

**SEECF – Bulgarian CiO
Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Preparedness and Prevention
Sofia, 9 April 2008
Concept Paper and Draft Agenda**

Background

Regional co-operation in the field of Disaster Preparedness and Prevention (DPP) is a vital topic for South Eastern Europe (SEE) for a variety of reasons including the exposure of the region to a range of natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, fires etc) and the need to reduce the vulnerability of relatively weak economies to the impact of such disasters.

A number of initiatives are underway or are being developed to tackle different aspects of DPP - so called “soft measures” (e.g. capacity building, training, institutional co-operation) and financial measures – financing physical investments and the development of a comprehensive but affordable risk insurance framework for governments, businesses and households.

Successful implementation of these initiatives requires high-level political commitment from the countries of the region and the international community.

Overall Objective of the Ministerial Meeting

SEECF Ministers will adopt a Ministerial Statement on DPP that will commit the parties to action in specific areas within a defined time period. This will include a commitment to developing a regional co-operation strategy for DPP. The Statement will be based on the commitments already made by countries of the region under the Memorandum of Understanding on the DPP Initiative of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

This Ministerial Statement will be supported by senior representatives of the international community who are active in the area of DPP including the EC, World Bank, NATO and UN - ISDR and OCHA.

Format and Participants

The one-day Ministerial meeting would take place in Sofia on 9 April under the chairmanship of the Government of Bulgaria. Participants will include the responsible ministers and senior officials from the SEECF Participating States and the international community.

Speeches/interventions at the meeting would be organised along specific topics (see attached draft agenda). Speakers would comprise relevant ministers of the SEECF participating states, the EU Presidency, the EC, World Bank, NATO, the UN (ISDR and OCHA) and the Regional Co-operation Council. The meeting would conclude with the formal adoption of the Ministerial Statement on DPP in SEE.

The ministerial meeting would be preceded (the day before) by the Regional Meeting of the SP's DPPI initiative. Additional preparatory meetings on issues such as risk mitigation for DPPI may also take place.

MEETING OF THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR DISASTER PROTECTION FROM THE SEECP PARTICIPATING STATES

DRAFT AGENDA

Part I.

08 April 2008

1. Meeting of Senior Officials (possibly as a part of the Regional Meeting of DPPI to be held in Sofia on 7 – 8 April).

(The main aim of this meeting would be to finalize draft ministerial declaration to be adopted by the ministers).

2. Welcome Reception.

Part II.

09 April 2008

Ministerial Conference

0900 – 0930

1. Opening

- a. Opening remarks by the representative of the Bulgarian SEECP CiO
- b. Address by Hido Biscevic, General Secretary of RCC
- c. Address by Dr. Erhard Busek, Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact

0930 – 1000

Group Photo

1000 – 1120

2. Key issues for future regional co-operation in the field of DPP

- a. Floods (the key interventions: Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Moldova)*
- b. Forest/Wild Fires (the key interventions: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina Montenegro, Greece)*
- c. Earthquakes (the key interventions: Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania)*

(* NB list is indicative)

1120 – 1140

Coffee Break

1140 – 1215

3. International Community's Support for DPP in South Eastern Europe

- a. Statement by the Slovenian/EU Presidency
- b. Statement by the European Commission
- c. Statement by the World Bank
- d. Statements by the UN ISDR, UN OCHA
- e. Statement by NATO

1215 – 1230

4. Future role of Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Initiative

- i. Statement by the Croatian DPPI SEE Chairmanship / DPPI SEE Secretariat

1230 – 1245

5. Adoption of the Ministerial Statement

1245 – 1300

6. Concluding statement by the representative of the Bulgarian SEECPCiO

1300 – 1330 Press Conference

1330 – 1500 Official Lunch

1500 Departure of the delegations