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85th 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, 18-19 April 2018

Report: Conclusions and Recommendations

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UNEP/MAP
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Introduction

1. In accordance with Article IV.2 of the Terms of Reference of the Bureau and in consultation with the President and members of the Bureau, the 85th 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 (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols was held in Athens, Greece, on 18-19 April 2018.

Participation

2. The President of the Bureau, Ms. Klodiana Marika (Albania), the Vice-Presidents: Mr. Charalambos Hajipakkos (Cyprus); Mr. Ahmed Kassem Sheta (Egypt); Mr. Oliviero Montanaro, and Ms. Silvia Sartori (Italy); M. Mohamed Sghaier Ben Jeddou (Tunisia) and the Rapporteur, Ms. Ivana Stojanovic (Montenegro) attended the Bureau meeting. 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 18 April 2018 by Ms. Klodiana Marika, President of the Bureau. She welcomed the Bureau members and other participants to their first meeting of the 2018-2019 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.85/1 (Annex II). No additional issues were added to the agenda item 7 “Any Other Matters”.

III. Agenda item 3: Progress Report for the Period January - March 2018

6. The Coordinator introduced the document “Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period January-March 2018” (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.85/3). He presented highlights from the document, noting that efforts were made to produce a focused and concise report. He also introduced the “Progress report by the Secretariat on the implementation of COP 20 Decisions” (document UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.85/4).

7. In his presentation, the Coordinator highlighted that work on the implementation of the PoW and other COP 20 decisions has started very early in the biennium. Special reference was made to the 34th meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel in Sophia-Antipolis, France (5-7 February 2018), and its importance for coordinating the work of the Secretariat from an early stage. Furthermore, the Coordinator presented important highlights of the progress made in the first quarter of the biennium, structured around the Themes of the Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021.

8. Highlights included the work on information and communication issues, preparation of the Common Regional Framework on Integrated Coastal Zone Management, resource mobilization and especially the GEF funded “Mediterranean Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security”, bilateral cooperation with Italy, progress in the ratification by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and progress on national reporting on implementation.

9. The Bureau members expressed great appreciation for the progress achieved in the implementation of the activities carried out and for the early start of implementation, as well as for the structure of the report (shorter and more focused document).

10. During the discussion, a member of the Bureau referred to the need of the MAP Components' Focal Points be kept involved and informed of the activities of the relevant MAP Components in the intersessional period. The Coordinator noted that a relevant tool developed by the Secretariat are the planning and priority tables; based on these, the MAP Components can submit updates on the relevant activities of 2018-2019 POW to their respective Focal Points to allow them to follow-up its implementation.

11. It was also stressed that coordination should be enhanced between projects related to specific issues and the relevant activities funded by MTF and voluntary contributions. The example of Integrated Coastal Zone Management/Marine Spatial Planning was provided, in relation to the preparation of the Common Regional Framework and the work of PAP/RAC to ensure coordination of efforts and synergistic links between relevant projects, such as the "GEF Adriatic project", the funding under the Cooperation Agreement with Italy and the MTF.

12. Furthermore, the Bureau discussed the issue of Focal Points being kept informed and involved in the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) by the MAP Components, to allow proper contribution and with the view to strengthen cooperation and coordination.

13. The Bureau expressed appreciation for the compilation of project fiches prepared by the Secretariat for the MAP Focal Points Meeting and COP 20 and asked the Secretariat to provide regular information on the development and implementation of projects relevant for the implementation of the POW, through the periodic update of project fiches.

14. Following a question by the Bureau on the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach and the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR, the Secretariat provided information on this issue, noting that: (a) the relevant work with Contracting Parties is ongoing to implement IMAP at the national level, (b) the Terms of Reference / Job Description for the Programme Management Officer (Quality Status Report Expert) at the Coordinating Unit have been prepared and are ready to be sent to Headquarters for classification, in order to have the post filled in January 2019, (c) the preparations for the regional meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on best practices for IMAP implementation to take place in July 2018 are underway, and (d) the roadmap and Needs Assessment for the 2023 MED QSR are being prepared and will be ready before the end of 2018.

Conclusions:

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

16. The Bureau requests the Coordinating Unit to instruct MAP components to submit twice a year updates on the relevant activities of 2018-2019 POW to their respective Thematic Focal Points in order to allow them to follow-up its implementation.

17. The Bureau requests the Coordinating Unit:

- (a) To provide legal advice on the process of development and subscription of MoUs relevant for the implementation of POWs, for discussion at the 86th Meeting of the Bureau;**
- (b) To instruct the MAP components to involve the relevant Thematic Focal Points in the process of development of MoUs to allow proper contribution and with the view to strengthen cooperation and coordination;**
- (c) To provide regular information on the development and implementation of projects relevant for the implementation of the POWs and based on the periodic update of Project Fiches.**

18. The Bureau acknowledges the work undertaken for the implementation of Decision IG.23/6 focusing on the implementation of IMAP at national level and the organization of best

practices meeting to foster it. The Bureau requests that the roadmap and Needs Assessment for the 2023 MED QSR, prepared in close collaboration with the EcAp Coordination Group, is presented at its 86th meeting.

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

19. The Coordinator informed the meeting on progress made regarding the financial situation as presented in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.85/5 “Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues”. He noted the importance of the early receipt of the assessed contributions by Contracting Parties, in order to allow the Secretariat to start the implementation of activities using the budget approved by the COP. Furthermore, in addition to the contributions included in the above-mentioned document, contribution to the MTF had also been received from Italy, bringing the collection rate for 2018 to 29.47 % at the time of the Meeting. It was also noted that, currently, the Secretariat has no Fund Management Officer since the incumbent temporarily vacated the position and the recruitment for the replacement in the interim is underway.

20. Concern was expressed by the Bureau in view of the fact that the position of the Fund Management Officer is currently vacant and on how this will affect the work of the Secretariat.

21. The Coordinator noted that the transfer of the staff member was done in line with the UN Rules and Regulations and he stressed that the Headquarters provide continuous support to the Coordinating Unit in ensuring the smooth administrative and financial operations of MAP in the interim.

Conclusions:

22. The Bureau notes with appreciation the high level of contributions received for the year 2017. It requests the Contracting Parties to pay their 2018 contributions and arrears as soon as possible. It requests the Coordinating Unit in consultation with UN Environment Headquarters to submit a proposal to the 87th meeting of the Bureau on a mechanism to ensure that the timing of the payment of contributions does not affect the implementation of the POW.

23. The Bureau takes note of the actions taken by the Secretariat for the cases of arrears for over 24 months and 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. It also requests the Coordinating Unit to liaise with UN Environment Headquarters as appropriate to identify means to address the issue of longstanding arrears and their impact on the effectiveness of the POWs implementation.

V. Agenda item 5: Specific Issues

24. The Coordinator presented the “Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues” (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.85/6).

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

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

26. 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.

27. The Coordinator reported that, since the last meeting of the Bureau, the Depositary has communicated to the Secretariat the deposit of the following instruments of ratification or accession: (a) the instrument of ratification of the ICZM Protocol by Lebanon, (b) the instrument of accession to the Prevention and Emergency Protocol by Lebanon, and (c) the instrument of ratification of the

Offshore Protocol by Croatia. He also informed the meeting about updates on the progress of the process of ratifications received by other Contracting Parties.

28. The Bureau discussed the issue and advised accordingly.

Conclusions:

29. 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, and especially the amended Dumping Protocol that requires one ratification to enter into force.

30. The Bureau congratulates Lebanon for the ratification of the ICZM Protocol and for the accession to the Prevention and Emergency Protocol, and Croatia for the ratification of the Offshore Protocol.

31. 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

32. The Coordinator presented the status of the Host Country Agreement of each RAC and the challenges faced in relation to the implementation of the common template. The Secretariat asked for the guidance of the Bureau on how to best comply with the relevant requirements of Decision IG.23/3.

33. The Bureau discussed the issue and provided its guidance accordingly.

Conclusion:

34. The Bureau takes note of the status of development of the Host Country Agreements for RACs and requests the Secretariat to prepare a first draft of minimum common provisions to ensure effective operation of the RACs based on their mandates and taking into account the approved Host Country Agreement template, as well as the challenges faced so far as reported by the Secretariat, for further discussion at the 86th Bureau meeting.

- C. Meeting of Thematic Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas/Biodiversity

35. The Coordinator presented the timeline and process of preparing a meeting of the thematic focal points for Specially Protected Areas/Biological Diversity for the biennium 2018–2019 in accordance with Decision IG.23/3, noting that the relevant information is provided in Annex II of the “Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues” (document UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.85/6).

36. The Bureau discussed the issue and advised accordingly. It was noted that, in relation to the substance of the meeting of the thematic focal points for Specially Protected Areas/Biological Diversity, the issue of Artificial Reefs may be included in the meeting agenda.

Conclusion:

37. The Bureau takes note of the proposed roadmap for the preparation, on a trial basis, of the meeting of the thematic focal points for Specially Protected Areas/Biological Diversity for the biennium 2018–2019, as presented by the Secretariat in Annex II of document BUR 85.85/6/Rev.1 “Report on Specific Issues”. The Bureau recommends that the Coordinating Unit, in line with the COP Decision, provides the necessary legal advice and that the need for external expertise be evaluated after the meeting in order to extract and apply its lessons learned. In

order to cover any additional need for the organization of the Thematic Focal Points meeting, available budget from other budget lines may be used, in accordance with the financial rules.

- D. Compliance Committee

38. The Coordinator reported on the implementation of Decisions IG.23/1 and IG.23/2 and especially on the submission of national implementation reports by the Contracting Parties, as well as on the composition of the Compliance Committee.

39. The Bureau discussed the above issues and advised accordingly. The Bureau noted the importance of timely submission of national implementation reports, which will allow the preparation of the analysis of the general status of the progress in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols for submission to COP 21.

Conclusions:

40. The Bureau congratulates the Secretariat for the good results of the efforts leading to an increased rate of submissions of national implementation reports and 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.

41. As requested by Decision IG.23/2 the Bureau elects Mr. Ahmad El-Khatib, nominated by Lebanon, to sit as an Alternate Member of the Compliance Committee for a term of four years, until COP 22.

42. The Bureau urges the Secretariat to continue consultation with Monaco to nominate an expert as Alternate Member of the Compliance Committee for a term of two years, until COP 21, as requested by Decision IG.23/2. In order to ensure that by the 14th Compliance Committee meeting the membership is complete, the Secretariat should consult with the relevant regional group to solve this issue.

- E. Cooperation and Partners

43. The Coordinator updated the Bureau on the efforts to contribute to regional governance and cooperation and to create and strengthen partnerships, in order to enhance the impact of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system.

44. With reference to Decision IG.19/6 on MAP/Civil society cooperation and partnership, the Coordinator updated Bureau members on the evaluation of the application by “OceanCare”, for accreditation as MAP Partner.

45. The Bureau discussed the above issues and advised accordingly. The members of the Bureau noted that, following the legal advice provided by the Secretariat, they understand that the list of criteria for the accreditation of MAP Partners (as in Annex II of Decision IG. 19/6) is prescriptive.

Conclusions:

46. The Bureau welcomes the progress achieved on issues related to Cooperation and Partners, and especially the close collaboration with GFCM and with EEA, and encourages the Secretariat to continue its work on these issues.

47. The Bureau acknowledges that “OceanCare” meets all the criteria but criterion “e)” of COP Decision IG.19/6 (annex II) and requests the Secretariat to contact “OceanCare” on this matter and report to the 86th Bureau meeting for final decision.

48. The Bureau asks the Secretariat to launch a formal written consultation of the SPA/BD Thematic Focal Points on the draft text of the Joint Cooperation Strategy to collect the comments and proposals for amendments and to prepare an advanced draft text accompanied by an explanatory note for submission to the 86th Bureau meeting.

- F. Process for the Preparation of the State of the Environment and Development Report

49. The Secretariat updated the Bureau on the process and timeline for the preparation of the 2019 State of the Environment and Development Report (SoED), as presented in Annex IV of the “Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues” (document UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.85/6).

50. The Bureau discussed the above issue and advised accordingly. Further to the conclusions presented below, the Bureau noted that the Secretariat is expected to:

- a) Enable Contracting Parties, through the Plan Bleu Focal Points, to designate experts for the review process of the 2019 SoED report;
 - b) Explore ways for Contracting Parties to participate in the Steering Committee of the process (for example through the participation of two Contracting Parties per sub-regional group, thus, six Contracting Parties in total);
 - c) Explore ways to enable participation of national experts in the Scientific Committee.
- Furthermore, each MAP Component to reach to its Focal Points and ask if they have experts to propose to assist in the preparation each chapter of the report.

Conclusion:

51. The Bureau takes note with appreciation of the work done for the elaboration of the 2019 State of the Environment and Development Report and asks the Secretariat:

- (a) To review the Table of Contents of SoED, as well as the process and timeline for the preparation of the Report to take into account comments and proposals from Thematic Focal Points and MCSD members;**
- (b) To ensure full consideration in the structure of the SoED of the 2016-2021 MTS and of the provision of Strategic Outcome 1.4 of the MTS itself;**
- (c) To carry out the review process with the timely and full involvement of the Thematic Focal Points.**

- G. Evaluation of MAP Regional Strategies and Action Plans

52. The Coordinator introduced this agenda item, referring to the process and timeline for the evaluation of MAP Regional Strategies and Action Plans, as mandated by the Contracting Parties. Such evaluations include the mid-term review of the status of implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2016-2025, the midterm evaluation of the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in the Mediterranean, the independent evaluation of the implementation of the Mid-Term Strategy and the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs).

53. Special emphasis was placed on the timeline of the mid-term evaluations of the MSSD 2016-2025, of the Regional Action Plan on SCP and of the NAPs, where the text of the relevant COP Decisions required further clarification.

54. The Bureau discussed the issue and advised accordingly.

Conclusions:

55. In relation to the evaluation of MAP Regional Strategies and Action Plans, the Bureau takes note of the discrepancies brought to its attention by the Secretariat and invites the Secretariat to inform the Contracting Parties of the correct schedule as reflected in Table 1 of document BUR 85.85/6/Rev.1 “Report on Specific Issues”.

56. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to prepare, in due time, a draft thematic decision, including a dedicated roadmap, related to the processes of the MSSD mid-term evaluation and the indicator-based mid-term evaluation of the SCP Regional Action Plan, and to submit it to the next meeting of the MAP Focal Points for consideration and further submission to COP 21.

57. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to develop a roadmap for the evaluation of the current MTS and the preparation of the next MTS, taking into account the relevant evaluation and assessment processes, by the 87th Bureau meeting.

58. The Bureau requests the Secretariat to consider upstream pollution prevention measures on a priority basis for the development of the main elements of the 6 Regional Plans to reduce/prevent marine pollution from land based sources and invites the Contracting Parties to fully participate and contribute to this important process. To this aim, the Bureau requests the Coordinating Unit to invite MED POL Thematic Focal Points to designate experts for the participation in the two meetings to be held in 2018-2019 and to follow-up the drafting process.

- H. Outreach, Information and Communication

59. The Coordinator presented a brief update on the information and communication activities and plans for the biennium in this area, with special reference to the process for the preparation of an operational Communication Strategy of UNEP/MAP.

Conclusion:

60. The Bureau expresses appreciation for the efforts and results of the information and communication work and requests the Secretariat to further progress in this direction, in parallel with the process for the preparation of the revised Communication Strategy.

- I. Preparations for COP 21

61. The Coordinator briefly introduced this agenda item, noting that preparations for COP 21 and collaboration with its host country, Italy, have already started from the first quarter of the current biennium.

62. The Bureau member from Italy, host country of COP 21, provided preliminary information on the organization of the event.

63. The Bureau members discussed the main aspects of the meeting and provided their guidance in relation to the process for the preparation of the substantial aspects of COP 21, as follows:

- a) The 86th Bureau meeting to discuss the general themes/issues of COP 21 and the preliminary list of COP 21 Decisions;
- b) Information/consultation with the Contracting Parties to follow and related timelines;
- c) The 87th Bureau meeting to discuss the main elements of the Ministerial Declaration;

- d) The MAP Focal Points meeting to discuss a first draft of the Ministerial Declaration;
- e) The Ministerial Declaration to be further elaborated for COP 21.

Conclusions:

64. The Bureau welcomes the proactive approach taken by the Secretariat for the preparation of COP 21 from an early stage.

65. The Bureau invites Italy, as Host Country, and the Secretariat to provide more information on the preparations of COP 21 at its 86th meeting, including on the substantive issues and possible theme of COP 21.

VI. Agenda item 6: Calendar of Meetings and Events, including Date and Venue of the 86th Meeting of the Bureau

66. The Bureau agreed that its 86th Meeting will be held on 6-7 November 2018, in Athens, Greece.

67. The Bureau also agreed to confirm the exact dates of the MAP Focal Points meeting and of COP 21 at its 86th meeting. The Secretariat noted the two-month deadline for meeting documents and the constraints that this poses in identifying an adequate calendar of meetings.

VII. Agenda item 7: Any Other Matters

68. No other matters were raised by the Bureau members.

VIII. Agenda item 8: Conclusions and Recommendations

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

IX. Agenda item 9: Closure of the Meeting

70. The meeting was closed by the President of the Bureau at 12:00 on Thursday, 19 April 2018.

Annex I

List of participants

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Annex II

Agenda

Agenda

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- Agenda item 3 Progress Report for January - March 2018**
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 - b) Development of Host Country Agreements for RACs
 - c) Meeting of Thematic Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas/Biodiversity
 - d) Compliance Committee
 - e) Cooperation and Partners
 - f) Process for the Preparation of the State of the Environment and Development Report
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