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82<sup>nd</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

Athens, Greece, 19-20 April 2016

**Report: Conclusions and Recommendations**

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UNEP/MAP  
Athens, 2016

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## **Introduction**

1. At the invitation of the Government of Greece, the 82<sup>nd</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 was held on 19-20 April 2016 in Athens, Greece.
2. Simultaneous interpretation in English and French was available for all sessions of the meeting.

## **Participation**

3. The President of the Bureau, Ms. Christina Baritaki (Greece), the Vice-Presidents: Ms. Klodiana Marika (Albania); Mr. Mohamed Abdel Monem Farouk Osman (Egypt); Mr. Victor Escobar Paredes (Spain) and the Rapporteur, Ms. Ayelet Rosen (Israel) attended the Bureau meeting. Mr. Mohamed Benyahia (Morocco) was absent with apologies. Ms. Marijana Mance (EC) attended the meeting as an observer. The Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit (Coordinator, Deputy Coordinator and Programme Officer). The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

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

4. The meeting was opened at 09:30 on 19 April 2016 by the President of the Bureau, Ms. Christina Baritaki. She welcomed the Bureau members and other participants to their first meeting of the 2016-2017 biennium.
5. The Coordinator also made a statement of welcome to the participants.

### **II. Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work**

6. The Bureau reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.82/1 (Annex II). The Bureau agreed to the following three issues to be added to the agenda item 7 “Any Other Matters”: (i) request by the EU to be invited as observer to all the Bureau meetings until COP 20; (ii) letter from Palestine requesting “directions to support the participation of Palestine in the Barcelona Convention conferences of parties and meetings”; and (iii) Lebanon waste crisis.

### **III. Agenda item 3: Progress Report for January-February 2016**

7. The Coordinator introduced and presented highlights from the documents “Progress report by the Secretariat on the activities carried out for the period January-February 2016” (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.82/3) and “Progress report by the Secretariat on the implementation of COP 19 Decisions” (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.82/4), the latter being a color-coded table.
8. It was suggested that the color-coded table could be restructured around the outputs of the 2016-2021 Mid-Term Strategy. The Coordinator explained that the descriptive progress report (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.82/3) is organized precisely around the strategic outcomes of the 2016-2017 Programme of Work, and that the color-coded table (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.82/4) is important to monitor the implementation of all the operative decisions of the Parties at their last COP. It was also suggested that the Secretariat may consider the feasibility of including in the table information on the status of implementation of key decisions adopted by previous COP.
9. It was recommended that the last section of the descriptive progress report indicates in future also the proposed solutions or the efforts being made to address the challenges described therein. The

importance of timely delivery of Resource Mobilization Strategy accompanying the MTS as provided for in COP 19 decision was stressed.

**Conclusions:**

**10. The Bureau expressed support for the work done as presented by the Secretariat, and appreciation in particular on the efforts and results of resource mobilization.**

**IV. Agenda item 4: Report by the Secretariat on financial and administrative issues**

11. The President informed the meeting that Greece had initiated the process for the payment of its 2016 contributions, to be expected in the near future.

12. The Deputy Coordinator presented to the Bureau members for their comments and recommendations an overview of the "Report by the Secretariat on financial and administrative issues" (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.82/5) and updated the information as necessary, including:

- Status of contributions
- Implications of Umoja implementation
- Invoicing for 2016
- Expenditures
- Working Capital Reserve
- Interim Report with the balance between income and expenditure
- Report on personnel matters

**Conclusions:**

**13. The Bureau noted with appreciation the high percentage of contributions received for the year 2015.**

**14. The Bureau welcomed the early payments of contributions by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, EU, Israel, Monaco, Slovenia, and Spain. The Bureau, taking into account Rule 4.2., which reads that "contributions for each calendar year are expected within the first quarter of that year and should be paid promptly and in full", requested the other Contracting Parties to pay their 2016 contributions and arrears as soon as possible.**

**15. The Bureau took note of the two cases of arrears for two or more years and requested the Secretariat to continue its efforts to collect the arrears and report to the Bureau and to the Contracting Parties on the outcome of its action.**

**16. The Bureau took note of the status of recruitment at the Coordinating Unit and, in addition, it encouraged the Contracting Parties who may be able to do so to contribute human resources to the Secretariat in the areas that are mostly needed, such as information and communication, and resource mobilization, through JPO and other similar schemes.**

**17. The Bureau acknowledged the views expressed by the Secretariat on the need of two full-time positions on information and communication, and resource mobilization at the Coordinating Unit to be considered through the due process at COP 20.**

**V. Agenda item 5: Specific issues**

18. The Coordinator presented the "Report by the Secretariat on specific issues" (UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.82/6).

19. The meeting discussed the matters summarized in the following paragraphs.

## - 5.1 Governance

20. The Coordinator reported that the long-standing issue of the ratification by Lebanon of the amended text of the Barcelona Convention had been finally solved. At present, only the ratification by Bosnia and Herzegovina was still pending.

21. The Coordinator also reported on the lack of progress in the finalization of revised or new Host Country Agreements for RACs. During the ensuing discussion, it was acknowledged that in practical terms, the implementation of the common agreement template at national level faced difficulties due to specific situations and legislation of each host country and legal nature of the RACs. In this context it was suggested that COP decisions that face difficulties in being executed need to be brought back to the attention of the Parties for possible reconsideration.

22. The meeting also discussed the issue of the shift to a Thematic Focal Point system. While there is an understanding of the rationale for entering in a new/updated governance system of focal points, with the view to enhance their accountability, there are practical difficulties in implementing it in a manner that should not distort the operation of the MAP system and the implementation of the PoW. Therefore, a prudent approach should be followed. In this context a gradual process could be put in place, starting for instance with biodiversity. Questions were raised about the importance of existing relationships between RAC Focal Points and the system at present, and on the readiness of national structures to adapt to a Thematic Focal Point system.

### Conclusions:

**23. The Bureau took note of the current status of ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and urged the Contracting Parties which have not yet done so to ratify without further delay the relevant legal instruments, and in particular the amendments to the Dumping Protocol which have not yet entered into force.**

**24. The Bureau encouraged the President and the Secretariat to put in place efforts to achieve the full ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols in a timely manner preferably during the current biennium.**

**25. The Bureau took note of the current status of development of the Host Country Agreements for RACs as reported by the Secretariat and encouraged the Secretariat to continue its work with the concerned Contracting Parties and UNEP Headquarters and submit a report to its 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting describing the status of negotiation for each Agreement including the challenges encountered.**

**26. The Bureau agreed with the proposed course of action as follows:**

- (a) The Secretariat will prepare the amended text of the Bureau TORs adding a compliance criteria in electing the members of the Bureau; in particular, adding after the words: “and regular attendance at the meeting of the contracting Parties” the following words: “and compliance with their reporting obligations under the Convention”.**
- (b) The Secretariat will submit it to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Bureau for review and further submission to COP 20 in December 2017.**

**27. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a preliminary analysis of the current status and the options and impacts for a shift to a Thematic Focal Point system taking into account current practice as appropriate of other multilateral agreements and to submit it for further discussion and guidance at its 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting.**

## - 5.2 Reporting and Compliance Issues

28. With reference to the operative paragraphs of the Decision IG.22/15 on Compliance Committee and the Decision IG.22/16 on Reporting Format, adopted by COP 19 (Athens, Greece, February

2016), the Secretariat provided an update on the status of reporting on implementation of the Barcelona Convention; the programme of work of the Compliance Committee; its membership; and the preparation of a simplified reporting format for the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. Welcoming the recruitment in progress of Legal Officer, it was pointed out that timely implementation of Compliance and Reporting decisions is of high importance for assessing the impacts of the Convention.

**Conclusions:**

**29. The Bureau urged the Contracting Parties who have not yet done so, to submit their 2012-2013 report without further delay.**

**30. The Bureau urged all Contracting Parties to start as soon as possible the preparation of their 2014-2015 reports, in order to comply fully with the deadline of 15 October 2016 as set by the COP 19 Decision IG.22/16. The Bureau, considering the status of recruitment of the Legal Officer, took note of the proposal by the Secretariat with regard to the implementation of the Decision IG.22/16 as follows:**

- (a) Provide advice to Contracting Parties subject to fund availability;**
- (b) Undertake consultation with the Focal Points on the needs to build capacities of the Contracting Parties and prepare a report for submission to COP 20. The first draft will be submitted to the 84<sup>th</sup> Bureau Meeting;**
- (c) Further work on a proposal for the preparation of a simplified reporting format for submission to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Bureau Meeting in 2016 for review and suggestions;**
- (d) Launch a testing process of the revised format by end of 2016-beginning of 2017 and a written consultation with the Contracting Parties;**
- (e) Finalize the revised reporting format based on testing feedback for submission to the 84<sup>th</sup> Bureau Meeting in 2017 and, as appropriate, to COP 20.**

**31. The Bureau urged the relevant Contracting Parties, namely Algeria, Egypt and Monaco to submit the details of their nominated candidates by 15 May 2016 at the latest to sit as Members and Alternate Members of the Compliance Committee for a term of four years until COP 21 and agreed to their being elected by correspondence.**

**- 5.3 Assessment of MAP II**

32. At COP 19 (Athens, Greece, February 2016), the Parties decided in favor of the option ii contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/23 on the implementation of decision IG.21/16 on Assessment of the Mediterranean Action Plan. Accordingly, the Mediterranean Action Plan Phase II document would be adjusted to reflect the key developments made in the Mediterranean Action Plan system with regard to thematic issues.

33. The Coordinator presented to the Bureau the proposed course of action for the implementation of the COP 19 conclusions on this matter for endorsement. It was proposed also that the Bureau assigned one of its members to lead the work of the open-ended Working Group that may be established for this purpose.

**Conclusions:**

**34. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to undertake the following course of action for the implementation of the COP 19 conclusions:**

- (a) the Secretariat to prepare TORs for the assignment taking also into account the MSSD, to be shared with the Bureau at its 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting;**

- (b) the Secretariat to send invitations to the Focal Points to participate or appoint their representatives on the open-ended Working Group;
- (c) the Bureau to nominate one of its members to lead the work of the Working Group with Secretariat's support;
- (d) the Working Group to hold its meeting in the first quarter of 2017 (if the external funds are available);
- (e) the Working Group to prepare its conclusions in time for submission to the 84<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau; and
- (f) the Bureau to provide its recommendations to the Meeting of MAP Focal Points in 2017 to be presented at the COP 20 together with the conclusions of the Working Group.

**35. The Bureau called upon the Contracting Parties to provide the necessary additional resources to ensure the full implementation of the process and the involvement of all Contracting Parties.**

#### **- 5.4 Cooperation and Partners**

36. With reference to the operative paragraphs of the Decision IG.22/18 on Cooperation and Partners, adopted by COP 19 (Athens, Greece, February 2016), the Coordinator presented an overview of cooperation with International and Regional Organizations, and bilateral cooperation agencies, and updated Bureau members on the operationalization of current agreements and progress in development of new ones. He also reported on the constructive coordination meeting of UNEP/MAP and GFCM held in Rome on 13 April 2016 and the promising outlook for further strengthening the two Organizations' collaboration.

37. The Secretariat reported to the Bureau on the evaluation of the applications by the International Federation for Sustainable Development and Fight to Poverty in the Mediterranean-Black Sea (FISPMED) and the Fondation Mohamed VI pour la Protection de l'Environnement for accreditation as UNEP/MAP Partners, for the Bureau's review and endorsement.

38. With regard to the Joint Strategy between SPA/RAC, ACCOBAMS, GFCM and IUCN-Med in collaboration with MedPAN for the spatial conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment in the Mediterranean, currently being developed, its importance, given the current global and regional debate on ocean governance, was stressed, and it was suggested that its profile should be raised to become a strategy of the whole UNEP/MAP system rather than of SPA/RAC. Furthermore, the importance of consulting relevant governance structures of the involved organizations was highlighted.

#### **Conclusions:**

**39. The Bureau welcomed the progress achieved on Cooperation and Partners and encouraged the Secretariat to continue its work on these issues.**

**40. The Bureau welcomed the results of the evaluation conducted by the Secretariat of the applications submitted by the International Federation for Sustainable Development and Fight to Poverty in the Mediterranean-Black Sea (FISPMED) and the Fondation Mohamed VI pour la Protection de l'Environnement, decided to accept their accreditation as UNEP/MAP Partners, and requested the Secretariat to submit this decision to COP 20 for endorsement.**

#### **- 5.5 Outreach Information and Communication**

41. The Coordinator presented a brief overview of the information and communication activities related to COP 19 and the plans for the biennium in this area. He highlighted the difficulties of disseminating appropriately the outcome of COP 19 and in general the MAP/Barcelona Convention

instruments and outputs, maintaining the visibility of the system, and supporting its information, communication and outreach functions without the necessary capacity at the Coordinating Unit.

42. The Bureau was invited to provide its views and considerations on this matter.

**Conclusions:**

**43. The Bureau expressed appreciation for the very good results of the information and communication work before, during and after COP 19 and therefore thanked the external support provided to that end.**

**- 5.6 Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award**

44. With reference to the operative paragraphs of the Decision IG.22/19 entitled “Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award” adopted by COP 19 (Athens, Greece, February 2016), the Coordinator presented the proposed plan for the finalization of the nomination and selection criteria and process and for granting the first Award at COP 20.

**Conclusions:**

**45. In line with Decision IG 22/19, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to proceed with work to finalize the selection criteria and mobilize the necessary resources; in that regard, the Bureau expressed appreciation for the support of Turkey.**

46. Under the item on Governance, the Coordinator presented an overview of the planning being developed for the implementation of the 2016-2017 Programme of Work. In particular, he reported on the planning exercise undertaken with the ECP at its 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of 22-23 March 2016. Considering the proposed calendar of meetings, some aspects related to the preparation of their working documents were also addressed such as the size of the documents and the deadline for the dissemination of working documents. The Bureau supported the idea of sticking to the 16-page UN rule as well as of using a flexible approach for the document dissemination timelines, when strictly necessary and justifiable. This would allow more time for preparing quality working documents in particular for technical meetings. Along these lines it was suggested that the Secretariat prepares a proposal for further consideration at the next Bureau meeting.

47. The Bureau discussed a number of priorities for the current biennium, as listed in the conclusions below.

**Conclusions:**

**48. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to bring to its attention at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting general issues of process and substance related to the implementation of the 2016-2017 Programme of Work, such as the preparation of the 2017 Quality Status Report, the implementation of IMAF, the preparation of the revised Resource Mobilization Strategy, the implementation of MSSD, the new reporting format, and others as necessary.**

**49. The Bureau decided to discuss at its 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting details of the Agenda preparation of Decisions, theme and focus of COP 20.**

**50. The Bureau took note of the report provided by the Secretariat for the planning of the implementation of the 2016-2017 Programme of Work. The Bureau expressed support to the Secretariat and RACs efforts, taking into account the limited time for its implementation in 2016 and the UMOJA challenges.**

## **VI. Agenda item 6: Date and Venue of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Bureau**

51. The Bureau was invited to decide on the date and the venue of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Bureau. It recalled that document UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG 22/Inf.17 entitled “Indicative Calendar of Main UNEP/MAP Meetings in the Biennium 2016-2017” and reviewed to COP 19 indicated the date of such meeting as October 2016.

### **Conclusions:**

**52. The Bureau agreed to hold its 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting on 25-26 October 2016 in Athens, Greece or Tirana, Albania. The final decision will be taken following further consultations.**

## **VII. Agenda item 7: Any Other Matters**

53. The Bureau had agreed on the participation of the European Union as an observer to the present meeting; if interested, the EU, as any other party, should submit a request to be invited to participate as an observer in the deliberations of any matter of particular concern to them at each following Bureau meeting.

54. The Secretariat informed the Bureau on the letter it received on 21 March 2016 from the Chairman of Environment Quality Authority regarding “support to the participation of Palestine in the Barcelona Convention conferences of parties and meetings”. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to be updated on this issue.

55. The Coordinator reported on the questions being raised by media representatives and the concerns over the situation and the pollution of the Mediterranean due to the garbage crisis of Lebanon. The Bureau acknowledged that UNEP is already looking at ways to respond to the situation.

56. Some Bureau members raised concern over the issue of interpretation needs and costs at Bureau meetings, as no other language but English was used during the 82<sup>nd</sup> meeting. The possibility of providing interpretation upon explicit advance request of the members of the Bureau, as appropriate, was evoked.

## **VIII. Agenda item 8 Conclusions and Recommendations**

57. The Secretariat submitted for adoption the set of conclusions and recommendations prepared in accordance with Article VII of the Terms of Reference of the Bureau.

58. The Bureau adopted the set of conclusions and recommendations as set on this report.

## **IX. Agenda item 9 Closure of the Meeting**

59. The meeting closed by the President of the Bureau at 16:30 on Wednesday, 20 April 2016.

## **Annex I**

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## **Annex II**

### **Agenda**

## **Agenda**

- Agenda item 1**                    **Opening of the Meeting**
- Agenda item 2**                    **Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work**
- Agenda item 3**                    **Progress Report for January-February 2016**
- Agenda item 4**                    **Report by the Secretariat on financial and administrative issues**
- Agenda item 5**                    **Specific issues:**
- 5.1                    Governance
  - 5.2                    Compliance
  - 5.3                    Assessment of MAP II
  - 5.4                    Cooperation and Partners
  - 5.5                    Outreach Information and Communication
  - 5.6                    Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award
- Agenda item 6**                    **Date and Venue of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Bureau**
- Agenda item 7**                    **Any Other Matters**
- Agenda item 8**                    **Conclusions and Recommendations**
- Agenda item 9**                    **Closure of the Meeting**