



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Report	1 - 9
Annex I: List of Participants	
Annex II: Agenda	

## **Introduction**

1. At their Twelfth Ordinary Meeting (Monaco, November 2001), the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention requested the MAP Secretariat to prepare a strategic evaluation of the general framework of the Barcelona Convention (operational entities and the MED Unit), entrusting the Bureau with deciding on the methodology and timetable.
2. At its meeting held in Monaco in October 2002, the Bureau of the Contracting Parties decided on the composition of the "think tank" to be responsible for the evaluation and on its broad outlines and asked the Secretariat to convene the first meeting as soon as possible.
3. Subsequently, the first meeting of the "think tank" was held on 6 March 2003 at the headquarters of the MAP Coordinating Unit in Athens.

## **Participation**

4. All the members of the "think tank" took part in the meeting, namely, the President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties (Monaco), accompanied by a technical adviser, a representative of a Mediterranean country member of the European Union (Greece), a representative of a southern or eastern Mediterranean country (Syrian Arab Republic), a representative of a Mediterranean country included in the next enlargement of the European Union (Slovenia), and two experts appointed by the Secretariat. The Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan was represented by the Coordinator and the Programme Administrator.
5. The full list of participants is attached as Annex I to the present report.

## **Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting**

6. Mr. Lucien Chabason, MAP Coordinator, opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the Coordinating Unit. He recalled that the composition of the "think tank" had been decided by the Bureau at its meeting in Monaco and introduced the two experts designated by the Secretariat, Mr. Mohammed Saied, adviser to the Directorate General of the National Environmental Protection Agency (Tunisia), and Mr. Harry Cocossis, professor at the Department of Planning and Regional Development of the University of Thessaly (Greece). He also introduced Mrs. Tatiana Hema, former director of the Albanian Environmental Agency, who had just taken up the post of Programme Administrator at the MAP in replacement of Mr. H. Da Cruz. Mrs. Hema was taking part in a MAP meeting for the first time and she had prepared the introductory paper submitted to the participants as a basis for their discussions. As the Bureau had requested, the meeting would hold an informal, but above all prospective, exchange of views.
7. After the participants had wished her every success in her new post, Mrs. Hema briefly introduced the introductory paper for the meeting, which comprised two parts: the historical background to the process that had led to the establishment of the "think tank", its possible method of work, and a detailed list of the major challenges facing the MAP in the future, showing the main findings and the issues to be discussed. The meeting should lead to a number of proposals and recommendations, which would be reviewed and supplemented at the second meeting of the "think tank", to be held at the end of April 2003, before the progress report was prepared for submission to the next meeting of the Bureau, to be held in Sarajevo at the end of May 2003.
8. Mr. Fautrier, President of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, thanked the Secretariat for its efforts and emphasized that the meeting was important because numerous

institutional changes were taking place in the Mediterranean region to which the MAP would have to adjust.

**Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

9. The meeting adopted its agenda after having amended it by deciding to have an initial exchange of views following the Coordinator's presentation, and then to consider item by item the second part of the introductory paper on the future challenges facing the MAP and arrive at some preliminary conclusions. It also decided to modify its timetable and to work continuously until the agenda was exhausted.

**Agenda item 3: Introduction by the Coordinator and initial exchange of views on the evaluation process**

10. The Coordinator emphasized that the purpose of his introduction was to stimulate discussion and it did not aim to be exhaustive. As he would soon be leaving his post, he had given considerable thought to MAP's current situation, its assets and its weaknesses. If appropriate remedies were to be found, the latter had to be analyzed properly. He welcomed the Bureau's decision to utilize an internal procedure for the evaluation because representatives of countries, experts and members of the Secretariat all had the detachment needed to undertake a self-evaluation without indulging in the self-satisfaction that sometimes occurred. Nevertheless, if during the discussions it appeared that views or assistance from outside were needed when dealing with certain issues, the group could take the requisite decision. The Coordinator first wished to refer to the components of the Programme and then to horizontal issues. He would base himself on existing evaluations, indicators such as external financing, and comments already made within MAP bodies.

11. The MED POL was presently implementing an extensive programme ranging from ongoing monitoring to practical implementation of the LBS Protocol, particularly through the SAP adopted by countries for that purpose. In carrying out the programme, MED POL had been able to secure assistance from two major sources, a GEF project, which was already far advanced, and recently €1.8 million for a French GEF project. Progress still had to be made in ongoing monitoring, the quality of technical evaluation documents - whose level remained below that of the corresponding publications of OSPAR and HELCOM - and implementation at the national level.

12. The REMPEC was widely recognized as a centre of excellence and its scope had been extended following the negotiation and adoption of the new prevention and emergency Protocol. For 20 years, it had limited itself to preparations for combating accidents, but now it covered the whole series of maritime risks, was preparing a strategy for the implementation of the Protocol, and had obtained MEDA support for a project on port reception facilities.

13. Blue Plan had also undergone change, from useful but somewhat abstract prospective studies to more pragmatic studies such as those on indicators and statistics. In the context of the MEDSTAT-environment programme, it had just received a project contribution of €2 million. The Centre had invested a great deal in the work of the MCSD, dealing with new issues – water demand management, indicators, trade and environment – and ensuring their follow up. Lastly, it had received a MEDA contribution of €500,000 to finalize its report on "Environment and Development". Its weak points remained the inconsistency of the Mediterranean Observatory, an insufficiently international approach, as well as a publication policy that lacked coherence.

14. The SPA/RAC had made considerable progress on an extremely sensitive issue – biological diversity – in an increasingly complex international context with an ever larger

number of international, global and regional legal instruments, and the active presence of well-informed, active and demanding NGOs. Overall, it was the feeling that the MAP had brought out a large number of documents of intention, such as the various action plans, but had achieved few practical results. The SPA/RAC also benefited from a MEDA project. Relations with other conventions and international organizations were sometimes a problem. The evaluation of the Centre was under way.

15. Turning to integrated coastal area management (ICAM), he said that the PAP/RAC had carried out impressive and appreciable work (guidelines, white paper, CAMPs manual), but in the field the practical results had been disappointing. That was also a difficult subject, involving political and economic elements at the local level. The European Union itself had decided not to adopt a directive on the subject and, although it remained a crucial issue within the MAP, ICAM called for a new vision and new operating methods.

16. The role of sustainable development within the MAP and the situation of the MCSD, its functioning and effectiveness, had already been the subject of numerous comments, criticism, questions, at its meetings and those of its Steering Committee, so it was not necessary to return to them at the present meeting, especially as a task force had been entrusted with undertaking an analysis and making proposals for a new outlook. The group would nevertheless have to decide whether it wished to make some suggestions as a contribution to the task force's work or whether it should await the latter's findings. His personal view was that the question of resources for the secretariat – which in any case lay within the competence of the Bureau of the Parties – should not dominate the task force's work. The Commission had more important issues to be dealt with.

17. As to horizontal issues, Mr. Chabason said that the legal system constituted a high-quality structure that was the result of the strenuous renewal and development efforts made from 1994 to 2002. Despite repeated intervention by the Bureau and its President with the Parties to encourage them to speed up the ratification process, only the new SPA Protocol had entered into force. There were various explanations for the disturbing delay, either institutional or political depending on the country. The MAP's credibility was at stake, however, because it did not always have the legal basis required to carry out the activities prescribed in MAP II.

18. In view of the delay in entry into force of the Convention and Protocols, it had only been possible to implement the new reporting system on an experimental basis and it was to be hoped that countries that were taking part voluntarily would submit a positive report at the Contracting Parties' meeting towards the end of 2003. Regarding implementation at the national level, there had been a move from a "soft" law system (inciting Parties) to a mandatory system with new or revised legal instruments. The mandatory system was not perceived as such by the Parties because it had no enforcement mechanism such as that in other conventions. Progress still had to be made in that area, taking as a possible model the mechanisms existing elsewhere.

19. The extension of the MAP's scope and activities could not fail to affect the work of the National Focal Points, whose tasks had increased exponentially. Without modifying the NFP system, it could be made more rational, for example, by dissuading NFPs from attending the MCSD and appointing delegates better suited to the advisory nature of the Commission.

20. After having referred to the question of meetings – their number, duration and cost had to be circumscribed – and information, whose importance had only been realized by the MAP at a late stage and which could still be substantially improved, the Coordinator took up a related issue: the external perception of MAP. The MAP existed in an environment that was increasingly European or pro-European and that had to be taken into account in its various activities. At a more global level, the GEF and the IMO gave MAP full recognition.

On the other hand, MAP's involvement with other global or regional conventions, particularly those relating to biological diversity, and with organizations such as UNESCO, was not adequate, and that was symptomatic of a Mediterranean tendency to cultivate its specificity and the uniqueness of its geographical position at the cross-roads of three continents. The natural trend was to make little reference to the Mediterranean region as an entity in the major global evaluations and the MAP had had to struggle to be included in GEO-3 or in the regional UN/ECE report for Johannesburg.

21. Lastly, the Coordinator reviewed the various types of MAP activities, drawing attention to the current weaknesses and how they could be overcome: reports on implementation of the Convention and Protocols, adoption of strategies for implementation, providing countries that so wished with assistance, although far more substantial financial and human resources were required in addition to the support provided by the GEF, MEDA and the French GEF for special projects. To achieve that, despite the precedents set by the Coastal Area Management Programmes, the emergency plans for combating accidental marine pollution and species management plans, the MAP still had to develop a technical assistance outlook, like the UNDP, and that was one of the major issues to which it would have to devote its attention in the near future.

22. The President thanked the Coordinator for his overview of the MAP, which had been extremely frank. The two elements – vertical and horizontal issues – could be used to orient discussions, which should probably focus on the RACs and programmes, leaving aside certain matters over which there could be little control such as delays in ratification, or which were currently the subject of other work, for example, the future of the MCSD in the context of the task force.

23. The representative of Greece considered that, on the contrary, the question of the MCSD should not be left out of the agenda on the pretext of awaiting the task force's conclusions because in his view, according to what he had heard, the task force was not exactly carrying out the work entrusted to it and the “think tank” might have a message to convey to it. The meeting endorsed his statement.

24. The President invited participants to express their views on the Coordinator's presentation and to hold an initial exchange on the various RACs and programmes. Regarding the 100 Historic Sites Programme, he shared the view that the concept did not belong within the MAP. It was undoubtedly an essential aspect of the Mediterranean eco-region, particularly in relation to tourism, but it was more pertinent to sustainable development and was thus linked to the MCSD.

25. Mr. Cocossis, expert, underlined the MAP's historic role as an environmental cooperation forum and its wide experience in that area, noting that the Programme had evolved to a large extent. The activities, the platforms and the actors had increased, with great expectations on the part of countries in terms of policies and sustainable development. There had to be a new context, which was embodied in the term of new governance. The MAP had now arrived at a crossroads and would have to take a decision on its future role – strategic or operational. In his view, the MAP should move away from its traditional role and take on: (1) the role of a control centre, a “guard dog” for effective implementation of the Convention; (2) the role of a centre for cooperation and coordination in the environmental sphere; (3) a practical role dictated by the possibilities afforded by the international agenda – the year of water, the year of climate change, etc.; and lastly (4) a more dynamic role that would bring it closer to other actors in order to develop partnerships and undertake pilot projects in areas such as tourism or land use planning.

26. The representative of Greece shared the Coordinator's views on the good work done by the MED POL, REMPEC and the Blue Plan. With regard to the latter, he nevertheless regretted that the first meeting on indicators held in January 2000 had not been followed by a second meeting on their application in the countries. That was, in general, an important weakness of the Centres; they focused on projects for which they received financial support (MEDA, MEDSTAT, GEF, etc.), then when the projects reached their agreed term, the Centres went on to another project without any type of follow-up. The PAP/RAC could not be blamed for the absence of practical application of ICAM. The reason was that the issue went beyond the environmental sphere and had political, economic and social implications. The view that the MAP was a relatively flexible forum for cooperation stemmed from the fact that it had no real power, allowing it to issue warnings, impose sanctions, etc. Countries therefore had to mobilize on their own initiative and that was a habit that took a long time to acquire. Lastly, he referred to the importance of the MCSD problem, which required an urgent solution, otherwise it might be the end of the MCSD and that would have serious repercussions for the MAP as a whole.

27. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic considered that when evaluating the MAP's activities, as the group had been requested to do, statistics and charts summarizing the trends and features of the MAP should be used in order to illustrate the situation better and to simplify matters. It would also make it easier to identify lacunae in comparison with other regional or international programmes. The main problem was implementation at the national level, which reflected the gap between the ambitions proclaimed and the measures adopted, and it was once again a question of financing for action in the field, which should be properly covered in the evaluation.

28. The representative of Slovenia highlighted the European context of the MAP and its subregional dimension. The MAP should be an important link for the application of the framework directive on water, through the MED POL, and the REMPEC had been asked to serve as a relay for the Adriatic/Ionian Seas initiative, yielding notable results. He pointed out that, for example, the MED POL questionnaire did not correspond to the European approach, thereby creating some confusion or duplication. Lastly, regarding ICAM, a directive was being prepared at the European level, albeit with difficulty and reluctance on the part of some countries, and in the CAMPs the goal should be synergy among the integration activities of the various RACs and not purely sectoral results.

29. The representative of Monaco considered that rather than comparing the MAP with HELCOM and OSPAR – more homogenous entities – or with what was being done in the EU or in other conventions, one might equally well ask “What would the Mediterranean be like if the MAP did not exist?” It was evident that the EU had “absorbed” many of the MAP's concepts, projects and achievements. The mistake was perhaps to speak of the MAP as though it was composed of only one single category of countries whereas there was a dual level MAP with some countries that had incorporated Community measures or were in the process of doing so, and the others. Even though in most cases the MAP dealt only with ministries of the environment, that was due to a lack of coordination in the countries themselves rather than a decision by the MAP. Lastly, regarding meetings of the Parties, it was perhaps time to move away from the lengthy list of recommendations that traditionally accompanied the report and to separate out the recommendations, introducing the concept of resolutions by the Parties on certain issues, which could more easily be disseminated to the bodies concerned.

30. Mr. Saied, expert, noted that the MAP's history since 1975 showed virtually ten-year cycles – 1985/Genoa, 1992/Rio-Tunis, and lastly 2002/Johannesburg, each time with a re-evaluation and refocusing. That was a healthy and legitimate process. There had already been evaluations (PAP, BP), and others were under way (SPA) or planned. They perhaps duplicated the present strategic evaluation and he wondered whether all the efforts should

not be combined in one comprehensive ten-year evaluation for MAP III, which would begin in 2005. Among the negative elements, the insufficient number of ratifications after five years could be seen as a disturbing and indeed extremely disappointing element because it obliged the MAP to navigate blind and it was perhaps necessary to develop an approach that would raise awareness in countries without appearing to be a form of interference. As had already been emphasized, due to lack of resources, the MAP could not play a direct role in the activities to be carried out, but it could help countries to formulate their financing requests at the appropriate time on the basis of a properly prepared dossier. In view of the extent of the programme, instead of being composed of a single individual, NFPs could be national focal committees whose members would have different expertise and would be involved according to the programme component. He urged the retention of a "culture and heritage" element in the MAP, without necessarily retaining the 100 Historic Sites, which had never functioned properly. It could be part of a tourism project, as had already been proposed by another speaker.

31. Following the preliminary exchange of views, the President made a number of comments. For over 30 years, the MAP's "business" had been to combat pollution and it should continue to assume that role, through the MED POL and REMPEC. It was important not to give in to the tendency towards international thematic years or days. On the other hand, as the representative of Slovenia had emphasized, the discrepancy or even contradiction between managing the Mediterranean and action by the EU was a real problem, and the MAP would lose credibility if it could not coordinate with Brussels. It was also important not to forget biological diversity; the fact that the SPA Protocol alone had entered into force showed that countries were interested in that component. The second aspect for MAP's future was sustainable development, which must be maintained but transcend purely environmental concerns. The MCSD had been in existence for eight years and its experience should be put to good use by improving its functioning. It was a forum for three regions, bringing together developed countries, countries with economies in transition, and developing countries. The Mediterranean should find its place in regional structures and forums established by the United Nations in the post-Johannesburg context.

**Agenda item 4:       Background information on MAP evaluation, including the future challenges**

32. With reference to the strategic evaluation, The Coordinator indicated that what was in the minds of the Parties when they requested the evaluation was that it should be launched, in other words, it should be a process that would gradually take form over time, culminating in an overall in-depth evaluation in 2005. The meeting pursued its discussions by taking up part B of the Secretariat's preliminary document "The MAP future challenges", focusing on the questions for discussion in each section.

1.               *Efficient implementation of the Convention and related Protocols*

33. Turning to the problem of delays in ratification, the meeting considered that it might be useful to **request the focal points in the countries concerned to transmit a precise status report on the ratification process, to provide information on the reasons for the delays and, in the light of their replies, to envisage new approaches to ambassadors in Athens or to ministries of foreign affairs or the environment. If necessary, the approaches could be in the form of a delegation from the President of the Bureau and the Coordinator in some countries.**

34. Regarding the reporting system, the meeting considered that the exercise conducted by several volunteer countries should be pursued and lead to a first concrete report for the next meeting of the Parties at the end of the year so that, gradually, other countries could



become familiar with the procedures, modify them as needed, and adopt them definitively after the various legal instruments had entered into force.

2. *Sustainable development*

35. The “think tank” considered that, as a subsidiary body of the Bureau, it was entitled to **transmit forthwith a message to the task force** so as to guide it in its work. Consequently, it was the “think tank”’s opinion that the **task force should not focus on matters relating to the secretariat, institutional autonomy, creation of posts, and that it was unrealistic to alter the composition and terms of reference of the MCSD before the next meeting of the Parties. For the moment, it was important to consider how the MCSD could utilize its resources better, in particular the RACs, break the routine of its work, tackle the problem of themes in the light of the new global challenges identified at Johannesburg (poverty, social justice, patterns of production and consumption), and how it could become integrated in the post-Johannesburg process established by the United Nations, perhaps with the possibility of obtaining financing from that source. The MCSD should attract the socio-economic actors that had virtually been absent until now** and participants underlined the role that the UN/ECE could play in that respect. They proposed that, if external financing could be obtained, the Commission’s Secretariat should employ a non-environmental professional (preferably an economist).

3. *Assessment documents*

36. Participants recognized the importance of MAP publications, although they considered that their quality could still be greatly improved. Furthermore, the documents were not taken sufficiently into account at the regional and international levels and **they should be made more consistent, appear on a regular basis and be properly planned. Greater contributions should also be made to evaluations by other organizations (GEO-3), documents should be prepared jointly with influential partners** so that they could become better known (for example, the EEA-MAP Mediterranean evaluation report), and **some lacunae should be remedied** (for example, on maritime traffic in the Mediterranean).

4. *Assistance to countries*

37. The meeting agreed that studies focusing on practical action and projects – particularly pre-investment studies – **should include a financing component** in order to ensure the success of donor conferences. While the MAP was unable to finance projects itself, it could nonetheless **play an important role as an interface with financing institutions and other donors**. It therefore had to be fully conversant with the instruments and programmes able to provide a response to eligible countries. The GEF MED precedent was an instructive first step in that direction. The MAP could also play a role at the bilateral level by approaching countries which traditionally lent support in the Mediterranean (Sweden, Denmark, Japan). For that purpose, the Unit and the RACs should in the long term recruit economists by modifying posts.

5. *Partnership*

38. Noting that the Athens Declaration, which recognized the important role played by the MAP, had not yet had any follow-up, on the proposal of the representative of Greece, the meeting requested the President of the Bureau **to address a letter to the Greek Minister for the Environment in order to draw his attention to the question**, because Greece was the current President of the European Union.

39. Regarding cooperation with intergovernmental and other organizations, several participants underlined the difficulties caused by the large number of international and regional conventions and agreements, particularly in areas such as biological diversity where the same species might be covered by several instruments. In view of those developments, **the MAP should rationalize its cooperation by carefully choosing its partners with a view to effectiveness and complementarity.**

40. Concerning cooperation with civil society, several participants drew attention to **the role that might be entrusted to the Barcelona CP/RAC in order to set up links with the business world and economic circles** which the MCS D had not yet been able to attract.

#### 6. *MAP visibility*

41. On the proposal of the Coordinator, the “think tank” heard a brief presentation from Mr. Baher Kamal, the officer in charge of information, on recent developments in the MAP in the area of information, publications and media relations.

42. As to the **MAP website**, two participants made suggestions to **improve its quality by developing its interactive nature and its links to other sites and programmes, partners and international days, providing all the legal texts of the Barcelona system in MAP’s four working languages, collecting statistics on the number of hits, and envisaging publication of “Medwaves” in PDF format** so as to reach a greater number of readers (schools, universities).

#### 7. *Institutional, management and financial issues*

43. A lively debate took place on the Regional Activity Centres and MED POL. One participant said that for more than 25 years the situation had been static and not very rational: the RACs did not all have the same legal status and their budgetary allocations varied. In general, the MED POL received the largest share. There was a need for harmonization and all should be given the same status and a more balanced budgetary allocation. Two other participants considered that, on the contrary, the situation reflected the essential differences, two Centres being responsible for implementing a Protocol (SPA/RAC and REMPEC), another (BP/RAC) being a private law body in line with the deliberate choice of the French Government, thereby raising problems for the issue of visas for meetings or scientific cooperation visits. In addition, the REMPEC came under the dual authority of UNEP and the IMO. Lastly, the two remaining RACs (CP and ERS) were not covered by the strategic evaluation because they had simply been placed at the disposal of the MAP by Spain and Italy respectively and the MAP was not directly responsible for them. In general, their financing had become more balanced over the past few years. In the case of MED POL, which was also responsible for implementing a Protocol, its budget had been greatly reduced in recent years, although that was not evident for the moment because of the amounts it received under GEF and French GEF projects. Traditionally, the MED POL had furnished substantial technical assistance to countries by maintaining and supplying laboratories and through research agreements with a large number of scientific institutions.

44. Agreement was reached on several points during the debate. Although the work of CP/RAC had been received most favourably, the question of setting up new Centres following proposals by countries was no longer on the table following the problems caused by the failure of the first stage of ERS/RAC, as shown by the reservations expressed regarding the proposal to establish a tourism Centre. **When a country had a project to propose to the MAP as a whole, the new approach should be to establish a partnership of limited duration.** That could be the case for the tourism project, to which could be added a “culture and heritage” component. **The terms of reference of two**

**Centres, BP/RAC and CP/RAC, dated back a long way and should be revised.** The PAP/RAC's terms of reference had recently been refocused exclusively on ICAM. The Centres were viewed by countries and partners as technical structures, and rightly so, because they did not have the political authority of the Coordinating Unit. **The Unit should therefore envisage giving the RACs increased support and follow-up for a whole series of issues of a more political nature**, for example, biological diversity for SPA/RAC or the "environment and development" report for BP/RAC.

**Agenda item 5: Date, venue and agenda of the second meeting of the "think tank"**

45. Participants approved the following **provisional agenda** for the "think tank"s next meeting:

- Introduction by the Coordinator;
- Consideration of the task force's conclusions;
- Consideration of the future progress report to be submitted to the Bureau, with charts showing certain major trends (number and cost of meetings, etc.);
- Preliminary conclusions and recommendations to be included in the report.

It was also decided that the meeting would be held at the headquarters of the Coordinating Unit on 23 April 2003, subject to confirmation.

**Agenda item 6: Closure of the meeting**

46. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Coordinator declared the meeting closed at 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 6 March, 2003.



## ANNEX I

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## **ANNEX II**

### **AGENDA**

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the provisional agenda and organization of work
3. Introductory paper on MAP evaluation process and approaches (ways, stakeholders and methodologies)
4. Background information on MAP evaluation including the future challenges
5. Conclusions and recommendations
6. Other business
7. Closure of the meeting