

**Global Fire Management Hub  
1st Technical Workshop  
14 - 16 November 2023  
FAO Headquarters – Rome**

Remarks: Krzysztof Zyman, Executive Secretary  
European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA)  
Council of Europe

Dear Organisers, dear speakers, dear Technical Workshop participants,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you in my capacity of the Executive Secretary of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA). Please allow me to briefly introduce the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement. Set up in 1987, the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement of the Council of Europe is a platform for co-operation in the field of major natural and technological disasters between Europe and the South of the Mediterranean. Its field of competence covers disaster risk reduction, in particular: knowledge, prevention, preparedness, risk management and post-crisis analysis. It has to date [22 member States](#).

The Agreement stands on two pillars: At the political level, each State is represented by its minister(s) responsible for natural and technological major hazards, assisted by the [Committee of Permanent Correspondents](#), who play the role of permanent relay between the national authorities and the Agreement.

At the scientific and technical level, the specific role of the [Specialised Euro-Mediterranean Centres](#) is to develop projects, both at national and regional levels, which aim to improve the awareness of and resilience to major risks within the population.

Global Fire Monitoring Center based in Freiburg Germany has joined the Network of Specialised Centers in 2007

The Global Fire Monitoring Center is one of the most active Centres with the EUR-OPA Network, serves as coordinator of the UNDRR Wildland Fire Advisory Group and the Global Wildland Fire Network. In addition, the GFMC is Coordinator of the International Wildfire Preparedness Mechanism (IWPM) and the Eurasia Team of Specialists in Landscape Fire Management, an advisory group to the member States of the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), with a focus on Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

Since 2010 the EUR-OPA Secretariat has sponsored the decentralization of GFMC by the establishment of the Regional Fire Monitoring Center for South East Europe, based in Skopje, North Macedonia. In 2013, the GFMC established the Regional Eastern Europe Fire Monitoring Center in Kiev, Ukraine, with the financial support of the Major Hazards Agreement.

These two Regional Centers, which are serving the tasks described by Mr. Goldammer, have been example for setting-up similar centers of excellence in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The seed money provided by EUR-OPA is paying off. Meanwhile, the regional centers are supported by long-term programmes such as the Switzerland-funded Programme “Landscape Fire Management in the Western Balkans”.

The EUR-OPA Secretariat and GFMC are closely cooperating with the UNDRR Office and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Last year, the centre focused on landscape fire management strategies in Ukraine, Greece and Western Balkans. It conducted mapping of wildfire monitoring in Ukraine – land mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) remain scattered across the country posing great danger to the inhabitants. A total area of 1.6m hectares of vegetated lands burned in 2022, thereof ca. 300,000 ha forests.

Earlier this year, Professor Goldammer attended, on behalf of the EUR-OPA Agreement the 8<sup>th</sup> International Wildland Fire Conference in Porto, Portugal.

I would like to recall that at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, hosted by Indonesia in 2022, the EUR-OPA Secretariat proposed the development of an International Landscape Fire Management Framework. Such a framework could follow the example of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The EUR-OPA Secretariat is welcoming the initiative of FAO and UNEP to establish the Global Fire Management Hub, notably the integration of the expertise of the GFMC and the Regional Fire Monitoring Centers.

The Global Fire Management Hub could provide the basis for developing a consent-based international instrument.

As a regional intergovernmental Agreement, the EUR-OPA Secretariat will further promote international cooperation in disaster risk reduction and will be available to contribute to the definition of the mission of the Hub over the coming months.

Thank you for your attention.