



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

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

REMPEC/WG.41/13

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Agenda Item 13

MEDITERRANEAN TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document provides an update on the progress made by the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) since the Tenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC and proposes future activities to be integrated to the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2018-2019.

Actions to be taken: Paragraph 28

Related documents: UNEP(DEC)/MED IG.13/8, UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, REMPEC/WG.37/9, REMPEC/WG.37/12, REMPEC/WG.37/14/1, REMPEC/WG.37/14/2, REMPEC/WG.41/9, REMPEC/WG.41/INF.3

Background

1 The Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), which was held in Malta from 25 to 28 October 2000, agreed on the establishment of the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) aimed at facilitating the exchange of technical data and other scientific information on preparedness and response issues related to marine pollution emergencies, and endorsed the Guidelines for the Mediterranean Technical Working Group that lays down the method of work of the MTWG.

2 According to Article 4 of the Guidelines for the MTWG, the "*Meetings of REMPEC's Focal Points should periodically examine and review these guidelines and make recommendations as appropriate to facilitate the work of the MTWG*". In this regard, the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), held in Malta, from 15 to 17 June 2015 reviewed and adopted the 2015 version of the Guidelines reproduced in Annex II to document REMPEC/WG.37/14/1.

3 Based on the recommendations adopted by the Twelfth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean ("the Barcelona Convention") and its Protocols (COP 12), which was convened in Monaco from 14 to 17 November 2001 (Annex IV, UNEP(DEC)/MED IG.13/8), the need for such a regional forum (i.e. MTWG) was strengthened as it was agreed that REMPEC should develop and maintain close working relationships with other Regional Activity Centres of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), also referred to as UN Environment/MAP and with the "specialised regional organisms" which play a coordinating role as set forth in the UN Environment/MAP, particularly with the scientific institutions within the region.

4 The Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (COP 19), which was held in Athens, Greece from 9 to 12 February 2016, adopted Decision IG.22/4 related to the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28), hereinafter referred to as the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), which is presented in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.41/INF.3.

5 All in all, the activities carried out within the MTWG facilitate the implementation of the following Specific Objectives of the Regional Strategy (2016-2021):

- .1 Specific Objective 18: To encourage the participation of the regional scientific and technical institutions in research and development activities and to facilitate transfer of technology.
- .2 Specific Objective 19: To improve the quality, speed and effectiveness of decision making process in case of marine pollution incidents through the development and introduction of technical and decision support tools; and
- .3 Specific Objective 21: To revise the existing recommendations, principles and guidelines, and to develop new ones aimed at facilitating international cooperation and mutual assistance within the framework of 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol.

Progress Report on the Programme of Work of the MTWG for the biennium 2016-2017

6 Whilst noting that the proposed programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2016/2017 put forward by the Secretariat in document REMPEC/WG.37/14/2 resulted from a consultation¹ with the MTWG contact points in charge of reviewing the Regional Information System (RIS), the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), agreed to include in the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2016/2017, the following tasks:

- .1 to update the Guidelines on Risk of gaseous releases resulting from marine incidents; and
- .2 to carry out a complete review of the Principles and Guidelines on cooperation and mutual assistance.

7 These tasks were included in the Programme of Work of REMPEC for the biennium 2016-2017, which was integrated in the Decision IG.22/20 related to the UN Environment/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2016-2017, adopted by COP 19 (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28).

8 It should be noted that whilst funding from the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF) was allocated to the review of the Principles and Guidelines on cooperation and mutual assistance, the source of funding for the update of the Guidelines on Risk of gaseous releases resulting from marine incidents was not secured.

Review of the Principles and Guidelines on “Cooperation and mutual assistance”

9 Document REMPEC/WG.41/8 submitted under agenda item 8 to the present Meeting outlines the process leading from the review of the Mediterranean “Principles and Guidelines on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance” to the preparation of the draft Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in responding to Marine Pollution Incidents, hereinafter referred to as the draft Mediterranean Guide, pursuant to the UN Environment/MAP Programme of Work for 2016-2017.

10 It should be noted that no specific MTWG Correspondence Group was established for this task, since the OPRC Focal Points of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, who are responsible for preparedness for and response to accidental marine pollution, were invited to participate in the preparation of the draft Mediterranean Guide by providing comments on the document prior and during the Regional Workshop on Cooperation Arrangements in the Field of Preparedness for and Response to Oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) Spills

¹ Circular Letter No. 06/2013 dated 11th March 2013.

(MEDEXPOL 2016) (St. Julian's, Malta, 14-15 December 2016). This Meeting was attended by twenty-nine (29) participants representing fourteen (14) Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Albania, Algeria, Croatia, European Union, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain and Tunisia) as well as Regional and International Organisations, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF), Federazione Nazionale dell'Industria Chimica (FEDERCHIMICA), Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG), the Mediterranean Operational Network for the Global Ocean Observing System (MONGOOS) and Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL), who contributed to the consultation process for the development of the draft Mediterranean Guide, in view of its submission to the present Meeting.

Update of the Guidelines on Risk of gaseous releases resulting from marine incidents

11 In line with activities proposed under the approved Programme of Work 2016-2017, and in accordance with the outcome of the discussions of the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) on the document REMPEC/WG.37/9 related to a project proposal on preparedness for and response to accidental marine pollution (oil and HNS), REMPEC submitted, together with Western Mediterranean coastal States and other partners, a joint project proposal, namely the Marine Oil & HNS Pollution Cooperation in the Western Mediterranean Region Project (West MOPoCo Project), to the 2016 Call for prevention and preparedness projects in the field of civil protection and marine pollution in the framework of the Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism and its implementing rules. One of the objectives of the proposal was to support the update of the Guidelines on Risk of gaseous releases resulting from marine incidents.

12 Since the West MOPoCo Project proposal was not selected, and with a view to carrying out the update of the Guidelines on Risk of gaseous releases resulting from marine incidents within the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2016/2017, the Centre initiated discussions to mobilise the resources required to ensure the start of this activity in 2017, following the required administrative procedures.

13 The Secretariat therefore proposed to:

- .1 rollover into the biennium 2018/2019, this task scheduled in the framework of in the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2016/2017;
- .2 establish an OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group under the MTWG to support the process of the update of the Guidelines on Risk of gaseous releases resulting from marine incidents;
- .3 designate, through the OPRC Focal Points, the appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group; and
- .4 to report on the outcome of this task to the Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) to be held in 2019.

Cooperation between the MTWG and the other technical fora

14 In line with the recommendations of COP 12 (Annex IV, UNEP(DEC)/MED IG.13/8) and in accordance with the 2015 Guidelines for the MTWG, the MTWG is considered as a regional forum through which the Contracting Parties can contribute to or benefit from the relevant work carried out at a global and European level (e.g. IMO's Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)'s Consultative Technical Group for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (CTG MPPR)) and in this context the Secretariat is requested to inform the Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC of developments within the PPR and the CTG MPPR and update the PPR and the CTG MPPR respectively on developments within the MTWG.

15 Following the review of document REMPEC/WG.37/12 relating to cooperation between REMPEC and the European Commission as well as EMSA, the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC agreed to explore possible synergies on future joint activities or projects in order to benefit from a stronger cooperation on topics of common interest, and to propose possible synergies

to the various technical groups of the regional agreements and the CTG MPPR, within the framework of the Inter-Secretariat Meetings.

Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR)

16 As indicated in document REMPEC/WG.41/6/1 submitted by IMO, on relevant work carried by the IMO's PPR Sub-Committee, the new output on "Guide on practical methods for the implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol" was assigned to the PPR Sub-Committee by the Seventieth Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), held in London, United Kingdom from 24 to 28 October 2016.

17 In this regard, it should be noted that the 1990 International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC 90 Convention) and its 2000 Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances (2000 OPRC-HNS Protocol) have been ratified by eighteen (18) and seven (7) Mediterranean coastal States, respectively.

18 The ratification and the effective implementation of the OPRC 90 Convention and the 2000 OPRC-HNS Protocol are considered with high priority by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocol as laydown in the Specific Objective 1 of the Regional Strategy 2016-2021, which invites *"all Contracting Parties to have taken the necessary actions to ratify and implemented, with high priority, other IMO relevant international conventions and to have ensured their transposition into national law by the same time and full compliance with their provisions"*.

19 As detailed in document REMPEC/WG.37/14/1, it is recalled that the regional forum (MTWG) and the international forum (PPR Sub-Committee), closely cooperated in the past on issues of common interest, such as the development of the Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool, the Maritime Integrated Decision Support Information System on Transport of Chemical Substances (MIDSIS-TROCS) and the Operational guidelines on sunken and submerged oil assessment and removal techniques.

20 The "Draft Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents" presented in document REMPEC/WG.41/8, contains relevant information and practical elements, which could contribute to the preparation of the "Guide on practical methods for the implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol".

21 In light of the above the Secretariat proposes to:

- .1 task the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group suggested above, to contribute to the "Guide on practical methods for the implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol", enabling all Mediterranean coastal States, in particular those which are not attending the sessions of the PPR Sub-Committee, to contribute through the MTWG to this international effort with a regional and national impact; and
- .2 submit to the Fifth Session of the PPR Sub-Committee tentatively scheduled to take place from 5 to 9 February 2018, as an initial contribution of the MTWG, the "Draft Mediterranean Guide on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Responding to Marine Pollution Incidents" as amended by the present Meeting for its consideration.

Consultative Technical Group for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (CTG MPPR)

22 The 10th Meeting of the Consultative Technical Group for Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (CTG MPPR) was held on 3 March 2016. Progress on the projects addressed under the CTG Rolling Work Programme was presented and the ongoing work was supported by the CTG MPPR. The achievements under the CTG MPPR for the period 2016-2017 includes:

- .1 Pollution Response Costs Recovery & Claims Management: the fourth workshop on Claims Management for EU national claims handlers facilitated by EMSA was held on 6 October 2016;
- .2 The fifth training course on 'The use of surveillance systems for marine pollution detection and assessment: Operational aspects' was held on 29 and 30 November 2016;

- .3 The continuation of the Empollex Expert Exchange Programme in 2016 and 2017;
- .4 A group of experts was established to explore possible added-value actions in support of the preparedness and response to incidents involving hazardous and noxious substances (TCG-HNS). The group's first task, led by France, was to review existing training material and develop the curriculum for an HNS training course (including an HNS exercise) for EU Member States, focusing on the exchange of experience and best practices among Member States (a training course from Member States for Member States); and
- .5 The outcome of the workshop on "Oil fingerprinting and the work of the Oil Spill Identification Network (OSINet)", organised on 2 March 2016, was discussed by the CTG, which established a new Correspondence Group (CG) to address oil spill sampling and oil identification; under the lead of Germany.

23 The 11th CTG MPPR meeting was held on 15 March 2017 in Lisbon. However the report of this meeting was not available at the time of drafting the present document.

Inter-Secretariat Meeting between Regional Agreements Secretariats, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and EMSA

24 As detailed in document REMPEC/WG.41/12 on cooperation in the Mediterranean to prevent and combat marine pollution from ships, the Twelfth and Thirteenth Inter-Secretariat Meeting between Regional Agreements Secretariats, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and EMSA, hosted by the Bonn Agreement Secretariat on 17 February 2016 in London and by EMSA in Lisbon on 16 February 2017, respectively, addressed in particular the following issues of common interest:

- .1 the inter-connection of inventories of equipment / pollution response resources in an effort to optimise the single input of data to update such inventories at national and regional level, as presented in document REMPEC/WG.41/9 and discussed under agenda item 9 of the present Meeting; and
- .2 the update of the response manuals for HNS spill of the Regional Agreements.

25 As mentioned above the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), considered in document REMPEC/WG.37/14/2 on future activities to be integrated to the programme of work of the MTWG, the outcome of the consultation with the MTWG contact points in charge of reviewing the RIS, which requested inter alia the development of the preparation of a technical document concerning the latest developments in the field of response to chemical spills. Considering the wide scope of this request the Meeting emphasised the need to specify the Terms of References of the work to be accomplished under this task and thereafter to include such defined task in the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2016-2017.

26 Considering the discussion between the Secretariat of the Bonn Agreement, the Secretariat of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) and REMPEC on the update of their respective response manuals for HNS spill, which has not progressed as expected due to lack of resources, REMPEC supported by HELCOM and the Bonn Agreement agreed to explore with their respective technical working group the possibility of joining efforts and resources to produce a joint manual based on existing guides and tools on HNS response .

27 In light of the above development, the Secretariat proposes therefore to:

- .1 task the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group suggested above, to contribute to a joint inter-regional efforts aiming at updating response manuals for HNS spill taking into account the latest developments in the field of response to chemical spills, through the possible production of a joint manual based on existing guides and tools on HNS response; and

- .2 to report on the outcome of this task to Thirteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) to be held in 2019.

Actions requested by the Meeting

28 The Meeting is invited to:

- .1 **take note** of the information provided by the Secretariat in the present document; and
- .2 **consider** the proposals put forward by the Secretariat to be integrated to the programme of work of the MTWG for the biennium 2018-2019, as laid down in paragraphs 13, 21 and 27 of the present document.