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84th Meeting of the Bureau 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, 19-20 June 2017 and Teleconference 14 July 2017

Report: Conclusions and Recommendations

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UNEP/MAP
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Table of contents

	Pages
Report	1-8
ANNEXES	
Annex I List of Participants	
Annex II Agenda	

Introduction

1. At the invitation of the Government of Greece, the 83rd Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols was held on 19-20 June 2017 in Athens, Greece, and was resumed through teleconference on 14 July 2017.

Participation

2. The President of the Bureau, Ms. Christina Baritaki (Greece), the Vice-Presidents: Ms. Klodiana Marika (Albania); Mr. Mohamed Abdel Moneim Farouk Osman (Egypt); Mr. Victor Escobar Paredes (Spain) and the Rapporteur, Ms. Ayelet Rosen (Israel) attended the Bureau meeting. Mr. Mohamed Benyahia (Morocco) was absent with apologies. Ms. Marijana Mance (EU) attended the meeting as an observer. The Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit (Coordinator, Deputy Coordinator, Programme Officer). The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

I. Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

3. The meeting was opened at 09:30 on 19 June 2017 by the President of the Bureau, Ms. Christina Baritaki. She welcomed the Bureau members and other participants to their third meeting of the 2016-2017 biennium.

4. The Coordinator also made a statement of welcome to the participants.

II. Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work

5. The Bureau reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.84/1 (Annex II).

6. The review of the initial agenda of COP 20 was added to the agenda. Furthermore, the EU observer informed the meeting that, under “Any other Business”, she would briefly provide information on the Conference “Our Ocean, an Ocean for Life”, to be held in Malta, on 5-6 October 2017.

III. Agenda item 3: Progress Report for September 2016 - May 2017

7. The Coordinator introduced the document “Progress report by the Secretariat on the activities carried out for the period September 2016-May 2017” (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.84/3). He presented highlights from the document, noting that efforts had been made to produce a focused and concise report.

8. The Secretariat also presented the updated “Progress report by the Secretariat on the implementation of COP 19 Decisions” (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.84/4).

9. The Coordinator highlighted the successful resource mobilization efforts, especially - but not only - in relation to the approval by the GEF Council of the “GEF Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security”. He also referred to the SWITCH MED project, which is soon coming to an end, and to the possibility of supporting its continuation through a follow-up project, to take advantage of its success and momentum. Bureau members welcomed the results of the resource mobilization by the Secretariat.

10. Referring to a question by a Bureau member on the timing of issuance of tickets for meeting related travels, the Coordinator stressed the importance of early nominations of meeting participants, and especially sponsored ones, by Contracting Parties.

11. Bureau members expressed appreciation for the progress achieved in the implementation of the activities carried out. The Bureau also indicated that efforts should continue towards the preparation of reports that show impact more clearly.

12. The Bureau considered the desirability of reflecting on strategic thematic issues of relevance for the future work of the MAP system. It was suggested that the next biennium may offer opportunities to initiate an unstructured strategic discussion among the Parties, under the leadership of the Bureau.

Conclusion:

13. The Bureau expressed appreciation for the work done as presented by the Secretariat, and for the efforts and results achieved so far.

IV. Agenda item 4: Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues

14. The Coordinator informed the meeting on progress made regarding the financial situation since the submission of document UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.84/5 “Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues”, and noted that in addition to those included in the above-mentioned document, contribution to the MTF had also been received from Slovenia, bringing the collection rate for 2017 to 65.04 %.

Conclusions:

15. The Bureau notes with appreciation the high level of contributions received for the year 2016 and the promising collection rate in 2017 as at end April. It requests those Contracting Parties which have not paid their 2017 contributions and arrears to do so as soon as possible and asks the Secretariat to send a letter to those Contracting Parties regarding their arrears;

16. The Bureau takes note of the actions taken by the Secretariat for the two cases of arrears for over 24 months. It requests the Secretariat to continue its efforts to collect the arrears and report to the Bureau and to the Contracting Parties on the outcome of its actions and the responses provided by the two Contracting Parties;

17. The Bureau takes note of the status of recruitment at the Coordinating Unit and in addition, it encourages the Contracting Parties who may be able to do so to contribute human resources to the Secretariat in the areas that are mostly needed through JPO and other similar schemes. It also encourages the Contracting Parties to consider the needs in terms of the allocation of funds to the required human resources for the effective and consistent delivery of the Programme of Work.

V. Agenda item 5: Specific Issues

18. The Coordinator presented the “Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues” (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.84/6).

19. The meeting discussed the matters summarized in the following paragraphs.

- A. Status of Ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

20. The Coordinator presented the update contained in the above-mentioned document on issues regarding the status of ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

21. The Coordinator reported that, since the last meeting of the Bureau, the Depositary had communicated to the Secretariat the deposit of the instrument of ratification of the Prevention and Emergency Protocol by Algeria.
22. The President noted that Greece has progressed in the process for the ratification of the ICZM Protocol, which is expected to be finalized within the current biennium. This was a much welcome development.
23. The Bureau also discussed the desirability of an analysis of the constraints that generate a low rate of ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, including their amendments for individual Contracting Parties. It was suggested that the Secretariat should pursue further contacts with those Parties at a political level, in order to identify such constraints and ways to address them.

Conclusions:

- 24. The Bureau takes note of the current status of ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and urges the Contracting Parties which have not yet done so to ratify without further delay the relevant legal instruments;**
- 25. The Bureau congratulates Algeria for the ratification of the Prevention and Emergency Protocol;**
- 26. The Bureau encourages the President and the Secretariat to continue their efforts to achieve the full ratification of the revised Barcelona Convention as well as the ratification of its Protocols.**

- B. Development of Host Country Agreements for RACs

27. The Coordinator reported on the developments of Host Country Agreements for RACs, noting the difficulties faced for a full harmonization of HCAs, especially due the different nature and specificities of each RAC and the related legislation of the host countries regulating RACs' activities.
28. The Bureau discussed the issue and advised accordingly.

Conclusion:

- 29. The Bureau takes note of the current status of development of the Host Country Agreements for RACs as reported by the Secretariat and refers the issue to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points for further consideration by the 20th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties; the Bureau, noting the difficulties in the implementation of a unified template of HCAs recommends that the Secretariat explores other modalities, as appropriate, for submission to the MAP Focal Points.**

- C. Shift to Thematic Focal Points

30. The Coordinator reported on the developments regarding the shift to Thematic Focal Points, noting that the relevant information is provided in the "Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues" (document UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.84/6). Its Annex I, presents the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for a possible shift on a trial basis of the PAP/RAC and SPA/RAC Focal Points to LSI/ICZM and SPA/BD Focal Points respectively.
31. The Bureau discussed the issue, noting that any possible change should be done on a trial basis and without creating disruption to the system, and advised accordingly.

Conclusion:

32. The Bureau takes note of the draft revised Terms of Reference for PAP/RAC (LSI/ICZM) and SPA/RAC (SPA/BD) Focal Points, as presented by the Secretariat in Annex I of the Report on Specific Issues, and requests the Secretariat to prepare on a trial basis a meeting of the SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points for the 2018-2019 biennium.

- D. Reporting and Compliance

33. The Coordinator reported on the submission of national implementation reports by the Contracting Parties, on the progress in the preparation of a revised, simplified, reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, as well as on the composition of the Compliance Committee.

34. The Bureau discussed the above issues and advised accordingly.

Conclusions:

35. The Bureau strongly urges those Contracting Parties who have not yet done so, to submit their national implementation reports for the reporting periods 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 without further delay;

36. The Bureau expresses its appreciation to those Contracting Parties who volunteered to test the draft revised reporting format and encourages Contracting Parties to participate in this exercise as a means to ensure that the revised reporting format is user-friendly;

37. The Bureau urges Monaco to nominate an expert as Alternate Member of the Compliance Committee for a term of four years, thus completing the membership of the Compliance Committee as per Decision IG.22/15;

38. The Bureau invites the Secretariat to undertake an analysis of the information mentioned in the national reports for the 2014-2015 biennium in order to draft a report addressing the general status of the progress in the region, on the legal, institutional and technical points of view, in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and present it as an information document for the meeting of the MAP Focal Points.

- E. Assessment of MAP II

39. The Coordinator informed the Bureau on the outcome of the Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the MAP II Assessment (Athens, Greece, 16-17 May 2017) and on the comments received by two Contracting Parties after its meeting, as included in the Report of the Meeting (document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.440/4). He also noted that the Bureau, at its 82nd meeting, decided, *inter alia*, that: (a) the Working Group to prepare its conclusions in time for submission to the 84th Meeting of the Bureau; and (b) the Bureau to provide its recommendations to the Meeting of MAP Focal Points in 2017 to be presented at the COP 20 together with the conclusions of the Working Group.

40. The Bureau discussed the issue at its session of 19-20 June 2017 and at its resumed session by teleconference on 14 July 2017, i.e. after the completion of the work of the above-mentioned Working Group. The Bureau agreed on its recommendations as follows, to be forwarded to the Meeting of MAP Focal Points in 2017, in order to be presented at the COP 20 together with the conclusions of the Working Group.

Conclusions:

41. The Bureau welcomes the course of action taken by the Secretariat;

42. The Bureau takes note of the conclusions of the Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the MAP II Assessment (Athens, Greece, 16-17 May 2017) as in Annex II of the Report on Specific Issues;

43. The Bureau agrees with the opinion of the Secretariat that an update of MAP II as the one proposed can be done through a Decision of a Meeting of the Contracting Parties;

44. The Bureau acknowledges the outcome of the work of the Open-Ended Working Group and agrees to transmit it to the MAP Focal Points for consideration at their next meeting, in a consolidated document together with the comments received by Italy and France. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to also transmit the “Legal issues associated with the MAP II Assessment” provided by the Secretariat to MAP Focal Points as an Information Document.

- F. Cooperation and Partners

45. The Coordinator presented an overview of cooperation with International and Regional Organizations and bilateral cooperation agencies, and updated Bureau members on the operationalization of current agreements and progress in development of new ones.

46. With reference to the operative paragraphs of Decision IG.22/18 on Cooperation and Partners, the Coordinator updated Bureau members on the evaluation of the applications by “Plastics Europe AISBL” and by “Youth Love Egypt”, for accreditation as UNEP/MAP Partners.

Conclusions:

47. The Bureau welcomes the progress achieved on issues related to Cooperation and Partners, and especially the close collaboration with GFCM and with WWF MedPO and the extension of the MoU with UfMS, and encourages the Secretariat to continue its work on these issues; furthermore, it requests the Secretariat to prepare an updated implementation plan of the MOU with UfMS in line with the priorities of the MTS;

48. The Bureau welcomes action taken by REMPEC to strengthen synergies with relevant international actors, such as EMSA;

49. The Bureau endorses the results of the evaluation conducted by the Secretariat of the applications submitted by “Plastics Europe AISBL” and by “Youth Love Egypt” for accreditation as MAP Partners and requests that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 20 for consideration and endorsement.

- G. Outreach, Information and Communication

50. The Coordinator presented a brief update on the information and communication activities. He also reported on the active participation in high visibility events, such as the UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (New York, 5-9 June 2017), the G7 Environment Ministers' meeting (Bologna, Italy, 11-12 June 2017) and the G20 High Level Conference on Marine Litter (Bremen, Germany, 30 May-1 June 2017). Finally, he elaborated on the further plans for the biennium, and noted the need to enhance the capacity of the Coordinating Unit in this area.

Conclusions:

51. The Bureau expresses appreciation for the very good results of the information and communication work and for the successful efforts of the Secretariat for increasing the visibility and impact of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system in spite of the limited resources available to information and communication;

52. The Bureau congratulates REMPEC for the celebration of its 40th Anniversary and acknowledges the work of the Centre and the high commitment of the Government of Malta, as its Host Country, as well as the support provided by IMO.

- H. Preparation for Main MAP Meetings (MAP Focal Points, 17th MCSD, COP 20)

53. The Coordinator informed the Bureau on the preparations for the 17th Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) to take place in Athens, Greece, on 3-5 July 2017. He noted the importance of the participatory process for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025 (MSSD), where all MCSD members should be actively involved.

54. The Bureau members discussed the most important aspects of the meeting, including the MSSD implementation and monitoring plan, the Mediterranean Dashboard of Sustainable Development and its indicators, as well as the roadmap for the preparation of the MED2050 report.

55. The Coordinator then informed the meeting on the preparations for the next Meeting of MAP Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 12-15 September 2017) and for the 6th Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Coordination Group that will also take place in Athens, Greece, on 11 September 2017. He noted the intention of the Secretariat to limit the number of draft Decisions submitted for consideration by the MAP Focal Points and to minimize the text of the draft Decisions .

56. The meeting agreed with the intention of the Secretariat and also noted the possibility for a working group on the biennial Programme of Work and Budget to be established during the MAP Focal Points meeting.

57. The Coordinator introduced the proposals of the Secretariat on the theme of COP 20, as presented in Annex IV of document UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.84/6, noting that they were prepared taking into account the focus of major international events on oceans in the context of sustainable development and the theme of UNEA-3. He also presented the preliminary provisional agenda of COP 20, as agreed during the adoption of the agenda of the Bureau meeting.

58. The Bureau members discussed and provided guidance on the theme and preliminary provisional agenda of COP 20.

Conclusions:

59. The Bureau welcomes the main topics and progress in the preparation of the 17th MCSD Meeting;

60. The Bureau takes note of the proposed list of draft Decisions for consideration by the MAP Focal Points and requests the Secretariat to finalize their preparation in a timely manner for submission to the meeting of the MAP Focal Points;

61. The Bureau welcomes the proposals of the Secretariat regarding the theme of COP 20, and decides on the theme: “Implementation of SDG 14 within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a Focus on Marine Pollution and Biodiversity”;

62. The Bureau agreed with the preliminary provisional agenda for COP 20 prepared by the Secretariat and asked the Secretariat to present it to the MAP Focal Points.

- I. Other Issues

63. The Secretariat presented the progress in the preparation of the 2017 Quality Status Report (QSR) and noted that the final draft of the 2017 QSR is under finalization for review by the EcAp Coordination Group and the MAP Focal Points.

Conclusion:

64. The Bureau welcomes the progress achieved in the preparation of the 2017 QSR and requests the Secretariat to make every effort in order to finalize the report in a timely manner for the EcAp Coordination Group and the MAP Focal Points.

VI. Agenda item 6: Preparation of the draft Programme of Work and Budget 2018-2019

65. The Secretariat presented the progress in relation to the preparation of the draft Programme of Work and Budget 2018-2019 (PoW), highlighting that the process for this biennium included some new elements, and mainly: (a) the preparation of the PoW based on the recently adopted Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021, (b) the very strong cooperation with the MAP Components from the early stages of the PoW preparation, and (c) the regular involvement of the MAP Focal Points, and of the Contracting Parties in general, from an early stage.

Conclusions:

66. The Bureau takes note of the proposal by the Secretariat on the outline, principles and assumptions for the PoW 2018-2019 and notes that the Secretariat intends to finalize the work along these lines for submission to the MAP Focal Points;

67. In relation to the total budget for 2020-2021, the Bureau invites the Secretariat to prepare a proposal on a non-binding prospective total budget for the biennium, taking into account the MAP system needs to deliver the new mandates decided by the Contracting Parties over the last decade and to meet the increasing operation costs of all its components. The Bureau further notes that the budget proposal for the biennium 2020-2021 is a matter to be considered by all Contracting Parties at the MAP Focal Points meeting and at the COP;

68. The Bureau welcomes the approval of the GEF MedProgramme, the GEF Adriatic Project, the GEF Special Climate Change Funds Project, as well as the EU funded projects SIMWESTMED and SUPREME MED, and requests the Secretariat to continue its good work in attracting external funding and their matching in line with the priorities of the MTS and the PoW.

VII. Agenda item 7: Date and Venue of the 85th Meeting of the Bureau

69. The Bureau agreed that its 85th Meeting will be held in mid-2018 in Tirana, Albania, and that the exact date will be decided at a later stage.

VIII. Agenda item 8: Any Other Matters

70. The EU representative referred to the upcoming Conference “Our Ocean, an Ocean for Life”, to be held in Malta, on 5-6 October 2017, noting that it will focus on issues such as marine pollution, marine protected areas, and climate change impacts. She also informed Bureau members that the meeting will focus on three regions, namely the Indian and Atlantic Oceans and the Mediterranean Sea, and that voluntary commitments can be submitted to the Conference.

IX. Agenda item 9: Conclusions and Recommendations

71. The Bureau adopted the set of conclusions and recommendations as set in this report.

X. Agenda item 10: Closure of the Meeting

72. The meeting was suspended by the President of the Bureau at 17:30 on Tuesday, 20 June 2017, resumed through teleconference at 10:00 on Friday 14 July 2017, and closed at 11:15 on Friday 14 July 2017.

Annex I

List of participants

MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU

GREECE / GRÈCE

(PRESIDENT)

Ms. Christina Baritaki

Secretary General

Ministry of Environment and Energy

Tel: +30 210 69 69 850

Fax: +30 210 69 69 501

Email: ch.baritaki@prv.ypeka.gr

ALBANIA / ALBANIE

(VICE PRESIDENT)

Ms. Klodiana Marika

Director

Biodiversity and Protected Areas

Ministry of Environment

Tel: +355 422 672 233; +355 692 092 872

Email: Klodiana.Marika@moe.gov.al

EGYPT / ÉGYPT

(VICE PRESIDENT)

Mr. Mohamed Abdel Moneim F. Osman

Head of Environmental Management Sector

Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency

(EEAA)

Ministry of State For Environmental Affairs

Tel: +202 5256 483; +201 005 625 212

Fax: +202 2526 454

Email: ceo.eeaa@eeaa.cloud.gov.eg

SPAIN / ESPAGNE

(VICE PRESIDENT)

Mr. Victor Escobar Paredes

Head of Unit

Directorate General for the Sustainability of the
Coast and the Sea

Ministry of the Environment and Rural and
Marine Affairs

Tel: +34 915 976 038

Email: vaescobar@magrama.es

ISRAEL / ISRAËL

(RAPPORTEUR)

Ms. Ayelet Rosen

Director Multilateral Environmental Agreements
Division

Ministry of Environmental Protection

Tel: +972 26 553 746

Fax: +972 26 553 752

Email: ayeletr@sviva.gov.il

OBSERVER

**EUROPEAN UNION / UNION
EUROPÉENNE**

Ms. Marijana Mance
Policy Officer, UNEP/MAP Focal Point
European Commission
Directorate-General for Environment
Unit C2: Marine Environment and Water
Industry

Tel: +32 22 982 011
Email: marijana.mance@ec.europa.eu

**SECRETARIAT TO THE BARCELONA CONVENTION
COORDINATING UNIT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN**

Mr. Gaetano Leone
Coordinator

Tel: +30 210 72 73 101
Email: gaetano.leone@unep.org

Ms. Tatjana Hema
Deputy Coordinator

Tel: +30 210 72 73 115
Email: tatjana.hema@unep.org

Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis
Programme Management Officer

Tel: +30 210 72 73 132
Email: ilias.mavroeidis@unep.org

Annex II

Agenda

Agenda

- Agenda item 1 Opening of the Meeting**
- Agenda item 2 Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work**
- Agenda item 3 Progress Report for September 2016 - May 2017**
- Agenda item 4 Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues**
- Agenda item 5 Specific Issues:**
- a) Status of Ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
 - b) Development of Host Country Agreements for RACs
 - c) Shift to Thematic Focal Points
 - d) Reporting and Compliance
 - e) Assessment of MAP II
 - f) Cooperation and Partners
 - g) Outreach, Information and Communication
 - h) Preparation for main MAP meetings (MAP Focal Points, 17th MCSD, COP 20)
- Agenda item 6 Preparation of the draft Programme of Work and Budget 2018-2019**
- Agenda item 7 Date and Venue of the 85th Meeting of the Bureau**
- Agenda item 8 Any Other Matters**
- Agenda item 9 Conclusions and Recommendations**
- Agenda item 10 Closure of the Meeting**