



Strasbourg, 20 March 2007

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EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT (EUR-OPA)

MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

Council of Europe, STRASBOURG (France)

Monday, 19 and Tuesday 20 March 2007

CONCLUSIONS



1. OPENING BY THE CHAIR AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

document AP/CAT (2007) OJ 3 rev.1: draft agenda

The meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents was held at the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, France) on 19 and 20 March 2007. The Chair, Ms Rajae CHAFIL (Morocco), opened the meeting and welcomed participants (see list in Appendix 1). She was pleased that the meeting marking the 20th anniversary of the Agreement was being held at the Council of Europe headquarters.

The draft agenda was adopted as reproduced in Appendix 2 to this document.

2. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR, DELEGATIONS AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

document AP/CAT (2006) 50: Conclusions of the last Committee meeting in Marrakech, 30 October 2006 document AP/CAT (2006) 52: Conclusions of the 11th Ministerial Session document AP/CAT (2006) 47 rev: Texts adopted at the 11th Ministerial Session document AP/CAT (2007) 9 Proceedings of the 11th Ministerial Session

The Permanent Correspondents took note of the report of their meeting and of the Proceedings, which included the presentations given by the various heads of delegation at the 11th Ministerial Session and the resolution and recommendations adopted at the session.

The Executive Secretary said that the Medium Term Plan adopted at the session had guided the choice of the various activities planned for 2007 and had also boosted efforts to establish synergy with ISDR, UNESCO and other partner international organisations, particularly with regard to risk education in schools and the setting up of national platforms.

The Permanent Correspondents approved the Chair's proposal to send the Proceedings of the 11th Ministerial Session held in Marrakech in October 2006 to the ministers concerned. They also supported the Secretariat's efforts to ensure that the work of the Agreement was consistent with the initiatives taken by other international agencies involved in the prevention of major hazards.

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALISED CENTRES AND OUTSIDE INITIATIVES

 Presentation of the EXTREMUM project by Mr. Alexander KUDRIN, ECNTRM-European Centre of New Technologies for the Management of Natural and Technological Major Hazards, Moscow, Russian Federation

The Centre, which had been part of the network of Specialised Centres of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement since 1996 (when the Russian Federation joined the Agreement), worked in three major areas:

- o technologies for predicting the effects of earthquakes;
- o space technologies for surveillance, prediction and warning;
- o preparation of teaching materials on risks.

Since 2001 the EXTREMUM system for predicting the effects of earthquakes had been operational round the clock seven days a week. Using the basic data collected, it provided estimates of the possible effects of earthquakes of a magnitude greater than 5.5.

The system was based on a database (topographical maps, demographic data etc.) and a mathematical model for processing the data collected. Since its inception, it had produced more than 10 000 assessments, which had been transmitted to 23 agencies (both in Russia and abroad) to help with decision-making. The system could also serve as a preventive tool by producing maps of individual or collective risks associated with a given earthquake.

Future developments in the system would be improvements to the database (essential in order to refine predictions), development of the prediction of secondary effects and use of satellite images (especially for monitoring forest fires).

The Permanent Correspondents emphasised the importance of this tool and encouraged the member states to cooperate in improving the database with regard to their countries and in identifying the national authorities interested in receiving the information produced by the system.

o Presentation of the Euro-mediterranean Pole on Risks by Mrs Claire-Anne REIX, Alcatel Alenia Space, Cannes, France

The Pole had been set up in Provence Alpes Côtes d'Azur and Languedoc Roussillon in 2005. Its purpose was to promote closer co-operation between research and industry on management of the different phases of risks by awarding a quality label to projects that could be financed by central government and/or local authorities. It had many regional partners, both public (authorities, higher education etc.) and private (laboratories, large firms, small and medium-sized firms etc.).

One of its main programmes was the GMES project (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security), with aimed to provide generic services (chiefly based on satellite data) to the European Union member states for the implementation of public policies at European and national level. Three services were expected to be operational by 2008: Oceanography, Spatial Management and Emergency Response.

The CEMER (Centre Euro-Méditerranéen de l'Environnement et des Risques/Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Environment and Hazards) was intended as a tool to develop the GMES project in the Euro-Mediterranean region: it would collect, process and disseminate information, serve as a laboratory for developing new technologies and thus constitute a skills showcase. It was therefore open to a variety of partnerships in this area (projects were under consideration with Italy and Morocco).

The Permanent Correspondents observed that these projects could be interesting pointers for developing similar initiatives at national or regional level, and encouraged the member states to explore the possibility of co-operating in such initiatives.

4. PROGRESS OF 2007 ACTIVITIES

 Meeting of the Directors of Specialised Centres of the Agreement (Paris, 5-6 February 2007)
 document AP/CAT (2007) 06: Conclusions of the meeting, Paris, 5-6 February 2007

The Secretariat presented the main conclusions of this meeting, which had in particular discussed the programmes carried out in 2006 and those scheduled for 2007; it had also identified the problems surrounding the current functioning of the Centres and the funding of their activities, and had explored ways of raising the profile of their activities.

The Permanent Correspondents were informed that M. Zoran MILUTINOVIC (ECILS, Skopje, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia") had been appointed Chair of the meeting of Directors of Specialised Centres in order to represent the Centres on the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and thereby increase interaction between the two components of the Agreement.

 Review of the 2006 activities and activities scheduled in 2007 document AP/CAT (2007) 02: Summary of Basic Activities for 2006 document AP/CAT (2007) 03: Summary of Coordinated Programmes backed in 2006 document AP/CAT (2007) 04: Basic activities of the Specialised Centres scheduled in 2007 document AP/CAT (2007) 05: Coordinated programmes of the Specialised Centres scheduled in 2007

The Secretariat presented the various documents summarising both the activities carried out in 2006 and the proposals concerning activities scheduled for 2007, on the basis of documents organised by centre with regard to lump-sum grants and by theme with regard to the co-ordinated programmes.

Although they had been decided on before the adoption of the Medium Term Plan for 2006-2011, most of the activities carried out in 2006 (as both basic and coordinated programmes) were already in line with the priorities established by the documents adopted at the 11th Ministerial Session.

The Secretariat presented the draft programme of activities for 2007. The programme had been prepared with the following elements in mind:

- o the programme of activities had been organised in a more legible way by arranging the activities to be carried out according to the priorities adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Marrakech in the Medium Term Plan 2007-2011;
- o the Specialised Centres would continue to play a key role in carrying out the activities, but participation in activities would be increasingly open to other sources of expertise;
- o although the priorities set in the Medium Term Plan would help to guide decisions on which activities should receive funding, highly specialised Centres would not be excluded from the programme, so as to maintain the diversity of activities which made the EUR-OPA programme so successful and the different Centres so complementary.

A number of thematic working groups would be set up, as follows:

- Working group on legislative and administrative aspects
- Working group on higher/vocational education on risk
- Working group on school education and risk (BE-SAFE-NET)
- Working group on vulnerability issues
- o Working group on cultural heritage and risk.

These groups would be open to interested Centres and governments and would set some mid-term goals to be achieved.

The Secretariat explained that the Centres were responding very positively to the idea of working increasingly in networks around common projects and emphasised the need to increase the number of specialised Centres as required.

The Committee discussed the new working methods and asked to be presented, at its forthcoming meetings, with different options concerning the issues to be prioritised for 2008, so that specialised Centres might adjust their proposals as appropriate. A number of delegations highlighted the remarkable work of the Centres, expressed their regret at the shortage of funding for projects and pointed to the need to look for appropriate donors and to improve communication between the specialised Centres and the Committee.

The Committee approved the draft programme of activities presented for 2007.

The Committee decided that each thematic group should establish draft terms of reference and should propose a series of activities to be carried out over the next two or three years. At its next meeting, the Committee would examine and possibly adopt terms of reference for those groups which had met in 2007.

The Committee supported the idea put forward by the Secretariat that the thematic groups should comprise a mix of experts from the Centres, governmental experts and independent experts, to ensure a broad range of expertise. The groups would receive core funding for a number of experts, and governments would be invited to send other experts at their own expense.

5. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF 2008 ACTIVITIES

document AP/CAT (2007) 01: Draft programme of 2007 activities of the Agreement document AP/CAT (2006) 46: Thoughts on the European Specialised Centres of the Agreement document AP/CAT (2002) 26: European and Euro-Mediterranean Centres set up in the framework of the Council of Europe's EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement: Functioning and By-Law

- New draft programme of activities of the Agreement
- o Discussion on the future role of the Specialised Centres
- o Possible modifications of functioning and by-law of the Centres

Mr. Vigneaux, who, at the Secretariat's request, had drawn up a report on possible changes concerning the Specialised Centres of the Agreement, presented the main points of the report.

In particular, he suggested unifying each Centre's management bodies in order to streamline their functioning and make them more accountable. He drew attention to the importance of the concept of the "label" awarded to Centres, which had to be distinguished from the possibility of funding them.

The Centres' activities needed to be publicised more widely, and surveys of knowledge of the themes addressed should also be published.

The Executive Secretary pointed out that some of these proposals concerned the Centres' operating rules, which should therefore be reviewed from this angle. In particular, the funding method needed to be adjusted (while preserving the underlying approach), to make it easier to introduce the new directions to be taken by the Agreement.

The Permanent Correspondents were invited to make their suggestions known to the Secretariat with a view to the preparation of an updated version for the next meeting.

The Secretariat would prepare a document setting out proposals to be examined by the Committee.

6. INFORMATION ON FORTHCOMING RELEVANT EVENTS

The Delegates were informed of the international meetings that the Agreement would attend:

• 4th International Wildland Fire Conference, Sevilla, Spain, 14-17 May 2007

The Agreement was helping to organise this Conference, and the work on the effects of forest fire smoke done under the programmes jointly coordinated by Milt Statheropoulos (ECFF, European Centre for Forest Fires, Athens, Greece) and Johann G. Goldammer (GFMC, Global Fire Monitoring Centre, Freiburg in Breisgau, Germany) would be presented at the Conference.

• First session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, 5–7 June 2007

As a member of the ISDR Inter-Agency Task Force since its inception, the Agreement would attend the first session of the Platform, which now included representatives of the states in order to reinforce priority 1 of the Hyogo Framework for Action, namely to ensure that disaster risk reduction was a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

• European Conference on disaster risk reduction in schools, Cyprus, end October 2007 (date to be confirmed)

This regional conference, organised by the Agreement as part of the 2006-2007 World Campaign "Disaster risk reduction starts at school", would provide an opportunity to discuss experiences in the European and Mediterranean region in order to identify practical recommendations. Its purpose was to define a specific contribution from the Agreement with a view to the future World Conference scheduled for November 2008.

7 DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents will take place in Bucharest, Romania during the second half of September 2007. The date will be fixed by the Bureau at its next meeting.

8 ANY OTHE BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

9. ADOPTION OF CONCLUSIONS

The Committee adopted its report on 20 March 2007.

APPENDIX 1

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APPENDIX 2

DRAFT AGENDA

FROM MONDAY, 19 MARCH (9:30) TO TUESDAY, 20 MARCH 2007 (12:30)

1. **OPENING BY THE CHAIR AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** document AP/CAT (2007) OJ 3 rev.1: draft agenda

2. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR, DELEGATIONS AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

document AP/CAT (2006) 50: Conclusions of the last Committee meeting in Marrakech, 30 October 2006 document AP/CAT (2006) 52: Conclusions of the 11th Ministerial Session document AP/CAT (2006) 47 rev: Texts adopted at the 11th Ministerial Session document AP/CAT (2007) 9 Proceedings of the 11th Ministerial Session

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALISED CENTRES AND OUTSIDE INITIATIVES

- Presentation of the EXTREMUM project by Mr. Alexandre KUDRIN, ECNTRM-European Centre of New Technologies for the Management of Natural and Technological Major Hazards, Moscow, Russian Federation
- Presentation of the Euro-mediterranean Pole on Risks
 by Mrs Claire-Anne REIX, Alcatel Alenia Space, Cannes, France

4. PROGRESS OF 2007 ACTIVITIES

- Meeting of the Directors of Specialised Centres of the Agreement (Paris, 5-6 February 2007)
 document AP/CAT (2007) 06: Conclusions of the meeting, Paris, 5-6 February 2007
- Review of the 2006 activities and activities scheduled in 2007 document AP/CAT (2007) 02: Summary of Basic Activities for 2006 document AP/CAT (2007) 03: Summary of Coordinated Programmes backed in 2006 document AP/CAT (2007) 04: Basic activities of the Specialised Centres scheduled in 2007 document AP/CAT (2007) 05: Coordinated programmes of the Specialised Centres scheduled in 2007

5. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF 2008 ACTIVITIES

document AP/CAT (2007) 01: Draft programme of 2007 activities of the Agreement document AP/CAT (2006) 46: Thoughts on the European Specialised Centres of the Agreement document AP/CAT (2002) 26: European and Euro-Mediterranean Centres set up in the framework of the Council of Europe's EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement: Functioning and By-Law

- New draft programme of activities of the Agreement
- o Discussion on the future role of the Specialised Centres
- Possible modifications of functioning and by-law of the Centres

6. INFORMATION ON FORTHCOMING RELEVANT EVENTS

- 4th International Wildland Fire Conference, Sevilla, Spain, 14-17 May 2007
- First session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, 5–7 June 2007
- European Conference on disaster risk reduction in schools, Cyprus, end October 2007 (date to be confirmed)

7 DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

- 8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (items for information only)
- 9. ADOPTION OF CONCLUSIONS

TUESDAY, 20 MARCH 2007: 14:30 – 18:00

SPECIAL SESSION

to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)

- Words of welcome by Mr. Eladio FERNANDEZ-GALIANO, Executive Secretary of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement of the Council of Europe (EUR-OPA)
- 14:45 Introductory statement by Mrs Rajae CHAFIL, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterrean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), (Morocco)

15:00 Statements by:

- o Mr. Guido BELLATTI CECCOLI, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of San Marino to the Council of Europe and Chair of the Ministers' Deputies, Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
- Mr. Walter SCHMIED, Chairman of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- o Mr. Ian MICALLEF, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

15:45 Key Note Speaker

Professor Salvino BUSUTTIL, President of the Malta Foundation, Valletta, Malta

The Agreement: its creation, objectives, achievements and future initiatives

16:10 Mr. Vladimir KAKUSHA, Vice Chair of the Agreement, Permanent Correspondent of the Russian Federation to the Agreement

Commmunication of the Statement to participants from Mr. S.K. SHOIGU, Minister and Mr Y.L. VOROBIEV, First Vice Minister, Ministry for Emergency Situations, EMERCOM of Russia

16:20 Break

16:30 Twenty years of prevention in the field of natural hazards and technological risks: the role of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement.

Moderator: Mr Iuliu BARA, Vice-Chair of the Committee of Permanent

Correspondents, (Romania)

Main speakers:

 Mr. Alfonso ANDRIA, Member of the European Parliament, President of the European University Centre for the Cultural Heritage (CUEBC), Ravello, Italy

The protection of the cultural heritage within the policy of the "European University Centre for the Cultural Heritage of Ravello"

- O Mr. Giovanni GALASSI, Secretary General of the European Centre for Disaster Medicine (CEMEC), Permanent Correspondent to the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, Republic of San Marino Network of Specialised Centres: gathering knowledge
- Mr. Victor POYARKOV, Executive Director of the European Centre of Technological Safety (TESEC), Kyiv, Ukraine
 Eastern countries' Centres: widening experiences and challenges
- Mr. Jean-Pierre MASSUE, former Executive Secretary of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement
 The Agreement's international co-operation: working together and with others
- Mrs. Helena MOLIN VALDĒS, Deputy Director of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)
 The Agreement's activities in a global strategy: implementing Kobé

17:30 Discussion

18:00 Closing words by Mr. Eladio FERNANDEZ-GALIANO, Executive Secretary of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement of the Council of Europe (EUR-OPA)

19:00 Reception hosted by the City of Strasbourg in the Town Hall lounges.

- Welcome speech by Mrs. Marie-Christine WEYL, Town Councillor, City of Strasbourg
- Speech by Mr. Terry DAVIS, Secretary General of the Council of Europe