



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

AP/CAT (2002) 53

Open Partial Agreement on the prevention of, protection against and organisation of relief in major natural and technological disasters

RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

**adopted at the 9th Ministerial session of the
EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement**

**Isle of Bendor, Bandol, France
3 - 4 October 2002**

Strasbourg, 5 November 2002

Strasbourg, 5 November 2002

AP/CAT (2002) 53

Open Partial Agreement on the prevention of, protection against,
and organisation of relief in major natural and technological disasters

RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

**adopted¹ at the 9th Ministerial session of the
EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement**

**Isle of Bendor, Bandol, France
3 -4 October 2002**

- Resolution on Euro-Mediterranean Synergy
- Resolution on Risk Culture
- Resolution on First-Phase Implementation of Risk Prevention Initiatives
- Recommendation concerning the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)

¹ Unanimously

RESOLUTION ON EURO-MEDITERRANEAN SYNERGY

THE MINISTERS,

1. Recalling the Resolution on co-operation between the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement and international institutions, adopted at the Agreement's 8th Ministerial Session in Athens (21-22 February 2000), in which they noted that in view of the variety, frequency, scale and geographical distribution of natural or technological disasters, many international organisations had drawn up strategies for limiting damage both to the population and to the environment,
2. Considering that the recent AZF technological disaster in Toulouse, the flooding in central Europe, Algeria and Russia, which took many lives and caused social and economic upheaval in several regions, and the growing frequency and scale of such crises oblige policy-makers to seek optimum complementarity in the activities being carried out internationally, and at Euro-Mediterranean level in particular;
3. Stressing the importance they attach to efforts to achieve inter-linkage, co-operation and search for synergy in the field of risk management between the European Commission and the Council of Europe's EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement;
4. Having regard to the proposal by the Ukrainian Minister for the management of emergencies and protection of the population against the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster to involve all the member States of the Agreement more closely in European initiatives:

DECIDE :

- with a view to strengthening the prevention of and preparedness for major natural and technological disasters, to set up a Euro-Mediterranean network based on existing structures, focusing on:
 - a. Procedures and protocols for harmonisation relating to:
 - on-line exchange of information and data concerning the occurrence and effects of disasters
 - requests and proposals for assistance in case of disasters;
 - b. Harmonised and standardised measures concerning:
 - Terminology and definition of risk-management concepts;
 - Risk assessment procedures and techniques; stability of buildings and civil engineering works; safety of chemical, radiological and other hazardous facilities, oil-, gas-, fuel- pipelines;
 - Damage assessment resulting from the occurrence of major disasters;

- Early warning systems for natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, and technological hazards, such as industrial and radiological hazards;
- Measurement techniques for chemical and radioactive contamination of the environment due to technological disasters;
- Vocational training, public awareness-raising concerning emergencies, particularly among children, and research efforts in priority areas.

In this respect they consider that:

5.
 - the direct operational aspects of crisis management such as the sending of rescue equipment and teams are not the responsibility of the Council of Europe EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement; on the other hand, the Agreement's contribution must concern knowledge about hazards and their prevention and in general all information, knowledge and scientific expertise which may facilitate risk-management decision-making;
 - the Council of Europe's EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement must make a significant contribution, through its representatives of the network of specialised Euro-Mediterranean centres and its European scientific co-operation networks,;
 - at technical and scientific level to the Euro-Mediterranean efforts in the risk prevention field;
 - to fostering the enactment and harmonisation of legislation compatible with European Union risk-management standards in its member states outside the European Union and not at present applicants for Union membership;
 - to presenting specific legal proposals that might be of relevance to all the Agreement's member States.
6. Concerning co-operation with other European and international institutions, they welcome the co-operation established with:
 - the European Union, particularly with a view to establishing greater complementarity with the mechanism established by the Community, as a priority, in the field of risk prevention;
 - the European Space Agency, in particular under the global environmental safety monitoring programme mounted in co-operation with the European Commission;
 - the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) of the United Nations, particularly concerning the evaluation of the Yokohama Strategy discussed at the meeting of Euro-Mediterranean experts on disaster prevention on the Isle of Bendor, France, on 1 October 2002;

- UNESCO, WHO, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Stability Pact in the interest of more effective risk prevention;
- the Council of Europe Development Bank, in the field of natural disasters.

INSTRUCT the Executive Secretary to implement this resolution in close co-operation with the Presidency and Vice-Presidency of the Agreement.

RESOLUTION ON RISK CULTURE

THE MINISTERS,

Recalling their declaration on the public's right to information and training about risk management, adopted at the 8th ministerial session of the Agreement (Athens, 21-22 February 2000), in which they stated their intention:

- to affirm the population's right to be informed about hazard prevention and how to behave in an emergency;
- to give priority to raising children's awareness of hazard prevention, particularly through the school curriculum;

Lend their support:

- to the implementation of the IRIS (International Risk Information System) project on the combined use of radio and Internet to better inform the public about risk prevention;
- to the creation in the member states of the Agreement of national observatories to monitor the safety of schools and higher education establishments or equivalents, forming a Euro-Mediterranean network whose secretariat could be provided by the European Centre in Sofia, in liaison with the national civil protection agency.

WELCOME:

- the evaluation report on the SESAM plan (plan for disaster relief in schools and other establishments frequented by children of school age, presented by the Monaco authorities);
- risk prevention schemes for children with special needs (children with physical or mental disabilities or socially deprived children (FORM-OSE - Net de la Rue);
- initiatives developed by the Yerevan European Centre (ECTR) to integrate protective features into the design of school furniture;
- initiatives developed at university level in connection with Euro-Mediterranean university networks, Euro-Mediterranean Masters courses as a first stage towards Euro-Mediterranean doctorates in risk sciences:
 - offered for the third consecutive year by the European Centre for Disaster Medicine (CEMEC) in San Marino, a European Master in Disaster Medicine;
 - offered for the second consecutive year by the Universities of Montpellier and Nîmes, a European Master in Risk Science.

INSTRUCT the Executive Secretary:

- to continue implementation of the radio-risk coupled with internet within the framework of the IRIS Project, on the basis of pilot schemes carried out in France and specific actions in Algeria, in the Wilaya of Ain-Temouchent, and Morocco, in Casablanca,
- to promote the creation in member states of national observatories to monitor safety in schools and higher education establishments,
- to enhance implementation of the FORM-OSE programme (Training, West, South, East)
 - at school level, relying on the European centres in Sofia, Ravello and Cyprus, paying particular attention to children with special needs.
 - at university and professional levels.

RESOLUTION ON FIRST-PHASE IMPLEMENTATION OF RISK PREVENTION INITIATIVES

THE MINISTERS,

Considering the resolution on Euro-Mediterranean Synergy adopted at this Ministerial Session,

Having regard to the priority they have given to the contribution which the Agreement must make in the scientific and technical field to hazard prevention,

Having regard to the conclusions presented at the meeting in Montpellier on 12-14 December 2001 as part of the programme on mobilisation of the scientific and technical community for the improvement of risk management, initiated with the support of the European Commission (DG Research, International Co-operation), which emphasises the value of developing initiatives under the Agreement on:

- the prevention of technological hazards, based on the establishment of a website on the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, a network of experts on industrial hazard prevention, improvement of water management in catchment areas from the point of view of quality and quantity of water (Danube Basin), and of torrential floods in Mediterranean countries, particularly those in Algeria in 2001 and Nîmes, France, in 2002.

Take note of and welcome:

- the start of the programme concerning comparative analysis of existing national and Euro-Mediterranean risk-management legislation, coordinated by the European Centre in Florival, Belgium, the European Centre for Technological Risk Assessment (TESEC), Ukraine, and the European Centre in Sofia (CSLT), Bulgaria;
- the scientific and technical meeting to be held in Munich (14 -15 November 2002) on the preparation of schemes to improve flood prevention in the Danube catchment area and in the Tisza basin;
- the meeting in Toulouse on 23 October 2002 on the setting up of European expert networks on the prevention of industrial hazards.

INSTRUCT the Executive Secretary, in liaison with the Presidency, to make contact with the relevant departments of the European Commission, in particular the Directorate General of the Environment, to consider, initiate and monitor possible co-operation and synergies to implement these initiatives.

REQUEST the Executive Secretary to report on the execution of this remit at the next meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION (ISDR)

THE MINISTERS CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Societies are increasingly vulnerable to natural and other related technological and environmental hazards, whose impact is made more acute by the consequences of demographic, economic and social changes including urbanisation and development processes, as recently recognised by the World Summit on Sustainable Development;
2. The Euro-Mediterranean (Euro-Med) region is not exempted from the adverse consequences of this trend, manifested also as a transboundary problem, such as in the case of the recent catastrophic floods in Western and Central Europe. The tens of thousands of victims of the two last earthquakes in Turkey, the 800 or more victims caused by the disastrous floods and mudslides in Algeria in 2001, and the devastation brought about by floods in the Gard region in France this summer are but a few reminders of this dramatic situation;
3. Disaster reduction is one central element of sustainable development and the associated risk management is a primary responsibility of governments. Such risk management should be based on an integrative decision-making process linking scientific knowledge, vulnerability assessment and authority structures at all levels. The civil society, the private sector, including insurance companies, experts and academia must be fully involved.

RECALLING THAT :

In 1996, a meeting of experts from the entire Euro-Med basin was convened in Italy (International Workshop on Natural Disaster Reduction in the Mediterranean Region, Castelnuovo di Porto) to review the state of the regional cooperation in this domain and which made recommendations for the adoption of a common strategy. In a subsequent meeting held in 1998 in Spain (IDNDR Regional Conference for the Mediterranean, Valencia), similar recommendations were made. The same recommendations were reaffirmed in December 2001 (Conference on Urban Safety and Sustainable Development, Naples) and May 2002 in Italy.

RECOMMEND THAT:

1. National disaster reduction platforms linked to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in the Euro-Med region be established, consolidated and developed through recognition and support by national governments. The positive experience they represent should be capitalised upon and should serve to support the goals underpinning the ISDR.

2. In pursuit of these goals, it is essential that risk management be integrated into planning and land use policy in the Euro-Med region. Initiative in this sense should be taken in co-operation with the Council of Europe and the European Commission where appropriate.
3. Furthermore, a stronger and more substantive collaboration between the Council of Europe (EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement in particular) and the European Commission should be encouraged in the area of disaster reduction. This collaboration could include support for developing countries and should be developed with the support of the ISDR Secretariat, which constitutes a link with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations.
4. A Euro-Med conference on disaster reduction should be organised jointly by the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement of the Council of Europe and the ISDR Secretariat in 2003 or early 2004, hosted by the government of Spain at the National School of Civil Protection in Madrid. This conference would be aimed at reviewing and consolidating the work done in the past few years and make specific proposals for the improvement of risk management in the Euro-Med region. The conference would also prepare a concerted input for the review of the Yokohama Strategy and Action Plan to be undertaken by the ISDR Secretariat at international level.

Such a conference should include amongst other topics:

- i. the specific problems of sub regions within the Euro-Med area
- ii. aspects of international co-operation within and outside the Euro-Med area
- iii. the transboundary aspects of risk management
- iv. the contribution of science and technology to disaster management.

INSTRUCT the Executive Secretariat of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement to contribute to the implementation of those Recommendations.

WELCOME the initiative of the German ISDR Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV) for convening a meeting of the national platforms for ISDR of the European Union countries in order to establish a network for enhanced cooperation and information exchange.

