EUR-OPA MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT
ACCORD EUR-OPA RISQUES MAJEURS

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Strasbourg, 21 April 2026

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European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)

85th Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents

Meeting Report

21 April 2026

Online meeting

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

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Tuesday, 21 April 2026

Welcome address

Krzysztof Zyman, Executive Secretary of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement, welcomed the participants to the 85th Committee of Permanent Correspondents held online, and stated the objectives of the meeting. The list of participants is set out in Appendix 1.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda AP/CAT(2026)OJ02

The agenda was revised with point 4b withdrawn and point 5 on the agenda revised to reflect the new date of the Rapporteur Group on Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment (GR-C) meeting of 30 June. The agenda was adopted, with the proposed modifications.

2. Statement by the Executive Secretary, Mr Krzysztof Zyman

Mr Zyman updated the participants on the Agreement's current situation.

As EUR-OPA works in synergy with other mechanisms within the Reykjavik Process and Environment Division, Mr Zyman briefed the Permanent Correspondents meetings and various activities of the Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV) which address issues of a broader nature pertaining to the environment. Mr Zyman updated the participants as follows:

- On 24-25 March 2026, CDENV held its first meeting with the aim of setting up its structure and chairmanship. It included an exchange of views on the integration of human rights considerations in environmental matters and instruments and recent developments in the area of social rights, execution of ECtHR judgements and legal cooperation.

  CDENV examined a document reviewing disinformation, misinformation and access to information as concerns the environment and approved sending a questionnaire to its member states for reply by 15 May. This topic ties in with the Agreement's work on the use of social media in disaster risk communication and offers ample opportunity for collaboration in future.

  CDENV examined Recommendation 536(2025) (link) by Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, "An Additional Protocol of the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the Environment" in which it called on the Committee of Ministers "to consider drafting and adopting an Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government in order to ensure that member states enable local authorities to integrate environmental considerations in local governance to address the challenges arising from the triple planetary crisis and environmental degradation".

  At the initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Council of Europe and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) initiative is co-led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Council of Europe, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the first European Forum on Human Rights Defenders will be held in Strasbourg on 3-4 June 2026.

  CDENV held an exchange of views on the state of and prospects for signature and ratification of the Convention on the Protection of Environment through Criminal Law (CETS No. 228) and how to promote it. To date, the convention has been signed by Luxembourg, Portugal,

Moldova and the EU. It will enter into force once it gathers 10 ratifications, including 8 from the member states.

Considering Strategic Objective 5 of the Strategy on the Environment, CDENV examined a document on policy guidance and advice on capacity building measures for adopting nature-based solutions and ecosystems-based approaches set in broader governance structures. It also approved that a questionnaire will be sent to the members, for reply by 15 May.

- On 25 and 26 November, Mr Zyman attended the 2nd Mediterranean Wildfire Workshop in Barcelona, Spain, which brought together 70 participants including the UNDRR, 10 EU members States, the Arab League and other stakeholders. The workshop was hosted at the EU Representation and was co-organised by the European Commission, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Prevention Preparedness Response to natural and man-made Disasters in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Programme (PPRD Med). At the meeting Mr Zyman highlighted the work undertaken on prevention, preparedness and response in the event of forest fires by the Agreement's scientific centres; the European Centre for Forest Fires (ECFF) and the Global fire Monitoring Centre (GFMC). He called for greater coordination of efforts in order to maximise synergies and avoid duplication. The workshop preceded the 10th UfM Regional Resilience and Recovery Forum: Advancing Collective Responses to Crisis, held on 27 November. It centred on examining ways to advance an integrated resilience agenda, connecting prevention, adaptation and mitigation.

- The next meeting of CDENV is scheduled for 13-14 October 2026.

- The Ministry of Culture of Spain in collaboration with the Xunta de Galicia will host on 12-13 May 2026 in Ribeira Sacra, Spain the 27th International Workshop on the implementation of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention entitled "Landscape management in the face of the climate crisis from a resilience approach: challenges and opportunities. The workshop will address the triple planetary crisis: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, through exploring the intersectionality of water landscapes and aquatic cultural landscapes and resilience, adaptation and mitigation. Dr Julian Mamo, Director of the Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Insular Coastal Dynamics (ICoD) in Malta will participate in the workshop and present the centre's project on "Engaging Communities in Climate-induced Hazards (ECCH) – Floods and Droughts", particularly its methodology and how it engages with the local communities to raise awareness on floods and droughts.

- The 2025 BeSafeNet Olympiad Award Ceremony will be held on 30 June in Strasbourg. The laureates are the Storm Chasers team from Licieul "Regina Maria" Romania (1st), the Pauchichi team from Croatia (2nd) and the Abysse team from Cyprus (3rd). A total of 350 secondary schools from 11 countries participated in the Olympiad which comprised of 50 multiple questions on various natural and technological hazards. BeSafeNet is one of the Agreement's flagship projects seeking to raise awareness among youth.

- On 3-5 July, the European Centre for Disaster Medicine (CEMEC), San Marino will host the EUROMED PROTECT-NET – European-Mediterranean Forum for Disaster Risk Governance, Health, Preparedness and Networking Advancement in conjunction with the CEMEC WADEM Summer School in Disaster Medicine. On this occasion, Mr Zyman will also discuss practical arrangements for the EUR-OPA ministerial meeting in 2027.

- Dr Elizabeth Lambert is leading a four-year project on Coastline Loss and Insurance Management (CLAIM). It draws attention to how spatial planning and construction are at risk from climate change and receding coastlines and examines ways to achieve socially and legally agreeable solutions to address changing coastline zoning rules. It also looks at how to award compensation following disasters, through the analysis of international best practices. Dr. Julian Mamo (ICoD) will be invited to participate in this project due to his experience in this field and he will serve as a relay point to keep the agreement informed.

No financing is required on the part of the Agreement. Mr Micallef suggested that reference be made to the work undertaken in partnership with the University of Modena regarding coastal risk management as it feeds into this work.

- The Europe and Central Asia Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction will be held on 26-27 May 2027 in Romania. The main themes will include, among others, risk communication, addressing misinformation and disinformation, early warning systems, DRR financing and the Sendai post-2030 agenda. It will feed into and inform the ninth Global Platform for DRR to be held in 2028 in Doha, Qatar.

3. Statutory meetings

a. Meeting report, Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents, 17 March 2026 AP/CAT(2026)01

b. Report of the Joint Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and directors of specialised centres, 6-7 November 2025, Paris AP/CAT(2025)05

The meeting reports were adopted.

4. Preparation of the 15th EUR-OPA Ministerial Session, 19 March 2027 (tbc), San Marino

Mr Zyman gave an update on the planning of the next EUR-OPA Ministerial Session to be held in 2027 in San Marino. In this context, he recalled that the last Ministerial Session was held as a side event during the EFDRR on 24 November 2021 in Matosinhos, Portugal, at the time when travel restrictions related to the covid pandemic were partially lifted. Mr Zyman thanked Prof. Balducci, Permanent Correspondent, San Marino for taking the initiative to host the event. It is planned that in addition to the ministers, the directors of specialised centres and representatives of local authorities in San Marino, NGOs and media will be invited.

The aim of the 2027 Ministerial session is intended to set the tone for the functioning and direction of the Agreement within the Council of Europe in the next years. It will aim to convey a political message, whilst taking stock of the past and shaping a strategy for the present. The 40th anniversary of the Agreement also falls in March 2027. A save-the-date will be sent in early July, once the date is confirmed, following consultations with the authorities of the host country.

Dr Micallef raised the opportunities offered by media coverage of the Ministerial Session to promote the visibility of the Agreement. Mr Zyman clarified that the Council of Europe's Media department will liaise in advance of the session with media outlets and provide them with background information and key deliverables expected from the session. Prof. Balducci clarified that as 50% the media in San Marino are owned by Italian television networks, this guarantees wider diffusion, in addition to the presence of the Italian press and the local media in San Marino.

The meeting documents (Ministerial Declaration and Strategy for 2027-2031), the drafts of which were distributed in advance of the 85th CPC meeting, will be finalised, with the agreement of the CPC and be made available in English and French before the next CPC meeting. Any comments relating to the proposed themes should be forwarded to Mr Zyman by mid-June 2026 to ensure that the documents are finalised well ahead of the meeting.

Decision: the committee agreed to take the proposed drafts as a basis for further discussion and to submit proposals for modifications to these texts by 15 June 2026.

5. Participation of the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents in the meeting of the GR-C Rapporteur Group on Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment of the Committee of Ministers (30 June 2026, 10:00)

The Chair of the Committee, Ms Dominika Reynolds, is invited to the next GR-C meeting to be held on 30 June 2026 in Strasbourg, along with chairpersons of the Bern Convention, the Landscape Convention and the Steering Committee on the Environment (CDENV). Ms Reynolds will present the recent Committee of Permanent Correspondents' Recommendation on "Citizen-centred prevention and preparedness in the face of natural hazards connected to climate change" (link) and inform the GR-C on the planned 15th Ministerial Session of the Agreement.

6. Implementation of past EUR-OPA recommendations AP/CAT(2026)04

The secretariat has prepared a compilation of 19 recommendations spanning the past 25 years, available in French and English. The topics range widely from scientific themes to rendering psycho-social support to victims. to the secretariat will publish the compilation as a reference document for the Agreement. Mr Zyman invited the CPC to review the listed recommendations to ascertain if they remain relevant or if they require updating, and to reflect on how the Agreement could build on these existing documents. Dr Micallef suggested that the real value could be determined after carrying out an evaluation of the impact on the member states, to determine if they served as tools that informed directly or indirectly legislative or other normative provisions and practical measures adopted in EUR-OPA member states. Mr Zyman suggested preparing a short questionnaire based on three or four recommendations to ascertain possible technological advances, adaptation of organisational structures, legislative changes or any other positive outcomes. The responses to the questionnaires will be discussed at one of the forthcoming CPC meetings after the Ministerial Session in San Marino.

Decision: The Secretariat will prepare a questionnaire, and following consultation with the Bureau and transmit it to the Permanent Correspondents.

7. Programme of activities 2026 and the budgetary situation of EUR-OPA AP/CAT(2021)11

EUR-OPA 2026 Budget AP/CAT(2026)02

Mr Zyman gave a brief overview of the financial situation in 2026. Despite the critical funding situation, (unpaid contributions by two member states), the Agreement maintained its core activities including two CPC meetings in 2026 (one on-line, one in-person) and funding of nine grants for projects implemented by the EUR-OPA scientific centres. However, other activities, including outreach work had to be scaled down considerably, on account of the lack of funding.

8. Opportunities for promoting the Agreement in 2026:

a. 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Yerevan, Armenia, 18-30 October 2026.

b. COP31 on Climate Change, 9-10 November 2026, Antalya, Türkiye

Mr Zyman encouraged the permanent correspondents to take advantage of opportunities offered by the forthcoming COP meetings, particularly the session in Antalya to promote the Agreement's work. He suggested that permanent correspondents could organise side events to

that end. The secretariate could also provide information materials and speaking points which could be used by interested State delegations.

9. Any other business

No other issues were raised

10. Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 5-6 November 2026, in Strasbourg.

Appendix I

List of Participants

1. Mr Jeyhun Isgandarli (PC, Azerbaijan)
2. Ms Daniela Ilieva (PC, Bulgaria)
3. Ms Nataša Holcinger (PC, Croatia)
4. Ms Mikaella Mala (PC, Cyprus)
5. Mr Ioannis Boukis (PC, Greece)
6. Mr Pol Henrotte (PC, Luxembourg)
7. Dr Anton Micallef (PC, Malta)
8. Naima Oumoussa (Morocco)
9. Mr Vlatko Sesov (PC, North Macedonia)
10. Ms Ana Freitas (PC, Portugal)
11. Ms Carla Barreiros (Portugal)
12. Prof. Alessandro Balducci (PC, San Marino)
13. Mr Luka Causic (PC, Serbia)
14. Ms Jelena Popovic (Serbia)
15. Ms Dominika Reynolds (Slovak Republic)

Observers

16. Olga Frayshteter, Council of Europe Development Bank

EUR-OPA secretariat

17. Krzysztof Zyman
18. Catherine Emezie