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

**Draft Revised Statute of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Protection against Major Natural, Technological and Biological Hazards and Strengthening Resilience in the face of Disasters**

**(EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement)**

**For discussion at the Meeting of the committee of PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS on 16 June 2021**

*Appendix to Resolution CM/Res(2021)x*

**Draft Revised Statute of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Protection against Major Natural, Technological and Biological Hazards and Strengthening Resilience in the face of Disasters (in short: EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement)**

**Article 1 – Aims and tasks**

**1.1       Aims**

The Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) shall contribute to the co-operation among its parties in the field of prevention, preparedness, and response in the face of major natural, technological and biological disasters. To achieve this, it shall develop knowledge-based instruments to assess and reduce vulnerability through science, technology, education and training. It shall offer guidance on disaster risk reduction to inspire and promote appropriate policies aimed at improving prevention and response governance and address, through a co-ordinated regional approach, often neglected important issues and defining adequate mechanisms to cope with them.

The Network of Specialised Scientific Centres, operating in the framework of the EPA shall develop projects, both at national and regional levels with an aim to share know-how and best practices and improve the awareness of and resilience to major risks within the population.

**1.2       Tasks**

**Policy making and standard setting**

The EPA, drawing in particular on the expertise of its member States and specialised scientific centres, the UNDRR, as well as that accumulated during the 34 years of operation of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, shall provide advice and expert assistance for the prevention, preparedness and response in the face of major natural, technological and biological disasters.

This involves:

* knowledge-based instruments to assess and reduce vulnerability through science, technology, education, and training;
* disaster risk reduction guidance to inspire and promote appropriate policies aimed at improving prevention and response governance;
* a co-ordinated regional approach in addressing often neglected important issues and defining adequate mechanisms to cope with them.

The EPA shall support networking and exchange among member States, in particular with a view to fostering:

* scientific and technical projects developed by the Network of Specialised Scientific Centres of the EPA integrating all specialised centres to better assess evolving risks and adapt the resilience strategies accordingly;
* reports prepared by consultants to meet the specific requests;
* contributions from governments of member States to projects or research of particular relevance to other States;
* information compiled by working groups created under the EPA to examine technical matters of common interest.

**1.3       Programme of activities**

The EPA shall implement a programme of activities as agreed upon by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

**Article 2 – Accession and participation**

2.1       Any member State of the Council of Europe or of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as the European Union, may become Member of the EPA by notification addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

2.2       The Committee of Ministers, in its composition restricted to the representatives of the member States of the EPA, may, by the majority stipulated in Article 20.*d* of the Statute of the Council of Europe, after consulting the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EPA, invite any non-member State of the Council of Europe to join the EPA, following consultation of the EPA members which are not members of the Council of Europe. A non-member State which receives such an invitation shall notify the Secretary General of its intention to become a member of the EPA.

2.3       Member States of the Council of Europe or of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction that have not joined the EPA may request the status of observer with the EPA for a period of maximum two years, without any financial contribution. The Committee of Ministers, in its composition restricted to the representatives of the member States of the EPA, after consulting the EPA members which are not members of the Council of Europe and the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EPA will make a decision on such request.

2.4       In accordance with Statutory Resolution [Res (93) 28](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680534828) on partial and enlarged agreements and at their request, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and the Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South-Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE) will be invited to participate in meetings of the EPA as observers without the right to vote.

2.5       The Committee of Ministers, in its composition restricted to the representatives of the member States of the EPA, may, by the majority stipulated in Article 20.*d* of the Statute of the Council of Europe, following consultation of the EPA members which are not members of the Council of Europe, authorise the EPA to invite other international intergovernmental organisations, NGOs or other bodies who contribute to EPA’s objectives, to participate in its work, without the right to vote.

2.6       The Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning (CEMAT), may participate in the work of the EPA.

**Article 3 – Ministerial Meetings**

3.1 Meetings of Ministers competent for natural and technological hazards shall be held every four years. They shall take place in camera.

3.2 The Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EPA may decide by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast to convene an extraordinary Ministerial meeting.

3.3 Each State shall be represented at Ministerial meetings by the minister(s) competent for natural and technological hazards and a Permanent Correspondent.

3.4 The Ministers shall adopt a Medium Term Plan for the following four years, giving general directions to the activities of the EPA. They may also take other decisions listed under Article 4.3.

**Article 4 – Committee of Permanent Correspondents**

4.1       The Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the EPA shall be composed of one representative appointed by each member of the EPA.

4.2       The Committee of Permanent Correspondents shall elect from among its members a Bureau comprised of a chair, a previous chair, one vice‑chair and two other members, for a term of office of two years, renewable only once. Election of the Chair, Vice-Chair and two Bureau members shall require a two-thirds majority of the votes cast at the first ballot and a simple majority of the votes cast at the second ballot. The election shall be held by secret ballot.

4.3       The Committee of Permanent Correspondents shall:

* be responsible for the general implementation of the tasks conferred to the EPA;
* adopt, by a unanimous vote, resolutions and recommendations addressed to member States;
* adopt the draft bi-annual programme of activities and the overall budget of the EPA and submit it, in conformity with the Financial Regulations of the Council of Europe, to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe relating to the elaboration of the draft bi-annual budget;
* decide on projects consistent with the Council of Europe’s political priorities;
* monitor the implementation of the programme of activities;
* adopt and transmit a bi-annual activity report to the Committee of Ministers;
* decide on establishment of sub-committees and experts’ groups
* decide on inclusion and exclusion of a specialised scientific centre in the Network of Specialised Scientific Centres.

4.4       The Committee of Permanent Correspondents shall meet at least once a year. It may invite representatives of the relevant Council of Europe bodies to attend its meetings, without voting rights, according to the items on its agenda.

4.5       The Committee of Permanent Correspondents may assign operational tasks to its Bureau by a two-thirds majority. The Bureau shall be convened by the chair of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents at least once a year.

4.6       The Committee of Permanent Correspondents shall adopt its decisions by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, with each member having one vote. Procedural matters shall be settled by a majority of the votes cast.

4.7 The Committee of Permanent Correspondents shall adopt its own rules of procedure and any other arrangements for the implementation of its activities.

**Article 5 – Network of Specialised Scientific Centres**

5.1       The Network of Specialised Scientific Centres shall be composed of scientific research institutions holding expertise in a specific field of disaster risk reduction, in particular: knowledge, prevention, preparedness, risk management and post-crisis analysis.

5.2. The criteria for inclusion of a specialised scientific centre in the Network shall be established in the rules of procedure of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents. The Executive Secretary shall inform the Committee about a centre no longer meeting the criteria with the view to enabling it to take a decision on its continued membership in the Network.

5.3 The inclusion or exclusion of a scientific research institution in the Network of Specialised Scientific Centres shall be a responsibility of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

5.4 Representatives of Specialised Centres shall meet at least once a year to present outcomes of projects funded by the EPA and make proposals for future projects.

**Article 6 – Budget**

6.1       The EPA’s budget shall be adopted annually by the Committee of Ministers, in its composition restricted to the representatives of the States members of the EPA, in accordance with the rules and procedures in force within the Organisation.

6.2 The EPA resources shall comprise:

a. the annual compulsory contributions of members of the EPA;

b. additional voluntary contributions of members of the EPA;

c. payments for services provided by the EPA;

d. any other payments, gifts or legacies, subject to paragraph 6.3 below;

e. the credit balance of the last closed and approved financial exercise.

6.3 The EPA may receive contributions by the European Union.

6.4       Expenditure related to the implementation of the programme of activities and common secretariat expenditure shall be covered by the partial agreement budget funded by the member States of the EPA.

6.5 Voluntary and other contributions connected with the work of the EPA, may be accepted, subject to the prior authorisation of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents. These contributions shall be paid into a special account, opened under the terms of Article 4.2 of the Financial Regulations of the Council of Europe, monitored by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and shall be earmarked for the objectives and tasks specified, provided that they are consistent with the aims of the Statute.

6.6       The EPA assets shall be acquired and held on behalf of the Council of Europe and shall benefit as such from the privileges and immunities applicable to the Council's assets under existing agreements.

6.7       Travel and subsistence expenses of persons attending meetings of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and its Bureau and, where appropriate, the Ministerial Meetings shall be borne by the State or the organisation concerned, unless otherwise decided by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

6.8       The travel and subsistence expenses of persons attending the meeting of the Network of Specialised Scientific Centres shall be paid by the participants, unless otherwise decided by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on the basis of allocations specified in the operational budget of the EPA.

6.9       The Financial Regulations of the Council of Europe shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the adoption and management of the EPA budget.

**Article 7 – Secretariat**

7.1       The Secretariat of the EPA, headed by an Executive Secretary, is provided by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

**Article 8 – Headquarters**

8.1     The EPA premises shall be in Strasbourg, the seat of the Council of Europe.

**Article 9 – Withdrawal**

 9.1       A member State may withdraw from the EPA by means of a declaration sent to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

9.2       The Secretary General shall acknowledge receipt of the declaration and so inform the members of the EPA.

9.3       By analogy with Article 7 of the Statute of the Council of Europe, withdrawal shall take effect:

* at the end of the financial year in which it is notified, if such notification is given before 1 June of that financial year;
* at the end of the following financial year, if notification of withdrawal is given on or after 1 June of the financial year.

9.4       In accordance with the Council of Europe’s Financial Regulations, the Committee of Permanent Correspondents shall examine the financial consequences of the withdrawal of a member State and shall make the appropriate arrangements.

9.5       The Secretary General shall immediately inform the member State concerned of the consequences of its withdrawal.

**Article 10 – Amendments**

10.1 The Committee of Ministers, in its composition restricted to the representatives of the States members of the EPA, and after consultation with the EPA members that are not members of the Council of Europe, may adopt amendments to this statute by the majority provided for under Article 20.*d* of the Statute of the Council of Europe.