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Open Partial Agreement on the prevention of, protection against and organisation of relief in major natural and technological disasters

RECOMMENDATION

adopted at the 9th Ministerial session of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement

**Isle of Bendor, Bandol, France
3 - 4 October 2002**

Strasbourg, 5 November 2002

Open Partial Agreement on the prevention of, protection against,
and organisation of relief in major natural and technological disasters

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**adopted¹ at the 9th Ministerial session of the
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Recommendation concerning the International Strategy for Disaster
Reduction (ISDR)

¹ Unanimously

RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION (ISDR)

THE MINISTERS CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Societies are increasingly vulnerable to natural and other related technological and environmental hazards, whose impact is made more acute by the consequences of demographic, economic and social changes including urbanisation and development processes, as recently recognised by the World Summit on Sustainable Development;
2. The Euro-Mediterranean (Euro-Med) region is not exempted from the adverse consequences of this trend, manifested also as a transboundary problem, such as in the case of the recent catastrophic floods in Western and Central Europe. The tens of thousands of victims of the two last earthquakes in Turkey, the 800 or more victims caused by the disastrous floods and mudslides in Algeria in 2001, and the devastation brought about by floods in the Gard region in France this summer are but a few reminders of this dramatic situation;
3. Disaster reduction is one central element of sustainable development and the associated risk management is a primary responsibility of governments. Such risk management should be based on an integrative decision-making process linking scientific knowledge, vulnerability assessment and authority structures at all levels. The civil society, the private sector, including insurance companies, experts and academia must be fully involved.

RECALLING THAT :

In 1996, a meeting of experts from the entire Euro-Med basin was convened in Italy (International Workshop on Natural Disaster Reduction in the Mediterranean Region, Castelnuovo di Porto) to review the state of the regional cooperation in this domain and which made recommendations for the adoption of a common strategy. In a subsequent meeting held in 1998 in Spain (IDNDR Regional Conference for the Mediterranean, Valencia), similar recommendations were made. The same recommendations were reaffirmed in December 2001 (Conference on Urban Safety and Sustainable Development, Naples) and May 2002 in Italy.

RECOMMEND THAT:

1. National disaster reduction platforms linked to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in the Euro-Med region be established, consolidated and developed through recognition and support by national governments. The positive experience they represent should be capitalised upon and should serve to support the goals underpinning the ISDR.

2. In pursuit of these goals, it is essential that risk management be integrated into planning and land use policy in the Euro-Med region. Initiative in this sense should be taken in co-operation with the Council of Europe and the European Commission where appropriate.
3. Furthermore, a stronger and more substantive collaboration between the Council of Europe (EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement in particular) and the European Commission should be encouraged in the area of disaster reduction. This collaboration could include support for developing countries and should be developed with the support of the ISDR Secretariat, which constitutes a link with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations.
4. A Euro-Med conference on disaster reduction should be organised jointly by the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement of the Council of Europe and the ISDR Secretariat in 2003 or early 2004, hosted by the government of Spain at the National School of Civil Protection in Madrid. This conference would be aimed at reviewing and consolidating the work done in the past few years and make specific proposals for the improvement of risk management in the Euro-Med region. The conference would also prepare a concerted input for the review of the Yokohama Strategy and Action Plan to be undertaken by the ISDR Secretariat at international level.

Such a conference should include amongst other topics:

- i. the specific problems of sub regions within the Euro-Med area
- ii. aspects of international co-operation within and outside the Euro-Med area
- iii. the transboundary aspects of risk management
- iv. the contribution of science and technology to disaster management.

INSTRUCT the Executive Secretariat of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement to contribute to the implementation of those Recommendations.

WELCOME the initiative of the German ISDR Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV) for convening a meeting of the national platforms for ISDR of the European Union countries in order to establish a network for enhanced cooperation and information exchange.