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

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

REMPEC/WG.56/4  
2 June 2023  
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Kappara, Malta, 13-15 June 2023

**Agenda Item 4: Air emissions from ships**

**Prevention of air pollution from ships in the Mediterranean Sea**

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### **Note by the Secretariat**

This document provides information on the latest developments related to the prevention of air pollution from ships in the Mediterranean Sea, notably within the framework of the Barcelona Convention.

## **Background**

1 The Twenty-second Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols (COP 22) (Antalya, Türkiye, 7-10 December 2021) adopted the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031)<sup>1</sup>, hereinafter referred to as the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), which addresses, *inter alia*, the issue of air emissions from ships in Common Strategic Objective (CSO) 3 (Reduce and monitor air emissions from ships to a level that is not harmful to the marine environment, or the health of the coastal population of the Mediterranean).

2 The First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (Floriana, Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022), hereinafter referred to as the First Coordination Meeting, organised by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) pursuant to the Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget for 2022-2023<sup>2</sup> of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), also referred to as UNEP/MAP, established a joint intersessional working group for CSO 2 (climate change) and CSO 3 (air emissions from ships).

3 As indicated in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.3, on the related topics of climate change (CSO 2) and air emissions from ships (CSO 3), the First Coordination Meeting recalled the urgency of ratification, transposition and effective implementation of Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

### **Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA)**

4 COP 22 adopted Decision IG.25/14 on the Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI.

5 Subsequently, France, on behalf of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (CPs) as well as the Member States of the European Union and the European Commission, submitted the joint and coordinated proposal on the designation of the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA on 4 February 2022 to the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 78) (London, UK, 6-10 June 2022), which endorsed the proposal and approved the related draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI.

6 The 79<sup>th</sup> Session of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 79) (London, UK, 12-16 December 2022) adopted the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI concerning the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA, with an expected date of entry into effective application on 1 May 2025.

7 Since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), the Secretariat has promoted the work on the designation of the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA in various fora, as indicated in document REMPEC/WG.56/2.

8 In this context, the Secretariat proposes to:

- .1 provide support for the consistent implementation of the 0.10% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI in the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA during the biennium 2024-2025; and
- .2 continue to promote the work on the designation of the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA in various fora, as appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP/MED IG.25/27, Decision IG.25/16.

<sup>2</sup> UNEP/MED IG.25/27, Decision IG.25/19.

### **Capacity-building activities**

9 COP 22 requested the Secretariat (REMPEC) to provide technical support for the implementation of the Decision IG.25/14 on the Designation of the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA, in synergy with the IMO, and other relevant stakeholders, through technical cooperation and capacity-building activities, including financial support and resource mobilisation activities.

10 REMPEC prepared draft national reports on the assessment of the needs of the CPs that have not yet ratified MARPOL Annex VI (Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon and Libya), including the work plan and timetable related to their ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI as well as their implementation of the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA.

11 REMPEC also submitted the draft regional fund-raising strategy to support CPs in relation to the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, as well as the implementation of the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA and linked compliance measures, to the First Coordination Meeting.

12 In this context, the Secretariat proposes to:

- .1 encourage the CPs to ratify and effectively implement MARPOL Annex VI, as soon as possible, if they have not yet done so, at least by the date of entering into force of the Med SO<sub>x</sub> ECA, to the extent possible;
- .2 provide technical support and capacity building to the CPs, which so request, to ratify and effectively implement MARPOL Annex VI, in synergy with the IMO and other relevant stakeholders, pursuant to the UNEP/MAP PoW and Budget for 2022-2023 and also during the biennium 2024-2025; and
- .3 continue its dialogue with relevant stakeholders to provide technical support, through technical cooperation and capacity-building activities, including financial support and resource mobilisation activities, to address the CPs' needs, notably within the framework of the joint intersessional working group for CSO 2 (climate change) and CSO 3 (air emissions from ships) established by the First Coordination Meeting.

### **Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides (Med NO<sub>x</sub> ECA)**

13 Being aware that the CPs were fully committed to reduce emissions from ships, both to fight climate change and air pollution, COP 22 encouraged UNEP/MAP, under the coordination of REMPEC, to progress on exploring the feasibility of a Nitrogen Oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) Emission Control Area (ECA) in the Mediterranean Sea as a whole, including health and socio-economic impact on the individual CPs during the biennium 2022-2023.

14 In this context, the Secretariat proposes to:

- .1 establish the Nitrogen Oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts nominated by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with a view to developing and validating Terms of Reference for a specific Technical and Feasibility Study to assess the relevant existing studies and gather further knowledge on the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides (Med NO<sub>x</sub> ECA), through correspondence coordinated by REMPEC, pursuant to the UNEP/MAP PoW and Budget for 2022-2023; and
- .2 prepare the Technical and Feasibility Study to examine the possibility of designating the Med NO<sub>x</sub> ECA under MARPOL Annex VI under the guidance of the Med NO<sub>x</sub> ECA Technical Committee of Experts, together with the related roadmap, during the biennium 2024-2025.

**Actions requested by the Meeting**

15     **The Meeting is invited to:**

- .1     **take note** of the information provided in the present document; and
- .2     **consider** the proposals put forward by the Secretariat, as laid down in paragraphs 8, 12, and 14 of the present document.

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