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

## **RULES OF PROCEDURE**

**adopted by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents  
on 17 November 2022 in Paris**

## **Article 1 – Composition and Powers of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents**

1.1 The composition and responsibilities of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents governed by Resolution (87) 2 on the prevention of, protection against, and organisation of relief in major natural and technological disasters, "EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement", (hereinafter referred to as "the Agreement").

## **Article 2 – Bureau of the Committee**

2.1 The Committee of Permanent Correspondents shall elect from among its members a Bureau comprised of a Chair of the Committee, two Vice-Chairs and the previous Chair.

2.2 The Chair and the Vice-Chairs of the Committee shall be elected, in the presence of the majority of the Permanent Correspondents entitled to sit on the Committee by a two-thirds majority of members taking part in the vote, at first ballot, and by a simple majority, at the second ballot. The term of office of the Chair and Vice-Chairs shall be two years 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.

2.3 The Bureau shall direct the administrative work of the Committee and perform all other functions conferred upon it by these Rules of Procedure or by the Committee. The Bureau shall not make any substantive decisions on behalf of the Committee.

2.4 The Bureau shall meet at the request of the Chair or any of its members. It shall be responsible for taking administrative and organisational decisions between meetings. The Executive Secretary will distribute the Bureau meeting reports to Committee members.

2.5 Under the guidance and instructions of the Committee of the Permanent Correspondents, the Bureau of the Committee shall prepare the meetings of the Committee and examine questions entrusted to it by the Committee.

2.6 The Bureau shall inform the Committee at its next meeting of any decisions which it has taken.

## **Article 3 – Functions of the Chair**

3.1 The Chair shall conduct proceedings and sum up the conclusions whenever he/she thinks necessary. He/she may call to order a speaker who departs from the subject under discussion or from the Committee's terms of reference. He/she shall retain the right to speak and to vote in his/her capacity as a member of the Committee.

3.2 A Vice-Chair shall replace the Chair if the latter is absent or otherwise unable to take the Chair. If the Chair and Vice-Chairs are absent, the Chair shall be taken by a member of the Committee appointed by the Committee.

3.3 The Chair shall represent the Agreement before the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and other Council of Europe bodies. Upon invitation and after consulting the Executive Secretary and the Bureau, the Chair may, within the limits of his or her responsibilities, represent the Agreement at meetings organised by authorities and public organisations of member States.

## **Article 4 – Meetings of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents**

4.1 The Committee of Permanent Correspondents (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") shall meet at least once a year. The date of each meeting shall as a rule be fixed during the previous meeting.

Any Permanent Correspondent may request that the Committee hold a meeting. His/her request is addressed to the Executive Secretary who shall inform all Permanent Correspondents. The request is considered as accepted if within fifteen days two-thirds of the Permanent Correspondents inform the Executive Secretary in writing of their agreement.

4.2 Meetings shall be held at the Council of Europe premises in Strasbourg unless the Committee decides otherwise by a simple majority. The Committee meetings shall be convened by letter of the Executive Secretary at least four weeks before the fixed date.

4.3 Whereby a meeting of the Committee has been arranged in accordance with the provisions of this Article, any request for advancement or a postponement shall be made at least fifteen days prior to the agreed meeting date. A decision to advance or to postpone the meeting shall be regarded as taken if two-thirds of the members inform the Executive Secretary of their agreement at least seven days before the date originally fixed. A decision to advance the date of the meeting shall be regarded as taken only if all the members inform the Executive Secretary of their agreement at least fifteen days before the new date which has been proposed.

4.4. Any Permanent Correspondent may be accompanied at the Committee meeting by a national expert, who shall attend at no cost to the Agreement and who shall have no right to vote.

#### **Article 5 – Meetings at Ministerial level**

5.1 These Rules of Procedure may also apply to the meetings of the Agreement at Ministerial level, provided that the Parties decide to do so.

#### **Article 6 – Agenda and working documents**

6.1 The draft agenda for the meetings of the Committee shall be prepared by the Executive Secretary on the basis of the decisions taken by the Committee at its previous meeting and in conformity with the instructions of the Chair of the Committee.

6.2 Each Permanent Correspondent has the right to request the inclusion of a point in the draft agenda not later than three weeks prior to the meeting.

6.3 Working documents relating to the point in the draft agenda to be included at a request of a Permanent Correspondent shall be transmitted to the Executive Secretary together with that request, not later than three weeks prior to the meeting

6.4 The Agenda shall be adopted at the beginning of each meeting. Any supplementary items may be added only if the Committee so decides. Decisions about the Agenda shall be taken by a simple majority of the Permanent Correspondents who are present.

#### **Article 7 – Secretariat of the Committee**

7.1 The Committee shall be assisted in its functions by a Secretariat.

7.2 The Secretariat consists of the Executive Secretary and other staff necessary for the Committee to fulfil its functions, appointed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

7.3 The Secretary General or his/her representative may at any time make an oral or written statement on any subject under discussion.

7.4 The Committee may direct the Executive Secretary to prepare a report on any question relevant to the Committee's work.

7.5 The Executive Secretary shall be responsible for preparing and circulating all documents to be examined by the Committee. He/she shall, in particular, prepare the reports on the Committee's meeting to be submitted to the Committee for adoption.

7.6 The Executive Secretary shall be responsible, in particular, for the implementation of the decisions of the Committee and, in concert with the Chair, shall take any other measure necessary to the implementation of the Work Programme of the Agreement.

7.7 The Executive Secretary shall inform the Committee of the decisions and other measures taken within the Council of Europe which present an interest for the Agreement.

7.8 The Executive Secretary shall prepare an annual activity report in concert with the Chair. This report shall be submitted to the Committee of Permanent Correspondents for approval before transmission to the Committee of Ministers.

7.9 The Executive Secretary shall represent the Agreement before other international organisations within the limits of his responsibilities.

#### **Article 8 – Quorum**

8.1 The Committee shall not deliberate and adopt decisions unless half of its members are present.

#### **Article 9 – Voting**

9.1 The adoption by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of a Resolution or a Recommendation addressed to Governments shall require a unanimous vote cast and a presence of the majority of the Permanent Correspondents entitled to sit on the Committee.

9.2 All other decisions shall require a two-thirds majority of the votes cast and a presence of the majority of the Permanent Correspondents entitled to sit on the Committee.

9.3 Procedural and administrative matters shall require a simple majority of the members who are present.

9.4 Where the question arises as to which of the preceding paragraphs shall be applicable to a given question, the Committee shall decide by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast whether a matter is procedural or administrative in nature.

9.5 Where unanimity is required, a Permanent Correspondent may, if the text is adopted, record his abstention - which may be accompanied by an explanatory statement - or approve the adoption of the text but reserve the right of his government to comply with it or not.

9.6 Each Permanent Correspondent shall have one vote.

#### **Article 10 – Proposals and amendments**

10.1 Any proposal must be submitted in writing if a Committee member so requests. In that case it shall not be discussed until it has been circulated.

10.2 Where a number of proposals relate to the same subject, they shall be put to the vote in the order in which they were submitted. In case of doubt, the Chair shall decide.

10.3 Where a proposal is the subject of an amendment, the amendment shall be put to the vote first. Where two or more amendments to the same proposal are presented, the Committee shall vote first on whichever departs furthest in substance from the original proposal. It shall then vote on the next furthest removed from the original proposal, and so on until all the amendments have been put to the vote. However, where the acceptance of one amendment necessarily entails rejection of another, the latter shall not be put to the vote. The final vote shall then be taken on the proposal as amended or not amended. In case of doubt as to the order of priority, the Chair shall decide.

10.4 Parts of a proposal or amendment may be put to the vote separately.

10.5 In the case of proposals with financial implications, the costliest shall be put to the vote first.

10.6 Procedural motions shall take precedence over all other proposals or motions except points of order. They shall be put to the vote in the following order:

- a. suspension of the sitting;
- b. adjournment of discussion on the item in hand;
- c. postponement of a decision on the substance of a proposal until a specified date.

10.7 When a decision has been taken it shall only be re-examined if a member of the Committee so requests, and if this request receives a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

#### **Article 11 – Points of order**

11.1 During the discussion of any matter, a member may at any time raise a point of order. A member may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

11.2 The point of order shall immediately be decided upon by the Chair.

11.3 Any appeal against the ruling of the Chair shall immediately be put to the vote.

#### **Article 12 – Use of electronic procedures**

12.1 The Committee, and its Bureau, shall make the best possible use of interactive technologies for networks and meetings, and may use electronic procedures for any aspect of its work, unless otherwise provided in the present Rules of Procedure. The Committee, and its Bureau shall nonetheless strive to give priority of face-to-face forms of interaction.

12.2 When a decision is taken using electronic procedures, the Chair or the Secretariat, where relevant, shall indicate in which manner and by what time-limit an answer is due.

#### **Article 13 – Experts' Working Groups**

13.1 The Committee shall decide the composition and terms of reference of Experts' Working Groups to which it gives special tasks.

13.2 The Executive Secretary shall send to the appointed experts, at least one month before the meeting, the draft agenda and any working documents.

#### **Article 14 – Network of Specialised Scientific Centres**

14.1 A Scientific Centre or a research institution operating in Europe, the Mediterranean or an Observer State may be included in the Network of Specialised Scientific Centres providing that :

- a. the objectives and activities of a Specialised Scientific Centre are in line with the aims of the Agreement and will contribute to the implementation of the objectives of its Medium Term Plan and to its annual programme of activities;
- b. the Centre has the necessary scientific expertise and sound administrative practices to ensure the efficient implementation of its technical activities in the field covered by the Agreement;
- c. the Centre has an international projection in its programmes and activities, in the composition of its ruling bodies and in its target audiences;
- d. the Centre has the recognition from the government in the State in which it is established;
- e. the Centre agrees to the following practices:
  - i. to send annually to the Committee the part of its programme of activities relevant to the Agreement;
  - ii. to ensure appropriate collaboration with the other Specialised Centres of the network;
  - iii. to ensure a regular external scientific assessment of its activities to be provided to the Agreement;
  - iv. to ensure that training courses, workshops or seminars funded by the Agreement comprise a significant number of participants from other States;
  - v. to ensure appropriate collaboration with the Permanent Correspondent of its country (for Centres in member States of the Agreement).

14.2 The Committee, upon examination of a request by a Centre, may decide to allocate the label of Specialised Scientific Centre for a probationary period of two years. The Centre will acquire a permanent status at the end of the two years unless a third of the member States of the Agreement present objections.

14.3 The Committee may, at any time, withdraw the label of Specialised Centre of the Agreement, on the proposal of the Executive Secretary if the Centre requests this in a letter addressed to the Executive Secretary of the Agreement, if it no longer enjoys recognition of a member State, if it has ceased its activities, or in the case of mismanagement of the funds allocated by the Agreement, confirmed by the Auditors of the Council of Europe.

14.4 A decision of the Committee to allocate or to withdraw the label of Specialised Scientific Centre of the Agreement shall require the majority indicated in Article 9.2 of these Rules and shall be a responsibility of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

14.5 The list of Centres participating in the Agreement's Network of Specialised Scientific Centres shall form an Annex I to the Rules of Procedure. Any change to the list should be reflected immediately following the decision of the Committee.

#### **Article 15 – Consultants**

15.1 The Committee, on the basis of proposals submitted by the Permanent Correspondents, shall appoint the consultants requested to carry out studies or fulfil other tasks in relation with the Work Programme of the Agreement. It shall specify the terms of reference of such consultants.

15.2 The Executive Secretary may, in the fulfilment of his tasks, use consultants selected by him/her. If appropriate, he/she may consult the Permanent Correspondents in order to draw up a list of experts.

15.3 The Executive Secretary shall appoint, in concert with the Chair and following the request of a member State, one or several experts able to assist this State in case of major hazards, avoiding any overlapping with other international organisations.

#### **Article 16 – Patronage**

16.1 The Committee may grant the Agreement's patronage to national and international events which comply with the aims of the Agreement.

#### **Article 17 – Observers**

17.1 The Committee may decide, by the majority indicated in Article 9.2 of these Rules, to propose to the Committee of Ministers that the observer status be given, for a period of maximum two years, to the Council of Europe member State or a non-member State participating in the work of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

17.2 The Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning (CEMAT), will be invited to be represented by observers at the meetings of the Committee.

17.3 The Committee may, by a unanimous vote, decide to admit to its meetings representatives of international organisations or observers. It can also admit to part of its meetings representatives of national organisations, prominent in the fields of activity of the Agreement or organise hearings for their intention.

#### **Article 18 – Budget**

18.1 The Committee shall approve, by the majority indicated in Article 9.2 of these Rules, the allocation of grants to projects implemented by the Specialised Centres, within the limits imposed by the budget of the Agreement.

#### **Article 19 – Amendments to the Rules of Procedure**

19.1 The present Rules of Procedure may be amended by a decision taken by a majority indicated in Article 9.2 of these Rules.