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94<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the  
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment  
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Izola, Slovenia, 20-21 June 2023

**Report of the Meeting**

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## **Introduction**

1. At the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and in accordance with Article IV.2 of the Terms of Reference of the Bureau and in consultation with the President and members of the Bureau, the 94<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols was held in Izola, Slovenia, on 20-21 June 2023.

## **Participation**

2. The meeting was attended by the President of the Bureau, Prof. Mehmet Emin Birpınar, accompanied by advisors; the Vice-Presidents: Mr. Nassir Bsher Madi Naser (Libya); Mr. Mitja Bricelj (Slovenia); Ms. Itziar Martin Partida (Spain); Mr. Mohamed Sghaier Ben Jeddou (Tunisia); and the Rapporteur, Mr. Senad Oprasic (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Ms. Anna Bobo Remijn (European Union) and Ms. Silvia Sartori (Italy, online participation) attended the meeting, as observers. The Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit (Coordinator and Programme Management Officer-Governance). The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

### **I. Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting**

3. The meeting was opened at 09:30 (UTC+1) on Tuesday, 20 June 2023, by Prof. Mehmet Emin Birpınar, President of the Bureau, who welcomed the Bureau members to the third Bureau meeting of the biennium and thanked the Secretariat and Bureau Members for the hard work done during this period. He also emphasized that the work was successfully carried out in implementing the decisions taken at COP 22, held in Antalya, Türkiye, which aimed to improve the Mediterranean environment and to establish a healthy and livable Mediterranean for future generations.

4. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Ms. Tatjana Hema, welcomed all participants to the meeting and thanked the Government of Slovenia and the local authority of Izola for kindly hosting the meeting. She also expressed deep condolences to the Government of Türkiye for the tragedy they experienced during the earthquake that the country faced in February 2023. She stressed the importance of the meeting, which was expected to address a number of issues in view of the preparation of COP23 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Portoroz, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023), including the Program of Work and Budget.

5. The President of the Bureau welcomed and gave the floor to Mr. Milan Bogatič, the Mayor of municipality of Izola, who greeted everyone present, and wished them a successful meeting and pleasant stay in Izola.

### **IV. Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work**

6. The Bureau reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda as contained in document UNEP/MED BUR.94/1. The Bureau member from Türkiye proposed to add a sub-item under Agenda Item 8 on Any other Matters, so that Türkiye could provide some more information regarding the proposal, that was submitted to the Secretariat on the possible establishment of a Regional Activity Center for Climate Change, to be hosted by Türkiye.

### **V. Agenda Item 3: Progress Report for November 2022 - May 2023**

7. The MAP Coordinator introduced the document “Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period November 2022 – May 2023” (UNEP/MED BUR.94/3), through an extensive PowerPoint presentation on the work and achievements of this period which included visual elements such as photographs from meetings and events, videos/pictures from Marine Protected Areas, etc. The Coordinator also referred to document “Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Implementation of COP 22 Decisions” (UNEP/MED BUR.94/4).

8. The President of the Bureau congratulated the Secretariat for the achieved progress and the huge effort put in this report. The President proposed that the videos/visual material, which were very nice and representing various activities, are placed on the UNEP/MAP website so that also the other Contracting Parties can view them. The President also suggested that Contracting Parties should encourage young people to prepare short video films (15 min), showing the specificities and beauty of their sea and coastal area, maybe for the side events of COP 23.

9. Other Bureau members also congratulated the Secretariat for the work done and for the excellent Power Point presentation that was fully responding to the relevant request made at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bureau meeting (Thessaloniki, Greece, 30 November-1 December 2023). They praised the idea of a new way of “storytelling” about what has been done in a more colorful way and stressed that this could be used to enhance visibility among young people and to bring other stakeholders closer to the process of environmental protection and sustainable development.

10. One member of the Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the support provided to his country regarding the implementation of activities, that are important for solving environmental challenges on the ground. Another Bureau member referred to the importance on working on disaster risk reduction, especially following the natural disasters that countries in the region recently faced. Furthermore, another member of the Bureau referred to the importance to follow up on the work on the MED SO<sub>x</sub> Emissions Control Area (ECA) by establishing a technical committee on the MED NO<sub>x</sub> ECA; she also referred to the need to have a decision on the MedECC Special Reports at COP 23.

11. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau expresses its appreciation for the work done in the period November 2022 – May 2023 as presented by the Secretariat, and its satisfaction for the efforts and results achieved by the Secretariat and the MAP Components.**

**(b) The Bureau welcomes the presentation of the progress report through an interactive powerpoint presentation with visual elements taken from major PoW activities and asks the Secretariat to continue this very good practice in future meetings.**

**(c) The Bureau stresses the importance of timely nominations by the Contracting Parties of representatives to UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention meetings and the need to respect these nominations for the efficient and cost-effective operation of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system.**

**VI. Agenda Item 4: Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues**

12. The MAP Coordinator presented to the Bureau members a financial and administrative update as contained in the “Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues” (UNEP/MED BUR.94/5), addressing the status of financial contributions, personnel, administrative matters and consultancy reporting. She highlighted the positive balance of the MTF, noting that in terms of assessed contributions the situation is a little behind schedule compared to the previous year. She added that continued support will be provided to Contracting Parties facing difficulties, and that there is some progress in view of collecting arrears. The Coordinator stressed that a positive cash balance is crucial in order to initiate the implementation of activities. In terms of implementation, she noted that the level of financial implementation is at 70%, with the aim to reach a minimum of 95% financial implementation by the COP. The Coordinator referred the lack of human resources and noted the long period needed to complete a recruitment. She also noted that regarding the refurbishment of the premises there are some good developments; the process is expected to start in January 2024. Regarding the Regional Activity Centres, she stressed that many of the RAC directors will leave their position due to retirement or other reasons and that the Secretariat, together with the host countries, is making every effort to ensure a smooth transition.

13. Two representatives asked for a more detailed explanation of point C of the document “Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues” on the Financial Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023, especially regarding a more detailed explanation of the levels of expenditure for 2023, before the MAP Focal Points meeting. One representative noted that the cost of the refurbishment of the offices should not be in expense of the running costs. Some members of the Bureau also noted the number of outstanding vacancies as well as the lack of human resources, which is a long-standing issue. One Bureau member noted in this respect that it is important to find solutions and provide the Secretariat and MAP Components with appropriate assistance, since a complete and motivated team is important for the quality work of the Secretariat and the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

14. **Conclusions:**

- (a) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to share the certified and audited financial statements for the year 2022 as soon as they are available and asks the Secretariat to provide a clear picture and related figures on the 2023 expenditure per MAP Component/Programme, as soon as possible for the MAP Focal Points meeting and COP 23.
- (b) The Bureau notes with appreciation the contributions received for the years 2022 and 2023 and encourages the Contracting Parties which did not pay to do so as soon as possible.
- (c) The Bureau draws the attention of the Contracting Parties to adhere to Procedure 4.2.b of the Financial Regulations and Rules and Procedures, which states that contributions for each calendar year are expected within the first quarter of that year and should be paid promptly and in full.
- (d) The Bureau encourages the Contracting Parties in arrears to pay them as soon as possible, while noting the specific circumstances of each Contracting Party in arrears.
- (e) The Bureau supports the efforts made by the Secretariat and urges the Secretariat to continue its efforts to maximize the collection of contributions and arrears in line with the Financial Rules and Procedures.
- (f) The Bureau takes note of the status of the financial implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023 and requests the Secretariat to continue making all possible efforts to achieve its full implementation.
- (g) The Bureau takes note of the status of recruitment and asks UNEP to accelerate the recruitment processes to enable the Secretariat to function properly.
- (h) The Bureau encourages the Host Countries of Regional Activity Centres to ensure that the new Directors of the Centres are selected in a timely manner to allow an efficient transition, taking into account national legislation as well as the “Common Operational Principles for MAP Components” adopted at COP 22 and in consultation with the CU in line with relevant COP decisions.
- (i) The Bureau takes note with appreciation of the efforts made with regards to the refurbishment of the premises and requests the Secretariat to accelerate the process with the support of the Greek Government and to report the final outcome of this process to the next Bureau meeting.

#### **V. Agenda Item 5: Specific Issues**

15. The MAP Coordinator presented the “Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues” (UNEP/MED BUR.94/6).

16. The meeting discussed the matters as summarized in the following paragraphs.

##### **- A. Ratification, Reporting and Compliance**

17. The MAP Coordinator, referred to issues related to ratification, reporting and compliance. She informed the meeting that there was a proposal by the compliance committee to revise the Procedures and Mechanisms for Compliance and that the final proposal was sent to the consultation meeting of MAP Focal Points that was held online of 31 January 2023, adding that the proposal has been agreed with some adjustments and that the only issue still open was the number of the Compliance Committee members/alternate members. She added that the Secretariat has received a new communication regarding a possible case of non-compliance by a Contracting Party, which was transmitted by the Secretariat to the Party concerned which was asked to submit an official response providing the needed information on this communication, in accordance to the Rules of Procedure. Finally, she highlighted the need for the Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports for the biennium 2020-2021, since a limited number of reports was submitted up to that moment.

18. The members of the Bureau discussed these issues and concluded as follows.

19. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the current status of ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and urges the Contracting Parties which have not yet done so to make efforts for the ratifications of the Protocols (7 Contracting Parties have not yet ratified the amendments to the Dumping Protocol; 5 Contracting Parties the amendments to the LBS Protocol; 14 Contracting Parties the Offshore Protocol; 5 Contracting Parties the SPA and Biodiversity Protocol; 15 Contracting Parties the Hazardous Waste Protocol; 5 Contracting Parties the Prevention and Emergency Protocol, and; 9 Contracting Parties the ICZM Protocol). To this aim the Bureau also invites these Contracting Parties to liaise with the Secretariat as appropriate to facilitate coordination towards ratification of the relevant legal instruments, with particular focus on the Dumping Protocol to ensure its entry into force as soon as possible.**

**(b) The Bureau encourages the President and the Secretariat to continue their efforts with the respective Contracting Parties to achieve the full ratification of the Protocols to the Barcelona Convention.**

**(c) The Bureau calls on Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports for the period 2020-2021 which supposed to be submitted by December 2022 and strongly urges those Contracting Parties who have not yet done so, to submit their national implementation reports for the reporting periods 2012–2013 and 2014–2015 (2 Contracting Parties), 2016-2017 (4 Contracting Parties), 2018-2019 (9 Contracting Parties) and/or 2020-2021 (12 Contracting Parties) without further delay to complete the reporting for these biennia as soon as possible.**

**- B. COP 22 Key mandates**

20. The Secretariat informed the members of the Bureau about the progress in relation to key COP 22 mandates, with a focus on the processes and on the actions taken as well as on the next steps for their efficient delivery. The MAP Coordinator noted that the work for delivering the 2023 MED QSR based on the relevant Roadmap and the activities included in the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023 was progressing towards its finalization in view of the 10<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group, the MAP Focal Points Meeting and COP 23. She added that post-CORMON and COR ESA revisions to the chapters were underway to prepare a consolidated MED QSR document for the consideration of the meeting of Integrated CORMONs. The EU-funded projects EcAp MED III, IMAP-MPA II and Marine Litter Med II continued to support beneficiary countries in their implementation of monitoring programmes based on IMAP, as well as in the data collection and submission that will contribute to indicators, Ecological Objectives and integrated assessments for the MED QSR, as feasible. She stressed that the delivery of the 2023 MED QSR required a lot of work and that the lack of systematic data reported by the Contracting Parties created several difficulties in the process and would also affect the quality of the entire MED QSR report.

21. The Coordinator highlighted the efforts of the Secretariat to further promote the work on the designation of the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA. REMPEC followed up on the draft national reports on the assessment of the needs that it had submitted to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols that had not yet ratified MARPOL Annex VI. She added that the six Mediterranean coastal States that have not yet ratified MARPOL Annex VI have requested a combination of legal, technical and financial assistance.

22. Finally, the Coordinator informed the meeting that the Secretariat timely launched the preparation of an updated Resource Mobilization Strategy (RMS) for accompanying the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027. She also referred to the resource mobilization activities in support of the operational implementation of the Post-2020 SAPBIO supported by the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), as well as to the resource mobilization activities in support of the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, in view of the implementation of the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA and linked compliance measures.

**23. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the information provided on the key mandates of COP 22 and their implementation, and requests the Secretariat and the respective MAP components to ensure all steps are undertaken for their effective and timely implementation, and urge the Contracting**

**Parties to fully participate and contribute to the effective delivery of related activities of the PoW 2022-2023.**

**(b) The Bureau welcomes the adoption of the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI concerning the Med SOx ECA at the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 79) (London, UK, 12-16 December 2022), and recalls the urgency of ratification, transposition and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI by those countries that have not yet done so, particularly in view of the expected date of entry into effective application of the Med SOx ECA on 1 May 2025.**

**(c) The Bureau encourages the Contracting Parties that have not yet done so, to finalise the assessment of their needs, in consultation with REMPEC and to take the necessary actions for ratifying MARPOL Annex VI with a view to facilitating the designation of the Med SOx ECA pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, and requests the Secretariat and REMPEC, in collaboration with IMO, to support these processes upon request.**

**- C. Main directions of the UNEP/MAP Program of Work and Budget 2024-2025**

24. The MAP Coordinator updated the Bureau on the preparations of the 2024-2025 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget and presented its main directions for the consideration of the Bureau.

25. The representative of an observer highlighted the importance of having a clear picture of the budget allocations when referring to the activities, so that an updated feedback will be sent to the Secretariat as soon as the PoW and Budget is received by Contracting Parties. The representative of another observer thanked the MAP Coordinator for very comprehensive overview of PoW 2024-2025 and corresponding budget and for the simplified way the PoW and Budget 2024-2025 was presented. She asked that actual figures on budget allocation should be provided as soon as possible. She also noted that work on emerging issues, such as the Treaty on BBNJ and the new plastics agreement, has to remain close to the framework of the Medium-Term Strategy and maybe be postponed to the next biennium. She asked for some clarifications to be provided, while she supported the combined approach to cover the additional budget, i.e. through a combination of the use of MTF surplus and a marginal increase of the assessed contributions for the 2024-2025 biennium at the level of 5 percent. A Bureau member also asked for a more clear picture on savings.

26. The MAP Coordinator explained that it is estimated that an additional sum of around 350,000 EUR compared to the approved budget for 2022-2023 may be required in addition to the efforts for securing external funding. She added that the increase for the administrative support costs are 3 percent increase on the costs of international staff posts for the biennium (1.5 percent per year) and a 5 percent increase of the locally recruited staff posts of the Secretariat for the biennium, compared to the 2022-2023 budget. She added that REMPEC is really very short in human resources and that the respective proposal for 2024-2025 will help increasing its staffing.

**27. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomed the principles and main elements for the PoW 2024-2025 and urged the Secretariat to make an effort to send the proposed PoW and budget with detailed figures for the 2024-2025 biennium to the MAP Focal Points as early as possible well in advance of the deadline.**

**(b) The Bureau took note of the preference of the Secretariat to go for the option of using both the savings and a recommended 5% increase of assessed contributions based on the UN scale.**

**- D. Preparations for COP 23: Format, Ministerial Session and Declaration, Host Country preparations**

28. The Secretariat introduced this agenda item, with reference to the theme and format of the Ministerial Session and the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration, as well as to organizational matters.

29. The Bureau member from Slovenia, host country of COP 23, shared with the Bureau members his country's vision for COP 23, highlighting the importance of contributing to a green transition in the Mediterranean, from decisions into actions, with concrete activities. He also referred to the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting

of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (Marseille, France, 14-16 June 2023) which is expected to incorporate the developments and aspects related to sustainable development.

30. The Coordinator added that the proposals on the theme of COP 23, following the advice of the Bureau and the respective refinements, will be also used as a basis for the preparation of the Portoroz Ministerial Declaration to be prepared under the leadership of the Host Country of COP 23 and under the guidance of the Bureau. For the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration, an online working group of Contracting Parties could be established under the leadership of the Host Country, as per previous successful practice. The Coordinator stressed that during a meeting between the Secretariat and the President of the Republic of Slovenia in April 2023, the President, Ms. Nataša Pirc Musar, expressed her willingness to participate at COP 23. It was agreed that further to the thematic aspects of the high-level segment, the COP will, inter alia, focus on gender and that the President of Slovenia will lead the planned event on Women Leaders of the Mediterranean. Furthermore, as the representative of Slovenia also noted, importance will be placed on Youth and Education, including possibly through panel participation and/or a dedicated youth event to take place before the COP.

31. The President of the Bureau welcomed this information and noted that his country would be interested to have a Pavilion at COP 23.

32. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the work by Slovenia and the Secretariat for the preparation of COP 23, and urges all Contracting Parties to ensure high level participation to the extent possible to maximise the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention's system visibility considering also that UNEP Executive Director has confirmed her participation.**

**(b) The Bureau agrees with the proposed theme of the Ministerial Session, "Green transition in the Mediterranean: from decisions into actions", and requests the Secretariat to timely proceed on the preparation of the Ministerial Session of COP 23.**

**(c) The Bureau agrees with the approach proposed by the Secretariat for the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration, and encourage both the Secretariat and the Host Country to draft the concept note and the first main elements of the Ministerial Declaration for submission to the meeting of the MAP Focal Points, where the theme will be agreed and the main elements of the Ministerial Declaration subsequently discussed.**

**(d) The Bureau takes note of the proposed list of draft Decisions for consideration by the MAP Focal Points and requests the Secretariat to finalize their preparation, taking into account the considerations of the Bureau at its 94<sup>th</sup> Meeting, in a timely manner for submission to the meeting of the MAP Focal Points.**

**- E. Partnerships**

33. The Coordinator presented the work of the Secretariat, which has been very active in enhancing partnerships since the last meeting of the Bureau. There has been recently a bilateral meeting with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) where the Secretariats went through points of common actions and discussed future collaboration. The Coordinator also provided more details on the cooperation with the UfM Secretariat and the Black Sea Commission, as well as with the European Commission, noting the enhanced collaboration with the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policies (DG REGIO) and the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fishery (DG MARE).

34. The Bureau members congratulated the Secretariat for the work done and the progress achieved in relation to partnerships and collaboration, stressing their satisfaction with the large number of activities. One Bureau member noted that these partnerships could also assist in expanding the network of protected areas and their effective management, while noting that these collaborations are also important for integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning and that it is essential to have such a partnerships on transboundary level. He added that a possible side event at COP 23 could focus on biodiversity and partnerships. Another Bureau member mentioned that more clarity is needed in the signature of emails received from PAMEX, so that its relation with UNEP/MAP is more clear (i.e. that UNEP/MAP is the technical Secretariat of PAMEX).



35. Another Bureau member recalled that at the previous Bureau meeting it was agreed to establish an informal task force in order to explain the position of Barcelona Convention, regarding the new global Treaty under preparation on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. She added that a draft document was prepared to this end and thanked the Secretariat for facilitating the relevant work that resulted to the document's submission to the INC Secretariat. She also referred to the importance of the collaboration between UNEP/MAP and the Black Sea Commission and noted that marine litter is a main pillar of this collaboration. She also referred to the benefits of partnership with DOALOS and the BBNJ process. Another member of the Bureau added that the collaboration with the Black Sea Commission should also be extended to the Danube River Convention.

36. Regarding the proposal by the Secretariat to have more flexibility on partner accreditation presented in the "Report on Specific Issues" (UNEP/MED BUR.94/6), Bureau members expressed their agreement, while one Bureau member noted that all partners who work for the benefit of the Mediterranean should be included.

37. The Coordinator noted that collaboration with EUSAIR is also a priority, adding that the Adriatic is a very important Mediterranean sub-region and, therefore, it is important to know how the work between the two processes can be further synergized and increased. She also noted that collaboration at the global level is challenging for UNEP/MAP since the Secretariat has to go through UNEP and the number of participants in UNEP delegations is very limited. She also referred to the efforts by the Secretariat to register MAP as an observer to the CBD, BBNJ, UN Ocean Conference, UNFCCC, Basel Convention meetings, that would allow RAC's to register and participate at these meetings.

38. In relation to PAMEx (which covers 14 countries, 13 of them Mediterranean), the Coordinator noted that a concern had been expressed by a Contracting Party on the relation of UNEP/MAP with this initiative; this party has asked to have this collaboration in a more systemic way. She clarified that UNEP/MAP has a dual role, since it is a partner and also acts as a Technical Secretary to PAMEx. On the latter, the Coordinator stressed that a person has been seconded by France to UNEP/MAP for the Technical Secretariat, as also agreed at the MAP Focal Points meeting of 2021. She added that the cost of this person is covered by France in tis biennium (with UNEP covering the 14% Programme Support Costs), while she also clarified that for the next biennium the cost will not be covered by the MTF and that relevant discussions are held with France.

39. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the work of the Secretariat on enhancing ocean governance and on strengthening cooperation and partnerships with global and regional organizations for joint impact on the ground.**

**(b) The Bureau welcomes the work by the Secretariat to strengthen participation and involvement in global processes and to raise the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system's profile, its work and its contribution to the implementation of the SDGs, and encourages the Secretariat to further work in this direction.**

**(c) The Bureau welcomes the strengthened collaboration between UNEP/MAP and UfM Secretariat and requests the Secretariat to proceed in updating the Appendix of the MoU between UNEP/MAP and UfMS for submission to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 23 for consideration and endorsement.**

**(d) The Bureau welcomes the collaboration between UNEP/MAP and ACCOBAMS, Black Sea Commission and PERSGA and agrees that, following the expiration of the existing MoUs with these organizations, new MoUs with each of these partners are prepared and submitted to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 23 for consideration and endorsement.**

**(e) The Bureau endorses the results of the evaluation conducted by the Secretariat of the new application submitted by Zoï Environment Network (Zoï), Agreement on the creation of a marine mammals Sanctuary in the Mediterranean Sea (Pelagos Agreement), European Boating Industry (EBI), Euro-Mediterranean Economist Association (EMEA), European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD), Cyprus Marine Environment Protection Association (CYMEPA) and AMWAJ / REVOLVE Mediterraneo (AMWAJ) as MAP Partners and requests**

that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 23 for consideration and endorsement.

**(f) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to prepare a proposal in order to allow more flexibility in the accreditation of MAP Partners, so as to enlarge the scope to other stakeholders/non-profit organizations, and to allow entities which do not have their headquarters or regional offices in the Mediterranean, but which have activities in the Mediterranean and actively contribute to the objectives of UNEP/MAP, to become MAP Partners, and to submit this proposal to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 23 for consideration and endorsement.**

**(g) The Bureau endorses the proposal by the Secretariat to renew the accreditation as MAP Partners of the organizations “FISPMED Onlus” and from “University of Siena – SDSN (Sustainable Development Solution Network)” following the applications submitted by these organizations, and requests that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 23 for consideration and endorsement.**

**- F. Outreach, Communication and Advocacy**

40. The Coordinator reported on the information and communication activities conducted and on the plans for the current biennium in this area, in the context of the most important global and regional events. She highlighted the plans to use the Our Ocean Conference, to take place in Athens, Greece on 2024, and the UN Ocean Conference, to take place in Nice, France on 2025, as opportunities to boost visibility of the work of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention. She also noted that 2025 is the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the amended Barcelona Convention and added that the Secretariat is looking forward for ideas on how to celebrate this very important anniversary.

41. The Bureau members discussed outreach, communication and advocacy issues and concluded as follows.

**42. Conclusion:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the Secretariat’s efforts in the field of outreach, communication and advocacy.**

**- G. Internal Reflections on the Mandate and Composition of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols**

43. The MAP Coordinator referred to the Mandate and Composition of the Bureau, as reflected in the Report on Specific Issues, noting the need to clarify the role of Bureau in terms of decision making and in terms of addressing recommendations to Contracting Parties as well as the proposal in expanding the Bureau composition to allow the previous Bureau Presidency to continue to be member or ex-officio member to the Bureau in order to ensure the continuation of work and the sharing of experiences. She noted that the Bureau is a very important body and is the only body that is mentioned in the Barcelona Convention, as amended in 1995 (the Bureau is referred to in Art. 19 of Barcelona Convention). She highlighted that in the view of the Secretariat and in line with the ToRs of the Bureau, the Bureau can recommend to Contracting Parties to implement the mandate of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention. She also noted that based on the provisions of Art. 19 of the Barcelona Convention, the Rules of Procedure for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties, and the Bureau ToRs, the Bureau is composed of six members, while the MAP Coordinator sits ex-officio on the Bureau and any other Contracting Party can participate at the Bureau meetings as observer following a specific process.

44. The Coordinator noted that, based on the above provisions, three options have been identified for ensuring continuity from one Presidency to the next one, as included in the Report of Specific Issues, Annex III. She added that the Secretariat believes that Option 3: “Both the former presidency and the future presidency are elected as ex officio Bureau members” is preferable since it would assist to ensure continuity while it will not alter the composition and geographical balance of the Bureau and would respect the rotation principle.

45. The Bureau members agreed on the usefulness of the Troika approach to enhance efficiency and noted the importance of simplifying structures and enhance continuity. One Bureau member favoured option 3 as it respects the provisions and purpose of the Convention to the greatest extent possible; another Bureau member favoured option 1; a third Bureau member preferred option 2. It was also noted

that if the former presidency and/or the future presidency are elected as Bureau members in any case, respecting the requirements for rotation, there will be no need to have them as ex-officio members.

#### 46. Conclusions

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the clarifications provided by the Secretariat on the role of the Bureau and its mandate in the period between two meetings of Contracting Parties, based on the ToRs of the Bureau approved by the Contracting Parties.**

**(b) The Bureau underlines the importance of using other effective models of governance, including a Troika approach, to ensure continuity of the work of the Bureau.**

**(c) The Bureau takes note of the proposals by the Secretariat to amend the ToRs of the Bureau in order to allow the possibility for the election of the Contracting Party representing the Presidency of the previous COP as a Bureau member or ex-officio member, for the consideration of the MAP Focal Points at their meeting of September 2023.**

#### - H. Emerging Issues of Global and Mediterranean Relevance and Importance

47. The Secretariat made a brief presentation on emerging issues related to environment and sustainable development and on the potential role and mandate of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention System, noting that such emerging issues include, *inter alia*, Food Systems; the new Treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction; Offshore Renewable Energy; Harmful Subsidies; Deep Sea Mining.

48. The representative of an observer pointed out that it is important to start with the reflections on these emerging issues noting that in doing so the Medium-Term Strategy has to be respected. She added that it may be better to start working on some of these issues when they become more mature and the relevant global instruments are adopted.

#### 49. Conclusion:

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the proposal of the Secretariat to examine the implications of the identified emerging issues at global level to the work and mandate of UNEP/MAP, in the context of the MAP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2027, and bring them to the attention of the MAP Focal Points.**

### VI. Agenda Item 6: Calendar of Meetings and events

50. The Bureau was informed on the “Tentative Calendar of UNEP/MAP Meetings and Major International Events in 2023” noting that information on the meetings and events for the next biennium will be provided towards the end of the year.

#### 51. Conclusion:

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the information provided by the Secretariat of UNEP/MAP.**

### VII. Agenda Item 7: Date and Venue of the 95<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau

52. The Bureau discussed the possible dates of the next Bureau meeting and agreed that the first Bureau meeting of the next biennium could take place at the end of March or beginning of April 2024, respecting international agenda and the holidays in Mediterranean countries. It could take place in one of the countries that will be represented in Bureau. It was also noted that an informal meeting of the Bureau could also take place at the last day of COP 23, as per practice.

#### 53. Conclusion

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the information provided by the Secretariat of UNEP/MAP.**

### VIII. Agenda Item 8: Any Other Matters

#### 54. a) Proposal by Türkiye on the Establishment of a Regional Activity Centre for Climate Change

55. The representative of Türkiye reminded participants that at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols her country had submitted a proposal

for the Establishment of a Regional Activity Center for Climate Change (CC/RAC), to be hosted by Türkiye, and that the Bureau requested the Secretariat to follow the rules of procedure regarding the submission of Türkiye's proposal to the MAP Focal Point Meeting for the consideration. The representative of Türkiye noted that her country has submitted a full proposal, including a draft decision, and that the cost of the new RAC, if established, will be fully covered by Türkiye (1 million USD per biennium). She also noted that her country committed to have the centre operational in January 2024, if the proposal would be approved at COP 23.

56. The Coordinator noted that the proposal is in full alignment with the establishment of the other RACs and that the costs will be covered through a voluntary contribution of Türkiye to the MTFs, adding that some issues need still to be clarified, such as those related to the Programme Support Costs. She clarified that the proposal will be submitted to the meeting of the MAP Focal Points of September 2023.

57. The Bureau agreed with the proposal, while one Bureau member noted the need to have more information on the relation of this proposed Centre with the other RACs.

#### 58. **Conclusions**

**(a) The Bureau agrees with the proposal by Türkiye on the Establishment of a Regional Activity Centre for Climate Change.**

#### **IX. Agenda Item 9: Conclusions and Recommendations**

59. The Bureau adopted the set of conclusions as set in this report.

#### **X. Agenda Item 10: Closure of the Meeting**

60. At the closing session, the Minister for Natural Resources and Spatial Planning of Slovenia, Mr. Uroš Brežan addressed the meeting and briefly presented the priorities of the upcoming Slovenian presidency of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, noting that the Mediterranean is a priority at the national level in Slovenia. He referred to water and climate change as priorities, noting that UNEP/MAP can provide ways and means for a sustainable future. He also stressed the importance of cross-border cooperation to improve the marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mediterranean region.

61. The meeting was closed by the President at 17:00 (UTC+1) on Thursday, 21 June 2023.

**Annex I**

**List of participants**

**MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU AND ADVISORS/MEMBRES DU BUREAU ET  
CONSEILLERS**

**TURKIYE / TURKIYE**

**(PRESIDENT) Prof. Mehmet Emin Birpınar**

Deputy Minister

Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change

**Mr. Turgut Eminoglu**

Chancellor

Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change

**Ms. Nazan Özyürek**

Head of Department

Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change

**Ms. Vildan Bölükbaşı Atay**

Environmental Engineer MSc

Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change

**Mr. Özgü Kasmer**

Head of bilateral relations and protocols department

Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change

**Mr. Mustafa Uğur Aydoğdu**

Civil Engineer

Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change

**LIBYA / LIBYE**

**(VICE-PRESIDENT) Nassir Bsher Madi Naser**

Environmental Engineering at EIA Department Environmental Authority

MED POL Focal Point

**SLOVENIA / SLOVENIE**

**(VICE-PRESIDENT) Mr. Mitja Bricelj**

Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning

**SPAIN / ESPAGNE**

**(VICE-PRESIDENT) Ms. Itziar Martin Partida**

Deputy General Director

Ministry of Ecological Transition

**TUNISIA / TUNISIE**

**(VICE-PRESIDENT) Mr. Mohamed Sghaier Ben Jeddou**

Administrateur de l'Unité Changement Climatique

Office National de l'Assainissement

Ministère de l'Environnement

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE ET HERZEGOVINE**

**(RAPPORTEUR) Mr. Senad Oprasic**

Head Environmental Protection Department

Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations

**OBSERVERS**

**EUROPEAN UNION / UNION  
EUROPÉENNE**

**Ms. Anna Bobo Remijn**

Senior Policy Officer

Directorate-General for the Environment

European Commission

**ITALY**

**Ms. Silvia Sartori**

Head of Section “International Activities”

Ministry of Environment and Energy Security

**SECRETARIAT TO THE BARCELONA CONVENTION AND COMPONENTS OF THE  
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN / SECRÉTARIAT DE LA CONVENTION DE  
BARCELONE ET COMPOSANTES DU PLAN D’ACTION POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**

**Ms. Tatjana Hema**

Coordinator

**Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis**

Programme Management Officer-Governance



## **Annex II**

### **Agenda**

## **Agenda**

- Agenda item 1      Opening of the Meeting**
- Agenda item 2      Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work**
- Agenda item 3      Progress Report for November 2022-May 2023**
- Agenda item 4      Report by the Secretariat on financial and administrative issues**
- Agenda item 5      Specific Issues:**
- a) Ratification, reporting and compliance
  - b) COP 22 Key mandates:
    - Achievements and lessons learnt from the 2023 MED QSR delivery
    - Follow-up to the Med SOx ECA implementation
    - UNEP/MAP Resource Mobilization Strategy
  - c) Main directions of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025
  - d) Preparations for COP 23: format, Ministerial Session and Declaration, Host Country preparations
  - e) Partnerships
  - f) Outreach, communication and advocacy
  - g) Internal reflections on the mandate and composition of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
  - h) Emerging issues of global and Mediterranean relevance and importance
- Agenda item 6      Calendar of Meetings and Events**
- Agenda item 7      Date and Venue of the 95<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau**
- Agenda item 8      Any Other Matters**
- a) Proposal by Türkiye on the Establishment of a Regional Activity Centre for Climate Change
- Agenda item 9      Conclusions and Recommendations**
- Agenda item 10     Closure of the Meeting**