independent committee to analyse the underlying causes and explore the perspectives for the future management of landscape fires in Greece. Following GFMC report delivered to the Greek Parliament in 2019, and after the very severe fires in Greece, this is now followed up by the new Ministry for Climate Crisis and Civil Protection. GFMC will meet with the task force responsible for post-fire reconstruction in March 2022 in Athens.

During the EFDRR in Matosinhos, GFMC organised a side event on "Landscape fires; strengthening governance in landscape fire management." The main priority identified was the need to strengthen civil society to become more actively involved in fire preparedness. Countries need to develop national landscape fire management policies of a cross-sectorial nature. One important conclusion was to establish an international instrument tentatively called the International Landscape Fire Management Framework.

Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Insular Coastal Dynamics (ICoD), Malta. [Link to presentation](#)

ICoD carried out the project on coastal risk assessment and mapping in collaboration with the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy and CERG, France. The project began in 2016-17 with the development of geomorphological maps, followed with susceptibility and vulnerability maps in 2018-2019. Coastal risk maps were produced in 2020-2021 to address the long-term objective

of risk assessment and mapping. The global objective of the overall project is to provide national authorities and/or ministries responsible for planning and civil protection with a well-defined methodology for risk mapping via a stepped approach of hazard susceptibility, vulnerability and risk assessment and mapping of coastal hazards. This approach to risk mapping was published in a peer-reviewed journal to address the wider academic community. A [brochure](#) summarising the overall work of the past 3-4 years were also produced for the benefit of policy makers and the wider community.

The 2022 project proposal will follow after discussion with A. Micallef's colleagues in order to propose a project that is in line with the MTP.

European Centre on Urban Risks (CERU), Portugal. [Link to presentation](#)

In 2021, CERU's main activity centred on the Local Knowledge and Schools Against Natural Disasters (LoKSAND) project coordinated by CUEBC Italy. The activities included selecting a pilot area to implement a Protect Your Territory (PYT) page devoted to main risks. An awareness raising campaign "Communicate to prevent" was conducted in one school in cooperation with the local civil protection authorities to disseminate information about the project and the PYT page. The campaign is formatted for mobile phone use, the main advantage being that it can automatically be translated into six languages. The PTY page lists risks associated to the specific territory, places of interest, parks, monuments or cultural heritage sites. Risks can be directly communicated from a mobile phone and photos of the site or incidents can also be uploaded when reporting risks such as floods, landslides, risks to heritage e.g., lack of maintenance, vandalism etc. Once reports received are verified, the information is communicated to the respective local authorities for follow up.

In 2022, CERU will begin a project entitled "Population involvement in risk management and mitigation" aimed at testing public participation in risk governance and DRR in the different communities. In Portugal, the project will cover the peripheral area of Lisbon, Barcelonnette, France and Amalfi, Italy in collaboration with the partner centres CERG and CUEBC. Training exercises will be conducted with the local population on how to manage the main risks.

European Centre for New Technologies of Risk Management (ECNTRM), Russia. [Link to presentation](#)

I. Oltyan shared the results of the three ECNTRM projects in 2021.

Project 1: Development of a digital information and education portal on "Protection of the population in emergency situations." ECNTRM harnessed artificial intelligence, using this in education dialogue. Although the developers experienced technical difficulties, marking correct answers as incorrect, they found a way to communicate the correct answers to the users. The programme is not intended to replace actual trainers rather, to fill the knowledge gaps and get people to become more engaged in the learning process. This project will be continued in 2022.

Project 2: Remote assessment of the integrated emergency risk index (1). As part of efforts, analysed various methods specially the informed index method used in Europe, tailoring it to the situation in Russia. The project developed Russia's approach to assessing the vulnerability of people living in the target areas and also the counteraction or mitigation potential. They developed specialised methods to assess hazards in areas which are susceptible to natural forest fires using satellite data and looked at potential flooding drawing on a variety of data. This was in the Republic of Tatarstan which has a high population density as the 8th most populated constituent entity in Russia and it is exposed to all kinds of hazards.

Project 3: Technology for assessing individual seismic risk considering actual data on building up and the expected hypocentre of earthquakes. The study looked at earthquakes and how they impact meteorological factors in Derbant, the pilot city for the study as it is located in a seismically active area. ECNTRM conducted a short and a medium-term analyses of possible seismic activity in Derbant. The study also aimed to analyse which centres are the most susceptible to earthquakes. The projects are fully in keeping with the Agreement's MTP in the area of risk assessment and the heritage site component.

Two of the projects will be continued in 2022-2023 with the addition of a third. It is hoped to develop new software drawing on the approaches of the previous year. ECNTRM will provide methodological guidance to local authorities and will organise seminars. The 2nd project will assess the seismic resistance of various buildings in Derbant, whilst the 3rd project will focus on methodologies for assessing the impact of hurricanes. Thus far, the projects undertaken in Derbant

have garnered support from the local civil protection authorities. K. Zyman remarked on the potential of ECNTRM to propose guidelines for other centres.

Friday 11 February 2022

European Center for Buildings Rehabilitation (ECBR), Romania. [Link to presentation](#)

E-M. Georgescu shared ECBR's 2021 achievements. The project aimed to reduce risks in schools and other educational facilities as well as for hospitals, medical and sanitary facilities. These activities relate to the coming strategy on seismic risk reduction to be enforced in Romania, which has been in preparation over the last 2.5 years. The activity will end in coordination with the World Bank in 2022 which will address in a new and comprehensive way all the issues related to seismic risk reduction. These educational and medical facilities will receive specific guidance and funding. ECBR aimed to simplify information and increase knowledge transfer about technical and complex strategies as a way to encourage people to be proactive. ECBR established good partnerships in this way to change behavioural responses of families, groups and the society as a whole to hazards and disaster risk.

The current study took into account that there are still many vulnerable buildings and this new approach aimed to achieve significant progress in seismic risk reduction. ECBR attempted to raise awareness about how earthquakes could combine with other risks such as the pandemic e.g., the earthquake in Croatia in March 2020, stressing how hospitals would have been impacted in such a situation. ECBR assessed the vulnerability of several buildings for the level of seismic risk and the findings were shared with the participants. To ensure that the ideas were taken on board and the sustainability of the project, ECBR conducted surveys with the seminar participants. ECBR collaborated with the Ministry of Public Works Development and Administration. A good gender balance was recorded in participation with women making up 75% of the participants in the educational institutions and 69% in the sessions organised for the local authorities.

In 2022-2023, ECBR will examine how to prepare for disasters involving combined risks e.g., earthquakes during a pandemic. ECBR will also focus on the MTP goals for inclusive societies in relation to how migrants asylum seekers and refugees, disabled persons and other vulnerable groups are accommodated in immigrational, healthcare or other facilities and prisons. They plan to collaborate with ECPFE, Greece and CEMEC, San Marino in the area of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Training targeting vulnerable groups will be conducted in 2022 and will include some practical demonstrations if the sanitary situation significantly improves. ECBR also aims to produce brochures and recommendations.

K. Zyman applauded the collaboration between ECBR and ECPFE and encouraged other centres to collaborate. He looked forward to receiving the recommendations for different stakeholders in Romania and Greece, so they can be discussed at the next joint meeting. This work would be pertinent given that many countries in the Agreement are prone to earthquakes. M. Dejeant-Pons congratulated E-S. Georgescu and stating that the ECBR methodology and experience relating to hospitals in particular could be replicated in other countries.

European Centre for Vulnerability of Industrial and Lifeline Systems (ECILS), North Macedonia. [Link to presentation](#)

V. Shendova presented the results of the 2021 project on seismic vulnerability assessment of the Old Bazaar, Skopje. The project aimed to perform a pre-event vulnerability assessment using the vulnerability index which scores buildings based on calculation of the weighted parameters of the structures which ECILS calibrated using the data of 15 screened historical buildings in the Old Bazaar. This was the first time such a project was undertaken since the earthquake in 2016. ECILS partnered with ECPFE using their extensive experience from realising similar projects as a crucial project corrective.

ECILS had planned to perform rapid visual screening of 30 selected buildings in the Old Bazaar but will carry forward this and other activities to 2022-2023 due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. ECILS will develop the forms for data recording during screening of the buildings. Joint meetings are planned with the responsible institutions in North Macedonia and ECPFE representatives to prepare a work plan, agree on the deliverables, select the buildings, perform the rapid visual screening providing categorisation of buildings according to seismic risk etc. The main role of the partner centre will be to provide available dynamic analysis for one representative building which will serve as a pilot study to validate the proposed methodology. In addition, ECILS priority action in 2022-2023 will focus on using scientific and technological knowledge to better

assess evolving risks and to adapt accordingly the resilience strategies. K. Zyman suggested teaming up with ECPFE and ECBR to draft recommendations for EUR-OPA on this topic.

European Center on Prevention and Forecasting of Earthquakes (ECPFE), Greece. [Link to presentation](#)

L. Peli Presented in brief the 2021 project on “Preseismic assessment of traditional dwellings, vulnerability assessment and evacuation of the old town of Rhodes.” The project was carried out in three stages. The first stage covered the preseismic assessment. In the second stage, an instruction manual for planning and implementing emergency exercises for earthquakes was produced and also a compilation of guidelines for the evacuation exercise for the medieval city of Rhodes. For the third stage, the partner centre ECFF produced a booklet entitled “Multi-hazard risk approach and inclusive community engagement in disaster risk management: experiences and lessons learned by a recent wildfire event in the Greek island of Rhodes amidst Covid-19 pandemic crisis”. ECPFE also participated in the BeSafeNet project, preparing a paper and multiple choice questions on cultural heritage at risk.

For the 2022-2023 project, ECPFE will prepare an atlas of the monuments of Greece classified according to their seismic behaviour. The second stage will focus on the selection of design seismic action for the redesign of old buildings in the old city of Rhodes. Based on this framework, focusing on the redesign and intervention studies of monuments, the scientific committee will elaborate on the crucial and controversial issue of the proper selection of the seismic action. In addition, ECPFE envisages cooperation with ECFF, ECBR and ECILS specialised centres.

European Center for Forest Fires, Greece (ECFF) [Link to presentation](#)

S. Karma presented the achievements of the ECFF in 2021. The project collaborated with ECPFE on “pre-seismic assessment of traditional dwellings and vulnerability assessment and evacuation of the old town of Rhodes.” ECFF was responsible for preparing a table top exercise in the Valley of Butterflies in Rhodes. Intensive summer heatwaves provoked dangerous fires in August 2021. ECFF cooperated with the Rhodes islands civil protection to elaborate guidelines on lessons learned and circulated this to all the Agreement’s centres in December 2021. ECFF aimed to highlight emerging issues linked to multi-hazards risk assessment and multi-hazards risk approach e.g., exposure to smoke from wildfires during the Covid-19. The project focused on how to engage the community, enhance disaster risk preparedness, improve bottom-up approaches whilst improving top-down disaster risk management and strengthening disaster resilience of communities mostly exposed to risk. This provided the basis to identify possible gaps, lessons learned in best practices and service, lessons learned among the interested parties in managing complex emergencies e.g., through holding risk trials in order to manage multiple risks.

Other important areas covered were inclusive risk communication, accessible broadcasting, relaying warnings and early warning systems e.g., in the Valley of Butterflies which is a popular touristic destination. ECFF gathered best practices used worldwide, specifically focusing on preparing populations against wildfires and smoke through targeted activities such as the “Build back better” programme. ECFF collaborated with GFMC who also provided materials used in the guidelines and enjoyed good cooperation internationally. ECFF will build on risk perception to see how different groups respond to information or instructions in disasters. The project focused on people with disabilities and vulnerable groups, to determine their risk perception. The data and conclusions contained in the guidelines are practical and can be used for all groups.

In 2022-2023, ECFF will collaborate with ECPFE on the “Inclusion of vulnerable groups in disaster preparedness and response for coping with emerging risks and evacuation exercise including people with disabilities”. ECFF will also collaborate with BeSafeNet and aims to actively engage with people/children with disabilities. The project will continue previous work on evacuation planning of critical infrastructure in case of fires or earthquakes by engaging children and multiple stakeholders. It hopes to achieve this through conducting evacuation simulation exercises in fire and earthquake scenarios.

European University for Cultural Heritage (CUEBC). [Link to presentation](#)

F. Ferrigni presented the results of CUEBC’s 2021 project Local Knowledge and Schools Against Natural Disasters (LoKSAND). Local communities are knowledgeable about local risks but this knowledge is neither used when setting up mitigation projects, nor is it relayed in the media. Decision-makers usually rely on theoretical models rather than on the local community. LoKSAND is a tool set up to facilitate the effective transfer of knowledge and information exchange by the local community via the Protect Your Territory (PYT) pages. The schools are used to relay messages from the community and this has proven to be effective. Schools are encouraged to use the web pages defined in the project and can also use the platform to report local risks and send messages

to parents. Several meetings were held with the project partners CRSTRA Algeria, CERU Portugal and civil society representatives in Slovakia. The guidelines can be used by other specialised centres wishing to set up their own PYT pages. Slovak partners prepared a test to assess the accuracy of information collected from the PYT pages to ensure the reality/correctness of the reported risks. The local press published several articles on the different local risks on the Amalfi coast such as landslides, fires, flooding etc. The PYT page was activated for the Amalfi Coast followed by the publication of a brochure. Seven students presented the LoKSAND activities as their chosen essay topic for their Baccalaureate exams.

In 2022, CUEBC will run a project on "Schools against domestic and urban risks" (SADUR). The project aims to reduce disasters such as gas explosions, fires, collapsing buildings, accidental forest fires etc., that stem from a lack of maintenance of domestic facilities, buildings or other factors. SADUR will be a means to disseminate information among households and families as to how facilities and appliances should be used safely or correctly. The project will look at how to reduce urban risks such as older buildings, narrow streets, poorly signed posted crossroads etc. The project partners will be CEMEC, San Marino and CERU, Portugal based on their experiences. CUEBC will draw up an inventory of accidents in Italy and schools will be involved in the campaigns. The results obtained in 2022 will be published. Finally, a conference will be organised in June 2023 with the results obtained presented to the local and national authorities. K. Zyman thanked F. Ferrigni and looked forward to receiving the guidelines and publications from the project.

10. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

K. Zyman encouraged the participants to inform the Agreement about any potential activities that could be of relevance. Where possible, EUR-OPA would contribute funds to allow for participation.

K. Zyman is invited to represent the Agreement at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to be held on 23-27 May 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. This is subject to the sanitary situation sufficiently evolving.

P. Costa (CERU Portugal) informed the participants that the 2nd International Conference on Urban Risks ([ICUR2022](#)) will be held (physically) on 23 to 24 June in Lisbon. The seven topics for discussion include risk protection on cultural heritage and historical centres, societal risks and citizen engagement and risk communication. The directors of centres were invited to participate in this scientific and technical conference. Abstracts submission is open until the end of February. Information on the event and a summary of the conclusions will also be made available on the Agreement's website.

K. Zyman is invited to represent the Agreement at the first Cannes International Resilience Forum on 23-26 October 2022, which is a private initiative supported by the municipality. This presents an opportunity to promote EUR-OPA's work and goals externally and K. Zyman is currently in discussion with the organisers to define what the Agreement can contribute to the forum. He looks forward to participating, possibly with some of the specialised centres to highlight their work in specific areas.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A. Makarov requested that the Executive Secretary consider the proposal for the Russo-Serbian Humanitarian centre based in Serbia to join the network of specialised centres. The centre is prepared to present their case and their activities at the next joint meeting. K. Zyman explained that according to the Rules of Procedure, Article 11 determines the procedure for admitting new centres to the Agreement. He invited the Committee to read the article which also stipulates that the objectives and activities must align with the aims of the Agreement and contribute to the implementation of some of the objectives of the MTP, have the necessary scientific expertise and sound administrative practices and must enjoy support from the government under which it is established. Upon examination of the centre, the Committee will determine whether or not the centre should join the Agreement's network. Furthermore, the Committee would also use this occasion to discuss the membership status of several inactive specialised centres and review the composition of the network, as stipulated in point 3 of the Appendix. The redundant centres will be contacted before any definitive action is taken regarding their membership. This item will be added onto the agenda of the next Committee meeting.

It was suggested to submit project proposals for 2023 by end of December 2022.

N. Holcinger expressed her thanks for the opportunity to chair the Bureau in the last two years and looked forward to continuing her active participation.

Decision: The Russo-Serbian Humanitarian Centre shall be invited to the next Joint meeting to present their activities to the Committee.

12. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next Committee of Permanent Correspondents will be held in Paris in a hybrid format on 17 November followed by the Joint Meeting with the directors of specialised centres on 18 November.

END OF MEETING