



**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP)
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

11th Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional
Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre
for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

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Agenda Item 16

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN OILED WILDLIFE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Submitted by Sea Alarm

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document is an information paper summarising recent developments in international oiled wildlife preparedness and response, prepared by the Sea Alarm foundation (a member of the Mediterranean Assistance Unit).

Action to be taken: To take note of the information provided.

Related documents: REMPEC/WG.37/4

Background

1 REMPEC and the Sea Alarm Foundation have in place a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which allows Sea Alarm to participate, on request of a Contracting Party, in the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU). Sea Alarm's membership in the MAU is with a view to enhancing the capability of the Contracting Parties in responding to oiled wildlife incidents. The objective of the MoU is to facilitate the mobilization of the expert personnel of Sea Alarm in case of the activation by REMPEC of the MAU following a request for assistance by a Contracting Party to the Emergency Protocol to the Barcelona Convention, in case of a marine pollution emergency.

2 The MoU also allows for Contracting Parties to involve Sea Alarm's expertise in the development of national contingency plans particularly with regard to the protection of sensitive species and the related operational procedures to be implemented in cases of emergency, including e.g. participation in relevant training activities organised by REMPEC in the Mediterranean region. In the interest of visibility and sharing of information, Sea Alarm has linked its Country Wildlife Response Profiles providing national data on the oiled wildlife response to the corresponding Country profiles of REMPEC's website (sections response strategy and expertise). Sea Alarm's website can be found at www.sea-alarm.org

3 This paper is for information purposes and provides an update on recent international developments in oiled wildlife preparedness and response, namely:

- .1 oil industry has fully integrated wildlife response and preparedness into their international standards;
- .2 developing a Global Oiled Wildlife Response System;
- .3 developing a European Module for oiled wildlife response (EUROWA);

- .4 wildlife response preparedness now a binding obligation for European Member States?; and
- .5 training course provided for HELCOM and Bonn Agreement Wildlife Authorities in Brussels

Industry has fully integrated oiled wildlife response and preparedness into their international standards

4 In setting their aims for responsible preparedness for oil spill response, the oil industry has collectively recognized that oiled wildlife response is one of the 15 main areas of oil spill response that need explicit preparedness in terms of expertise and equipment (see table 2 and figure 5 in the following document):
<http://oilspillresponseproject.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Tiered%20Preparedness%20and%20Response%20GPG.pdf>

5 Industry's vision on how to develop and maintain oiled wildlife response preparedness is described in the so called "Good Practice Guideline" on Wildlife Response Preparedness which has been published online and can be downloaded from:

<http://oilspillresponseproject.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Wildlife%20response%20preparedness.pdf>

This document states that the development of an oiled wildlife response plan should be followed by systematical development of capabilities via training, exercises and maintained equipment stockpiling, and annual evaluation of progress and plan improvements, involving key stakeholders.

Developing a Global Oiled Wildlife Response System

6 The oil industry has recently contracted Sea Alarm with 10 subcontractors to explore and design a global Tier-3 system for oiled wildlife response. The oil industry is interested to have an effective response system in place for their global operations. The project will run until December 2016 and will develop a Standard Operating Procedure for notification, mobilization, operational activities and demobilization. The project will also define animal welfare standards for treating oiled wildlife of various species groups, and a road map for developing global readiness in terms of expertise and equipment. The project aims to align the world's leading wildlife response organisations and define a robust system that can be activated by the oil industry via Oil Spill Response Ltd (OSRL) in the UK.

Developing a European Module for Oiled Wildlife Response (EUROWA)

7 Sea Alarm is working with four partners and two subcontractors on a two-year project co-financed by the European Commission via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The project (named EUROWA) aims to develop a so called Module (experts and their equipment) that can be mobilised by European Member States via CECIS to assist with wildlife response within Europe or elsewhere in the world. Project partners include the British RSPCA, Belgian WRCO, German ProBird and WWF-Finland. ELF (Estonia) and Oniris (France) are involved as subcontractors to the project. Although clearly related to the project described under 3.2, this EU project builds upon the more advanced cooperation between European organisations. Apart from a Standard Operational Procedure for Module mobilisation and onsite operations, the project will develop training packages for the different expert positions in the Module.

8 Once developed, the project will organise training events for individuals from different European countries who would like to be accredited and listed for inclusion in the Module in case of call-out. The project will also consider and prepare the Sea Alarm owned equipment for integration into the Module. Lastly the project includes a budget for various exercises, including one full Module mobilisation exercise that can be integrated in a national oil spill exercise. The project will provide a wide range of opportunities for Member State Authorities, NGOs and individual experts to support the development of preparedness at national and international levels. Further details will be published on the project website at <http://www.oiledwildlife.eu/eurowa/project>

Wildlife response preparedness a binding obligation for European Member States?

9 Annex VII section H of the recently adopted EU Directive 2013/30 on Offshore Safety (available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32013L0030>) contains a reference to oiled wildlife response preparedness. It states that as part of so called "external plans"

Member States have to include: "Arrangements for the mitigation of the negative impacts on wildlife both onshore and offshore including the situations where oiled animals reach shore earlier than the actual spill." The Offshore Directive aims to ensure that the risks and consequences (social, economic and environmental) from incidents caused by offshore exploration and production are minimized. To that end Member States have to make sure that operators or owners of offshore installations develop so called "internal plans" which aim to maximize safe operations, reduce risks and minimize the quantities of oil spills, e.g. by providing capacity to drill relief wells and placing capping installations, have to develop "external response plans" on the basis of which the consequences of oil spills can be minimized. The content of these plans is defined by Annex VII of the said EU Directive 2013/30.

10 The Offshore Directive has been adopted in 2014 and must be implemented via national legislation. Transposition of the Directive into national legislation needs to be completed by July 2015. All Member States must transpose and implement the Directive, including Member States that do not have offshore installation, even land-locked Member States.

11 The fact that section H on wildlife has been included in Annex VII of the Directive indicates that the development of an integrated oiled wildlife response plan has now become a legal obligation for European Member States. At Interspill 2015, Sea Alarm has presented a paper on this topic, the draft of which can be provided on request.

Training Course provided for HELCOM and Bonn Agreement Wildlife Authorities in Brussels

12 In the framework of the HELCOM Response Oiled Wildlife Response Expert Group, Sea Alarm organized and provided a two-day training course on oiled wildlife response planning on 16-17 April 2015 in Brussels, Belgium. The course was tailored to European authorities that are in charge of coordinating and/or developing an integrated plan for oiled wildlife response preparedness in their country. The course was kindly hosted by the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) of the European Union. The course topics are listed at paragraphs 16 and 17 in the present document.

13 Although the event was originally organised for members of the HELCOM Oiled Wildlife Response Expert Group, it was decided to open registration also for countries outside the HELCOM region. The announcement was also disseminated via the secretariats of the Bonn Agreement and REMPEC.

14 Representatives from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia and Poland attended the course. The total of 16 participants attended, representing 9 countries, also including Netherlands, France and Ireland. Also the HELCOM Secretariat attended the event.

15 The participants of the workshop found the course extremely useful for their national planning processes. Some participants were at the beginning of their planning, others were assessing their existing plan, again others could already share experience on multi-year implementation history. All starts with the country priorities concerning oiled wildlife response and getting relevant stakeholders involved to explore common ground and shared interest. Most important is to think through possible scenarios and the potential impacts on wildlife populations and the given response system. What level of preparedness is needed, and how does that translate to people, equipment, facilities and the management system as part of the overall emergency response, were key questions that the course tried to answer. Also media effects of a wildlife response were discussed. The Baltic participants found it useful to exchange experiences with representatives from outside the Baltic Sea, so that there were more examples, experience, and solutions to look at, and appreciated the valuable contacts made. The participants therefore proposed to have such an event every year as a structural European exchange of knowledge expertise in this emerging field to which the main European regional agreements would be invited.

16 Course topics included:

- What is essentially a wildlife response and its objectives (the implications of which are often underestimated)?
- How does this fit in into the overall oil spill response and preparedness system that everybody already is familiar with?

- Integrating wildlife response into existing oil spill response plans (local, national, regional, global): why and how?
- Who are wildlife responders, how do they think, what do they need, what can they accomplish, how to reach out for them and get them engaged?
- What are international standards that actors (governments, companies, NGOs) best aim for regarding response management and preparedness (e.g. pre-spill planning, tiered response, protocols, equipment investments, mobilisation)?
- What are the different stages of the planning process, who are the stakeholders to involve in each of these stages, how can an external consultant assist?
- What are facilities, which equipment is needed for an oiled wildlife response?
- What is an appropriate level of preparedness for an actor and what are the criteria that can be used to determine if that level is reached?
- Which decisions will significantly affect costs, and how can these costs be controlled and justified as part of a claim?
- What were lessons learnt from a selected number of wildlife incidents, e.g.
 - o Prestige (Spain)
 - o Tricolor (France, Belgium)
 - o Volganefit (Russia)
 - o Oliva (Tristan da Cunha)
 - o Treasure (South Africa)
 - o Rena (New Zealand)

17 Table top exercises included:

- Developing response strategies and the location of wildlife response facilities;
- Electronic simulation of quantitative management in an oiled bird rehabilitation facility (demonstration).

18 **The Meeting is invited to take note** of the information provided in this document.