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## UN-backed tsunami warning system for the Mediterranean passes first test



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The first test of the communication network of the United Nations-backed tsunami early warning system for the North-eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean was carried out successfully today, paving the way for the establishment of regional tsunami warning centres.

Tsunami warning focal points of 31 countries in the region took part in the test of the system, which was first established in 2005 by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) established under the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)).

“This past decade alone has shown us the terrible destructive power of earthquakes and tsunami on several occasions,” [said](#) UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova.

“Today’s test represents a significant step towards improving security for the lives of tens of millions of people in the North-eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, and meeting UNESCO’s ambition of establishing early warning systems globally,” she stated.

A test message was set via e-mail, fax and the Global Telecommunications System from Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute (KOERI) in Turkey to the 31 focal points. Early results show the messages were well received within a few minutes of being sent, according to a news release issued by UNESCO.

“The purpose of the test was to ensure the effective communication between potential regional and national tsunami warning focal points,” said Ocal Necmioglu, co-chair of the Tsunami Early

Warning and Mitigation System for the North-eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean and connected seas (NEAMTWS) and lead scientist for today's exercise at KOERI.

“The exercise went smoothly. A full evaluation will be made in the coming weeks,” he added.

The success of this first test paves the way for the establishment of regional tsunami warning centres. The first two, Turkey's KOERI and the Atomic Energy Centre in France, should be operational some time in 2012 when a more exhaustive test will be conducted. Others are planned for Greece, Italy and Portugal at a later date.

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