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EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT
(EUR-OPA)

58th MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

8 – 9 April 2010

Council of Europe Office, Paris

CONCLUSIONS

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1 ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The Chair of the meeting, Mr. Galytsin, welcomed the participants and opened the floor to discussion of the draft agenda. The draft agenda was modified to include the Bosnia and Herzegovina presentation by Mr. Popovic while the participants were informed that both Ms. Marin from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Ms. Nehir Varol from Turkey, were unable to participate and make their respective presentations. Furthermore, due to the early departure of the Russian delegation, the discussion on the Ministerial Session issues was advanced to the first day.

2 RECALL OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS

The Executive Secretary recalled the conclusions of the previous Committee of Permanent Correspondents' meeting and pointed out the reform underway in the Council of Europe by its new Secretary General, Thornjorn Jagland, who highly appreciates the work done within the Partial Agreements. He remarked upon the importance of dealing with the human dimension of disaster risk reduction as confirmed by the interest shown from both Parliamentary Assembly and the European Congress of Local and Regional Authorities..

3 COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR, DELEGATIONS AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Emergency management of the Madeira floods (Portugal)

Ms. Martins presented the Civil Protection system in Portugal and its action on the Madeira floods which occurred in February. The law on Civil Protection had been updated in 2006 and the ANPC was created in 2007 as a fusion of three services dealing previously with risks. It has several bilateral agreements (Spain, France, the Russian Federation, Morocco and Cabo Verde) and participates in the work of several international organisations.

Concerning the Madeira flooding, she recalled that it is mainly a tourist resort: 45% of the island's population live in Funchal, a city with a high population density. It had to face extreme weather conditions which gave rise to more than 100 mm of rainfall in 24 hours (20% of the annual average rate) and which were highly concentrated in respect of both time and location. As Madeira and Azores Regional Governments have their own competences with respect to the mainland service, first relief operations used regional resources and it was only on the following day that national authorities mobilized additional resources in view of the extent of the disaster. The disaster generated 42 deaths, 100 injured and many homeless as well as a disruption of main supply systems (water, electricity, ...). In answer to the question by the Executive Secretary on the role of city planning in the disaster, the Portuguese delegate confirmed that the lack of urban planning development has probably had an important impact on the extent of the damage.

Ecological emergency in the Kalush district due to technological hazards (Ukraine)

Mr. Poyarkov presented the technological risk faced by the Kalush district and remarked that for the first time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has asked the technical help of the Agreement. He recalled that the potash fertilizers plant was established in 1967 but that mines

and quarries are now abandoned. However wastes are accumulated in storages places and can pollute the population's water sources: even a new storage constructed in the 80s has already shown weaknesses. He consequently proposed that TESEC will investigate the possible contribution of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement and will inform the Committee of Permanent Correspondents at its next meeting.

Dialogue with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on “Prevention of Natural Disasters”

Ms. Nollinger from the Parliamentary Assembly Secretariat presented the report on natural disasters prevention. She informed the Committee that the Parliamentary Assembly would like to participate in the Ministerial Session. The Belgian delegate proposed to collaborate based on the work carried out on local and regional authorities.

Presentation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Civil Protection System

Mr. Popovic recalled the interest of Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the EUR-OPA Agreement as a means of developing common activities throughout the South East European countries. His country faces both natural (floods and landslides; earthquakes; fires, infectious diseases) and technological (industrial disasters; mining accidents) hazards as well as specific hazards (mines and UXOs; depleted uranium ammunition). The structure has a national level (Ministry of Security), an entity level (CP administration for both entities) and a district level (for the special Brcko district). A risk assessment methodology was launched in 2009 and is scheduled to finish at the end of 2010 while the Prevention and Rescue plan and Prevention and Rescue development have to be created in 2011-12. In response to the Belgian delegate's question on the role of local authorities in such assessment, he recalled that there are also Civil Protection administrations at local level (cantons and municipalities). With respect to the Swiss delegate's question on their partnerships with neighbouring countries, he stressed that agreements with Croatia, Montenegro, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” already exist while the one with Serbia is underway. The Executive Secretary thanked Mr. Popovic for his contribution and hoped that Bosnia and Herzegovina will soon join the Agreement.

Emergency management of the Xynthia storm in France

Colonell Nardin presented the measures adopted in France to face the Xynthia storm, which has also hit other countries. The event had been well anticipated by Météo France (which launched a red alert for 4 departments) and preventive measures were taken: the traffic was restricted, most exposed people were evacuated and additional means (600 persons and material) sent to Poitiers and Angouleme. Winds of over 130 kms over the Pyrenees damaged high voltage cables but the Atlantic coast suffered the major impact with water rises of 2.5-3 meters which caused 53 deaths but only a few injured persons while more than a million homes remained without electricity. The event resulted in important material damage: transportation disruptions (roads, trains...), technological infrastructures and aquaculture installations, over 1000 boats damaged and more than a million cubic meters of forest destroyed. Broken coastal dams caused saline deposits and have rendered the soil infertile with poor agricultural prospects. To the Moroccan delegate's question on the potential damage if such preventive measures were not taken, he recalled that the 1999 storm, whose early warning was minimized, led to more than 90 deaths and 2500 injured people. The Executive Secretary remarked that, in spite of good measures during the event, the prevention

phases remain essential, especially taking into account that climate change will probably increase such phenomena.

4 INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

Activities promoted by the Spanish presidency of the European Union

The Spanish delegate Mr. Lahore, after expressing the solidarity of the member States with the Russian authorities for the recent bombing in the Moscow's underground, made a brief survey of the Spanish presidency of the European Union's actions in the civil protection domain.: proposals to work on forest fire prevention and on psychological support of victims had been put forward. He recalled the possible impact on that domain of the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, even if homogenization of legislations on the topic is still excluded, and the fact that Civil Protection is also now included in the Directorate General on human support.

Presentation of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Programme for Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters (PPRD South)

Mr. Soddu presented the PPRD South programme which includes civil protection but also other stakeholders and which collaborates with WFP, SAFER and NEAMTWS. Among the main objectives are the reinforcement of the quality of Civil Protection services, the setting up of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction, etc. Its expected results include the improvement of the knowledge of exposure, prevention/preparedness methodologies and information of the population. To achieve it, a demand driven strategy with close cooperation, practicality and innovation is privileged and implies high level manager workshops (on topics such as disaster risk reduction culture, early warning systems, satellite data, ...), staff training and response exercises. The main expected products are a GIS atlas, a Civil Protection manual, 18 workshops (of which 4 will be related to exercises), a web portal and awareness raising activities.

Presentation of the Special Session on the Mid Term Review of the Hyogo Framework of Action

Mr. Briceño (UN-ISDR) informed on the current mid-term review of the Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015: it will be a broad and strategic review of the first five years' achievements but also a discussion on what is needed beyond 2015. The report will be published in 2011 to be discussed during the 3rd Global Platform. Due to a lack of participants, the Special Session planned on the afternoon of the 9th April could not take place and he consequently presented the alternative means for governmental authorities to contribute to that review process. The Executive Secretary granted the support of the Agreement's Secretariat in such a procedure and also encouraged the member countries to contribute individually.

Development of the European Forum for disaster risk reduction and participation in the International Disaster and Risk Conference (Davos, Switzerland, 30 May - 03 June 2010)

The Executive Secretary informed on the advancement of the European Forum and thanked France for organising the first meeting and recalled the involvement of the Agreement in that process. At the last preparatory meeting in London, the participants arrived at an agreement

on its content and elected the Chair (Sweden) and Co-chair (“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”): the Forum will be supported by both EUR-OPA and UN-ISDR Europe. A first meeting of the Forum has already been planned for October 2010 in Göteborg, Sweden. He also recalled that during the forthcoming Conference in Davos, the Agreement will participate in a parallel session devoted to National Platforms, in cooperation with UN-ISDR and the European Forum.

5 PREPARATION OF THE 2010 MINISTERIAL SESSION

General discussion on the 2010 Ministerial Session

The Executive Secretary presented the draft programme for the planned Ministerial Session by recalling the structure of the Session and the presentations already confirmed. The morning will be mainly devoted to adopting the Medium Term Plan while the afternoon will be devoted to the adoption of the resolutions on climate change impact and ethical issues. The Chair, on behalf of the Russian authorities, informed that the Ministerial Session will take place at the National Congress Palace (Constantine Palace) and that the participants will be hosted there. A cultural and field programme will be organised on the second day. In order to inform of the potential, the Secretariat proposed to attach an abstract of the Ministerial Session to the letter of invitation sent to Ministers by the hosting Minister, Mr. Shoygu.

Discussion of the draft 2011-2015 Medium Term Plan

The Executive Secretary presented the main ideas contained in the Medium Term Plan 2011-2015 which focuses mainly on topics concerning disaster risk reduction as the Agreement cannot develop extensive operational activities. In order to maintain a certain flexibility, the plan is organized in three main streams: the first focuses on the human dimension of disaster risk reduction, the second recognises that knowledge and its accurate use is a basic element for risk reduction and the third emphasizes the preparation for emergency situations. Responding to the request of the Moroccan delegate for priorities within the actions, the Executive Secretary remarked that such a general document is a framework which is implemented through the annual programme of activities.

Mr. Vigneaux remarked that the proposed Medium Term Plan reflects all the recent discussions within the Agreement and is an improvement with respect to previous ones as it values the diversity of its expertise. The Romanian delegate pointed out that as many Ministers will be new, the text should insist on new aspects with respect to previous Medium Term Plans. The Belgian delegate emphasized that several topics, such as an updated information on the competence of various International Organizations and the promotion of collaboration between researchers and managers, should be further highlighted. The Spanish delegate remarked the potential role of volunteers and proposed to add this point to the document. The Armenian delegate also proposed to support the creation of regional networks for early warning but for such complex topics, developing study on the existing methodologies was viewed as a best approach.

The Romanian delegate also suggested that a major task for the Agreement in the future should be to diffuse accurate information to decision-makers and media, the latter point requiring the recognition of both the rights and duties of media as an information vector in disaster risk reduction and emergencies. The Executive Secretary recalled that awareness as stated in the draft is not limited to the general population but should include the media as a

way of also reaching the population. In addition, he proposed to insist on the potential role of civil society in risk governance issues.

After this fruitful discussion, the Executive Secretariat will integrate all the comments in the final version and, at the request of several delegations, a progress report summarizing the achievements of the previous Medium Term Plan will be produced.

Discussion of the Centres' activities in the context of the new Medium Term Plan

The Executive Secretary addressed the question of the way to better integrate the Centres in the implementation of the forthcoming Medium Term Plan 2011-2015. The Centres can provide their technical capabilities to implement it and the role of laboratory of the Agreement should be preserved. Nevertheless, as accurately pointed out by the Croatian delegate, the limited budget of the Agreement imposes to focus on fewer topics which will have true multi-country impacts. The Belgian delegate also remarked upon the lack of concrete return to the Agreement of the extensive work done by the Centres at national level.

To stress such an international project-oriented approach, the Executive Secretary proposed to move all available financing for activities to concrete projects submitted by the Centres instead of fixed grants, keeping nevertheless some balance between Centres in order to preserve their global financial means. Such a trend will further favour common projects by various Centres and will ensure a more effective contribution to the Medium Term Plan goals. The Armenian delegate also proposed to emphasize the role of the Centres as national focal points for possible projects financed by other international organizations.

Discussion of the draft versions of the Recommendation on ethical values and resilience to disasters and the draft "European and Mediterranean Ethic Charter on Resilience to Major Disasters"

Regarding the recommendations to be adopted at the Ministerial Session, the Executive Secretary recalled the idea behind the Ethical Charter on Resilience to Disasters. The Consultant, Michel Prieur, presented the draft charter. He pointed out that there is no such document linking human rights and disasters and the topic falls within the competence of the Council of Europe: the European Court of Human Rights has already applied this aspect in some of its decisions. The Charter collects existing human rights and identifies those which will be more problematic to implement in the three phases of the risk cycle: prevention, intervention and reconstruction. Another specificity of the Charter is to consider all kinds of disasters, not only natural ones, and to emphasize the rights of the rescuers alongside the victims' rights (and obligations). The initial draft version has been discussed and its content has been enriched in several aspects, such as the most vulnerable groups of people, the specificity of certain places (schools, hospitals) and the psychological context (protection from the media, training of rescuers). Summing up, the charter allows values to be expressed which are difficult to transfer in law.

All delegations pointed out the importance and interest of the issues covered by the proposed recommendation. The ISDR representative announced that such an important topic was to be included in the mid term review of the Hyogo Framework for Action. Several delegations highlighted that its adoption requires that national experts be consulted regarding the actual content of the draft charter. In particular, the Russian delegate emphasized that covering issues beyond civil protection needs a consultation with other departments concerned by its

content. The French delegate also emphasized that, in spite of the interest for Ministers for such a political project, its adoption goes beyond their specific competence and requires consultation from other sources. Other delegates also pointed out the need for previous approval by various national institutions (Foreign Affairs Ministry in Morocco, Parliament in Lebanon, ...) and thus all participants agreed that such a procedure is too long to be finalized before September for adoption of the text by the participants at the Ministerial Session.

The Executive Secretariat noted the proposed draft charter did not have binding character of the recommendation was also extensively discussed. The Spanish delegate insisted that the proposed text does not impose anything upon member countries as it only suggests that they undertake their own actions in that domain. Several delegates remarked that adopting the Charter will imply some *de facto* commitments and that based on its present content, it can lead affected people to legal actions. In order to minimize those aspects, the French delegate proposed to limit the recommendation to vulnerability issues while the Spanish delegate suggested to cover both the planning and prevention phases. This would avoid dealing with the very specific emergency issues. Finally, the Ukrainian delegate remarked that already existing national legislation should be confronted with the proposals of the Charter.

After the discussion, the Executive Secretary tried to summarize all the comments. As highlighted by the Croatian delegate, the Agreement should maintain leadership in the field of ethics and disasters and he pointed out that the main interest of the recommendation is precisely to include all the aspects of disaster management, not only prevention. But as many delegates considered it too premature to be adopted at the Ministerial Session, he suggested to follow the proposals of several delegates to change the recommendation into a resolution inviting the Agreement to continue work on the topic. Professor Prieur will be invited to present these ideas at the Ministerial Session.

This new approach would allow its implications to be accurately discussed with the different partners and also to obtain legal advice from the Council of Europe's Legal Affairs Department on the compatibility of the proposed text with international legislation. He finally recalled that the Charter (or a document on the issue) will be a conceptual milestone within a longer term process linked to on-going activities related to psychological assistance to victims and other activities in the field to be developed in the future. Consequently such important remarks as the emphasis to be placed on the duties of the population and the rights of the rescuers or the necessary focus on the feasibility of the proposals, could be addressed more accurately.

Discussion of the draft version of the Recommendation on reducing vulnerability in the face of climate change

The Executive Secretary also presented the Climate Change recommendation by recalling that the Hyogo Framework for Action had somehow ignored the potential climate change impact but events now urge us to consider it. The work will be directed towards the impact on peoples' lives (namely adaptation), irrespectively of the possible results on mitigation negotiations. The Croatian delegate remarked that the number and intensity of extreme events will increase and we have to assess vulnerability in a longer term. The ISDR representative also emphasized that the links between disaster risk reduction and the focal point on climate change are essential as their impact will push a multi-hazard approach that will also revert for non directly affected risks (as the seismic one). The Romanian delegate agreed that climate change is a matter of development and therefore it has to be considered at all levels in the

plans dealing with it. The Spanish delegate agreed to this point and insisted that such a topic requires an adequate response by Civil Protection, as for example the future *decisions* of the European Union on forest fires. Nevertheless, the Lebanese delegate warned about using climate change as a selling argument and the Executive Secretary recalled that concrete climate change related activities had been launched or are planned in the future.

6 EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRES' 2010 ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION ON FORTHCOMING RELEVANT EVENTS

Due to the extensive discussion on the Ministerial Session, the examination of 2010 activities was reduced to a presentation of the main issues by the Executive Secretariat. The Deputy to the Executive Secretary presented the main conclusions of the meeting of the Directors of Specialised Centres of the Agreement (Paris, 1-3 February 2010). He sketched the activities developed by the Centres in 2009 and those planned in 2010, emphasizing the wish of the Agreement to complete ongoing activities rather than launching new ones. He highlighted the proposals by the Centres in view of the elaboration of the new Medium Term Plan 2011-2015, many of which were already included in the draft document discussed earlier.

He also informed of the progress of the various thematic groups, pointing out the first meeting in December 2009 of a newly created group on Vulnerability. Finally, the Executive Secretary recalled the forthcoming activities related to climate change based on the results of 2009 activities, in particular the European and Mediterranean Workshop on Climate Change Impact on Water Related and Marine Risks (Murcia, Spain, 26-27 October 2009) and the Master level course on cultural heritage and climate change (Strasbourg, September 2009).

7 DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Acting as Chair due to the early departure of Mr. Galytsin, the Croatian delegate closed the meeting recalling that the next meeting will take place in Saint Petersburg on 27th September 2010 to prepare the Ministerial Session to be held the day after. He took the opportunity to emphasise the need for Permanent Correspondents to motivate their Ministers to participate in the Ministerial Session.

8 ANNEXES

Annex 1**58TH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS****8-9 APRIL 2010 / OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE****AGENDA****1. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA***AP/CAT (2010) OJ 4: Draft Agenda***2. RECALL OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS***AP/CAT (2009) 58: Conclusions of the previous Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents, Dubrovnik, 15-16 October 2009***3. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR, DELEGATIONS AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

- Emergency management of the Madeira floods (Portugal)
Presentation by Ms Ana Martins, Portuguese National Authority for Civil Protection (ANPC)
- Ecological emergency in the Kalush district due to technological hazards (Ukraine)
Presentation by Mr Viktor Poyarkov, Executive Director of the European Centre of Technological Safety
- Dialogue with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on "Prevention of Natural Disasters"
Presentation by Ms Agnès Nollinger, Head of Secretariat, Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE
- Current protection and rescue system of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Presentation by Mr Milivoje Popović, Head of Department for International Cooperation, Protection and Rescues Sector, Ministry of Security
- Emergency management of the Xynthia storm in France
Presentation by Mr Philippe Nardin, Ministry of Interior of France

4. INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

- Cooperation opportunities in the field of major hazards and risk mitigation offered by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Programme for Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters (PPRD South)
Presentation by Mr Pierluigi Soddu, Executive Director PPRD South, Protezione Civile, Italy
- Presentation of the Special Session on the Mid Term Review of the Hyogo Framework of Action
Presentation by Ms Paola Albrito and Ms Letizia Rossano, UN-ISDR
- Development of the European Forum for disaster risk reduction
AP/CAT (2010) 09: Minutes of the meeting of the National Platforms for disaster risk reduction, London 11-13 November 2009
- Participation in the International Disaster and Risk Conference (Davos, Switzerland, 30 May - 03 June 2010)

5. PREPARATION OF THE 2010 MINISTERIAL SESSION

- General discussion on the 2010 Ministerial Session
AP/CAT (2009) OJ9 rev1: 12th Ministerial Session of the European and Mediterranean Major

Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) Preliminary Draft Agenda

- Discussion of the draft 2011-2015 Draft Medium Term Plan
AP/CAT (2010) 5: 2011-2015 Draft Medium Term Plan
- Discussion of the Centres activities in the context of the new Medium Term Plan
- Discussion of the Draft version of the "European and Mediterranean Ethic Charter on Resilience to Major Disasters" and the Draft Recommendation on ethical values and resilience to disasters
AP/CAT (2009) 57rev2: European and Mediterranean Ethical Charter on Resilience to Disasters
AP/CAT (2010) 11: Recommendation on ethical values and resilience to disasters
- Discussion of the Draft Recommendation on reducing vulnerability in the face of climate change
AP/CAT (2010) 10: Recommendation on reducing vulnerability in the face of climate change

6. EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRES' 2010 ACTIVITIES

AP/CAT (2009) 22: Guidelines for the 2010 programme of activities

- Meeting of the Directors of Specialised Centres of the Agreement (Paris, 1-3 February 2010)
AP/CAT (2010) 03: Conclusions of the meeting, Paris, 1-3 February 2010
- Evaluation of the 2009 activities and examination of the activities scheduled in 2010
AP/CAT (2010) 01: Activities carried out within the framework of the annual grant in 2009
AP/CAT (2010) 02: Activities carried out within the framework of the coordinated programmes in 2009
AP/CAT (2009) 53rev: Activities proposed within the framework of the annual grant for 2010
AP/CAT (2010) 04: Activities proposed within the framework of the coordinated programmes for 2010

7. INFORMATION ON FORTHCOMING RELEVANT EVENTS

Thematic groups

- Thematic group on vulnerability issues, Paris, 19 December 2009
AP/CAT (2010) 07: Conclusions of the meeting
- Thematic group on legislative aspects of risk: analysis of the role of local and regional authorities in major hazard management
AP/CAT (2010) 08: analysis of the role of local and regional authorities in major hazard management
- Thematic Group on Awareness and Education to Risk at School Level, Modena, June 2010

Climate change related topics

- Results of the European and Mediterranean Workshop on Climate Change Impact on Water Related and Marine Risks (Murcia, Spain, 26-27 October 2009)
AP/CAT (2009) 60: Conclusions of the Workshop
- Preparation of the International Workshop on Forest Fire Management in a Climate Change Context (Freiburg, 25-28 June 2010)
- Preparation of the Master level course on Management and protection of cultural heritage and climate change (Ravello, 4-8 October 2010)

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Annex 2**58TH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT CORRESPONDENTS****8-9 APRIL 2010 / COUNCIL OF EUROPE OFFICE, PARIS****LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****PAYS MEMBRES DE L'ACCORD / MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE AGREEMENT****ARMENIE / ARMENIA**

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