

Strasbourg, 25 April 2018

AP/CAT(2018) 07
Or: English

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT (EUR-OPA)

MEETING OF THE BUREAU COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

MEETING REPORT

12 April 2018, Strasbourg

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

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Draft meeting report

Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

AP/CAT(2018)OJ01 For adoption

The Executive Secretary, G. Silvestrini, welcomed the members of the Bureau and presented the agenda which was adopted without further additions (Appendix I).

2. STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

For information

G. Silvestrini gave an update of the budget situation following the discontinuation of Turkey as a major Council of Europe (CoE) contributor. Turkey's contribution was cut by 147 000€, thereby necessitating the preparation of an emergency plan for EUR-OPA and the renegotiation of grant agreements for the specialised centres. Staff costs were reduced by 59 000€ and an A3 administrator post downgraded to a B5 post in order to ensure a balanced ratio between activities and staff. This was the most suitable option that would enable EUR-OPA to keep all 4 existing posts.

Russian Federation withholding financial contributions to the CoE since June 2017 to date has compounded the funding situation and if there is no resolution by May 2019, EUR-OPA would lose 325 000€ per year in funding. In the meantime, G. Silvestrini is actively engaged in raising EUR-OPA's profile before several ambassadors e.g. Slovak Republic, Mexico, Italy, Japan given the particularly rich experience of these countries in DRR.

3. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2017

3.1. Statutory meetings

Joint Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents with the Directors of the Specialised Centres (Paris, 6-7 November 2017)

[AP/CAT\(2017\)20](#) Meeting report for information

G. Silvestrini recalled the salient points of the last meeting. The aim was for the CPCs and the Directors of Specialised Centres to meet for the first time in the context of a joint meeting, to know each other and to provide information on the scientific projects as the CPCs were often not informed about what the centres were doing. Although the joint meeting was hugely beneficial, Luxembourg requested that CPCs also be given an opportunity to meet alone. The 2018 joint meeting should take this request into account and the following discussion ensued:

J. Isgandarli thought it was a good opportunity to organise another joint meeting. He thought it was positive in the sense it afforded both groups an opportunity to meet each other directly, hear firsthand and appreciate the work the Directors are engaged in and he suggested this format be continued. He used this opportunity to inform EUR-OPA that there would soon be a new director of the centre in Baku due to efforts by the Ministry of Interior's administration and that documents have just been submitted for registration. In reply to G. Silvestrini's question on the timeline for this important development, it could take at least 4 months for the centre to complete registration procedures. The Azeri Centre will focus on the protection of cultural heritage from disasters.

A. Vahtarić highlighted the value of cohesion between both groups as the centres, in addition to reporting on current work, have an opportunity to share their ideas on future projects. The structure of the meeting could serve to curb the influence and outcome of projects so that they are in line with CPCs needs and priorities. A. Vahtarić had positive feedback from N. Holcinger, who had represented her at the joint meeting.

Decision: EUR-OPA should continue to organise joint meetings in future. However, the CPCs should also be given a space to meet separately in order to discuss their specific agenda.

4. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2018

4.1. Statutory activities

The joint meeting of Permanent Correspondents and Directors of the Specialised Centres will be

organised in Croatia or Strasbourg on 6-7 November 2018, under the Croatian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers.

Bureau members were invited to discuss the preparation of the joint meeting and make proposals for the agenda. The meeting will be organised during the Croatia Chairmanship (18 May to 25 November 2018), in order to give visibility to EUR-OPA and it could deal *inter alia* with a topic of interest to the host country.

The structure of the meeting should allow starting with presentation of directors' 2018 activities. This would give the CPCs more points to reflect on and discuss during their own meeting, e.g. new priority actions, mainstreaming of existing projects etc. It was agreed to keep the meeting to 2 days maximum not only due to financial constraints but for the purpose of effectiveness.

Decision: A. Vahtarić will contact the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Representation in Strasbourg to know if they agree to host the meeting in Croatia and inform the Secretariat. If it is positive, A. Vahtarić will negotiate organisational participation/costs to the ministry in terms of venue, identify 2 or 3 hotels and negotiate hotel costs (participants will be asked to book directly), one or two dinners, coffee breaks and a cultural event. EUR-OPA will take care of the invitations, agenda, travelling and per diem costs of some correspondents as well as interpretation expenses (EN, RU, FR).

If it is not feasible to meet in Croatia, the meeting will be held in Strasbourg. 1.5 days for the joint meeting and 0.5 day (second afternoon) for CPCs meeting. The agenda for the joint meeting should be ready and circulated to the Chair and Bureau members for approval before the summer break.

Evidence of improvement and impact of the work of Specialised Centres and Committee of Permanent Correspondents in national legislation, policies and strategies for disaster risk reduction

[AP/CAT\(2018\)02](#) Survey for discussion

Further to the CoE Committee of Ministers (CM) request to measure the impact of EUR-OPA's work based on several indicators e.g. the number of and implementation of recommendations/guidelines, their impact in member States' national policies and strategies, the Secretariat prepared a template for a survey. P. Cadeac explained that the aim of the online *Survey on the implementation of EUR-OPA recommendations* is:

- to measure the actual impact/usefulness of EUR-OPA instruments and recommendations. The survey will be sent to the CPCs and Directors of Specialised Centres in order to collect information and on if and how the EUR-OPA recommendations are being applied in the member States. It is hoped to disseminate the questionnaire in May and receive the results before the joint meeting. The survey will also show if the recommendations are useful, too general or specific enough, value for money, adequate, whether more need to be produced and where efforts should be pooled in the effort to add value to EUR-OPA's work.
- A. Vahtarić highlighted the conciseness of the survey remarking that it would provide a baseline for future work; nothing needed to be changed or added. Asking if a member State could provide more than one response to the survey, A. Vahtarić added she aims to share the survey with multiple ministries and governmental agencies too. A. Freitas will also share with several other partner ministries e.g. the ministry in charge of asylum seekers and refugees, and she will coordinate all the replies and feedback to EUR-OPA.

Decision: beside the link to the electronic questionnaire for the survey, the word document version will be made available for dissemination by the Permanent Correspondents to other interested groups/authorities in order to collect the requested information.

4.2. Thematic Priorities

2018 Projects of the Specialised Centres

Compilation of revised projects [APCAT\(2017\)12REV](#)

For information

Bureau members were invited to take note of the revised list of projects to be financed in 2018-2019. C. Emezie gave an overview of EUR-OPA projects, funding and the themes of the four

priority area as outlined in the Medium Term Strategy. There was a need to address the imbalance as priority 2, "Developing cooperation among all decision-makers to better define authorities' adequate role in DRR" only had 4 centres working on this theme. Priority 2 is important as it provides the evidence needed to assess the impact of the centres' projects at national level.

In reply to J. Isgandarli's question of if co-funding is allowed for EUR-OPA projects, some centres are already co-financed by other partners and international organisations. J. Isgandarli asked if a ministry could implement the project with EUR-OPA funding since there is no centre in Azerbaijan currently. G. Silvestrini explained that this could prove difficult and it would be better to finance projects through the country specialised centre, as foreseen in the EUR-OPA resolution. J. Isgandarli suggested the organisation of a workshop on vulnerable groups and DRR to be held in Baku in 2019. G. Silvestrini and the Bureau supported the idea on this priority topic for the EUR-OPA programme of work.

Decision: J. Isgandarli agreed to prepare a concept note with a draft programme for the intended event and send it to G. Silvestrini to study. The documents will be discussed at the next Bureau meeting for submission to the joint meeting in November.

4.3. Operational Activities

Vulnerable Groups and Risk Management:

Children/Teenagers and DRR – collaboration with the Council of Europe education department on: BeSafeNet project and organisation of the Olympiad on knowledge of Natural and Technological disasters

[APCAT\(2018\)01](#)

Letter to Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Centres
For information

Bureau members were informed of the preparation of the activities targeting students in secondary schools. P. Cadeac presented BeSafeNet's work and the Olympiad to be held in April 2019 (the timing takes into account the school calendar and the required time for teachers to train students) among secondary schools. The aim of BeSafeNet is to foster knowledge of risk culture as well as to raise awareness among students. The online tool is available in 5 languages and focuses on 5 hazards. BeSafeNet also aims to collaborate with the Education Department of the CoE.

The quiz will only be held in English and the online tool has been publicised to ministries of education, the CPCs and directors of centres. Another possible future objective is to add to schools curricula a component on hazards prevention and preparedness due to their increase because of climate change. Letters have now been sent out to ministries of education through the CPCs. The Bureau members all acknowledged receipt of the letter. The BeSafeNet editorial meeting will take place in Strasbourg on 17-18 April.

It was suggested to add a BeSafeNet website link to websites of ministries in order to diffuse the information on the Olympiad and give visibility to the information tool. J. Isgandarli also recommended to tie 1st March, the international civil defence day, to the BeSafeNet campaign and he suggested organising the Olympiad on this date, to give greater visibility to the event. G. Silvestrini explained Board members' particular skills (language and specific expertise covering the 5 hazards on the website). He also applauded the dynamism and motivation of the Cyprus team who have finalised the website and set up the online tool. This is a tangible educational tool and this Olympiad will be the first as well as a test to see if the website can withstand the heavy wave of visits without crashing. It has also adapted as an iPhone app. Further textual revisions to the website will be carried out before the Olympiad. Many interesting prizes are available e.g. cash prizes to buy school materials and iPads for the three best score schools, watches for students, several other visibility items, diplomas for all competitors, etc. The Bureau members were encouraged to add the links to their websites if possible. Cross-sectorial cooperation is a priority for EUR-OPA and the aim is to cooperate on issues such as education, migrants, vulnerable groups, cultural heritage, etc.

Decision: the 2 letters addressed to ministries of education and to the CPC and the rules will be translated into Russian, if cost estimates are reasonable, and addressed to Russian speaking countries to facilitate their participation in the Olympiad. P. Cadeac to provide a cost estimate for translation.

Cultural Heritage and Risk Management:

Workshop on "Culture against Disasters" (Ravello, Italy, 28-29 September)

[APCAT\(2018\)04](#) and [APCAT\(2018\)06](#)
For information

G. Silvestrini informed the Bureau members of the preparation of a workshop on "Culture against Disasters", organised by the European University Centre for Cultural Heritage, in Ravello, Italy on 28-29 September. He presented the concept note and the draft programme's innovative and interesting topic which focuses on the management and protection of cultural landscapes for reducing and preventing the impact of natural disasters, as well as maintaining traditional farming and constructing practices. A. Freitas explained how Portugal is seriously addressing the important question of "creating value" so that the younger generation is encouraged to live locally, and also to dissuade people from only owning holiday homes in rural areas. The government is raising awareness through the "Safety Cities" programme where it works with local leaders (at grassroots level), schools and churches so they can act as the contact in emergency situations.

Decision: The Secretariat will diffuse information about the conference as widely as possible and invite the CPC and Directors of the Centres to attend.

Technical Assistance to member States:

EUR-OPA collaboration with the Confidence Building Programme of the Council of Europe: technical assistance on flood prevention to be provided to Bosnia and Herzegovina

[AP/CAT\(2018\)03](#)

For information

G. Silvestrini informed the Bureau of the development of synergies with the CoE Confidence Building Programme. This approach aims at improving communication and reconciliation between people in post-conflict contexts in Europe. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the proposal is to get communities in the Republika Srpska and the Federation to work together when disasters occur, since disasters impact several communities irrespective of demarcations e.g. floods, forest fires, etc. The objective is to cooperate on flood prevention and DRR appraisal to identify local needs and assess the most adequate measures e.g. nature-based solutions to limit the impact of floods etc. A. Vahtarić confirmed that Croatia had regional experts in every disaster-related field and would be willing to send them should EUR-OPA request this. The fact that they are local or regional would be advantageous as they are already familiar with the local geography, language and culture.

5. BUDGET FOR 2018

- *Revised Budget 2018*
- *Call for Voluntary Contributions to member and observer States*

[AP/CAT\(2017\)14REV](#)

Letter to Permanent Correspondents
For information

Participants took note of the revised 2018 budget. C. Emezie presented a brief overview of the budget as well as the CM expected result and performance indicators. Cuts by Turkey lead to a 147 000 € reduction in EUR-OPA's financial resources in 2018.

Participants were informed of the request made by the Secretariat for voluntary contributions to boost the EUR-OPA programme budget. Although the request did not yield any response/results so far, EUR-OPA could also identify projects that the member States could contribute to in kind or financially. Another possibility could be to second a civil servant to the Secretariat for a period of 1 to 3 years maximum in order to provide more support to its small team. In Portugal secondment is possible although there are some legal restrictions.

6. INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction, Italy, 21-23 November

[EFDRR Draft Concept Note](#)

For discussion

G. Silvestrini informed the Bureau about the preparation of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction under the Italian chairmanship, by the three Secretariats; UNISDR, EU and EUR-OPA. The Forum is open to a plethora of stakeholders from different continents and

different tiers of government, civil society and private sector. The first step was the discussion of the concept note which took place in Brussels in March with the view to ask member States to take a leading role on different technical sessions. G. Silvestrini presented the draft concept note. The meeting venue in Italy is still to be decided. Taking into account the CoE human right approach and the EUR-OPA experience, it could contribute to the organisation of the sessions on "every life counts: inclusive and equality based strategy" and "reducing risk to cultural heritage". However, because of the reduced human and financial approach in 2018 the Secretariat will propose a collaborative approach to the partner organisations. A. Vahtarić suggested the option of co-organising an event in order to share the burden of the work and financial costs.

Decision: G. Silvestrini will make this proposal to the organising committee during a conference call scheduled on 13 April. The link to the EFDRR website will be sent to the CPC and Directors of Centres for registration in due course.

7. VISIBILITY

P. Cadeac informed the Bureau about the new collaborative platform for the Specialised Centres and visibility tool. She presented the web platform which provides a space for the EUR-OPA specialised centres to showcase the hard work put into the projects. It is aimed at increasing EUR-OPA's visibility, ensure easy accessibility and better document management by EUR-OPA stakeholders and the secretariat. It is also in response to a need to harmonise project proposals and reporting as well as extract a grant agreement from the information provided by the centres themselves. Importantly, it will be accessible to online visitors as well as governments, ministries etc. This tool is also expected to facilitate the administration of the EUR-OPA Secretariat, since the centres can submit projects directly online; project coordinators and partners alike. Each centre is responsible for updating of their page, filling in the budget template and submitting reports at the end of each year. Also, many project-related procedures can now be fed into this platform, thus reducing the burden on the Secretariat and the Directors of the Centres.

P. Cadeac also encouraged the Bureau members to visit the EUR-OPA Facebook page.

A. Vahtarić congratulated the secretariat for the good work.

8. RESTRUCTURING EUR-OPA

AP/CAT(2018)05

For discussion

Bureau members were invited to discuss the measures to adapt activities and working methods to the reduced resources. In response to apparent funding problems, EUR-OPA is seeking other ways to maximise use of available funds through the proposals outlined in the EUR-OPA strategy document. G. Silvestrini explained that the uncertainty over EUR-OPA funding (Russia and Turkey, the biggest contributors to the EUR-OPA budget) makes it compulsory to streamline EUR-OPA activities especially if the impasse between the Russia and the CoE is not amicably resolved. The document on restructuring considers the following questions:

- Which selected priority topics should EUR-OPA channel its limited resources into?
- Which time limits should be set for such projects/topics? 4 years is suggested.
- How can the CPCs or countries benefit more from EUR-OPA's work? Who will undertake which role?

The CPCs will also get a dedicated page on the collaborative web platform so that they can feed their national policies, strategies and best practice into the online tool, with the aim to increase contact between CPCs and directors of specialised centres, capitalise on EUR-OPA's achievements/projects and give guidance on what EUR-OPA can produce that will be of value/use to the member States. The idea of CPCs promoting EUR-OPA projects in an "ambassadorial" role was supported.

It was suggested to make it possible to increase the number of partners beyond 3 per project in anticipation of larger projects with external partners.

A. Vahtarić said the idea of CPCs assuming the role of ambassadors is good to promote, possibly attract co-funding, attract new partners and increase visibility.

J. Isgandarli added that there could be a possibility for co-funding by bigger organisations if the projects are attractive.

Decision: To target 2020 and not 2019 as the date to implement new strategies in order to give centres enough time to adjust to the new policies and also give the Secretariat adequate time to prepare a template for national strategies to harmonise responses. Portugal (relevant ministry) has already been asked if the money can be used to explore other external projects and not just EUR-OPA centres' projects. The Portuguese authorities would also like to see political and not only scientific guidelines. The centres need to be informed and encouraged to comply to avoid a country's withdrawal due to lack of visible results.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Bureau members did not raise other issues to be discussed with the Secretariat

10. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

2 October was confirmed as the next meeting date, in Paris.

11. MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY IN EUR-OPA ACTIVITIES

Presentation by Cécile Greboval, Programme Manager, Gender Equality Unit, CoE.

[Role of Gender Equality Rapporteurs](#)

For discussion

C. Greboval explained gender mainstreaming: taking into account the role of men and women in different organisations and effect policy changes and avoid gender blindness; equal treatment versus equal opportunities. Women are affected differently and suffer greater impact in disasters. Women often majority of vulnerable groups – mainstreaming looks at different factors why women are in positions of disproportionality, lack of access to decision-making for women.

Changing policies, once differences in data are understood or interpreted. Firstly look at available data and studies by the UN, for example, in order to get a better picture of situation. Starting small to see where gender equality exercise can be included in EUR-OPA's work programme.

Decision: J. Isgandarli to carry out an evaluation of existing strategies and tools for gender mainstreaming in DRR. An assessment of EUR-OPA projects, in collaboration with C. Gréboval and G. Silvestrini, in order to integrate gender considerations in the future projects. Firstly, to focus on victims of disasters and subsequently, on the participation of women in civil protection. A meeting will be organised for all gender rapporteurs to look at available guidelines and instruments (October or November 2018) in which J. Isgandarli will be invited to participate. J. Isgandarli will examine existing guidelines and build upon this, particularly as regards vulnerable groups and women, in response or rescue activities, how cultural requirements limit their participation etc. J. Isgandarli will prepare a concept note for the next Bureau meeting. The rapporteur's role is to inform and encourage action in gender equality. The results will be used to shape member States' policies. International gender experts in EUR-OPA's areas of activities will need to be identified.

Appendix I

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

MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

DRAFT AGENDA

**12 April 2018 (8:15-16:00)
AGORA Building
Room B5.04 C**

		Documents	Expected results
8:15 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA	AP/CAT(2018)OJ01 For adoption	Bureau members are informed of the aims of the meeting and adopt the agenda.
	2. STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY	For information	Bureau members are informed of the latest developments at the Council of Europe and their impact on EUR-OPA.
	3. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2017		
	3.1. Statutory meetings		
	Joint Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents with the Directors of the Specialised Centres (Paris, 6-7 November 2017)	AP/CAT(2017)20 Meeting report For information	The salient points of the last meeting are recalled.
	4. PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2018		
	4.1. Statutory activities		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Joint meeting of Permanent Correspondents and Directors of the Specialised Centres (Croatia or Strasbourg, 6-7 November 2018), under the Croatian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers	For discussion	Bureau members are invited to discuss the preparation of the meeting and make proposals for the agenda.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Evidence of improvement and impact of the work of Specialised Centres and Committee of Permanent Correspondents in national legislation, policies and strategies for disaster risk reduction	AP/CAT(2018)02 Survey For discussion	Bureau members are invited to discuss how to measure the impact of EUR-OPA work as well as the implementation of its recommendations.
	4.2. Thematic priorities		
	2018 Projects of the Specialised Centres	Compilation of revised projects APCAT(2017)12REV For information	Bureau members are invited to take note on the revised list of projects to be financed in 2018-2019.
	4.3. Operational Activities		
	Vulnerable Groups and Risk Management: Children/Teenagers and DRR – collaboration with the Council of Europe education department on: BeSafeNet project and	APCAT(2018)01 Letter to Permanent Correspondents and	Bureau members are informed of the preparation of the activities targeting students in secondary

	organisation of the Olympiad on knowledge of Natural and Technological disasters	Directors of Centres For information	schools.
	Cultural Heritage and Risk Management: Workshop on "Culture against Disasters" (Ravello, Italy, 28-29 September)	APCAT(2018)04 APCAT(2018)06 For information	Bureau members are informed of the preparation of the workshop. The Chair will be invited to attend this event in Italy.
	Technical Assistance to member States: EUR-OPA collaboration with the Confidence Building Programme of the Council of Europe: technical assistance on flood prevention to be provided to Bosnia and Herzegovina	AP/CAT(2018)03 For information	Bureau members are informed of the development of synergies with the Confidence Building Programme of the CoE.
12.00 Lunch Break			
	5. BUDGET FOR 2018 - Revised Budget 2018 - Call for Voluntary Contributions to member and observer States	AP/CAT(2017)14REV For information Letter to Permanent Correspondents For information	Participants are taking note of the revised 2018 budget. Participants are informed of the request of voluntary contribution to boost the EUR-OPA programme.
	6. INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction, Italy, 21-23 November	EFDRR Draft Concept Note For discussion	Bureau members are informed of the preparation of the European Forum under the Italian Chairmanship.
	7. VISIBILITY Presentation of the new collaborative platform for the Specialised Centres	Oral presentation For information	The Bureau members are informed on this new administrative and visibility tool
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8. RESTRUCTURING EUR-OPA	AP/CAT(2018)05 For discussion	Bureau members are invited to discuss the measures to adapt activities and working methods to the reduced resources.
	9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS		Bureau members are invited to raise other issues to be discussed with the Secretariat
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING	For decision	The dates and venue of the next Bureau are decided. (Proposed date: 2 October in Strasbourg)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11. MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY IN EUR-OPA ACTIVITIES Presentation by Cécile GREBOVAL, Programme Manager, Gender Equality Unit, CoE	Role of Gender Equality Rapporteurs For discussion	Bureau members are invited to take note of the information provided by the Secretariat and to raise questions.
16:00	12. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING		