

FH/mm/112

Malta, 9 April 2013

Circular Letter No. 07/2013 (English/French)

To (for action): REMPEC Governmental Focal Points

Copy (for information): REMPEC OPRC Focal Points
REMPEC Prevention Focal Points
Mr. S. Micallef, Director, MED, IMO, London, U.K
Ms M.L. Silva Mejias, Executive Secretary and Co-ordinator,
UNEP/MAP, Athens, Greece
Mrs. J. Alder, Head of Marine & Coastal Environment Branch,
UNEP-Nairobi, Kenya
Mediterranean Countries Embassies resident in Malta
EC Representation in Malta

Subject: REMPEC Focal Points Meeting for the biennium 2012 - 2013

Dear Focal Points,

The 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention is scheduled to take place in December 2013. This Meeting is the culminating point of a process which usually entails Meetings of the MAP Components Focal Points and a Meeting of the MAP Focal Points. However, this year, due to several inter-related reasons, the process will be different, and as explained hereunder, it has been decided that no REMPEC Focal Points Meeting will be convened in 2013

Application of the "Governance" decision:

In 2008, at their 15th Ordinary Meeting, held in Almeria, Spain, the Contracting Parties adopted Decision IG 17/5 "Governance", which introduced some changes in the preparation of the MAP biennium work programme. Basically, the underlying principle is that MAP Focal Points should be in a position to first agree on the main priorities of the programme of work and once they have agreed, the technical MAP Components' Focal Points should then detail the proposed activities. A first attempt to put into practice this new method of work was carried out for the preparation of the 2012-2013 programme of work, with a written consultation of the REMPEC Focal Points preceding the discussion of this topic at the 10th Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points held in Malta in May 2011. Moreover the draft MAP programme of work was also transmitted by the Co-ordinating Unit to the MAP Focal Points. This process, however, has not been found satisfactory as very few comments were received within the prescribed deadlines and the MAP Focal Points felt that the written consultation procedure did not provide them with the possibility to discuss and agree on the priority activities. Therefore, for the preparation of the MAP programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015, it has been decided that a first meeting of the MAP Focal Points shall precede the MAP Components' Focal Points Meetings. This first MAP Focal Points Meeting will take place in Athens on 22 - 23 April 2013 whilst the MAP Focal Points Meeting preceding the Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties, which will review the

proposed decisions and budget, will take place as usual towards the end of September 2013. In order to comply with this new calendar, a draft programme of work has been communicated by the various MAP Components to the Co-ordinating Unit for consideration by the first MAP Focal Points Meeting. A copy of the draft REMPEC programme of work for 2014-2015 is attached.

Budget estimates for the 2014-2015 Programme of Work:

The MAP Components have been requested to build their proposals for the 2014-2015 programme of work on the same allocation of funds from the MTF as for the 2012-2013 Budget. As was already explained during the last REMPEC Focal Points Meeting, this allocation, which has not been reviewed since 2003, does not guarantee a meaningful level of activities by the Centre. In the meantime, the capacity of the Centre to mobilise other resources through new externally funded projects has been weakened by some institutional changes within the European Union, REMPEC's main provider of externally funded projects and also by the uncertainty of the future of the Centre, as explained below.

Functional review of the Mediterranean Action Plan:

At their last Ordinary Meeting, the Contracting Parties have decided to undertake a functional review of the UNEP/MAP Components (Decision IG 20/13). The review was conducted in late November 2012 and the draft report issued in February 2013. A copy of the final report to be discussed at the next MAP Focal Points' Meeting is attached herewith for your complete information. As could be read in the report, one of the main recommendations regarding REMPEC is to "re-establish REMPEC as a national body with a regional function" aligning its status with the status of the other MAP Regional Activity Centres (RACs). If this recommendation was to be endorsed by the Contracting Parties, it will entail a phase out-phase in process which would surely impact the delivery of activities by the Centre during the next biennium. This process will also result in potential financial liabilities which need to be further considered and, if necessary, also reflected in MAP's budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

The particular situation arising out of the various reasons explained above has been brought to the attention of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties which, in its last Meeting in February 2013, has agreed that, under these circumstances, there should be flexibility as to whether MAP Components' Focal Points Meeting should be convened.

REMPEC Focal Points Meeting:

In view of the various reasons exposed above and considering the substantial amount of financial resources required to organise a REMPEC Focal Points Meeting, as well as the technical nature of such a meeting, I do not believe that is advisable to organise a REMPEC Focal Points Meeting this year. As you could see from the attached draft REMPEC programme of work for 2014-2015, the main proposed item on the Centre's programme of work will be the revision of the 2005 Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, which is due to end in 2015. This will be an opportunity to assess the results achieved under this Strategy, update it as necessary and in particular align it with MAP's Decision IG 20/4 on the implementation of the MAP ecosystem approach roadmap. Another proposed area of work will be to continue the preparatory work related to an action plan for the implementation of the Offshore Protocol.

In order to keep the Contracting Parties updated on the work carried out by REMPEC during the biennium 2012-2013, a progress report will be circulated by the Centre in the near future.

Despite all the difficulties that REMPEC has been going through during this biennium, I would like to assure you of the commitment of the staff of the Centre to assist you as best as they can in line with the Centre's mandate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'F. Hébert', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Frederic Hébert
Director, REMPEC

Enc.

by email only