



**BeSafeNet**  
EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement

# Welcome to BeSafeNet.net



*the website that teaches you everything you need to know about natural and technological hazards and disasters and how to Be Safe!*



## WHAT ARE NATURAL & TECHNOLOGICAL DISASTERS?

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Natural and technological hazards can become disasters causing great human and economic losses due to social vulnerability, i.e. a propensity for people, societies and ecosystems to be harmed. Many natural hazards are not just natural processes, but have been made more likely and more intense by human activity.

BeSafeNet aims to reduce losses caused by disasters by providing people with the knowledge they need to reduce the risk of hazards turning into disasters and to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

BeSafeNet promotes a risk culture among populations. It is supported by the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) of the Council of Europe. As a tool, BeSafeNet provides basic knowledge on hazards and vulnerabilities for pupils and teachers by promoting safety and preparedness through awareness raising among youth.

It also disseminates a wealth of valid information and best practice multilingually through its dedicated website.

Natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, fires and storms occur when hazards meet vulnerability. They can happen in various places in the world and cause considerable damage and suffering. Some natural disasters occur more frequently or may have more severe consequences than others, depending on the location, the climate, the geology of the area, population density and other human environmental factors. For example, some places are especially prone to earthquakes or hurricanes, and the way buildings are constructed will determine the scale of a disaster.

Technological disasters such as radiation leakages, chemical spills, dam failures, etc. are accidents caused by human error, negligence, or deliberate action. They can happen anywhere in the world and have harmful effects on both people and the environment. The likelihood of certain technological disasters and the seriousness of their consequences may depend on the type, the amount and the location of the hazardous materials involved. For example, some chemicals are more toxic or flammable than others.

# WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT DISASTERS?

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When disasters occur, they destroy homes, schools, communities, belongings and livelihoods. They can also injure or kill loved ones. They disrupt normal life and provoke fear, sadness and anger.

But there is something that you can do to reduce the impact of disasters: you can learn about them and how to prepare for them. By doing so, you can protect yourself, your family and your friends from harm. You can also help people with disabilities and other vulnerable persons around you, and make a positive difference to your community.



# LEARNING ABOUT DISASTERS CAN ALSO HELP YOU:

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- Understand the natural and technological processes that cause them and how they interact with each other.
- Recognise the signs and warnings of impending disasters and how to react to them.
- Identify the risks and vulnerabilities to various types of hazards in your area and your community.
- Develop a personal and family emergency plan that includes what to do before, during and after a disaster.
- Build a disaster kit that contains essential items that you may need in the event of an emergency.
- Know how to communicate with your family and friends during a disaster and how to access reliable sources of information and assistance.
- Acknowledge human rights and not avoid marginalised and vulnerable groups that face discrimination and exclusion.
- Practise safety skills and drills that can save your life or someone else's in the event of a disaster.



- Support disaster prevention and mitigation efforts that aim to reduce the likelihood or severity of future disasters.

By learning about hazards and disasters, we can reduce the vulnerability of our world and make it more resilient and valuable for the future.

Would you like to learn more about natural and technological hazards and disasters and how to protect yourself from them? Would you like to join the EUR-OPA member states' community of students and teachers who share the same interest? Would you like to participate in exciting competitions and test your knowledge?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you should visit [www.BeSafeNet.net](http://www.BeSafeNet.net)!



BeSafeNet also organises an annual Olympiad competition for students aged 11-16 where they can test their knowledge and skills in hazard and disaster prevention and preparedness. The Olympiad is open to teams from all the EUR-OPA member states and offers attractive prizes, including a possible visit to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, for the three winning teams.

## THE OLYMPIAD CONSISTS OF:

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- 50 multiple-choice questions
- 5 types of hazard
- 10 questions for each type of hazard or related disaster
- 1 answer per question

You can find all the instructions on how to register and compete in the Olympiad on the website.

BeSafeNet is a fun and educational way to learn about natural and technological hazards and disasters and how to be safe. Do not miss this opportunity and visit [www.BeSafeNet.net](http://www.BeSafeNet.net) today!



## CONTRIBUTORS

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The European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement is a platform for co-operation in the field of major natural and technological disasters. Its field of competence covers natural and technological hazard-related disaster risk reduction, in particular; knowledge, prevention, preparedness, risk management and post-crisis analysis. The agreement is supported by the Council of Europe and aims to promote a risk culture among populations.

The agreement provides a platform for co-operation between countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It aims to reduce the impact of disasters by promoting knowledge sharing and best practices. The agreement also provides a wealth of resources for countries that want to improve their disaster risk reduction strategies. These resources include guidelines, training materials, and tools that are designed to be user-friendly and accessible.

Co-ordination of website development and day-to-day operation are carried out by the “European Centre of Disaster Awareness” under the umbrella of Cyprus Civil Defence and an international Editorial Board.



## CONTACT US

 [www.besafenet.net](http://www.besafenet.net)



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**OLYMPIAD**