

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

REMPEC/WG.18/8
20 July 2000

Original: English

Malta, 25 - 28 October 2000

Agenda Item 8

CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION
WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMMES

Note by REMPEC

1. Working relations with a number of International Organizations and Programmes were maintained and further extended since the last Meeting of Focal Points held in Malta in November 1998.
2. A number of activities carried out by REMPEC during the last biennium were financially supported by financing mechanisms set-up by such organizations and programmes, while some other activities were developed in co-operation with them. The **European Union** in particular, through the European Commission and its various programmes, was an important partner of REMPEC in the implementation of the Centre's workplan. In fact, the budget allocated to REMPEC by the Contracting Parties through the Mediterranean Trust Fund covered its core activities and the costs of day-by-day operation of the Centre, while the funds provided by the European Community enabled REMPEC to carry out a series of important activities in the field of capacity building at the national and subregional levels.
3. Three different projects aimed at capacity building in various countries in the Eastern Mediterranean, implementation of which is currently co-ordinated by REMPEC, are being carried out with the financial support of the **LIFE Third Countries** instrument of the European Community:
 - LIFE TCY96/INT/08 - Development of spill response capabilities of Cyprus, Egypt and Israel (1997-2000);
 - LIFE TCY98/TR/001 - Risk assessment of ports of Mersin and Iskenderun, Turkey and associated capacity building for the state of readiness and for the response to marine pollution (2000-2002);
 - LIFE TCY99/INT/017/SYR - Development of the national system for preparedness and response to accidental marine pollution in Syrian Arab Republic (2000-2002).

4. The Project concerning **Cyprus, Egypt and Israel** is now in its final stages, and since the last Meeting of Focal Points the following activities aimed at developing the capacities in the field of accidental marine pollution response of the three countries concerned had been carried out and completed:

- organization of a subregional training course on the use of dispersants and other products, Haifa, Israel, 26-29 April 1999;
- organization of a subregional training courses on training of trainers, Nicosia/Athalassa, Cyprus, 16-18 May 2000;
- organization of the second joint subregional oil spill response exercises (including the deployment of response personnel, equipment, vessels and aircraft), Haifa, Israel, 9-11 November 1999;
- organization of two Steering Committee Meetings: Third (ordinary) Meeting, Tel Aviv, Israel, 8-9 March 1999 and an Extraordinary Meeting, Nicosia, Cyprus, 19 May 2000;
- preparation of the sensitivity maps of the coasts of Israel and Cyprus is continuing in the two countries concerned and Egypt has completed the sensitivity mapping of its coasts in 1998.

5. In order to enable the completion of last activities planned under the project, the European Commission has granted an extension of the duration of the project until the end of 2000. The remaining activities include a subregional training course on new shoreline clean-up techniques (based on Erika experience), a group of activities aimed at providing the three countries concerned with an oil spill forecasting model that could be used as a tool for assisting decision making process in case of oil spill accidents, and the final Meeting of National Operational Authorities of the three countries concerned.

6. Following the appointment of consultants by an adjudication committee consisting of representatives from the Turkish authorities, the E.C. delegation in Malta, the Malta Maritime Authority and from REMPEC to evaluate bids for the provision of technical consultancy services, the first activities under the LIFE Third Countries project concerning the risk assessment of the ports of **Mersin and Iskenderun, Turkey** and associated capacity building for the state of readiness and for response to marine pollution should start by the end of this year. These will cover the first phase of the project which involves the preparation by consultants of a study aimed at identifying the risks in both ports and recommending measures for the reduction the risks.

7. The implementation of the LIFE Third Countries project aimed at developing the **Syrian** national preparedness and response system commenced in the spring of 2000 with the First Meeting of the Steering Committee. Initial activities, that started in May and should be completed by the end of November 2000, include the preparation of a draft national legislation for dealing with marine pollution emergencies, risk analysis for main Syrian oil ports and terminals, revision of the draft national contingency plan and the preparation of a proposal for procurement of pollution response equipment.

8. In October 1999 REMPEC was invited to participate in the **LIFE Week Conference and Exhibition**, a manifestation organized by the Directorate General for Environment, Nuclear Safety and Civil Protection of the European Commission in Brussels with a view to presenting the achievements of various components of the Community's LIFE instrument. The Centre was invited to present the two projects carried out in the Eastern Mediterranean for the benefit of Cyprus, Egypt and Israel. These **two projects, co-ordinated by REMPEC, were selected by the Commission to be included among** some fifteen projects considered as "**success stories**" of the LIFE programme. The Centre prepared the paper describing the two projects, their implementation and results.

9. In addition to the three projects financed by LIFE Third Countries instrument, in 1997 REMPEC submitted for approval by **MEDA** financial mechanism established within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership of the EC a project on port reception facilities for collecting ship generated garbage, bilge waters and oily residues. As reported in the last Meeting of Focal Points, the project was accepted by the relevant services of the Directorate-General for Energy and Transport of the EC. The contract for the implementation of the Project, to be signed between the EC and IMO on behalf of REMPEC, was prepared in June 1999, however its signing is still pending (cf. REMPEC/WG.18/10/4).

10. The representative of the Civil Protection Unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment is invited to present, on behalf of the **European Community**, the ongoing activities and new initiatives within the field of prevention, preparedness and response to marine pollution, that are of interest for the Mediterranean coastal States.
11. The **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** has established and developed the Marine Meteorological Support System for Marine Pollution Emergency Operations on the High Seas (MPERSS), as reported by the representatives of the WMO in the Meetings of REMPEC Focal Points in 1994, 1996 and 1998 respectively. During the last two years REMPEC in collaboration with WMO, included the Area Meteorological Co-ordinators that had been given the responsibilities under MPERSS to provide meteorological and oceanographic services in the Mediterranean Marine Pollution Incident (MPI) area, in two alert exercises organized in December 1999 and July 2000 respectively.
12. On both occasions the response from the two Mediterranean MPERSS Area Meteorological Co-ordinators (Meteo-France and Hellenic National Meteorological Services) was prompt and efficient. The results of these exercises have confirmed that in event of a major marine pollution accident on high seas, national authorities of the coastal States concerned could rely on the meteorological and oceanographic support provided through the WMO and through its MPERSS co-ordination centres in the Mediterranean. It should be emphasized that as part of its service Meteo-France also provides forecasting of oil spill movement, fate and behaviour as well as the forecasting the drift of containers lost at sea.
13. The representative(s) of the Ocean Affairs Division of the WMO (and Meteo France respectively), are invited to give more information on services currently available through MPERSS in the Mediterranean.
14. Inter-agency co-operation between REMPEC and other U.N. organizations/programmes continued during the period under review namely with: the **ILO/UNEP/ WHO International Programme on Chemical Safety** and the **Production and Consumption Unit and Chemical Unit** within the **Division of Technology/Industry and Economics (DTIE)** of the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**. This co-operation took the form of the exchange of information on the initiatives taken in the field of risks to human health and the environment from exposure to chemicals.
15. REMPEC continued to participate to the **Working Group on the Evaluation of the Hazards of Harmful Substances carried by Ships of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environment Protection (GESAMP)**. It must be noted that the information generated by this Working Group is utilized by the IMO to assign pollution categories of noxious liquid substances listed in Appendix II to MARPOL 73/78 Annex II, to classify marine pollutants under the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code for packaged dangerous goods and to identify harmful substances under MARPOL 73/78 Annex III. An important output of this Working Group is a composite list containing 2,500 hazard profiles of substances transported at sea. This list can be used as a reference for a first assessment of the effects of chemicals if accidentally spilled in the marine environment. At the request of the IMO, this Group has revised its hazard evaluation scheme for chemicals in order to consider modern insights in environmental science. This revised scheme is based on an expanded set of criteria and includes acute and chronic aquatic toxicity, biodegradation and bioconcentration.
16. REMPEC closely followed the activities of **International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds)** during the last biennium and persistently promoted, through its own training programme and through meetings and workshops organized by other parties, to which the Centre was invited, the ratification of the 1992 Protocols to the CLC and Fund Convention and the denunciation by the Mediterranean coastal States of the "old" liability and compensation regimes of 1969 and 1971 respectively.
17. Since the last Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points Italy and Malta deposited instruments of accession to the 1992 Protocols to CLC and Fund Convention.
18. The representative of the IOPC Funds, is invited to inform the Meeting of the most recent developments within the framework of international regimes for compensation for oil pollution damage.

19. REMPEC continued the co-operation in the field of training with the **International Maritime Academy (IMA)** in Trieste, Italy, which operates under the auspices of IMO. In April 1999 REMPEC prepared the programme, delivered lectures, conducted the table top exercise and participated in the organization of the demonstration of pollution response equipment in one-week course module on "Preparedness and Response (to marine pollution accidents)", that was part of the two-months training course on "Handling of Hazardous Bulk Liquids in Port", organized by IMA in Trieste.

20. The Centre also maintained and intensified regular contacts with the Secretariats of the **Bonn Agreement** and the **Helsinki Commission** respectively. In May 2000 the Centre participated in the Meeting of the Bonn Agreement's Working Group on Operational, Technical and Scientific Questions Concerning Counter Pollution Activities (OTSOPA). During the period under observation REMPEC distributed to the competent national authorities of the members States of these two regional agreements copies of the Practical Guide for Marine Chemical Spills and of the TROCS database. On the other hand, the Bonn Agreement Secretariat provided Centre with copies of the Manual on Oil Pollution at Sea - Part 2: Effective Prosecution of Offenders - Guidelines on International Co-operation. Like Part 1 of the Manual (Securing Evidence on Discharges from Ships) that was distributed to the national authorities of the Mediterranean coastal States some years ago, the second Part is also very well prepared and provides useful reference for all those responsible for the implementation of MARPOL 73/78. The guidelines based on the experience of the countries in the northern and western Europe could be of particular interest for the Mediterranean coastal States that are setting up their national structures for the enforcement of MARPOL 73/78 regulations, but also for those which have their national organization already in place. A copy of the Manual will be distributed to each head of delegation in the present Meeting.

21. REMPEC intends to keep the Contracting Parties, through its Focal Points, regularly informed of the ongoing activities, as well as those planned by the Secretariat of the Bonn Agreement and its member States, in the fields of prevention, preparedness and response to marine pollution.

22. Regular contacts and exchange of information between REMPEC and the **Environmental Health and Safety Division** of the **Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** have continued during the period under review, in particular for those initiatives taken within the remit of the Working Group on Chemical Accidents.

23. Regular contacts and an exchange of information between the **RAMOGE** agreement (covering France, Monaco and Italy) and REMPEC have also continued during the two years period since the last Meeting of Focal Points. The representative of RAMOGE agreement is invited to present a description of activities carried out within the framework of RAMOGE sub-regional agreement between the three parties that are also the parties to the Emergency Protocol.

Action Requested of the Meeting of Focal Points

24. The Meeting is invited to:

- a) consider, discuss and express its view concerning the status of co-operation and co-ordination between REMPEC and various international organizations and programmes;
- b) examine the role that REMPEC can play in further intensifying such co-operation and co-ordination for the benefit of the Mediterranean coastal States.