

Strasbourg, 26 February 2024

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Or. English

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

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

MEETING REPORT

14 February 2024 (9:30-10.30)

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

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PARTICIPANTS:

Bureau members:

Dominika Reynolds (DR): Chair
Alessandro Balducci (AB): Vice-Chair
Anton Micallef (AM) : Vice-Chair
Mikaella Mala (MM): Ex-Chair

Council of Europe (CoE) Secretariat:

Tanja Kleinsorge (TK): Head of Department, Reykjavík Process and Environment
Krzysztof Zyman (KZ): EUR-OPA Executive Secretary
Catherine Emezie (CE): EUR-OPA Secretariat

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA [AP/CAT\(2024\)OJ01](#)

The Executive Secretary welcomed the participants and proceeded to share the aims of the meeting. The agenda was adopted without amendment.

2. STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

KZ introduced T. Kleinsorge, the new Head of Department, Reykjavík Process and Environment. The Reykjavík Process is well underway coordinated by DGI, Directorate of Social Affairs, Health and Environment. The Bern Convention, the Landscape Convention and EUR-OPA have all been integrated into the Reykjavík Process and are contributing to it. The staff situation of EUR-OPA remains unchanged, with two staff members. In 2024, the Agreement will focus, in line with the decision taken at the last Joint Meeting of Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Specialised Centres, on Promoting the right to living in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for the current and future generations.

3. STATEMENT BY MS TANJA KLEINSORGE, HEAD OF THE REYKJAVIK PROCESS AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

KZ invited TK to address the Bureau. TK, who has worked extensively with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on issues relating to the environment, was keen to see how the Agreement could contribute to implementation of the Reykjavík Process. The two main goals of the new department would be to 1) fulfil the goals outlined in Appendix V of the Reykjavík Declaration (countering the triple planetary crisis; climate change, pollution and loss of biodiversity) politically and at European level and to 2) initiate the Reykjavík Process, making it a visible priority for the Council of Europe actions relating to the environment with the aim to presenting concrete proposals to the Committee of Ministers (CM) that will meet on 16 and 17 May in Strasbourg. Youth organisations and civil society organisations have been invited to contribute to the Reykjavík Process.

TK encouraged the Agreement to further contribute to the Reykjavík Process as natural and technological hazards (e.g., resulting from and amplified by climate change) provide opportunities for EUR-OPA to develop actions of direct relevance.

4. PREPARATION OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS (CPC)

The next meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents will be held online on 16 May. Holding of in-person meeting is not possible due to its dates coinciding with the CM meeting (16-17 May) and unavailability of meeting rooms and interpretation on these dates.

The CPC will be invited to reflect on expert proposals and themes that would allow the Agreement to feed into the Reykjavík Process, whilst looking at what has been achieved in the area of the right to a clean and healthy environment. Following this discussion, an expert report could be prepared for the CPC meeting in November. AM pointed out several themes in the Declaration which the Agreement could follow up on such as the challenges raised by the triple planetary crisis, inclusion of youth, thereby linking protection of the environment and people. DR agreed on the importance of seeing the interlinkages between human rights and disasters.

KZ suggested approaching the experts who had already contributed to the Council of Europe work in the field of environment, notably to the PACE debate on "Environment and human rights: right to a safe, healthy and sustainable environment" held in September 2021. KZ also invited the Bureau to inform him about any national experts who could contribute to the Agreement's reflection on this topic.

At the next meeting, the CPC will also discuss potential synergies on issues of common interest with the Bern Convention and the Landscape Convention. For example, EUR-OPA could investigate how the Bern Convention's work on biodiversity and the Agreement's work on mitigation of hazards could be combined. KZ will invite the Chair of the Bern Convention Standing Committee to address the CPC meeting.

5. FUNCTIONING OF THE AGREEMENT

EUR-OPA is proceeding without major changes and with no accessions or withdrawals signalled in the last months. The Secretariat is developing a project proposal based on the paper presented by V. Poiarkov (PC, Ukraine) at the CPC meeting in November 2023. The proposal focuses on assistance to the State Emergency Service of Ukraine with regard to all stages of the disaster cycle (prevention, preparedness, response and recovery) related to technological disasters (in particular nuclear accidents), that could result from military engagement, or due to other causes, in order to provide effective protection to the population. If endorsed by all stakeholders, the proposal will seek funding outside of the budget of the Agreement.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other issues were raised.

7. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

No Bureau meeting will be held prior to the CPC meeting in May. Any exchange of information will be via email.