



Paris, 24 October 2013

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT (EUR-OPA)

Recommendation 2013 - 1 of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on the inclusion of people with disabilities in disaster preparedness and response, adopted at the 64th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), Paris, France, 24-25 October 2013.

The Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA),

- A. Recognising that people with disabilities have a fundamental right to a degree of protection against disasters that is comparable with that enjoyed by the rest of the population and in other terms offers a satisfactory level of preparedness;
- B. Mindful that in most European countries awareness, planning, assistance, training and specialised emergency assistance to people with disabilities would benefit from significant improvement;
- C. Desirous to promote a more integrated, efficient and effective approach to the problem of ensuring that people with disabilities in Europe are protected against emergencies and disasters;
- D. Taking note with satisfaction of the report "Including People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness and Response" by Prof. David Alexander (Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction, University College London) and Mr Silvio Sagramola (Director of the Centre National Disability Information and Meeting Centre, Luxembourg), and of the "Guidelines for Assisting People with Disabilities during Emergencies, Crises and Disasters" by the same authors.

Recommend that member States of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA):

1. Integrate specialised measures for people with disabilities into national disaster risk reduction policies, planning processes, training curricula and emergency response practice, favouring, as appropriate, investment in long-term strategies that would reduce the vulnerability and exposure to disaster of people with disabilities;
2. Design and promote national programmes and standards for the protection, rescue and care of people with disabilities when and where they are at risk of disaster;
3. Design and promote measures at the community level through local administrations and civil protection services, making use of local organisations that provide care and representation to people with disabilities;
4. Ensure that people with disabilities are included in the entire disaster risk reduction process and that, wherever possible, their viewpoints are taken fully into account;
5. Ensure that education and training for the protection and assistance of people with disabilities are firmly in the mainstream curricula for incident, crisis and disaster management and response;
6. Support the efforts of the Agreement to promote inclusive disaster risk reduction for people with disabilities in its member states mainly through the promotion of adequate regulations, the sharing of expertise, the organisation of training programmes and the promotion of good practice.

And invites the Secretariat to submit the above Recommendation to the Committee of Ministers for information and possible distribution to all member States of the Council of Europe.