

Strasbourg, 23 March 2023

AP/CAT(2023)01

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT

MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

MEETING REPORT 21 March 2023 (9:30-11.00)

PARTICIPANTS:

Bureau members:

Mikaella Mala (MM): Chair
Alessandro Balducci (AB): Vice-Chair
Anton Micallef (AM) : Vice-Chair
Nataša Holcinger (NH): Ex-Chair

Council of Europe (CoE) Secretariat:

Krzysztof Zyman (KZ): EUR-OPA Executive Secretary
Catherine Emezie (CE): EUR-OPA Secretariat

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA *AP/CAT(2023)OJ01*

The Executive Secretary welcomed the participants. He informed the Bureau about the aims of the meeting. The agenda was adopted without amendment.

2. STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Executive Secretary (KZ) gave an update on the recent developments. In 2023, the Agreement is operating under the budget that was communicated to CPCs during their last meeting on 17 November 2022, in Paris.

The fourth Summit of Council of Europe Heads of State will be held on 16-17 May in Reykjavik, Iceland. The main aim of the summit is to discuss the future direction of the CoE, i.e., its mission, and the priorities of the organisation. Furthermore, the CoE Parliamentary Assembly's (PACE) Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development is working on the report on "Political strategies to prevent, prepare for, and face the consequences of natural disasters" that is intended to lead to the adoption of a recommendation and a resolution. The outcome or conclusion of these discussions will be known by mid-year 2023.

The secretariat is examining project proposals with a view of signing grant agreements shortly. The list of project proposals has been reviewed by the Sub-Committee on Projects and the CPC adopted a decision on the proposed allocation of grants. As the funding required to finance all the proposals is more than what the Agreement can afford, the project proposals from GFMC and CUEBC are still on hold pending possible savings in other areas. MM thanked NH and AM for their work examining the project proposals. KZ reiterated that funding priority would be given to specialised centres located in the Agreement's members states.

AM referenced an article published on 6 February 2023 by the UN Secretary General which argues for adopting a human rights-based approach when addressing environmental issues and future generations. This approach ties in with the CoE human rights work and it could be worthwhile for the Agreement to capitalise on this. KZ confirmed that this approach is shared by the CoE. The jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights has been called upon to develop its case-law in environmental matters on account of the fact that the exercise of certain Convention rights may be undermined by the existence of harm to the environment and exposure to environmental risks.

KZ reminded that the CPC meeting will be held one week before the Summit of CoE Heads of State, which may adopt decisions that will address issues of environment and natural disasters. AB suggested in this context, delaying the CPC meeting until after the summit in order to relay any decisions resulting from the summit, as they could prove of fundamental importance for the Agreement's programme of work. It was agreed the Bureau will meet after the summit in order to take stock of the decisions taken.

<p>Decision: The CPC meeting on 11 May will be held as planned and the Bureau will meet on Wednesday 5 July to take stock of both the CPC meeting and the summit.</p>

3. PREPARATION OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

AP/CAT(2023)OJ02

The Bureau discussed two main points on the draft agenda of the next CPC meeting on 11 May 2023:

- Slovakia and Serbia will update the CPC about their plans to join the network of specialised centres respectively.
- Two experts, F. Duarte and C. Rizza, will present a paper on *the use of social media, traditional media, big data and mobile phone networks, to support national measures for successful disaster risk communication*. The secretariat will receive the first draft for comment on 27 March and the final version on 15 April. KZ will share the draft paper with the Bureau. Mr Olivier Galichet, a French expert who works and applies the principles listed in the paper in real time, will share his experience at the meeting. Following this, the Committee will be invited on the opportunity for drafting guidelines and a recommendation to be adopted at the CPC meeting in October.

4. FUNCTIONING OF THE AGREEMENT [AP/CAT\(2007\)32](#)

The Agreement is currently functioning with two staff members due to the reduced budget. There is no budget for additional staff in 2023. The CoE secretariat is in the process of preparing a four-year Programme and Budget 2024-2027 for the Organisation.

KZ attended the conference on Action Oriented Dialogue held in Bucharest in February, where he presented EUR-OPA's current work. The conference was organised by the Romanian Secretary of State at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Mr Arafat, in cooperation with UNDRR and was attended by delegations from over 20 countries.

KZ further informed the Bureau of an invitation he received to attend a conference organised by CERU, on Civil Protection and Science to be held on 29-30 March in Lisbon.

KZ will further attend an Administrative Council meeting and a ceremony to mark the 40th Anniversary of the European University Centre for Cultural Heritage (CUEBC) in Ravello on 14-15 April.

Following a recent meeting with the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the CoE, KZ is invited to the 2023 International Conference on Resilient Systems to be held in Mexico City from 28-30 June. He will also hold bilateral meetings with state officials.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other issues were raised.

6. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Bureau meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 July.

7. END OF THE MEETING