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MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN

Joint Meeting of the Scientific and Technical
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**DRAFT GUIDELINES
CONCERNING THE EXCHANGE OF LIAISON OFFICERS
BETWEEN THE CONTRACTING PARTIES
IN CASE OF RESPONSE OPERATIONS
INVOLVING SEVERAL STATES**

**DRAFT GUIDELINES
CONCERNING ARRANGEMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE MADE
WITH A VIEW TO ENSURING, IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT,
LIAISON BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES
AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES**

*(To be submitted for adoption to the Ninth Ordinary Meeting of the
Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention)*

Proposal by the Secretariat

Introduction

The Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) held in Malta, 4-6 October 1994, examined, amended and approved the Draft Guidelines concerning marine pollution preparedness, response and mutual assistance, presented in this document.

These Draft Guidelines are submitted to the Joint Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee and the Socio-Economic Committee prior to their transmission for adoption to the Ninth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

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CONCERNING THE EXCHANGE OF LIAISON OFFICERS
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(To be submitted for adoption to the Ninth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention)

1. In order to achieve prompt and efficient exchange of information and effective operational command over pollution response operations, the Contracting Parties to the Emergency Protocol to the Barcelona Convention shall endeavour to establish and maintain permanent liaison, between the competent national authority of the Party whose territorial sea, coasts and related interests are directly affected by pollution and who has the overall operational command over the response operations, and competent national authorities of the assisting Parties or Parties taking part in response operations. Two main cases arise:
 - either pollution occurs in the waters of one Contracting Party and threatens the waters of another; or,
 - the scale of the assistance provided by one Contracting Party to another justifies the presence of a liaison officer from the assisting Contracting Party at the response headquarters of the assisted Contracting Party.
2. With a view to establishing and maintaining such liaison, the Parties may decide to exchange Liaison Officers in all cases when, in the opinion of their respective competent national authorities in charge of response to a pollution incident, the circumstances of the incident and/or the scale of the response measures call for it.
3. The role of such Liaison Officers shall be limited:
 - a) in the first case, referred to in paragraph 1, to facilitate mutual information exchange between threatened Contracting Parties with a view to enabling a Contracting Party which might be subsequently affected to prepare its response actions, and when appropriate, to start response operations without waiting that the pollution reaches its waters.
 - b) in the second case referred to in paragraph 1, to transmitting the orders of the authority having overall command over response operations (Supreme On-Scene Commander) to officers in charge of resources of the assisting Party.
4. Each Contracting Party shall endeavour to include the liaison officers among the staff of its response command and to facilitate the performance of their duties in particular by arranging access to communication means.

5. In designating their Liaison Officers, the Parties shall take into consideration that the selected persons should have relevant specialist knowledge, a good command of the working language of the other Party and confirmed communication skills, in addition to being able to work efficiently under stress.
6. The Party receiving a Liaison Officer from another Party, shall make necessary arrangements concerning immigration and custom formalities for his/her entry into the country.

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1. The competent national authorities of a Contracting Party affected by a marine pollution incident, threatening its territorial sea, coasts and related interests, shall endeavour to establish and maintain, throughout all phases of planning and implementation of response activities, liaison with other parties having an interest in the pollution incident (further on referred to as **interested parties**), including the owners of the ship(s) and the cargo and in particular, their insurers, and their respective technical advisors and experts.
2. The objective of such liaison shall primarily be to obtain and exchange necessary technical information required for planning and implementation of appropriate pollution response measures, with the view to increasing the effectiveness of response operations, to reducing the effects of pollution on the environment and resources at risk, and to reducing the overall costs of pollution response measures, and to consider possible legal and financial implications of taken or planned response actions. This information shall *inter alia* include:
 - a) on the part of relevant interested parties: information concerning the ship and the cargo involved in the incident, response measures taken or planned by these parties, resources, including personnel, equipment and other means, which these parties have available for responding to the incident, contingency plans prepared by them, and the availability of funds through ship's/cargo's insurers;
 - b) on the part of the competent national authorities of the affected Contracting Party: information concerning national organization for accidental marine pollution response, national and local contingency plans, available resources including personnel, equipment and other means, arrangements made or planned by the competent national authorities, for responding to the pollution incident, and national laws and regulations covering the field of accidental marine pollution, including liability and compensation.
3. In order to ensure the permanent liaison with other parties having an interest in the pollution incident, competent national authorities of the Contracting Party affected by such an incident shall request other interested parties to designate persons who will be in permanent contact with competent national authorities in charge of response operations.

4. The competent national authorities shall ensure that persons designated by the government to act as counterparts to contact persons designated by the representatives of other interested parties have good knowledge of technical, legal and financial issues related to marine pollution incidents, including liability and compensation schemes.