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

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

REMPEC/WG.51/9  
Date: 7 May 2021

Online, 31 May – 2 June 2021

Original: English

Agenda Item 9

### **DATA SHARING, MONITORING AND REPORTING**

#### **Note by the Secretariat**

#### **SUMMARY**

**Executive Summary:** This document sets out an outline of progress made on data sharing, monitoring and reporting since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC held in Malta in June 2019

**Action to be taken:** Paragraph 30

**Related documents:** REMPEC/WG.45/8, REMPEC/WG.45/16, REMPEC/WG.51/9/1, REMPEC/WG.51/9/2, REMPEC/WG.51/9/3, REMPEC/WG.51/INF.3, REMPEC/WG.51/INF.8, REMPEC/WG.51/INF.10

#### **Background**

1 The Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) (Floriana, Malta, 11-13 June 2019), hereinafter referred to as “the Meeting”, reviewed the document REMPEC/WG.45/8, which outlined the progress made on data sharing, monitoring and reporting since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 23-25 May 2017).

2 In light of the description provided on the various data reporting procedures and requirements established in the framework of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”), and noting that the Centre received only a minimal number of reports, revisions and updates through the regional decision support tools, the Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to:

- .1 **regularly update** their Country Profiles, the Mediterranean Integrated Geographical Information System on Marine Pollution Risk Assessment and Response (MEDGIS-MAR), the Information System of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL<sup>1</sup> within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS);
- .2 **use the Waste Management Decision Support Tool** to establish or review their national waste management strategy for oily waste resulting from accidental marine pollution;

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<sup>1</sup> International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)

- .3 **liaise** with the respective MENELAS Designated Representative to contribute to the discussion on the MENELAS database on illicit ship pollution discharges in the Mediterranean;
- .4 **submit** their annual reports to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) by 31 December of each year, using the revised reporting format set out in MEPC/Circ.318, for those who are Parties to MARPOL;
- .5 **liaise** with the respective MAP Focal Points to report on the implementation of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, through the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS); and
- .6 **liaise** with the respective MAP Focal Points to contribute to the revision of the InfoMAP Data Management Policy and to explore the best way forward to reach a consensus on the access rights of national data, with a view to improving the quality, speed and effectiveness of the decision-making process in case of marine pollution incidents.

3 Further to the consideration of the Decision IG.23/11 related to the Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents, the Meeting:

- .1 **urged** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to take the necessary measures to incorporate the procedures defined in the Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents into their national, bilateral and multilateral systems for preparedness and response to marine pollution;
- .2 **encouraged** them to regularly test those procedures during communication and full-scale exercises; and
- .3 **requested** the Secretariat to envisage the use of the the Emergency Communication and Information System for marine pollution incidents (CECIS) Marine Pollution, within the EU-cofunded Western Mediterranean Region Marine Oil and HNS Pollution Cooperation Project (West MOPoCo), in order to enhance coordination of requests for, and offers of international assistance.

4 In light of the conclusion of the 2017 Mediterranean Quality Status Reports (2017 MED QSR) and the recommendations on environmental monitoring and reporting from shipping activities, which emphasized that monitoring initiatives should not be limited to the Common Indicator 19 of the Ecological Objective 9 of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea, and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP), the Meeting requested the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to continuously monitor and report, as required the following, within their national monitoring programme:

- .1 illicit discharges occurrences and their cumulative effects and impacts;
- .2 accidental post-spill consequences on biota and ecosystem;
- .3 non-indigenous species (NIS) invasion; and
- .4 underwater noise from commercial shipping.

5 Recognising the importance of a common approach on data sharing, and following the overview provided by the Secretariat, when working towards a standardised monitoring and reporting format for the pollution from ships, the Meeting requested the Secretariat to:

- .1 **carry out** (at international and regional levels) a comparative review of existing reporting procedures and formats to, as much as possible, avoid duplication, and to ensure the format retained is in line with the one already developed; and
- .2 **review**, as required, relevant IMAPs Assessment Fact Sheets.

6 With a view to contributing to the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR, and in light of the gaps identified and related assessment exercises, the Meeting **requested** the Secretariat, with the contribution of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, to update existing information and prepare a Study on marine pollution from ships and maritime traffic trends in the Mediterranean for the next biennium.

### **REMPEC platforms developments**

7 With a view to assisting the Contracting Parties to the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, in the process of implementing its Article 7 on Dissemination and exchange of information, REMPEC developed, over the years, a set of tools, as referred to in documents REMPEC/WG.32/5, REMPEC/WG.37/10, REMPEC/WG.41/9 and REMPEC/WG.45/8 submitted respectively to the Tenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 3-5 May 2011), the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 15-17 June 2015), the Twelfth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 23-25 May 2017) and the Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 11-13 June 2019).

8 During the period under review, MEDGIS-MAR was upgraded and complemented with 15 new features, including a layer related to illicit discharges, a responsive interface with additional filters, customized access and update by Mediterranean coastal States, and running of oil forecasting simulations.

9 REMPEC launched its new REMPEC.2.0 website, the revamped Waste Management Decision Support Tool and the MENELAS websites. All REMPEC websites are now hosted on INFO/RAC's server together with the Preparedness for Oil-polluted Shoreline clean-up and Oiled Wildlife interventions' (POSOW) and MEDGIS-MAR websites, which were transferred in 2019.

10 In line with previous recommendations, the Secretariat proposes that the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention:

- .1 **regularly update** their Country Profiles, MEDGIS-MAR, and MENELAS Information System; and
- .2 **use the Waste Management Decision Support Tool** to establish or review their national waste management strategy for oily waste resulting from accidental marine pollution.

### **Draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report and reporting of illicit ship pollution discharges**

11 The Fourth Meeting of MENELAS, which was organised remotely by REMPEC on 21 and 22 April 2021, also discussed the further development of a draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report. the establishment of a MENELAS database on illicit ship pollution discharges in the Mediterranean, the outcome of which is reflected in the report of the meeting reproduced in document REMPEC/WG.51/INF.8.

12 Having agreed to take the standard forms developed and used by relevant regional and international organisations, namely the IMO, the North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors (NSN)<sup>2</sup>, the Bonn Agreement<sup>3</sup>, as well as the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission or HELCOM)<sup>4</sup>, as a basis for the finalisation of a draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report, within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and MENELAS, the Fourth Meeting of MENELAS also stressed the importance to obtain first-hand experience in the Mediterranean region with the implementation of the said standard forms and recommended that these were used during a forthcoming coordinated aerial surveillance operation for illicit ship pollution discharges in the Mediterranean (OSCAR-MED) to be organised by the Secretariat of the RAMOGE Agreement<sup>5</sup>, with the participation of:

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<sup>2</sup> a body associated with the Commission established by the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention), the latter referred to as the OSPAR Commission.

<sup>3</sup> Agreement for Cooperation in Dealing with Pollution of the North Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances, 1983.

<sup>4</sup> the governing body of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention).

<sup>5</sup> Accord relatif à la Protection de l'Environnement Marin et Côtier d'une Zone de la Mer Méditerranée.

- .1 Mediterranean coastal States; and
- .2 possibly, interested Contracting Parties to the Bonn Agreement and HELCOM and their respective secretariats.

13 In this context, the Secretariat proposes that the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention:

- .1 **participate** in the above-mentioned coordinated aerial surveillance operation, as appropriate; and
- .2 **request** the Centre to submit the finalised draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report to the Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be held tentatively in 2023 for endorsement.

### **Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean**

14 Although Contracting Parties have an obligation to report all incidents which result, or may result, in a discharge of oil or hazardous and noxious substances under Article 9 and 10 of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, during the period under review, only five (5) of Mediterranean coastal States, reported such incidents through the notification systems in place.

15 As requested by the last Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC, the Centre 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 West MOPoCo Project. REMPEC produced a report on the outcome of the consultation process (Survey), carried out through the MTWG, which was discussed at the Regional Workshop to enhance Marine Oil and HNS regional cooperation in the Mediterranean (MEDEXPOL 2020) (Online, 27-28 October 2020). A concept note proposing alternatives for the establishment of a Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean is presented in document REMPEC/WG.51/9/2 for its consideration by the Meeting.

16 In light of these developments, the Secretariat proposes that the Meeting :

- .1 **takes note** of the information provided in the document REMPEC/WG.51/9/2;
- .2 **examines and agrees upon** the proposals put forward by the Secretariat in paragraphs 30, 31, 34, 38, 42, 45, and 49 of the document REMPEC/WG.51/9/2; and
- .3 **agree upon:**
  - i. the possible use of the Emergency Communication and Information System for Marine Pollution (CECIS MP) by all Contracting Parties, as a Common Emergency Communication System for the request of assistance, and invite the Secretariat and Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) to make the necessary adjustments to ensure compliance with the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol; and
  - ii. the proposed interconnection between the equipment database of CECIS MP and MEDGIS-MAR, allowing the update of MEDGIS-MAR equipment database through CECIS MP, as laid down in Annex II to the present document.

### **Manual on national mechanisms for the mobilisation of response equipment and experts in case of emergency**

17 In the framework of the West MOPoCo Project, REMPEC contributed to the development of the common 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 Spain, Tunisia, Malta, Algeria and Morocco, and assisted the completion by France and Italy. In this process, REMPEC Country Profiles were reviewed and updated by 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.

18 Further to the successful use of the Manuals on national mechanisms for the mobilisation of response equipment and experts in case of emergency, the Secretariat prepared the document REMPEC/WG.51/9/3, which presents the objective and added value of such a Manual, and proposes that the Meeting:

1. **takes note** of the information provided in the document REMPEC/WG.51/9/3; and
2. **examines and agrees upon** the proposals put forward by the Secretariat in paragraph 5 of the document REMPEC/WG.51/9/3.

#### **IMAP Guidance Fact Sheets: Common Indicator 6 and 19**

19 In the framework of the Decision IG.22/7 on the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP), adopted by COP 19 (Athens, Greece, February 2016), Common Indicator Guidance Factsheets have been developed to provide a common reference to support the implementation and improvement of national monitoring programmes of Contracting Parties.

20 The factsheet of the Common Indicator 19 "Occurrence, origin (where possible), and extent of acute pollution events (e.g. slicks from oil, oil products and hazardous substances) and their impact on biota affected by this pollution" related to the Ecological Objective 9 (EO9) on Pollution and the factsheet of the Common Indicator 6 "Trends in abundance, temporal occurrence, and spatial distribution of non-indigenous species (NIS)" related to EO2 (Non-indigenous species) were prepared through a wide consultation process.

21 Considering the conclusions of the Mediterranean 2017 Quality Status Report, some sections of the CI19 and CI6 factsheets were revised using information from the "Study on trends and outlook of marine pollution, maritime traffic, and offshore activities in the Mediterranean" presented in the document REMPEC/WG.51/INF.3. The revision process also considered on-going processes, in particular discussions on multi-scale approach for monitoring and assessment and the definition of "significant acute pollution" events under the Bonn Agreement.

22 The revised factsheets presented in document REMPEC/WG.51/9/1 submitted to the present meeting for its consideration, are the result of a consultation with Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention through the Integrated Meetings of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Groups on IMAP Implementation (CORMONs), held by Videoconference, between 1 and 3 December 2020 and the Online Working Group (OWG). The same version is being submitted to the upcoming CORMON Meeting and to the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) Thematic Focal Points.

23 In this context, the Secretariat proposes that the Meeting:

- .1 **takes note** of the information provided in document REMPEC/WG.51/9/1;
- .2 **comments** as appropriate; and
- .3 **requests the Secretariat** to coordinate the finalisation of the amended fact sheets.

#### **Study on trends and outlook of marine pollution, maritime traffic, and offshore activities in the Mediterranean**

24 With a view to contributing to the preparation of the 2023 MED QSR, and in light of the gaps identified and related assessment exercises including the State of Environment and Development in Mediterranean (SoED), presented in the document REMPEC/WG.45/8, which identified a lack of comprehensive knowledge about offshore activities, the Secretariat was requested to update existing information to prepare a Study on marine pollution from ships (accidental and operational pollution, marine litter, air pollution, etc.) as well as maritime traffic trends in the Mediterranean.

25 In order to achieve this objective, REMPEC, in collaboration with the Plan Bleu Regional Activity Centre (PB/RAC), the Mediterranean Pollution Assessment and Control Programme (MED POL), and the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC), prepared a study on trends and outlook on marine pollution from ships and activities and of maritime traffic and offshore activities in the Mediterranean.

26 Further to the consultation process with Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, the revised study considering the Mediterranean coastal States' comments, is submitted to the present Meeting, under the document REMPEC/WG.51/INF.3.

27 In light of the above, the Secretariat proposes that the Meeting:

- .1 **takes note** of the information provided in the document REMPEC/WG.51/INF.3; and
- .2 **requests the Secretariat** to undertake the necessary editorial review and publish the Study on Trends and Outlook on Marine Pollution, Maritime Traffic and Offshore Activities in the Mediterranean.

#### **Comparative review of existing reporting procedures and formats**

28 Recognising the importance of a common approach on data sharing towards a standardised format for monitoring and reporting on pollution from ships in the Mediterranean region, the Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Floriana, Malta, 11-13 June 2019), requested the Secretariat to carry out, at international and regional levels, a comparative review of existing reporting procedures and formats to, as much as possible, avoid duplication and to ensure the format retained is in line with the ones already developed.

29 The said comparative review prepared by the Secretariat, in consultation with the IMO and the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP), is reproduced in the **Appendix** to the document REMPEC/WG.51/INF.10.

#### **Actions requested by the Meeting**

30 **The Meeting is invited to:**

- .1 **take note** of the information provided in the present document; and
- .2 **consider** the proposals put forward by the Secretariat, as reproduced in paragraphs 10, 13, 16, 18, 23, and 27 of the present document.