

Meeting of the Focal Points of the  
Regional Marine Pollution Emergency  
Response Centre for the Mediterranean  
Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.16/7  
22 October 1998

Original: English

Malta, 25 - 28 November 1996

Agenda Item 7

**CO-OPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS  
AND THE OIL , CHEMICAL AND SHIPPING INDUSTRIES**

**Note by REMPEC**

1. The adoption by the Conference on International Co-operation on Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (London, 19-30 November 1990) of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990 (OPRC 90) and a series of related Resolutions, has given a very prominent place to the co-operation between governments and oil, chemical and shipping industries in the field of accidental marine pollution preparedness and response.
2. The OPRC Convention *inter alia* stipulates that the States, Parties to the Convention, shall require that ships flying its flag, the operators of offshore units, sea ports and oil handling facilities, have oil pollution emergency plans, which should be co-ordinated with respective national systems. The States are also invited to co-operate, as appropriate, with the oil and shipping industries in setting up pre-positioned response equipment stockpiles, in developing programmes of exercises and training, establishing communication capabilities, and in establishing arrangements for mobilizing necessary resources.
3. Taking into consideration that the OPRC 90 Convention calls for the contribution from these industries in the development and implementation of arrangements adopted by the governments in the field of preparedness for, response to and co-operation in case of marine pollution incidents, REMPEC started establishing and developing closer collaboration with the organizations representing these sectors, as early as 1991/1992.

**CO-OPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND THE OIL INDUSTRY**

4. For the last few years, both Governments and Industry have expressed the need for closer and stronger ties between themselves in order to actively co-operate in the field of oil spill preparedness and response, thus entailing a better protection of the Mediterranean sea.

5. Over the past biennium those two entities have concretely strengthened their co-operation by:

- Attending common meetings when one protagonist (either Governments or Industry) observed its counterpart's meetings and vice-versa, or by actually participating in common meetings;
- Fostering the exchange of information;
- Organizing or attending activities and mainly oil spill response exercises (the two entities were either involved at the same degree of preparation, or one participating as an observer).

6. A good example of co-operation between Governments and the oil industry is the secondment by French oil company Elf Aquitaine of a junior engineer to REMPEC. The post has been financed by the oil industry for a period of 16 months, starting in October 1997, which corresponds to the period during which this French Civil Servant carries his National service. In the recognition by both the oil industry and the governments, of the benefits of such collaboration, Elf Aquitaine has shown commitment to continuing this practice in the future. Whilst REMPEC is grateful to the French oil industry, due to the heavy workload, the Centre would welcome the secondment of personnel from other coastal States and /or industry to REMPEC.

7. Relying on the above-mentioned contribution, which no doubt gave a new impetus to their relationships, the oil industry on one hand through the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA) and its Mediterranean branch, the Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG), and the Governments on the other hand through REMPEC, were able to develop activities of common interest and improve their co-operation in particular in the following fields:

### **Meetings**

8. REMPEC attended as observer the various meetings organized by MOIG, held respectively in Marseille in June 1997, Cyprus in February 1998, and will attend the forthcoming MOIG meeting due to be held in Malta next November (the venue and the dates have been chosen to take advantage of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention being gathered at the forthcoming Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points at that time, thus fostering informal talks).

9. The oil industry, through their national representatives being part of their respective national delegations, attended the last Meeting of the Focal Points held in Malta in October 1996, and is expected to repeat it at the present Meeting.

10. In addition, REMPEC actively participated in an informal meeting with industry representatives held last June in Rome by Esso Italiana.

### **Exchange of information**

11. REMPEC regularly provides information on activities carried out by the Mediterranean coastal States in the field of oil spill preparedness and response and contributes, by means of provision of articles, to the MOIG newsletter. On the other hand the Centre is regularly kept informed of MOIG activities.

12. Furthermore, with respects to its project for a computerized database on resources available within the oil industry and/or a website, MOIG developed strong contacts with REMPEC with a view to creating a useful tool and ensure itself the sought product would match the current needs.

13. In addition, the possibility of a joint delegation – Governments and industry – representing the Mediterranean region at the 99' International Oil Spill Conference due to be held next March in Seattle, United States, is being considered.

## **Training and Exercises**

14. Various oil spill exercises took place during the past biennium, such as:
- Exercise off Toulon, France in September 1997: the national authorities in conjunction with French Oil Company TOTAL organised an exercise to test the French POLMAR Contingency plans both marine and terrestrial (Tier 2 and 3).
  - Exercise off Cadiz, Spain in October 1997: the local authorities, in conjunction with the EXXON european emergency group, organised an exercise involving the Southampton-based Oil Spill Response Ltd. The use of dispersants was applied (Tier 2 and 3)
  - Exercise off Larnaca, Cyprus in February 1998: the local authorities, in conjunction with the various oil companies carrying activities in the bay, organised an exercise whose main objective was to test and review their contingency plan (Tier 1).
  - Joint oil Spill Response Exercise due to take place off Cyprus in the beginning of November 1998 as part of the EU/LIFE financed project for the development of the spill response capacities of Cyprus, Egypt and Israel, will also include the participation of the oil industry. A MOIG representative will be present as an observer.
15. Organization of a joint regional exercise involving both Governments and industry is also being considered.

## **CO-OPERATION WITH THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY**

16. In recent years, the concern on the transport and storage of hazardous substances which may present a danger to the public and the environment, if not handled properly, have increased greatly. Public concern over hazardous materials has grown and governments as well as industry have taken steps to prevent and respond to incidents involving hazardous substances.

### **Application of the OPRC Convention to hazardous substances**

17. It is recalled that Resolution 10 of the OPRC Conference calls for the "Expansion of the scope of the Convention to include hazardous and noxious substances". Furthermore, the 31<sup>st</sup> session of IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), agreed to initiate the work to develop an appropriate instrument to expand the scope of the OPRC Convention pursuant to the OPRC Conference Resolution 10 and entrusted the OPRC Working Group to carry out its work. The Working Group finalized a draft text of the Protocol at MEPC 41 for consideration by the Committee at MEPC 42 (2 - 6 November 1998).

### **The European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC)**

18. The European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) is the Brussels based organization representing the national chemical Federations and chemical companies of Europe which account for about 30% of the world production of chemicals. Among CEFIC's tasks and objectives are:

- to co-operate internationally with chemical associations in different parts of the world within the framework of the International Council of Chemical Associations;
- to work with the appropriate authorities in identifying long-range issues;
- to formulate and promote compliance with standards, codes of practice and guidelines;
- to contribute to the successful implementation of programmes such as that concerning the "Responsible Care Initiative".

### **Initiatives taken by the European chemical industry to prevent, prepare and respond to chemical transport incidents**

19. Under the "Responsible Care Initiative", the European chemical industry launched a co-operative programme, called "the International Chemical Environment (ICE)". The programme was started in May 1990 by a small group of chemical companies which recognized the need for co-operation. Since November 1991, the programme has become an official activity of CEFIC involving the whole of the chemical industry in Europe. ICE has two main areas of focus: Prevention and Emergency response.

#### Prevention

20. The objective of this programme is for the chemical industry to monitor the safety and quality performance of its logistic service providers by evaluating the factual results of an SQAS (Safety and Quality Assessment System) audit by a third party. The arrangement of one single audit, making use of a common standardized questionnaire reduces considerably the myriad of inspections by individual chemical companies, each with their own questionnaire. Each transport mode or distribution operation will eventually be covered by the SQAS packages, specifically:

- SQAS for road;
- SQAS for cleaning stations;
- SQAS for rail;
- SQAS for intermodal transport;
- SQAS for marine transport;
- SQAS for terminals.

21. With regards to the SQAS for marine transport, the scheme was established by 1994 involving the inspection of chemical/chemical gas ships and is now well established in Europe and North America and is being extended to Asia Pacific region.

#### Preparedness and response

22. The objective of this programme is to minimize the consequences of transport incidents involving chemicals by providing competent assistance to the emergency authorities in chemical transport incidents by having a network of national centres and schemes for mutual assistance between chemical companies. This is done by:

- providing competent assistance in each participating country;
- co-ordinating emergency response particularly across national boundaries;
- making expertise available to authorities who are normally in charge of the emergency;

23. Through the system, the chemical industry offers three levels of assistance:

- remote information and general advice by telephone or fax;
- presence of an expert who can give advice after having carried out an assessment/inspection;
- equipment and personnel at the scene of an incident.

24. Some countries have a scheme on emergency response put in place by manufacturers or distributors of chemicals. The scheme is normally administered by the National Chemical Federation which co-ordinates with the authorities. The scheme is based on a register of participating companies which commit themselves to provide assistance when requested by the authorities. Within each scheme is a national centre which maintains 24 hr/day cover, keeps a register of contacts and has access to relevant chemical data. REMPEC has been accepted as part of the ICE network through which information could be transferred to and from the chemical industry in case of chemical marine accidents.

### **Participation of the European chemical industry to activities carried out within the framework of the Emergency Protocol**

25. The objective of including this specific agenda item and inviting representatives from the chemical industry is to develop a comprehensive approach to preparedness and response to maritime related accidents involving hazardous substances. In this context, it must be recalled that previous Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points (REMPEC/WG.10/17, REMPEC/WG.14/17) were of the opinion that co-operation between the chemical industry and government should be encouraged. It must be also noted that co-operation between the European chemical industry and REMPEC has taken place within the framework of the Emergency Protocol. These include:

- i) an expert sent by CEFIC (costs of participation covered by industry) to lecture at the "Introductory Training Course on the Theory and Handling of Protection Equipment in Response to Maritime Accidents involving Chemical Substances - MEDEXPOL 91" (November 1991);
- ii) experts representing CEFIC and IAPH (costs of participation covered by industry) who presented the perspectives and views of the industry at the "Workshop on Preparedness for and Response to Maritime related Accidents, involving Hazardous Substances, in Mediterranean Port Areas and their Approaches" (Barcelona, March 1994);
- iii) contribution by the chemical industry to the last Meeting of Focal Points in the form of an information paper prepared by CEFIC, which was circulated to the Meeting (Malta, October 1994);
- iv) inclusion of REMPEC in the scheme for ICE Emergency Response Centres (May 1995);
- v) an expert from the Turkish Chemical Associate Member Federation, who made a presentation at the "Regional Training Course on Preparedness for and Response to Marine Pollution incidents involving Oil and Hazardous Substances in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea - MEDIPOL 95" on behalf of CEFIC on the chemical industry's initiatives (Istanbul, October 1995);
- vi) participation of REMPEC in a level-1 ring test exercise to test the exchange of information among national emergency response centres participating in the ICE initiative (December 1995);
- vii) participation of the CEFIC/ICE secretariat to the last Meeting of REMPEC's Focal Points (Malta, 22 - 26 October 1996);
- viii) a course held in collaboration between the Italian Ministry of Environment, ENICHEM S.p.a and REMPEC involving liquid hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) carried in bulk, On-Scene Co-ordinator (Porto Marghera, 24 - 28 November 1997);
- ix) a level-2 exercise simulating a chemical ship collision to test the exchange of information between the emergency centre of the Italian national scheme SET and REMPEC (November 1997);
- x) a level-2 exercise which will test the exchange of information between the emergency centre of the Dutch national scheme TRC and REMPEC (envisaged for late October 1998).

26. The chemical industry is invited to submit an information documents providing more information on the topics listed above and to present its views on the issue of the co-operation between government and the chemical industry on preparedness and response to maritime related accidents involving hazardous substances in the Mediterranean region.

### **CO-OPERATION WITH THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY**

27. During the last two years period the relations between REMPEC and the shipping industry were limited to REMPEC's participation in several oil spill drills, organized by various shipping companies on their vessels in the Mediterranean, in the process of their preparation for compliance with the International Safety Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for the Pollution Prevention (ISM Code). These exercises included sending pollution reporting messages from ships or their operators to the Centre and transmitting such messages by the Centre to the competent national authorities of the coastal States concerned.

28. REMPEC attended the Regional Seminar on Implementation of the ISM Code organized by IMO and hosted in **Malta** between 24 and 26 March 1998 by the Malta Maritime Authority.

28. REMPEC continued intensive co-operation in the field of training with the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited (ITOPF). As a result of this co-operation ITOPF provided lecturers in all regional, subregional and national training courses and workshops organized by REMPEC since the last Meeting of Focal Points.

29. ITOPF is invited to inform the Meeting of the most important recent developments within the shipping industry concerning international co-operation on oil spill preparedness and response, and in particular on the plans to extend the membership in the Federation to non-tanker owners.

**Action Requested of the Meeting of Focal Points**

30. The Meeting is invited to:

- a) discuss and express its view on the issue of co-operation between government and the industry;
- b) examine the role REMPEC can play in enhancing this co-operation.