

To Ministries of Education
of the EUR-OPA member States

Ref ► KZ/ce

Strasbourg, 12 January 2023

Subject: 2023 Olympiad on Natural and Technological Hazards

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to inform you about an Olympiad on Natural and Technological Hazards to be organised on 10 March 2023 under the auspices of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) of the Council of Europe, in collaboration with the Cyprus Civil Defence. The EUR-OPA Agreement is a platform for co-operation between 22 countries in Europe and South of the Mediterranean in the field of disaster prevention and preparedness since 1987.

Natural hazards and technological accidents cause a great number of casualties and important economic losses every year. Although it may not be possible to prevent certain hazards, we aim to reduce vulnerability to disasters by providing teachers and secondary school students in particular, with accurate information on risks and how to mitigate the effects.

Organised in the framework of the BeSafeNet project, the purpose of this Olympiad is to foster knowledge on hazards and the associated preventive measures among secondary school students. It consists of an online competition (in English) based on the BeSafenet.net website to provide reliable educational material about hazards and preparedness). The competition is open to secondary schools (16 years old maximum) in the 22 member States of the Agreement¹.

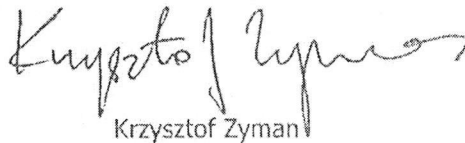
¹ The EUR-OPA member States: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, , Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Morocco, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine

It will take place on **10 March 2023 at 9 a.m. CET**. Please refer to the BeSafeNet website for further information on the Olympiad and the rules of the competition to participate in the Olympiad.

The EUR-OPA Committee of Permanent Correspondents, composed of representatives of mainly Ministries of Interior and Environment in charge of disaster risk reduction in each member State, fully supports this initiative and have been asked to diffuse its announcement.

I should be most grateful if you could spread the information on the 2023 Olympiad among the secondary schools in your country in order to promote their participation in the competition.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Krzysztof Zyman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Krzysztof Zyman

Executive Secretary of the European and
Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement

Encl: Factsheet

European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) BeSafeNet 2023 factsheet

The European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) is a platform for co-operation focusing on major natural and technological disasters. The main objectives of EUR-OPA are to reinforce and promote co-operation between member states in a multi-disciplinary context to ensure better prevention, protection against risks and better preparation in the event of major natural or technological disasters. EUR-OPA currently has 22 member states and it supports in particular projects on education and disaster risk reduction aimed at promoting a culture of prevention, for example through emergency response drills in school establishments together with annual national campaigns. It also provides preventive information and education on how to stem the effects of natural disasters as well as developing a methodology on basic knowledge for schoolteachers on safety activities in emergencies etc.

BeSafeNet project

The BeSafeNet project was initiated under the auspices of EUR-OPA to achieve three main goals:

1. Promote a culture of safety among youth:
 - Raise awareness on the implications of their actions and their perception of emergencies.
 - Replace fear with a culture of preparedness.
2. Disseminate knowledge to multilingual societies:
 - Create a common knowledge database of best experience.
 - Disseminate information in several languages for the benefit of the wider society.
3. Become an interactive tool:
 - Open the BeSafeNet website to other users and organisations for their benefit and comment.
 - Enrich its content by contributions based on real-life experiences and information provided by experts. The target is the general public, especially - school teachers and students.

2023 Olympiad

The Olympiad is an online competition between schools on the theme "Better knowledge against disasters", and is open to secondary schools in the 22 member States of the Agreement¹. The age limit to participate is 11 to 16 years. The competition will give pupils a chance to increase their knowledge on natural and technological hazards that they could face even outside of school. The pupils will learn the adequate behaviour in these situations and how to reduce/prevent as much as possible the potential impact of disasters.



The quiz is based on five of the hazards featured on the BeSafeNet website. Fifty multiple choice questions (10 for each of the 5 chosen hazards) requiring a single answer. It will be available online on **10 March 2023 at 09.00 CET**.

Registration of participants is open until 10 March 2022 - at 08.30 CET.

www.besafenet.net
www.coe.int/europa

¹ The member States of EUR-OPA in 2023 are: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Morocco North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, , Ukraine.