



Yerevan, 30 September 2011

EUROPEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN MAJOR HAZARDS AGREEMENT (EUR-OPA)

Recommendation 2011 - 1 of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents on information to the public on radiation risks,

adopted at the 61st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Correspondents of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA), Yerevan, Armenia, 29-30 September 2011

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

- A. Taking into account the high number of nuclear power plants and other installations handling radioactive materials in Europe and the Mediterranean, and the serious potential hazard of such materials to human health and the environment in case of accidental release;
- B. Noting that in the two major nuclear accidents since 1986, in Chernobyl and Fukushima, populations were not properly informed of the risks during the crisis, as authorities proved great inefficiency in delivering accurate information and people had little previous knowledge of the risks of radiation;
- C. Recalling that its Resolution 2011-1 on Ethical Principles relating to Disaster Risk Reduction and contributing to People's resilience to disasters mentions the obligation of public authorities and private actors to provide high quality information about disaster risks and the preventive measures to adopt in order to reduce the risk;
- D. Desirous to both improve the knowledge and awareness of populations in respect to radiation risks and encourage public authorities and managers of nuclear power plants and other installations handling radioactive materials to increase transparency and provide accurate and reliable information on the risk of radiation;

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

1. Actively prepare populations for a better understanding of the radioactive hazard, in particular to:
 - Populations living around Nuclear Power Plants and other installations dealing with radioactive waste;
 - People involved in handling radioactive materials in industry, medicine or the military ;

- Civil protection personnel or rescue workers that may be involved during emergencies;
 - Population affected by transport of radioactive materials;
 - People leaving in areas having suffered from radiation contamination;
2. Encourage the elaboration of contingency plans for nuclear emergencies establishing mechanisms, in case of imminent threat to human health or the environment, to disseminate without delay all information which could enable the public to take measures to prevent harm arising from a radiation threat;
 3. Encourage managers of Nuclear Power Plants and other installations using radioactive materials to regularly communicate to local authorities and neighbouring populations the risks and contingency plans in case of accidental release of radiation; organise regular campaigns and exercises in this context;
 4. Recognise as appropriate the principle of access of the population of the relevant information concerning the hazard of industrial activities using radioactive materials, as a principle recognised in the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and in some decisions of the European Court of Human Rights;
 5. Support the efforts of the Agreement to produce and disseminate basic knowledge on radiation hazards and the appropriate behaviour in case of nuclear accident, so as to promote appropriate information and awareness on these hazards.