

7 November, 2003

EMI in meetings to establish new World Bank earthquake risk reduction program for Istanbul

On 26-31 November 2003, Dr. Fouad Bendimerad, Chairman of EMI participated in several working sessions between the World Bank and the authorities of the Turkish Government. The aim of these meetings was to develop a new World Bank program for mitigating earthquake risk to Istanbul. EMI was invited to participate in these sessions by the *Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality* ("**IMM**") in an advisory and observer status. EMI has been helping IMM to establish an earthquake management program for Istanbul since after the 1999 Marmara earthquakes. EMI has supported IMM in establishing an "**Earthquake Master Plan**" for this city of more than 10 million people (see separate article). Istanbul is a partner city of EMI.

A series of meetings with the Istanbul Governorate, IMM, and the Municipalities of the Istanbul's districts of Zetincburnu and Bakirkoy took place to define the parameters of a Feasibility Study that encompasses a wide variety of projects. These include reinforcement of disaster management infrastructure, seismic retrofit of critical facilities, and an innovative program for seismic retrofit of residential construction. This program, if approved, would constitute the first residential large-scale seismic retrofit project undertaken by the World Bank.

Dr. Bendimerad participated in a series of discussions with the World Bank team and the Project Implementation Unit of the Turkish Prime Minister Office aimed at defining the implementation structure for a first phase of this project. The project is headed by the Europe and Central Asia Section of the World Bank.

During his trip, Dr. Bendimerad had consultations with Mr. Mesut Pektas, Deputy Secretary General of IMM in charge of Earthquake Risk Management, Prof. Metin Ilkisik principal advisor to the Lord Mayor of Istanbul for earthquake safety, the faculty of the Department of Earthquake Engineering at Bogazici University in Istanbul, and with Prof. Polat Gulkan from the Department of Civil Engineering at Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara. Both Bogazici University and METU are heavily involved in studies related to the definition and implementation of the Master Plan.

EMI attaches a great importance to this World Bank project, which has far reaching consequences, as it will serve as a model to other earthquake prone megacities. EMI will continue to lend its support to the project and to help in its definition and implementation.

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