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## **TOPO-EUROPE – A new European Collaborative Research Programme (Overview)**

### **K. Rankenburg and the ESF Topo-Europe Community**

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This presentation introduces TOPO-EUROPE, a new European Collaborative Research (EUROCORES) Programme managed by the European Science Foundation (ESF). TOPO-EUROPE is concerned with the geosciences of coupled deep Earth and surface processes and their effects on the evolution of the topography of continents and their margins. In addition to addressing world-class issues of Earth-System sciences, TOPO-EUROPE has considerable societal relevance, since topography directly affects humanity as a result of secular landscape changes that have a direct bearing on environmental change and geohazards. TOPO-EUROPE intends to investigate the 4-D topography evolution of the European continent, its margins, and adjacent parts of North Africa, Asia and the Middle East. This requires an interdisciplinary approach that integrates research in the sub-disciplines of geomorphology, geochronology, geology, tectonics, geochemistry, petrology, geophysics, hydrology, geodesy, remote sensing and various branches of geotechnology.

Europe hosts excellent natural laboratories for studying and resolving first-order problems in continental topography. Several areas with specific characteristics and problems offer exciting opportunities for investigation. Combined studies of processes operating in these areas and other regions of the world will address the general issue of topography evolution. The important roles that climate and lithosphere-scale processes play in controlling topography development have only recently been recognised. Consequently, major scientific breakthroughs in this important field of research can be

expected in the coming years.

The TOPO-EUROPE Programme in its final form will be financed by up to 22 funding agencies from 21 European countries, including FWF, Austria; FWO, FNRS, Belgium; GA-CR, Czech Republic; Danish Natural Research Council, Denmark; INSU/CNRS, France; ETF, Estonia; DFG, Germany; RANNIS, Iceland; IRCSET, Ireland; ISF, Israel; CNR, Italy; NWO, The Netherlands; Research Council of Norway, Norway; Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Poland; FCT, Portugal; National University Research Council, Romania; SAS, Slovakia; SNSF, Switzerland; MEC, Spain; Scientific & Technological Research Council of Turkey, Turkey; Institute of Geophysics and NAS, Ukraine, and by the European Science Foundation (ESF) under the EUROCORES Programmes, with support by the European Commission, DG Research (Sixth Framework programme, contract ERAS-CT-2003-980409).