



Strasbourg, 4 March 2011

AP/CAT(2011)12. Or. E.

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT (EUR-OPA)

MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALISED CENTRES

3-4 February 2011 Council of Europe Office, PARIS

CONCLUSIONS

1. Adoption of agenda

The Chair of the meeting welcomed the participants (cf. list in appendix 2) and more particularly Mr Barelli, newly appointed President of CEMEC (San Marino). Mr Barelli thanked the late Professor Manni, President of CEMEC for many years, and expressed his wish to strengthen the cooperation with the other partners in the Agreement.

The agenda was adopted as set out in Appendix 1.

2. Decisions of the Ministerial Session of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement held in St Petersburg on 28 September 2010

After thanking the Russian authorities for the excellent organization of the Ministerial Session, the Executive Secretary pointed out its interest both in terms of content and of results. He briefly recalled the main issues addressed by the Ministerial Session, particularly insisting on the request to put to use the existing knowledge to increase resilience of societies.

The formal results of the Ministerial Session were two Resolutions and one Recommendation:

- a Resolution on "Ethical values and resilience to disasters".

 The development of activities linked to this challenging issue (related to core topics of the Council of Europe) was supported;
- a Recommendation on "Reducing vulnerability in the face of climate change."

 The need to take into account the changing nature of hazards due to climate change was stressed.
- A Resolution on priorities for action of the Agreement.
 The resolution included the adoption of the associated Medium Term Plan 2011-2015.

The Executive Secretary also recalled that the Ministerial Session was preceded by a one day meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents. The Executive Secretariat presented a full account of the work carried out by the Agreement since the last Ministerial Session in 2006 including a clear overview of the results achieved by the network of specialised Centres. +

The San Marino Centre remarked upon the importance of the guidelines set down in the new Medium Term Plan for the future activities of the Centres. The Chair also acknowledged the importance of this document and emphasized the considerable amount of work carried out since the previous Ministerial Session in 2006, insisting upon the need for a wider dissemination of results..

The Biskra Centre expressed its satisfaction that although all risks are evoked in the new Medium Term Plan, it would have liked to have seen more emphasis put upon the climate change impact on droughts and desertification. Similarly, the Bucharest Centre pointed out that research and knowledge promotion was an important issue of the Ministerial Session but insisted on the importance of informing people on vulnerabilities, especially earthquakes, and in particular raising awareness of building owners and local authorities. The Chair agreed that the lack of information and awareness is an important obstacle to decision making at high level.

3. Assessment of activities developed in 2010

For better assessment of the proposed activities for 2011, the Secretariat gave the floor to the Centres to briefly recall their major initiatives in 2010 (in both the frameworks of the annual grant and the coordinated programmes), highlighting wherever feasible, possible future cooperation with other Centres.

The Florival Centre (ISPU) explained the work carried out at national level, pointing out the feasibility study of a post-disaster committee in Belgium along the lines of the one existing in the Netherlands. This work was conducted in collaboration with the Université Catholique de Louvain,. Within the Agreement, the Centre continued its activity related to the role of regional and local authorities in risk management by finalizing the first stage and developing a web based database of the legislative information collected to facilitate their update. As this project will be active in the future, the Florival Centre encouraged new countries to participate. The Executive Secretariat insisted that, as already done by some Centres, Centres can participate by collecting information on their own country, even if limited to certain aspects, without being considered as an official response by their authorities. Furthermore, similar initiatives developed at national level in Moldova and Azerbaijan can be integrated into the project. The Lisbon Centre also offered its help to collect its national legislative data. The Yerevan Centre acknowledged its positive collaboration with ISPU which has been extremely useful for Armenia in raising the level of involvement with local government and he expressed his strong wish to continue.

The Moscow Centre (ECNTRM) informed on the progress of its distance automatic on-line monitoring of buildings: the prepared methodology has been adopted at official level and its implementation has been authorized and even made mandatory for important social buildings, such as the future Olympic instalments. Regarding the Extremum project, the Centre developed a better calculation algorithm to have a higher level of assessment of earthquakes. The update of foreign data remains to be done and in this respect the collaboration of other Centres was requested. To the question of the Skopje Centre about diffusion of Extremum information to the directors of Centres, it was confirmed that the results can be widely distributed and the best way to do so will be explored. The Chair added that Extremum is a programme where cooperation between Centres can play an extensive role and he requested all Centres to send their e-mails to the Moscow Centre to improve dissemination of results.

The San Marino Centre (CEMEC) developed, as in previous years, its training courses on disaster medicine but also organized an international seminar on lessons learned from the Aquila earthquake in the field of disaster medicine. It also reached an agreement with the Nikiforov Institute of Saint Petersburg (Russian Federation) to develop training in Russian for doctors and nurses in psychological management of disasters. ,To the question of the Executive Secretariat on the plans to have the training material in other languages than Italian, the Centre informed that NBCR risk training was already available in English and Russian versions are in preparation. The Yerevan Centre proposed to set up a contact between its national Ministries, also interested in psychological support, with CEMEC to develop common activities.

The Rabat Centre (CEPRIS) presented its various activities related to seismic risk: a report on seismic activity in Morocco over the last 15 years, an updated seismic network deployment as well as the analysis of seismic vulnerability of critical infrastructures and of new cities are under development. Among more international oriented activities, the collaboration with the Lisbon Centre on the tsunami risk has led them to renew the network of maregraphs necessary for an alert system. A scientific seminar was also organized to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the devastating Agadir earthquake. The Ravello Centre asked about the adequacy of current paraseismic codes for historical buildings and as the Rabat Centre informed that a specific code for rehabilitation of such buildings is underway, a possible cooperation between both Centres

emerged. The Walferdange Centre also offered to collaborate on accelerometric data acquisition Finally Mr Goerens pointed out that the work on critical infrastructures could also benefit from the Tbilissi Centre's work on dams: the latter Centre agreed to cooperate with the Rabat Centre.

The Freiburg Centre (GFMC) recalled its collaboration with the Athens Centre (EFFC) in organizing a video-conference on forest fire fighting, emphasizing the consequences of smoke on health. This issue appears as an emerging topic if we consider the Western Russia forest fires in summer 2010: they implied severe smoke effects on the population and the mortality rate was far over the average due to these phenomena. With the help of the Agreement, a specific monitoring centre for the Balkans has been set up and has forecast that South Caucasus will suffer severely from forest fires, as climate change will affect that region. The Tbilissi Centre, which asked if the phenomena was at the origin of recent fires in Georgian natural parks, was informed that most were man-made and rehabilitation was ongoing. The Biskra Centre used that example to highlight the importance of making use of initiatives such as *BeSafeNet* to raise the population's awareness to risks and their possible capacity to limit them.

The Biskra Centre (CRSTRA) informed on their activities related to desertification risks but also on droughts even in arid areas. Alongside local awareness of students to desertification issues, the Centre has contributed to the BeSafeNet initiative by preparing the material on desertification risk. An international training workshop on major hazards and disasters has been organized gathering diverse partners (local authorities, scientists, decision makers, civil protection agents, teachers, ...) already involved in risks issues. Concerning the kind of risks addressed by the Centre, the Ravello Centre insisted on the importance of the monitoring of landscapes as a prevention measure.

An International Workshop on Drought: - analysis and adaptation-Strategies - has capitalised knowledge on this risk: indicators, alarm systems and adaptation strategies in the context of climate change, -awareness raising towards socioeconomic partners such as the farmers the most exposed to this risk (cereal growers in particular). The Centre published a document on major risks following International Workshop organized in 2009 with the cooperation of many partners (local authorities, researchers, decision-makers, civil protection servants, teachers) already working on risks. As regards the risks dealt with by the Centre, the centre of Ravello insists upon the importance of landscape surveillance as a preventive measure.

The Walferdange Centre (Luxembourg) mainly developed fundamental research on seismic hazard (on topics such as earthquake ground motions generation or algorithms for earthquake early warning), but also conducted activities in more applied domains such as the critical infrastructure monitoring or the implementation of seismic networks. The yearly workshop organized by the Centre was devoted to induced seismicity and led to the emergence of new research activities among the participants.

The Nicosia Centre (BeSafeNet) presented the development of the multilingual website (6 language versions are currently available to receive material). It has been improved to be more user friendly as hazards had been organized in three main categories and different levels of information are available for each of the 10 standard questions discussed in each hazard. The Kiev Centre recalled that the initiative is one of the leading projects of the Agreement as many Centres had collaborated to collect best available information presented in various languages. The Bucharest Centre agreed that internet is a privileged way to inform new generations and pointed out that specific information of each country should be taken into account. The Valletta Centre illustrated the potential of such an initiative by informing on the use of the material on coastal hazards to lecture at degree level. Finally, the Executive Secretariat remarked that additional contributions or comments from Centres not yet participating are warmly welcomed.

The Kiev Centre (TESEC) emphasized that countries need to also have technical capabilities in case of emergencies. Based on the Ukrainian experience concerning radiological emergencies, a summer school is organized yearly to provide students with the latest guidance on environmental, source, personal and equipment monitoring in case of a nuclear or radiological emergency and to practice and learn the monitoring procedures in "real" conditions (Chernobyl Exclusion Zone). The Centre also informed on its contribution to the BeSafeNet on radiological risks and informed of the progress of the initiative on radiological information of local and regional authorities. As the Chair asked about the possible connection of the last activity with the ongoing discussion on ethics and disasters, the Executive Secretary recalled the necessary endorsement by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

The Sofia Centre (ECRP) informed of the development of the DRACE project through an improved website and specific work on heritage protection from harmful effects of waters along the Danube River. Concerning school education, the Centre also recalled its implication in the BeSafeNet initiative while university education was developed with the New Bulgarian University through master programmes on security issues. Along these lines, it co-organized a Balkan Conference on "Security Strategies and Policies" where the launch of a biannual review on Safety has been proposed where disasters will also be addressed.

The Lisbon Centre (CERU) pursued its activities on emergency specificities in historical cities: it was involved in the assessment of the Seismic Hazard, maintenance and rehabilitation of the heritage in the City of Lagos (Algarve-Portugal). The past cooperation with other Centres in this domain was recalled as well the continuous cooperation with the Rabat Centre on tsunami issues in the Atlantic coasts. The Centre also expressed its willingness to collaborate in the common work on legislative aspects led by the Florival Centre.

The Chisinau Centre (ECMR) organized a round table on good practices in case of risks for students where suggestions on methodological assistance in training the population to develop their abilities for an adequate behaviour in hazardous situations had emerged. Another scientific-practical seminar on The Role of Public Authorities in Promoting the Culture of Hazards Prevention has brought to light the need for a unique National Centre for Management in Emergency Situations. The Chair pointed out the clear link of the latter activity with the work coordinated by the Florival Centre but the Chisinau Centre clarified that their approach developed a larger view rather than the sole legislative aspects.

The Yerevan Centre (ECRM) continued its work on information of the population before a disaster situation. Particular emphasis was put on studying the rights of most vulnerable people and adapting information to their specificities. An important work on first aid has also been developed. Based on the recommendation adopted by the Agreement, the Centre suggested to the Ministry of Emergencies the creation of a National Platform in Armenia to promote disaster risk reduction. It also remarked upon the joint work with the Florival Centre on legislation aspects and with the Kiev Centre on radiological risks.

The Tbilissi Centre (GHHD) exposed the activities developed on dams and landslides. It also informed of its involvement in the creation of a National Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, constituted as an NGO, as for the time being the authorities are not involved in it. Following a question by the Skopje Centre on the difference, a debate on the exact meaning of National Platform took place as different approaches are actually adopted in various countries. The Executive Secretary recalled that, whatever specific structure is retained, the Agreement supports such a trend to federate all actors to foster prevention. Several participants highlighted the interest of Centres to collaborate with National Platforms.

The Ravello Centre (CUEBC) recalled the two training courses organized, respectively on climate change impact on cultural heritage and on cultural landscapes. The former was supported by

the Agreement and corresponded to a second edition of a course already held in Strasburg in 2009: the new course was more oriented toward providing adequate scientific background to cultural heritage managers to accurately deal with the expected consequences of climate change at short (2010), medium (2030) and long term (2100).

The Baku Centre (ECMHT) organized a conference on educational aspects of risks with several recommendations on teaching risks and on school safety. The Chair remarked once again the possible links of such activities with the BeSafeNet initiative. The Centre also recalled its collaboration with other countries (UKR, RUS, GEO, BUL) as well as its implication in UN activities and with local communities. A manual on "Management of emergency situations" was written in the Azerbaijan language and translated into English. Finally, a seminar for media to inform them on risks was also organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Emergencies.

The Bucharest Centre (ECBR) recalled that their activities in seismic risk were structured along two major topics: the support to building rehabilitation and dissemination through earthquake materials, seminars and demonstrations. In the first topic, a particular effort was devoted to facilitating the application of the new codes and standards by the community of structural design engineers. In the second topic, the seminars on risk issues to students of the Interior Design Department of the University of Architecture and Urbanism were motivated by the fact that the design of all elements in the buildings can potentiality increase the vulnerability of the building and/or their inhabitants.

The Skopje Centre (ECILS) recognized that their activities were mostly devoted to organizing the 14ECEE Fourteenth European Conference on Earthquake Engineering in Skopje. Nevertheless, guidelines on multi-risk assessments had been developed and its translation in terms of risk mapping is underway. It also pointed out that the heritage of masonry structures in Europe needs specific protection measures and consequently proposed it as a useful programme for collaboration between various centres.

The Valletta Centre (ICOD) finalized the introduction of a module on coastal hazards into a degree on environment and participated in the training on coastal management organized by the Biarritz Centre. An International Conference on Coastal Recreational Resources with a special session on Coastal Hazards was also organized and a project on the study of sea level rise in Turkey and Malta was initiated with the Middle East University of Ankara, a project whose methodology can be interesting for other Centres and which can collaborate in the project.

The Strasbourg Centre (CERG) has developed a landslide susceptibility mapping at European scale with the identification of thresholds for landslide crises, and implications for operative Early Warning Systems. A coastal risks project was also launched with the study of three different littorals in Europe with monitoring and modelisation. To the Yerevan Centre's question on the vulnerability reduction aspect of their work on landslides, the CERG Centre pointed out it was generally outside the scope of the projects. The Tbilissi Centre asked about how they deal with data problems at national borders and the definition of the classification of hazards: CERG responded that the most adequate information is collected and elaborated to approximate missing data while the choice of categories much depends upon the goal pursued (research or operational).

The Biarritz Centre (CERCO) has initiated a project wishing to collect existing knowledge in a data base (such as biological or biodiversity ones) related to coastal areas and has developed contacts with other organizations in this respect... This project stemmed from the double need to harmonize existing data and to develop a mediation between scientists and decision makers. Along these lines, a second Training Course on Knowledge and Coastal Risk Management has been organized with success.

Summing up all the presentations, the Chair pointed out that several good examples of cooperation between Centres had been presented and many other possible interactions had already been identified: that potentiality has to be communicated to the Permanent Correspondents as it is appears a crucial point for the future development of the Agreement.

In addition, two topics where a common effort by all Centres could also be possible seemed to emerge from that assessment: the potential clearing house role of the Agreement and its implication in risk related mapping development. Concerning the first, many Centres emphasized the need to firstly collect and diffuse the network's own results but also to report on pertinent work and publications in their respective domains of expertise. Concerning the mapping issue, some Centres already have experience on such work but the capabilities of each Centre can enrich such a project, even if its difficulty was pointed out by other Centres.

4. Debate on future activities of Centres

In order to justify such a debate, the Executive Secretary recalled that the last meeting of Permanent Correspondents preceding the Ministerial Session, had asked the Secretariat to review the Centres' activities in order to improve their efficiency both for countries and for Centres in the context of the newly adopted Medium term Plan 2011-2015. He pointed out that the Centres' activities are very much valued by Permanent Correspondents but the need for more visibility of their results and of increased synergy between them has been highlighted.

To study the possible changes to implement, a working group with some Permanent Correspondents, Directors of Centres and experts has been created and some preliminary guidelines had emerged from its first meeting in January. One important conclusion of that first meeting was to avoid an excessive split of the limited resources between multiple projects involving only one Centre.

Consequently, the major idea for 2012 is to merge the amounts devoted to grants and coordinated programmes to finance at a higher level fewer projects of common topics to various Centres, the outcome being clear defined deliverables. In fact truly international projects will be favoured but national actions with international applicability could also be supported.

To additionally support this trend, specific governments may join in with additional resources for the topics they are particularly interested in and the opening to external partners outside the network will be also supported. An added transversal character and clear deliverables produced will increase attractiveness for such external funding.

Mr. Goerens recalled that audits systematically verify whose co-operation already exists. He also recognised that some Centres may have difficulties in the transition as they need some funds for functioning. With this in mind, the Tbilisi Centre suggested to keep a minimal amount to allow each Centre to continue working. Nevertheless, he also remarked that many new activities had moved progressively to the coordinated programmes.

The Biskra Centre remarked that synergy between activities already exists: they have already participated in two common projects. However, co-operation can only be applied to projects whose topics can be addressed by several Centres but some very specific Centres can also be useful for other countries without having counterparts in another country.

The Florival Centre proposed to add a half-day to the Directors' meeting in order to precisely discuss more in depth the possible common activities. The presentation by coordinators of each topic could also help to attract other Centres to cooperate. The need to recall the activities developed by the Centres during official contacts between national authorities could help to

promote additional collaboration. The Executive Secretary recalled that it had always promoted a greater synergy between Centres and Permanent Correspondents.

The Kiev Centre suggested that purely national projects should be financed directly by each country and recalled that the limited resources available impose that efforts be joined with other Centres. However this calls for sufficient benefits for common work for all partners. The Tbilissi Centre relayed this concern about the participation of each Centre by asking how to divide resources between partners. The Ravello Centre also confirmed the need to ensure that each partner can take advantage of its participation.

The San Marino Centre emphasized that the existence of specialized Centres is fully compatible with the new system, as long as a common agreement on how the resources are to be shared between partners is clearly stated. The role of coordinator can also include the availability of a meeting place for the partners of the project. The Chair insisted that a clarification of the role of the leading Centre will be necessary as such a figure would be positive for the Agreement and consequently for the Centres.

The Armenian Centre suggested keeping resources for basic research. The synergies between Centres are highly limited by the specific topics addressed by each Centre: co-operation can only be case by case. Nevertheless, agreements with ISDR and other international organizations on work at national level appear as very useful. The Rabat Centre proposed to organize technical meetings on one topic with specialized Centres and other Centres of member countries to promote external partnerships.

The Moscow Centre emphasized that the main goal is to increase the safety of the European population and suggested to develop a verification of methods of evaluating risks leading to an agreement in order to have a common data base and a manual for transnational action. The creation of a document on cartographic data exchange will allow to draw a common risks map: a European atlas could then be edited. Similar international norms on civil protection could be developed, in particular concerning technical rules. Even if recognizing the interest of the proposals, the Kiev Centre raised however the problem of how to finance such ambitious common work.

The Executive Secretary intervened to clarify that the debate wished to collect reactions on changes proposed as a way to enrich the discussion on strategic choices, which remains essentially in the hands of the Permanent Correspondents. Furthermore, discussion on the specific topics to develop seemed premature at this stage. The Chair insisted on the "work in progress" character of the envisaged reform.

The Ravello Centre pointed out that the reform is a good way to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Agreement but recalled that at the origin of the Agreement, the goal was to deploy its various competences throughout its member States. However, the possible contradiction between national goals and international goals has to be acknowledged and thus propose some kind of roving pluriannual programmes. Focus has consequently to be put on methodologies and their diffusion among member States. The fact that member States already contribute makes it difficult for additional resources to be made available but coordinated programmes can more easily convince countries to contribute to concrete actions.

The Baku Centre highlighted that all agree to unite forces as co-operation can increase the value of the results obtained. However, in order to attract possible external funding, the network of Centres has to make its work known. Mr. Vigneaux supported this need to diffuse the results and potentialities of all the Centres to attract external partners to our projects, at the same time pointing out perseverance required to obtain any external financing. The Chair suggested to launch 2 or 3 projects to ask for specific funding.

The Skopje Centre clarified that co-operation can be considered either on a common topic or on a regional basis. He proposed to keep the principle of grant but to organize more clearly the coordinated programmes by requesting Secretariat proposals on precise topics (such as the study of vulnerability of masonry building in Europe). Furthermore, the Agreement can point out the problems and the possible solutions as a way to obtain additional resources.

The Walferdange Centre raised the problem of possible competition between Centres for funding: more detailed evaluation criteria of the projects should be defined to avoid such phenomena. It also raised the problem of launching a project but not receiving additional external resources to implement it. The Executive Secretariat responded that each project should limit its scale to what is feasible with resources from the Agreement and extend that scale in the case of the availability of additional resources. He also pointed out that change is part of life but there is no wish to place any Centre in a difficult position through these changes.

5. Activities scheduled for 2011

Due to the extensive discussion concerning the future of the activities of the Centres, the time devoted to discussing 2011 planned activities was considerably reduced. Consequently, the Executive Secretariat suggested to focus on the coordinated programmes proposed and encouraged the Centres to review their proposals, based on the possible synergies revealed during the 2010 activities discussion.

The Florival Centre proposed to cooperate on legislation issues with the Baku and Chisinau Centres which had already worked in this area and proposed to reintroduce an additional half-day session at each of the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents to present the activities. The Executive Secretariat suggested that such a half-day could also be useful during the Directors of Centres meeting in order to directly exchange between Centres in order to define common projects and proposed to devote the afternoon to precisely allow such bilateral contacts to already revise if necessary the actual proposals for coordinated programmes for 2011.

6. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of the meeting of Directors of Centres

Mr. Anton MICALLEF (ICoD, Valletta) and Mr. Azelarab EL MOURAOUAH (CEPRIS, Rabat) were re-elected respectively as Chair and Vice-Chair.

7. Date and place of next meeting

In order to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Agreement, the Directors welcomed the Italian proposal to host their next meeting in Ravello (Italy). Nevertheless, the Deputy Executive Secretary pointed out that the meeting will probably be moved to November/December 2011 instead of February 2012 in order to apply the new procedure concerning activities.

Appendix 1

MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALISED EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CENTRES OF THE EUR-OPA MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT

Thursday 3rd February (9.30 a.m.) to Friday 4th February 2011 (5.00 p.m.)

Council of Europe Office, 55 avenue Kléber, PARIS 16e

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

AP/CAT (2011)0J2

- 2. Decisions of the Ministerial Session of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement held in St Petersburg on 28-29 September 2010 AP/CAT(2011)4
- 3. Assessment of activities developed in 2010
 - Activities within the annual grant framework
 Activities within the coordinated programmes framework
 AP/CAT(2011)6
 AP/CAT(2011)5
- 4. Activities scheduled for 2011
 - Implications of the adopted Medium Term Plan 2011-2015
 - Activities within the annual grant framework
 Activities within the coordinated programmes framework
 AP/CAT(2011)3
 AP/CAT(2011)7
- 5. Debate on the future activities of the Centres
 - Information on the first meeting of the Working Group on Centres' activities held in Paris on 17 January 2011
 - Discussion of the first guidelines of the Working Group
 - Proposals of the Centres for the second meeting of the Working Group on Centres' activities to be held in Paris on 10 March 2011
- 6. Other business
- 7. Election of the chair and vice-chair of the Meeting of the Directors of Centres
- 8. Date and place of the next meeting

Appendix 2

List of Participants

Algeria/Algerie

CRSTRA - Centre Euro-Méditerranéen de recherche scientifique et technique sur les régions arides Omar El Barnaoui (Biskra, Algérie C)/ Euro-Mediterranean Center on scientific and technical research in arid zones Omar El Barnaoui (Biskra, Algeria)

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