



MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP) REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)

Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.51/4
Date: 24 May 2021

Online, 31 May – 2 June 2021

Original: English

Agenda Item 4

PROGRESS REPORT ON REMPEC ACTIVITIES SINCE THE THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINTS OF REMPEC

Note by Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document sets out an outline of the activities carried out by the Centre since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC.

Actions to be taken: Paragraph 14

Related documents: MEPC 76/INF.63, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/23, UNEP/MED IG.24/22, UNEP/MED IG.24/Inf.9, UNEP/MED WG.468/11, UNEP/MED WG.468/14, UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.14, UNEP/MED WG.482/21, REMPEC/WG.45/8, REMPEC/WG.45/9/1, REMPEC/WG.45/9/2, REMPEC/WG.45/11, REMPEC/WG.45/12/2, REMPEC/WG.45/12/3, REMPEC/WG.45/INF.9, REMPEC/WG.45/INF.10, REMPEC/WG.45/INF.18

Introduction

- 1 This report covers the period May 2019-April 2021, that is to say:
 - .1 the activities conducted after the Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) (Malta, 11-13 June 2019), based on the approved Programme of Work and Budget (PoW) of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), for the biennium 2018-2019¹, and before the Twenty-first Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the “Barcelona Convention”) and its Protocols (COP 21) (Napoli, Italy, 2-5 December 2019); and
 - .2 the activities carried out after COP 21, based on the approved UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 2020-2021², until 30 April 2021.

Ratification of the Convention and its Protocols

- 2 Since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the Depositary has communicated to the Secretariat the deposit of the instrument of accession to the Barcelona Convention, by Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 19 October 2020.

¹ UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/23, Decision IG.23/14.

² UNEP/MED IG.24/22, Decision IG.24/14.

3 There are still seventeen (17) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention which have, up to now, ratified or acceded to the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (the "2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol") to the Barcelona Convention, whereas six (6) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention are only Parties to the Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency (the "1976 Emergency Protocol").

4 The status of signatures and ratifications of the 1976 Emergency Protocol and the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, as of 29 October 2020 (last notification received), is listed in Annex I to the present document.

Decisions adopted by COP 21

5 The main decisions directly relevant to the work of REMPEC, as adopted by COP 21, were on the Road Map for a Proposal for the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides Pursuant to Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), within the Framework of the Barcelona Convention³, on the Operational Guidelines on the Provision of Reception Facilities in Ports and the Delivery of Ship-Generated Wastes in the Mediterranean, on the Guidance Document to Determine the Application of Charges at Reasonable Costs for the Use of Port Reception Facilities or, when Applicable, Application of the No-Special-Fee System, in the Mediterranean⁴, and on the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021⁵.

Resource mobilisation

6 The following external funding from the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) amounting to € 142,555 were secured and transferred to REMPEC:

- .1 € 38,862 for the Sub-regional Workshop on the assessment of the level of oil spill response planning and readiness management (7-8 September 2021);
- .2 € 16,677 for the Regional Meeting of National Experts on the Mediterranean Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (online, 10 March 2021);
- .3 €16,489 for National Workshops on Ratification and Effective Implementation of MARPOL Annex VI: Libya (Tunis, Tunisia, 5-6 December 2019), Algeria (online, 26 November 2020), Lebanon (online, 10 December 2020).
- .4 € 25,978 for the Workshop to enhance regional cooperation in responding to marine oil and Hazardous & Noxious Substances (HNS) pollution in the Mediterranean (MEDEXPOL 2020), (Monaco, 27-29 October 2020);
- .5 € 4,573 for the Webinar on the implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention) in the Mediterranean region (online, 23 September 2020);
- .6 €5,281.69 for the National Training Course on the Response to HNS in the Marine Environment (Manager Level) (Tekirdağ, Turkey, 3-5 December 2019);
- .7 €28,041 for the Regional Workshop on the International Convention on the control of harmful anti-fouling systems on ships, 2001 (AFS Convention) and the 2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ships' biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species (Biofouling Guidelines) (Valletta, Malta, 12-14 November 2019); and
- .8 €6,654.86 for the National oil spill response training course on the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC) (Model Course, Level 2) (Bar, Montenegro, 19-21 June 2019).

³ UNEP/MED IG.24/22, Decision IG.24/8.

⁴ UNEP/MED IG.24/22, Decision IG.24/11.

⁵ UNEP/MED IG.24/22, Decision IG.24/14.

7 REMPEC supported the preparation of the project proposal for the “Marine Litter-MED II” Project funded by the European Union (EU) to be implemented by the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit (CU) through technical insight.

8 REMPEC continued implementing the two-year 2019-2020 EU-funded Western Mediterranean Region Marine Oil and HNS Pollution Cooperation (West MOPoCo) Project, extended to 30 April 2021.

9 In consultation with the IMO and the CU, REMPEC continued liaising with the International Association of Oil & Gas Producers (IOGP) for the drafting of the required agreement related to a part-time secondment to REMPEC from the oil and gas industry to support the implementation of 2020-2021 activities related to offshore.

Secondments

10 The Centre benefited, during the period under review, from the support of a Junior Programme Officer financed by the French Oil Industry through the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs mechanism entitled “*Volontariat International Scientifique*” (VIS). This support has been provided to the Centre since its inception and the Centre wishes to express its gratitude and appreciation to the Government of France and to Total S.A. for this continuous support. Mr Christophe Blazy was seconded in August 2018 and concluded his appointment with the Centre on 31 July 2020, whilst Ms Phyllis Therdrois has been seconded to REMPEC since 3 August 2020, for a period of 18 to 24 months. The responsibilities of the Junior Programme Officer include, amongst others, supporting the Programme Officer (OPRC) and the Head of Office of REMPEC, in the field of preparedness for and response to marine pollution from ships as well as IT support (i.e. the Centre’s website, online tools, communication and information systems, etc) and communication.

11 The Centre also benefit from the IMO Junior Professional Officer (JPO) programme, a voluntary programme under which IMO Member States sponsor the secondment of young professionals from their country to work at the IMO. JPO positions are subject to funding by the relevant IMO Member State and the appointment is limited to the period of funding. Contracts are fixed term for one (1) year with the possibility of extension, subject to satisfactory performance, for up to a total of three (3) years. In this context, upon completion of the recruitment process, Mr Shi Wentao was seconded by the People's Republic of China, and joined REMPEC from 20 April 2018 to 17 March 2021, covering the maximum period of three (3) years. His duties and responsibilities included, amongst others, supporting the Programme Officer (Prevention) in his work as well as assisting the Head of Office of REMPEC on policy issues relating to regional activities in the field of marine environment protection and providing expert legal advice.

12 On 17 February 2021, the Secretary-General of the IMO announced a position for JPO at REMPEC in Malta⁶. The deadline for applications is 17 June 2021 and all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention were invited⁷ to consider this position, which is expected to be filled before the end of 2021.

Activities

13 The activities implemented by REMPEC in the field of prevention of, preparedness for and response to marine pollution from ships between May 2019 and April 2021, in accordance with the UNEP/MAP Programmes of Work and Budgets for the biennia 2018-2019 and 2020-2021, are presented in Annex II to the present document with reference to the UNEP/MAP Mid-Term Strategy (2016-2021) themes and strategic outcomes. During the period under review, REMPEC implemented an array of activities, which have significantly contributed to:

- .1 **defining, through a collaborative approach, the vision, the strategic directions, and objectives of a post-2021 Mediterranean Strategy for Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships;**

⁶ IMO Circular Letter No. 4353.

⁷ REMPEC Circular Letter No. 08/2021.

- .2 strengthening the level of preparedness and capacity of Mediterranean coastal States, at national, sub-regional and regional level, to respond to oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) pollution from ships, notably by:**
- further reinforcing national capacities by closing existing gaps and linking established sub-regional contingency plans or developing new ones to maximise the efficiency of the preparedness for and response to major incidents through a coordinated approach in terms of procedures, exchange of human resources and response equipment;
 - developing the Multi-regional Manual on Marine HNS Response, in collaboration with the Secretariats of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) and the Bonn Agreement;
 - upgrading the Maritime Integrated Decision Support Information System on Transport of Chemical Substances (MIDSIS-TROCS⁸);
 - organising a regional workshop to set-up a common emergency communication system accessible to all countries in the Mediterranean region;
 - organising national trainings course based on the newly-developed IMO HNS Model Course;
 - implementing the EU-funded West MOPoCo Project; and
 - extending the membership of the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU).
- .3 reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and harmful effects of atmospheric emissions from ships within the framework of MARPOL Annex VI, notably by:**
- facilitating the adoption by COP 21 of Decision IG.24/8 on the Road map for a Proposal for the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, within the Framework of the Barcelona Convention (the “road map”);
 - overseeing the implementation of the road map, notably the completion of the necessary knowledge gathering, the carrying out of the further studies to more fully address the criteria and procedures for designation of emission control areas laid down in Appendix III to MARPOL Annex VI, and the updating of the initial draft submission to the IMO based on the completed knowledge gathering and the further studies carried out;
 - raising the awareness of Mediterranean coastal States on the requirement and consistent implementation of the global 0.50% sulphur limit that took effect on 1 January 2020;
 - organising six (6) national workshops on the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI; and
 - contributing to the implementation of the Global MTCC Network (GMN) initiative funded by the European Union and implemented by the IMO.
- .4 addressing illicit ship pollution discharges, through the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS), notably by:**
- preparing a draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report;
 - reviewing existing applicable sanctions at national level with regard to illicit ship pollution discharges;
 - preparing a draft decision to apply criteria for a common minimum level of fines for each offense provided for under the Annexes to MARPOL;
 - studying the modalities of possible creation and operation, including in terms of governance and financing, of a regional “Blue Fund”; and
 - examining the possibility to define criteria to determine the reparation of environmental damage beyond the compensation of the cleaning operations resulting from pollution of the marine environment from ships and to harmonise practices to that end.

⁸ <http://midsis.rempec.org>.

- .5 **enhancing the management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas in the Mediterranean**, notably by:
- facilitating the adoption by COP 21 of the Operational guidelines on the provision of reception facilities in ports and the delivery of ship-generated wastes in the Mediterranean as well as the Guidance document to determine the application of charges at reasonable costs for the use of port reception facilities or, when applicable, application of the No-Special-Fee system, in the Mediterranean;
 - implementing the EU-funded “Marine Litter-MED” Project, as well as relevant activities of the Cooperation Agreement between the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea (IMELS) and UNEP, which, *inter alia*, comprised the development of the above-mentioned Mediterranean guidelines, the implementation of national pilots, the organisation of national awareness meetings, with regard to implementing charges for the use of port reception facilities at reasonable cost and operational aspects of port reception facilities in accordance with MARPOL;
 - supporting the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit in preparing the project proposal and initiating the implementation of the EU-funded “Marine Litter-MED II” Project, *inter alia*, building and capitalising on the institutional, financial, and capacity-building measures and tools that were developed during the first phase of the project; and
 - exploring synergies between the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) and the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships.
- .6 raising awareness on the requirements and benefits of the ratification, effective implementation, and enforcement of the **International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships, 2001 (AFS Convention)** as well as implementation of the **2011 Guidelines for the Control and Management of Ships' Biofouling to Minimize the Transfer of Invasive Aquatic Species (Biofouling Guidelines)**;
- .7 **supporting the implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention)**, notably by:
- organising a Webinar on the implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean region; and
 - updating the Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management, including its Action Plan and Timetable;
- .8 ensuring special protection of the Mediterranean Sea, notably by developing the draft Guidance Document for the identification and designation of **Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs)** in relation to Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs), and strengthening capacity-building in enhancing the scientific description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), within the framework of the Cooperation Agreement between IMELS and UNEP;
- .9 **supporting the preparation of the 2023 Quality Status Report (QSR), by capitalising on the results of the State of the Environment and Development Report (SoED) 2019, preparing thematic products building on the findings of the SoED 2019, providing input to the Med 2050 Roadmap, as well as updating thematic assessment products related to pollution and marine litter cluster of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP)**, notably by:
- preparing a study on trends and outlook of marine pollution from ships and activities and of maritime traffic and offshore activities in the Mediterranean; and
 - reviewing the Guidance Factsheets for IMAP Common Indicator 6 and Common Indicator 19 related to non-indigenous species and pollution, respectively.

Actions requested by the Meeting

14 **The Meeting is invited to take note** of the information provided in the present document, and **comment**, as appropriate.

Annex I

Status of signatures and ratifications of the 1976 Emergency Protocol and the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol as of 29 October 2020

Contracting Parties	1976 Emergency Protocol			2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol			Offshore Protocol		
	Signature	Ratification	Entered into force	Signature	Ratification	Entered into force	Signature	Ratification	Entered into force
Albania	-	30.05.90/AC	29.06.90	-	-	-	-	26.07.01	24.03.11
Algeria	-	16.03.81/AC	15.04.81	25.01.02	14.11.16	14.12.16	-	-	-
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	22.10.94/SUC	01.03.92	-	-	-	-	-	-
Croatia	-	12.06.92/SUC	08.10.91	25.01.02	01.10.03	17.03.04	14.10.94	08.02.18	10.03.18
Cyprus	16.02.76	19.11.79	19.12.79	25.01.02	19.12.07	18.01.08	14.10.94	16.05.06	24.03.11
European Union	13.09.76	12.08.81/AP	11.09.81	25.01.02	26.05.04	25.06.04	17.12.12/AC	29.03.13	29.03.13
Egypt	16.02.76	24.08.78/AC	23.09.78	-	-	-	-	-	-
France	16.02.76	11.03.78/AP	10.04.78	25.01.02	02.07.03	17.03.04	-	-	-
Greece	16.02.76	03.01.79	02.02.79	25.01.02	27.11.06	27.12.06	14.10.94	-	-
Israel	16.02.76	03.03.78	02.04.78	22.01.03	10.09.14	10.10.14	14.10.94	-	-
Italy	16.02.76	03.02.79	05.03.79	25.01.02	30.06.16	30.07.16	14.10.94	-	-
Lebanon	-	08.11.77/AC	12.02.78	-	3.11.17/AC	03.12.17	-	-	-
Libya	31.01.77	31.01.79	02.03.79	25.01.02	-	-	-	16.06.05	24.03.11
Malta	16.02.76	30.12.77	12.02.78	25.01.02	18.02.03	17.03.04	14.10.94	-	-
Monaco	16.02.76	20.09.77	12.02.78	25.01.02	03.04.02	17.03.04	14.10.94	-	-
Montenegro	-	-	-	-	19.11.07	19.12.07	-	-	-
Morocco	16.02.76	15.01.80	15.02.80	25.01.02	26.04.11	26.05.11	-	01.07.99	24.03.11
Slovenia	-	16.09.93/AC	15.03.94	25.01.02	16.02.04	17.03.04	10.10.95	-	-
Spain	16.02.76	17.12.76	12.02.78	25.01.02	10.07.07	09.08.07	14.10.94	-	-
Syria	-	26.12.78/AC	25.01.79	25.01.02	11.04.08	11.05.08	20.09.95	22.02.11	24.03.11
Tunisia	25.05.76	30.07.77	12.02.78	25.01.02	-	-	14.10.94	01.06.98	24.03.11
Turkey	16.02.76	06.04.81	06.05.81	-	03.06.03	17.03.04	-	-	-

Accession = AC

Approval = AP

Succession = SUC

Annex II

Activities related to the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) carried out by the Centre in accordance with the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 2018-2019 (May 2019 - December 2019) and for the biennium 2020-2021 (1 January 2020 - 31 April 2021)

II.1 Overarching Theme: GOVERNANCE

Strategic Outcome 1.1: Contracting Parties supported in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, Regional Strategies and Action Plans

1 REMPEC prepared a comparative analysis of relevant strategies and action plans, National Action Plans, and fiches providing information on projects supporting the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021), hereinafter referred to as the Regional Strategy (2016-2021). REMPEC submitted the first draft of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) and its Action Plan, hereinafter referred to the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), for comments to the established Brainstorming Group, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and Partners for comments. Representatives from 21 out of 22 Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, as well as representatives from relevant regional and international organisations, actively participated in the Regional Meeting of National Experts on the Mediterranean Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (online, 10 March 2021) organised by REMPEC, which reviewed the second draft of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) as well as agreed upon a set of conclusions and recommendations and upon the amended second draft of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), as amended by the Meeting.

2 REMPEC contributed to the preparation of the UNEP/MAP Mid Term Strategy (2022-2027) (i.e. building blocks and products) and provided relevant documents related to the preparation of the draft Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031).

Strategic Outcome 1.2: Contracting Parties supported in compliance with the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, Regional Strategies and Action Plans

3 The Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC was successfully organised in Malta, from 11 to 13 June 2019, and agreed notably: to continue developing and strengthening pollution response capacity and cooperation at national, sub-regional and regional levels; to launch a wide consultation process to prepare the draft post-2021 Mediterranean Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships; to explore and establish synergies between the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol and the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships; to further examine the possibility of designating the Mediterranean Sea, or parts thereof, as an Emission Control Area (ECA) for Sulphur Oxides (SO_x) under MARPOL Annex VI; and on the need to define a sustainable and collaborative approach to implement effectively the Offshore Protocol and its Action Plan.

Strategic Outcome 1.3: Strengthened participation, engagement, synergies and complementarities among global and regional institutions

4 REMPEC attended, inter alia, the 74th session of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 74) (London, UK, 13-17 May 2019), to present the progress related to the implementation of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol. Progress reports on REMPEC activities were prepared and published for MEPC 75 (online, 16-20 November 2020) and for MEPC 76 (online, 10-17 June 2021). The 2019 achievements and 2020-2021 Programme of Work of REMPEC were presented at the 16th Inter-Secretariat Meeting between Regional Agreement Secretariats, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) (Brussels, Belgium, 5 February 2020), where synergies and follow-up actions were agreed upon. REMPEC also attended the 17th Inter-Secretariat meeting between Regional Agreement Secretariats, European Commission and EMSA (online, 24-25 February 2021).

5 In accordance with the decision adopted by COP 19⁹ on Cooperation and Partners¹⁰, REMPEC also participated in the Stakeholder workshop on lost containers (Brussels, Belgium, 4 September 2019) organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE).

6 REMPEC contributed to the preparation of the EU-funded "Marine Litter-MED II" Project, ensuring continuity and building on the outcome of the first phase of the project, and integrating relevant aspects of the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships in the proposal. IMO, UNEP/MAP and REMPEC explored synergy between the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean in the Framework of Article 15 of the LBS Protocol and the IMO Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships by establishing a dialogue between UNEP/MAP and IMO to ensure synergies between the EU-funded "Marine Litter-Med II" Project and the IMO-FAO-Norway GloLitter Partnerships Project.

Strategic Outcome 1.4: Knowledge and understanding of the state of the Mediterranean Sea and coast enhanced through mandated assessments for informed policy-making and Strategic Outcome 2.4: Marine Pollution Monitoring and Assessment

7 The first draft Study on trends and outlook of marine pollution from ships and activities and of maritime traffic and offshore activities in the Mediterranean, prepared by REMPEC in collaboration with MED POL, the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC), the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Project Team, and the CU, was reviewed by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The second draft Study submitted to the present Meeting was prepared integrating comments from the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and elements from the complementary study related to ship movement forecast for the next 5, 10, 20 and 30 years. The Study will contribute to the preparation of QSR 2023 and the Med 2050 Roadmap.

8 The revised IMAP Guidance Factsheets for the Common Indicators 19 (CI19) and 6 (CI6), prepared by REMPEC in consultation with SPA/RAC, were submitted to the CORMON Meeting, under document UNEP/MED WG. 482/21. In this context, REMPEC exchanged best practice on CI19 with the Bonn Agreement, HELCOM as well as other regional seas programme and the EU with a view to better defining "acute pollutions" and related level to trigger monitoring of the impact to the environment. The revised documents were shared with the members of the Online Working Group (OWG) and the present Meeting and will be discussed during the next CORMON Meeting.

Strategic Outcome 1.5: MAP knowledge and MAP information system enhanced and accessible for policy-making, increased awareness and understanding

9 REMPEC launched its new REMPEC.2.0 website, the revamped Waste Management Decision Support Tool and the MENELAS websites, hosted on INFO/RAC's server together with the Preparedness for Oil-polluted Shoreline clean-up and Oiled Wildlife interventions (POSOW) and Mediterranean Integrated Geographical Information System on Marine Pollution Risk Assessment and Response (MEDGIS-MAR) websites, which were transferred in 2019.

10 MEDGIS-MAR was upgraded and complemented with 15 new features, including a layer related to illicit discharges, a responsive interface with additional filters, customised access and update by Mediterranean coastal States, as well as running of oil forecasting simulations.

11 REMPEC Country Profiles were reviewed and updated by partners of the EU-funded West MOPoCo Project (i.e. Algeria, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain, and Tunisia as well as Monaco) together with their respective list of response equipment and experts on MEDGIS-MAR.

12 In cooperation with the IMO, HELCOM, the Bonn Agreement, Cedre, Transport Canada, and the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, REMPEC finalised the revision and upgrade of MIDSIS-TROCS, within the framework of the EU-funded West MOPoCo Project.

⁹ Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016).

¹⁰ UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, Decision IG.22/18.

13 REMPEC launched a consultation process, through the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG), for the establishment of a Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean within the framework of the EU-funded West MOPoCo Project. REMPEC produced a report on the outcome of the consultation process (survey), carried out through the MTWG, which was discussed at MEDEXPOL 2020 (Monaco, 27-29 October 2020). A concept note is presented to the present meeting for its consideration.

14 Within the approved EU-funded West MOPoCo Project, the project website (www.westmopoco.rempec.org) and other promotional material were launched in September 2019.

15 REMPEC also set-up IT infrastructure to facilitate work during teleworking arrangements and a digital telephone system to ensure REMPEC staff can be accessible on the Centre telephone number at anytime from anywhere, in particular in case of emergency.

Strategic Outcome 1.6: Raised awareness and outreach

16 REMPEC initiated consultation with the IMO for the production of a promotional video on the work of the Barcelona Convention on the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as a SO_x ECA (Med SO_x ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, and the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031).

17 REMPEC actively participated in the UNEP/MAP Communication Task Force, contributed to the MED NEWS, provided regular input for publication of UNEP/MAP and IMO articles, and regularly updated the news section of REMPEC website and social media.

II. 2 Core Theme I: LAND AND SEA-BASED POLLUTION

Strategic Outcome 2.1: Strengthening regional implementation of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention and four pollution-related Protocols, and of programmes of measures in existing relevant Regional Strategies and Action Plans

18 Particular attention was given to sub-regional developments and initiatives during the current biennium. REMPEC assistance was formally requested to elaborate a Trilateral Agreement (Sub-regional Marine Oil Pollution Contingency Plan) between Greece, Cyprus and Egypt, the draft of which was discussed by the competent authorities during two meetings organised by REMPEC (Piraeus, Greece, 9-10 October 2019 and Nicosia, Cyprus, 20-21 November 2019). The ongoing work process for the finalisation of the Annexes to the Sub-regional Oil Marine Pollution Contingency Plan between Cyprus, Egypt and Greece was suspended following the withdrawal of Egypt, due to unsuccessful internal procedures.

19 The following activities were implemented within the framework of the EU-funded West MOPoCo project:

- .1 REMPEC contributed to the preparation of a first draft Study, led by France, aimed at identifying and establishing operational and administrative synergies between existing sub-regional agreements in place in the Western Mediterranean region;
- .2 The initial draft Inter-regional HNS response was submitted to the HELCOM Response Group (Vejle, Denmark, 26-28 February 2020), and to MEDEXPOL 2020 (online, 27-29 October 2020) for its consideration. The final version was produced and published in April 2021 and disseminated to REMPEC, HELCOM and the Bonn Agreement for submission to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, the Helsinki Convention, and the Bonn Agreement.
- .3 The manual and tools to evaluate oil spill management capabilities introduced in 2019 were used by Algeria, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain, and Tunisia.
- .4 REMPEC contributed to the development of the template for the Manuals on National Mechanisms for the mobilisation of response equipment and experts in case of emergency, supervised the completion of the assessment by Algeria, Malta, Morocco Spain, and Tunisia, as well as assisted the completion by France and Italy whilst suggesting it to Monaco.

20 Further to the announcement by PAP/RAC of the signature of CAMP Bosnia and Herzegovina, REMPEC relaunched the activity for the development of the National Contingency Plan (NCP) of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

21 The agreement within the framework of the MAU between the newly established Adriatic Training and Research Centre for Accidental Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (ATRAC) and REMPEC was signed in Malta on 12 June 2019. REMPEC renewed its agreements with the Italian Federation of the chemical industry (FEDERCHIMICA) and Sea Alarm within the MAU, as well as initiated the renewal process with other MAU Members, i.e. Cedre and the Mediterranean Operational Network for the Global Ocean Observing System (MONGOOS). In accordance with Decision IG 3/5, the MAU special revolving fund reached a level equivalent to the average expenses of a one-month mission.

22 The MAU was activated to provide remote expertise to Israel in March 2021. On 9 March 2021, REMPEC received a request for assistance from the Lebanese authorities regarding the oil spill incident affecting the Lebanese shoreline since 22 February 2021. Upon receipt of the request for assistance, under UNEP leadership, a coordination team was established involving representatives from the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC), UNEP, United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT) and REMPEC. REMPEC deployed onsite two MAU experts from ATRAC from 23 March to 2 April 2021. The objectives of the ten-day mission were to assess the extent of the pollution, assist national and local authorities in ongoing clean-up and remediation operations, as well as to provide guidance on oiled waste management.

23 The Third Meeting of MENELAS (Valletta, Malta, 15-16 October 2019) examined the implementation of its Programme of Activities for the period 2018-2019, discussed about operational cooperation to combat illicit ship pollution discharges in the Mediterranean as well as cooperation with other regional and international organisations. The report on the activities of MENELAS, as requested by Decision IG.21/9, was submitted to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points and COP 21, under documents UNEP/MED WG.468/Inf.14 and UNEP/MED IG.24/Inf.9, respectively. REMPEC carried out preparatory work with a view to following up on the conclusions and recommendations from the Third Meeting of MENELAS pertaining to the work of the MENELAS Working Group. The Fourth Meeting of MENELAS meeting originally planned for September 2020 was organised remotely by REMPEC on 21 and 22 April 2021, in particular to review the draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report, the draft decision to apply criteria for a common minimum level of fines for each offense provided for under the Annexes to MARPOL, as well as to discuss about the modalities of possible creation and operation, including in terms of governance and financing, of a regional "Blue Fund". REMPEC invited the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to share information on any coordinated aerial surveillance operations for illicit ship pollution discharges.

24 REMPEC established contact with INTERPOL and EUROPOL to enhance cooperation, as a follow-up to the operation "30 Days at Sea", the report¹¹ of which was submitted to the Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 11-13 June 2019). Since REMPEC did not receive any request from Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to participate in surveillance operations, the related funds were allocated to other activities.

Strategic Outcome 2.2: Development or update of new/existing action plans, programmes and measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines

25 The Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 11-13 June 2019) adopted the "2019 Guide for risks of gaseous releases resulting from maritime accidents", as set out in document REMPEC/WG.45/12/2. This meeting also agreed upon the initial draft table of content of the Joint Inter-Regional HNS Response Manual prepared in consultation with ITOPF, Cedre, HELCOM, OSPAR/Bonn Agreement and REMPEC within the framework of the EU-funded West MOPoCo Project, presented in document REMPEC/WG.45/12/3.

¹¹ REMPEC/WG.45/INF.18.

26 Within the framework of the EU-funded “Marine Litter-MED” Project as well as the Cooperation Agreement between IMELS and UNEP, the draft Operational Guidelines on the provision of reception facilities in ports and the delivery of ship-generated wastes in the Mediterranean (the “Operational Guidelines”) as well as a draft Guidance Document to determine the application of charges at reasonable costs for the use of port reception facilities or, when applicable, application of the No-Special-Fee system, in the Mediterranean (the “Guidance Document”) were reviewed by the Second Regional Meeting on Marine Litter Best Practices (Seville, Spain, 8-10 April 2019). The Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 11-13 June 2019) agreed upon the draft Operational Guidelines and the draft Guidance Document respectively presented in documents REMPEC/WG.45/9/1 and REMPEC/WG.45/9/2, as well as requested the Centre to submit them to the next Meeting of the Focal Points of MAP, for approval. The Operational Guidelines and Guidance Document were subsequently approved by the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points (document UNEP/MED WG.468/14) and were adopted by COP 21 under Decision IG.24/11 (This activity also contributes to 2.5.1 and 2.5.2).

Strategic Outcome 2.3: Strengthening and implementation of marine pollution prevention and control legislation and policies at national level, including through enforcement and integration into sectorial processes

27 REMPEC provided technical support to Albania, Egypt, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey, further to their respective expressions of interest for the preparation of National Action Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021).

Strategic Outcome 2.4: Marine Pollution Monitoring and Assessment

28 The Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 11-13 June 2019) agreed upon the section related to “Maritime transport” prepared by REMPEC, in cooperation with Plan Bleu and the Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production (SCP/RAC), as set out in Annex III of document REMPEC/WG.45/8, to contribute to the publication of the SoED 2019.

Strategic Outcome 2.5: Enhanced capacity at regional, sub-regional and national levels including technical assistance and capacity building

29 Based on the National IMO training course on response to HNS in the marine environment (Istanbul, Turkey, 13-16 November 2018) using the newly developed IMO model course, REMPEC, in collaboration with IMO and EMSA, organised a new session of the training (in Tekirdağ, Turkey) in the first week of December 2019. REMPEC also organised the National oil spill response training course (IMO OPRC Model Course Levels 2) in Montenegro, from 19 to 21 June 2019, financed by the IMO’s ITCP, and supported the 4th edition of the Adriatic Oil Spill Conference (ADRIASPILLCON 2019) (Croatia, 28-30 May 2019), which discussed the development of a sub-regional oil spill contingency plan for the Adriatic Sea region.

30 Within the approved EU-funded West MOPoCo Project, the Sub regional training on the use of the Readiness Evaluation Tool for Oil Spills RETOS™ organised by REMPEC (Malta, 24-26 April 2019) provided beneficiary countries with the necessary technical knowledge to self-assess their national oil spill contingency plans.

31 Within the framework of the EU-funded “Marine Litter-MED” Project, as well as relevant activities of the Cooperation Agreement between IMELS and UNEP, the following activities were implemented by REMPEC in Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, and Tunisia:

- .1 Seven (7) pilots to determine the application of charges at reasonable costs for the use of port reception facilities or, when applicable, application of No-Special-Fee system in seven (7) ports;
- .2 Six (6) pilots related to the provision of port reception facilities and the delivery of ship-generated wastes in six (6) marinas;
- .3 Eight (8) national meetings with relevant stakeholders to raise awareness on the need to better manage marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and to provide ships using their ports with updated information relevant to the obligation arising from MARPOL Annex V and from their legislation applicable in the field.

32 REMPEC organised the Sub-Regional Meeting on the Better Management of Marine Litter from Sea-based Sources in Ports and Marinas in the Adriatic (Sliema, Malta, 29-30 January 2020), which was part of the 2018-2019 activities funded by the Cooperation Agreement between IMELS and UNEP, to discuss the outcome of the national pilots and follow-up measures in the Adriatic. REMPEC also contributed to the preparation of the EU-funded "Marine Litter-MED II" Project, ensuring continuity and building on the outcome of the first phase of the project, during which the organisation of the national pilots related to the better management of marine litter from sea-based sources in ports and marinas for Lebanon had been originally planned.

33 REMPEC organised, in close co-operation with IMO, the Regional Workshop on the AFS Convention and the Biofouling Guidelines (Valletta, Malta, 12-14 November 2019) co-funded by the IMO's ITCP as co-financing commitment to the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project.

34 MEDEXPOL 2020 originally to be held in Monaco from 27 to 29 October 2020 was held remotely, to present and discuss deliverables of the EU-funded West MOPoCo Project for further integration at Mediterranean level.

35 REMPEC initiated the preparation of the Sub-regional Workshop on the assessment of the level of oil spill response planning and readiness management (Tirana, Albania, 28-30 April 2020), which was postponed to September 2021 and will be held remotely.

Strategic Outcome 2.7: Identifying and tackling new and emerging issues, as appropriate

36 The final draft Technical and Feasibility Study as well as the revised draft recommendations, including a revised draft road map, and an initial revised draft submission to the IMO were submitted to the Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 11-13 June 2019), as documents REMPEC/WG.45/INF.9, REMPEC/WG.45/11 and REMPEC/WG.45/INF.10, respectively. REMPEC participated in a side event and a meeting on the Med SO_x ECA organised in the margins of MEPC 74 (London, UK, 13-17 May 2019) as well as was consulted on the matter during the preparations of the "Sommet des deux rives" (Marseille, France, June 2019) attended by the Head of States of the countries of the 5+5 Dialogue.

37 The draft roadmap set out in document UNEP/MED WG.468/11 was reviewed by the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points and was submitted to COP 21 that eventually adopted the related Decision IG.24/8 on the Road Map for a Proposal for the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, within the Framework of the Barcelona Convention.

38 REMPEC prepared, in consultation with the Secretariat of the MAP-Barcelona Convention System, the IMO, Plan Bleu and MED POL, a plan for the implementation of Decision IG.24/8 on the roadmap for the possible designation of the Med SO_x ECA, defining roles and responsibilities, identifying challenges and opportunities, as well as agreeing on the process related to the drafting of the required studies in January 2020. REMPEC, MED POL and Plan Bleu launched a joint Call for Expressions of Interest to provide consultancy services for the implementation of the road map in April 2020, and drafted five (5) ToRs related to the IMO submission and synopsis of the assessment (ToR 1), quantification of the impacts associated with deposition of PM_{2.5} and air toxics (ToR 2), land-based emissions controls (ToR 3), additional economic impact evaluation (ToR 4), and fuel supply and technology (ToR 5), which were submitted to the SO_x ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts for its consideration prior to the launch of the related tenders.

39 Through the IMO, REMPEC launched, in June 2020, a Request for Proposals on the provision of consultancy services related to the implementation of the road map for the possible designation of the Med SO_x ECA, which covered LOT 1 (updating of the initial draft submission to the IMO), LOT 2 (land-based emissions control measures of SO_x and PM in the Mediterranean coastal States) and LOT 3 (analysis of fuel supply and alternative compliance methods).

40 The successful consultant for LOT 1 and LOT 2 as well as the successful company for LOT 3 initiated their respective work and provided the first deliverables, as scheduled, in September 2020, which were submitted to the SO_x ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts for feedback and comments in October 2020. REMPEC also contributed to the preparations by Plan Bleu of a Call for Proposals for the “*Additional economic impact evaluation for the possible designation of the Mediterranean as a SO_x Emission Control Area*”, which covered LOT 4.

41 Revised deliverables were submitted to the SO_x ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts for feedback and comments in January 2021.

42 The final deliverables, which took into account the feedback and comments received from the SO_x ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts, were discussed at the Regional Expert Meeting on the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SO_x ECA pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI (online 27-28 April 2020) organised by REMPEC. This meeting adopted a set of conclusions and recommendations for their consideration by the present meeting.

43 REMPEC submitted an information document¹² to the seventy-sixth (76th) session of the IMO’s MEPC (MEPC 76) to be held remotely from 10 to 17 June 2021, which provided information on the adoption and implementation of the road map.

44 During the period under review, the Secretariat MAP-Barcelona Convention System, in cooperation with INFO/RAC, REMPEC and Plan Bleu, raised awareness on the Med SO_x ECA, through various publications and the production of a story map.

45 To facilitate the ratification and implementation of relevant international maritime conventions related to the protection of the marine environment, REMPEC participated, together with the Secretariat of the MAP-Barcelona Convention System, in an ad-hoc inter-ministerial meeting organised by the Tunisian authorities (Tunis, Tunisia, 11 March 2020) to discuss about the implementation of Decision IG.24/8.

46 Six (6) online National Workshops on Ratification and Effective Implementation of MARPOL Annex VI financed by the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF) and the IMO’s ITCP were organised by REMPEC in line with the road map to support the implementation and ratification processes, in Albania (Durrës, 25-26 November 2019), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo, 28-29 November 2019), Libya (Tunis, Tunisia, 5-6 December 2019), Egypt (online, 25 November 2020), Algeria (online, 26 November 2020), and Lebanon (online, 10 December 2020).

47 The Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre – Africa (MTCC-Africa) organised, in collaboration with REMPEC, the Webinar for Climate Change Mitigation in the Shipping and Maritime Industry with a Focus on North African States bordering the Mediterranean Sea (online, 18 February 2021) within the framework of the Global MTCC Network (GMN) initiative funded by the European Union and implemented by the IMO.

48 REMPEC did not receive any request from the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to provide technical support to raise awareness on the reduction of underwater noise from commercial shipping to address adverse impact on marine life.

¹² MEPC 76/INF.63.

II.3 Core Theme II: BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS

Strategic Outcome 3.1: Strengthening regional implementation of the obligations under the Barcelona Convention, and its relevant Protocols and other instruments

49 Within the framework of the Cooperation Agreement between IMELS and UNEP, REMPEC and SPA/RAC cooperated on the preparation of the Guidance Document for the identification and designation of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) in relation to Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs), hereinafter referred to as the draft Guidance Document, and the strengthening of capacity-building in enhancing the scientific description of EBSAs. The draft PSSA Guidance Document was disseminated among participants of the Adriatic Region Workshop on PSSAs and the Mediterranean Seminar on PSSAs (Tirana, Albania, 9-12 December 2019), organised by SPA/RAC in collaboration with REMPEC, with the purpose of providing information regarding the regulatory elements of PSSAs and the potential policy tools that could be leveraged to contribute to the protection of sea areas subject to the environmental impact of marine traffic.

50 REMPEC and SPA/RAC submitted the draft Guidance Document to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, through the REMPEC Prevention Focal Points and the Focal Points for Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD), for feedback and comments prior to its submission to the present meeting for its consideration.

51 Despite several attempts to specify, with the interested parties, the type of assistance and timeframe to support the process for the implementation of a pilot on mutually granted exemptions under the BWM Convention, making use of the same risk area concept for short sea shipping trade between two neighbouring countries in specific areas of the Mediterranean Sea, this activity could not be launched due to lack of responsiveness.

Strategic Outcome 3.2: Development of new action plans, programmes and measures, common standards and criteria, guidelines for the conservation of Coastal and Marine biodiversity and ecosystems

52 REMPEC prepared, in consultation with SPA/RAC, the first draft of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027), hereinafter referred to as the draft Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027), the outline of which was introduced during the Webinar on the implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean region (online, 23 September 2020) organised by REMPEC in collaboration with IMO. Subsequently, a consultation process was launched to collect feedback and comments from the Focal Points of MAP, REMPEC Prevention Focal Points and SPA/BD Focal Points, which were taken into account, in the final draft Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) submitted to the present meeting for its consideration.

53 In consultation with the Secretariat of the MAP-Barcelona Convention System, REMPEC invited HELCOM, the ODYSSEA Project and SPA/RAC to share information on data and projects related to the granting of exemption under the BWM Convention, target species in the Mediterranean Sea and its relationship with the BWM Convention at the Webinar on the implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean region (online, 23 September 2020).