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Regional Meeting on the Further Implementation of the Regional Plan
for the Management of Marine Litter in the Mediterranean

Tirana, Albania, 19-20 July 2016

**Report of the Regional Meeting on the Further Implementation of the Regional Plan for the Management of
Marine Litter in the Mediterranean**

**Co-organized with the IPA-Adriatic funded project entitled “Derelict Fishing Gear Management System in the
Adriatic Region” (DeFishGear)**

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UNEP/MAP
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Introduction

1. With the adoption by COP 18 of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention took an important commitment with regard to marine litter management. The Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean is the first ever legally binding regional plan containing measures and timeframes for their implementation on marine litter management, including prevention, reduction, monitoring and assessment. In addition, the Contracting Parties have set specific marine litter reduction targets (COP 19, Athens, Greece, February 2016).
2. In this context the representatives of 17 Contracting Parties and other participants from the region and other countries met in Tirana, Albania on 19 and 20 July 2016. The meeting was co-organized by the UNEP/MAP's MEDPOL Programme and the IPA-Adriatic funded DeFishGear project, with main scope to enhance the implementation of the Regional Plan for the Management of Marine Litter in the Mediterranean. The meeting was also the closing event of the 3-year IPA-Adriatic funded DeFishGear project, which was an opportunity to share the collective experience gained from actions implemented on the science-policy-society interface for a litter free Adriatic and Ionian coast and sea.
3. During the meeting, the latest trends and findings on marine litter in the Adriatic, Ionian and Mediterranean Seas were presented with regards to amounts, sources, impacts, implications and solutions. The meeting was transformed into a forum where participants shared experiences, lessons learned and successes in combating Marine Litter, addressing land-based and sea-based sources of marine litter; and give updates on the implementation of Marine Litter reduction and prevention measures. The meeting also was informed on the new EU funded UNEP/MAP project on marine litter (EU funded ML MED Project) and bilateral discussions were held with the eligible countries for its implementation and follow up.

Participation

4. The meeting was attended by participants from the following countries: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey. The UNEP/MAP Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit, MED POL Programme, SCP/RAC and RAC/Blue Plan. The meeting was also attended by the Partners of the IPA-Adriatic funded DeFishGear Project. The full list of participants is attached as Annex I to the present report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

5. The meeting was opened by Mr. Gaetano Leone, Coordinator of UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention; Mr. Pëllumb Abeshi, Director General of Environment Policies Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration, Albania; and Mr. Andrej Krzan, DeFishGear Coordinator & National Institute of Chemistry, Slovenia.
6. The coordinator of UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention, highlighted the presence of all participants as a sign of continued commitment to achieve the marine litter reduction targets, agreed by COP 19. He also pointed out UNEP's response to the marine litter challenges (i.e. UNEP/GPA Marine Debris Task Team, the specific resolutions adopted by UNEA-1 and UNEA-2, etc.), the G7 activity on marine litter and the importance of giving a regional dimension to the problem towards strengthening coordinated national actions to meet commitments on Marine Litter in the context of SDG. Special reference was also made to the Mediterranean countries that took an important step forward in 2013 in addressing marine litter management by adopting the first ever legally binding regional plan with the most important dimension of commitment to concrete actions on marine litter reduction and prevention. Concluding his opening speech Mr. Leone emphasized that UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat looked forward to create a network of collaboration to harmonize our common efforts and maximize result and recognized the added value of the DeFishGear project in

providing a strategic input towards tackling marine litter and contributing to the coordination and harmonization of actions on the science-policy-society interface for the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region.

7. In his opening remarks Mr. Pëllumb Abeshi welcomed the participants wishing a successful meeting and pointed out the work undertaken by Albania on marine litter and on the NAP preparation.

8. Mr. Andrej Krzan on behalf of the IPA-Adriatic funded DeFishGear thanked UNEP/MAP for the opportunity of jointly organizing this important meeting and for sharing the results of project with the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda and election of the officers

(a) Adoption of the Agenda

9. The proposed Provisional agenda appearing in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.424/1/Corr.1, was adopted and appears as Annex II to the present report.

(b) Election of officers

10. In accordance with the Rules of procedures for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties the meeting elected one (1) President, two (2) Vice-Presidents and one (1) Rapporteur from among the participants, as follows:

Chair:	Mr Pellumb Abeshi, Albania
Vice-Chair:	Mr Mohammed Elbouch, Morocco
Vice-Chair:	Ms Anna Maria Cicero, Italy
Rapporteur:	Mr Hassan Hoteit, Lebanon

Agenda item 3: Implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean

11. Under the third Agenda item the following issues were discussed: a) New UNEP/MAP Marine Litter MED Project funded by the EU; b) Fishing for Litter Guidelines adopted by COP 19 of the Barcelona Convention; and c) The DeFishGear project: a pilot project for coordinated and harmonized actions on the science-policy-society interface to tackle Marine Litter issues in the Adriatic Sea.

12. The Secretariat presented the objectives and the main activities of new EU funded Marine Litter Project as well the Fishing for Litter Guidelines adopted by COP 19, Athens 2016. (Decision IG 22/10 of COP 19 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols). The DeFishGear Project Coordinator presented the DeFishGear project, including its background, aim, objectives, and main lines of action and achieved results.

13. A fruitful discussion was generated mainly targeted on the ways and means to fully and actively partake in the new EU funded Marine Litter project as an important input to support Marine Litter measures of the updated National Action Plans. The need for implementation of Fishing for Litter guidelines was stressed along with benefiting from the experiences and outcomes of the DeFishGear project. At the end of this session the representative of the Secretariat held bilateral discussion with the Marine Litter MED fund eligible countries related to the implementation of national activities on marine litter.

Agenda item 4: Enhanced knowledge on amounts, sources and impacts of Marine Litter, including micro-plastics

14. Under this Agenda item the following issues were discussed: a) Highlights and emerging issues; and b) New data and findings, including a Mediterranean survey on abandoned, lost and derelict fishing gear and the DeFishGear socio-economic implications study of Marine Litter in the Adriatic Sea.

15. On behalf of the Secretariat, the French representative presented the current and new issues identified in the recent 2015 UNEP/MAP Marine Litter Assessment Report as well as on Decision IG 22/10 on the Implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (Fishing for Litter Guidelines, Assessment Report, Baselines Values, and Reduction Targets).

16. The DeFishGear partners MIO-ECSDE and IWRS presented a summary of the new data and findings obtained from the monitoring activities of the DeFishGear project, on macro-litter and micro-litter respectively as well as on the methodological approach and the main outcomes of the DeFishGear socio-economic implications study on Marine Litter in the Adriatic. On behalf of the Secretariat the MIO-ECSDE representative presented the main results of the Regional Survey on Abandoned, Lost or Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) and Ghost Nets in the Mediterranean.

Agenda item 5: Best practices to tackle land-based sources of Marine Litter

17. Under this Agenda item the following issues were discussed: a) Extended producer responsibility schemes, voluntary agreements, plastic bag levy, deposit/refund schemes for beverage packaging; b) Banning of plastics landfilling, and c) the “Adopt-a-beach” concept.

18. SCP/RAC presented the best practices related to voluntary agreements and deposit/refund schemes for beverage packaging. The French representative presented the measure implemented by the Ministry of Ecology of France on the banning of single use of plastic bags and the representative from the Marine Unit of the Ministry of Environment of Ireland made an intervention on the Irish plastic bag levy best practice, including its background, key steps, main challenges and successes.

19. The Foundation for Waste Prevention in Catalonia presented on the Deposit, Return and Refund (DRS) System and the pilot implementation for beverage containers in Cadaqués (Catalonia). Plastic Europe presented a successful strategy for plastic waste reduction and the way we can exclude plastic material from landfilling towards having a 100% success in recovery, the cost benefits and challenges for the implementation of related measures. Marine Conservation Society presented the “Adopt-a-beach” concept, the best practices, and the added value and benefits when implemented at European level.

Agenda item 6: Best practices to tackle sea-based sources of Marine Litter

20. Under this Agenda item the following issues were discussed: a) Fishing for Litter: setting up DeFishGear management schemes, targeted recovery of ghost nets; and b) Better management of sea-based litter in ports.

21. The DeFishGear partners ISPRA, HCMR, IOF, IWRS and the Mediterranean Consortium presented the aforementioned measures including their main features and implementing modalities, the target groups and added value and their local/national implementation experiences, including the collective results and impact of these measures, the challenges encountered and the lessons learned.

22. An overview of the different fee systems for ship-generated waste was also presented by a representative of the Flemish Waste Agency, including their advantages and respective shortcomings. Furthermore, the applicability, added value, requirements of the no-special-fee system in the Mediterranean were explored and discussed. The representative of the Ministry of Environment of

Spain shared their experience related to the fixed fee in ports for MARPOL Annex V waste as an incentive measure to promote Marine Litter management in ports.

Agenda item 7: Hands-on exercise on Marine Litter management

23. Under this Agenda item the participants carried out Hands-on exercise on marine litter management.

24. The DeFishGear partner MIO-ECSDE facilitated a brainstorming exercise on identifying measures for the reduction of selected marine litter items. Participants carried out group work and reported back in the plenary session. The best measures were identified and were prioritized in terms of feasibility. Finally, the key steps of implementing the most feasible measure were also discussed.

25. The Secretariat finally moderated a fruitful discussion on concrete actions to be taken at national level and the regional support needed to implement the measures addressed during the meeting. The meeting agreed on a number of priority actions as contained in Annex III to this report.

Agenda item 8: Any Other Business

26. Under the eight Agenda item, participants didn't raise and discuss any other matters.

Agenda item 9: Closure of the Meeting

27. The vice chair in his closing remarks thanked the participants for their constructive contribution to the meeting which resulted in the very good consensus about the way forward for a successful implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. The vice chair also pointed out the importance of working together in synergy with other actors and projects and the example of organizing this meeting with DeFishGear project was highly appreciated as a tool to enhance the science-policy interface in an effective manner. The Vice chair thanked the Secretariat and the DefishGear project for all efforts made to organize this effective and very useful meeting.

28. After the expression of usual courtesies, the vice chair declared the meeting closed at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday 20 July 2016.

Annex I
List of Participants

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES / REPRESENTANTS DES
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Annex II
Agenda of the Meeting

Agenda

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

Agenda item 2: Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

Agenda item 3: Implementation of the Regional Plan for Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean

- a) *New UNEP/MAP Marine Litter MED Project funded by the EU*
- b) *Fishing for Litter Guidelines adopted by COP 19 of the Barcelona Convention*
- c) *The DeFishGear project: a pilot project for coordinated and harmonized actions on the science-policy-society interface to tackle Marine Litter issues in the Adriatic Sea*

Agenda items 4: Enhanced knowledge on amounts, sources and impacts of Marine Litter, including micro-plastics

- a) *Highlights and emerging issues*
- b) *New data and findings, including a Mediterranean survey on abandoned, lost and derelict fishing gear and the DeFishGear socio-economic implications study of Marine Litter in the Adriatic Sea*

Agenda item 5: Best practices to tackle land-based sources of Marine Litter

- a) *Schemes, voluntary agreements, plastic bag levy, deposit/refund schemes for beverage packaging.*
- b) *Banning of plastics landfilling*
- c) *Adopt-a-beach*

Agenda item 6: Best practices to tackle sea-based sources of Marine Litter

- a) *Fishing for litter: setting up DeFishGear management schemes, targeted recovery of ghost nets*
- b) *Better management of sea-based litter in ports*

Agenda item 7: Hands-on exercise on Marine Litter management

- a) *Hands-on exercise*

Agenda item 8: Any Other Business

Agenda item 9: Closure of the Meeting

Annex III
Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

Participants acknowledged the importance and the need of awareness raising and capacity building in the countries. The meeting specifically highlighted the need to focus on a number of priority actions and measures with the view to further implement the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean herein after referred to as the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management, as follows:

- i. To identify a limited number of common goals or common measures based on the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management and the updated NAPs, and implement them jointly throughout the Mediterranean thus contributing in a harmonized manner to the related SDG, international, regional and national marine litter agendas (such as the ban of single-use plastic bags or their reduction as well as the marine litter reduction targets adopted by COP 19 of the Barcelona Convention). Other additional common measures could be added in the future after considering all the measures provided for in the national Programmes of Measures and the updated NAPs. The countries are strongly encouraged to also implement all measures provided in the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management and the updated NAPs.
- ii. To further work and enhance political will and strengthen public opinion support and their social responsibility related to marine litter prevention and reduction measures. In this respect awareness activities are very important. Making use of MAP coastal day celebration to raise awareness also on marine litter should be considered. Preparation and distribution of short movies on ML is also encouraged. Support was also expressed to consider marine litter among the key criteria to grant the Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award agreed by COP 19 of the Barcelona Convention.
- iii. To provide support to countries in developing cost benefit and socio economic analysis related to marine litter prevention and reduction measures as a tool to raise the awareness of policy makers. In this context the importance of environmental aspects of marine litter measures in relation to impacts on economic sectors such fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, shipping, etc. should be considered and proactively demonstrated as appropriate.
- iv. To promote the establishment of sustainable collaboration and ensuring commitments of the main key national and local relevant public authorities to streamline marine litter in their sectorial policies and agendas.
- v. To involve the relevant key sectors and promote networking and partnerships, voluntary agreements with retailers, services, industries, fisheries, etc., to set marine litter reduction targets and streamline marine litter measures in their business plans and enhance their corporate social responsibility. In this context the use of incentive instruments to make local actors interested to contribute to marine litter prevention and removal measures should be highly considered.
- vi. To encourage countries to strengthen marine litter education programmes in addition to training and capacity building. The participants also expressed their interest regarding the GPA online training course on marine litter to be disseminated to relevant networks.
- vii. To provide support to countries in developing national monitoring and enforcement programmes on marine litter including monitoring and assessment of marine litter riverine inputs.