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Or English

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

**PRIORITY ACTIVITIES
PROGRAMME OF WORK 2020-2021
(REVISED)**

**Adopted at the 74th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and meeting of the
Directors of Specialised Centres (Joint Meeting)
3-4 November 2020, Strasbourg, France.**

INTRODUCTION

The EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement lost the financial contribution of Turkey (325k€/year), due to the Turkish decision to withdraw from the Agreement as of January 2019. The Russian Federation withheld its membership fee to the Council of Europe since 2017, due to divergences within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. In July 2019, the Russian Federation paid its 2019 financial contribution to the Organisation. EUR-OPA has lost in one-year 325k€, out of a total budget of 1025k€ (staff + activities), which represents a loss of -32%. Therefore, the funding for the activities was reduced and the posts of the Deputy Executive Secretary and one Project Assistant were suppressed to maintain an acceptable ratio between activity/staff from a managerial point of view. Moreover, on 28 April 2020 Algeria, informed of its decision to withdraw from the Agreement as from 1 January 2021. This step, accompanied by the loss of 43k€/year, will negatively impacts further the EUR-OPA's scope of action.

The Secretariat prepared a contingency plan to ensure the smooth running of EUR-OPA despite its reduced human and financial resources. It is therefore proposed to streamline the programme of activities and to identify some priority actions. For example, EUR-OPA could finance a few projects on selected priority topics for up to four years and inform the decision-makers of the outcomes in order to contribute to good governance practices on risk prevention, preparedness and management.

The Secretariat invites the Permanent Correspondents to identify specific targeted activities to be financed by EUR-OPA for the 2020-2021 work programme, in complementarity with and/or support to the initiatives undertaken by other international organisations in the field of disaster risk reduction.

RESULTS OF PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS ON PRIORITISATION

- A) At the Joint meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Centres held in Zagreb on 6-7 November 2018, the following priority topics were identified:
- Strengthen the interface between science and policy-making (Greece).
 - Fires and vulnerable groups (Greece and Albania).
 - Fires and floods are of common interest for many countries in the region, therefore collaboration with neighbouring countries should be strengthened (Albania).
 - Risk culture (Italy): build a global project on local risk culture including in schools, building on previous project results and call for contributions and collaboration in this subject.
- B) The Bureau met on 29 April 2019 and proposed the following options:
- consider all priority topics identified in the document AP/CAT(2018)05 for the 2019 programme of activities, as all the issues were relevant;
 - deal with priority topics that were not being addressed yet (e.g. developing cooperation among all decision-makers to better define authorities' adequate role in DRR);
 - promote the protection of cultural heritage and organise a national workshop on this topic.

HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH AND INCLUSION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN DRR

The vulnerability of individuals, communities and the environment is a major factor that increases exposure to disaster risks, although these risks do not affect everybody in the same way. Underprivileged people and socially disadvantaged groups are the most exposed and suffer most directly from disasters. Yet the most vulnerable people are often not sufficiently considered in prevention strategies or operational manuals. EUR-OPA has centred its activities on the resilience of vulnerable groups such as migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, people with disabilities and children.

EUR-OPA encourages and supports projects with a view to preparing recommendations for the reduction of exposure of vulnerable persons to hazards. The guidelines aim to improve co-ordination between civil protection and other agencies supporting vulnerable groups, to exchange good

practices for engaging young people in civil society and in all phases of the disaster risk management cycle, as well as actions for engaging with vulnerable groups and using their skills and capacities for disaster risk reduction. The inclusive approach represents an added value of EUR-OPA action.

PROPOSALS FOR PRIORITY ACTIONS

1. Strengthening the interface between science, technology and policy

In the last 32 years, the network of Specialised Centres has produced a significant number of scientific instruments, technological tools and guidelines to better assess evolving risks and adapt resilience strategies accordingly.

The work done by the Centres is not always visible at national and international level and, therefore, the Permanent Correspondents and national decision-makers do not draw greater benefit from the available scientific and technological knowledge aimed at improving governance practices. In order to increase visibility and accessibility to the work done by the Centres, the Secretariat has developed a dedicated internet page for the Centres and a collaborative platform on the EUR-OPA [website](#).

Permanent Correspondents are invited to use and promote the scientific instruments and guidelines developed by the Specialised Centres to identify policies, strategies and good practices for the prevention, preparedness and management of natural and technological disasters.

It is now of paramount importance to capitalise on the existing EUR-OPA work and tools for better governance and cooperation in disaster risk reduction.

Who is doing what?

Directors of Specialised Centres: complete their project reports in the EUR-OPA database and download the results of their researchers, scientific instruments, technological tools, guidelines, etc.

Permanent Correspondents: use and promote the Centres' results for their national DRR-related policies, strategies and good practices on selected topics.

Secretariat: provide support to the users of the collaborative platform and Centres' webpage.

2. Priority projects in 2020-21

It could prove more beneficial to allocate the funds to limited priority projects of a four-year duration wherein, if possible, several Centres can cooperate on the same topic. The Permanent Correspondents should select priority topics quadrennially in order to deal with different and/or emerging issues on a rotational basis, paying attention to the protection of vulnerable groups.

It is recommended that one or more Permanent Correspondents take a leading role and become the "Ambassador" of such a project; providing support and visibility, in collaboration with the Secretariat, for political relevance and to ensure its impact.

Who is doing what?

Permanent Correspondents: select priority topics for limited projects for the new biennial programme 2020-21, provide support and visibility to the projects, promote the use of projects' results to decision-makers to identify policies and government practices in DRR.

Directors of Specialised Centres: submit to the Secretariat project proposals in line with the priority topics selected by Permanent Correspondents and ensure the suitable cooperation between partners.

Secretariat: provide support and resources to selected projects, guarantee the visibility and the diffusion of projects' outcomes on EUR-OPA website and international events.

USING SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE TO BETTER ASSESS EVOLVING RISK AND ADAPT ACCORDINGLY THE RESILIENCE STRATEGIES

*First Priority for Action of the Sendai framework:
"Understanding disaster risk"*

AND

DEVELOPING COOPERATION AMONG ALL DECISION-MAKERS TO BETTER DEFINE AUTHORITIES' ADEQUATE ROLE IN DRR

*Second Priority of Action of the Sendai Framework:
"Strengthening disaster risk governance"*

A) Strengthening the interface between science, technology and policy

- Fires
- Floods
- Landslides
- Heat-waves
- Earthquakes
- Nuclear disasters
- **Biological hazards**

Tools available are listed in Appendix I

Role of Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Specialised Centres:

- Implement/promote good practices in order to improve governance and cross-border cooperation on wildfire DRR.
- Disseminate teaching and guiding materials for citizens on the causes of floods and prevention measures to areas exposed to this risk.
- Test the cost-effective autonomous telemetric early warning system for detecting floods, in particular in cross-border regions, and exchange experience with neighbourhood countries;
- Implement/promote the Guidebook on local heat-wave risk adaptation skills.
- Implement/promote the Recommendations to protect people from nuclear disaster together with the appropriate national institutions.
- Implement/promote the Guidelines for strengthening the role of local authorities in building disaster resilient communities, work with national and local media to raise awareness on DRR.

B) Priority projects 2020-21

Natural hazards:

Natural hazards are a common concern for many countries. Therefore, some major projects on prevention, preparedness and risk management could be proposed by the Specialised Centres, focusing on strengthening international cooperation and cross-border exchange of experience with neighbouring countries and considering vulnerable people. Transversal cooperation between different risks should also be promoted through projects.

The outcomes of the projects should strengthen the interface between science and policy-making by providing concrete tools/guidelines/recommendations for the decision-makers to conceive appropriate legislations, policies and governance practices on risk management.

Cultural Heritage:

One main project on protection of cultural heritage and promotion of local risk culture, building on previous project results, could be proposed by the Specialised Centres.

Biological Hazards:

The COVID-19 pandemic, which first appeared at the end of 2019 in Wuhan, China has had a devastating effect on individuals, families and communities across the world including Europe and the Mediterranean. Given that the network of Permanent Correspondents and Specialised Centres has a wealth of expertise on biological hazards and can offer valuable tools for governments and citizens to find the best and most sustainable responses to the Covid-19 crisis, it is proposed that, as a first step, Specialised Centres of the Agreement, assisted as appropriate by external consultants, prepare stock-taking reports on issues relating to biological hazards, affecting persons in particular those belonging to vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, children, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, including as regards respect for human rights of such persons.

**PROMOTING RISK CULTURE AMONG POPULATION
(CHILDREN AND GROUPS WITH SPECIAL VULNERABILITIES)**

*Fourth Priority for Action of the Sendai Framework:
“Enhancing disaster preparedness”*

AND

FOSTERING POPULATION’S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

*Third Priority for Action of the Sendai Framework:
“Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience”*

A) Strengthening the interface between science, technology and policy

1. Children:

- Promote disaster risk education in schools, focusing on local risk and the conduct to be observed in emergency situations.
- Promote training on risk preparedness for teachers in schools located in risk prone areas.
- Elaboration of academic curricula for the training of didactic staff on the protection of children against risks. Organise awareness campaigns with public participation.

Tools available are listed in Appendix I

Role of Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Specialised Centres:

- Raise awareness of Ministries of Education on the existing EUR-OPA educational tools.
- Liaise with the Ministry of Education to encourage schools to participate in the BeSafeNet Olympiad online competition.
- Encourage evacuation drills in schools located in risk-prone regions.
- Organise awareness campaigns and develop training materials on risk preparedness.
- Disseminate training and pedagogical materials for citizens on seismic risk preparedness

2. Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees

Tools available are listed in Appendix I

- **With the help of an external consultant, draft a report (working paper) on the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees in viral pandemic (drawing examples from experiences gathered during the Covid-19 pandemic) with a view to holding an exchange of views at the CPC meeting and adopting a Resolution.**

Role of Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Specialised Centres:

- Implement/promote guidelines and practices for the inclusion of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in disaster preparedness and response.

3. People with disabilities

Tools available are listed in Appendix I

- **With the help of an external consultant, draft a report (working paper) on Disabled Persons in Viral Pandemics (drawing examples from experiences gathered during the Covid-19 pandemic) with a view to holding an exchange of views at the CPC meeting and adopting a Resolution.**

Role of the Permanent Correspondents and Directors of the Specialised Centres:

- Implement/promote good practice on disaster preparedness and response targeting people with disabilities.

B) Priority projects 2020-2021

Human Rights approach and inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Disaster Risk Reduction

- 1 project on education targeting schools and raising public awareness on risks.
- 1 project on migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and displaced persons.
- 1 project on people with disabilities.

Appendix I

Council of Europe Recommendations and Guidelines

A) Climate Change

- a. **Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)03** of the Committee of Ministers to member States on cultural heritage facing climate change: increasing resilience and promoting adaptation [EN](#)[FR](#)
- b. **Recommendation 2011 - 2** of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on preventing and fighting wildland fires in a context of climate change, adopted at the 61st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EUR-OPA Agreement, Yerevan, Armenia, 29-30 September 2011 [EN](#) [FR](#)
- c. **Recommendation 2010 - 1** of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on reducing vulnerability in the face of climate change, adopted at the 12th Ministerial Session of the EUR-OPA Agreement, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, 28 September 2010 [EN](#) [FR](#) | [RU](#)
- d. **Recommendation 2009 - 1** on Vulnerability of Cultural Heritage to Climate Change, adopted at the 57th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EUR-OPA Agreement, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 15-16 October 2009 [EN](#) [FR](#)

B) Environment

- a. **Recommendation 2012 - 1** of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction, adopted at the 62nd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EUR-OPA Agreement, Strasbourg, France, 26-27 April 2012 [EN](#) [FR](#)
- b. **Recommendation** on Risks in coastal areas, adopted at the 53rd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EUR-OPA Agreement, Bucharest, Romania, 27-28 September 2007 [EN](#) | [FR](#)

C) Governance

- a. **Recommendation** on local and regional authorities preventing disasters and facing emergencies, adopted at the 11th Ministerial Session of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), Marrakech, Morocco, 31st October 2006 [EN](#) | [FR](#)
- b. **Recommendation 2009 - 2** on the promotion and strengthening of national platforms for disaster risk reduction, adopted at the 57th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EUR-OPA Agreement, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 15-16 October 2009 [EN](#) [FR](#)

D) Radiation Risks

- a. **Recommendation 2011 - 1** of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on information to the public on radiation risks, adopted at the 61st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EUR-OPA Agreement, Yerevan, Armenia, 29-30 September 2011 [EN](#) | [FR](#)
- b. **Recommendation 2008 - 1** on Radiological protection of local communities : improving preparedness and response, adopted at the 55th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EUR-OPA Agreement, Istanbul, Turkey, 30-31 October 2008 [EN](#) | [FR](#)

E) Vulnerable groups

- a. **Recommendation 2016 - 1** of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on the Inclusion of Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees in disaster preparedness and response, adopted at the 13th Ministerial Session of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), Lisbon, Portugal, 26 October 2016. [EN](#) | [FR](#)
- b. **Guidelines** for assisting migrants, asylum seekers and refugees during emergencies and disasters (2016) (AP/CAT(2016)08 [EN](#) | [FR](#)
- c. **Recommendation 2013 - 1** of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on the inclusion of people with disabilities in disaster preparedness and response, adopted at the 64th meeting of the Committee of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), Paris, France, 24-25 October 2013 [EN](#) | [FR](#)
- d. *Major Hazards and People with Disabilities: a [toolkit for good practice](#)*
- e. **Recommendation** on Disaster risk reduction through education at school, adopted at the 11th Ministerial Session of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), Marrakech, Morocco, 31st October 2006 [EN](#) | [FR](#)
- f. **Recommendation** on Psychosocial support and services for victims of disasters, adopted at the 53rd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EUR-OPA Agreement, Bucharest, Romania, 27-28 September 2007 [EN](#) | [FR](#)

Selection of other tools and reference texts (the list is not exhaustive)
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Fires

- Recommendations and good practices to improve governance and cross-border cooperation on wildfire disaster risk reduction with emphasis on Eastern Europe.
- Recommendations to protect the population against exposure to fine and ultrafine particles as a side effect of forest fires, with special attention to vulnerable groups of population (e.g. pregnant women, children, people with disabilities).

Floods

- Relevant material, instructions, booklets for public information on floods.
- Cost-effective autonomous telemetric early warning systems for the detection of floods, mudflows and rock fall initiation.

Heat-waves

- Guidebook on local heat-wave risk adaptation skills.

Nuclear disasters

- Recommendations for better protection of people in case of nuclear disasters.

Local authorities

- Guidelines for strengthening the role of local authorities to build disaster resilient communities.

Vulnerable groups

- BeSafeNet: a website providing reliable educational material about hazards and preparedness. An Olympiad on knowledge of natural and technological hazards will be organised in April 2019 and will consist of an online competition.
- Methodology for teaching the course “Basic knowledge on safe life activities basis” for public school teachers.
- Methodology and Action Plan to prepare national and municipal Campaigns on awareness raising, acquisition and consolidation of adequate behaviour skills in emergencies.
- Training and pedagogical materials on seismic risk for citizens’ preparedness.
- Recommendation 2016-1 of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on the inclusion of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in disaster preparedness and response.
- Guidelines for assisting migrants, asylum seekers and refugees during emergencies and disasters.
- Migrants in disaster risk reduction: practices for inclusion.