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EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT
(EUR-OPA)

**Meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points for
Disaster Risk Reduction**

Paris, 24-25 April 2008

hosted by UNESCO

Meeting Report

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1. Context

National Platforms (NPs) for disaster risk reduction were an integral part of the International Decade for Natural Disaster risk reduction (IDNDR), where they proved to be effective partners within the international structure. After phasing out of IDNDR they took the same crucial position within its successor arrangement, the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ISDR). Therefore NPs continue to be the pillars of the national initiatives to reduce the negative impacts of hazards. This important role of NPs is also recognized by the United Nations Secretary-General, who recommended in his report to the General Assembly in 1999: “Given the success of national committees and focal points for the Decade in a large number of countries, the Secretary General strongly encourages all Governments to take the necessary measures to implement this appeal.” (see Secretary General’s Report to the UNGA A/54/497, 1999, para. 32).

Subsequently, at the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction, 168 Governments adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA). One of the HFA’s strategic goals is “the development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards”. It calls on all nations to “support the creation and strengthening of national integrated mechanisms such as multi-sectoral National Platforms” to ensure that DRR is a national and a local priority.

Disaster risk is increasingly global in character. Due to factors such as climate change and economic globalization, actions in one region may have an impact on risk of hazards in another, and vice versa. This, compounded by growing vulnerability as a result of unplanned urbanization, under-development and competition for scarce resources, points to a future where disasters will increasingly threaten the world’s economy and population.

Europe is a hazard prone region exposed to a range of disasters caused by the impact of natural hazards, including earthquake, floods, forest fires, drought and landslides. The impact of climate change, accompanied by changes in land-use patterns and increased human settlements in areas that are prone to disasters, will certainly increase risk from such weather-related hazards in the coming years.

Europe is equally a major international player in the different sectors of development aid and humanitarian assistance, as well as a imbedding technical expertise and research knowledge on disaster risk reduction.

A number of official Hyogo Framework for Action Focal Points (HFA Focal Points) have been designated at the national level providing updates and exchanges to the UN/ISDR secretariat in advancing on the HFA implementation.

The meeting has built on the outcome of the European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points Meeting held in Strasbourg on 7 May 2007.

2. Date, venue and conveners

The Council of Europe (European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)) and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) secretariat in

collaboration with an European Network of National Platforms and HFA Focal Points (currently chaired by DKKV) invited representatives of European National Platforms and HFA focal points for disaster risk reduction to the European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points Meeting held on 24-25 April 2008 in Paris. The meeting was hosted by UNESCO and was held in its premises.

3. Meeting objectives

- Discuss and share information on the progress in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (reporting guidelines and presentation of work plan for monitoring and progress review and its publications);
- Build on the opportunities of collaboration between national platforms in Europe (European Network of National Platforms; twinning between national platforms; exchanges and collaboration with specialized institutes);
- Agree on common issues to be taken forward at the European level (review on main challenges in Europe and ways forward).

4. Participants

See list of participants in Annex 1

5. Proceedings

Mr Iuliu Bara (Chair of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the Council of Europe (CoE) European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)) chaired the meeting on the 24th of April.

Mr. Claes-Uno Brask (Swedish Rescue Services Agency Emergency Prevention Department) chaired the meeting on the 25th.

5.1. Welcome remarks.

Mr Iuliu Bara and Mr. Badaoui Rouhban (Chief, Section for Disaster Reduction Natural Sciences Sector of UNESCO) welcomed the participants on behalf of CoE and UNESCO as co-organizers and hosts of the meeting.

Mr Eladio Fernández-Galiano (Executive secretary EUR-OPA) presented this meeting as an opportunity to formalize cooperation among European NPs, to push the establishment of NPs and networking, including exchanges with the CoE (EUR-OPA) specialized centers and to view progress made in disaster risk reduction.

Mr. Sálvamo Briceño (Director of UN/ISDR secretariat in Geneva) welcomed the participants on behalf of UN/ISDR and hailed the close partnership with CoE and UNESCO, which permitted this meeting. He made a short statement on the situation of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Europe, which is increasingly vulnerable to hazards (disasters and human losses rise higher and higher). He also underlined one of the issues of the meeting, climate change (CC) adaptation and DRR.

On behalf of the French, German and Swiss National platforms for DRR, DKKV represented by Mr. Karl-Otto Zentel (Chief Executive Officer of the German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV)) gave a short overview of an European Network of NPs. He stressed the fact that countries need National Platforms to deal with risks efficiently and that Europe must be seen as an opportunity to advocate for DRR at regional and global levels because of its role as major international actor in international development and humanitarian assistance. .

5.2. Progress on Disaster Risk Reduction activities.

a) This topic was opened by a presentation¹ given by Ms. Paola Albrito (UN/ISDR Regional Coordinator Europe) on reviewing and monitoring progress in the implementation of the HFA. The presentation:

- Provided background information about the ‘HFA Monitor online tool’.
- Presented a work plan for monitoring and progress review.
- Provided timeframe for NPs to share information to UN/ISDR for this online tool.

b) *Monitoring progress in the implementation of the HFA.*

The ‘HFA Monitor online tool’ will enable NPs and HFA focal points to collect information and share experiences on common issues.

The intention is to be able from national and regional levels to capture and share information, on reducing vulnerability to disasters and to highlight priorities areas to be addressed.

Data and products updated will be available online.

National inputs (submitted on-line), regional reports and country case studies prepared will need to be provided between April and August 2008. The information will allow for development of the analysis and drafting of Global Assessment Report between September – December 2008. The Global Assessment Report will be available for the next global platform (Geneva, July 2009). For Europe, the following added value in monitoring progress has been identified: to monitor progress on achievements, to build resilience to disasters, and to identify gaps and necessary resources related to programmes and initiatives; to foster closer collaboration and cooperation amongst national actors; to stimulate exchanges and activities with international entities; to enhance visibility of countries within the global arena; to share good practices/lessons learned among national actors and with other countries that might be undertaking similar initiatives; to access the “rolling” possibility of the HFA Monitor online reporting tool.

The on-line monitoring progress in the implementation of the HFA is one of the tools discussed during the last meeting of European NPs and HFA Focal points. This tool, together with the final version of the Indicators guidelines to monitor achievements in the implementation of the HFA are considered to be useful in facilitating the work that needs to be undertaken at the national and regional level. Through Preventionweb, an overview on countries and activities will be available providing an easier and quicker way to obtain information about achievements and gaps.

The on-line monitoring tool is available in French, English and Spanish.

Ms. Albrito mentioned the regional and sub-regional organizations that should provide regional elements related to monitor progress in Europe. These are: CofE (EUR-OPA), EU/EC, Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (DPPI), a European Network of NPs, and the Central European Disaster Prevention Forum (CEUDIP).

c) *Value added of the initiative.*

¹ Available at www.unisdr.org/europe under Meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points for DRR

This tool aims at avoiding overlapping and enhancing visibility of countries within the global arena.

NPs and HFA focal points will have the opportunity to view the information posted by other countries when their reporting is completed and it represents a valid tool to build on a large database of achievements and challenges to be addressed.

d) Discussion on presentation and brainstorming on current main achievements.

Mr. Eladio Fernández-Galiano, mentioned two main messages raising from the presentation:

- Partnerships between all actors can provide information and knowledge.
- It is essential to create cooperation and an institutional basis for this cooperation.

Mr. Karl-Otto Zentel stressed the added value of obtaining information on processes and not only from facts. Mr. Karl-Otto Zentel mentioned that this initiative aims at collecting information on all aspects of Disaster Management in depth, which poses a challenge for National Platforms and HFA Focal Points to provide these information on a sound basis. He recalled two key words: cooperation and practicality.

Ms. Biljana Zuber (Senior adviser for international relations at the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief) recognized that it was difficult to report progress last year due to lack of indicators. Thus, the participants admitted that the current version of the on-line reporting, that includes indicators, is a useful tool.

A number of participants raised the issue that as more NPs and HFA focal points are connected, working together with UN/ISDR, common issues to address should be identified in the near future. Climate change has been identified as one of these issues. There is therefore a need to promote networking of experiences, and not only on how to build an NP.

Mr. Sálvano Briceño (Director of UN/ISDR) reminded climate change adaptation is a great opportunity to advance on issues related to adaptation and DRR by using and applying HFA. Mr. Briceño mentioned that since Bali, DRR is part of the climate change negotiations. The Green Paper on Climate Change Adaptation developed by the EU was provided as an example where the activities highlighted to adapt to climate change are the same indicated in the HFA to reduce vulnerability to disasters. DRR

He recommended participants to use this opportunity to renew the commitment in implementing the activities highlighted in the HFA.

A challenging question was raised by the Mr. Steven Barnes (United Kingdom Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Cabinet Office): How do we judge/evaluate the progress made? Indeed, all countries want to appear as champions, to increase the standing of their activities, and indicators have to be really precise to avoid any subjective consideration.

Ms. Paola Albrito explained that the reporting process has been structured according to a step-by-step approach, progressing with indicators. As regional organizations are also requested to report, there will be a further opportunity to highlight key achievements in the region. This is a way to keep things in perspective.

Participants recognized that this point raised the general problem of measuring and the challenge in find an adequate instrument to measure progress. The use of the indicators developed for the monitoring will hopefully respond to such a difficult question.

Mr. Claes-Uno Brask recalled that even if monitoring is important, learning is still more important. According to the participant, NPs and HFA focal points must share lessons learned and good practices.

Agreement was reached on the fact that regular self-analysis on achievements and challenges related to DRR are very important.

5.3. Opportunities of collaboration on DRR in Europe.

a) Outcomes

This topic was opened by a presentation² from Francesc Pla (Programme Manager CoE (EUR-OPA)) on collaborative centers and synergies with European NPs and HFA Focal Points. The presentation:

- Gave a brief overview of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement.
- Presented the value added of a European network.
- Gave outlook concerning future activities under the above mentioned agreement.

EUR-OPA is an agreement, which offers a good example of networking between various stakeholders with common goals.

The important characteristic is the multisectoral approach: 25 countries cooperating for DRR, followed by other actors, such as observer states or international organizations.

The value added of such a European network is to be an interface (between the scientific community and civil protection, for example), to permit sharing the necessary skills for DRR and to allow cooperation between different organizations.

The EUR-OPA committed to support the developing of NPs, in collaboration with UN/ISDR, will offer the opportunity to support workshops on how to develop and run a NP.

b) UN/ISDR presentation on recent developments in Europe.

Ms. Paola Albrito noted that partners are becoming more active on issues related to DRR. With an increasing number of regional workplans addressing disaster risk reduction and supporting national activities related to reducing vulnerabilities. The presentation³ provided a summary of these activities and key achievements related to regional organization and partners, and for each of these actors the role played by UN/ISDR secretariat in stimulating, facilitating and/or supporting the process. During the presentation a number of achievements were also shown on how to mobilize resources for DRR.

Further exchanges among European NPs and HFA focal points, particularly as part of the activities undertaken by a European Network of NPs, is becoming an efficient way to exchange information, to open a dialogue around national experiences and to move forward the agenda at the European level.

However, one of the challenges raised is to avoid duplication by exchanging more openly and actively on activities in which countries are involved related to DRR.

Ms. Paola Albrito then presented the following key messages:

² Available at www.unisdr.org/europe under Meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points for DRR

³ Available at www.unisdr.org/europe under Meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points for DRR

- To be creative in resource mobilization at the regional and national level;
- To build strong commitments at all levels;
- To stimulate the use of Regional, Sub-Regional organizations and capacities to better understand what DRR means;
- To identify coordination and information sharing as key tools to make sure that the different regional actors do not duplicate activities and to build on each other's opportunities;
- To identify key public events in which DRR issues could be highlighted (advocacy and outreach).

c) *A European Network of NPs and HFA Focal Points (DKKV Chair).*

This topic was opened by a presentation⁴ by Mr. Karl-Otto Zentel (Chief Executive Officer of the German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV)). The presentation aimed at:

- Highlighting the common goals, the specific objectives and the work plan of a European Network of NPs and HFA focal points (currently formed by Germany, France and Switzerland).
- Presenting an overview of the activities undertaken since the establishment of this network;
- Inform on future activities planned by a European Network of NPs and HFA focal Points

Among the achievements and activities related to the Network the following were highlighted: Developed Project Proposal to respond to the call of DG Research on DRR Coordination Mechanisms in Europe such as NPs; Organized the Divonne Les Bains meeting (French NPs key organizer) 5-6 Dec. 2007 on Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Response – Two separate words in Europe?; Presented and participated at a number of key European meeting to advance the DRR agenda; Involvement with EUR-OPA on meeting and way forward for Reporting in Europe (UN/ISDR secretariat: February 2008).

Within the overview of the future activities, one important point mentioned by DKKV was to use the opportunity to raise DRR during the French presidency of the EU. Mr. René Feunteun (French ministry of sustainable development - Direction de la prévention, des pollutions et des risques) mentioned that, during the French EU Presidency, an event on the European's risk approach, prevention and awareness, including climate change adaptation, will be organized by the ministry and AFPCN on 26-28 November 2008. A strong European commitment to the DRR topic could stimulate the development of a political commitment at the national level. This with the appreciation that the European level is sometimes more attractive to political actors than at the national level.

As part of the future activity highlighted by the presenter there was the work on climate change and stimulating a common European approach on DRR together with the European Commission.

It was agreed that moving forward on a common issue such as climate change adaptation through the EU Presidency is considered highly valuable and it was highlighted that similar coordination should be undertaken by the future EU Presidency. It was also noted that in many occasions there is still a need to raise the profile of DRR at the national **level** as well as building political commitment.

⁴ Available at www.unisdr.org/europe under Meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points for DRR

d) EU/EC and DRR: the development of a Disaster Prevention strategy.

Mr. Thomas de Lannoy, (Administrator at the European Commission, Directorate-General Environment - Civil Protection Unit) representing the European Commission briefly presented the current strategies and future initiatives of the Commission linked to DRR.

The European Commission plans to publish in October 2008 a specific Communication on an integrated approach to disaster prevention. The tragic disasters of previous years have led to a strengthening of European civil protection legislation, with a reinforced Community Civil Protection Mechanism and the adoption of the Civil Protection Financial Instrument. There is now a political will from all concerned to strengthen the links between prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. More action is needed at community level in the efforts to prevent disasters. The Communication should explore the following issues: build a consistent knowledge base on disasters, link the various actors and sectoral policies, improve the use of EU funds for preventing disasters, complement existing initiatives, develop specific research activities, reinforce international cooperation in the field of prevention.

In autumn 2008, a white paper on adaptation to climate change will be presented as a follow up of the Green Paper on adaptation to climate change adopted by the European Commission in June 2007.

The European Commission is also in the process of developing a proposal for a EU Strategy for DRR in developing countries. The Strategy, expected to be adopted by the Commission in October 2008, will take the form of a Commission Communication. A consultation of interested parties has been published on the Internet.

The Commission is working in the Balkans and in Turkey on DRR activities in coordination with the WB and UN/ISDR within the SEEDRMAP (South Eastern Europe Disaster Risk Mitigation and Adaptation Programme). The overall objective of the Disaster Risk initiative is to reduce the vulnerability of IPA countries to natural disasters, by building the capacity of local authorities and promoting a coordinated approach in disaster risk reduction. The Programme aims to provide technical advice and support to enhance and strengthen the meteorological and early warning systems in the region. The Disaster Risk Reduction Programme will have as main implementers the WMO (World Meteorological Organisation) and UNDP. The Disaster Risk Reduction Programme is part of the Commission Communication "Western Balkans: enhancing the European perspective" accessible at the EC website.

The key challenges depicted concerned the information and communication around DRR: many efforts have to be made to develop a common approach in Europe. The Commission is not planning a specific legislative proposal on this regard but has already started stakeholder consultations around issues linked to DRR.

e) Discussion on opportunities of collaboration on DRR in Europe.

The meeting Chair thanked all the speakers for their presentations, reminding of the key messages:

- European Networking and collaboration must lie on bottom-up initiatives to be efficient.
- Cooperating and networking are the key words.

Prof. Alberto Monti (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)) talked about the recent initiatives and projects that the OECD is carrying forward in the field of financial management of large-scale disasters. He highlighted the need to devise efficient financial strategies to manage the increasing costs of disasters at country and regional levels, and underscored the limitations inherent to purely *ex post* compensation mechanisms. He also emphasized the link between a clear *ex ante* allocation of the financial cost of disasters and the incentives to adopt cost-effective DRR measures at all levels of government and society. Prof. Monti welcomed opportunities of information and exchanges with OECD and suggested that the European Network of NPs and HFA focal points could take part in the future initiatives and events organised under the auspices of the OECD International Network on Financial Management of Large-Scale Catastrophes.

Mr. Giovanni de Siervo (Italian Civil Protection), which has established an NP and is in the process of developing the NP's functioning and membership, spoke about the overwhelming number of forms in which DRR is discussed as well as the need of coordination. Rationalizations and a practical approach of supporting countries to implement DRR activities have been highlighted as a way to move forward.

Mr. Steven Barnes posed the question if many things have already been done by regional and international actors, what is left to do at the national level?

UN/ISDR mentioned that the DRR is a very broad subject and that true achievements are based on a strong national legislation and system addressing the issue. Many examples were provided on NPs' activities. The regional and international organizations' role is to support national efforts. DKKV added that the UN/ISDR secretariat and the CoE and other partners can not substitute national governments in the development and implementation of national plans and activities.

Participants recognized there was a long way to go to raise awareness of governments concerning DRR.

Signature of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat (UN/ISDR).

5.4. Common issues to take forward at the European level: review on main challenges in Europe and ways forward.

This part of the agenda was Chaired by Mr. Claes-Uno Brask (Coordinator at the Planning, Construction and Environment Department at the Swedish Rescue Services Agency) from Sweden. He welcomed participants on this second day of the meeting and mentioned that this second day was to be viewed as an opportunity to discuss a number of issues briefly introduced by presentations from different actors.

a) Climate change adaptation and DRR: common agenda and key events (introduction on main events).

This topic was opened by a presentation⁵ by Mr. Sálvano Briceño (UN/ISDR Director) The presentation:

- Explained the concept of adaptation and presented an overview of the problem.
- Described the link between the Bali Action Plan and DRR.

⁵ Available at www.unisdr.org/europe under Meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points for DRR

- Announced the main events in 2008 for pursuing DRR agenda.

One of the key concepts of adaptation is the idea of managing the unavoidable.

The Bali conference on climate change call for enhanced action on adaptation that includes: risk management and risk reduction strategies, including risk sharing and transfer mechanisms such as insurance; disaster reduction strategies and means to address loss and damage associated with climate change (CC) impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Mr. Briceño explained that in order to reach the above, there are a number of key steps that should be undertaken from the DRR community at the national level: develop national mechanisms to link and coordinate CC adaptation and disaster risk reduction policies; conduct a baseline assessment on the status of disaster risk reduction and related CC adaptation efforts in the country and undertake climate risk assessments; and prepare CC adaptation plans drawing on the Hyogo Framework.

b) Discussion on common objective and main events.

To guide the debate, Ms. Paola Albrito posed a few questions to the participants:

- 1) Do you have experts on CC in your NP? Do you have experiences to share?
- 2) Are you discussing CC issues within your NP?
- 3) Do you have a workplan on that?
- 4) Are you preparing something for specific public events?
- 5) Do you have suggestions to move forward together on the issue of CC/DRR (another meeting will take place to talk about this precise point).

Mr. Claes-Uno Brask (Coordinator at the Planning, Construction and Environment Department at the Swedish Rescue Services Agency) intervened to explain that the issue of CC adaptation and DRR had been raised in his country during a meeting in 2008. A publication is computing the main outcome of this intense discussion at the national level. The NP in Sweden is very concerned about this issue. He reminded of the importance of bringing different bodies together in order to work efficiently.

Mr. Karl-Otto Zentel mentioned that the German NP is in close contact with the Environmental Agency contributing with its experience to the development of an adaptation strategy. He mentioned that environmental groups are very often focused on environmental issues (topics of transport, energy or finance are not raised). Efforts have to be made to incorporate all relevant sectors into the adaptation strategy. Discussions on EU Green Paper have been opened in Germany but it is a huge process.

Efforts have to be made to work together with other actors, such as the EU, to follow the process within Brussels's discussions.

Mr. Thomas De Lannoy indicated that within the strategy of the Commission, adaptation to CC and prevention to disasters are two distinct concepts and two different initiatives within the Commission.

Mr. Giovanni de Siervo mentioned that there might be a danger in focusing entirely on CC issues to the detriment of the focus on DRR. During his intervention he also spoke about an event that Italy, Russia with the support of Switzerland are organizing in Geneva on the 25th of June 2008. The event entitled *The role of modern civil protection systems and the new global challenges: "From the Hyogo Framework for Action to real time response"*, will look at the role of the modern civil protection in addressing new challenges related to disaster preparedness, response but also disaster risk reduction.

Mr. Sálvano Briceño (Director UN/ISDR) recognized that it is important to note that CC adaptation and DRR are different issues but also that they have common parts. It is important to link them to avoid overlapping.

There are indirect impacts of CC on disasters. Besides, there is no risk that one or the other problem will soon disappear. DRR has to become a more legally binding issue.

CC must be a midterm objective of the HFA.

The main challenge is that CC is still mainly focused on energy, on how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A large movement has to emerge to make governments think about adaptation measures. It is the same for DRR: to shift from response to prevention.

c) Main events to use to advocate on CC/DRR.

Participants agreed on benefiting from the opportunity of the French presidency of the EU on the second semester of 2008.

However, according to Mr. Karl-Otto Zentel from DKKV, not much can be done in six months. We can start a process during the presidency but it is essential to follow it up through the next EU presidencies of the Czech Republic and Sweden.

d) Twinning of National Platforms. Introduction on main events at the global level.

This topic was introduced by a presentation⁶ by Mr. Lars Bernd (Programme Officer, UN/ISDR). The presentation:

- Gave a brief global overview of the existing NPs and HFA focal points, and of the NPs to be established.
- Introduced the project of a toolkit for NPs.
- Described several examples of partnership among international actors, cooperation and twinning among NPs
- Announced the main events for 2008-2009 as far as NPs are concerned.

The number of NPs is increasing but is still not that high. Above all, many NPs have difficulties to work efficiently, because of a lack of sustained financial and human support. The project of a toolkit is supposed to help countries setting up efficient NPs with basic advice and practical tools (how to create a multi stakeholder dialogue, how to write up a work plan...).

However, good examples of cooperation between partners (UN agencies, NGOs...) have to be mentioned, such as a growing interest from OECD/donor countries.

The main event to bear in mind for the coming months is the consultative meeting of NPs and HFA focal points in Panama in October 2008. Mr. Lars Bernd reiterated an appeal for donors to help organize this meeting.

e) Discussion on common objectives and main events.

A shift has to be made from experience sharing to legislative sharing, to move forward more concrete partnerships.

Mr. Petter Nuland (Senior Advisor at the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning) gave the example of its twinning conference with China, in which discussions took place at the same levels (Norwegian Red Cross discussed with the Chinese Red Cross, for example).

⁶ Available at www.unisdr.org/europe under Meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points for DRR

Workshops will take place (dates to be defined) for NPs to be in Europe, in which established NPs will provide technical advice to NPs in the process of establishment.

Many participants questioned what twinning means and implies. Ms. Paola Albrito reminded that it is up to the European NPs to discuss what twinning means and what the objectives could be. She highlighted three levels of twinning that have emerged from exchanges in Europe: interest from a country to know more on how existing NPs developed in order to advance on their developing of NPs (expression of interest has been shown by many of the countries currently developing an NP); interest from a country developing an NP to build on other European NPs' experiences related also to activities and exchanges of technical nature (this is the case on the expressed interest from Montenegro towards the members of a European Network of NPs (Germany, France and Switzerland)); and concrete support requested and expressed between a NP and a country developing an NP (this is the case between Italy and Albania, as Albania has called for the Italian civil protection (NP coordinator) support in restructuring their Civil Protection system from a legislative, structural and programmatic point of view). All these examples can be captured under the concept of "twinning".

Overall, it emerged that the concept of twinning has to be elastic, in order to stimulate further support and to capture progress from exchanges.

Mr. Karl-Otto Zentel mentioned that it is no use to have lots of good practices without a concept. NPs need a framework to start such a process. There is always cooperation between NPs but to build a permanent forum of discussion is more difficult, but also more needed.

Ms. Paola Albrito replied by asking a basic question: Who should provide the aims/objectives? UN/ISDR? NPs? The idea is that all actors have to work together.

It was therefore agreed that UN/ISDR will circulate a draft paper capturing the concept of twinning to be distributed to the NPs and HFA focal points in Europe in order to agree to some common definition and concepts on this great opportunity of collaboration.

Mr. Steven Barnes that all countries have something to offer. Above all, the twinning process has to be an inclusive process instead of an exclusive one.

The UN/ISDR staff reminded the two sides of twinning:

- Existing NPs working together on selected issues.
- Help from an existing NP to an NP to be (concrete advice).

5.5. A European Platform for DRR. Introduction to the topic.

a) This topic was introduced⁷ by Mr. Sálvano Briceño. The presentation:

- Reminded that DRR, as a national and local priority (HFA Priority 1) has to be mainstreamed within the legislative framework.
- Introduced the idea of DRR as a European priority.

Mr. Salvano Briceño proposed to strategically advocate for DRR at the European level, among EU Parliamentarians in order to mainstream DRR into regional legislation.

One of the key challenges is to know how to make prevention become the main purpose for European legislators.

⁷Available at www.unisdr.org/europe under Meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points for DRR

The Global Initiative was also presented, as a network of legislators, mainly from the environmental sector, but also from DRR.

Next step to follow is to build Public/Private Partnerships for DRR among various actors:

- 1) Politicians
- 2) Legislators
- 3) Private sector.

b) Discussion on the European Network of NPs and high political level engagement in Europe.

According to UN/ISDR, three concrete questions have to be raised to move forward to a more efficient European Network:

- 1) What is the potential for support of existing NPs?
- 2) What are the key events on which NPs can play to advocate for DRR at European and global levels?
- 3) What kind of efforts have to be made to improve information sharing? (Much information is shared with and by UN/ISDR Regional Coordinator for Europe, but not directly between NPs).

Mr. Steven Barnes mentioned that an important part of the agenda item relates to what a “European Platform” is. He mentioned that there are many opportunities to advance the issue at the European level but that we should avoid creating many sub-groups of NPs agreeing to combine their efforts. This could end up in the establishment of several “European network for DRR”. Mr. Karl-Otto Zentel, representing DKKV, as current chair of “A European Network of National Platforms and HFA Focal Points” mentioned the wish for their network to welcome and invite other NP and HFA Focal Points to join the existing structure.

A suggestion was made by Mr. Barnes to Mr. Zentel to act as chair for all existing NPs and HFA focal points and to agree together on some key aspects to be addressed – based on existing emerged elements. As time did not permit, the discussion should continue via e-mail.

As a result of these exchanges, it was agreed that in order to facilitate for all national platforms in Europe to cooperate in a European Network the differences in organization of, and mandate for, the individual platforms must be taken into consideration. This issue should be further elucidated and discussed in coming meetings.

Further it was noted that the NPs and HFA focal points meetings could be organized twice instead of once per year.

6. Outcomes of the meeting

The following outcomes/conclusions emerged from the meeting:

- A European Network is an opportunity to formalize cooperation among NPs, to support the establishment of NPs and networking.
- It is also an opportunity to see the progress made on DRR and to highlight common changes and good practices.

- Signing of the agreement between ISDR secretariat and the Council of Europe's Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) has formalized existing partnership between the two actors.
- The meeting has allowed taking stock of achievements and progressing so far in implementing the HFA in Europe and, with regard to NPs, globally.
- The meeting has facilitated sharing of information on the guidelines and timetable for the upcoming HFA GAR reporting exercise in the lead up to the second session of the Global Platform.
- The participants agreed on identifying the HFA Monitor online tool as a way to avoid overlapping and enhance visibility of countries within the global arena. This tool will help building a big database for DRR at country level.
- Regular self-analysis is considered as an important tool to monitor progress.
- Adaptation to CC and disaster risk reduction have got common ground but mostly a number of common activities that will reduce the risk of disaster and allow climate change adaptation.
- Identified twinning of NPs as beneficial but also the need to further develop the concept and objectives of twinning.
- Agreed for UN/ISDR to circulate a draft paper capturing the concept of twinning to be distributed to the NPs and HFA focal points in Europe in order to agree to some common definition and concepts on this great opportunity of collaboration.
- Explored the possibility, if felt useful, to discussion further by e-mail on the suggestion raised by the UK to the Chair of a European Network of NPs to be acting as chair for all existing NPs and HFA focal points and to agree together on some key aspects to be addressed – based on existing emerged elements.

7. Closure of the meeting and next steps

The participant agreed on the importance of such a meeting to determine outlook and next steps to follow to move forward more cooperation and networking. Indeed, this meeting:

- Allowed to inform of upcoming events and activities, in particular by the initiative "A European network of NPs" gathering the NPs from France, Germany, Switzerland, but also France and Italy ("Role of civil protection facing new challenges" - int. meeting in June in Geneva) and UN/ISDR Europe activities for NPs (Good Practices of NPs publication, Toolkit for NPs and HFA FPs, Second Consultative Meeting of NPs and HFA FPs in Panama, etc.)
- Allowed Several European NPs to consider new challenges and opportunities by the large scale international focus on climate change: Sweden prepared a larger report and policy document on "Sweden facing climate change", which highlights many local scenarii (they seem to be the most advanced on the topic in Europe). Though not a NP publication, some of its members were part of the discussions. Germany: The NP DKKV is part of the UNFCCC working group on "Extreme events". It is also involved in the on-going preparations to develop a NAPA in Germany. As chair of a European NP network, DKKV also gathered European NP/ HFA FP comments to the EC Green Paper on climate change adaptation. The network also plans to hold a session for NP with some climate change focus at the 08/2008 IDRC (details are still to be defined). France is gearing up for the EU Presidency in 06-12/2008 and plans to hold a November 2008 meeting focusing on Europe facing disasters, to day CC, with European NPs and focal points in particular.

- Allowed NPs and HFA focal points to share lessons, information and knowledge.
- Stressed the fact that DRR is now part of the climate change negotiations since Bali.
- Agreed for UN/ISDR to circulate a draft paper capturing the concept of twinning to be distributed to the NPs and HFA focal points in Europe in order to agree to some common definition and concepts on this great opportunity of collaboration.

Throughout this meeting it was recommended:

- To stress the link between DRR and climate change adaptation.
- To strengthen bilateral cooperation and exchange among National Platforms. Things should develop following "bottom up" approach.
- To move forward more cooperation and concrete approach on the subject.
- To identify common issues to work in the future.
- To build strong commitments on DRR at all levels.
- To identify key public events in which DRR issues could be highlighted (advocacy and outreach).
- To benefit from the opportunity to raise DRR during the French presidency of the EU.
- To shift from experience sharing to legislative sharing, in order to rationalize and to start developing some concrete activities related to DRR among NPs.
- To start building on opportunities highlighted at the meeting (e.i. use of specialized centers by NPs).
- To find a general concept of twinning.
- The question what a European National Platform means, was not adressed at all.

UN/ISDR thanked the participants for the constructive and fruitful discussions of both days. The number of country representatives underlined the interest for DRR in Europe. The meeting should be seen as an initiative to strengthen contacts and to establish information exchange among National Platforms and HFA focal points at regional level. The discussions highlighted the existing potential of networking in different areas of DRR at European level.

The Council of Europe also thanked the participants for their contributions to the meeting.

Closure of the meeting.

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ANNEX 2

United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
Secretariat, Geneva

**Meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points
Paris, 24-25 April 2008
Hosted by UNESCO within the Council of Europe (EUR-OPA Major Hazard
Agreement) permanent correspondent meeting**

Draft Agenda

***24 April – Meeting scheduled within the EUR-OPA Permanent Correspondent Agenda
UNESCO Building – Room XIII***

14h30 Welcoming addresses by

- Council of Europe: European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) (Iuliu Bara, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents and Eladio Fernández-Galiano Executive Secretary. EUR-OPA)
- UN/ISDR secretariat (Sálvano Briceño, Director United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction)
- UNESCO welcoming joint meeting (Badaoui Rouhban Chief Section for Disaster Reduction Natural Sciences Sector UNESCO)
- European Network of National Platforms and HFA Focal Points (DKKV Chair of Network, Karl-Otto Zentel)

14h50 Progress on disaster risk reduction activities

- Presentation by UN/ISDR on progress in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (reporting guidelines and presentation of work plan for monitoring and progress review and its publication) (Paola Albrito, Regional Coordinator Europe);
- Discussion on presentation and brainstorming on current main achievements.

15h45-16h00 Coffee Break

16h00 Opportunities of collaboration on disaster risk reduction in Europe

Short Presentations on:

- EUR-OPA of collaborative centers and synergies with European NPs and HFA Focal Points (Francesc Pla, Council of Europe EUR-OPA Programme Manager)

- Recent developments in Europe. (Paola Albrito, UN/ISDR Europe Coordinator);
- European Network of National Platforms and HFA Focal Points; (DKKV Chair of the European Network of NPs⁸/Karl-Otto Zentel)
- EU/EC and disaster risk reduction: the development of a disaster prevention strategy.

Round table discussion on common opportunities on disaster risk reduction in Europe:

Collaborative centers, NPs and HFA focal points – how to move forward?

National Platforms’ common challenges and support through regional opportunities:

Political Priority? Inter-ministerial Coordination? Participation of non-authorities?

Workshop on how to establish a National Platforms?

17h30 Signature of the Memorandum of Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)

25 April UNESCO Building Room XVI

Chair Mr. Claes Brask, Sweden

9h00 Common issues to take forward at the European level: review on main challenges in Europe and ways forward.

- Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction: common agenda and key events (Introduction by Sálvano Briceño, Director United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction))

Discussion on common objectives and main events.

- Twinning of National Platforms (Introduction – Lars Bernd, Programme Officer UN/ISDR)

Discussion on common objectives and main events.

- Tools Kit for National Platforms (Introduction – Lars Bernd, Programme Officer UN/ISDR)

Discussion on advancement on this initiative

10h30-10h45 Coffee Break

10h45 - An European Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. (Introduction by Sálvano Briceño, Director United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction))

Discussion on the European Network of National Platform and high political level engagement in Europe

12h00 Closure of the meeting

Please note that for the second day the meeting language will be English.

^{8 8} The phrase “the European Network of National Platforms and HFA Focal Points” is used to ensure proper editing of the English language. In the agreement signed between AFPCN, DKKV and PLANAT it is referred to as “A network of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points”.

ANNEX 3

**Subject: Meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points
Paris, 24-25 April 2008 – Hosted by UNESCO**

26 March 2008

Dear National Platform and/or Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) Focal Point,

The Council of Europe (European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)) and the United Nations, secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) in collaboration with the European Network of National Platforms and HFA Focal Points⁹ (currently chaired by DKKV) would like to invite you, as a representative of your National Platform and/or HFA Focal Point for Disaster Risk Reduction, to participate in a meeting of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points in Paris on 24-25 April 2008 (see attached draft agenda).

The objectives of this meeting are the following:

- Discuss and share information on progress in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (reporting guidelines and presentation of work plan for monitoring and progress review and its publications);
- Build on the opportunities of collaboration between National Platforms in Europe (European Network of National Platforms; twinning between national platforms; exchanges and collaboration with specialized institutes);

⁹ The phrase “the European Network of National Platforms and HFA Focal Points” is used to ensure proper editing of the English language. In the agreement signed between AFPCN, DKKV and PLANAT it is referred to as “A network of European National Platforms and HFA Focal Points”.

- Agree on common issues to take forward at the European level (review on main challenges in Europe and ways forward).

The meeting responds to the request by the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, Kobe 2005, to strengthen existing and support the development of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction to serve as a catalyst to bring together relevant stakeholders at the national level.

The UN/ISDR secretariat as part of its mandate, the Council of Europe (EUR-OPA), as indicated in the work plan agreed at the Marrakech meeting, and the DKKV as implementer in collecting relevant information on the National Platforms in Europe and as Chair of the European Network of National Platforms and HFA Focal Points, are committed to support the development of National Platforms in Europe and their cooperation at the European level.

The meeting will build on the outcome of the National Platforms and HFA Focal Points meeting held in Strasbourg on 7 May 2007 and will identify the next steps to move forward the disaster risk reduction agenda in Europe.

We look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,

Sálvano Briceño
Director
United Nations, secretariat of the
International Strategy for Disaster
Reduction (UN/ISDR)

Eladio Fernández-Galiano
Executive Secretary
Council of Europe
European and Mediterranean
Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)

To: European National Platforms and/or HFA Focal Points