



Strasbourg, 26 August 2011

AP/CAT (2011) 22 rev
Or. E.

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

60th MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

14 – 15 April 2011

Council of Europe, Strasbourg

CONCLUSIONS

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Croatian delegate, acting as chair, welcomed the participants (see appendix 2). The Executive Secretary also welcomed the participants to the headquarters in Strasburg, stressing the fact that the Agreement is an integral part of the Council of Europe. The agenda (see appendix 1) of the meeting was adopted.

2. RECALL OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

After thanking again the Russian authorities for the excellent organization of the Ministerial Session and the side-by-side Permanent Correspondents' Meeting, the Executive Secretary emphasized the new Medium Term Plan 2011-15 as the main result of the Session. It sets up the priorities for upcoming work and both a recommendation on climate change and vulnerability and a resolution on ethical values in Disaster Risk Reduction were adopted. Concerning the latter, recent events in Japan reinforce the importance of such topics as will emphasize the message that the Secretary General will convene in the forthcoming 25th commemoration of Chernobyl. The Chair expressed the hope that the Agreement's work on that topic will be continued.

3. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR, DELEGATIONS AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Lessons learned during last summer's wildfires in the Russian Federation

The Russian Federation delegate exposed the extend of the wildfires that affected Western Russia during the summer of 2010 and the means mobilized to cope with them. This experience has allowed to identify shortcomings having contributed to the extend of the disaster : inefficiency of forest protection system, limited capabilities, absence of well organized voluntary fire-fighters system and issues of international assistance acceptance. To avoid in the future such shortcomings, important measures have been undertaken : legislation improvement, enhancement of preparedness, capacity building and huge investment in fire fighting equipment.

The Spanish delegate emphasized the existing cooperation agreement with the Russian Federation on forest fires, possible fostered by the 2011 year of Russia in Spain. The Chair recalled that the Russian experience proves that we have to work on the two directions, intervention but also prevention, specially in the present climate change context (high temperatures and associated droughts) : as intervention means are often needed at the same time in different countries, we must focus on prevention issues . The Executive Secretary emphasized the possible contribution of Specialized Centres in forest fire to propose such prevention measures, remarking the potential impact on population health of forest fires. In that line, the Greek delegate recalled the various seminars organised by the ECFF. The Executive Secretariat proposed to work on a recommendation on wildfires for the next meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

Nuclear Hazard - Chernobyl and Fukushima lessons concerning population awareness

To understand both catastrophes, the Ukrainian delegate provided some technical insights on nuclear plants. To produce energy, they generate radioactive spills and several barriers (4 shields actually) are needed to prevent their release. In both Chernobyl and Fukushima cases, the reactor cladding was damaged and volatile radio nuclides were released. Even when stopped, reactor must be cooled as energy is released as well as hydrogen, who is highly explosive. Furthermore, wind can spread the volatile components : Chernobyl explosion implied many releases while in Fukushima nuclides were the only released volatile and the radioactive cloud went mainly to the ocean. What matters more is the way it affects the human cells, not its source : average annual doses are very diverse between countries. Furthermore, iodine is short lived (8 days) and so its not a main threat while other compounds have a longer impact.

Consequently, the right way to inform the population on the potential risk (and on what to do in case of disaster) has to be found. Following that new accident, we have to think of the future in terms of prevention but also of preparedness and mitigation: an international involvement for a better safety is essential and emergency planning, staff training, general public awareness must be promoted. A possible way to inform people is to launch an initiative (as a pilot project with UNDP) in Russian towards teachers

for spreading adequate information. On the political side, the 25th conference of Chernobyl will be important occasion to

The Chair recalled that Chernobyl and Fukushima events require a new approach of such risk : people has to decide if nuclear plants have to be developed and that requires to know enough on radiological hazard as they are particularly afraid due to its invisibility. The Croatian delegate opened the discussion by pointing out that the Agreement must contribute to build trust between the technicians and the population and remarked the role of media on transferring that knowledge. The Executive Secretary also emphasized the lessons learned from both events, specially in what concerns information of people and their preparedness to such events. The ISDR representative recalled however that Chernobyl was mainly due to a human error while Fukushima was triggered by a natural disaster. Responding to the Greek delegate on the apparent no real consequence of the accident, the Ukrainian delegate remarked that it may mainly affect a limited zone of 30kms round the nuclear plant.

The Belgian delegate informed that an information campaign on nuclear accident was actually launched as planned on the 14 March, creating some confusion due to the Fukushima accident but turning into a success. IAEA audit on the two Belgian NPs was well received by population. The Luxemburg delegate pointed out that similar questions were raised 25 years ago (after Chernobyl accident) and many studies have been done : we have to reuse them in order to propose new things. The Monaco delegate also highlighted the need to work against disinformation and to adopt a multi-risk approach. The Ukrainian delegate remarked that unfortunately little results had been obtained in terms of awareness and so we must promote very practical actions. Several delegations agreed thus to draft a vulgarisation document on previous disasters, completed with national information.

4. EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRES' ACTIVITIES

Meeting of the Directors of Specialised Centres of the Agreement (Paris, 3-4 February 2011)

One essential aspect of the meeting was to discuss the role of the Directors to potential changes proposed for future activities, as the Secretariat stressed that the Centres' work is the backbone of the Agreement. Most of the Directors agreed to rethink accordingly their way of working by taking into account in particular:

1. The concentration on a thematic choice of activities
2. The implementation of greater cooperation between Centres
3. The promotion of truly regional approaches

Not forgetting the pertinence of the work of each Centre and the needed emphasis on synergies, the 25th anniversary of the Agreement appeared as an ideal occasion to rethink the working methodology of the Centres.

The move to common projects will imply that logistics will change as the role of coordinators and the split of resources related to one project must be very clearly stated both in terms of work and resources. Centres worried about competition among them or needing a certain amount to pay for the general operating expenses of their Centre were reassured that the new approach will take into account those specificities.

Finally, the proposal to host the next meeting of Directors of Centres by the Ravello Centre, a leading Centre in the network since the outset of the Agreement, was welcomed. Due to the change in functioning, it was suggested to advance the Directors of Centres meeting to the end of each current year (e.g. November/December) to better plan and coordinate activities. This would enable Centres to gain time to efficiently implement their activities at the outset of each new year. The Directors of Centres noted that more concrete orientations have been set down in the new five year Medium Term Plan (2011-2015).

Anton Micallef (ICOD, Malta), who has been working with the Agreement since its outset, was re-elected as the Chair of the Directors of Centres to be a voice in Permanent Correspondent Committee meetings. Unfortunately Mr. Micallef could not attend the present Committee meeting and had apologised for his absence.

Evaluation of the 2010 activities

The Executive Secretariat presented briefly the titles of supported activities by themes in 2010, thus illustrating the interesting relation between national projects and international projects. A table attempted to identify the main fields and the associated activities split between mainly nationally based projects and projects with an already international aspect. The presentation showed that many of the 2010 activities will also run over 2011 and can be an interesting basis for future activities.

In that line, alongside topics already supported by the Agreement for many years, new topics such as Psychological Support of victims or Coastal hazards has been developed in 2010, the latter following on from the recommendations of the 2009 Murcia workshop on water related risks. Among the thematic groups, the legislative and educational working groups have consolidated their activities even if the "vulnerability" group has not been very active due possibly to its terms of reference who had not been clearly enough defined at the outset and will require during the coming year to make it more practical oriented.

Examination of the activities scheduled in 2011 and future orientations

The Executive Secretariat emphasized that the discussion on activities planned for 2011 and beyond was mainly devoted to identify potential future synergies between various Specialized Centres along pre-existing topics in one of the Centres' activities. Such approach was due to the presentation to the Directors of Centres of the first trends concerning the new policy concerning centres' activities identified by the Working Group on activities (see below). Common activities will be encouraged in order to use 2011 to liaise between Centres and develop future common strategies and approaches.

5. ADOPTION OF A NEW POLICY CONCERNING CENTRES' ACTIVITIES

Working group on activities of the Centres, Paris, 17 January and 10 March 2011

First of all, the Executive Secretary thanked the French delegation for launching at the previous meeting of the Permanent Correspondents the idea of a rethinking of the working methods of the Agreement and acknowledged the support of the other Bureau members (Russian Federation and Croatia). In order to elaborate that idea, a working group including both Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Centres met twice to define a new policy concerning Centres' activities to be implemented from 2012.

The working group called mainly for:

- *a better link between Centres of the EUR-OPA network and with other external centres of expertise*
Centres should at the least link with other Centres, but equally with centres of expertise which are not part of the EUR-OPA network.
- *a longer term approach of common projects*
Centres were advised to propose projects over 2/3 budgetary years to improve planning and to enable other outside funding to be sought.
- *an improvement in visibility of the actual results of the projects*
Once a project has been completed, it needs to be publicised in a more structural manner. For every project, the Secretariat will ask for more clearer deliverables which will be summarised in the two official languages and posted on the Agreement's web site.
- *a match of the countries' needs to the work being developed by the Agreement and to the priorities set at Ministerial Sessions*

The Secretariat should have a greater influence on the Centres to ensure that their work meets the priorities set at the Ministerial Sessions.

The Executive Secretary emphasized that one major role for the Secretariat is to transform the Committee's decisions into action and to connect them with the rest of the Council of Europe's activity. The Permanent Correspondents are the "owners" of the Agreement and the network of Centres had to adjust its operation to their requirements : a better match between the needs of the countries and the work of the Centres is necessary. The link between Centres and Permanent Correspondents should be tightened and he requested that Centres communicate better with their governments. On the other hand, he remarked that governments have not always been present enough : for example, many governments are interested in specific risks and could provide good input for a cooperation with the Centres. Such

cooperation will make easier to obtain co-financing by other institutions : governments may contribute on specific topics of their interest

Consequently, Centres cannot longer be allowed to propose whatever activity they wish and as the Agreement doesn't have enough means to support fundamental research, it must concentrate its resources on selected substantial projects with more long term and more international views. Consequently, the grants has to be discontinued in order to liberate means to support more policy oriented work by the Centres. The document proposes criteria for evaluating the proposals by the Centres but some flexibility in the implementation must be kept in order to enable the Centres to adjust to the new working methods.

Presentation and discussion of the draft decision prepared by the Executive Secretariat

The Executive Secretary briefly presented and explained the draft decision prepared by the Secretariat on "Improving the work and efficiency of the Agreement, in particular through the streamlining of the work of the network of Specialised Centres with the new Medium Term Plan 2011-2015" (document AP/CAT (2011) 10 prov.).

Following this presentation, the Chair confirmed that in order to improve the work of the Agreement and to build up a stronger network, certain aspects had to be changed. The funding which the Agreement receives from governments has to be spent according to the rules of the Council of the Europe and consequently the Council of Europe internal audit recommendations must be taken into account. It also proposed to keep a flexible approach for two years in order to allow the Centres to adapt to the new working methodology to be instigated in 2012.

The Chair opened the floor to discussion and asked the Permanent Correspondents to express their opinion on the new working methods and to inform the Centres to prepare them for the change in 2012. Both the Romanian delegate and the UNESCO representative supported the effort to ameliorate the interaction between Permanent Correspondents. The Greek delegate asked for a clarification of the running period of new projects : is the 2 year period obligatory or is it still possible to take account of one year activities? The Executive Secretariat explained that new impact, longer term projects will receive more support but obviously an interesting conference will also be supported as the idea is not to loose interesting opportunities

The French delegate remarked that it is evident that we find ourselves within a closed network of Centres and he asked about the future of the European labels of the Centres in that new context, in particular for those Centres who do not propose an activity. The Executive Secretary stressed that it is not simply the grant which is important for the Centres, it is the fact of belonging to a network which is a valuable asset. Consequently, the Agreement will keep the present principle as it stresses the expertise brought to the network more than the financial support provided : in 2007 at the Committee's meeting in Bucharest, the status of "Associated Centre" was set up to enlarge the expertise but such Centres did not receive an annual grant.

The Luxemburg delegate recalled that for many years a better cooperation between Permanent Correspondents and Centres has been advocated but there has always been the problem of exchange of information and access to information. There is no common platform for easy exchange of each other's information : he stressed that this common platform needs to be installed and if necessary funds from the budget should be dedicated to setting up such a platform. The Executive Secretary recognised that the visibility of Agreement has to be improved by asking to the Centres for more clear deliverables with summaries put on a an electronic platform based on the current Agreement's website and linked with already existing platforms such as Preventionweb run by ISDR.

To go along that line in what concerns national authorities, the Swiss delegate bring several publications on disaster risk reduction prepared by his country to the attention of the Committee. The Executive Secretary was very grateful for this material and took the opportunity to encourage other delegations to circulate similar information and documents to the Secretariat for diffusion within the Agreement. Together with a brief summary (with a picture and a link), it will allow the Agreement to build up an interactive site and platform as advocated by the Luxembourg representative.

The Armenian delegate asked about how the funding would function when the cooperation between the Centres already exists as in his opinion some Centres may receive funding for one area of activity but not for another. The Executive Secretariat went on to clarify the idea behind the new way of functioning : if

there are several countries with similar projects, they could be done at national level but should be carried out in a common framework and each Centre should add to it, as in the ongoing work concerning legislative aspects. Similarly, once an interesting pilot project has been defined, it should be developed in several countries to evaluate its international applicability. The boundary between national and international is thus blurred and we want to make it even more blurred and hazy in order to .

In the absence of further comments, the Chair closed the discussion on this item and concluded that the Committee of Permanent Correspondents adopted the decision on the use of the operative budget of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement (see text in Appendix 3) and that henceforth the new budgetary methodology to improve the financing of EUR-OPA's Specialised Centres was in place.

6. INFORMATION ON FORTHCOMING RELEVANT EVENTS

Involvement in international initiatives

- *Study on "Climate-change and disaster risk reduction governance in Europe: ongoing activities and future trends" (in cooperation with UN-ISDR Europe and European Commission DG Research)*

The Executive Secretariat explained that the report summarises where Europe stands with regard to disaster risk reduction and climate-change in terms of the link between knowledge and decision makers, a main aspect of the Agreement's Medium Term Plan and the associated Recommendation adopted on the topic at the 12th Ministerial Session in St. Petersburg. The report will be presented to the 3rd UN-ISDR Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in May in Geneva. The UN-ISDR representative stressed that the study is an introductory road map to be followed in order to pass the message that disaster risk reduction is a mean of adapting to climate change : governments should consider lending their support.

He announced a forthcoming workshop, probably in Brussels, to have a direct interaction between professionals, policy makers and researchers to collect feedback on how to improve communication between them. The Chair confirmed that it is necessary to gain more involvement with the scientific community, disaster managers and town planners, particularly on weather related events (floods, droughts, forest fires, high-level tides) and their connection to the cultural heritage. This workshop will be the start of an ongoing programme and rich feedback is expected from it.

- *Participation in the 3rd UN-ISDR Global Platform (Geneva, Switzerland, 8 - 13 May)*

In addition to the report mentioned under 6.1. above, the Executive Secretariat informed the Committee of the planned participation of the Agreement:

- a school education session promoted by UNESCO
- the regional session organized by UN-ISDR Europe
- a session on forest fires organised by the Global Fire Monitoring Centre (Freiburg)
- a session on environmental aspects of disaster risk reduction issues promoted by PEDDR

It added that this event will provide an excellent opportunity to improve the visibility of the Agreement, pushing forward some topics developed by the Agreement (as cultural heritage and risks) at international level. It also will allow to collect a wealth of information that it will help identify areas where the Agreement should concentrate its work, taking account of all existing initiatives throughout the world.

The French delegate stressed the importance which France attaches to the Agreement's participation to the Global Platform as an excellent opportunity to publicise its activity. With this in mind, he hoped that the Executive Secretariat will meet delegations to make as great a visibility as possible and added that France itself will be well represented with a large delegation as well as a stand presenting the work done on the French international strategy on DRR. The Spanish delegate also informed on Spain's participation with the Spanish experience on forest fires and the work of the Spanish national platform. The Ukrainian delegate remarked a key message is that the public should be more informed in the face of a possible disaster. The Armenian delegate referred to the question of nuclear safety and supported the importance of scientists in producing clear reports for the authorities and civil society to enable them to progress on security issues.

The UN-ISDR representative remarked that as the Global Platform is co organized with the World Bank, the economic aspects of disasters will be examined in detail. At the remark of the Swiss representative that it is worth a country investing in disaster risk reduction because in the long run it saves money, he

confirmed that the involvement of the private sector, and more particularly insurance companies, will be examined. The Chair agreed that the involvement of insurance companies is essential as barely 10% of private homes in Europe are insured : an effort should be made to cut insurance prices and the educational aspect of raising awareness of the need for DRR has to be underlined.

- *Development of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction*

The Executive Secretary informed briefly on the first EFDRR meeting in Goteborg (Sweden) held a week after the Agreement's Ministerial Session. It was well attended at high level by national platforms and HFA focal points. A concept paper has been drawn up by the Swedish Chair not only on national platforms, but also on other topics like information sharing and exchange and climate change and adaptation. Its new Chair is Dr. Pande Lazarevski from "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and the next meeting will be held in Skopje in October 2011. A preparatory meeting of the Friends of the Chair was held in Brussels in February to prepare the Skopje agenda and a brochure of the EFDDR. The work related to thematic groups was also discussed: there will be a first review to identify existing gaps, to define added values by the potential contribution of each entity and to have clear working rules established.

The Executive Secretary underlined that national platforms are important instruments for risk governance and, in close cooperation with ISDR, the Agreement should support the creation of national platforms and their work. Once well consolidated, national platforms could become a "third layer" in the Agreement (alongside the Permanent Correspondents and the Centres) which will in turn benefit from all the information collected by them. The Committee was also informed in 2012 one of the Vice Chairs of the Agreement, Mr. D. Cemerin (Croatia) will be Chair of the Forum, thus greatly enhancing cooperation between the two entities.

The Chair explained that one of the tasks of the European Forum is to assist countries in setting up a national platform and how to establish bridges for their common interest. The Forum is thus a tool for cooperation and an exchange of knowledge and experience, within Europe but also with other regions. The Chair concluded that cooperation between the Agreement, ISDR and the EFDRR was very important to help countries establish a national platform. Secondly, a network needs to be built between the national platforms to share information and lessons learned from other countries on voluntary basis along specific topics. Thirdly, it should be noted that the European Forum is completely open to all countries, no matter whether they have a national platform or not. In that line, the UN-ISDR delegate announced the launching of a national platform in Montenegro in June 2011.

Thematic groups

- *Thematic group on Ethical issues, Paris, 18 February 2011*

The Executive Secretary presented the document "Ethical principles in disaster risk reduction for a greater resilience" [AP/CAT (2011) 2 prov.] as a follow-up of the Resolution 2010 - 2 adopted at the 12th Ministerial Session in St. Petersburg. He pointed out that it is a platform to build on and will allow to better fit in the refocusing of the Council of Europe activities. He recalled that the Committee of Ministers established the Agreement as a cooperation group so its documents have no compulsory character but are essentially an inspiration for future work. According to the commitment in the Medium Term Plan recalled by the Chair, the goal is to use such document to define precise actions related to it. The Swiss representative suggested to put it into action with consistence with existing procedures and to avoid to suggest proposals that are not feasible in order to not raise too high expectations, as some countries ignore their responsibility and refuse external help.

Mr. Michel Feider, Luxembourg, confirmed that the document makes good sense but expressed some concern as to whether this question of ethics falls within the framework of the Agreement : he considered it more a subject for other sectors of the Council of Europe as the document could give rise to a political problem. However he agreed that certain aspects such as information to foreigners could be covered by the Agreement.

The French delegate also remarked the necessity to treat a document of this nature with caution: it is not a standard setting text and the Executive Secretariat should ensure that it is kept up to date. It should also be disseminated through networks for recognition and endorsement. Headway should be made with this document and an agreement reached as to where to go from here.

The Executive Secretary remarked that the proposed text is a very comprehensive compilation of existing dispersed principles adopted by various international organizations but adapted to the DRR context.

Following the Luxembourg delegate suggestion, it was agreed to stress in the decision that it is a compendium of principles. The Chair remarked that although the document had already been the subject of careful revision, it would of course be possible to rework it with a mention of all sources. The Executive Secretary also insisted on the European character of the principles, its evolving character to regularly update it and its diffusion to other bodies for comments, as suggested by the French delegate.

To promote its diffusion, the Executive Secretary suggested to adopt a recommendation or resolution related to the proposed text. The French delegate questioned whether it was up to the Agreement or the Parliamentary Assembly to make such recommendation : the Parliamentary Assembly would validate it and the Agreement disseminate it. He suggested submitting this compendium of ethical principles to the authorities for examination and implementation after validation by their national bodies. The Executive Secretary recalled that the Committee has in principle the right to make recommendations and resolutions. We can in this case “invite States to take note of” – perhaps in the form of a resolution, as suggested by the French delegate.

The Armenian delegate also remarked that it was generally a very good document necessary for the work of the Agreement and acknowledged the considerable contribution which France had made to the work on this document. He also pointed out the special needs of the disabled and their access to information as most people do not know how to adequately communicate with them. To its comments on the sources of information, the Executive Secretary recalled that the European Court of Human Rights ensures the right to free speech : people in Europe are not forbidden to disseminate information as long as it is reliable.

The Chair finally remarked the importance of such document in view of the report on the recent Haiti disaster. In view of the absence of further comments by the Permanent Correspondents, he concluded that the Committee of Permanent Correspondents adopted the decision on the use of the operative budget of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement (see text in Appendix 5).

- *Thematic group on legislative aspects of risk: analysis of the role of local and regional authorities in major hazard management*

The Executive Secretariat gave the floor to the Belgian delegate, who acts as coordinator of the working group, inviting her to present the new interactive tool developed in the field. She presented the dedicated web site (www.ispu.eu) set up (in French, English and Dutch) by the Belgian Specialised Centre, the Higher Institute for Emergency Planning, to facilitate exchange of information and appraisals. She explained that the site contains the replies to the questionnaire, the comparative analysis, the relevant legislation and recommendations and the examples of good practice. She urged the Committee members to register and fill in the questionnaire and the section on best practices on line, pointing out that it is not necessary to complete all the questions and that the collected responses would be available on the site only after the site managers validation.

Following the previous seminar who proved that the institutional context is essential for the emergence of good practices, she also announced a new seminar on the topic to be held in November both with former contributors such as Algeria, France and Armenia and new contributors such as Azerbaijan and Morocco, whose centres had already developed some work in that direction. The Armenian delegate expressed his enthusiasm for this initiative and pointed out that his country plans to do an analysis and has adapted many of its laws and is eager to improve its work in this area and learn from other countries' experiences. The Spanish delegate also expressed his interest to participate in the project.

- *Thematic group on Disaster Education and Awareness*

The Executive Secretariat gave a brief update on the ongoing project explaining that editorial work is currently in progress and the next step would be to have a more coherent distribution of information. To cover a few hazards where the competence of the Centres is somewhat restricted, such as the meteorological hazards which are not directly addressed by the Agreement's network of Centres. He called upon the Committee to point out potential contributors in their countries for input and concluded that the ultimate goal of the site is interaction and to render it a valuable tool for teachers and their school curricula.

He then gave the floor to the Cypriot delegate (coordinator of the project) who, after thanking all the Centres who had contributed with material, presented the renewed web site more in detail (<http://www.besafenet.org>). Although not yet officially published, the site is accessible and all comments from Committee members would be highly appreciated. The Bulgarian delegate asked when the site

would be fully operational and if the Centres could assist to translation. The Executive Secretariat explained that the Centres' contribution to the site is on a voluntary basis has made the process longer but he hoped to have it operational by the end of 2011. Regarding translation, each country could participate by translating in its own language the final version of the website.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Opinion on Recommendation 298 (2010) of the Congress on "Coastal towns and cities tackling threats from the sea"

The Executive briefly presented the Congress recommendation 298 (2010) concerning "Coastal towns and cities tackling threats from the sea" adopted and he clarified that the Committee of Ministers had requested an opinion on this Recommendation and that due to the timing required for a response, it was necessary to adopt it at the level of the Bureau : the document AP/CAT (2011) 8 is thus an opinion of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and is an item for information on the present meeting's agenda.

In view of the absence of comments by the Permanent Correspondents, the Chair concluded that the Committee of Permanent Correspondents accepts this opinion and asked the Executive Secretariat to inform the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe that the opinion previously addressed to them has the support of the Committee.

Proposal of a competition on resilience

The French delegate explained that it is vital to examine ways to capitalise the value of the Centres' work and to ensure that this work is shared by all. He proposed to launch a competition on resilience issues (in particular with respect to climate change) in urbanism, open to young architects and planners with experience on town and country planning, where the Centres could certainly lend valuable support to the teams by answering the questions as to how towns may be made more resilient. He suggested to set up a working group to draw on an already existing initiative EUROPAN 11 (<http://www.europan-europe.com>) in order to get the Agreement involved in it and to increase the coverage of that initiative.

The UN-ISDR also expressed their willingness to participate to that initiative as their work carried out in this sector within the "Making Cities Resilient" campaign is important. After giving further details on this campaign, with already seven hundred cities worldwide participating in it, he recalled the Agreement strong commitment in the Campaign and thanked it for having facilitated ISDR's participation in the March session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, which proved very beneficial to the Campaign. He remarked that the Permanent Correspondents can also have an important role to play by making their governments aware of the Campaign.

The Chair agreed that the UN-ISDR Campaign is an excellent tool for approaching and involving local authorities in work on cities' resilience of to disasters and highlighted the possible synergies with the French proposal. The UNESCO representative also welcomed this project and stated the necessity to clearly define the action to be undertaken as well as the actual structure of the competition and its aims. Finally, the Executive Secretary confirmed the Agreement's firm interest in the French proposal and proposed to organise in Autumn a meeting, jointly with UNESCO and UN-ISDR, to discuss their possible roles in such initiative.

8. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Armenian delegate informed the Committee that, in response to a request from the Executive Secretary, the Minister of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia agreed to hold the next meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents in Yerevan. The tentative dates are 29 and 30 September 2011.

After thanking the interpreters, the Executive Secretariat and the participants, the Chair closed the 60th meeting of the Committee.

APPENDIX 1

AGENDA

1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

AP/CAT (2011) OJ 7 : Draft Agenda

2. RECALL OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

AP/CAT (2011) 09: Report of the 12th Ministerial Session, St. Petersburg, 28.9.2010

3. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR, DELEGATIONS AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

- Lessons learned during last summer's wildfires in the Russian Federation
Presentation by Ms Yulia Zhitina, EMERCOM, Russian Federation
- Nuclear Hazard - Chernobyl and Fukushima lessons concerning population awareness
Presentation by Mr Victor Poyarkov, Executive Director of the European Centre of Technological Safety (TESEC)

4. EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRES' ACTIVITIES

- Meeting of the Directors of Specialised Centres of the Agreement (Paris, 3-4 February 2011)
AP/CAT (2011) 12: Conclusions of the meeting, Paris, 3-4/2/2011
- Evaluation of the 2010 activities
AP/CAT (2011) 6 bil rev.: Activities carried out within the framework of the annual grant in 2010
AP/CAT (2011) 5 bil rev.: Activities carried out within the framework of the coordinated programmes in 2010
- Examination of the activities scheduled in 2011
AP/CAT (2011) 3 bil rev.: Activities proposed within the framework of the annual grant for 2011
AP/CAT (2011) 7 bil rev.: Activities proposed within the framework of the coordinated programmes for 2011

5. ADOPTION OF A NEW POLICY CONCERNING CENTRES' ACTIVITIES

- Working group on activities of the Centres, Paris, 17 January and 10 March 2011
- Presentation of the draft decision prepared by the Executive Secretariat
AP/CAT (2011) 10 prov.: Improving the work and efficiency of the Agreement in particular through the streamlining of the work of the network of Specialised Centres with the new Medium-Term Plan 2011-2015
- Discussion and adoption of the draft decision

6. INFORMATION ON FORTHCOMING RELEVANT EVENTS

6.1 Involvement in international initiatives

- Study on "Climate-change and disaster risk reduction governance in Europe: ongoing activities and future trends" (in cooperation with UN-ISDR Europe and European Commission DG Research)
- Participation in the 3rd UN-ISDR Global Platform (Geneva, Switzerland, 8 - 13 May)
- Development of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction

6.2 Thematic groups

- Working group on Ethical issues, Paris, 18 February 2011
AP/CAT (2011) 02 prov. : Ethical Principles in Disaster Risk Reduction for a greater resilience
- Thematic group on legislative aspects of risk: analysis of the role of local and regional authorities in major hazard management
AP/CAT (2011) 11 : Local and regional authorities involvement in major hazards management : work progress
- Thematic group on Disaster Education and Awareness

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Congress Recommendation 298 (2010) "Coastal towns and cities tackling threats from the sea"

AP/CAT (2011) 08 : Opinion of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents

8. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

APPENDIX 2

List of participants

ALBANIA / ALBANIE

Mr Florion BREGASI, Director of Foreign Relations Sector, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Albania, Sheshi Skenderbej No. 3, Albania
Tel. : +355 69 41 31 557
E-mail : florion.bregasi@moi.gov.al

ARMENIA / ARMENIE

Mr Stepan BADALYAN, Director of the European Interregional Scientific and Educational Centre on Major Risk Management, 23 Nalbandyan Str., 0001 YEREVAN, Republic of Armenia
Tel.: +374 10 54 49 92
E-mail: ecrmeurope@gmail.com

AZERBAIJAN / AZERBAIDJAN

Mr Jeyhun ISGANDARLI, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Emergency Situations, M. Mushvig str., 501st block, BAKU, Azerbaijan
Tel. : +994 12 512 0430 Fax. : +994 12 512 0441
E-mail: jeyhun.isgandarli@fhn.gov.az

BELGIUM / BELGIQUE

Mme Monique BERNAERTS, Directeur Planification d'Urgence, Centre Gouvernemental de Coordination et de Crise, Rue Ducale, 53, B-1000 BRUXELLES
Tel.: + 32 2 506 47 70 Fax.: +32 2 506 47 09
E-mail: monique.bernaerts@ibz.fgov.be

BULGARIA / BULGARIE

Ms Gloria STOYANOVA, Expert, DG Fire Safety and Civil Protection, Ministry of Interior, 171 A Pirotska Str., 1309 SOFIA, Bulgaria
Tel.: + 359 2 960 10 293 Fax.: +359 2 960 10 316
E-mail: g.stoyanova@cp.government.bg

CROATIA / CROATIE

Mr Damir CEMERIN, Deputy Commander of Civil Protection, Head of the Director's Office, Croatian National Protection and Rescue Directorate, Nehajska 5, 10000 ZAGREB, Republic of Croatia
Tel. : +385 1 38 55 914 Fax. : +385 1 38 55 935
E-mail: damir.cemerin@duzs.hr

CYPRUS / CHYPRE

Mr George GEROSIMOU, Senior Civil Defence Officer, Cyprus Civil Defence, Eleftheriou Venizelou 91, 8021 PAPHOS, Cyprus
Tel. : +357 2681 8470 Fax. : +357 2694 6374
E-mail: ggerosimou@cd.moi.gov.cy

FRANCE

M. Jacques FAYE, Chef du bureau de l'information préventive, de la coordination et de la prospective, Ministère de l'écologie, du développement durable, des transports et du logement, Arche de la Défense – Paroi Nord – 92055 LA DEFENSE CEDEX, France
Tel. : 01 40 81 88 75 Fax. : 01 40 81 20 95
E-mail : jacques.faye@developpement-durable.gouv.fr

M. Thierry HUBERT, Adjoint au Chef du service des risques naturels et hydrauliques, Ministère de l'écologie, du développement durable, des transports et du logement, Arche de la Défense - Paroi Nord - 92055 LA DEFENSE CEDEX, France
Tel. : 01 40 81 88 40 Fax. : 01 40 81 89 83
E-mail: thierry.hubert@developpement-durable.gouv.fr

GEORGIA / GEORGIE

Mr Irakli MEGRELIDZE, Deputy Head of the Division of Mitigation Hydrometeorological Hazardous Events
Ministry of Environmental Protection of Georgia – National Environmental Agency, 150 Agmashenebeli
ave. 0112, TBILISI, Georgia
Tel. : +995 32 43 95 38
E-mail: ikakoo@hotmail.com

GREECE / GRECE

Mr Stephanos E. DRITSOS, Professor, ECPFE - European Centre on Prevention and Forecasting of
Earthquakes, 32, Xantou Street, ATHENS, GR- 15451
Tel. : + 30 26 10 99 77 80 Fax. : + 30 26 10 99 65 75
E-mail: dritsos@upatras.gr

LUXEMBOURG

M. Michel FEIDER, Directeur, Administration des Services de Secours, 1, rue Robert Stumper, L – 2557
LUXEMBOURG
Tel. : +352.49771-406 Fax. : +352.49771-771
E-mail : michel.feider@secours.etat.lu

MOROCCO / MAROC

M. Khalid EL BATTACHI, Vice-consul, Consulat Général du Royaume du Maroc à Strasbourg, 7 rue
Erckmann-Chatrian, F - 67000 STRASBOURG
Tel. : 03 88 35 23 09 Fax. : 03 88 35 68 51
E-mail : consumastras@noos.fr

PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO / PRINCIPAUTE DE MONACO

Lieutenant Colonel Tony VARO, Chef de Corps des sapeurs-pompiers de Monaco, 11 avenue du Port, MC -
98000 MONACO
Tel. : +377 93 15 60 00 Fax. : +377 93 15 60 08
E-mail : tvaro@gouv.mc

ROMANIA / ROUMANIE

Mme Oana ROGOVEANU, Adjointe au Représentant Permanent de la Roumanie auprès du Conseil de
l'Europe, Villa Schlieff, 64 Allée de la Robertsau, F – 67000 STRASBOURG
Tel. : +33 (0) 3 88 37 01 60 Fax. : +33 (0) 3 88 37 16 70
E-mail: oana.rogoveanu@gmail.com

RUSSIAN FEDERATION / FEDERATION DE RUSSIE

Ms Yulia ZHITINA, EMERCOM of Russia, Teatralniy proezd, 3, 109012 MOSCOW, Russian Federation
Tel. : +7 (495) 626 35 16 Fax. : +7 (495) 624 84 10
E-mail : y.zhitina@gmail.com

REPUBLIC OF SAN MARINO / REPUBLIQUE DE SAINT-MARIN

Dr Giuseppe DERMO, Médecin, CEMEC - Centre Européen pour la Médecine des Catastrophes, Via Scialoja
1 Cailungo, Rep di San Marino
Tel. : + 378 994535-994600 Fax. : +378 903706
Email : cemec@iss.sm

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA / REPUBLIQUE DE SERBIE

Mr Predrag MARIC, Assistant Minister of Interior and Head of Sector for Emergency Management, Sector
for Emergency Management, Ministry of Interior, 101, Kneza Milosa Str., 11000 BELGRADE, Republic of
Serbia
Tel. : +381.11.3621.947 Fax. : +381.11.3621.947
E-mail: predrag.maric@mup.gov.rs ; radmila.randjelovic@mup.gov.rs

SPAIN / ESPAGNE

Mr Sergio VALDIVIA ESTRELLA, DG Proteccion Civil y Emergencias, Ministerio del Interior, c/
Quintiliano, 21 – 28002 MADRID, Spain
Tel. : + 34 915 37 32 69 Fax : +34 915 62 89 24
E-mail: svaldivia@procivil.mir.es

“THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA” / “L’EX-REPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE MACEDOINE”

Mr Mihail GAREVSKI, Professor, Director of the Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology, (IZIIS), Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Salvador Aljende St. 73, POBox 101, 1000 SKOPJE, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Tel. : +389.2.310.77.01 / +389 2 310 77 02 Fax. : +389.2.311.21.63
E-mail: garevski@pluto.iziis.ukim.edu.mk

TURKEY / TURQUIE

Mr Kaan AKLAR, Authorized Representative for EUR-OPA, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency- Prime Minister’s Office-Republic of Turkey, Basbakanlik Afet ve Acil Durum Yonetimi Baskanligi Lodumlu, ANKARA, Turkey
Tel. : + 90 312 287 26 80 / 13 28 Fax. : +90 312 287 38 51
E-mail: kaan.aklar@afad.gov.tr

UKRAINE

Mr Viktor POIARKOV, Executive Director of the European Centre of Technological Safety, TESEC, P.O.B. # 13, KYIV-110,03110, Ukraine
Tel. : +38.050.312.40.24 / +380.44.332.59.05 Fax. : +380.44.270.85.90
E-mail: poyarkov@i.kiev.ua

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS / ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES

UNESCO – UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION / ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L’EDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE

M. Badaoui ROUHBAN, Directeur, Section de la prévention des catastrophes, UNESCO, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 PARIS Cedex 15, France
Tel. : + 33 1 45 68 41 20 Fax. : + 33 1 45 68 58 21
E-mail: b.rouhban@unesco.org

UNITED NATIONS : I.S.D.R.- INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION / NATIONS UNIES : I.S.D.R. - STRATEGIE INTERNATIONALE DE LA PREVENTION DES CATASTROPHES

Mr Demetrio INNOCENTI, Associate Programme Officer, UNISDR, Rue Montoyer 14, 1000 BRUSSELS, Belgium
Tel.: +32 (0) 22 902 587 Fax. : + 32 (0) 22 904 950
E-mail: innocenti@un.org

OBSERVERS / OBSERVATEURS

AFPCN - FRENCH ASSOCIATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF NATURAL DISASTERS / ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE POUR LA PREVENTION DES CATASTROPHES NATURELLES

M. René FEUNTEUN, Ingenieur en chef honoraire des Travaux Publics de l’Etat (TPE), 19, avenue du Maine, F – 75015 PARIS
Tel. : +33 (0) 1 45 45 57 01 Fax. : +33 (0) 1 42 19 14 79/14 63
E-mail : Rf.k@orange.fr

SWITZERLAND / SUISSE

Mr Andreas SCHIESS, Policy Coordinator Civil Emergency Planning, Deputy Head of Multilateral Affairs Division, Humanitarian Aid Department, SDC Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Sägestrasse 77, 3003 BERN, Switzerland
Tel. : +41 31 322 36 64 Fax. : +41 31 324 16 94
E-Mail: andreas.schiess@deza.admin.ch

COUNCIL OF EUROPE / CONSEIL DE L’EUROPE

CEB - SECRETARIAT OF THE PARTIAL AGREEMENT ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE DEVELOPMENT BANK / SECRETARIAT DE L’ACCORD PARTIEL DE LA BANQUE DE DEVELOPPEMENT DU CONSEIL DE L’EUROPE

Mr Alessandro MANCINI, Project Coordinator, F – 67075 STRASBOURG CEDEX

Tel. : +33 (0) 88 41 22 65 Fax. : +33 (0) 3 88 41 27 03
E-mail : alessandro.mancini@coe.int

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OF THE EUR-OPA MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT /
SECRETARIAT EXECUTIF DE L'ACCORD EUR-OPA RISQUES MAJEURS**

M. Eladio FERNANDEZ-GALIANO, Secrétaire Exécutif / Executive Secretary
Tel. : +33.3.88.41.2259 Fax. : +33.3.88.41.2787
E-mail : eladio.fernandez-galiano@coe.int

M. Francesc PLA, Adjoint au Secrétaire Exécutif / Deputy to the Executive Secretary
Tel. : +33.3.90.21.4930 Fax. : +33.3.88.41.2787
E-mail : francesc.pla@coe.int

Mme Linda ROLLIN, Tel. : +33 3 88 41 2937 Fax. : +33 3 88 41 2787
E-mail : linda.rollin@coe.int

Mlle Tania BRAULIO, Tel. : +33 3 88 41 3027 Fax. : +33 3 88 41 2787
E-mail : tania.braulio@coe.int

INTERPRETERS / INTERPRETES

Anne FORDER - anneforder@googlemail.com
Luke TILDEN - luke.tilden@coe.int
Christine MARTEAU - christinemarteau@hotmail.com
Ludovic MARTIN - ludovic.lumartin@gmail.com
George A. PEROUANSKY - yurapero@web.de
Youri SOUVOROF - souvorof@noos.fr

APOLOGISED FOR ABSENCE/ EXCUSES

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE-HERZEGOVINE

Mr Milivoje POPOVIC, Ministry of Security bh, TRG BIH 1, SARAJEVO, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel. : +387 33 492 729 / Fax.: +387 33 492 795
E-mail: milivoje.popovic@msb.gov.ba

**CERG - EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SEISMIC AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL HAZARDS (STRASBOURG,
FRANCE)/ CENTRE EUROPEEN SUR LES RISQUES SISMIQUES ET GEOMORPHOLOGIQUES
(STRASBOURG, FRANCE)**

M. Jean-Philippe MALET, CERG, 3 rue de l'Argonne, F – 67083 STRASBOURG CEDEX, France
Tel. : +33 (0) 390 240 911 Fax.: +33 (0) 390 240 900
E-mail : jeanphilippe.malet@east.u-strasbg.fr

**EUROPEAN FORUM FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT / FORUM EUROPEEN
POUR LA GESTION DES CATASTROPHES AU NIVEAU LOCAL ET REGIONAL**

Mr Jan MANS, President, European Forum for Local and Regional Disaster Management, Herdenkingsplein
25 D, NL – 6211 PX MAASTRICHT
Tel. : +31.6.387.59.603
E-mail: janmans@home.nl

Mr Harrie JEURISSEN, Secretary General, European Forum for Local and Regional Disaster Management,
Herdenkingsplein 25 D, NL – 6211 PX MAASTRICHT
Tel. : +31.6.518.405.36
E-mail: harrie.jeurissen@hotmail.com

FRANCE

Monsieur le Colonel Philippe NARDIN, Chef de la Mission des Relations Internationales, Direction de la
Défense et de la Sécurité Civiles, Ministère de l'intérieur, 87-95 quai du Docteur Dervaux, F – 92600
ASNIERES SUR SEINE
Tel. : +33 1 56 04 76 71 / 75 58 Fax. : +33 1 56 04 76 63 / 75 62
E-mail: philippe.nardin@interieur.gouv.fr

HOLY SEE / SAINT SIEGE

Mgr Aldo GIORDANO, Observateur Permanent, Mission Permanente du Saint-Siège auprès du Conseil de l'Europe, 2, rue Le Nôtre, 67000 STRASBOURG, France
Tel. : 03 88 35 02 44 Fax. : 03 88 24 78 05
E-mail : saint.siege.strg@wanadoo.fr

LEBANON / LIBAN

M. Alexandre SURSOCK, Directeur, Centre de Recherches Géophysiques, Conseil National de la Recherche Scientifique, BP 16-5432, Achrafyeh 1100-2040, BEYROUTH, Liban
Tel.: +9614-981885 Fax.:+9614-981886
Email : asursock@cnrs.edu.lb; asursock@wise.net.lb

MOROCCO / MAROC

M. Mehdi CHALABI, Directeur de la Surveillance et de la Prévention des Risques, Département de l'Environnement, Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'Eau et de l'Environnement, 9, avenue Al Araar, Secteur 16, Hay Riad, RABAT, Maroc
Tel. : +212 5 37 57 66 46 Fax. : +212 5 37 57 66 45
E-mail : chalabi@environnement.gov.ma

SWEDEN / SUEDE

Ms Mette LINDAHL OLSSON, Head of the Section, Risk and Vulnerability Reduction Department, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency,
S-651 80 KARLSTAD
Email: mette.lindahl-olsson@msb.se

APPENDIX 3

Decision on the use of the operative budget of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)

The Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement

Wishing to improve the efficiency in the use of the resources of the Agreement;

Recognising the good work of the Network of Specialised Centres of the Agreement as a fundamental aspect of the action of the Agreement;

Aiming to improve the coherence of the Network of Centres, the visibility of their technical work and its consistency with the priorities set up by the 2010 Ministerial Session;

Desirous to improve the synergy of action between the Centres and the Committee of Permanent Correspondents;

Recognising that the transparency and efficiency in the use of the budgetary means of the Agreement is an important way, but not the only one, to achieve those goals;

Taking note of the observations and suggestions made by the Council of Europe audit on the use of the budgetary resources of the Agreement;

Wishing to align itself with the practice of two-year budgets now applicable to the whole Council of Europe;

INSTRUCTS the Executive Secretariat and the Bureau of the Committee to apply the following criteria in the use of the operative budget of the Agreement:

1. Operative funds will be used for the funding of the following activities:
 - A. Statutory meetings of the Agreement
 - B. Working groups created by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents to carry out specific tasks¹
 - C. Seminars organised by the Executive Secretariat to implement specific concerns or decisions of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents
 - D. Activities carried out in cooperation with other international organisations implementing specific concerns of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents²
 - E. Payment for services provided by Specialised Centres involved in the European Warning System³
 - F. Audit activities of the scientific quality and sound budgetary management of the Specialised Centres
 - G. Activities (studies, projects, seminars, training, publications, etc..) carried out by the Specialised Centres or by some Governments (preferably in cooperation with Centres and providing additional resources) of member States of the Agreement.
2. The Bureau will oversee the implementation of the programme of activities, supported as necessary by the Chair of the Meeting of Directors of Specialised Centres and other experts the Chair may appoint. The Executive Secretariat will present proposals at the first meeting of the year of the Bureau. Such proposals will be presented annually but will cover a two year cycle, starting in the period 2012-2013.

¹ i.e. existing working groups on education, ethics and resilience, cultural heritage and natural risk, vulnerability, etc.

² i.e. participation in the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) , the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR), cooperation with the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, etc.

³ i.e. EXTREMUM system of ECNTRM, Moscow, or alerts of CSEM, Paris

3. The Bureau and Executive Secretariat will use the following guidelines in the choice of activities proposed under G) above :
1. The activity/project is in line with the priorities set in the Medium Term Plan and those set by the Committee of Permanent Correspondents for the biennial period concerned.
 2. The activity/project has clear, immediate application to increase the resilience of populations facing a risk or in the improvement of response in crisis situation and is in line with specific needs of a state party to the Agreement.
 3. The activity/project has a true European and Mediterranean dimension and, for activities/projects of a fundamentally national character, their results may be used by other states, having an interest as pilot-cases.
 4. The activity/project is presented by two or more Specialised Centres or in collaboration with other Centres of recognised competence.
 5. Other partner Centre(s) or Government(s) involved bring additional resources and expertise to the activity/project.
 6. The activity/project has a transversal, multidisciplinary character, covering several risks or being developed in different states.
 7. The activity/project has clear deliverables with summaries of results in at least one of the two official languages of the Partial Agreement that may be publicised by the Partial Agreement and other appropriate sources.
 8. The activity/project is scientifically or technically sound, innovative and far-reaching.
 9. The activity/project is to be developed over two or more years.⁴
 10. The activity/project contributes to further synergies among the Specialised Centres in the network of the Agreement.
 11. The activity/project is aimed to analyse the “state of the art” in a sector of Disaster Risk Reduction aiming to providing new directions of research and action.
 12. The activity/project integrates partners from the private sector which fund part of the activity/project.

The above criteria will be valued positively in assessing the activities/projects presented but their non fulfilment is not meant as an exclusion criteria.

⁴ This point is not meant to exclude Activities/ Projects that may be developed during one budgetary year

Some issues of special concern of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents for 2012-2013 biennium

- Reduction of vulnerability (improving resilience, mapping risks, improving environment resilience and planning, adapting to climate change, etc...)
- Governance of risk (integrating the different aspects and actors of prevention and response, building national platforms, etc..)
- Awareness and improving preparedness of populations and rescuers to emergency situations, building a culture of risk
- Earthquakes and prevention. Identification of areas or buildings at risk, preparedness for events, etc...
- Cultural heritage and risk (protection of cultural goals, buildings, collections, world heritage, historical sites)

Appendix 2 to the Decision

Improving the work and efficiency of the Agreement in particular through the streamlining of the work of the network of Specialised Centres with the new Medium-Term Plan 2011-2015

1. Introduction

At the Ministerial Session of the Agreement, held in September 2010 in St Petersburg (Russian Federation), a new Medium-term Action Plan 2011-2015 was adopted (see AP/CAT (2010) 5rev2).

At the previous meeting of Permanent Correspondents in Paris (Spring 2010), a strong wish was manifested by a number of States to have a full overview of the activities of the Agreement since the previous Ministerial meeting of the Agreement in 2006 Marrakech (Morocco).

At the meeting of the Permanent Correspondents in St Petersburg, the Secretariat presented a comprehensive view of all programmes and activities carried out in the previous 4 years (document AP/CAT (2010) 21) and also a new brochure summarising both the purpose, reach and technical work of the Agreement, as well as its synergies with other processes and international bodies in the field of disaster risk reduction.

Based on that overview and taking into account the new Medium Term Plan, the need to examine, at a further meeting, the working methods of the Agreement and more particularly, the work of the network of Specialised Centres, in view to aligning the whole of the work of the Agreement with the priorities set, increasing the visibility of the action of the Agreement and creating further synergies among the different Specialised Centres.

To examine the working methods of the Agreement, the Executive Secretariat, under the instructions of the Chair and Vice-chair of the Agreement, created a small working group that met in Paris twice (on 17 February and 10 March 2011) to make precise proposals to be submitted to the April meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

The Group was composed of Permanent Correspondents (from the governments of France, Croatia and Belgium), Directors of the Centres (from Armenia, Ukraine and Morocco), the Chair of the meeting of Directors, the Chairs of the Programme and the Audit Committees, as well as the Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary. The choice of persons aimed at favouring a variety of opinions and a good expertise on the way the Specialised Centres work.

The debate of this working group was very rich in ideas and suggestions. Most of them have been incorporated in point 3) above, which is the result of a collective reflection exercise.

The main finding was that, although the present working methods and the attribution of funding to activities - the result of a complex development of the Agreement over the years - was not an unreasonable one, it was necessary to proceed to a progressive change to improve transparency, accountability, efficiency in the use of resources, visibility of results and a greater coherence with the objectives and priorities of the Agreement and the needs of its members States.

The Centres have been pivotal in the development and disaster reduction action of the Agreement but needed to better plan activities, increase synergy between them, avoid the dispersion of resources and devote more efforts to publicise results. The system of fixed, small grants to Centres was no longer justifiable as resources get dispersed and are not attached to results. Concentration of resources could permit joining forces with other Centres of expertise, governments interested in the development of some programmes and the private sector where applicable.

The working group invited the Executive Secretariat to present these new ideas, to invite all the structures of the Agreement to apply them in their field of competence (including the Committee of Permanent Correspondents, its Bureau, the Specialised Centres, the meeting of Directors and the Executive Secretariat).

The working group considered appropriate to present, for consideration of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and possible approval, a "*Draft Decision on the use of the operative budget of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)*" considering that, although not all problems may be solved by clear rules on the use of the budgetary means of the Agreement, the proposal put forward can help the objectives of improving working methods.

In the draft decision some criteria are presented to assess the projects presented by the Centres (under point G). These criteria should not be taken as exclusive, in the sense that projects will not be financed if they do not meet all criteria, but rather as positive points for an evaluation. The Group also suggested that the Committee of Permanent Correspondents highlight a certain number of fields for each two years-period and made a few proposals for the period 2012-2013.

The Executive Secretariat presented the main conclusions of the working group to the meeting of Directors of Specialised Centres, who were in general favourable to the new methods proposed, as they understood that the evolution of the work of the Centres necessitated the changes proposed.

2. Present working methods of the Agreement

The present working methods of the Agreement are the result of a complex history in which the Specialised Centres played a key role in encouraging governments to join the Agreement, at a time where a relatively small network of Centres received, comparatively, far higher funding from the Agreement. The network of Centres was designed to bring expertise in many different topics and the Agreement was seen as a main source of finance.

Basically the different roles of the bodies of the Agreement consist in :

- a governmental Committee of Permanent Correspondents which has a political leading role and supervises (supported by its Bureau) the implementation of the priorities set by the Ministerial Sessions
- a network of Specialised Centres that make proposals on scientific, technical, training or awareness activities on disaster risk reduction
- an Executive Secretariat that serves both bodies, implements directly part of the programme of activities through the organisation of working groups, is involved in other activities carried out in cooperation with other international organisations, oversees and follows very closely the implementation, budgetary accountancy and results of the work of the Centres (supported by the Audit Committee and, as necessary by the Chair of the Programme Committee).

The Executive Secretariat also maintains a web site, takes care of compliance of all procedures with Council of Europe rules and maintains a capacity of proposal for new activities for submission to the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

Resources provided by governments are approved on an annual basis by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and are used for staff, organisation of statutory meetings, travelling of Executive Secretariat and some government experts or directors, audit activities, maintenance of the European Alert System and EXTREMUM (financed only partially through the Agreement) and a more action oriented "operative budget".

The operative budget is at present fractioned into roughly two halves:

- one that provides (relatively modest) "fixed grants" to 21 Centres (out of the 27 in the network)
- the other that pays for "coordinated programmes", which are activities or projects, carried out by one or several Centres (more often one than several).

Grants pay for maintenance of Centres or its ruling bodies, travelling of directors, meetings and other technical or scientific activities in the field of competence of each Centre. Resources for coordinated programmes pay for groups of experts organised by the Executive Secretariat, collaborative action with other organisations (e.g. promotion of National Platforms for DRR, participation in ventures such as the Partnership for Environment and DRR, training of psychologists for intervention after disasters, etc) and also for activities and projects presented by the Centres.

Proposals are received annually by the Executive Secretariat, assessed for scientific, technical and budgetary soundness, presented to the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for comment and, after acceptance, implemented by the Centres with support and scrutiny from the Executive Secretariat.

3. Some ideas for improvement of working methods

a) Match the needs of countries and priorities

The present system does not ensure enough that the activities made by the Centres are in line with the priorities of the Ministerial Session - or specific needs having been identified by governments -, especially in the use of grants. Even if most directors of Centres play the game honestly and try, within the sphere of their expertise, to follow priorities, sometimes other considerations are more important. The Executive Secretariat tries to influence proposals in a constant dialogue with the Centres, but is also handicapped by the modesty of the sums provided, which do not permit to be in a strong negotiation position.

Notwithstanding the modesty of the sums provided, most directors find that their integration in the network of Specialised Centres gives them two important values (apart from the resources): one is the labelling of their centres as "European and Mediterranean Centres" attached to an international organisation such as the Council of Europe, the other is being part of a network of expertise in DRR that offers interesting contacts in many fields of expertise and in many different States.

It is suggested to discontinue "grants" (too dispersed now and with limited relevance as based mainly on geographical reasons) to concentrate all resources on "coordinated programmes" comprising activities and projects that will be assessed according to their topics' relevance with the priorities of the Agreement or specific needs and interest of Member States.

b) Increase the European and Mediterranean dimension of projects

Present dispersion of resources does not favour significant transversal work among several Centres, even those dealing with the same topic or hazard. Many Centres can find common projects around some DRR issues, but so far they have not shown much interest in doing so because of the difficulties in carrying out common tasks together. This is clearly something that can and must change.

It is suggested that common projects presented jointly by a few Centres (even if each individual Centre may, at a later stage, carry out a part of the common project), be regarded as adding value to the results and coherence of the network of Centres and thus be considered under a favourable light. As these projects will require a more substantial funding, they are also more likely to be able to find additional sources of funding (from governments, or other sources). Needless to say, this does not exclude some Centres from continuing to present projects on very specific issues (where they may be the only Centre in the network on that topic) but with a clear international added value.

It is also suggested that Centres present more projects with a European and Mediterranean dimension (i.e. that they do not have a purely local or national character). The mapping of a certain risk in one country of

the Agreement, for instance, may be of use to that State but it has little added value to other States, unless an “exportable” innovative methodology is used. It is also suggested that projects covering several States, having a multidisciplinary character or covering several hazards should be seen as meriting closer attention. A multi-state project can also make it easier to find additional resources and contributes to the coherence of the network.

c) Improve planning and gather external resources and expertise

The problem with many projects or activities is that they are developed over a short period of time and there is no clear evidence of their impact on disaster risk reduction. Sometime activities help maintain the coherence and communication of existing networks of experts researching on a particular risk and it is much easier to see, from year to year, a certain “line of research” around topics of interest for DRR.

This is not a problem restricted to the Agreement. The Council of Europe has felt that having “one year programmes” attached to the budgetary calendar of the Organisation (which states that budgets are voted every year) may become a problem by lack of continuity in action. The Council of Europe has decided in 2011 to pass to a system of two-year budgeting as from 2012-2013 (even if formally there will still be an annual approval of budgets) that permits to better plan and carry out activities.

It is suggested that the EUR-OPA Agreement also adopts a two year budgeting and that projects and activities of the Centres are also presented for development over two or more years, if this is feasible. This would permit a project to develop work in different phases, improve planning and implementation of projects and also foresee results at various stages of the activity. It is also recommended that multi-year projects include an annual reporting to facilitate a better follow-up of the activity by the Executive Secretariat and the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

A longer duration of the project/activity should also facilitate the search for additional funds (in governments or other sources) and the involvement of other partners (for instance other technical centres of expertise – not necessarily in the network of Specialised Centres). In this way the meagre funds of the Agreement might be complemented by other sources, making projects more consistent and significant and thus more attractive to potential donors. It is suggested that Centres look for outside partners, including government agencies, and approach them for presenting more substantial – and hopefully, better financed - activities.

It is also suggested to make an assessment of the evolution of the activities of the Centres over the years and to evaluate whether the Centres and their main orientation are still in line with the needs of the Agreement and the priorities set by the Medium Term Action Plan 2011-2015, and to make appropriate recommendations. In that context it would also be useful to identify whether the Centres find that there is an added value of being integrated in the Agreement and, likewise, how states parties of the Agreement value the contribution of the Centres to its work and priorities.

d) Improve presentation of results and visibility

The results of certain projects and activities carried out in the framework of the Agreement are now far from clear. Even if the Executive Secretariat gathers synthetic information from each project and presents it to the Committee of Permanent Correspondents in the form of summary documents, this does not appear to be sufficient to ensure clarity. It is suggested that the projects/activities have better defined “deliverables” and that their presentation is somehow homogenized, so that governments may have a clearer idea of the work developed.

One of the present weaknesses of the Agreement is that the very interesting work carried out by the Centres in their different spheres of expertise is much dispersed in many different publications, some printed by the Centres, some by the Council of Europe, some published only online, some presented in other scientific fora or Conferences of specialised character which are not necessarily attended by practitioners from governments. The final result is that there is no clear visibility or “return” to governments for the funds invested in these projects, creating a sense of opacity and losing many good opportunities to enhance the usefulness of the work done and the image of the Agreement.

It is suggested that projects and activities carried out in the Agreement are publicised both on the Agreement’s web site and, where existent, on the Centres’ web sites. In addition, it would be necessary to foresee, in the budget of the projects, some funding for the translation of summaries of results into the two official languages of the Agreement and request them from project managers.

e) Foster communication between Permanent Correspondents and Specialised Centres

The communication between the Centres and the Committee of Permanent Correspondents is relatively good at present, but can be improved. Existing mechanisms of communication are the following:

- at least a third of the States in the Agreement are regularly represented at the Committee of Permanent Correspondents by directors of Centres;
- in every meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents the work of one or two Specialised Centres is presented by their directors;
- the Chair of the Meeting of Directors of Centres is invited systematically to the meetings of Permanent Correspondents;
- in the last six years there has been a meeting of directors and two seminars (mainly attended by directors) organised “back-to-back” to the meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents;
- progress in the work of the Centres is presented at least once every year to the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

The Executive Secretariat is thus invited to integrate more both Directors and Permanent Correspondents in existing working groups. It is also suggested that meetings held “back-to-back” between the two bodies are privileged and that both Permanent Correspondents and Directors of Centres contact each other more often at national level.

At the national level, it is also suggested that both governments and directors of Centres increase communication efforts and keep each other respectively informed of their action and priorities, so that contacts between some Centres and their own governmental authorities does not necessarily rely in meeting in the framework of the Agreement, but in a more fluent, direct communication. It is also suggested that Centres be aware and participate, as appropriate in the work of the National Platforms for disaster risk reduction (where they exist) so that they can offer their technical expertise and also benefit from the multi-stakeholder approach of national Platforms.

f) Keep flexibility in the application of criteria

The suggestions above are aimed at improving the quality and consistency of the work of the Centres and at integrating more efficiently in their work the priorities defined by governments. They are not intended to exclude the activities of any of the Centres, so the guidance above will have to be applied flexibly, trying more to obtain a progressive change in orientation than a discouragement of the Centres input into the Agreement.

It is suggested that both the Executive Secretariat and the Bureau apply the rules in a flexible manner, so that Centres have time to adapt, look for new technical partners that may help them to embark in more consistent and ambitious projects and also search for supplementary financial sources. It is suggested that the decisions of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents are transmitted without delay to the Centres and the Executive Secretariat and, where appropriate, national governments, explain the new orientations. A special effort of communication will be requested from the Executive Secretariat.

4. Council of Europe internal audit suggestions

Concerning the grants agreed by EUR-OPA to the Centres for specific action, the Council of Europe audit recognises that the absence of a procedure and formal criteria in the attribution of grants is a problem to be solved, even if the existence of “customary practice” (i.e. that the funds are given to the network of Centres, that the Executive Secretariat requests reports on the expenditure and bills, and the positive role of the audit committee) and the relatively modest amount of funds alleviates the problem.

The audit recommends maintaining a certain flexibility in the process of attributing funds but to better formalise the criteria for their provision. The audit suggests the adoption of rules fixing the criteria for funding to specific projects or Centres. Given the relatively small amount of resources involved, they do not recommend setting up a specific committee entrusted to distribute these funds, but rather to better formalise the conditions for their request (deadline for presentation of projects, delimiting responsibilities in the roles of Executive Secretariat and the Committee of Permanent Correspondents).

The audit recommends replacing the system of fixed grants to Centres by a system of project funding exclusively, so that funds would only be used for activities and no longer a share of the running costs of Centres.

More strategically, the audit suggests that projects avoid the present dispersion and focus on a number of priority issues for the Agreement, which would permit the Agreement to better align the activities and projects with the political priorities of the Council of Europe in disaster risk reduction.

Appendix 4

Opinion of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) on Recommendation 298 (2010) of the Congress on “Coastal towns and cities tackling threats from the sea”

The Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement :

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the sustained interest of the Congress in addressing the effects of climate change on the vulnerability of European citizens, in particular those more at risk from rising sea levels and coastal flooding.
2. Notes that climate change is making European towns and cities more vulnerable to coastal and marine risks as the result of a combination of factors including environmental degradation, erosion, high occupation of coastal areas, rising sea levels and increased frequency of extreme events.
3. Notes that such changes need to be addressed by strong and well financed policies of risk reduction, paying particular attention to design climate-change adaptation policies in coastal areas and to improve risk governance, in particular through a greater synergy between central and local and regional authorities.
4. Notes that local and regional authorities have important competences, particularly in planning, that permit to increase the resilience of coastal towns and cities to natural hazards and calls them to exert them responsibly, notably by avoiding new developments in areas that may be affected by storms or coastal flooding.
5. Calls the attention of the Congress to the results of the 12th Ministerial Session of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) held in St Petersburg on 28 September 2010 and in particular to the new priorities set for 2011-2015, including the reduction of vulnerability from marine risks and the adoption of a specific recommendation on reducing vulnerability in the face of climate change which, among other issues, requests governments to promote the mapping of risks, paying attention to areas and regions that may become more vulnerable as a result of climate change, including coastal and urban areas.
6. Notes that the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) has a sustained interest in the resilience of coastal towns and cities, recalling the workshop held in Murcia (Spain) in October 2009 on “climate change impact on water-related and marine risks” and announcing a new event to be held in Biarritz (France) in October 2011, focused on the vulnerability of coastal ecosystems to global change and extreme events, which should help to better understand the interaction between environmental factors and risk of disasters in coastal areas.
7. Welcomes the invitation of the Congress to work on the ethical aspects of resilience to disasters, and notes that the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) has decided to continue working in that field during 2011.

**The Congress
of Local and Regional Authorities**

19th SESSION
26-28 October 2010



Coastal towns and cities tackling threats from the sea

Recommendation 298 (2010)⁵

1. Europe's coastal populations are increasingly anxious about threats from the sea: rising sea levels, worsening of coastal flooding, growing severity of storms and increasing frequency of extreme events which are among the most serious consequences of global warming and which jeopardise the well-being and future of the populations of coastal towns and cities.
2. Many Council of Europe member states are already facing the consequences of erosion of their coastline and increased risks of flooding which would directly and indirectly affect coastal residents. Serious consequences are also to be feared for coastal infrastructures, buildings and ecosystems.
3. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe continues to express its great concern about the growing speed of global warming and the increasing extent of its consequences. It is convinced that efforts to combat this problem must receive greater attention from policy makers and become a priority at every level of governance.
4. Coastal regions are densely populated and play a vital part in many countries' prosperity, because of their significant populations and socio-economic activities. The concentration of populations in coastal areas is steadily increasing and needs to be taken into account in adaptation policies.
5. The Congress considers that local and regional authorities have a major role to play in reacting to the specific challenges facing coastal areas. The magnitude of the predicted changes requires better anticipation and the development of a new risk culture and new governance practices. In this respect, it draws attention to its previous work on coastal management⁶ and on building the adaptive capacity of local and regional authorities.⁷
6. The complexity of the problem and all the interaction involved necessitate a more strategic approach and a combination of different adaptation measures, according to the actual situation in each region. Practical implementation must be based on an interactive and multidisciplinary approach encompassing all the relevant components of maritime climate contributing to the impact of change, and must rely on widespread participation by all stakeholders.
7. In this respect, the Congress would like to draw attention to the principles set out in the European Charter of Local Self-Government and its Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority (CETS No. 207), a protocol opened for signature on 16 November 2009.
8. A prior understanding of the problem is one of the greatest difficulties for the public authorities, together with the implementation of integrated and more consistent coastal management and planning policies. Indeed, while some of these policies depend wholly on national authorities, they do effectively require real involvement by local authorities so as to guarantee greater consistency in the activities of the various sectors and levels of governance.

⁵ Debated and adopted by the Congress on 28 October 2010, 3rd sitting (see Document [CG\(19\)13](#), explanatory memorandum) Rapporteur: I. de La Serna Hernaiz, Spain (L, EPP/CD).

⁶ Recommendation 160 (2005) on coastal management and local and regional authority policy in Europe.

⁷ Recommendation 231 (2008) on climate change: building adaptive capacity of local and regional authorities.

9. The Congress also notes that combined demographic and economic pressure on coastal areas frequently leads to non-decision making which inevitably aggravates the risks.

10. The Congress points out that states are duty bound to ensure that the law is strictly applied and to do more to meet the cost of preventive measures, to involve local and regional authorities from the very beginning in the devising of any prevention and adaptation strategy, and not to leave them alone to cope with the pressures that they face.

11. Moreover, it welcomes the resolution adopted at the 12th Ministerial Session of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) under the title "Ethical Values and Resilience to Disasters", which recognises "the value of applying best ethical principles in disaster risk reduction, in improving the resilience of societies".

12. Consequently, the Congress recommends that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:

a. invite the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) to continue its work with a view to the preparation of a draft Ethical Charter on Resilience to Disasters and take note of the role and experience of local and regional authorities in prevention and in adaptation of their areas;

b. include among the Organisation's priorities the study of relations between human rights and climate change in Europe and decide to hold a conference to consider the issue from various angles (human rights and legal affairs, environment, social cohesion, etc), as advocated by the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH).

13. The Congress recommends that the Committee of Ministers encourage the member states which have not yet done so to:

a. draw up a national climate change adaptation policy to ensure the safety of populations and property, and including – in those countries which have a coastline – specific measures for coastal areas;

b. sign and ratify the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority.

14. The Congress also invites the Committee of Ministers to request that member states:

a. take, as a matter of extreme urgency, and with the assistance of local and regional authorities, priority measures to improve the resilience of coastal urban areas, after assessing the impact of climate change on all the relevant components of the maritime climate prior to any action;

b. draw up integrated and more consistent strategies for coastline management and for adaptation at local and regional levels, appropriate to the human and material implications and giving greater recognition to the local and regional dimension, taking care to:

i. give their institutional and financial support to local and regional authorities in their practical implementation of these strategies;

ii. integrate into these policies the concept of reasonable risk, the principle of responsibility and the moral and ethical values implied by the scale of the threats;

iii. ensure the transparency of the decision-making process and the participation of all stakeholders, including the population and private decision-makers, in work on a long-term shared vision and on innovative planning solutions;

c. support research into vulnerability and into marine climate trends, making the findings accessible at local and regional levels, and develop international and inter-regional co-operation, as well as exchanges, in this field.

15. Furthermore, the Congress requests the European Union to take greater account of the local and regional dimension in its climate change adaptation policies, and to foster exchanges of knowledge and good practice.

16. Finally, *the Congress invites the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe* to support its efforts to get local and regional authorities more genuinely involved from the policy-making stage onwards, so that action can be more efficient and more consistent.

Appendix 5

Resolution 2011 – 1 of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on Ethical Principles relating to Disaster Risk Reduction and contributing to People’s Resilience to Disasters,

adopted at the 60th Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents, Strasbourg, France, 15 April 2011.

The Committee of Permanent Correspondents

- a) Taking into account its Resolution 2010 (2) on ethical values and resilience to disasters which recognises the value of applying best ethical principles in disaster risk reduction, in improving the resilience of societies and in responding efficiently to emergencies;
- b) Considering the appended “Ethical Principles relating to Disaster Risk Reduction and contributing to People’s Resilience to Disasters” prepared by Professor Michel Prieur as a compilation of existing ethical principles related to disaster risk reduction and as an evolutionary text without a normative character;

RESOLVES to:

1. invite Member States of the Agreement and other Council of Europe States to take account as appropriate of the appended ethical principles;
2. update the document regularly.

Ethical Principles relating to Disaster Risk Reduction and contributing to People's Resilience to Disasters

CONTENTS

Foreword

Ethical principles relating to disaster risk reduction and contributing to people's resilience to disasters

1 Preamble

2 General principles

- 2.1. Solidarity
- 2.2. Joint responsibility
- 2.3. Non-discrimination
- 2.4. Humanity
- 2.5. Impartiality
- 2.6. Neutrality
- 2.7. Cooperation
- 2.8. Territorial sovereignty
- 2.9. Prevention
- 2.10. Role of the media

3. The ethical principles applied prior to disasters

- 3.1. Introduction of prevention measures
- 3.2. The importance of a good quality healthy environment
- 3.3. Education, training and awareness-raising about resilience to disasters
- 3.4. Prior information
- 3.5. Participation
- 3.6. Freedom of expression
- 3.7. Access to justice
- 3.8. Disaster prevention at the workplace
- 3.9. Disaster prevention in recreation and tourist areas
- 3.10. Disaster prevention in public places, particularly schools and hospitals
- 3.11. Special prevention measures for the most vulnerable groups
- 3.12. Organisation of and participation in emergency drills
- 3.13. Preventive evacuation of populations

4. The ethical principles applied during disasters

- 4.1. Humanitarian assistance
- 4.2. Information and participation during disasters
- 4.3. Compulsory evacuation of populations
- 4.4. Respect of dignity
- 4.5. Respect of persons
- 4.6. Emergency assistance for the most vulnerable persons
- 4.7. The importance of rescue workers
- 4.8. Measures to safeguard and rehabilitate the environment
- 4.9. Necessary measures to safeguard and restore social ties

5. The ethical principles applied after disasters

- 5.1. Strengthening resilience to the effects of disasters
- 5.2. Necessary measures

- 5.3. Protection of economic, social and cultural rights
- 5.4. Protection of civil and political rights

Foreword

This document is the response of the Executive Secretariat of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's invitation to it, in Recommendation 1862 (2009), to prepare an ethical charter on resilience to disasters. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe endorsed this proposal in paragraph 8 of its reply of 8 July 2009, calling for a European and Mediterranean Ethics Charter on resilience to major disasters, whose aim would be to improve preparedness and deal with ethical problems concerning victims of disasters.

The 12th Ministerial Session of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, held in St Petersburg on 28 September, confirmed the need to continue to work on ethical principles which contribute to disaster risk reduction, while improving societies' resilience and responding efficiently to emergencies.

This document concerns both natural and technological disasters. It should nevertheless be noted that most international documents relating to the links between human rights and disasters cover only natural disasters. However, we did not think that it was appropriate to confine ourselves to natural disasters, as ethical principles should apply in all circumstances. Moreover, the International Law Commission makes no distinction between the two types of disaster in its draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters. Lastly, dealing with both types of disaster accords with the remit of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement. Including man-made disasters does mean, however, leaving out those resulting from armed conflicts.

The current document is intended to deal both with the direct victims of disasters and with the other parties involved, such as public civil defence organisations, public servants of states affected by disasters and of assisting states, and humanitarian NGOs. So many parties are involved that common ethical principles are required, transcending the rules governing the responsibilities of local and regional authorities, in accordance with the wishes expressed by the International Law Commission in the course of its work on the protection of persons in the event of disasters.

These ethical principles therefore relate not just to direct local victims, but also to all parties involved in disaster response, at any time and in any place. The document deals with the ethical principles of the whole disaster cycle: from prevention to reconstruction via the emergency phase, irrespective of the duration of the disaster (sudden or progressive) or its context (simple or complex emergency⁸). It is important to properly make a distinction between an emergency in the case of a disaster and preventive measures in the case of a risk of disaster. An emergency implies rapidity of intervention no matter the origin of the disaster. Human rights cannot be ignored under the deceptive pretext of exceptional circumstances. Prevention aims at risk reduction before a disaster and is adapted to various types of disaster. It implies the usual respect of human rights. The context of the two situations is radically different and so the ethical principles applicable require an assessment adapted to the circumstances. The ethical questioning varies according to the moment (before, during or after the disaster) and also according to the field under consideration (health, rescue operations, environment, governance).

The ethical principles mostly concern individuals, but in some cases may also apply to corporate bodies, although ethical concerns have a more natural link with personal law than institutional law.

The aim of this document is to establish, for the whole process of dealing with disasters (from prevention measures to reconstruction, including the actual crisis period, so before, during and after disasters), what moral obligations the various parties have, local victims and rescuers alike, in the light of existing rules of general international law, and particularly those relating to international law of human rights.

The numerous documents and declarations about disasters have very seldom addressed the links between disasters and human rights. Crisis situations and the emergencies to which they give rise have the effect of eclipsing existing rights in general, and human rights in particular. In some states, crisis situations are treated as "exceptional circumstances" or "force majeure". This is used as legal justification for setting aside the usual legal rules. In principle, fundamental human rights are to be applied at all times and in all places, because of their universal nature⁹. They should therefore be enforced in all circumstances,

⁸ A humanitarian crisis accompanied by near or complete collapse of the authorities.

⁹ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) ; The European Convention on the safeguard of human rights and fundamental freedoms (1950) ; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and economic,

including times of disaster. Crises and emergencies all too often mean that the overriding nature of human rights is forgotten and certain exceptions are tolerated. What we should be doing instead is pointing to the compelling ethical need to respect these rights, either to fill a legal vacuum or to bolster and strengthen the basic duties of the various parties involved in the disaster. Disasters do not cause fundamental human rights to vanish. They often mean that these rights are intentionally or unintentionally forgotten for a time, especially as the absence of, and the lack of effective supervision by, the police and judicial authorities make it easier for infringements of fundamental rights to go unpunished. In a disaster parties are also faced with choices of ethical nature.

Local victims, humanitarian organisations and the other bodies and persons involved must therefore be reminded that certain human rights and duties must be especially respected and cannot be waived, even during exceptional circumstances. This reminder insists on raising awareness and training the public to confront the reality of disaster situations. An emergency sometimes requires taking decisions which can be morally difficult. One has to be prepared for this. This awareness raising and training of the public will ease its awareness of the ethical problems encountered in these circumstances and will thus enable the public to also contribute to the respect of human rights.

It is difficult, however, to select the ethical principles which should apply. On the face of it, it would appear obvious that all human rights are absolute, whether civil and political or economic, social and cultural. However, to avoid making an overlong list, we will concentrate only on those considered to be more frequently in jeopardy before, during and after a disaster, and refer for a fuller list to the various handbooks and operational guides on the links between human rights and disasters¹⁰.

In the absence of an appropriate and coherent legal instrument setting out for the international and regional levels human rights and duties during the different phases of the disaster cycle, it is in keeping with the Council of Europe's objectives to propose, *de lege ferenda*, the ethical principles necessary and applicable to both public and non-public parties.¹¹ In this respect this document is original and innovative and could inspire other initiatives at international level.

The aim of ethical principles applied to disaster risk reduction is to strengthen the resilience of populations in the event of a likely natural and technological disaster, by giving an ethical content to the risk reduction measures, such as prevention, assistance, reduction of vulnerability and reconstruction, centred around sustainable development, the protection of human rights and the reduction of human vulnerability linked to gender, social and environmental. These ethical principles should also help to better cope with problems arising during the disaster. In both cases, it should give rise to a culture of resilience associated with a systematic consideration of human rights, everywhere and at all times, thus contributing to the development of a "moral code" applicable just as well to disaster prevention as to emergency situations during the disaster itself.

It should be possible to monitor informally through the EUR-OPA Agreement any problems arising in the practical application of these ethical principles. The principles could also serve as a basis for the work of the International Law Commission and of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which have on several occasions highlighted the imperative need to take human rights into account in times of disaster¹². In the context of the Haiti disaster, the press release of 2 February 2010 by a regional body, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, emphasised the threats to human rights resulting from the Haiti disaster. The Council of Europe's ideas may also be useful to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

This document has no legally binding force. It is simply a reminder of the fundamental principles usually applicable when disasters occur, both before and after a disaster. It may be a useful guide for the various persons concerned.

social and cultural rights (1966) ; Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) ; Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000) ; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

¹⁰ Sphere, project handbook and humanitarian charter, 2004; Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Operational guidelines on human rights and natural disasters, 2006; IDLO, Manual on international law and standards applicable in natural disaster situations, by Erica Harper (co-ordinator), Rome, March 2009.

¹¹ Following on from Recommendation 1823 (2008) on global warming and ecological disasters and Resolution 1655 (2009) on environmentally induced migration and displacement – a 21st century challenge of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

¹² Human Rights Council Resolution of 28 January 2010 on the support of the Human Rights Council to the recovery process in Haiti: a human rights approach (A/HRC/S-13/L.1).

None of the measures relating to ethical principles can be interpreted to allow a restriction or an infringement of existing rights guaranteed by international, regional and national bodies for the protection of human rights and by humanitarian agreements already in force.

Ethical principles relating to disaster risk reduction and contributing to people's resilience to disasters

1. Introduction

The Parties to the EUR-OPA Agreement can only note the increase in the risks of natural and technological disasters and their frequency. These disasters pose a major threat not only to the survival of populations and societies as a whole, but also to the dignity and safety of individuals and to the preservation of the natural, cultural and environmental heritage. Most of the time the disorganisation which disasters cause to society results in serious infringements of the entire range of human rights.

Various consequences affecting human life, safety, dignity, property, cultural heritage, the environment and sustainable development result from all those events.

Through their impact on society, the economy and the environment, disasters jeopardise sustainable development. Environmental degradation compounds economic and social vulnerability by increasing all forms of inequality and by contributing to an increase in risks.

Certainly, the vulnerability of individuals, communities and the environment is a major factor in exposure to disaster risks which limits resilience, but these risks do not affect everybody in the same way. Poor people and socially disadvantaged groups are the most exposed and suffer most directly from disasters. Yet the most fragile people are often not given priority in prevention strategies or operational manuals, despite quite clearly being the most vulnerable.

The increase in disaster risks, greater population density in exposed areas and population movements due to climate change have consequences for human rights, requiring disaster risk reduction to be incorporated into strategies for adaptation to climate change, in conjunction with respect for human rights;

As disasters, whether natural or technological, can aggravate population movements, and since there is no international legal status protecting environmentally displaced persons, who are in a situation of extreme vulnerability, there seems to be a need to consolidate behaviour ethically in keeping with fundamental human rights.

Considering the impact of disasters on human rights, in the absence of a specific universal binding legal instrument, it seems imperative to formulate the ethical principles essential as part of a minimum set of ethical standards for the various parties concerned, in prevention, action and reconstruction strategies.

Such ethical principles should, in the event of a disaster, help to strengthen disaster resilience by ensuring that all those affected by the disaster, assisted persons and relief workers alike, are protected both physically and in terms of human dignity.

Disaster victims are people directly affected in the flesh (dead and wounded), whether they be persons assisted or relief workers. Indirect victims are people having suffered an economic or social prejudice resulting from direct or indirect effects of the disaster.

That increased resilience is dependent on reducing vulnerability as a whole, whether it is linked to poverty, gender, health, insecurity, family break-up, fear or panic; that reduction requires ethically responsible practice.

The international community, local, regional and national authorities, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and companies have a duty to adopt prevention, assistance and reconstruction measures to protect individuals, natural, historical and cultural heritage, property and means of development and subsistence from disasters, while taking account at all times, in all places and without discrimination, of the need to protect the fundamental rights of those concerned;

The cross-border impact of disasters should not be forgotten, and requires preventive measures, a common, concerted response, co-operation between governments and local and regional authorities, and the involvement of civil society.

At all events, only better anticipation and improved prevention will be able to reduce the risk of deliberate or unintentional breaches of the human rights liable to affect both direct and indirect disaster victims.

If some public and private development projects may contribute to an increase in the risk of disaster, they must in consequence, with a view to sustainable development and respect for human rights, take the risks into account in their impact studies and limit their effects, particularly for vulnerable people, by including these effects in various disaster prevention measures and plans so as to strengthen disaster resilience.

Good governance in disaster management obliges an easier participation of the population in the planning and decision making processes regarding the reduction of risks linked to natural and technological eventualities concerning them. Good governance also forces people to account for their actions and hence reduces the risk of corruption in government, in civil services and in society.

The most vulnerable groups need special protection of their rights taking into account their physical and psychological specificities in order to help them cope better with the disaster.

Finally, it should be emphasised that the human rights of indigenous communities and local populations require special protection, taking account of their customs, cultures and differentiated relations with the environment, which make them more vulnerable to the risks of disaster, while emphasising the importance of their knowledge of the locality and its history to risk prevention and reconstruction.

2. General principles

2.1. Solidarity

Nations and peoples should co-operate in a spirit of solidarity so as to strengthen disaster resilience and help victims. The costs and burdens of disasters, as well as the benefits of risk reduction measures, should be shared equitably, which implies giving particular attention to the most vulnerable individuals and communities.

2.2. Joint responsibility

National and local public authorities, the private commercial sector, agricultural and industrial, non governmental organisations, individuals and the media have a joint responsibility regarding prevention in the face of disaster risk and regarding an efficient contribution in the face of emergency situations.

2.3. Non-discrimination

Measures to prevent, reduce and prepare for disasters and to distribute relief and promote recovery, and also the enjoyment of fundamental rights are secured and implemented without distinction on any ground such as gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, ethnic group, affiliation to a national minority, socioeconomic circumstances, birth, disability, age or other status.

2.4. Humanity

All persons are treated humanely, in all circumstances, that is to say with respect, tolerance and compassion, regardless of the nature, origin, duration and place of the disaster, and particular attention should be paid to the most vulnerable people. The dignity and rights of all disaster victims are respected and protected in all circumstances.

2.5. Impartiality

Disaster prevention, preparedness, relief and recovery measures should be implemented and provided on the basis of genuine needs alone, without any favouritism between or within the population groups concerned.

2.6. Neutrality

Disaster prevention, preparedness, relief, response and recovery measures should be taken without political, racial, religious or ideological debate, and with the sole aim of protecting individuals and the enjoyment of their rights, the environment, property and heritage, and thereby strengthening resilience to this type of event.

2.7. Co-operation

States should co-operate, regardless of political, economic, social and cultural differences and according to their capacities, to strengthen disaster resilience and to secure respect for human rights, showing particular regard for the possible cross-border impact of disasters and the need for joint action.

2.8. Territorial sovereignty

States have a duty to protect persons on their territory, guaranteeing that, even if a disaster occurs, human rights are fully applied for not only their nationals, but also for foreigners on their territory including humanitarian assistance teams from abroad.

2.9. Prevention

States, as well as regional and local authorities, have a responsibility to implement anticipatory and preventive measures, with the most active involvement possible of all parties, including companies and the civil society. This principle presupposes awareness of the different risks in different places and at different times, depending particularly on variables arising from demography and climate change.

2.10. Role of the media

The media plays an essential role by informing and raising the public's awareness to the forecasting of disasters and the way they evolve. Disaster victims are treated by the media with dignity and with full respect of their privacy.

3. The ethical principles applied prior to disasters

3.1. Introduction of prevention measures

1. All persons should benefit from disaster prevention measures which ensure, by suitable means, their protection from bodily harm and the protection of their assets and which are also able to provide an appropriate level of disaster resilience, taking advantage of feedback from various countries about their experience of dealing with all possible types of disaster.
2. Such prevention measures are specially adapted to the various eventualities and the diverse categories of vulnerable people, so as to provide a better guarantee of the very strictest safety measures.

3.2. The importance of a good quality healthy environment

Given the services rendered by ecosystems, there is a direct link between quality of environment, including the protection of ecosystems, level of exposure to natural eventualities and communities' ability to react. Thus the existence of a right to a healthy environment enables to better protect at the same time the ecosystems and the neighbouring populations as well as their property which is consequently less vulnerable and more secure.

3.3. Education, training and awareness-raising about resilience to disasters

All persons, including children and people with disabilities, their families, those who care for them, teachers, civil servants and company directors and employees are entitled to receive appropriate instruction and training capable of strengthening their resilience to disasters and creating an outlook and a culture of prevention of, and adaptation to, risks.

3.4. Prior information

1. All persons may request, disseminate and receive reliable information, of both a technical and more accessible nature, together with explanations where necessary (inter alia about alerts, and with advice about the right way to behave in the case of a disaster), about the risks to which they are exposed and the measures to adopt to limit or reduce the risks and to foresee or limit the effects of a disaster. Prevention measures and alerts vary with the type of disaster envisaged.
2. States, regional and local authorities, hospitals, schools and companies produce and provide high-quality information, according to procedures and in a language that are easy for everyone to understand, about disaster risks and the preventive measures to adopt in order to reduce these. This information includes risks linked to housing construction and public infrastructure. This information is supplied subject to the limits associated with the level of knowledge, the predictability of risks and the availability of such information.

3.5. Participation

1. All persons can be consulted on and are able to participate in the drawing up of disaster risk prevention and reduction plans and programmes and emergency and relief plans, as well as in decisions on public or private projects which could, directly or indirectly, potentially cause or exacerbate disasters.
2. This participation takes place at both national and local levels. Its implementation implies the participation of all local bodies.

3.6. Freedom of expression

All persons may express publicly their opinions, fears and wishes and take part in the public debate on disaster risk prevention, on public authorities' and private bodies' predictions and on assistance and reconstruction measures planned in case of disaster.

3.7. Access to justice

All persons have the right to a fair trial and an effective legal remedy to ensure the protection, respect and enjoyment of their rights with regard to the prevention measures planned or if the authorities fail to act to adopt prevention and disaster risk reduction measures and to organise relief.

3.8. Disaster prevention at the workplace

All workers are informed in due time about disaster risks at their workplace and about the effects of natural and technological disasters. They receive special training in disaster prevention and possible responses to disasters.

3.9. Disaster prevention in recreation and tourist areas

All individuals are informed about potential disaster risks during their leisure or tourism activities and about the effects of natural eventualities and technological dangers. They can benefit from appropriate special information about prevention and the possible responses to disasters, enabling them to find out, in accessible language, about relief plans and how to behave if a disaster occurs.

3.10. Disaster prevention in public places, particularly schools and hospitals

Users of public places, particularly schools and hospitals, are informed about disaster risks which can be a threat to these buildings. This information should include special prevention measures and possible responses to disasters, and should explain, in accessible language, the main points of relief plans and how to behave in a disaster.

3.11. Special prevention measures for the most vulnerable groups

Pregnant women, children, disabled persons, elderly persons, the sick, the wounded, indigenous populations, environmentally displaced persons, ethnic and religious minorities and the most disadvantaged members of society, including persons or groups of persons who are victims of racism, benefit from disaster prevention measures tailored to their already existing vulnerability.

3.12. Organisation of and participation in emergency drills

To strengthen disaster resilience, emergency drills and simulations as well as national and local information and alert campaigns are regularly organised, with active participation by local authorities, relief agencies, companies, the populations concerned and people temporarily in the area. Special arrangements should be made for persons with disabilities, particularly for those with a hearing impairment if sirens are used.

3.13. Preventive evacuation of populations

1. Except in situations of serious and imminent danger, all the necessary steps are taken, insofar as is possible without compromising public safety, to avoid temporary evacuation and displacement of people because of the risk of a disaster.
2. Compulsory evacuation before a disaster should not be allowed unless there is an imminent threat. Persons who refuse to be evacuated do so at their own risk.
3. Persons, groups or communities evacuated because of serious risks and imminent threats of disaster are duly notified of the time of the evacuation, the procedures to be followed, the destinations and the expected duration of the evacuation. The arrangements for evacuation guarantee that their dignity and their fundamental rights are protected, and should include special protection for their property and effects.
4. Special operational procedures are planned and followed for the evacuation of vulnerable persons, particularly persons with disabilities.

4. The ethical principles applied during disasters

4.1. Humanitarian assistance

All persons receive immediate assistance in the event of a natural or technological disaster, including the benefit of basic health services. Humanitarian assistance is provided fairly, impartially and without discrimination, showing due regard for the vulnerability of victims and for individuals' and groups' specific needs. This humanitarian assistance meets the needs of the populations concerned, in accordance with international standards and the best existing practices.

4.2. Information and participation during disasters

All persons, local and regional authorities and non-governmental organisations affected by disasters are informed of and are entitled to participate in making decisions in response to disasters. They receive, in their own language, easily understandable information about the nature and extent of the disaster, the emergency measures planned in response to it, the times and places at which food and drink will be distributed, the location of emergency medical facilities, temporary housing arrangements and the arrangements for and destination of any population movements that are planned.

4.3. Compulsory evacuation of populations

Compulsory evacuation can only take place if a clear explanation has been given of the potential risks involved in the case of non evacuation. Persons who refuse to be evacuated do so at their own risk and should not endanger the lives of rescue workers through their conduct.

4.4. Respect of dignity

1. The dignity of all persons who are victims of a disaster is respected, particularly concerning his/her security, physical safety, access to food and clean water, hygiene, temporary housing, clothing and if necessary essential emergency medical and psychological care.
2. Sexual violence and abuse is intolerable whoever the perpetrators and victims may be.

4.5. Respect of persons

Personal rights are respected, particularly the right to one's own image and the right to privacy, so that the presence of the media does not result in abuses.

4.6. Emergency assistance for the most vulnerable persons

Allowing for local circumstances and without prejudice to the priority assistance to be given to all who have a chance of survival, priority for humanitarian assistance, first aid and any emergency evacuations go in priority to the most vulnerable people, such as pregnant women, children, people with disabilities, elderly people, the ill and the wounded.

States train and provide special equipment to members of the emergency services and doctors and nurses, so that they are able to search for and provide first aid to the most fragile persons.

4.7. The importance of rescue workers

1. Assistance measures are implemented in a spirit of humanity, solidarity, hope and impartiality.
2. Irrespective of their nationality, their status or their function and regardless of the seriousness and nature of the disaster, both civilian and military rescue workers, including any private security forces, behave with dignity, keep their anxiety or fear under control, keep calm and ensure that they never infringe the fundamental rights of the people they are rescuing.
3. Rescue workers, in the face of the local populations, have a pre-eminent moral role as a model for the respect of human rights.
4. Emergency relief should be provided without discrimination or favouritism and without heed to differences in gender, religion, language or social status.
5. Rescue workers do not take advantage of the exceptional situation to misuse their rights. They never exploit the weakness or helplessness of the persons assisted to force them to carry out acts that infringe their human dignity or their physical and sexual integrity. They refrain from any act that may be equated with corruption.
6. Rescue workers of any nationality continue to enjoy all their fundamental rights, even during emergency situations.
7. Rescue workers have psychological assistance available during and after relief operations.
8. States, international organisations and all institutions connected with humanitarian assistance in response to disasters take every possible measure to guarantee to rescue workers the necessary conditions for them to carry out their work properly, including the conditions needed to protect their dignity, safety, and physical and psychological integrity.

9. States, regional and local authorities and rescue training establishments provide special training to rescue workers covering human rights and ethical principles in times of disaster and the special arrangements for dealing with persons with disabilities and the most vulnerable persons.

4.8. Measures to safeguard and rehabilitate the environment

In view of the importance of the environment to human survival, practical measures are taken to ensure the quickest possible safeguarding and rehabilitation of environmental assets and the re-establishment of environmental quality.

4.9. Necessary measures to safeguard and restore social ties

Considering the importance of social ties to human survival, practical measures are taken to ensure that social ties are restored as quickly as possible, in particular by foreseeing meeting places, places of worship and places for leisure activities.

5. The ethical principles applied after disasters

5.1. Strengthening resilience to the effects of disasters

1. As guardians of sustainable development, states and local and regional authorities as well as companies contribute to strengthening resilience by getting sites back to normal as quickly as possible after a disaster. During the period of a return to the conditions of a normal life, they continue to guarantee infrastructures and essential services, the enjoyment of and respect for human rights.
2. The businesses, other economic players and humanitarian organisations involved in the reconstruction process are responsible for respecting the human rights and dignity of victims and of any persons taking part in the reconstruction work. They adopt measures and practices ensuring in all places and all circumstances that human rights are protected and respected in the course of their activities.
3. The urgency of the rehabilitation process cannot be used as an excuse for taking reconstruction or environmental rehabilitation measures that would ultimately be detrimental to the environment or to residents' future safety.

5.2. Necessary measures

1. States should do what they can to adopt the requisite measures to ensure that human rights are protected and promoted during all reconstruction and rehabilitation work, and to investigate infringements of those rights.
2. The organisations and authorities responsible for reconstruction work and the humanitarian assistance agencies participating therein, as well as all those bodies' staff, should respect human rights and adopt an irreproachable line of conduct in keeping with ethically responsible behaviour throughout their work, while endeavouring to achieve the highest level of protection.

5.3. Protection of economic, social and cultural rights

1. Economic, social and cultural rights are protected and measures are taken to safeguard their implementation during the rehabilitation phase that follows disasters. Efforts to secure respect for these rights should give priority to the right to medical and psychological assistance, education, protection of property and the cultural heritage, housing and means of subsistence, preservation of culture, traditions and customs and restoration of the quality of the environment.

2. Ceremonies for the dead are organised without delay, in accordance with the respective traditions and religions.
3. Temporary housing is used for the shortest possible time.
4. Restitution of property deeds is carried out on the basis of claimants' good faith, backed up by witnesses' statements, if the relevant evidence has been lost.
5. Environmentally displaced persons, whether nationals or foreigners, have a say on the location and conditions of their temporary housing.
6. Measures are adopted to guarantee the right to health in particular, thanks to the medical and psychological treatment necessary to the full physical and psychological recovery of victims after disasters have occurred.

5.4. Protection of civil and political rights

1. Civil and political rights are preserved after a disaster.
2. Disaster victims whose official papers and identity documents have been lost or have disappeared obtain replacements easily.
3. Disaster victims are free to come and go at the site of the disaster, provided that they do not hinder relief and rehabilitation operations.
4. Disaster victims receive all the necessary assistance for the purposes of family reunification.
5. Special care is provided for orphans, and searches are made for parents, relatives, neighbours, friends or adoptive parents capable of taking them in, with priority being given to family reunification.
6. Formalities relating to voting rights are possibly relaxed to enable disaster victims to exercise their civic rights immediately.

All these ethical principles should be widely distributed to States, non-governmental organisations, companies and civil society so that ethical standards accompany in all circumstances persons facing disaster situations. These ethical principles could be considered a code of good conduct for all concerned by the disaster cycle.