

To Ministries of Education in the
Council of Europe member States

Ref ► KZ/ce

Strasbourg, 16 January 2025

Subject: 2025 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 **12 March 2025** 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.

Organised in the framework of the BeSafeNet project, the purpose of this Olympiad is to promote knowledge of hazards and the associated preventive measures among secondary school students. It consists of an online competition (in English) based on the [BeSafenet.net](https://www.besafenet.net) website to provide reliable educational material about hazards and preparedness. **In a new development, the competition is now open to secondary school pupils (16 years old maximum) in the 46 member States of the Council of Europe.**

The competition will be held online on **12 March 2025 at 09.00 CET**. Please refer to the [BeSafeNet](https://www.besafenet.net) website for further information on the Olympiad and the rules of the competition to participate in the Olympiad.

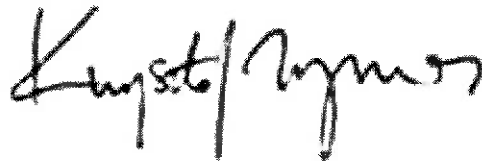
The EUR-OPA Committee of Permanent Correspondents, composed of representatives of ministries in charge of disaster risk reduction in each member State, fully supports this initiative and have been asked to diffuse its announcement.

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.

I should be most grateful if you could disseminate the information on the 2025 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', written in a cursive style.

Krzysztof Zyman
Executive Secretary
European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement

Encl: Factsheet

European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) BeSafeNet 2025 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 the 22 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. In particular, EUR-OPA supports 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 information and education on how to mitigate the effects of natural disasters as well as develop a methodology on basic knowledge for schoolteachers on safety activities in emergencies.

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 their perception of emergencies and on the implications of their actions;
 - replace fear with a culture of preparedness.
2. Disseminate knowledge to multilingual societies:
 - create a common knowledge database of best practice;
 - 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 audience is the general public, especially - school teachers and pupils.

2025 Olympiad

The Olympiad is an online competition on the theme “Better knowledge against disasters” and is now open to secondary schools across the 46 member States of the Council of Europe. The age limit to participate is 11 to 16 years. The competition will offer pupils a chance to increase their knowledge on natural and technological hazards that they could face at any moment. 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 competition is based on five of the hazards featured on the BeSafeNet website and fifty multiple choice questions (10 for each of the 5 chosen hazards) requiring a single answer. The competition will be held online on **12 March 2025 at 09.00 CET**. Registration of participants is open until 12 March at 08.30 CET.

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



BeSafeNet
EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement

12
3
25

How much do you know about Hazards?

Join the challenge and compete
www.besafenet.net



SCHOOLS AROUND EUROPE ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

The BeSafeNet online Olympiad is open to secondary schools in the Council of Europe member states. In addition to raising awareness about disasters and emergencies, the Olympiad offers fabulous prizes, including a possible visit to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France for the three winning teams. Exceptionally, the Olympiad Award Ceremony may be hosted in a different location to Strasbourg. Seven teams of runners-up will also be awarded a selection of consolation prizes.





2025

RULES OF THE COMPETITION

BeSafeNet SCHOOL OLYMPIAD 2025 - 12 March 2025 at 09:00 CET

OLYMPIAD

BETTER KNOWLEDGE AGAINST DISASTERS

The BeSafeNet initiative, supported by the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA) of the Council of Europe, is pleased to announce the seventh online Olympiad, a competition on the theme “Better knowledge against disasters”. It is open to secondary schools of the member States of the Agreement (participants must be under age 17 on the day of the competition). The competition will offer students a chance to increase their knowledge on natural and technological hazards, vulnerability-related topics and the associated preventive measures that they could face at any given moment, inside or outside of school. They will learn the adequate behaviour in these situations and to reduce as much as possible the potential impact of disasters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The BeSafeNet Initiative “Protect yourself from hazards” in the context in which this competition is organised, was officially launched in 2019. Its purpose is to diffuse among young people, basic knowledge on hazards, in order to make them aware of the risks that they may face if such events occur. Currently most school curricula generally do not cover disaster risk but focus on traditionally taught subjects. And since technological tools are a preferred way for younger generations to search for information, BeSafeNet has developed an internet-based tool that provides important information on both natural and technological major hazards that can negatively impact our societies.

STRUCTURE

The 2025 competition includes a compulsory multiple choice quiz, based on five hazards, as featured on the BeSafeNet website.

- Landscape Fires
- Tsunami
- Volcanic Eruptions
- Chemical Emergencies
- Climate Crisis

Fifty questions (10 for each of the 5 chosen hazards) requiring a single answer for each multiple choice question. The Olympiad will be held online on: **12 March 2025 at 09:00 CET**

Students should note that the quiz scoring system will award 2 points for each correct answer, subtract 0.75 points for each incorrect answer and subtract 1 point for no answer.

This year's competition is time-sensitive. In the event of a tie, the completion and submission time will determine the ranking. The team that completes and submits the competition earliest will be ranked higher among the tied teams.

The essay is optional. It will be requested only in case of a tie (if there is a time tie as well).

REFERENCE MATERIAL

The competition will be based on the material available on the English version of the BeSafeNet website: <https://www.besafenet.net>

Other versions are also available in French, Greek, Italian, Russian and can be useful for preparation for the competition.

The answers to the quiz questions will be based only on the first level material, namely the Introduction, Sections 1 to 12 and Basic Knowledge for each hazard: all sub-sections entitled "More information on ..." (labelled 1.1, 5.3, 12.2, etc.) on the website will not be used for the competition but can help students to better understand the subject.

REGISTRATION

The registration of participants will be open from **2 December 2024 at 11:00 CET** until **12 March 2025 at 09:00 CET** and done online by filling the registration form accessible at the following link: <https://olympiad.besafenet.net/olympiad>

Participants from secondary schools (participants must be under age 17 on the day of the competition) must be organised in teams of minimum 3 students and

maximum of 4 and be endorsed by a teacher who should provide all the required information on the composition of the team.

A teacher may endorse/register more than one team using a different email account for each team. After registration, a specific account will be generated for each team, allowing them to confirm their participation in the Olympiad, provide the team composition and submit any additional information.

Previous competition accounts created for Olympiad 2019-2021, remain valid. Due to security reasons since the development of our new website, all the passwords were reset.

Teachers just need to:

- ✓ Click "Sign in"
- ✓ Click on "I forgot my password"
- ✓ Fill in your account email
- ✓ Follow the instructions on the email received to set a new password. (Do not forget to check your Junk/Spam email if you do not receive the reset email)
- ✓ Then register a new team to the Olympiad 2025 competition.

Previous competition accounts created/competed for Olympiad 2022-24, are working normally.

For any help, contact the organisers on olympiad@besafenet.net

Further details and/or updates will be sent to the registered teams as necessary.

COMPETITION PHASE

On the Olympiad day, **12 March 2025, from 09:00 CET**, registered teams should log into their team account in order to access the quiz. Each team will have max 1 hour to complete the answer form: for a successful completion of the quiz, the "Compete" button must be clicked. In all cases, the page will automatically close at **10:00 a.m. CET** and answers submitted.

This year's competition is time-sensitive. In the event of a tie, the completion and submission time will determine the ranking. The team that completes and submits the competition earliest will be ranked higher among the tied teams.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

As this is an online competition, each team is required to:

- have access to the internet in order to complete the various steps (registration, access to BeSafeNet content, fill in the answers form, essay etc);
- have an email address for each team, to allow the Organising Committee to liaise with them.

Any questions about the competition, should be sent by email to the Organisation Committee through the BeSafeNet website contact form.

RESULTS

The results will be announced on the BeSafeNet website and Facebook page within a month of the competition.

AWARDS

After verifying the authenticity of data provided in the registration form, the three best teams will be awarded prizes. In case of a tie between teams in the quiz part, time of completion and submission will serve as the tie-breaker.

The three best teams will be awarded respectively the following gifts:

- ✓ A Gold certificate for the winning team, as well as a range of attractive prizes for the teacher and students;
- ✓ A Silver certificate for the team in second place, as well as a range of attractive prizes for the teacher and students;
- ✓ A Bronze certificate for the team in third place, as well as a range of attractive prizes for the teacher and students.

Teachers and the students from the top three teams will be invited to attend an award ceremony at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. Exceptionally, the Olympiad Award Ceremony may be hosted in a different location to Strasbourg.

Note that the same student cannot win the first three prizes in more than one competition.

The teams ranked fourth to tenth will receive consolation prizes and printed certificates of participation

All other participating teams can generate a digital certificate of participation, after the results, from their team profile.