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1. Policy and Coordination

Concerning **personnel** issues, Mr. Michail Angelidis joined the MED POL Programme on 10 January 2008 as the Programme Officer responsible for the monitoring activities.

In addition to the long-standing **cooperation** with WHO in relation to the activities related to the sanitary aspects of the SAP and the LBS Protocol, compliance and enforcement, work has continued to be closely carried out in cooperation with IAEA/MEL in relation to data quality assurance of chemical analyses through training, intercalibration, scientific visits, purchase of instruments and advices on monitoring issues.

The long-standing cooperation with the ICS-UNIDO office in Trieste on PRTR was unfortunately interrupted due to a policy change of the new management of ICS-UNIDO. MED POL is currently in contact with the Italian Government and EC to seek new partnerships and support.

Cooperation and exchanges of information were intensified with the Basel Convention and the London Convention/London Protocol Secretariats. A cooperation agreement was signed with the Basel Convention and joint activities were initiated with the Regional Centres of the Convention in Bratislava and Cairo in the field of hazardous wastes. Exchanges were also ensured regarding the respective reporting systems with a view at harmonizing and simplifying the corresponding national obligations. Data and information were exchanged with the London Convention/London Protocol Secretariat on dumping permits and practices. In addition, a joint session was organized in Rome 20-23 May 2009 to promote the implementation of the London and Barcelona dumping Protocols in the Mediterranean.

Concerning cooperation with MAP Regional Activity Centres (RACs), MED POL strengthened cooperation with INFO/RAC for the preparation of the MED POL Information System (see below). An MoU was signed between MEDPOL and CP/RAC outlining the common activities which would be implemented during the Biennium 2010-2011. The activities are related to Hazardous wastes, harmful substances management and to the promotion of clean technology in the region. Close contacts were also kept with the Blue Plan for the preparation of indicators to monitor the implementation of the EU initiative Horizon 2020 in cooperation with EEA. In the framework of the work carried out by MED POL on behalf of MAP on the application of the ecosystem approach (see below), coordinated work was carried out together with all RACs to identify the possible role of each Centre and the implications for the respective programmes of work expected to be brought by the future application of the approach. As a result, a road map for the gradual application of the ecosystem approach was prepared and adopted by the Parties. In this context, extensive cooperation was established with the RAC/SAP for the preparation of the assessments required by the road map.

Cooperation continued with sub-regional Agreements, with the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (All) by putting at the disposal of the Adriatic and Ionian countries the experience of MED POL and the results of the activities carried out in their area.

MED POL became a formal member of MOON (Mediterranean Operational Oceanography Network) through a Cooperation Agreement that facilitates the exchange of data and information and synergy in selected projects.

The Agreement with the University of Alessandria, (Italy), to promote the use of biomarkers and to ensure good quality data related to biological effects monitoring, was successfully continued through the organization of training and intercalibration exercises. On the same subject, MED POL is following the work of the ICES Working Group on Biological Effects of

Contaminants and plans to initiate common activities with ICES (OSPAR) and HELCOM aiming at harmonization of techniques.

Close contacts were kept with the UNEP Office of DEPI and the Regional Seas Programme in Nairobi for over all guidance and coordination.

With the adoption of the new Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) of the European Union (2008/56/EC, 17 June 2008), MED POL has been actively involved in the promotion of the Mediterranean interests in harmony with EU objectives and principles. To that end, MED POL is participating in the process of development of Descriptors for Good Environment Status (GES) to be used by all EU Member States in the frame of the MSFD, under the coordination of JRC. MED POL also participated in the Task Group to develop methods for monitoring contaminant concentrations in biota and sediments in the frame of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) of the EU, and to the Chemical Monitoring Activity of EU to develop harmonized monitoring methods for assessing the state of marine environment in the European seas. By its participation in the development of marine monitoring methods and practices in the frame of the EU, MED POL aims to assure that the new EU relevant legislation 1) is in harmony with MAP and MED POL objectives, principles and targets (in particular the SAP and the process that has been initiated for the application of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities), and 2) could channel into the region technical and financial support for the achievement by the countries (also non-EU) of the common targets and objectives. In this framework, the Mediterranean EU member states may wish to propose to the EU to use MAP/MED POL as the operational tool for the implementation of the MSFD in the wider Mediterranean region thus bridging EU and non-EU countries in the initiative.

MED POL closely cooperated with the EC in the formulation of the **Horizon 2020 Initiative** that was adopted by the European Ministers in Cairo in December 2006. The Initiative has taken into full account the progress made by MED POL in the implementation of the SAP and the NAPs. In particular, in the pollution reduction component of the initiative, projects identified by the EC and its partners were mostly based on the priority identified by the countries in their MED POL National Diagnostic Analyses and the investments listed in their National Action Plans. The European Investment Bank has already selected 44 bankable projects, which are now under consideration for funding. The Horizon 2020 and the NAPs will jointly contribute to the common objective to substantially reduce land-based pollution.

In the context of the Horizon 2020 Initiative, cooperation was also strengthened with the European Environment Agency (EEA) in the field of monitoring and assessment and the identification of appropriate indicators. Several meetings were held to discuss the related work of MED POL and the Agency on indicators and data availability to try to find a common approach and strategy for the future work of monitoring and assessment that the Horizon 2020 Initiative will require. In the same context, MED POL has participated at all the Meetings organized by EMMA (the European Marine Monitoring and Assessment) together with all the European Marine Conventions and participated in the Task Group 1 on Indicators comparison coordinated by EEA.

At the initiative of the European Commission, a contract was signed by the EC with an international consulting company to analyze the work and the experience of the MAP system (MEDU, MED POL and the RACs) to facilitate and strengthen MAP participation in the Horizon 2020 Initiative and enhance its contribution to its implementation. Several visits will be made by the consulting team to RACs and Focal Points while the team leader will spend several months at MAP in Athens to obtain first hand information and ensure exchange of views.

One of the innovations brought forward by the European Marine Strategy Directive is the application of the **ecosystem approach** to the management of human activities. The initiative has been taken up by MED POL in the framework of the MED POL Phase IV and is

actually been applied by the entire MAP system. To this end, the European Commission financed a project to be implemented by MAP to assist the gradual application of the ecosystem approach to the management of human activities in the region. MED POL participated to the Second meeting of Government-designated Experts on the application of the ecosystem approach (Athens, July 2008), where the next steps of the implementation of the road map were decided. MED POL together with SPA/RAC finalized an annotated Table of contents for the Assessment Document to be prepared in each one of the four sub-regions of the Mediterranean and drafted the Terms of Reference for the international, regional and national experts to assist on the preparation of this Document.

A draft **MED POL Information System** was prepared in collaboration with INFO/RAC and is at present being tested. It is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2009.

As part of the new **GEF Strategic Partnership**, MED POL did not implement any activity due to the delay in the launch of the project. The activities are expected to commence by mid-2009.

2. Implementation of the LBS Protocol and the Strategic Action Programme (SAP)

National Action Plans (NAPs)

At the outset of the entry into force of the amendment to LBS Protocol on 8 June 2008 and as a result of Durres and Barcelona meetings on the long term implementation of NAPs to address LBS of pollution in the region, a Meeting on the Implementation of NAPs and the preparation of legally binding regional plans/programmes containing measures and timetables required by Art.15 of the LBS Protocol was held in Aix-en-Provence, France, on 27-28 November 2008. The main objective of the Meeting was to follow up and implement the Decision IG 17/8 of the Contracting Parties in their meeting held in Almeria in 2008 on the long-term implementation of NAPs. MED POL focal points were invited to examine the following:

- The identification of priority substances;
- Various options for the identification of differentiated mechanism fro the reduction of pollution; and
- Proposals for the development of action plans/programmes containing legally binding measures and timetables.

Document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.328/4 includes the report of the meeting and the conclusions. The Secretariat considers the deliberations of this meeting a milestone in the effective long-term implementation of pollution reduction measures.

Sustainable financing is obviously the most critical issue of the process of implementation of the NAPs. Aware of that, the Secretariat has been actively working with the EC in the framework of the EU H2020 initiative for the pollution reduction of the Mediterranean and the GEF Strategic Partnership for Large ecosystem of the Mediterranean.

MED POL considers the EU H2020 Initiative a dynamic platform for the implementation of NAPs. MED POL closely cooperated with the European Investment Bank (EIB) in the framework of subgroup on pollution reduction established to finance the priority actions described in the NAPs of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Other Mediterranean countries could be supported for the implementation of their NAPs through different European financial instruments. The subgroup selected 44 bankable projects as those to be considered for implementation. The EIB recently established a Technical Assistance Programme for the preparation of the portfolio to finance potential projects out of

the long list. The Programme leader has already contacted the MED POL staff for a full coordination of the work.

Furthermore, MED POL has substantially contributed to the development of the Strategic Partnership (SP) between MAP, GEF and the World Bank. The SP has two components: the first component is related to regional policy reform, capacity building in the field of sectoral industrial management, PCBs management and disposal, ICZM, coastal water resource management, the creation of a regional finance mechanism/platform and finally an information and replication strategy. The component is worth around 30.000.000 \$ including the GEF and MAP/MED POL contributions and co-financing from the Parties, the Fond Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM) and the Spanish and Italian Government Governments. The second component is the creation of an Investment Fund, managed by the World Bank, for the implementation of priority actions described in NAPs. The Partnership is expected to be fully operational by mid-2009.

The work on setting the basis for a mechanism of transfer of technology and know how to facilitate the implementation of NAPs continued during the biennium 2008-2009 in cooperation with CP/RAC. In this context, the two partners organized two workshops in Syria in February 2008 to introduce cleaner production concepts in university courses and to promote Ecolabelling in the textile industry.

Finally, MED POL established a database to follow up the implementation of the projects listed in the NAPs. This will enable the secretariat and the Contracting Parties to better assess and monitor the expected reduction of pollution and better plan for further activities. The Secretariat will be able to inform the Contracting Parties on the trends in pollution reduction by the end of 2009.

Municipal sewage

The preparation of the surveys of the wastewater treatment plants in Mediterranean coastal cities in 2003 and 2006 covering cities with population more than 2000 inhabitants was the first step towards the assessment of the treatment plants and the pollution load entering the Mediterranean sea. However the pollution load that contributes to the degradation of the marine waters due to the input of major rivers was not so far taken into consideration. Therefore an assessment of the treatment facilities in cities discharging their effluents in rivers that in their turn end up into the sea was prepared. In particular the cities discharging in major rivers in Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Spain and Turkey with population more than 2000 inhabitants were assessed and a document was prepared. (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 334/Inf.4)

Following the request of a number of countries for organizing national training courses on the safe use of wastewater, the first of these courses was held in Malta from 27-29 April, while another one was held in Albania from 25-27 May. It is expected that until November 2009 several countries including Lebanon, Syria and Montenegro, will organize national training courses with support consisting on lecturing training material and financial assistance

A consultation meeting of country designated experts on bathing waters was also held in Athens on 1-2 April 2009, where Albania, Croatia, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Slovenia and Spain presented pilot studies on the proposed methodology for bathing waters quality profiles following the agreed guidelines for criteria and standards for bathing waters quality. It was requested by Montenegro to update their legislation regarding bathing waters and, following a preliminary study in course, a short training course on the subject will be held in October 2009. The same request was made by Algeria and the training course will be held

during September. The intercalibration exercise on the capacity of the laboratories to perform microbial analyses, will be conducted in late September.

As a follow up to the regional training course on municipal wastewater treatment plants operation and management, held in the past, one national training course on the same subject in Turkish, will take place in Ankara, Turkey from 29 June-2 July 2009. The course will be co-organized by WHO/MED POL and the Turkish Ministry of Environment along with the Middle East Technical University. The course will also include a part on the adaptation to the EC Directive on municipal wastewater following a request from the Turkish authorities.

Coastal Solid Wastes and litter

An update of the "Assessment of marine litter in the Mediterranean Region was performed during the first semester of 2008, with the assistance of three NGOs, namely HELMEPA, Clean Up Greece and MIO-ECSEDE. The document prepared on the subject includes the assessment of the scale of the problem, the main sources of marine litter in the Mediterranean, as well as information on the existing legal regimes, national and regional institutional and programmatic systems, policies and identification of gaps and needs. The Mediterranean Assessment was also included in a major editorial effort that UNEP produced in 2009 which comprises all the Regional Seas of the World.

The findings of the above-mentioned Assessment were used to prepare a draft "Regional Strategy on Integrated Management of Marine Litter in the Mediterranean" (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 334/Inf.5) that takes into consideration institutional and technical aspects highlighted in the assessment. The draft Strategy was further considered during an experts' meeting that was held in Athens from 18-19 September 2008. During the meeting, the Strategy report was thoroughly reviewed and amendments were made in order to ensure sustainability to the activities proposed at the regional and national levels. The issue of the implementation of the strategy will be examined in the next biennium when an analysis of the financial implications of the proposed activities. It is proposed to submit the Strategy to the Contracting Parties for consideration in 2011.

Industrial Pollution

Concerning industrial pollution, during 2008-2009 MED POL finalized the data base (DB) with the data and information from the **National Baseline Budgets of emissions and releases** for the year 2003 and launched a region-wide exercise to track the changes occurred between 2003 and 2008 on the levels of releases from industrial activities. The exercise was accompanied with a regional soft forum to facilitate the interactions and share information between national experiences from one side and the Secretariat from the other side. By May 2009 MED POL had received reports from Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Palestinian authority, Slovenia and Syria. Reports were still to be received from Albania, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey. A preliminary assessment based on the reports received indicates that releases have been considerably reduced during the period of 2003-2008.

According to Art.15 of the LBS Protocol, Contracting Parties should adopt programmes/action plans containing measures and timetables one year after the entry into force of the amended protocol. Therefore, the issue was reviewed by the MED POL Focal Points at their meeting in Aix-en-Provence in 2008. The Meeting agreed to prepare for submission to the Contracting Parties meeting in 2009 three regional plans/Programmes based on ELVs and including temporal differentiation, on the following issues:

- Reduction of BOD from municipal waste water;

- Phasing out substances contained in Annex I of the LBS protocol and Annex A of the Stockholm Convention, namely, Aldrin, Chlordane, Dieldrin, Endrin, Haptachlore, Mirex and Toxaphene;
- Phasing out of DDT.

The draft regional plans were prepared by MED POL as UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 333/3, UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 333/4, and UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 333/5. To facilitate the negotiations process on the proposed texts, MED POL organized a soft forum where Focal Points could access the document and post comments and proposals. The latter are seen by all the members of the Forum.

Destruction of habitats

As a follow up to the work carried out by the Secretariat during previous years on the management of **sea water desalination** that led to the preparation of an assessment, Guidelines and the decision by the Contracting Parties to consider such activities as industrial activities falling under the provisions of the LBS Protocol, MED POL has attempted to diffuse as much as possible the information available on the environmental risks associated to desalination and on good management practices. As a result, the documents prepared by MED POL were widely distributed and a MED POL staff participated at the international symposium on sea water desalination organized by the European Association for Desalination (EDS). In addition, and upon request of the Government of Algeria, MED POL sent a regional expert to assist the Algerian national and local authorities in updating the EIA studies of planned sea water desalination plans and identify their needs in human resources.

Reporting

MED POL continued to provide assistance to Contracting Parties experts to prepare their national reports on the implementation of LBS, Dumping and Hazardous waste Protocols in the framework of the MAP reporting exercise. An internal assessment of compliance to the commitments of the Contracting Parties to the technical provisions of the three Protocols on the basis of reports of 2004-2005 showed that between 47-63 % of the countries are not so far able to generate the necessary data on the technical implementation of the Protocols.

MED POL actively participated in the MAP exercise for the development of effectiveness indicators required by Art. 26 to the Barcelona Convention. A document was prepared (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 334/Inf.6) that should be reviewed by the Focal Points before launching a testing trial during 2010-2011.

Considering the importance of the establishment of national **Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR)** systems, MED POL continued to provide technical and financial assistance to the countries to facilitate the implementation of pilot projects. In this context, MED POL in cooperation with ICS-UNIDO finalized the Pilot Project in Izmir, Turkey. In view of the successful results of the pilot project, the National Authorities requested the implementation of full size project that is expected to be launched by June 2009.

In addition, MED POL revitalized the pilot project in Syria and organized in February 2009 a national workshop for new industrial partners and the national team in Damascus. The follow up to the implementation plan of the project shows that the process is on schedule. The pilot project will be finalized by the end of 2009 thus preparing for the launch of a full size project if resources are available.

During the biennium, the ICS-UNIDO office in Trieste, the main partner of MED POL in the implementation of PRTR, informed the Secretariat of an internal change of priorities and

programmes and, accordingly, of the decision to interrupt the long-standing cooperation. As MED POL considers PRTR an essential tool for industrial pollution management, efforts are being made to identify new partners and find support. Preliminary but promising contacts were made with the Italian Government and the EC-ENV.

Other activities related to the LBS Protocol and the SAP

Regarding **Environmental Inspections** and in particular systems of inspection in the Mediterranean countries, as a follow up to the meeting of the Network on Compliance and Enforcement of legislation that was held from 24-25 October 2007 in Athens (it was held late in the previous biennium and therefore not referred to in previous progress reports) another meeting of the above Network is scheduled to take place in late November 2009 in Athens.

In line with the regional training course to “train the trainers” on environmental inspection systems, held in the past, a national training course on water and wastewater treatment plants inspection was held on 2-6 March 2009 in Tunis, where thirty inspectors attended the course lectured by an international expert. It is also planned to enhance capacity building for sanitary inspections in Montenegro and Algeria during September and October 2009.

Due to the increasing importance of indicators in all the aspects of the environmental compliance monitoring and their proposed use, a set of pilot indicators for environmental inspections was prepared and it was tested for the preparation of the national reports of the following countries: Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Turkey. The results showed that particular arrangements should be taken so as to adapt the indicators to the specific inspection system of the country in relation to the scope of the inspections, the size of the inspected facility and the non-compliance definition and determination. During the next meeting to be held in late November 2009, the national reports to be presented, will take into consideration the above-mentioned issues for the preparation of the agreed indicators.

It is expected that the capacity building programme that was formulated under the GEF project will commence by mid-2009 and will involve two countries for the identification of gaps in the inspection system, a workshop for practical guidance and a national final meeting for assessment and feedback.

The new MED POL Phase IV includes the issue of **health risks in tourist establishments** among those to be examined in the region, while tourism is indicated by the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development as being of utmost importance for development. Considering the existing link of the human health aspects of tourism with the provisions of the LBS Protocol, and the assessment document on health risks associated with tourist establishments in the Mediterranean region that was prepared following a meeting in the last biennium, a draft guidance document has been prepared. Its contents provide information on measures and actions to minimize environmental health risks in tourist establishments and it will be further developed, so as to form practical guidelines for use by both the tourist establishment owners and the tourists themselves (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 334/Inf. 7).

3. Assessment of pollution

Agreements for the definition of national monitoring programmes, as well as financial assistance agreements have been signed with Egypt (2008), Montenegro (2008) (a new national monitoring programme was established), Morocco (2009) and Tunisia (2008).

Agreements for national monitoring programmes without financial assistance have been signed with Slovenia (2008 and 2009)

Agreements for national monitoring programmes and financial assistance by MED POL are still under negotiation with Croatia, Lebanon, Libya, Syria and Turkey. Agreements will be finalized and signed within 2009.

During the biennium 2008-2009, MED POL has received data from the national monitoring programmes of the following countries: Albania (2006, 2007), Croatia (2006), Cyprus (2006), Egypt (2006), France (2006), Israel (2006, 2007), Italy (2006), Morocco (2006, 2007), Slovenia (2006), Spain (2006, 2007), Syria (2006), Tunisia (2006, 2007, 2008), Turkey (2006, 2007, 2008). Efforts are still needed to extend the coverage temporally and geographically and to ensure good quality data.

An eutrophication pilot study was implemented in the Lagoon of Nador, Morocco (2008).

Based on the recommendations of the 15th Contracting Parties Meeting and the conclusions of the Fourth Review Meeting of the Monitoring Activities (December, 2007), the countries that had no agreements with MED POL or had gaps in the provision of data were contacted with a request to provide the data and results of their monitoring activities according to MED POL specifications. As a consequence, Italy provided contaminant data for coastal waters, sediments and biota (2006), France provided data on hazardous substances in biota (2006) and Spain provided data on hazardous substances in biota (2006, 2007). Greece provided data from MED POL-supported studies on biological effects of contaminants on biota (2007, 2008).

As a follow up to the approval by the 15th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the MED POL Phase IV programme, work started on the organization of sub-regional surveys for the better understanding of the contamination levels of Mediterranean coastal waters. As an initiative was already in progress, it was decided to join hands with the ongoing activities and assist other Mediterranean laboratories to participate. In the framework of the projects MYTIMED, MYTIAD and MYTIOR (covering respectively the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, the Adriatic Sea and the South-Eastern Mediterranean Sea), cages with mussels were placed in selected stations and the mussels were later analysed for chemical contaminants (heavy metals and organics). MED POL assisted the participation of Lebanon and Syria in MYTIMED (2007-08), the participation of Albania, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Slovenia in MYTIAD (2008-09) and is negotiating its assistance to the participation of Cyprus, Egypt and Libya in MYTIOR (2009). All these programmes are basically a continuation of MYTILOS programme (western Mediterranean Sea) and when completed they will provide a "snapshot" of the pollution impact on the marine biota in the entire Mediterranean coastal area, using caged mussels. It is planned to finalise the overall programme by 2010-11.

For the biological effects monitoring, MED POL focal points had recognised the need for harmonization of the assessment criteria with those of the northern European organizations

and Conventions. To that end, MED POL participated in the ICES Working group meeting on the biological effects of contaminants (WGBEC) in Sete, France (March 2008). At the workshop it was agreed that harmonisation should include biomarker selection, standard operating protocols and data management as well as common inter-calibration exercises, training courses and databases.

Data quality assurance (DQA) is a vital component of the monitoring work. The Marine Environmental Studies Laboratory (MESL) of IAEA-MEL, continued to cooperate with the MED POL programme in the implementation of a comprehensive Data Quality Assurance programme for chemical contaminants in the framework of the national monitoring programmes.

As outlined below and described in more detail, the work of IAEA/MEL during 2008-2009 period focused on training courses in marine analytical chemistry of pollutants, inter-laboratory studies and the provision of expert technical advice through country missions and attendance at meetings.

Two training courses in Monaco were implemented during the later part of 2008, and complete reports of the individual courses have been submitted to MED POL. A training course for the measurement of chlorinated pesticides and PCBs in marine samples was organized from November 3 to 18, with the participation of 6 trainees from 6 countries (Albania, Croatia, Israel, Malta, Morocco and Slovenia). Similarly, a training course on determination of heavy metals in marine samples was organized from November 24 to December 5, with the participation of 6 trainees from 6 countries (Cyprus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Morocco, Montenegro, Syria and Tunisia). Two more training courses are scheduled for November-December 2009.

Two reports were completed for the proficiency tests of samples IAEA-436 (Tuna Fish homogenate) and IAEA-432 (mussel tissue). In the *MED POL Proficiency test for the determination of selected trace elements in biota (Tuna Fish homogenate IAEA-436)*, IAEA, 2008) participated 22 laboratories, and in the *Analytical Performance study for MED POL: Determination of organochlorine compounds and petroleum hydrocarbons in biota sample (mussel tissue) IAEA-432 (IAEA, March 2008)* participated 19 laboratories.

Two Analytical Performance Studies for MED POL were underway in 2009, for the determination a) of trace element and b) chlorinated compounds and petroleum hydrocarbons, in sediments. A statistical evaluation will be made after all results are received and reports will be available within 2009.

Two samples of marine biota were prepared for interlaboratory study of organic contaminants (IAEA-451) and metals (IAEA-452). One of new emerging pollutant, PBDEs (flame retardant) is newly included in the organic contaminants samples. IAEA-451 and 452 samples were distributed in December 2008. IAEA-451 samples were sent to 64 laboratories from 19 Mediterranean countries and IAEA-452 samples to 55 laboratories from 13 countries. The deadline for reporting was set for the end of December 2009.

For eutrophication parameters an intercalibration exercise was completed in 2008 using the services of QUASIMEME. MED POL supported the participation of 15 Mediterranean laboratories in the exercise for the determination of nutrients and chlorophyll-a.

To improve DQA for the biological effects monitoring, a new agreement has been signed between MED POL and DiSAV (February 2009) for the organization of an intercalibration exercise with the participation of Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean laboratories (from OSPAR and HELCOM). The intercalibration exercise will be finalized within 2009 and a Workshop to discuss its results will be organized in 2010.

Based on the recommendations of the 15th Contracting Parties Meeting, MAP (and MED POL) should strengthen cooperation and seek synergies with initiatives pursuing similar environmental objectives, including the European Union Marine Strategy Directive, with a view to achieving our shared vision of a healthy Mediterranean. MED POL participated in the EU meetings relative to the development of indicators to assess the quality of the marine environment, including: "EIONET Workshop on improving EEA marine indicators" (EEA, May 2008), "EMMA Task Group 1 on indicator comparison" (EEA, November 2008), "Drafting group for the sediment-biota Guidance Document for the WFD" (JRC, January 2009), "MSFD Descriptor 8 Task Group kick-off meeting" (JRC, April 2009).

MED POL is collaborating with IAEA, in the framework of the project TC RAF/7/008 – Enhancing Regional Capability for the Assessment of Contamination in the Marine Environment, of IAEA, by supporting capacity building of eligible southern Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia). The objective of the project is to improve regional capabilities for using nuclear techniques to assess contamination of the marine environment around the African continent, with a view to promoting its sustainable development.

MED POL is participating in the development of the process of application of the Ecosystem Approach, according to the decisions of the 15th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Almeria, 2008). The initiative is under development and an Assessment Document in four Mediterranean sub-regions is under preparation, to be finalized within 2009.

As a follow up to the agreed MED POL work programme, an updated Eutrophication Assessment Report was prepared by the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, based on information provided by country experts and National Coordinators through questionnaires circulated by the Secretariat. The final draft was presented in the Monitoring meeting of MED POL (Athens December 2007), where the focal points decided to ask for more information from the countries before accepting it. The Questionnaire was sent again to countries that did not respond initially and replies are still pending in order to amend the Eutrophication Report.

A method for sediment sampling and analysis was presented in the Review Meeting of MED POL Monitoring Activities (December 2007) and was accepted with a demand to edit the chapter on sedimentation rate calculation. The necessary amendments are under preparation with the assistance of the Marine Environment laboratories of IAEA.

MED POL participated in two meetings organised by MOON and MED GOOS to further establish cooperation with MAP and MED POL for the use of the existing products related to operational oceanography (Athens, Greece, March 2008 and Nicosia, Cyprus, March 2009). The available products and data are expected to be utilized by all MAP components.

MED POL participated in the Advisory Committee of the EU funded scientific project SESAME (November 2008), which aims to assess past and current status in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The data generated in the frame of the Project (mainly nutrients and chl-a concentrations on a large Mediterranean scale) and the models to be developed, will be used by MED POL in its effort to assess the quality of the Mediterranean marine environment.

4. Information System

During the biennium MED POL developed an information system in cooperation with INFO/RAC. At present, the **MED POL Information System** includes the following modules:

- Intranet facilitating the contacts and dissemination of documents and information between the secretariat and the national coordinators;
- On line reporting that includes reporting on status, trends and compliance monitoring programmes;
- Data acquisition and drawing; and
- GIS.

The development of the first two modules is finalized, as an Alpha test for MEDPOL staff was achieved already in 2006; the Beta test which covers Focal Points and stakeholders is expected to initiate by mid-2009. MED POL is actively working with INFO/RAC to ensure the switching into on line reporting system by the end of 2009. The development of the GIS module is scheduled to start in 2009 and to be completed during the next biennium.

MED POL has started working on the preparation a dedicated **web site** that is expected to be finalized by the end of 2009.

5. Activities related to the implementation of the Dumping Protocol

Under the provisions of Article 5 of the 1976 Dumping Protocol, national authorities are requested to keep records of the dumping activities by issuing permits and informing the Secretariat accordingly. However, as it was reported on several occasions since the entry into force of the Protocol, only few countries have regularly reported to the Secretariat on the permits issued.

The Secretariat collected the necessary information related to the development of Threshold Limit Values (TLV) for dredging materials to be used for the preparation of guidelines for the development of TLVs by national authorities. On the basis of the collected information and with the assistance of regional experts, MED POL prepared comprehensive Guidelines for the establishment of National Threshold Limit Values (NTLV) for dredged materials (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 334/Inf. 8). The guidelines describe the up-to-date methodology for the establishment of NTLV for dredged materials with additional information about the origin of the materials, their potential uses and the order of magnitude of dumping of dredged materials in the region.

The Secretariat updated the report on dumping of ammunitions in the Mediterranean region on the basis of data and information provided by the Contracting Parties (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 334/Inf. 9). The document is expected to be of assistance to port authorities, fishermen communities, national authorities, etc. MED POL organized in cooperation with IMO-London Convention/London Protocol Secretariat a regional workshop hosted by the Government of Italy on 20-23 May 2009 to promote the implementation of the two respective dumping Protocols. National experts have been invited to review a number of documents proposed by IMO and MEDPOL and to present their state-of-the-art in the management of dumping materials.

As requested by the Contracting Parties Meeting held in Almeria in 2008, MED POL, with the financial and technical assistance of the government of Spain, launched the preparation

of a risk assessment for CO₂ sequestration in submarine geological structure in the Mediterranean. The assessment is expected to be finalized by August 2009. The results of the assessment may be used to suggest possible amendments to the text of the 1996 Dumping Protocol.

6. Activities related to the implementation of the Hazardous Wastes Protocol

In cooperation with the Basel Convention Regional Center in Egypt, MED POL developed a regional strategy and action plan for combating illegal traffic and disposal of hazardous waste in the Arab region (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG. 334/Inf.10). In the framework of the project, MED POL provided financial and technical assistance to the Mediterranean Arab countries. The project rationale is based on the information from civil society and NGOs that illegal traffic and disposals are occurring in the region and that a strategy and an action plan to fight against them are largely missing.

The basic steps towards achieving the strategy and action plan include:

- a) Collecting information and investigating on similar strategies and watch system plans from other regions;
- b) Preparing a strategy and action plan to be presented to a regional workshop;
- c) Propose a financial mechanism and coordination unit for the strategy and action plan;
- d) Convene a Technical level meeting to discuss the budget and financial issues, the collaboration mechanisms and the elements of the strategy and action plan;
- e) Convene a high level regional workshop to present and agree on the strategy and action plan, agree on implementation mechanisms and review financial mechanisms;
- f) Publicize the strategy and action plan; and
- g) Present the strategy and the plan to the Ministers of Environments in the Arab countries at their annual meeting with the League of the Arab States.

The strategy consists of a series of actions under a programme of capacity building, including institutional and legal aspects, networking, awareness and community participation. The strategy targets port authorities, inspectors, customs and environmental authorities and the public.

In addition, in cooperation with BCRCs in Egypt and Slovakia an assessment of the state-of-the-art management of Electronic and Electrical Equipment Waste (EEEA) is underway. The work was organized in three sub regions, i.e. European Countries, Arab Countries and Adriatic Countries plus Turkey and Israel. The assessment aims at the development of regional action plan for the management and disposal of e-waste to be developed in the biennium 2010-2011. The assessment is expected to be completed by the end of 2009.