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PREFACE

No society, rich or poor, is safe from the effects of disasters: the forces of nature and technological accidents give rise to risk situations endangering human lives, destroying property and damaging the environment. Extreme changes in meteorological conditions often result in floods, landslides, droughts or heat waves which may affect human lives. Earthquakes put the soundness of our cities and infrastructure to the test, the sea threatens human activities taking place too close to the shore, and our imperfectly developed or carelessly used technologies may cause death and destruction. It is therefore important for societies to be well informed and prepared to face up to hazards, and to react speedily and efficiently in the event of a disaster: we all need to play our part in this joint effort to make our societies safer and more resilient places.

The Council of Europe has a political mandate to seek joint solutions to the major challenges facing European society. This is why a platform was set up in 1987 in the field of major natural and technological hazards, not only in Europe, but also involving its Mediterranean neighbours. Thus was born the European and

Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), which has, since being set up, developed a huge range of activities relating to the knowledge and evaluation of risks, risk prevention (also encompassing the raising of public awareness), emergency management and the governance of risks.

The Agreement has taken a particular interest in the promotion of good practices in respect of disaster risk reduction, assessing the different states' reactions to natural or technological emergencies and preparations for the next disaster, and thereby enabling all to benefit from the lessons learned. Science and education play fundamental roles in damage prevention. The Agreement accordingly decided to set up a network of specialised European and Mediterranean centres which supply the necessary technical support and the knowledge needed by governments on matters as varied as earthquake engineering, forest fires, legal aspects of disaster prevention and governance, and the effects of floods, marine risks, landslides and extreme meteorological phenomena.

Science and technology are not everything, however, and the best way of avoiding paying a heavy price when the next disaster occurs is to anticipate its possible consequences. We can build disaster-resistant cities, teach our children how to protect themselves if disaster strikes, make local and regional authorities aware of the potential consequences of many of their decisions if extreme events occur, promote a more sustainable approach to the environment, make schools, hospitals and infrastructure less vulnerable and adopt construction codes which ensure that people's housing is appropriate to local seismic risks.

This is not just a matter for experts, although obviously experts must provide good advice. Because this effort requires participation by all, the Agreement has been working in recent years to promote better disaster governance, encouraging all ministries and government bodies to co-operate with each other and with local authorities and the private sector. We are happy to say that, as we go about these noble tasks,

we are not alone: many other European institutions and international organisations are working with the Agreement and its member states to promote implementation within the Agreement's geographical area of the principles of the Hyogo Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted in 2005 by 168 countries, through the dissemination of good practices and through networking.

The booklet in your hands attempts to set out some of the recent achievements of the EUR-OPA Agreement and the direction in which it will henceforth be moving, always guided by the idea that the suffering caused in our societies by disasters can in fact be considerably reduced in future through prevention policies and activities.

Eladio Fernández-Galiano

Executive Secretary to the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)





WHAT IS THE AGREEMENT ALL ABOUT?

There are no borders where the origins and effects of disasters are concerned, and “domino effects” are no respecters of territorial delimitations. For the sake of the principle of solidarity, co-operation on overall risk management needs to be well developed at both European and Euro-Mediterranean levels, especially through existing intergovernmental machinery such as that of the Council of Europe.

Set up in 1987, the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) is a platform for co-operation between the countries of Europe and those of the southern Mediterranean in relation to major natural and technological hazards: its field of action encompasses knowledge of risks, risk prevention, emergency management and post-emergency analysis and rehabilitation.

Its main objectives are thus closer and more dynamic co-operation among member states from a multidisciplinary perspective, in order to ensure better prevention and protection and better organisation of relief in the event of major natural and technological disasters.

Justification for this co-operative effort stems from the need for a better sharing of knowledge about the new kinds of hazards (those associated with climate change and nuclear accidents, for instance). Another aim is to develop new methodologies and tools for efficient risk management.

The Agreement, in order to meet the major challenges posed by natural and technological hazards, takes innovative action to promote a greater risk culture within the population, as well as better management of disaster situations by all responsible authorities.

What does «major hazard» mean?

A potentially dangerous event, a risk, becomes a **hazard** only if it exists in an area where human, economic or environmental **interests** are at stake, and where there is a certain degree of **vulnerability**. Whether or not a hazard is major is determined mainly by the extent of the damage which it is capable of causing:

- **direct damage:** quantifiable as soon as the exceptional event is over (impact on homes, infrastructure, buildings, farms and, in the worst cases, loss of human life);
- **indirect damage:** identifiable in the longer term on the basis of the economic and social disruption caused (loss of business associated with the destruction of work tools, interruption of communications, damage to the environment, etc). Thus a major hazard is characterised by infrequent occurrence and a large number of victims (people killed or injured), extensive physical damage and/or significant environmental effects. Two kinds of phenomenon come within that description in every respect:
- **natural hazards**, including those associated with geological phenomena (landslides, earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions) and hazards associated with weather conditions (floods, hurricanes, storms, avalanches, droughts, forest fires, heat waves);
- **technological hazards**, such as industrial, nuclear and biological hazards and dam bursts.

The EUR-OPA Agreement in a nutshell

- Set up in 1987 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
- Partial Agreement designated «open», as membership may be requested by any state, whether or not it is a member of the Council of Europe
- Members: 26 member states, of which 23 are members of the Council of Europe and three are from the southern Mediterranean
- Decision-taking bodies: Committee of Permanent Correspondents (and its Bureau), Meeting of Directors of Specialised Centres
- Ministerial Meetings, usually every four years, covering priority fields of action
- Specialised European and Mediterranean centres, numbering 27



MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

Some countries from Europe and from the southern Mediterranean are working together to bring the subject of major hazards into a broader process of discussion of sustainable development, in conjunction with the Council of Europe's intergovernmental programme on the environment.

List of member states (in alphabetical order):

Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Greece, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Morocco, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Spain, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey and Ukraine. Switzerland and Japan are regularly invited to take part in activities.

What commitments do member states make?

Member states undertake to promote co-operation between them and take care to comply with the principles and guidelines put forward by the EUR-OPA Agreement in respect of preventive action and education relating to major hazards. Thus they are expected to implement the Agreement's recommendations and resolutions through their national policies.

International partners

The Agreement also works in a wider context, co-operating with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) on implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. A practical result of this co-operation came in 2008, when a co-operation memorandum was signed by the Secretariats of both initiatives, defining fields of joint activity.

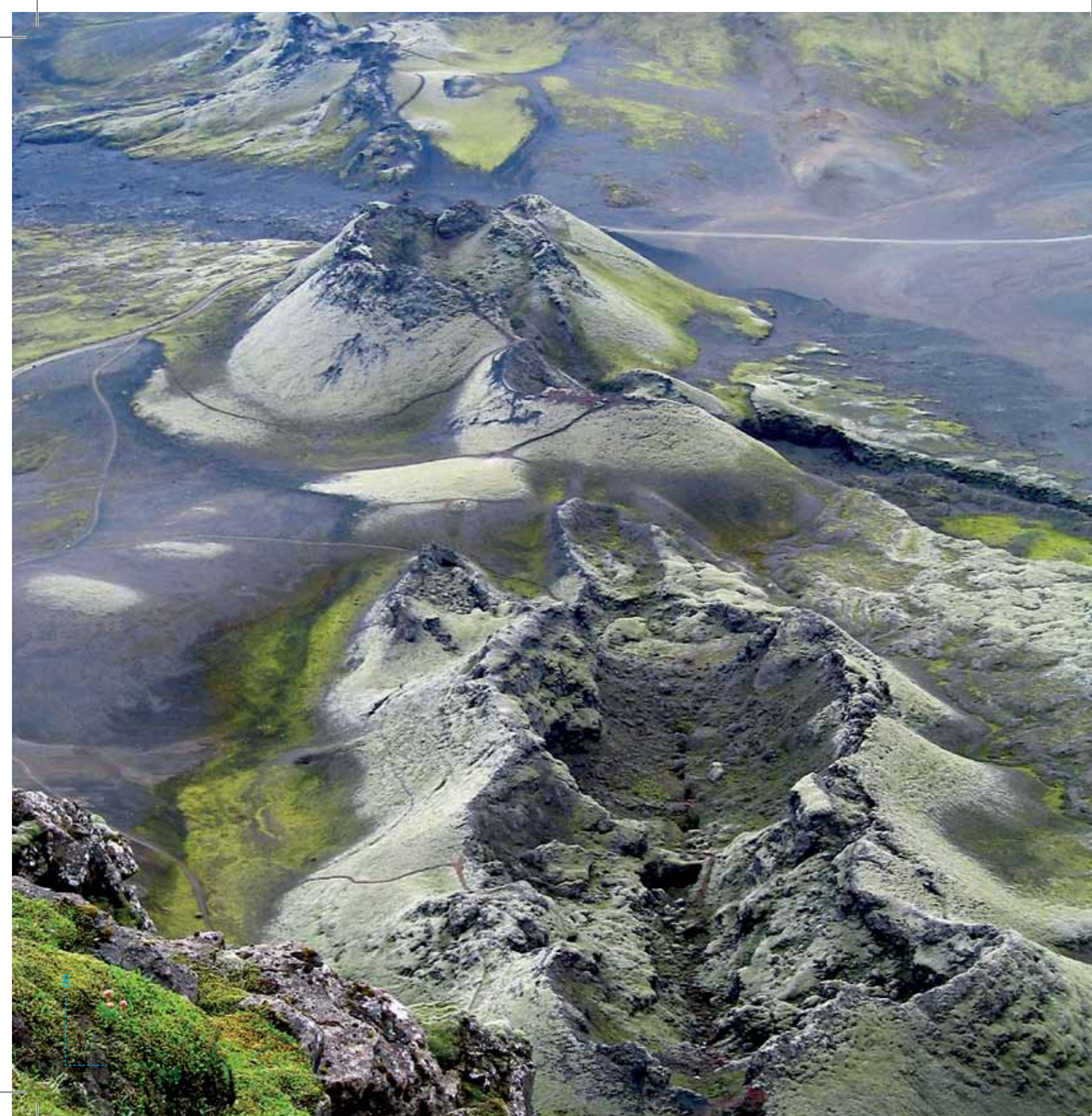
Other international organisations also take part in the work of the Agreement:

- The European Commission (through its Civil Protection Unit)
- UNESCO
- The International Civil Defence Organisation (ICDO)
- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- The World Health Organisation (WHO)

The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and Development Bank work very closely with the Agreement. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is also involved in its activities, and since 2009 representatives and experts of the national platforms for disaster risk reduction have regularly been invited to attend the Agreement's technical meetings.

Privileged partners: the Agreement's specialised centres

One of the Agreement's strengths is its direct involvement of its member states through their technical bodies. It encourages the setting up of specialised centres in those countries, which provide a basis for a network of European and Mediterranean expertise. These centres make a tangible contribution to the common objectives of the Agreement by implementing information, training, research and expertise programmes in the field of major hazards. Their specific role is thus to develop national and regional projects intended to increase awareness of and resilience to major hazards among the population.



Structure

Since it was set up, the EUR-OPA Agreement has stood out mainly for its determination to bring together those who possess knowledge (research scientists and technicians), and those who make use of that knowledge (decision-makers in the public and private sectors) in order to create a strong institutional basis for risk reduction.

The Agreement therefore operates on two levels:

On the political and intergovernmental level:

Guidelines for the Agreement's activities and programmes are adopted at Ministerial Meetings and meetings of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents.

--▶ Ministerial Meetings

These are attended by the Ministers with responsibilities in the field of major hazards and are held at regular intervals, although circumstances or an urgent need may justify the holding of an extraordinary meeting. Each state is represented at these meetings by either the Minister responsible for the subject; or the Minister instructed by his or her government to coordinate the activity of the Ministries concerned. Ministerial Meetings are held at a maximum of four-yearly intervals, most recently in Marrakech (2006) and St Petersburg (2010).

--▶ Permanent Correspondents

Each state appoints a Permanent Correspondent who, on behalf of his or her national authorities, is responsible inter alia for: preparing for the Ministerial Meetings, particularly by setting guidelines for the medium-term plan; monitoring implementation of the medium-term guidelines in the context of the Agreement's annual programmes. The Committee of Permanent Correspondents meets at least twice a year.

Priority activities of the Agreement

Following the Ministerial Meeting of October 2006, the Agreement reaffirmed in a resolution its priority activities in the field of disaster prevention in the European and Mediterranean area, and included these in the joint effort to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action.

INSTITUTIONAL, LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL ASPECTS:

- Analysing member states' legislation on major hazards
- Encouraging national coordination platforms

BUILDING UP A RISK REDUCTION CULTURE:

- Supporting university training and training courses for specialists
- Encouraging the devising and use of teaching materials in schools and for the general public

RESEARCH, RISK ASSESSMENT, EARLY WARNING:

- Collecting and analysing information relating to risks
- Developing standardised methodologies

EFFICIENT PREPARATION AND RESPONSE THROUGH SERVICE ACTIVITIES:

- Supporting coordinated regional approaches
- Promoting psychological assistance in emergency situations

These two bodies supervise implementation of the Agreement's technical programmes and also regularly issue recommendations to member states on issues connected with major hazards. The Ministerial Meeting of 2006, for example, also adopted two recommendations, one on education with a view to risk reduction and the other on the role of local and regional authorities, while the Committee of Permanent Correspondents has, since 2006, given its support to recommendations on:

- risks in coastal areas (2007),
- psychosocial support and services to disaster victims (2007),
- radiological protection of local communities: improving preparedness (2008),
- the vulnerability of the cultural heritage to climate change (2009),
- the promotion and strengthening of national platforms for disaster risk reduction (2009),
- reducing vulnerability in the face of climate change (2010).

On the scientific and technical level:

The network of specialised Euro-Mediterranean centres has roles in the fields of research, training and expertise with a view to implementation of the guidelines set for the Agreement in the four-year medium-term plan drawn up by the Ministerial Meeting. In 2009, the network comprised 27 centres in 23 different countries (the full list is in appendix 2), and it has expertise in a wide variety of spheres, such as: seismic risk (the centres in Bruyères le Châtel, Skopje, Walferdange, Rabat, ...), education about risks (the centres in Biskra, Nicosia, Sofia, Ankara, Yerevan, ...), impact on the cultural heritage (the centres in Athens, Ravello, Lisbon, ...).

Each centre, under an individual annual work programme jointly funded by the Agreement, works in its own specific area of expertise. Thus a full range of expertise can be used for the purposes of coordinated programmes spanning several of the network's centres, benefiting from specific financial support from the Agreement.

In order to strengthen co-operation focusing on common subjects, specific working groups have been set up, meeting at least once a year to assess the state of knowledge in the fields concerned and to promote innovative activities in the relevant subject.

Active working groups

Education about risks

Promoting in the school context the introduction of specific courses about hazards and safety arrangements.

Legislation

Identifying good practices in relation to hazards, not only at interministerial level, but also in terms of interaction with local and regional authorities.

Cultural heritage

Developing specific methodologies for the protection of historical sites from natural disasters.

Vulnerability

Identifying existing sources of vulnerability and suggesting ways of reducing that vulnerability.

The Agreement has, since 2007, held an international workshop every autumn on a prominent hazard-related subject, attended by experts and governmental representatives who discuss not only the progress made, but also any shortcomings identified.

Subjects dealt with at these workshops:

Risk training and prevention in schools (Paphos, 2007)

The role of local and regional authorities in the risk cycle (Kiev and Istanbul, 2008)

The impact of climate change on water-related and coastal risks (Murcia, 2009)

New governance of risks in a context of climate change (2010)





PROTECTING SOCIETIES AGAINST RISKS: A TOP PRIORITY

As the three main phases of emergency management (risk management, emergency situation management and monitoring of disasters) frequently overlap and interact, there are two main lines along which the Agreement works: Study of hazards and analysis of vulnerability and Improving risk governance.

Study of hazards and analysis of vulnerability

--> Study of risk sources to facilitate disaster prevention

Since it was set up in 1987, the Agreement has advocated a preventive approach to natural and technological hazards as the most effective way of coping with major hazards and reducing their effects on the population. With a view to preventive action against existing risks and to coping with emerging threats, risks first need to be identified and their sources understood.

While understanding sources is more in the realms of fundamental research, hazard identification is a technical task in line with the Agreement's main role as a place for co-operation between states and with experts. The Agreement has therefore focused on identifying and mapping hazards and given priority to defining joint action and relevant studies at international level.

In particular, a risk becomes a hazard only if people and property might be affected if that risk became a reality. So the elements which are in play need to be singled out. Study of the sources of vulnerability of those elements to events is therefore a crucial stage of the process of identifying hazards and implementing appropriate preventive measures.

While preventive measures do not diminish the likelihood of a disaster occurring, the state of preparation of the population, public authorities and all the stakeholders is one of the main factors able to limit

a disaster's impact during the critical emergency phases and subsequently. Thus decision-making assistance is needed in risk management, the aim being to provide, at the appropriate time and in an appropriate form, enough of the structured knowledge needed to help decision-makers to manage the hazard. Information may be valuable when it comes to assessing the extent of the emergency situation and hence the resources needed to cope with it, including the decision on whether international action will be necessary.

Two complementary projects relating to mapping

Common methodology: landslide mapping

The aim of this project, developed by the CERG* (Strasbourg), is to draw a map of Europe showing the zones likely to experience landslides, on the basis of experts' analysis (in view of the lack of inventories) of various data (lithology, angle of slopes, nature of soil, etc).

Regional mapping of the southern Caucasus region

Co-ordinated by the GHHD* (Georgia), an atlas has been compiled covering five of the main hazards (earthquakes, landslides, debris flows, avalanches and sudden flooding) affecting the three countries of the region (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan).

* The full list of specialised centres is appended.

Some risks are greater if the environment has suffered damage. For instance, areas where forests have been cut or burned are more prone to landslides, snow avalanches, erosion and floods. Also marine risks are high where sand dunes or vegetation have disappeared and urbanisation has ensued. The Agreement has joined an international group which is working on this topic, the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR).

Two instruments relating to seismic risk

Hazard monitoring: the European warning system

This system, run by the EMSC (France) and based on a network of 48 seismographs in various European countries, the United States, Africa and French Polynesia, sends out a message containing technical data as soon as an earthquake occurs.

Rapid evaluation of disaster impact: the Extremum model

This model, developed by the ECNTRM (Russia) has been designed to estimate the potential scale of the effects of a disaster (in this instance an earthquake), and more specifically to make an initial assessment of damage and of the possible number of victims.

→ Raising awareness of hazards through education

The EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement has always regarded education, training and the dissemination of information as absolute priorities; they are the “cornerstone” of the risk culture and the basis for an enlightened risk prevention policy. Activities in this field are therefore designed to encourage education at various levels:

In schools

Since it was set up, the Agreement has taken great interest in raising awareness among children of school age, engaging in two main kinds of activity:

Raising awareness of risk prevention

In the wake of various conferences on the subject, a comparison of member states’ efforts showed that the use of new technologies is an asset for the purpose of raising awareness in the younger generations.

Making schools safer

Following discussions on this subject, a Euro-Mediterranean agreement has been suggested, focusing on the following main points:

- Evaluation of schools’ specific vulnerability, with personal safety one of the factors taken into account;
- Organisation of schools’ safety plans, display of safety regulations and periodical simulations followed by joint analysis of feedback;
- Training of staff (head teacher, other teachers, administrative staff, technicians) and awareness-raising among pupils’ parents.

A multilingual Internet project on hazards

Under the aegis of Be Safe Net (a centre based in Cyprus), a multilingual Internet site for use in schools (by teachers and pupils) is being developed to provide information about hazards, awareness-raising tools and risk preparedness, a project in which some of the Agreement’s other centres are participating: (CERG (France), CUEBC (Italy), CLST (Bulgaria), ICOD (Malta), TESEC (Ukraine), CRSTRA (Algeria)....).

At universities

The Agreement has also backed the promotion of training relating to major hazards:

Long-term university training

Mainly through its centres, the Agreement encourages universities to develop specific training on risk sciences, and has backed the start-up of various training courses in member states :

- European Masters course in disaster medicine (San Marino) : the aim of this course, devised by the CEMEC (San Marino) and organised by the Università del Piemonte Orientale and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, is to provide an insight into major concepts relating to medical preparation and disaster management through both classroom and distance learning.
- “Risk science” element of the “Risk environment” Master’s course (Montpellier, France) : this involves

the three Montpellier universities and the Ecole des Mines in Alès, and the aim is to provide the academics and top-level officials concerned by risk management with a high level of general knowledge about risks in the university or working environment.

- Specialised Master’s course in risk management at local and regional level - Applied urban cindynics (EISTI, Cergy Pontoise, France) : with the support of public and private-sector partners, the aim is to teach local and regional risk managers about technological and strategic developments, involving theoretical teaching, personal research in the work context and the writing and defence of a work-related thesis.

Specialised courses

Taking account of the need for short specialised training courses both for students and for professionals, the Agreement also gives its support to the development of specific training modules.

Some examples of the courses supported

Course on the vulnerability of the cultural heritage to climate change

With the co-operation of the CUEBC (Ravello, Italy), this has given postgraduate students an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the subject and undertake rigorous academic work on the impact of climate change on the heritage.

Course on the management of coastal zones

In co-operation with the CerCo (Biarritz, France), this has enabled students and coastal zone managers to improve their knowledge of all features of coastal risks and to acquire tools for managing those risks.

Course on the health and environmental impact of climate change

With the co-operation of the ENGEES (Strasbourg, France), this course has given postgraduate students an opportunity to acquire basic knowledge of the subject and undertake rigorous academic work on the impact of climate change on health and the environment.



Improving risk governance

--> Analysing the role of legislation and structures

Over recent years, the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement has taken a particular interest in the role of the legal frameworks within which risk prevention and management activities have to take place. The situation in this sphere varies widely in the different member states, and a good number of countries, in search of input for the discussion of their own reforms, are endeavouring to draw on other countries' experience. These efforts nevertheless, for reasons of proximity making contact and information exchange easier, tend to go no further than neighbouring countries' experience, whereas hazards and disasters call for a wider vision.

Furthermore, most decision-making is in practice done at different levels: at European/international level; at national level; at governmental and interministerial level; at the level of local and regional authorities.

It was therefore recommended that member states' own regulations should be in line with a comprehensive management approach encompassing: the inclusion of every kind of hazard ; active participation by those with a management role ; the concept of ongoing emergency spanning the prevention, preparation, action, post-emergency analysis and rehabilitation phases.

In a context of greater devolution, local and regional authorities also play a vital role in not only immediate decision-making, but also the adoption of preventive measures. Supervisory and inspection mechanisms should also be developed, for regulations which remain unsupervised very often remain a dead letter.

A comparative study of legislation relating to the management of major hazards

Conducted by the specialised centre in Florival (Belgium) at the Agreement's request, this study is intended to draw up an inventory of everything that exists in Agreement member states in terms of risk prevention, emergency management, rehabilitation, punitive and supervisory measures, in order to create a legal database on the subject and to identify "good practices" likely to be transferable to other countries.

The study focused on four main areas:

- International institutions responsible for major hazard management;
- A comparison of national legislation relating to major hazard management;
- A comparison of major hazard management which involves different government Ministries;
- A study of the specific role of local and regional authorities.

The main conclusions of the study are:

- powers and responsibilities are divided in a very complex way, with large numbers of stakeholders, and therefore a variety of texts;
- there is no integrated approach: emergency management is very efficiently organised, but no single body has overall responsibility;
- there are few structural rehabilitation mechanisms: all too often there are only emergency budgets released immediately after a disaster;
- punitive and supervisory mechanisms are weak: inspectorates lack staff and inspections are overly repressive but lack a deterrent effect.

--> Uniting all the sector's stakeholders

The EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement has always emphasised the fact that effective risk prevention and management require the best possible coordination of the various players during every phase. Its very structure, within which technical centres and institutional decision-makers stand side-by-side, has led the Agreement since its inception to encourage links between technical and scientific knowledge and practical measures.

Very much aware that these traditional stakeholders do not cover everything that is conducive to risk reduction, the Agreement supports the pooling of their resources (in terms of both capabilities and knowledge) so as to take account of all relevant aspects. More specifically, the Agreement, in co-operation with the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, encourages the setting up in its member states of national platforms for disaster risk reduction (uniting academia and the public, private and social sectors): in this context, member states such as Bulgaria, Croatia, France and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", among others, have recently set up, or are in the management phase of, national platforms.

European Forum for disaster risk reduction

The Agreement also supports co-operation between the various national platforms on matters of common interest: for example it helped to organise various preparatory meetings in order to decide on the general characteristics of an entity which would enable them to meet to share experience and promote coordinated activities. Thus the Forum, a product of three years of co-operation with the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, was officially created in November 2009 and will have its first official session under Swedish chairmanship in Gothenburg in October 2010. The Forum is intended to be a place for information and knowledge exchange between national platforms for disaster risk reduction and the focal points of the Hyogo Framework for Action, with a view to expanding the political space dedicated to the subject while at the same time helping to take effective action to reduce the impact of disasters in Europe.

--▶ Promoting compliance with ethical principles and values

Looking beyond the more technical aspects of action in the event of a disaster, the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement pays particular attention to the human dimension during the different phases of the risk management cycle. Care should be taken from the prevention and preparation phase onwards to ensure that the most vulnerable groups (elderly persons, children, persons with physical or mental disabilities, and so on) are dealt with appropriately in the light of their greater vulnerability to natural and technological risks.

While pre-disaster, account has to be taken of the human factors in play, the exceptional situation brought about by a disaster raises even more important aspects in terms of ethics and values. Account needs to be taken not only of the material and human needs created by the specific situation (reduced mobility, for instance) of the most vulnerable groups, but also of the ability to maintain the rights and duties of the various people involved in the emergency situation.

Raising the awareness of the most vulnerable groups : pilot project in Armenia

The ECTR (Yerevan, Armenia) has, since 2008, been working on a projected campaign at both national and local levels to raise awareness among the Armenian population of the main risks to which it is exposed. In this context, specific efforts for particularly vulnerable groups are planned: the documentation for the general public is to be rewritten for persons suffering from a variety of disabilities.

Psychosocial assistance for disaster victims

While physical assistance to victims is important in the short term, we must not overlook the short and longer-term psychological assistance needed by disaster victims, preventing the appearance of post-traumatic stress disorder or other psychological disorders sometimes suffered in the aftermath of an exceptional event. The Agreement has therefore, in co-operation with the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, developed a project whereby professionals will be trained to assist disaster victims, mainly on the basis of the good practices identified at the time of previous disasters.



WHAT CHALLENGES LIE AHEAD ?

Society faces not only the natural risks and technological flaws identified, but also the emergence of new and more diffuse threats, as well as far-reaching changes in the risks that we all face, the main ones that should be mentioned being climate change and its consequences.

The challenge of implementation

In view of its role as a tool of intergovernmental co-operation, the Agreement must focus on drawing up recommendations which are valid for most of its member states, rather than on significant activities in the field, which would by definition be specific to individual countries.

Although the work done by the Agreement's centres is helpful, the putting into practice of these recommendations in individual countries is therefore a matter for those states themselves, which must identify appropriate partners and the requisite resources.

As this constraint is known to exist, definition of the methodologies associated with these recommendations, adaptable to individual member states, is a future path to be explored in the hope that words can be turned into actions.

The challenge of more effective co-operation and knowledge transfer

On the sound basis of the expertise accumulated by all the intergovernmental bodies taking part and by its network of specialised centres, the Agreement must improve this joint work on risk reduction by extending it to new knowledge centres.

Since one of the critical needs during emergency situations is the right information at the right time, it is important to do more to ensure that existing scientific and research data in appropriate form are available to those who are responsible for managing emergency situations.

To this end, the Agreement must further step up its co-operation with other initiatives and agencies of a similar kind so as to disseminate information about disaster risk reduction to the greatest possible number of potential users (those responsible for managing risks to the general public).

The challenge of climate change

A large number of the natural risks covered by the Agreement are directly linked with phenomena which are likely to be affected by current climate change, no matter how extensive this may turn out to be.

Indeed, climate change mitigation policies (through such means as reductions in CO₂ emissions) being outside the ambit of the Agreement, adaptation to that change is necessary in relation to risks, particularly those of natural origin.

The Murcia workshop on the impact of climate change on water-related and coastal risks (2009) already traced certain lines of activity:

- Identifying problems and areas of vulnerability;
- Bolstering the disaster prevention programme and including it on the climate change work programme;
- Adopting a knowledge-based approach to disaster prevention and management;
- Promoting the role of co-operation and solidarity.

The challenge of giving individuals a central role in resilience

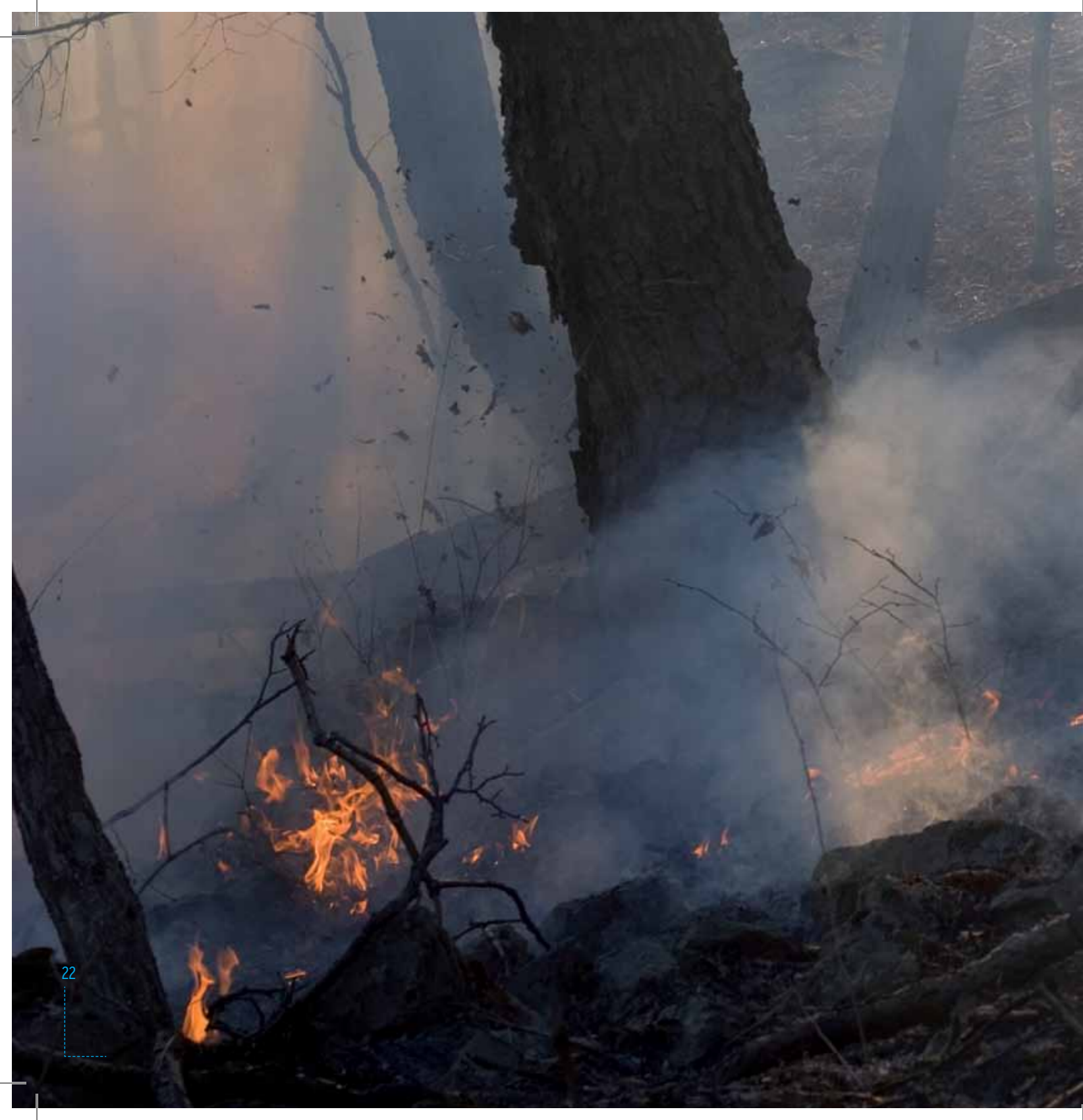
All too often, we consider our own security in a complex and exclusively scientific or technological context, whereas human beings play a key part in reducing disaster risks.

In emergency situations, human reactions are vital and depend on how societies have prepared in advance, what decisions are taken in an emergency and how relief is organised.

Thus the Agreement focuses on such matters as expert training, public education about risks, relief procedures which are both effective and respect human dignity, decisions about planning which may help to avoid further disasters, and so on.

It is therefore one of the Agreement's constant concerns to gain a better understanding of risks and the associated communication as it strives to make our societies more risk-resilient.





Appendices

Reference Text

RESOLUTION (87)2

SETTING UP A CO-OPERATION GROUP FOR THE PREVENTION OF, PROTECTION AGAINST, AND ORGANISATION OF RELIEF IN MAJOR NATURAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL DISASTERS

(adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 March 1987 at the 405th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Representatives on the Committee of Ministers of France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Turkey,

Considering Resolution (72) 6 on precautions against natural and other disasters and the planning and provision of disaster relief, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 18 February 1972;

Having regard to, the Declaration of the ministers responsible for the prevention of, and protection against, major natural and technological disasters in southern Europe (Note of the Secretariat : Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Republic of San Marino, Spain, Turkey), adopted in Ravello on 10 June 1985;

Having regard to the principles for the use of resources in the event of disasters adopted on 11 December 1985 at the 2nd informal meeting of the ministers responsible for the prevention of, and protection against, major natural and technological disasters in southern Europe;

Considering the interest and the different activities of the Commission of the European Communities regarding the problems of civil defence (protection civile);

Having regard to the training programmes undertaken in the field of prevention of, and protection against, major disasters at the European University Centre for the Cultural Heritage of Ravello and at the European Centre for Disaster-related Medicine of San Marino;

Having regard to the conclusions adopted at the 4th informal meeting of the ministers responsible for the prevention of, and protection against, major natural and technological disasters in southern Europe in Istanbul on 8 and 9 December 1986, proposing the establishment of an Open Partial Agreement;

Having regard to the Committee of Ministers' Resolution (51) 62 concerning Partial Agreements;

Recognising the need to enable the informal meeting of ministers responsible for the prevention of, and protection against, major natural and technological disasters in southern Europe to carry on its activities as efficiently as possible,

Resolve to set up a Co-operation Group for the prevention of, protection against, and organisation of relief in major natural and technological disasters.

I. The aim of the group shall be to make a multidisciplinary study of the co-operation methods for the prevention of, protection against, and organisation of relief in major natural and technological disasters.

II. The working methods employed hitherto by the group shall be maintained under this Partial Agreement.

i. Meetings. In private, at ministerial level, as a general rule every two years, but circumstances and urgency may justify special meetings of the group in addition to these two-yearly meetings;

ii. Each state is represented at the meetings either by the minister(s) concerned with the subject being dealt with, or by the minister instructed by his Government to co-ordinate the action of ministries concerned with major natural and technological disasters. A permanent correspondent appointed for each state is responsible for preparing the group's ministerial meetings in personal liaison with the minister(s) attending them; he may be assisted by experts;

iii. The permanent correspondents and their experts meet twice during the interval between ministerial meetings to follow the application of the guidelines adopted and to prepare the ministers' future meetings in accordance with a given mandate. Their duties, in this connection, include:

- arranging the agenda and subjects of the coming ministerial meeting,
- collecting material for the preparation of basic documents,
- making arrangements for the practical preparation of ministerial meetings,
- exchanging information on the latest developments in the participating countries concerning the subjects dealt with by the ministers at previous meetings;

iv. The group decides on the publication of documents drawn up by the permanent correspondents as well as resolutions adopted by it;

v. The languages used at meetings are English and/or French;

vi. The meeting papers are reproduced in English and/or French. Activities. Co-operation programmes on:

- relief organisation: doctrines, information, simulation, assistance, etc.
- training and research implemented in co-operation with specialised centres forming networks. (Note 1)

III. Any member state of the Council of Europe may join this group at any time by notification addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

IV. States not members of the Council of Europe and the European Communities may join the group with the unanimous agreement of the member states of the group.

V. The Secretariat General of the Council of Europe will provide the group, with the help of the European University Centre for the Cultural Heritage of Ravello and other specialised centres and, particularly as regards the ministerial meetings mentioned under 3 below, with the help of the centre responsible for the practical organisation, with the following secretariat services:

1. Preparation and distribution of papers for the group's meetings at both ministerial and permanent correspondent level;
2. Convening of meetings;
3. Practical organisation of the group's ministerial meetings;
4. Practical organisation of the group's meetings at permanent correspondent level at the rate of two in each interval between ministerial meetings;
5. Translation of the group's papers into English or French;
6. Provision of the staff required by the group for its functioning;
7. Preparation and circulation of the conclusions of the group's meetings.

VI. The group's operational expenditure under the Partial Agreement shall be apportioned as follows:

1. The travel and subsistence expenses of persons attending the group's meetings (ministers, permanent correspondents and experts) shall be paid by the member state concerned;
2. Additional expenditure arising from the organisation of meetings elsewhere than at the seat of the Council of Europe shall be borne by the host country;
3. Expenditure relating to the implementation of co-operation programmes and common secretariat expenditure (papers, staff, missions, translation, interpretation and all other operational expenditure) shall be covered by a Partial Agreement budget funded by the group's member states and governed by the same financial rules as foreseen for the other budgets of the Council of Europe.

(Note 1) At the time of adoption of this resolution, the centres are the following:

- European Centre for Disaster-related Medicine of San Marino;
- European University Centre for the Cultural Heritage of Ravello;
- European Training Centre for Natural Disasters (Turkey);
- European Centre on Prevention and Forecasting of Earthquakes, Athens;
- European Centre of Geodynamics and Seismology of Walferdange (Luxembourg);
- European Mediterranean Seismological Centre, Strasbourg (France);
- European Centre for Training and Research in the Field of Natural and Technological Pollution in the Mediterranean (Malta).

Date of adhesion of member states

Albania	1993
Algeria	1991
Armenia	1993
Azerbaijan	1993
Belgium	1991
Bulgaria	1994
Cyprus	2000
Croatia	2002
Spain	1987
France	1987
Georgia	1993
Greece	1987
«the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia»	1995
Lebanon	1997
Luxembourg	1987
Malta	1987
Moldova	1998
Morocco	1995
Monaco	1990
Portugal	1987
Romania	2001
Russian Federation	1990
San Marino	1987
Serbia	2009
Turkey	1987
Ukraine	1997

List of specialised centres

Scientific and Technical Research Centre on Arid Regions	CSRTRA	Biskra, Algeria
European Interrregional Education Centre on major risks management	ECTR	Yerevan, Armenia
European Centre on Training and information of Local and Regional Authorities and Population in the Field of Natural and Technological Disasters	ECMHT	Baku, Azerbaijan
Higher Institute of Emergency Planning	ISPU	Florival, Belgium
European Centre for Risk Prevention	CSLT	Sofia, Bulgaria
Bulgarian National Training Centre	BNTC	Sofia, Bulgaria
European Centre for Disaster Awareness with the use of Internet	BeSafeNet	Nicosie, Cyprus
European Centre for Seismic and Geomorphological Hazards	CERG	Strasbourg, France
European Mediterranean Seismological Centre	CSEM	Bruyères-le-Châtel, France
Specialised European Centre on Coastal Risks	CERCO	Biarritz, France
European Centre for the vulnerability of Industrial and Lifelines Systems	ECILS	Skopje, «the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia»
European Centre on Geodynamical Hazards of High Dams	GHHD	Tbilisi, Georgia
Global Fire Monitoring Centre	GFMC	Fribourg, Germany
European Centre on Prevention and Forecasting of Earthquakes	ECPFE	Athens, Greece
European Centre on Forest Fires	ECFF	Athens, Greece
European University for the Cultural Heritage	CUEBC	Ravello, Italy
European Centre for Geodynamics and Seismology	CEGS	Walferdange, Luxembourg
Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Insular Coastal Dynamics	IcoD	La Valette, Malta
European Centre for Mitigation of Natural Risks	ECMNR	Chisinau, Moldova
Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Evaluation and Prevention of Seismic Risk	CEPRIS	Rabat, Morocco
European Centre on Urban Risk	CERU	Lisbon, Portugal
European Centre for Buildings Rehabilitation	ECBR	Bucarest, Roumania
European Centre of New Technologies for Risk Management	ECNTRM	Moscow, Russian Federation
European Centre for Disaster Medicine	CEMEC	San Marino, San Marino
European Centre on Social Research in Emergency Situations	CEISE	Madrid, Spain
European Natural Disasters Training Centre	AFEM	Ankara, Turkey
European Centre of Technological Safety	TESEC	Kiev, Ukraine

EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement

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