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

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

REMPEC/WG.41/5  
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Agenda Item 5

**DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN UN ENVIRONMENT/MAP RELATED TO  
THE OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF REMPEC**

**Note by UN Environment/MAP**

**SUMMARY**

**Executive Summary:** This report covers the developments within UN Environment/MAP since the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC. It refers to the main Decisions adopted at 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 (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016) which are of relevance to the work of REMPEC. It also refers to the recent ratifications of the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea and summarizes the recent meetings of bodies of the UN Environment/MAP-Barcelona Convention system as well as activities under resource mobilization and monitoring and assessment. Furthermore, reference is made to the involvement of the UN Environment/MAP in the Fortieth Anniversary of REMPEC and the Seventieth Session of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee. Finally, reference is made to the preparations for the Twentieth 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 to be held in Tirana, Albania from 17 to 20 December 2017 and to future international and regional meetings and processes of UN Environment/MAP relevance.

**Actions to be taken:** Paragraph 23

**Related documents:** UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.22/28, UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR.83/7

**Introduction**

1 This report covers the developments within the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) also referred to as UN Environment/MAP, within the Barcelona Convention system, since the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), which took place from 15 to 17 June 2015.

### **Decisions adopted by the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols**

2 During the period between June 2015 and February 2016, the focus was on the preparation for the Decisions to be adopted by 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 ("the Barcelona Convention") and its Protocols (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016). The draft decisions were submitted for consideration during the Meeting of the UN Environment/MAP National Focal Points held in October 2015. After adjustments to reflect comments made by this Meeting, the revised draft decisions were then forwarded to the Contracting Parties for adoption during the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

3 Decisions of direct relevance to the work of REMPEC included the adoption of:

- .1 Decision IG.22/3 related to the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan in the framework of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil ("the Offshore Protocol"); and
- .2 Decision IG.22/4 related to the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021), hereinafter referred to as the Regional Strategy (2016-2021), which is presented in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.41/INF.3.

4 Furthermore, the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols adopted the UN Environment/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021 (Decision IG.22/1), which is meant to guide the path for the protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and contribution to sustainable development of the Mediterranean Region for the period 2016-2021, as well as the Programme of Work and Budget 2016-2017 (Decision IG.22/20). According to the UN Environment/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021, the overarching theme is Governance, the core themes are Land and Sea Based Pollution, Biodiversity and Ecosystems, and Land and Sea Interaction and Processes. The cross-cutting themes are Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Sustainable Consumption and Production and Climate Change Adaptation. To this end, the Programme of Work of REMPEC for the biennium 2016-2017 contributes to all themes.

5 The Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols also took a number of other important relevant decisions, such as:

- .1 Decision IG.22/2 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025;
- .2 Decision IG.22/5 Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Mediterranean;
- .3 Decision IG.22/6 Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework for the Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Areas; and
- .4 Decision IG.22/7 Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (which is related to the implementation of the ecosystem approach).

### **Ratification of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol**

6 Since the Eleventh Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, the Depositary has communicated to the Secretariat the deposit of the instrument of ratification of the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea ("the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol") by Italy, dated 30 June 2016, and by Algeria, dated 14 November 2016. In accordance with Article 33 of the Barcelona Convention, the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol signed by Italy and Algeria entered into force on 30 July 2016 and 14 December 2016, respectively. It should be noted that there were no ratifications of the Offshore Protocol during the reporting period since June 2015.

### **Advisory bodies / meetings**

7 Coordination between the different UN Environment/MAP Components is very important. To this end, during the period under review, nine meetings of the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP), which is composed of the UN Environment/MAP Coordinator and the Heads of all UN Environment/MAP Components, were held. The most recent, the Thirty-first ECP Meeting was held in Tunis, Tunisia, from 11 to 12 January 2017, whilst the Thirty-second ECP Meeting is scheduled to take place in Split, Croatia, from 29 to 30 March 2017.

8 During the reporting period, four meetings of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols were held. The most recent, the Eighty-third Meeting of the Bureau of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols took place in Tirana, Albania, from 25 to 26 October 2016. Its conclusions and recommendations are presented in document UNEP(DEPI)/MED BUR. 83/7.

9 Other meetings include the Sixteenth Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) (Marrakesh, Morocco, 9-11 June 2015), the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Meetings of the MCSD Steering Committee (Marrakesh, Morocco, 11 June 2015 and Athens, Greece, 18-19 January 2017) as well as the Eleventh and the Twelfth Meetings of the Compliance Committee (Athens, Greece, 22-23 October 2015 and 24-25 January 2017, respectively).

### **Resource mobilization / projects**

10 The Marine Litter Med Project funded by the European Union Global Public Goods and Challenges - Programme for the Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, including Energy (EU GPGC/ENRTP) was approved and the project became operational in June 2016. MEDPOL is coordinating the project implementation, whilst the Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC), REMPEC and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) are in charge of implementing a number of activities. The project objective is to support the UN Environment/MAP and its Southern Mediterranean Contracting Parties to implement key common measures, provided for in the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean, and updated National Action Plans to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) in synergy and coherence with the implementation of the European Union (EU) Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and H2020 initiative, thus contributing to the region-wide Marine Litter reduction targets as approved by the Nineteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and the UN Environment/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021, as well as the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The project aims to reduce and prevent marine litter generation both from land-based and sea-based sources.

11 A framework Agreement was signed in September 2016 between the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea and the UN Environment/MAP in support to the implementation of the mandate of the Barcelona Convention and the work of UN Environment/MAP, addressing key priorities towards ensuring a fully integrated marine and coastal management in the Mediterranean region. The four components of this framework Agreement are:

- .1 Development and strengthening of an effective Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) management;
- .2 Enhancement of Marine Litter Management;
- .3 Creation of a Mediterranean Network of CAMP Projects; and
- .4 Promotion of governance tools for "Blue Growth": Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and other relevant tools.

12 REMPEC will be involved in the implementation of the Agreement and especially its first two components. Work is currently ongoing to develop a multiannual programme. Activities related to sea-based sources of marine litter in relation also to marine protected areas are planned to be included.

13 In October 2016, the GEF Council approved the "Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): Enhancing Environmental Security". The Programme targets coastal nutrient pollution hotspots, harmful

chemical and wastes, critical coastal habitats and freshwater resources, climate resilience, marine protected areas and monitoring of progress to impacts. It will be developed through four Components and seven Child Projects which follow the structure of the UN Environment/MAP Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2021.

### **Monitoring and Assessment**

14 The UN Environment/MAP Secretariat, in close cooperation with REMPEC, is developing Mediterranean Monitoring Procedures and Programmes for Offshore Monitoring, with the support of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp)-MEDII Project. In line with the relevant common indicators of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP), a detailed Regional Road Map for the Implementation of a Regional Offshore Protocol Monitoring Programme and Assessment (OPMP) is being developed in this respect.

15 Furthermore, in relation to the implementation of IMAP, REMPEC is ensuring the integration of the provisions of the Offshore Protocol and of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol into the IMAP process, both with regard to the development of the Indicator Guidance Fact-Sheets and drafting of the Assessment Fact-Sheets of the 2017 Quality Status Report. An Offshore Monitoring Plan will be developed taking into account international and regional best practices with a view to complete the IMAP with relevant information and indicators to measure the implementation of the Offshore Protocol and the Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan. In this respect, the First Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact of Offshore Monitoring Programmes will be held in Greece from 3 to 4 April 2017, under the EU funded EcAp-MED II Project. In addition, a Quality Assurance Programme will be developed for data reporting and collection, in accordance with Article 5 of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, with a view to completing the IMAP with relevant information and indicators as well as measures to implement the Prevention and Emergency Protocol and the respective Regional Strategy (2016-2021).

16 The approach for the development of the 2017 Quality Status Report, which is currently under preparation, is based on Common Indicators' Assessment Fact Sheets prepared at the regional level that will allow assessments to be linked via metadata to the underlying datasets, methods, authors, increasing transparency and repeatability. This draft Assessment template was presented and reviewed at the various meetings of the Correspondence Monitoring Groups (CORMONs) held in 2016 and early 2017. The draft completed Assessment Factsheets will be further reviewed through the EcAp Coordination Group envisaged to be held in April 2017 and the UN Environment/MAP Components' Focal Points meetings in late April - May 2017. Final drafts will be uploaded in a specifically designed web-platform for review by the Meeting of the EcAp Coordination Group and the Meeting of the UN Environment/MAP National Focal Points which will take place in Athens, Greece, in September 2017.

### **Fortieth Anniversary of REMPEC**

17 The UN Environment/MAP Secretariat was involved in the preparations of the High Level Meeting to celebrate the Fortieth Anniversary of REMPEC, "Forty Years of Cooperation in the Mediterranean to Prevent and Combat Marine Pollution from Ships". The High Level Meeting and the launch of the fortieth anniversary celebrations of the Centre were held on 4 October 2016 and were organized within the framework of the Malta Maritime Summit (3-6 October 2016). At the meeting, the UN Environment was represented by Mr Jan Dusik, Director and Regional Representative of the UN Environment, Regional Office for Europe, who delivered a keynote address. Furthermore, UN Environment/MAP Coordinator, Mr Gaetano Leone, moderated a Panel Discussion with former Directors/Head of Office of REMPEC, entitled "A review of forty years of work of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)".

### **Participation in the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)**

18 Mr Gaetano Leone, UN Environment/MAP Coordinator, participated together with Mr Gabino Gonzalez, Head of Office of REMPEC, in the Seventieth Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 70) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), held in London, United Kingdom, from 24 to 28 October 2016, where he delivered a presentation on "Regional policies to tackle obligations arising from the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water

and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Conventions): The UN Environment/MAP Barcelona Convention ecosystem approach in practice”.

### **Preparations for the Twentieth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols**

19 Preparations for the Twentieth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols are currently under way, with the full involvement of all the UN Environment/MAP Components, with relevant discussions conducted during the ECP meetings. Special emphasis is placed on the preparation of the Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget of the UN Environment/MAP for the biennium 2018-2019 in a fully inclusive manner. A document entitled “Draft guiding elements for the preparation of 2018-2019 UN Environment/MAP Programme of Work (PoW) and budget”, was shared with all ECP members, before the Thirty-first ECP meeting. The document had a substantive part composed of two elements focusing on:

- .1 the assessment of the current planning and programming practices and tools, the lessons learnt and any shortcomings; and
- .2 recommendations on the basis of which the 2018-2019 PoW and budget should be prepared.

20 It also proposed a roadmap for undertaking consultations with the focal points of each UN Environment/MAP Component and the UN Environment/MAP focal points as provided for in the Governance Paper, in order to enhance Contracting Parties’ ownership. The process was fine-tuned during the ECP meeting while the early involvement of all UN Environment/MAP Components in the process was much welcomed. Furthermore, it was clarified that while thematic activities needing relevant expertise will be included under the three core and the three cross-cutting themes, the overarching theme (Governance) will include a streamlining of what will be delivered in an integrated manner. Preparations for the PoW are proceeding as scheduled.

### **Future meetings and processes of UN Environment/MAP relevance**

21 The UN Environment/MAP is preparing to contribute to future events of global dimension on oceans and marine issues planned for 2017, and to showcase the Mediterranean region as an example for environmental governance. Such events and processes include: the 2017 "Our Ocean" Conference to be held in Malta in October 2017, the Malta EU Council Presidency (first semester 2017) and especially the Informal Environment Council, the G7 Italian Presidency which focuses on the Mediterranean marine environment, the process under the UN on Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), the High-Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (New York, USA, June 2017) and the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3, Nairobi, Kenya, December 2017), with this sequence of events being concluded by the Twentieth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols at the end of 2017.

22 The main theme of UNEA-3 will be “Pollution Free Planet: Delivering a deal to detoxify the world” which is of great relevance to the work of the UN Environment/MAP and REMPEC. Oceans and Seas have a central role in the work of the UN Environment and UNEA-3 will provide a great opportunity to showcase the achievements in relation to ocean governance and the prevention and control of pollution in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment. This focus also follows on the relevant Resolutions adopted in UNEA-2 (Nairobi, Kenya, May 2016), namely:

- Oceans and Seas
- “Role, functions and modalities for the UN Environment implementation of the SAMOA Pathway as a means of facilitating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Marine plastic litter and micro plastics
- Sustainable coral reefs management.

### **Actions requested by the Meeting**

23 **The Meeting is invited to:**

- .1 **take note** of the information provided in the present document; and
- .2 **comment** as deemed appropriate.