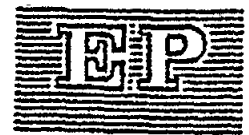




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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Joint Meeting of the Scientific and Technical
Committee and the Socio-Economic Committee

Athens, 3-7 May 1993

PROPOSAL FOR A MEDITERRANEAN TASK FORCE FOR ASSISTANCE

IN COMBATING ACCIDENTAL MARINE POLLUTION

Proposal by the Secretariat

INTRODUCTION

At the Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) held in Malta, 22-26 September 1992, a proposal prepared by REMPEC concerning the establishment of a Regional Task Force presenting the justification, the scope, the composition, the principles of organization, the principles of activation and the duties and responsibilities of such a Task Force was introduced.

The Meeting recalled "The Principles and Guidelines concerning the role and responsibilities of experts sent on mission by the Centre, following the request of a State in case of emergency, and duties and obligations of States towards them" adopted by the Seventh Meeting of the Contracting Parties (UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.2/4, Cairo, October 1991) as well as the decision made by the same Meeting to provide REMPEC with an *ad hoc* budget line of US \$ 10,000 for "assistance in case of emergency". The Meeting also recalled the "Resolution" of "The Conference of Ministers responsible for the Marine Environment" convened in Malta, 18 November 1991 at the invitation of the Maltese Government, a Resolution which called for the establishment of such a Task Force.

The Meeting:

- a) examined, discussed and amended the proposal prepared by REMPEC;
- b) approved the proposal which follows on the establishment of a Regional Task Force which will be submitted for adoption to the Eight Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

PROPOSAL FOR A MEDITERRANEAN TASK FORCE FOR ASSISTANCE

IN COMBATING ACCIDENTAL MARINE POLLUTION

The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention,

Recalling their commitment under the Protocol on Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Case of Emergency, in particular, to endeavour to provide assistance in the form of expert advice at the request of another Party in case of emergency,

Recalling also the function of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea "to provide, upon request, to coastal States assistance in cases of emergency, either by using its own capacities or through secondment of experts",

Recalling further the "Principles and Guidelines concerning the role and responsibilities of experts sent on mission by the Centre, following the request of a State in case of emergency, and the duties and obligations of States towards them",

Recognizing that, in the case of a major pollution accident, the national authorities of the affected Contracting Party may have an urgent need for the assistance of experts who will provide advice and technical expertise to help national authorities in deciding on the measures to be taken,

Considering that, arrangements and permanent instructions are necessary, in order to be in a position to provide the assistance of experts rapidly and efficiently,

1. **Decide** to establish a Mediterranean Task Force for assistance in combating accidental marine pollution which the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean (REMPEC) will organize and activate within the limit of the budget allocated to it by the Meeting of Contracting Parties;
2. **Endeavour** to provide their assistance in the organization and functioning of the Mediterranean Task Force;
3. **Agree** that the role of the Mediterranean Task Force should evolve taking into account the experience gained and in accordance with new needs and possibilities. The changes or necessary adjustments will be submitted to the Contracting Parties for approval at their meetings.

1. General Principles

- 1.1 A Mediterranean Task Force for assistance in combating accidental marine pollution shall be formed within the framework of the Protocol on Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency.
- 1.2 The organization and the activation of the Mediterranean Task Force shall be the responsibility of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) which shall assume this responsibility in accordance to the Protocol on co-operation in cases of emergency, the various decisions taken by the Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and in conformity with the provisions of this document.
- 1.3 The primary objective of the Mediterranean Task Force shall be to rapidly provide the services of selected experts to a Contracting Party which, in case of emergency, would request such assistance. By going to the scene of an accident the experts shall provide advice and technical expertise to the authorities with a view to assisting them during the initial phases in deciding on the combating measures to take and on the assistance that could be necessary to request. Another rôle of the Mediterranean Task Force shall be to help the requesting State to implement the provisions for regional co-operation in case of emergency, particularly the arrangements and procedures adopted by the Meetings of Contracting Parties aimed at facilitating co-operation and mutual assistance.
- 1.4 The Mediterranean Task Force is an "expert service" capability established by the Contracting Parties to the Protocol on co-operation in cases of emergency which could be rapidly mobilized and activated at their request to serve the Mediterranean coastal States.

II Geographical Coverage and Scope

2.1 The geographical coverage of the Mediterranean Task Force shall be that of the Protocol on co-operation in cases of emergency.

2.2 The scope *rationae materiae* of the Mediterranean Task Force shall be combating accidental marine pollution by oil and other harmful substances. The Task Force shall provide expert services in the following areas among others:

a) response to pollution by oil

- Crisis management and organization of intervention:
 - . analysis, assessment and forecasting of oil slick behaviour, fate and movement;
 - . response planning and logistics;
 - . response strategy/tactical choices and options.
- Combating methods and techniques at sea:
 - . containment/recovery;
 - . use of dispersants and other treatment products.
- Shore clean-up techniques and methods.
- Treatment and disposal of wastes
- Financial documentation and claims for compensation

b) Response to pollution by harmful substances

- Crisis management and organization of intervention.
- *Analysis, assessment and forecasting of fate and behaviour of:*
 - . gas clouds
 - . floaters
 - . dissolvers
 - . sinkers
- Recovery of packages at sea
- Response to spilled chemicals depending on their behaviour:
 - . personnel protection;
 - . aquatic toxicity and rehabilitation;
 - . biogeochemical cycling;
- Decontamination
- Treatment and disposal of wastes
- Financial documentation and claims for compensation

III Composition

3.1 The Mediterranean Task Force shall be composed of a selected limited number of highly qualified experts and centres of expertise, for each area of expertise. An expert or centre of expertise can be selected for more than one area of expertise.

3.2 REMPEC shall select the experts and centres of expertise using its own lists of experts and other means of information in its possession as well as in consultation with the competent national authorities and with other organizations which can give useful advice.

3.3 The experts and centres of expertise shall be selected for a duration of 2 years, this period being renewable. During this period, the experts and centres of expertise shall respond, in accordance with permanent instructions, to all the requests made in the case that the Mediterranean Task Force is activated. The

composition of the Mediterranean Task Force shall be published by REMPEC every two years and updated as necessary depending on the changes that need to be made.

IV Activation

- 4.1 The Mediterranean Task Force be activated by REMPEC at the request of the competent national authority in charge of response to accidental marine pollution or at the request of that authority which is in charge of dealing with mutual assistance in the case of an emergency (refer to REMPEC/RIS/B/1) on behalf of the State affected by the accident. The national authorities which request REMPEC to provide them with the assistance of the Mediterranean Task Force, must endeavour to specify as precisely as possible what areas of expertise are required according to the circumstances of the case in order to decide jointly with REMPEC on the composition of the team to be sent to the site.
- 4.2 Depending on the circumstances and in agreement with the requesting State and within the limits of the financial resources available, REMPEC shall determine the duration and decide on the end of the mission of the member(s) of the Mediterranean Task Force. The presence of the Mediterranean Task Force can be prolonged beyond the duration permitted by the financial resources available to REMPEC, if the situation dictates and if the corresponding financial arrangements have been agreed between the parties concerned.

V Organization

- 5.1 REMPEC shall establish permanent arrangements for the provision, in the shortest time possible, of prepaid air tickets to all Mediterranean destinations as well as for the issue of a visa when one is required.
- 5.2 The State requiring the assistance of the Mediterranean Task Force, shall take all necessary measures to facilitate the mission of the members of the Task Force. Such necessary measures concern:
- a) the immigration and arrival procedures as well as customs formalities in particular for data processing equipment and the associated documentation or computerized material;
 - b) accommodation and transport;
 - c) providing expert(s) with sufficient work space;
 - d) access to communication means.
- 5.3 REMPEC shall cover the initial costs of the mission of the Mediterranean Task Force: air tickets, daily subsistence allowance; and possibly fees on a pre-arranged basis.
- REMPEC shall reserve the right, according to the applicable legal regimes, to seek reimbursement for the expenses thus incurred.
- 5.4 In accordance with the request of the competent national authorities of the State and in agreement with them, REMPEC shall determine the terms of reference of the mission of the Mediterranean Task Force and shall give instructions to this effect. In their request the competent national authorities shall specify the name, function and details of the authority the members of the Mediterranean Task Force must contact upon arrival. They shall also specify the authority or authorities to whom the members of the Force must report.
- 5.5 Member(s) of the Mediterranean Task Force shall maintain contact with REMPEC and provide it with daily reports. REMPEC shall give to the Mediterranean Task Force all the support the Force might need.
- 5.6 The Mediterranean Task Force shall work in close co-operation with and be at the service of the public authorities responsible for the organization and the management of response. In order to accomplish their duty, members of the Mediterranean Task Force shall have access to available information, shall carry out the necessary investigations in co-operation and with the support of the responsible national authorities and shall participate in meetings as necessary.
- 5.7 Member(s) of the Mediterranean Task Force shall make a daily report containing an assessment of the situation, their analyses and conclusions and their proposals for actions which they shall submit to the authorities to whom they are reporting. The proposed actions can be related to the organization of response, the tactical options, the methods and techniques of response and to experts, equipment and products that can be requested from

other Contracting Parties or private entities. A copy of this report shall be sent to REMPEC by telefax. Members of the Task Force shall submit a final report at the end of the mission.

5.8 In the case where the competent authorities would request international assistance, member(s) of the Mediterranean Task Force, by their good cognizance of the regional system for co-operation, in liaison with REMPEC, shall assist these authorities.

VI Role and Responsibilities of members of the Mediterranean Task Force

6.1 The role and responsibilities of members of the Mediterranean Task Force shall be limited to assisting national authorities in the decision making process. In this perspective, their role shall be solely advisory. All decisions related to response operations as well as their consequences shall be the entire responsibility of the competent authority of the requesting State.

6.2 In their advice, the members of the Mediterranean Task Force shall endeavour to protect the interests of the requesting State, in particular for the protection of the environment and resources, and they shall take into consideration the economic and financial implications.

6.3 During their mission, the members of the Mediterranean Task Force have a duty of discretion. Unless otherwise specified, they shall not have direct contact with the general public or the media, this being the responsibility of the national authorities.

VII Duties of the selected experts and centres of expertise

7.1 The experts and centres of expertise shall possess a complete and updated version of the Regional Information System. They shall be familiar with this system as well as with the regional arrangements for preparedness and response, specifically the provisions and procedures aimed at facilitating mutual assistance.

7.2 The experts and centres of expertise shall endeavour to inform REMPEC of the time they are able to allot so that the Centre can know in advance their availability. If an expert is no longer available and is not in a position to respond to a request made as a result of the activation of the Mediterranean Task Force, REMPEC should be informed immediately. In this case, REMPEC shall make arrangements to replace the expert.