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

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

MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN
PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE



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

REMPEC/WG.28/9/1
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Agenda Item 9

ACCIDENTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Note by the Secretariat

1. Since the 7th Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points held in April 2005 the Centre received three requests for assistance from the GSP Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lebanon and Syria in connection with oil spills which affected these countries. Between 7 and 8 March 2006, the Centre provided on-site technical advice at the Port of Misurata to the competent authorities of the GSP Libyan Arab Jamahiriya following their request for assistance. During the Summer 2007, the Centre was also deeply involved in the response to the major marine pollution incident, which affected the Eastern Mediterranean region, and which required international co-operation to deal with its consequences (*vide* REMPEC/WG.28/9/2). The competent national authorities of Lebanon and Syria requested REMPEC for technical advice and the Centre was able to provide such assistance, either utilizing its own expertise and resources, or external sources of information and assistance.

2. The other oil spills recorded in the Mediterranean during the abovementioned period were of a very limited size and were dealt at the national level. As regards accidents involving hazardous substances other than oil, few incidents were reported to the Centre and these were dealt by the national competent authorities.

3. REMPEC regularly collected information concerning maritime accidents that caused or were likely to cause pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by oil and other harmful substances. In 2004, REMPEC published the latest version of the list of alerts and accidents in the Mediterranean under Section 4 of Part C of the Regional Information System (RIS) which covered alerts and accidents until December 2003. Only the accidents that actually caused pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by oil or other hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) or were likely to cause such pollution were recorded. The accidents that were included in the list include those that satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- Accident involving any type of ship, which actually resulted in an oil spill, a spill or release of a hazardous and noxious substance, or in a loss or damage to a container containing HNS;

- Accidents on land (terminals, storage tanks, pipelines, industries, power plants, etc.) that resulted in entry into the sea of oil or HNS;
- Accident involving one or more oil tankers or chemical tankers (either laden or not);
- Collisions, groundings or other accidents causing serious damage to the ships involved, in particular if these carried or could carry significant quantities of fuel oil as bunkers;
- All accidents involving sinking of vessels that had on board any quantity of oil as bunkers;
- All accidents involving sinking of vessels that carried HNS as cargo (either in bulk or in packaged form);

4. The Centre's list of alerts and accidents in the Mediterranean is currently under revision and should be made available on REMPEC's website by the last quarter of 2007.

5. In most cases, the first notification of accidents that occurred in the Mediterranean Region was received at REMPEC from Lloyd's Casualty Reporting Service. As in previous years, the Centre only exceptionally received the first information from the REMPEC's National Focal Points.

6. In this connection, it should be recalled that:

- Article 8 of the Protocol concerning Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, 1976 lays down obligations related to reporting of any incident which results or may result in a discharge of oil or HNS or any incident observed at sea which poses or is likely to pose a threat to the marine environment or to the coast or related interests of one or more of the Parties;
- Article 9 of the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, 2002 lays down similar obligations for a Party to report all incidents which result or may result in a discharge of oil or HNS;
- The report shall contain information on "the presence, characteristics and extent of spillages of oil or hazardous and noxious substances, including hazardous and noxious substances in packaged form (...)"
- In case of a pollution incident, the information collected shall be communicated to the Centre and to the other Parties likely to be affected by a pollution incident by the Party which has received the information, preferably directly or through the Centre, or by the Centre. In case of direct communication between Parties, these shall inform the Centre of the measures taken, and the Centre shall communicate to the other Parties;
- The Parties shall use a mutually agreed standard form proposed by the Centre for the reporting of pollution incidents;
- The OPRC Convention 1990, in its Article 4, lays down similar obligations related to reporting of marine oil pollution;
- The "Guidelines for co-operation in combating marine oil pollution in the Mediterranean" adopted on the 11 September 1987 by the Fifth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, also state that "The Parties will report to the Centre at least all spillages or discharges of oil in excess of 100 cubic metres as soon as they have knowledge of them."

However, as indicated in paragraph 3, incidents without spillage are also recorded in the list.

The Meeting of Focal Points is invited to

- **inform** the participants about significant incidents that occurred during the period under review in the geographical area of the protocol;
- **examine** possible improvement in reporting incidents to the Centre, in order to enable the Secretariat to maintain updated the list of alerts and accidents.