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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention for the protection of the
Mediterranean Sea against pollution and
its related protocols

Brussels, 9-10 April 1991

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU
OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AGAINST
POLLUTION AND ITS RELATED PROTOCOLS

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was called to order by Mr. V. Mandl, Vice-President of the Bureau (EEC), who was chairing in the absence of H.E. Mr. A. Ebeid, President of the Bureau, and at his request. H.E. Mr. I. Butini, Vice-President (Italy), Mr. A. Demetropoulos, Rapporteur (Cyprus) and Mr. E. Eid (Egypt) were present. Two members of the Bureau were accompanied by advisers. The Co-ordinator, Mr. A. Manos, represented the Secretariat. Mr. I. Dharat, Programme Officer, acted as Secretary of the meeting. The list of participants is contained in Annex I to this report.

2. In his opening statement, the President welcomed the members of the Bureau to Brussels on behalf of the European Economic Community. He stressed the fact that the EEC is very interested in the protection of the Mediterranean against pollution. He informed the meeting that he had received a telex from the President of the Bureau Dr. A. Ebeid informing him that due to unforeseen circumstances he will not be able to attend the meeting.

Agenda item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

3. The Agenda suggested by the Secretariat (UNEP/BUR/38/1) and annotated in document UNEP/BUR/38/2 was adopted.

Agenda item 2 Progress Report by the Co-ordinator on the implementation of the 1990-1991 approved programme and budget

4. The Co-ordinator, Mr. A. Manos, extended to the participants the greetings of Dr. Mostafa K. Tolba, Executive Director of UNEP. He introduced the Progress Report contained in document UNEP/BUR/38/3 on the activities carried out since the last meeting of the Bureau (Rome, 6-7 September 1990). He provided additional information on recent developments.

5. The Co-ordinator referred to document UNEP(OCA)/MED WG.18/4 containing the report of the meeting of the Working Group of Experts on the Draft Offshore Protocol (Athens, 8-11 January 1991). The report of the meeting contains the draft text of the offshore Protocol which was agreed upon by the Working Group of Experts. Due to the long process of preparation and reviewing of the draft protocol, he proposed that the Bureau should authorize the Executive Director of UNEP to convene in 1992 a Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Sea-bed and its Subsoil.

6. He informed the meeting that as only two replies were received in relation to the proposal to invite the Black Sea countries to the forthcoming meeting of the Contracting Parties, he expressed the view that the Bureau may advise the Secretariat on the procedure to be followed.

7. The Co-ordinator informed the meeting on the letter of thanks and encouragement that was received from Albania concerning the training courses which were organized for scientists from that country. He pointed out that a training course at MED Unit will be organized for two Albanians on administrative and financial matters relevant to MAP.

8. He informed the meeting that a MAP meeting of experts on port reception facilities will be convened at the end of the year in Egypt, in cooperation with the REMPEC Centre, IMO and EEC.

9. The Co-ordinator informed the meeting that the Tunisian government has decided to sign the draft host country Agreement between UNEP and Tunisia concerning the Specially Protected Areas Centre in Tunis. The ceremony of signature will take place in Tunis. The Co-ordinator will sign the Agreement on behalf of UNEP. Furthermore, he expressed the hope that Contracting Parties should assist the Centre to reactivate its functions by sending volunteers in specific fields, such as "park management", on secondment.

10. He pointed out that the Marseille Centre for the 100 historic sites is very active in implementing the workplan, approved by the Contracting Parties. The Centre will organize a meeting of experts to be convened in Thessaloniki (Greece) during 1991 to discuss the issue of historic sites.

11. As regards the Arabic version of the main report of the Blue Plan, he informed the meeting that the Arabic text is ready for publishing, and the Secretariat is very keen to accelerate its publication for the benefit of the Arab countries.

12. The Co-ordinator briefed the meeting on the high inflation in Yugoslavia which has a negative effect on the work of the PAP/RAC Centre.

13. As regards the Mediterranean Environment week which will occur on 5 to 11 June this year, he informed the meeting that the theme of the week this year would coincide with the theme of the UNEP Environment Day, namely, "Climate change, need for global partnership".

14. The Co-ordinator informed the meeting of his imminent departure from MAP/UNEP (31 May 1991). He pointed out that all these years working as Co-ordinator of MAP had been a very satisfactory experience for him. He hoped that he will continue to assist in protecting the Mediterranean in a different capacity. He pointed out that a vacancy notice was sent by UNEP to all Contracting Parties.

15. Finally, he briefed the meeting on the recent bomb attacks on the United Nations Information Centre in Athens and on some diplomatic cars. UNEP and the Greek government were notified of the need to render protection to MED Unit office in Athens.

16. During the ensuing debate, the members of the Bureau expressed their views on many of the issues raised in the progress report and by the Co-ordinator.

17. All members of the Bureau expressed their thanks and appreciation to the Co-ordinator for his efforts and achievements in the service of the Mediterranean and wished him well in his future endeavours.

18. As regards the Black Sea issue, the Vice-President from Italy expressed the view that the Black Sea countries which stated at the CSCE in Palma their wish to establish relations with MAP should be invited as observers to the Cairo meeting. The Bureau decided that the Co-ordinator should send another letter to the Contracting Parties that have not replied yet, seeking their views on an invitation to be sent to the Black Sea countries to attend the forthcoming meeting of the Contracting Parties (Cairo, 8-11 October 1991) as observers. The Contracting Parties will be informed that in the absence of reply within two months of the date of the letter, the Secretariat should assume that the Contracting Party in question is in agreement with the suggestion.

19. As regards the views expressed by some Black Sea countries at the CSCE meeting in Palma to be associated with MAP, the Bureau took note of these developments.

20. The Vice-President from Italy informed the Bureau that his government is proposing to set up in Venice a Centre or Institute of Mediterranean Studies in the framework of MAP and to promote new initiatives for the Mediterranean. The Municipality of Venice has offered the office space. Additional information on the scope of the Centre will be provided. He requested the Secretariat to make the necessary contacts with the Italian authorities on the activities of the Centre and the financial aspects.

21. The Egyptian representative informed the meeting that his country, in cooperation with UNDP and supported by Italy, has offered to host a new Centre for the Arab region on Development and Environment (CEDARE). His country has offered to host the Centre and make available all needed facilities as well as a five million Egyptian pounds through five years for the budget of the Centre. He distributed copies of an information paper on the establishment of this new Centre which could be integrated with the Centre in Venice in a complete network (including preparation of EIA for projects).

22. The Bureau welcomed these two initiatives and requested the Secretariat to initiate the necessary contacts with the Italian and Egyptian governments.

23. In reference to the Secretariat proposal to convene a Conference of plenipotentiaries on the offshore protocol, the Bureau decided to place the proposal on the agenda of the next meeting of the Contracting Parties (Cairo, 8-11 October 1991) for decision. A meeting of experts should be convened few days before the Contracting Parties meeting, to review the annexes and the issues still pending in order to facilitate a decision at the Cairo meeting.

24. The representative of Egypt suggested the convening of a meeting of Mediterranean experts to assess the effects on the Mediterranean environment of the burning of oil fields in the Gulf. He offered to host the meeting in Cairo. After an exchange of views on this proposal and hearing a statement on UNEP's initiatives, the Bureau decided to convene such a meeting, in cooperation with the Egyptian government and the EEC. Funds to finance the meeting should be made available by MAP through suppressing another meeting or from savings. Outside experts familiar with the situation could be invited to attend the meeting.

25. The Bureau took note with satisfaction of the imminent signature of the host country agreement between Tunisia and UNEP in relation to the SPA/RAC Centre. The Bureau also took note of the Italian offer to assist the Tunis Centre.

26. As regards the Arabic version of the Blue Plan Report, the Egyptian representative suggested that the Co-ordinator should ask the President of the BP/RAC to contact the Egyptian authorities on this issue.

27. The Bureau took note of the statement of the Co-ordinator in regard to the critical situation facing the PAP/RAC Centre in Split due to the high rate of inflation.

28. On the issue of the *Posidonia oceanica*, the Bureau welcomed the initiative of the Environmental Association "MARE VIVO" for a Mediterranean campaign to be carried out with the support of two training sailing ships "AMERIGO VESFUCCI" and "PALINURO" of the Italian Navy.

29. The representative of Egypt expressed the great interest of his government in regard to the Fuka pilot project. He requested that the proposed MAP/PAP mission to Fuka area should be sent soon. The Secretariat confirmed that the mission was planned.

30. As regards the delays in payment of contribution to the Mediterranean Trust Fund, the Vice-President from Italy reassured the Bureau that the Italian contribution will be paid before the next meeting of the Contracting Parties. The Bureau urged all Contracting Parties to speed up the process of payments. The representative of the EEC expressed satisfaction for the new presentation of the EEC contributions in the budget and he indicated that the administrative procedures for the payment of its 1991 contribution have started.

31. Finally, in respect to the foreseen increase in the 1992/1993 budget, the Bureau decided that a meeting of financial experts should be convened in Athens prior to the Contracting Parties meeting (Cairo, October 1991). Moreover the Secretariat should prepare a brief paper for the joint meeting of the two technical committees (Athens, May 1991) to identify separately the effects of inflation and the additional activities proposed.

32. The representative of the EEC indicated that paragraphs 9 and 17 of Document UNEP/BUR/38/3 should be amended to reflect more correctly the situation. The Secretariat accepted the suggestion.

33. At the end of the discussion of this agenda item, the Bureau took note of the progress report contained in document UNEP/BUR/38/3 and of the supplementary oral comments provided by the Co-ordinator.

Agenda item 3 Contribution of the Mediterranean Coastal States to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

34. The Co-ordinator introduced document UNEP/BUR/38/4 concerning the Mediterranean Report for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The Report was prepared by the meeting of Experts convened in Athens from 16 to 18 January 1991. He proposed to the Bureau that it should review and approve the draft Report.

35. He brought to the attention of the Bureau the other recommendations of the meeting of Experts concerning issuing of a political declaration by the Contracting Parties during their Cairo meeting that could be transmitted to the 1992 Conference. He also referred to the additional documents and material mentioned in paragraph 6 of the Report which would subsequently be prepared, subject to the approval of the Contracting Parties.

36. During the ensuing debate some amendments were made to the draft Report and a proposal to transfer the parts relevant to the Nicosia Charter and the Genoa Declaration to appear as annexes was accepted.

37. At the end of the discussion, the Bureau approved the draft Report and authorized its transmission to the Secretariat of UNCED. The Bureau decided that the matter of issuing a political declaration should be referred to the Cairo meeting. It endorsed the suggestions concerning the preparation by the Secretariat of a document on the socio-economic and environmental development 1970/1990/2010 and welcomed the voluntary contributions to the presentation of the Mediterranean programme for the general public. The representative of Italy indicated that his country was also ready to assist.

Agenda item 4 Date and place of the next meeting of the Bureau

38. The Rapporteur from Cyprus extended the invitation to the Bureau to convene its next meeting in Cyprus. The Bureau accepted the invitation and decided to convene its next meeting in Cyprus on 9-10 July 1991.

Agenda item 5 Other business

39. The Co-ordinator informed the Bureau that the Minister of Environment, Public Works and Physical Planning of Greece had visited the Unit and discussed the Unit's requirements of office space. The Co-ordinator confirmed that the Bureau would be involved in any decision concerning alternative accommodation of the Unit in Athens.

40. The representative of Egypt informed the meeting that his government would seek re-election to the Presidency of the next Bureau. The Bureau took note of this intention.

Agenda item 6 Adoption of the report of the meeting

41. The Bureau adopted its report on 10 April 1991.

42. In adopting the report, the Bureau expressed its appreciation to the European Economic Community for hosting its meeting in Brussels and for the facilities and hospitality it had provided.

ANNEX I

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