



**EUR-OPA MAJOR  
HAZARDS AGREEMENT**

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OPEN PARTIAL AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF, PROTECTION AGAINST  
AND ORGANISATION OF RELIEF IN MAJOR NATURAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL  
DISASTERS

**Report on the international colloquy  
on a tsunami warning system in the western Mediterranean  
(Nice, 25 February 2005)**

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1. I represented the Council of Europe EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement at a colloquy in Nice, organised by the Alpes-Maritimes Department, on the subject of warning systems in the western Mediterranean. Representatives of local and regional authorities from the “Latin Arc” and north African countries were invited.

Several Directors of Centres and/or Permanent Correspondents of the Council of Europe Agreement were present. Mr Rémy Bossu, Secretary General of the Euro-Mediterranean Seismological Centre (CSEM), and Professor Luis Mendes Victor, Director of the European Centre on Urban Risks (CERU), Lisbon, spoke about early warning systems.

2. A general Round Table session enabled a number of objectives to be identified:

- the setting up of one or more early warning systems in the Euro-Mediterranean area, with a distinction being made between different possible geographical zones (such as the eastern and western Mediterranean and the Atlantic seaboard), interlinking with the Global Monitoring system (GMES) being set up by the European Union and European Space Agency. Support from the European Union (IST programmes) would be needed for setting up or developing such systems;
- efficient management of the stages from receipt of a warning to the raising of the alarm, and creation of an appropriate human environment to deal with crises. There is a need for a prevention culture to be developed, as highlighted at the Kobe conference in January 2005 and in the UN Plan of Action for the next 10 years;
- avoidance of compartmentalisation of strategies for the various kinds of disasters which might occur in the territory concerned.

3. At the final Round Table session, held in the presence of the French Minister for Ecology and Sustainable Development, Mr Serge Lepeltier, I referred to the exchange of letters between the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, which mentioned the possible contributions of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement to the world risk prevention strategy:

- contribution from the Agreement's Centres, with their potential for early warnings in the Euro-Mediterranean area. This contribution could take practical form in initiatives supported by the European Union. The experience of the network of Centres should also be highlighted at the planned international conference on warning systems scheduled for 2006 in Germany;
- the Agreement's experience in education and the provision of information (among the examples being the FORM-OSE programme and the Be Safe Net project). This seems to be how the Agreement could best contribute to the dissemination of a risk culture, through, for instance, pilot projects to be started by local authorities in the “Latin Arc” referred to at the Nice colloquy of 25 February;
- intergovernmental contribution in terms of an integrated risk management policy derived from the programme being developed by the Agreement for comparative analysis of legislation.

4. Account could be taken of the Nice colloquy at the meeting of Directors of Centres and Permanent Correspondents, to be held in Paris from 7 to 9 March 2005.