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European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)

84th Joint Meeting of the Committee of Permanent
Correspondents and Directors of Specialised Centres

Meeting Report

6-7 November 2025

Council of Europe Office, Paris

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

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Welcome address

Mr Zyman welcomed the participants to the Agreement's 84th Joint Meeting. The attendees included permanent correspondents (PC) from Azerbaijan, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia and Slovak Republic. Representatives from Luxembourg attended the morning session on the second day of the meeting. The PC from, Monaco, North Macedonia and Romania had apologised for their absence.

Mr Zyman welcomed the permanent correspondents, directors of specialised centres, the observers as well as the experts and invited all present to briefly introduce themselves. He proceeded to briefly summarise the aims of the Agreement. Ms Reynolds (PC, Slovak Republic and CPC Bureau Chair) also welcomed the participants.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda [AP/CAT\(2025\)OJ04](#)

The draft agenda was adopted without revision.

2. Statement by the EUR-OPA Executive Secretary

Mr Zyman recalled the Council of Europe's (CoE) recent activities:

- On 14 May 2025, the Committee of Ministers of the CoE adopted a new CoE Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law. It is the first internationally legally binding instrument that addresses environmental crime and covers a broad range of criminal acts. The Convention is a manifestation of concrete fleshing out of the Reykjavik Declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the CoE in May 2023, which underlines the need to "...counter the impact of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity on human rights and the rule of law..."
- Mr Zyman attended the UNDRR Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction "Every Day Counts, Act for Resilience Today" held in Geneva on 4-6 June 2025. The Platform brought together over 3000 participants from 164 countries joined by a significant number of other participants on-line. It builds on the conclusions of the most recent UNDRR regional meetings, such as the European Platform held in Budva, Montenegro in November 2024. At the GPDRR in Geneva, Dr Karma, Director of the European Centre for Forest Fires (ECFF), Athens, presented the topic "Disability Inclusion in Building Disaster Resilience".
- Mr Zyman participated in the FAO Global Fire Management Hub held in Rome on 10-12 June 2025. It focused on building partnerships and harmonising national, regional and global strategies from planning and management and to operational action on the ground. That meeting was followed up on 7-8 October on International Interoperability hosted by the Global Fire Management Hub in Fribourg, Germany.
- On 14-15 October 2025, Mr Zyman participated in the third workshop on Seismic Assessment and Retrofitting of Masonry in Preserved Structures organised by the Security Innovation Center (SIC) in Belgrade in collaboration with the specialised centres in Athens and Skopje.

- The CoE at their 134th Session held in Luxembourg on 14 May 2025 strongly encouraged member States to implement its Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)20](#) on human rights and the protection of the environment, and instructed its Deputies to move forward as quickly as possible in their consideration of a possible binding or non-binding instrument in this field;
- Mr Zyman reiterated the Agreement's persisting financial difficulties resulting from the nonpayment of contributions by some state parties. The 2026 budget is under discussion by the CM, with the view to its adoption at the deputies budget meeting on 18-20 November 2025.
- The next EUR-OPA Ministerial Session will be hosted in San Marino in March/spring 2027 to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the Agreement. On this occasion, the Agreement's next medium-term plan will be discussed and presented for adoption.
- Ms Reynolds, CPC Bureau Chair, suggested to focus more on EUR-OPA's visibility and on enhancing synergies with other partners and organisations. Mr Zyman emphasised the need to continue to network with international organisations and other member states to the Agreement. [Link to full text](#)

3. Statutory meetings

The Permanent Correspondents adopted the reports of the latest statutory meetings:

- Reports of the Bureau meetings of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on 20 February 2025 [AP/CAT\(2025\)01](#) and 6 September 2025 [AP/CAT\(2025\)03](#).
- Report on the 83rd Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents, 20 May 2025 [AP/CAT\(2025\)02](#).

4. Programme of activities 2025 and the budgetary situation of EUR-OPA [AP/CAT\(2021\)11](#)

The draft 2026 budget is awaiting adoption by the CM towards the end of November 2025.

5. Presentation of activities of the Union for the Mediterranean relating to civil protection and discussion on possible collaboration between the UfM and EUR-OPA.

Mr Valentin FORAND, Civil Protection and Disaster Risk Management Expert, presented UfM's priorities and strategic areas of work. The UfM focuses on stability and resilience, human development, sustainability development and green transition as well as social and economic development. The UfM gathers 43 member states comprised of the 27 European Union member states and 16 other States mostly located around the Mediterranean Sea.

Mr Forand outlined the priorities of the 2030 UfM Action Plan on Civil Protection and Disaster Risk Management, which seeks to support and facilitate cooperation among UfM Member

States in strengthening prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery systems. By 2030, the Action Plan aims to support the establishment of an operational Mediterranean Framework on Civil Protection (MFCP) to facilitate alignment of national/regional/sub-regional frameworks and procedures related to Civil Protection within UfM Member States, for effective 'on the ground' action in connection, interface, and complementarity with the European Union's Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and its regional projects.

Moreover, the UfM Regional Dialogue Platform will function as a space for cooperation and technical exchange, helping Member States identify shared priorities, promote complementarity with the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and regional projects, and mobilise expertise and resources through partnerships with institutions, donors, academia, and the private sector.

Mr Zyman expressed his interest in increasing cooperation between the UfM and the existing CoE structures.

Dr Micallef noted the similarities in goals and objectives (e.g., prevention, preparedness and response) and suggested that joint activities could be foreseen in future. Further, the scientific centres' wide area of expertise provides a basis for networking and international cooperation on several topics related to natural and technological disasters. Mr Zyman hopes to increase cooperation on issues shared by the Agreement and UfM. [Link to presentation](#)

6. Possible increased synergy between EUR-OPA and UNESCO

Dr Denis Chang Seng, Programme Specialist at UNESCO, responsible for the Task Team on Disaster Management and Preparedness presented the activities of the Ocean Decade Tsunami Programme managed by the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for Early Warning and Mitigation System in the North-Eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean and Connected Seas (ICG/NEAMTWS) focusing on early warning systems and tsunami risks. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO is responsible for accreditation of global tsunami warning and mitigation systems.

The Ocean Decade Tsunami Programme's has two objectives, firstly to "...develop the warning systems' capability to issue actionable and timely (<10 min) tsunami warnings...". Secondly, to prepare and make tsunami resilient 100% of at-risk communities by 2030 via programmes aimed at ensuring resilience such as the science-driven IOC-UNESCO Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme (TRRP). The activities entail close collaboration with national civil protection agencies, e.g., improving detection through the installation of deep-sea booths, sharing data and testing of this technology. The NEAMWave26 tsunami readiness exercise will be jointly organised with UfM from 3- 26 March in 2026. [Link to presentation](#)

7. Election of subordinate bodies within the Committee of Permanent Correspondents [AP/CAT\(2022\)08rev](#)

The composition of the current subordinate bodies shall remain unchanged.

8. Report on specialised centres' activities in 2025 and proposals for 2026

The directors of specialised centres presented the project achievements for 2025 and the proposals for 2026.

Security Innovation Center (SIC), Serbia

Mr Stojanovic presented the 2025 activities of SIC which included participation in several events with other partner centres of the Agreement e.g., the Euro-Mediterranean Forum on disaster risk governance organised by CEMEC, San Marino in May. SIC also successfully completed an international project on "Seismic Behaviour of Characteristic Types of Byzantine churches in the Balkan Region" in collaboration with the scientific centres in Greece and North Macedonia.

In 2026, SIC plans to conduct a national risk assessment study of the 13th century Žiča Monastery in Belgrade, in collaboration with the Faculty of Security Studies and other partners. SIC's risk assessment software was made available to the public through the launch of a new bilingual website. [Link to presentation](#)

European Centre for Vulnerability of Industrial and Lifeline Systems (ECILS), North Macedonia

Dr Apostolska, the newly appointed Director, shared ECILS' 2025 achievements. In addition to collaborating with the centres in Greece and Serbia on "Seismic Behaviour of Characteristic Types of Byzantine churches in the Balkan Region", ECILS participated in the panel discussion organised by SIC on 14-15 October in Belgrade.

ECILS contributes toward resilient society and DRR in North Macedonia through continuous research, education, training and awareness raising through various platforms such as the Integrative Strengthening of Seismic Risk Awareness (ISRA) and the Rapid Multi-risk Needs Evaluation and Planning Platform. (EMERGE). These platforms are open for collaboration between the specialised centres in 2026. ECILS will continue its work with youth through its IZIIS project which raises DRR awareness through interactive educational workshops for children and youth. [Link to presentation](#)

European Centre on Urban Risks (CERU), Portugal

Dr Ferreira outlined CERU's key activities for 2025 organised in the context of Municipality of Lisbon programme entitled "Seismic resilience for the hotel sector". As part of this initiative CERU conducted multiple technical visits to hotels to discuss practical and effective strategies aimed at increasing earthquake and tsunami resilience within the hospitality sector. These activities were carried out in collaboration with the Municipality of Lisbon and the Lisbon Fire Brigade Regiment and Instituto Superior Técnico, with the aim of evaluating structural and non-structural vulnerabilities. To follow up, CERU produced a set of recommendations and strategies to enhance earthquakes and tsunami resilience, compiled in a manual entitled "Gestão do risco sísmico e de tsunami no setor hoteleiro - Recomendações". CERU Contributed to Loulé's "Tsunami Ready" Recognition, awarded on 24 October 2025 by UNESCO. As part of this effort, CERU developed educational materials to train beach lifeguards on actions to be taken before, during and after a tsunami, and provided recommendations for boats and maritime safety at the marina.

In 2026, CERU will undertake a project on “Youth4Resilience: mapping risks, shaping futures” aimed at empowering youth, teachers and local communities by raising awareness and strengthening capacities to understand, map and reduce disaster risk. Dr. Ferreira invited other specialised centres to partner with CERU on this project. [Link to presentation](#)

European Center for Disaster Awareness (BeSafeNet), Cyprus

Mr Christou outlined BeSafeNet's 2025 activities. The online Olympiad was held in March for secondary school pupils across Europe on natural and technological disasters. More than 350 secondary schools in 11 countries participated in the Olympiad, marking a 150% increase in participation compared to 2024. The award ceremony will be held in Strasbourg in 2026. This event is significant considering that natural and technological hazards are generally not part of the curriculum in the majority of secondary schools across Europe. BeSafeNet via its website has a broad enough outreach to meet this educational need across European schools.

BeSafeNet collaborated with ICoD, the centre in Malta to update the text on drought and desertification on its website. In 2026, BeSafeNet plans to collaborate with ECPFE, Greece on people with disabilities and their caregivers in the case of an earthquake. [Link to presentation](#)

European Center for Forest Fires (ECFF), Greece

Dr Karma shared ECFF's 2025 activities. The Resilience4all programme focusing on awareness raising on disaster risks continued from 2024, aimed at persons with disabilities. The 2025 “Exercise Hephaestus II” involved multi-stakeholder drills for possible earthquake and fire scenarios and involved persons with disabilities participating in the evacuation exercises. ECFF also participated in the Ignite Stage on “Disability inclusion in building disaster resilience.” Further, Dr Karma shared ECFF's article on EU Climate Adapt Platform of the European Union which tackles the issues of preparedness for climate-related hazards, citing the example of the “Leaving no one behind: inclusive climate resilience in Greece” evacuation exercise.

In 2026, ECFF activities will focus on disaster preparedness via practical tools and methods and citizens' engagement in building inclusive disaster resilience. [Link to presentation](#)

European Centre on Prevention and Forecasting of Earthquakes (ECPFE), Greece

Dr Pelli summarised ECPFE's 2025 activities. ECPFE coordinated phase II of the “Seismic behaviour of characteristic types of byzantine churches in the Balkan region” project in collaboration with the specialised centres in North Macedonia and Serbia. This culminated in a workshop held in Belgrade on 14-15 October. The workshop proceedings will be published in November 2025.

In 2026, ECPFE will update the BeSafeNet website on the topic of how people with disabilities and their care givers should adequately react in case of an earthquake. [Link to presentation](#)

European Center for Buildings Rehabilitation (ECBR), Romania

Dr Georgescu presented ECBR's 2025 activities, notably the DIGIRISX project which focuses on creating digital content through various social media for disaster risk reduction in Romania's seismic zones. This was achieved through the hosting of two webinars which gathered multiple stakeholders including partners from the University of Romania. Topics discussed included putting together a national strategy for seismic risk reduction, actions to be taken before, during and after an earthquake, etc.

In 2026, ECBR's activities will focus on citizen-centred prevention and preparedness in the face of natural hazards related to climate change. It also plans to organise an earthquake evacuation exercise at USAMV University. [Link to presentation](#)

European Centre for Disaster Medicine (CEMEC), San Marino

Prof. Mugavero gave a general overview of CEMEC's 2025 activities focusing on training and education in emergency and risk management, disaster medicine and resilience building. The training was carried out in partnership with the University of the Republic of San Marino's Center for Security Studies, the University of Rome and the Observatory on Security and CBRNe Defence (OSDIFE) in Italy. CEMEC also participated in the launch of the European Disaster Alliance in collaboration with the European Council of Disaster Medicine and other international partners. CEMEC once again hosted the EUROMED PROTECT-NET Forum for disaster risk governance, health preparedness and networking advancement. Several directors of specialised centres participated in the forum. CEMEC will continue to pursue these activities and multi-stakeholder collaborations in 2026. [Link to presentation](#)

Specialised Centre for Technological Hazards (ScenT), Slovak Republic

In 2025, Dr Halúzova implemented the Beyond 7 Dangers project which seeks to spread awareness and optimize preparedness for new threats among different generational groups through its family festivals platform. One of these festivals was "Beyond 7 Mountains" which is held across several locations over 7 consecutive days and attracts over 20 000 visitors. The highlights include puppet theatres, storytelling, sports and quizzes, as well as educational topics such as cyber security. In 2026, the activities will continue, introducing an Environmental Awareness component, ScenT also seeks to expand its cooperation with other stakeholders such as NGOs.

Dr Micallef suggested that ScenT consider dedicating one of their stands to EUR-OPA and raise its visibility by sharing information and promotional materials such as Besafenet and other relevant topics. [Link to presentation](#)

Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Evaluation and Prevention of Seismic Risk (CEPRIS), Morocco

Dr Jabour presented the results of the 2025 activities on tsunami risk mitigation organised by CEPRIS. The project aimed to fortify cities along the coast of Morocco against tsunamis. CEPRIS conducted a tsunami simulation event to show its impact along the coast, the severity of the waves, and measured the timing of impact in order to adequately prepare for any such event. This exercise would serve to guide the Moroccan authorities and communities to respond in a timely manner and put in place effective emergency measures. He cited as an example the fishing harbour which is the main activity in Larache city as well as tourism. On the edge of the city lies the inundation zone and shelters are calculated according to the vulnerability of the areas based on the topography of the city. The tsunami warning chains project will continue in 2026. [Link to presentation](#)

European Centre on Geodynamical Hazards of High Dams (GHHD), Georgia

Dr Varamashvili presented GHHD's 2025 project entitled "Machine learning and landslide hazard maps of Georgia", detailing how to make a stationary hazard map by applying this method. Georgia is a mountainous country, having a high probability of large geological activity due to a combination of different factors. In 2025, landslides intensified in the municipalities of Khemagala and Gverki in the Kharagauli region. Due to the dynamic factor of precipitation, GHHD aimed to create a landslide prediction model for Georgia using the stationary national landslide susceptibility map and precipitation data.

GHHD also conducted early warning systems tests, equipping them with multi-task sensors and applied them to mass movements. The tests were considered successful.

[Link to presentation](#)

Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Insular Coastal Dynamics (ICoD), Malta

Dr Mamo outlined ICoD's 2025 activities which focused on the risks and impacts of environmental change in the mediterranean basin. ICoD collaborated with farmers by seeking ways to apply ground research in order to practically help farmers. The grounded research covered various topics such as hybrid monitoring and engagement with social media, coastal challenges, understanding what the soil data conveys etc. ICoD aims to rediscover traditional water management based on resilience to scarcity (as opposed to abundance). An important part of ICoD's work is to be the link between the farmers and the policy makers.

Regarding monitoring, the soil data provides significant information about drought and flooding e.g., data can be used to predict flooding events. Based on what the soil is telling, the farmers adapt and change methods. Although these are small-scale farmers, they collect their own data. ICoD aims to assist farmers at local level and decipher which products help them to adapt to the prevailing conditions. Dr Mamo also laid emphasis on youth participation and community engagement overall.

In 2026, ICoD will focus on "Engaging Communities in Climate-Induced Hazards" such as floods and droughts. He expressed the hope to collaborate with other EUR-OPA specialised centres on outreach activities. As an example, providing schools/teachers pilot learning kits to help the younger generation understand hazard risk. This is one way to ensure the transfer of knowledge. [Link to presentation](#)

European University Centre for Cultural Heritage (CUEBC), Italy

Mr Ferrigni, shared CUEBC's 2025 activities of the project PRoCLaPreND which is a complementary approach to protecting cultural heritage against natural disasters and mitigating their impact. In 2026, the project will focus on terracing in the Amalfi Coast area using artificial intelligence. The project partners include University of Rome 3 and the local farmers' associations who will put together a set of guidelines to on disaster risk in terraced natural landscapes. [Link to presentation](#)

Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE),

Mr Rajkovchevski summarised the main activities of DPPI SEE. The Initiative is structured around 10 focal points in 10 national civil protection authorities who are all members of Union Civil Protection Mechanism. DPPI SEE focuses on prevention and preparedness in disasters.

The main activities include organising two decision-making regional meetings annually and 7 to 10 Disaster Management Training Program (DMTP) workshops, seminars and trainings.

In 2025, DPPI SEE organised several workshops, exercises, seminars and training events provided focused on mountain rescue, inclusive preparedness, risk analysis etc. They collaborated with several intergovernmental organisations such as UfM and UNDRR. Mr Rajkovchevski expressed his willingness to collaborate with the specialised centres and the Agreement. He welcomed ideas and initiatives to enhance disaster risk resistance and extended an invitation to them to participate in the DPPI SEE meeting to be held on 14-16 April 2026. [Link to presentation](#)

9. Discussion and adoption of the draft recommendation on “Citizen-centred Prevention and Preparedness in the face of natural hazards connected to climate change” [AP/CAT\(2025\)01 REC](#)

Mr Zyman recalled the working paper on “State obligations and people’s right to be protected from the serious effects of global warming: realisation of the right to a healthy and sustainable environment in the face of risks and threats of natural hazards” elaborated by Professor Elisabeth LAMBERT, legal expert and research director in the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), DCS Research Unit and the discussion of the Committee on its findings at the 82nd Joint Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Specialised Centres held on 21-22 November 2024 in Paris. In particular Mr Zyman recalled the CPC’s decision to consider drafting a recommendation on state obligations and peoples’ right to a healthy and sustainable environment in the face of risks and threats of natural hazards, which would take into account the CoE Strategy on Environment and other relevant documents.

Taking into consideration the decision of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE, taken at the meeting in Luxembourg in May 2025, that strongly encouraged member States to implement its Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)20](#) on human rights and the protection of the environment, and instructed its Deputies to move forward as quickly as possible in their consideration of a possible binding or non-binding instrument in this field, it was considered that a CPC Recommendation focused on “Citizen-centred prevention and preparedness in the face of natural hazards connected to climate change” would be an appropriate contribution at the current stage.

The Committee discussed the amendment to the draft that was proposed by Luxembourg in advance of the meeting and accepted it.

Dr Micallef recommended to replace “vulnerability” with “groups at higher risk” as the term vulnerability is not generally accepted as it can be perceived to blame the victim. It was also suggested to reword point 6, to allow the Agreement to approach governments to ascertain/gauge impact of the Recommendation at national level, share best practices and inform of inherent setbacks. Following the vote, the Recommendation was adopted unanimously, on the understanding that the text finalised by the secretariat will be shared with all Permanent Correspondents, including those who were absent at the meeting.

Decision: The Recommendation was adopted.

10. Fifteenth EUR-OPA Ministerial Meeting (spring 2027, San Marino)

The 40th anniversary of the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe [[Resolution \(87\)2](#)] that established the Group for the prevention of, protection against, and organisation of relief in major natural and technological disasters, referred to now as EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement will come on 20 March 2027.

Mr Zyman recalled that the Permanent Correspondent of San Marino proposed at the last CPC meeting in May 2025 to organise the 15th EUR-OPA Ministerial Session in that country on a date falling close to the anniversary to mark the event.

The permanent correspondents are invited to inform their ministries well in advance in order to ensure their presence in person at the Session. Mr Zyman will prepare the relevant documents and the next medium-term plan for the Agreement, building on its achievements and focusing on the way forward in the light of its past work. The relevant documents will be circulated by the next online CPC meeting in April 2026.

The Permanent Correspondents will also be invited to review the Agreement's past recommendations to take stock and to determine how they could be better implemented. Mr Zyman invited the committee to send their ideas for activities over the next 5 years to the secretariat by the end December.

Ms Holcinger supported designing a questionnaire on how the governments have been implementing the recommendations over the years. This would also help determine which direction the Agreement should embark on for the next medium-term plan.

11. Any other business

Dr. Ferreira, informed participants about the [40th General Assembly of the European Seismological Commission](#) to be hosted in Istanbul from 6-11 September 2026 which seeks to explore the latest developments in seismology, earthquake research, technology and applications. She encouraged the directors and EUR-OPA to participate in the assembly.

12. Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting of Permanent Correspondents will be held online in the week of 20-24 April 2026.