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19th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016

Agenda item 3: Thematic Decisions

Draft Decision: Implementation of Decision IG.21/16 “Assessment of the Mediterranean Action Plan”

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Implementation of Decision IG.21/16 “Assessment of the Mediterranean Action Plan”

Note by the Secretariat

The COP 18 Decision IG.21/16 “Assessment of the Mediterranean Action Plan” requested to “launch a process to assess MAP phase II with the intention of addressing effectively the challenge of sustainable development and the irreversible nature of impacts on the environment and resources, with a view to proposing a Decision on the appropriate way forward including the possible adoption at the 19th meeting of the Contracting Parties of MAP Phase III; give greater emphasis in MAP to concrete and operational activities; and actively associate all relevant regional organizations, building on their respective strength, capacity and mandate

The Secretariat undertook this assessment and presented it at the meeting of the MAP Focal Points (Athens, Greece, October 2015). The meeting had a general discussion of the proposed evaluation undertaken by the Secretariat and requested to defer its consideration at COP 19. The attached document contains few updates to reflect developments since the MAP Focal Points Meeting.

1. Introduction

The COP 18 Decision IG.21/16 “Assessment of the Mediterranean Action Plan” requested to “launch a process to assess MAP phase II with the intention of addressing effectively the challenge of sustainable development and the irreversible nature of impacts on the environment and resources, with a view to proposing a Decision on the appropriate way forward including the possible adoption at the 19th meeting of the Contracting Parties of MAP Phase III; give greater emphasis in MAP to concrete and operational activities; and actively associate all relevant regional organizations, building on their respective strength, capacity and mandate”.

The current document is based on a desktop review of the text of MAP Phase II (Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean) which was adopted as annex to the Barcelona Resolution at the Conference of the Plenipotentiaries in Barcelona on 10 June 1995. It aims to assess whether the context, objectives, thematic areas and activities contained in MAP II are still adequate and up-to-date to address effectively the challenges of sustainable development and the irreversible nature of impacts on the environment and resources, and suggests three different options for the way forward to be discussed by COP 19 (Athens, Greece, February 2016).

2. Analysis of the Text of MAP Phase II

Following the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) in Rio and the requirements of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (Agenda 21), the Contracting Parties undertook it to translate the results of the summit onto the regional Mediterranean level. This led to the adoption of the second phase of the Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean (MAP II) and of the amendments to the Barcelona Convention in June 1995. The main objectives of MAP II are:

- to ensure sustainable management of natural marine and land resources and to integrate the environment in social and economic development, and land-use policies;
- to protect the marine environment and coastal zones through prevention of pollution, and by reduction and, as far as possible, elimination of pollutant inputs, whether chronic or accidental;
- to protect nature, and protect and enhance sites and landscapes of ecological or cultural value;
- to strengthen solidarity among Mediterranean coastal States in managing their common heritage and resources for the benefit of present and future generations;
- to contribute to improvement of the quality of life.

MAP II comprises the following three components:

I. Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, addressing the following themes:

1. Integrating Environment and Development;
2. Conservation of nature, landscape and sites;
3. Assessment, prevention and elimination of marine pollution;
4. Information and Participation.

II. Strengthening of the legal framework, including the Barcelona Convention, the Protocols adopted or amended at the time of the adoption of MAP II.

III. Institutional and financial arrangements:

1. Institutional arrangements - describing the institutional set-up and governance mechanism of the system (i.e. COP, Bureau, UNEP Secretariat with Coordinating Unit, RACs, MCSD, *ad hoc* advisory working groups, and the Focal Point system).
2. Financial arrangements (i.e. assessed and voluntary contributions and provision for the MTF).

Developments in the MAP system for the implementation of MAP Phase II:

- Entry into force of the amended Barcelona Convention in 2004;
- Entry into force of the Offshore Protocol in 2011;
- Adoption of a new Protocol on Hazardous Wastes in 1996, entry into force in 2008;
- Adoption of amended SPA and Biodiversity Protocol in 1995, entry into force in 1999 ;
- Adoption of the Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SAP-BIO) in 2003;
- Adoption of new Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in 2008, entry into force in 2011;
- Adoption of the amended LBS Protocol in 1996 (entered into force in 2008) and of ten Regional Plans with Programmes of Measures and Timetables for their implementation, as provided for in Article 15 of the LBS Protocol;
- Adoption of the Strategic Action Programme to Address Pollution from Land-based Activities (SAP-MED) in 1997;
- Adoption of the amended Dumping Protocol in 1995 (not yet entered into force);
- Adoption of the amended Prevention and Emergency Protocol 2002, entry into force in 2004;
- Adoption of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships in 2005;
- Establishment of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) in 1996;
- Formulation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2005;
- Revision process of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2015;
- Evolution of the Environment Remote Sensing Regional Activity Centre (ERS/RAC) into Information and Communication Regional Activity Centre (INFO/RAC) in 2005;
- Evolution of the Cleaner Production Regional Activity Centre (CP/RAC) established in 1996, into Sustainable Consumption and Production Regional Activity Centre (SCP/RAC) in 2013;
- Adoption of the roadmap and timetable to implement Ecosystem Approach in the Mediterranean including the vision, goals and the Mediterranean Ecological Objectives and GES targets (Decisions IG.17/6, IG.20/4 and IG.21/3);
- Adoption of the Almeria Governance Paper (Decision IG.17.5);
- Adoption of the UNEP-MAP Five Year Programme of Work 2010-2014.

Developments outside the MAP system since the adoption of MAP II:

- The Rio+10 and Rio+20 Conferences:
 - Green Economy;
 - Climate Change;
 - Sustainable Consumption and Production.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including the Sustainable Development Goals (adopted at the United Nations Summit in September 2015);
- Wide recognition and application of the Ecosystem Approach;
- Increased attention to Climate Change:
 - IPCC Fourth and Fifth Assessment Reports.
- Widened legislation on marine and coastal environment of the EU, with particular focus on the Marine Strategy Directive and Marine Spatial Planning Directive;
- Increased emphasis on Environmental Governance:
 - Emergence of other actors in the Mediterranean;

- Euro-Mediterranean Partnership/Barcelona Process that evolved to the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean;
- World Bank, GEF.
- Developments in the ocean governance at the global and UN level (ABNJ, MPAs, Deep Sea Mining).

3. Main Findings

MAP Phase II was adopted twenty years ago. Its objectives remain relevant and aligned with the current global environmental agenda, although new issues have emerged. Since the Sustainable Development paradigm crystallized at the Rio Conference, developments at global level have been aimed at strengthening existing commitments and focussing on their implementation and achievement.

In reflecting the above, the MAP agenda has also evolved in response to the global agenda, taking on board in particular the following emerging issues:

- Application of Ecosystem-based Management (EcAp);
- Climate Change;
- Sustainable Consumption and Production and Green Economy.

The Ecosystem Approach is the overarching principle of UNEP/MAP work. The Mediterranean Ecological Objectives are fully aligned to the objectives of MAP II. Climate Change Adaptation has been addressed by the MAP system since 1995, most recently it was a strategic theme in the MAP Five Year Programme of Work, and is a thematic area in the revised MSSD. Green Economy is also a thematic area in the revised MSSD. Finally, sustainability of consumption and production has evolved from Cleaner Production to SCP, as a strategic theme in the MAP Five Year Programme of Work. Green Economy is addressed by the revised MSSD. Additionally, the strategic priorities enunciated by MAP II have been periodically updated through multi-annual programmes of work of the MCSD, the Five Year Strategic Programme of Work, and currently the MTS. The emerging issues have been addressed in Programmes of Work, Strategies, and Action Plans.

In conclusion, it is evident that there is deep matching of the thematic areas of MAP II (including the above developments) with effectively addressing the challenge of sustainable development and the irreversible nature of impacts on the environment and resources.

There may be a need, nevertheless, for certain updates in the text of MAP II to reflect the evolution of the reality of sustainable development and of the MAP system itself. The context of MAP II, its objectives, thematic priorities and activities are still relevant as described in the text. The text is flexible enough to accommodate new global developments and it is fully complemented by the new tools and instruments, comprehensive protocols and amendments that the MAP system has adopted and implemented.

4. Options for the way forward

Following the above analysis, three options are offered for consideration of the way forward:

i. MAP Phase II document remains unchanged

The evolution of the MAP system through the adoption of new policies, legal instruments, strategies, and approaches (e.g. MSSD, EcAp, ICZM), has addressed all the issues emerging since 1995 in the framework of MAP II, making its revision unnecessary. MAP II is taken as the cornerstone of the system complemented by those new policies, legal instruments, strategies, and approaches.

ii. MAP Phase II is updated

The document of MAP II is adjusted in order to reflect the key developments made in the MAP system with regard to thematic issues. A Working Group of the MAP Focal Points, under the Bureau guidance, could be assigned to update the document for submission to COP 20. Such activity would require at least one meeting during the 2016-2017 biennium.

iii. The MAP document is revised as MAP Phase III

The MAP document is revised as MAP Phase III to fully integrate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, based on the Mediterranean specificity and the MAP mandate. This would be a new process to be mandated by COP 19 and launched in 2017, requiring inter-governmental negotiations through a Working Group established by COP 19 with clear terms of reference, timetables and deliverables, as well as adequate resources.