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REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)

CENTRE REGIONAL MEDITERRANEE POUR L'INTERVENTION  
D'URGENCE CONTRE LA POLLUTION MARINE ACCIDENTELLE (REMPEC)

MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN  
PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE



8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Focal Points of the  
Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response  
Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.28/10  
22 March 2007

Malta, 7-11 May 2007

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Agenda Item 10

**DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION**

**Note by the Secretariat**

This document intends to address various issues related to the dissemination of information by the Centre.

**Network of Focal Points**

1. The correspondents of the Centre in each Contracting Party are the Focal Points designated by the competent authorities of that Party. Besides a Governmental Focal Point, following previous decisions taken by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, the Centre has also two other specialized Focal Points, one for issues related to pollution response and co-operation (OPRC) activities and the other one for matters related to prevention of pollution from ships. It has also to be noted that in some countries, besides the appointed Focal Points, the Centre has also been requested to copy one or two other officials.

2. Though the competent national authorities have chosen to designate officials within the government department or agency which is more likely to be the leader on the relevant issues, it has to be stressed that the primary role of a Focal Point is to liaise with the other departments that can be involved in order to widely disseminate the information received by the Centre. In particular, when an invitation to nominate several participants to a meeting has been issued by REMPEC, it is expected that the Focal Point will consult and coordinate with all national authorities concerned, to prepare one list of participants from his/her country, thus avoiding multiple nominations exceeding the available capacity and/or without the necessary official backing.

3. Usually, invitations of this kind are addressed to the most concerned REMPEC Focal Point and copied to the others either for their information or because they may also be concerned by the topic. In order to avoid difficulties such as those mentioned above, it is recommended that the reply originates from the Focal Point to whom it has been addressed.

4. As the network of Focal Points is the official link between the Centre and the Contracting Parties, it is of utmost importance that whenever a new Focal Point is nominated, the Centre receives official notification of the appointment, with all the relevant contact details.

#### **Transmission of information in case of emergencies**

5. As is stated in the Centre's annual circular letter "Communications with REMPEC" issued in the beginning of each year, in order to initiate contact with the Centre when faced with an emergency situation, it is recommended to utilize the 24 hours emergency mobile phone line indicated in this circular letter. The Centre, when disseminating information on marine pollution incidents, would endeavour to also forward this information to the 24 hours national emergencies centres or contact points of the Contracting Parties which are listed in Part B Section I of the Centre's Regional Information System (RIS).

#### **General transmission of information**

6. After a review of the current situation, taking into consideration the existence of new technologies which are available in the various Contracting Parties, it is proposed to adopt new procedures on the transmission of information between the Centre and the Contracting Parties.

7. The Centre is mainly producing four types of documents: circular letters, training material, meeting documents and printed publications.

##### ***Circular letters***

8. Up to now, the Centre has mainly relied on circular letters which are disseminated either by fax or mail only, or by fax and mail. Due to the huge number of recipients, and the fact that in some countries fax machines are not always on the "ready to receive" position, the dispatch by fax of a circular letter is a time consuming exercise of at least half a day. Despite that, it is not always sure that the circular letters sent by fax reach their addressee. It is therefore proposed to start sending circular letters by electronic mail instead of sending them by fax as was previously done. However, circular letters which are disseminated through regular airmail will continue to be disseminated in this way.

##### ***Training material***

9. For the purpose of training courses, the Centre is preparing some paper documentation. This will remain unchanged.

##### ***Meeting documents***

10. Two types of documents are issued in relation with meetings: working and information documents, and reports of meetings. As far as working documents are concerned, these are already made available through the "documents section" of REMPEC's website and it is proposed to maintain the present policy.

11. On the contrary, today, meetings' reports with all relevant attachments are addressed to all participants in a paper format. This involves time and costs for reproducing and mailing these documents. It is therefore proposed that the reports would now only be disseminated through CDs.

### ***Publications***

12. No changes are proposed for the dissemination of publications.

### **Information Tools**

13. *Regional Information System (RIS)*: The Centre is keeping the RIS updated as much as possible. However, REMPEC is considering a complete review of this system, its content and its format (see agenda item 11) with a view to making it more user-friendly.

14. *Databases*: During the current biennium the Centre has concentrated on rebuilding its database on maritime accidents in the Mediterranean Sea, which dates back to 1983 and needs a thorough review.

15. *MIDSIS TROCS* (Mediterranean Integrated Decision Support and Information System – Transport Oriented database on Chemical Substances) has also been reviewed and a final version 2 is now available. However, the development and production of this information support system has encountered many difficulties resulting in delays. In the meantime, new developments have taken place at the international level mainly with regard to the classification of chemicals and their related GESAMP profiles. These latest developments would eventually need to be reflected in MIDSIS TROCS in order to keep this tool updated.

16. *Website*: Launched in 2003, mainly as a link between the Centre and its Focal Points, the Centre's website needs to be reviewed in order to make it more user-friendly and also to meet the expectations of the general public looking for accurate information on the prevention of and response to marine pollution from ships in the Mediterranean Sea.

**The Meeting of Focal Points is invited to** take note of the information provided in this document and to consider and agree upon the proposals of the Secretariat contained in paragraphs 8 and 11.