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

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

REMPEC/WG.56/8
31 July 2023
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Kappara, Malta, 13-15 June 2023

REPORT

**FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINTS OF THE
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

Kappara, Malta, 13-15 June 2023

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REMPEC
Malta, 2023

INTRODUCTION

1 The Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), hereinafter referred to as “the Meeting”, was convened in Kappara, Malta, from 13 to 15 June 2023, with in-person participation complemented by the use of hybrid meeting capabilities, pursuant to the Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget for 2022-2023 of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), also referred to as “UNEP/MAP”, adopted by 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 (“the Barcelona Convention”) and its Protocols (COP 22) (Antalya, Türkiye, 7-10 December 2021).

2 The principal objectives of the Meeting, which was organised by REMPEC, were:

- .1 to examine the implementation of the activities and deliverables by REMPEC pursuant to the approved UNEP/MAP PoWs and Budgets for the biennia 2020-2021 and 2022-2023, since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021); and
- .2 to discuss and agree upon the activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP PoW for the biennium 2024-2025, as proposed by REMPEC, prior to their submission, for approval by the next meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points (Istanbul, Türkiye, 12-15 September 2023), and for adoption by the Twenty-third Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 23) (Portorož, Slovenia, 4-8 December 2023).

3 Considering the scope of the Meeting, all REMPEC Governmental Focal Points were invited to nominate jointly and, in consultation with their respective REMPEC Prevention Focal Points and REMPEC OPRC Focal Points, their representatives to the Meeting. The participation of observers representing the oil, chemical, port and shipping industries in national delegations was strongly encouraged. The invitation to attend the Meeting was also extended to the specialised agencies of the United Nations, other governmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as to the international professional organisations and associations, the activities of which were relevant to the work of the Centre.

4 The Meeting was attended by delegations from the following Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention:

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| ALGERIA | LEBANON |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | LIBYA |
| CROATIA | MALTA |
| CYPRUS | MONACO |
| EGYPT | MONTENEGRO |
| EUROPEAN UNION | MOROCCO |
| FRANCE | SLOVENIA |
| GREECE | SPAIN |
| ISRAEL | TUNISIA |
| ITALY | TÜRKİYE |

by a representative from the following organisations of the United Nations:

- INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO)
- UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME / MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (UNEP/MAP)

by representatives from the following inter-governmental organisation:

- INTERNATIONAL OIL POLLUTION COMPENSATION FUNDS (IOPC FUNDS)

by representatives from other organisations:

- CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE ARAB REGION AND EUROPE (CEDARE)
- CENTRE OF DOCUMENTATION, RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTATION ON ACCIDENTAL WATER POLLUTION (CEDRE)
- ITALIAN FEDERATION OF THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY (FEDERCHIMICA)
- INTERNATIONAL OCEAN INSTITUTE (IOI)
- ITOPF LIMITED
- MEDITERRANEAN OIL INDUSTRY GROUP (MOIG)
- OIL SPILL RESPONSE LIMITED (OSRL)
- SEA ALARM FOUNDATION

5 A complete list of participants is set out in **Annex I** to the present report.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

6 The Meeting was opened by the Interim Head of Office of REMPEC, Capt. Joseph Zerafa, on Tuesday, 13 June 2023 at 0900 hours. He welcomed the participants to the Meeting and explained the objectives of the Meeting. Furthermore, he presented an overview of the main achievements since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC that had to be held remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite that the pandemic greatly impacted the Centre throughout that period, he welcomed the fact that REMPEC had been able to ensure the implementation of its PoW, notably, the designation of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SO_x ECA), adopted by the 79th session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 79) (London, United Kingdom, 12-16 December 2022); the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (the "Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)"), adopted by COP 22 in December 2021, and the subsequent successful organisation of the 1st Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) in November 2022; the finalisation of the draft regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention) in the Mediterranean Sea; and the recent developments regarding the final draft 'Operational Guide on the Response to Spills of Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS)', as agreed by the Tenth session of the IMO's Sub Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR 10) (London, United Kingdom, 24-28 April 2023). Recalling the transitional period that the Centre was going through, notably the move to the new premises and the recruitment of a new Head of Office of REMPEC, Capt. Zerafa officially thanked Mr Gabino Gonzalez, former Head of Office of REMPEC, for his work and extended his best wishes for his new position at UNEP/MAP.

7 Ms Patricia Charlebois, Deputy Director, Subdivision for Implementation, Marine Environment Division, IMO, in highlighting the uniqueness of the Mediterranean ecosystem, stressed the critical role that REMPEC had been playing in developing effective policies and strategies for the prevention of, preparedness for, and response to marine pollution from ships in all its forms, a role that it had successfully carried out over the past five decades, underpinned by the successful and longstanding partnership between IMO and UNEP. In particular, she referred to the landmark achievement which constitutes the designation of the Med SO_x ECA, as agreed at MEPC 79 in December 2022. Finally, she thanked the Government of Malta, as the host country, and REMPEC staff for their efforts.

8 Ms Tatjana Hema, MAP Coordinator, MAP Coordinating Unit, MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, in an online address, whilst apologising for her absence due to unforeseen circumstances beyond her control, expressed her wishes for a fruitful and productive meeting, and congratulated the Focal Points of REMPEC, as well as the Secretariat, IMO and UNEP/MAP, for the efforts invested in the designation of the Med SO_x ECA. She extended her special thanks to the interim management of REMPEC and to Ms Charlebois for ensuring that the implementation of the activities of the Centre continued smoothly and in an effective manner despite the transitional period and staff changes.

ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

Rules of Procedure

9 The Meeting agreed to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, the Rules of procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related Protocols (UNEP/IG.43/6, Annex XI) to its deliberations.

Election of Officers

10 Following informal consultations held with the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, the Interim Head of Office of REMPEC proposed Malta as Chair, Türkiye as Vice-Chair and Lebanon as Rapporteur. The Meeting unanimously agreed to elect the following officers of the Meeting:

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|---|------------------|
| Mr Mevric ZAMMIT (Malta) | Chairperson |
| Ms Derya Didem UĞUR (Türkiye) | Vice-Chairperson |
| Ms Ilham MANSOUR MANSOUR EL KHABBAZ (Lebanon) | Rapporteur |

Working Languages

11 The working languages of the Meeting were English and French. Simultaneous English/French/English interpretation services were provided during the Meeting. All working documents were available in both official languages of the Centre, i.e. in English and in French. Information documents were available in their original language unless a translation was provided in the second working language.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

12 The Chairperson thanked the Meeting for supporting his election and proposed that the Provisional Agenda, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.56/1/Rev.3 and annotated in document REMPEC/WG.56/1/1/Rev.1, be adopted.

13 The Meeting adopted the Agenda reproduced in **Annex II** to the present report. The list of documents is set out in **Annex III** thereto.

AGENDA ITEM 2: PROGRESS REPORT ON REMPEC ACTIVITIES SINCE THE FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINTS OF REMPEC

14 The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to provide information on the activities carried out by the Centre since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.56/2.

15 In its presentation, the Secretariat referred to the report of the First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (Floriana, Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.3.

16 The Meeting appreciated the progress reported on REMPEC activities since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), as set out in document REMPEC/WG.56/2.

17 The Meeting welcomed the adoption of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) by COP 22 and noted the outcome of the First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (Floriana, Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.3.

18 During an exchange of view, a number of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention informed the Meeting of the specific activities undertaken with the assistance of the Centre. As requested, the full statement made by the delegation of Cyprus is set out in **Annex IV** to the present report.

19 The delegate of France clarified that the objective of the IRA-MAR Project – Improving the Integrated Response to pollution Accident at sea and chemical risk in port, was to create bridges between the said project and other projects such as the NAMIRS (North Adriatic Maritime Incident Response System) Project with a view to using their joint results in sub-regional agreements and exercises such as RAMOGEPOL.

20 Following a comment by a delegation, the representative of IMO provided more details on the application of the RETOS tool, stating that it had been distributed to, and in use by, other regional systems and was currently available in the Excel format. She also indicated that IMO was working on a web-based version that should be available soon with accompanying user manuals.

21 Following a query by a delegation, the Secretariat elaborated on the arrangements of the intersessional working groups envisaged to be established within the framework of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) with a view to further the work under the seven Common Strategic Objectives (CSOs) thereof. It stressed that the intention was to operationalise these working groups by the end of the last quarter in 2023.

22 Following a request by a delegation, the Secretariat also briefed the Meeting on the outcome of the Fourth Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact (Floriana, Malta, 23-24 May 2023).

23 To conclude this agenda item, the Meeting urged the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which had not yet done so, to ratify the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (the “2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol”) to the Barcelona Convention, in order to achieve universally the objectives of the said Protocol in the Mediterranean region.

AGENDA ITEM 3: ILLEGAL AND ACCIDENTAL OIL AND HNS POLLUTION FROM SHIPS

- **Final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report**

24 At the invitation of the Chairperson, the Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.56/3/1 providing information on the final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report developed within the framework of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS), hereinafter referred to as “the final draft common report”.

25 In its presentation, the Secretariat referred to the report of the Fifth Meeting of MENELAS (Floriana, Malta, 22-23 February 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.4.

26 The Meeting considered the proposals put forward by the Secretariat in document REMPEC/WG.56/3/1 and examined the final draft common report, as set out in the Appendix thereto.

27 The Meeting noted the outcome of the Fifth Meeting of MENELAS (Floriana, Malta, 22-23 February 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.4.

28 The Meeting also noted with interest that the draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report had been finalised within the framework of MENELAS, taking as a basis the standard forms to report detected pollution adopted by relevant regional and international organisations, namely the IMO, the North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors (NSN)¹, the Bonn Agreement², as well as the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission or HELCOM)³, and adapting them to the Mediterranean Sea area by adding appropriate references to the Barcelona Convention.

29 The Meeting further noted with satisfaction the first-hand experience in the Mediterranean region on the use of the draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report in the margins of a coordinated aerial surveillance operation for illicit ship pollution discharges in the Mediterranean (OSCAR-MED) held in 2022 within the framework of the RAMOGE Agreement⁴.

30 The Meeting endorsed the final draft common report, as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/1, consisting of:

- .1 the Standard Pollution Observation/Detection Log and Completion Guide, as set out in Part A and Part B respectively of the Appendix thereto; and
- .2 the Pollution Observation/Detection Report on Polluters and Combustible Spills (IMO), as set out in Part C of the Appendix thereto.

31 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to liaise with the OSPAR Commission⁵/Bonn Agreement Secretariat and the HELCOM Secretariat to explore the possibility to jointly endorse the final draft common report for use in the Bonn Agreement, HELCOM and Mediterranean Sea areas.

32 The Meeting also requested the Secretariat to liaise with the Secretariat of the RAMOGE Agreement with a view to ensuring that the final draft common report be used during OSCAR-MED 2023 to obtain further practical experience in the Mediterranean region.

- **Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) and related activities**

33 The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to provide an update on the progress made by the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021) and propose future activities to be integrated into its work programme for the biennium 2024-2025, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.56/3/2.

¹ a body associated with the OSPAR Commission.

² Agreement for Cooperation in Dealing with Pollution of the North Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances, 1983.

³ the governing body of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention).

⁴ Accord relatif à la Protection de l'Environnement Marin et Côtier d'une Zone de la Mer Méditerranée.

⁵ the OSPAR Commission was established by the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention).

34 In its presentation, the Secretariat referred to the MTWG deliverables developed during the period under review stressing the need for the involvement of all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to ensure more relevance to the results of the tasks assigned to the MTWG by the Meetings of the Focal Points of REMPEC.

35 The Meeting considered the proposals put forward by the Secretariat in document REMPEC/WG.56/3/2.

OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group

36 The Meeting welcomed the progress made by the MTWG since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021).

37 The Meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which had not yet done so, to nominate their national entities and/or officials as contact points for the Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances (OPRC-HNS) Correspondence Group.

38 The Meeting considered that risks associated with the transport by ships of oil and HNS with possible harmful consequences on biota and ecosystems could not be eliminated and that accidents could and still did occur, including those causing acute pollution.

39 The Meeting invited the MTWG to consider the following tasks:

- .1 to contribute to the development of the Post 2016-2024 Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan through the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group in cooperation with the OFOG Sub-Groups on Environmental Impact and on Health and Safety; and

Correspondence Group on Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting

- .2 to establish a new Correspondence Group on Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting to:
 - .1 improve the contribution of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to activities related to Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting on Oil and HNS Spills in the Mediterranean; and
 - .2 contribute to the preparation of a Regional Workshop to enhance Regional Cooperation in Responding to Marine Oil and HNS Pollution in the Mediterranean (MEDEXPOL 2024) on Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting.

40 The Meeting also encouraged the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to designate through the REMPEC OPRC Focal Points, the appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for the Correspondence Group on Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting, once established.

Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean

41 At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegate of the European Union provided information on the progress made in the Project for the renewal and upgrade of the Common Emergency Communication and Information System for Marine Pollution (CECIS MP). She also invited third countries to join the said system and to participate in the forthcoming steps for its inception: the identification of the future users; and the use of some functionalities of the platform, including the uploading of the Mediterranean Integrated Geographical Information System on Marine Pollution Risk Assessment and Response (MEDGIS-MAR) data on response equipment.

42 The Meeting noted the agreement of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), as set out in document REMPEC/WG.51/9/2, on the use of the CECIS MP, to progress on the establishment of a Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean and the launch by the European Commission (EC) of the project for the renewal and upgrade of CECIS MP.

43 The Meeting also noted the progress made by the EC for the renewal of the CECIS MP.

44 The Meeting agreed to maintain the task assigned to the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group to assist the Secretariat in cooperation with the EC during the different phases of the development of the Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean and to test it once developed.

Marine HNS Response Manual – Multi-Regional Bonn Agreement, HELCOM, REMPEC

45 The Meeting noted the submission to PPR 10 by REMPEC, in cooperation with HELCOM and the Bonn Agreement, and pursuant to the recommendation of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), of the Marine HNS Response Manual – Multi-Regional Bonn Agreement, HELCOM, REMPEC, with the view to contributing to the development of an IMO Operational Guide on the Response to HNS Spills.

46 The Meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to use the Marine HNS Response Manual – Multi-Regional Bonn Agreement, HELCOM, REMPEC.

Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region and Oiled Shoreline Assessment Form

47 In its presentation, the Secretariat also referred to the Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean (2008) and the findings of the Second Meeting of the National Operational Authorities in charge of the Subregional Contingency Plan between Cyprus, Greece and Israel (Greece, October 2021) agreeing upon additional specific information concerning the Mediterranean Sea within Part II of these Guidelines.

48 The delegate of Israel informed the Meeting of the request of the Third Meeting of these Authorities (Israel, September 2022) related to the 2009 Mediterranean Oiled Shoreline Assessment Guidelines (REMPEC, 2009) and the Oiled Shoreline Assessment Manual (POSOW Project 2013) Assessment Forms.

49 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to:

- .1 review Part II of the Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region with a special focus on the issues of salinity range, nutrient levels and the risk of using dispersants in the vicinity of desalination plants in the Mediterranean Sea;
- .2 develop an electronic version of the Oiled Shoreline Assessment Form in the 2009 Mediterranean Oiled Shoreline Assessment Guidelines and the 2013 Oiled Shoreline Assessment Manual; and
- .3 submit both for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be tentatively held in 2025, as appropriate.

Condensates – Chemical Intervention Guide for the Mediterranean

50 In its presentation, the Secretariat further referred to the final version of the ‘Condensates – Chemical Intervention Guide for the Mediterranean’ developed within the framework of the MTWG.

51 The Meeting considered the proposal put forward by the Secretariat in document REMPEC/WG.56/3/2 and examined the ‘Condensates – Chemical Intervention Guide for the Mediterranean’, as set out in the Annex thereto.

52 The Meeting noted the revision made to the “Condensates – Chemical Intervention Guide for the Mediterranean” submitted to the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), as set out in Annex I to document REMPEC/WG.51/10/1.

53 The Meeting endorsed the final draft version of the “Condensates – Chemical Intervention Guide for the Mediterranean”, as set out in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/2.

• Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) and related activities

54 The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the developments on funding the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) that celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 2023, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.56/3/3.

55 The Secretariat provided an overview on the MAU, its achievements since its inception in 1993 by Decision IG.3/5 of COP 8 (Türkiye, October 1993), and the approval to maintain the funding of the MAU to the average expenses of one month mission by Decision IG.17/18 of COP 15 (Spain, January 2008). It also referred to the proposal to increase the MAU Special Revolving Fund to cover an additional month so that it would be able to fund the average expenses of a two months’ expert mission.

56 The Meeting considered the proposal put forward by the Secretariat in document REMPEC/WG.56/3/3, with a view to submitting the draft decision of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, as set out in the Annex thereto, for approval by the next Meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points and for adoption by COP 23, as appropriate.

57 The Meeting welcomed the information on the MAU, its achievements during the last three decades, since its inception, and the important role of its members, as well as noted with interest the developments on funding of the MAU.

58 The Meeting also noted the information provided by Cedre and ITOPF, as members of the MAU, on the assistance given to countries and REMPEC in the recent accidents.

59 The Meeting stressed the need to raise the funding of the MAU Revolving Fund to cover an additional month with a view that the Revolving Fund would be able to fund a two months’ expert mission, subject to the availability of funds, for consideration by the next meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points.

• Data sharing, monitoring, and reporting

60 At the invitation of the Chairperson, the Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.56/3/4/Rev.1 setting out an outline of the progress made on data sharing, monitoring, and reporting since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC.

61 The Meeting noted the information on the progress made on data sharing, monitoring, and reporting since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021).

REMPEC platforms development

62 The Secretariat provided an overview of the Country Profiles, the MEDGIS-MAR databases, and the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool, highlighting *inter alia* the importance of MEDGIS-MAR in contributing to the development of the MAP Knowledge Management Platform and to the development of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR 2023). It stressed that MEDGIS-MAR remained the unique source of information provided by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and REMPEC about accidents, as well as oil and HNS spills in the Mediterranean.

63 The Meeting acknowledged the importance of the Country Profiles as well as the MEDGIS-MAR databases and datasets, and also the contribution of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in the maintenance and updating of these databases.

64 The Meeting recognised that, although the information on spills continued to be collected, this data remained under reported and not necessarily representative of oil spills from ships under the threshold of 50 m³, acute pollution, and those from sources other than ships.

65 The Meeting noted the lack of visibility and knowledge on the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool and the need to facilitate its use by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

66 The Meeting agreed to:

- .1 adopt an approach of periodic updating through online surveys facilitating the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to inform on their last update on both databases;
- .2 encourage the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to contribute to this work, which was also beneficial for their reporting under the MARPOL Convention as well as the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, respectively;
- .3 instruct the Secretariat to develop a new layer on MEDGIS-MAR related to spills in the Mediterranean to be evaluated during the forthcoming MEDEXPOL 2024 on Data Sharing, Monitoring and Reporting;
- .4 also instruct the Secretariat to prepare an evaluation report on the reporting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention using the new layer of the MEDGIS-MAR on spills in the Mediterranean, for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be tentatively held in 2025, as appropriate;
- .5 invite the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to incorporate the Oil Spill Waste Management Plan (OSWMP) procedures into national and regional systems for preparedness and response to marine pollution;
- .6 include the use of the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool in the scenario of exercises and drills for oil spills;
- .7 examine the feasibility of allowing users other than REMPEC OPRC Focal Points to input national information in the appropriate sections of the OSWMP; and
- .8 agree on the proposal to upload the final OSWMP of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in their Country Profiles.

Manual on National Mechanisms for the Mobilisation of Response Equipment and Experts in case of Emergency

67 The Secretariat recalled the feedback from the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention on the usefulness of the “Manual on National Mechanisms for the Mobilisation of Response Equipment and Experts in case of Emergency” developed within the framework of the two-year Western Mediterranean region marine Oil and HNS Pollution Cooperation (West MOPoCo) Project (2019-2020).

68 In its presentation, the Secretariat referred to the revised template of the “Manual on National Mechanisms for the Mobilisation of Response Equipment and Experts in case of Emergency”, as set out in Annex 1 to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/4/Rev.1, hereinafter referred to as “the revised template”, as well as to the recommendation of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021) inviting the Secretariat to submit, every two years, to all Mediterranean coastal States, a pre-filled Manual, and other relevant forms, for update to support them to meet their reporting obligations.

69 The Meeting noted the changes made on the template of the “Manual on National Mechanisms for the Mobilisation of Response Equipment and Experts in case of Emergency”, in accordance with the recommendations of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), as set out in paragraph 62.2 of document REMPEC/WG.51/9/3.

70 The representative of the Sea Alarm Foundation proposed further inputs on response to oiled wildlife that could be referred during the submission of the revised template or the pre-filled Manual to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

71 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to:

- .1 endorse the revised template, as set out in Annex 1 to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/4/Rev.1;
- .2 populate the revised template with relevant information;
- .3 update the information directly on MEDGIS-MAR and Country Profiles, or by updating the latest pre-filled forms;
- .4 communicate to the Secretariat any recommended improvements on the revised template, with a view to improving its user friendliness, and facilitating the link with other databases in relation to response equipment; and
- .5 agree on the proposal to upload the latest version of the Manual in the Country Profiles.

Reporting on the implementation of the Protocols

72 The Meeting welcomed the first results of the assessment of the reporting by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention on the implementation of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol and 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”) to the Barcelona Convention for the biennium 2020-2021 showing an increase in the number of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that prepared their respective reports.

73 The Meeting noted the digitalisation of the reporting through the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS) which facilitated the progress in reporting under the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol and the Offshore Protocol by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, and also noted that discrepancies still existed between the information reported under BCRS on operational aspects and incidents and those available on the Country Profiles and MEDGIS-MAR ‘accidents’ and ‘equipment’ databases.

74 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to maintain updated Country Profiles and MEDGIS-MAR to facilitate their periodic reporting.

IMAP revised Guidance Fact Sheets for the Common Indicators 6 and 19

75 In its presentation, the Secretariat also referred to the revised Data Standard and Data Dictionaries for the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) Common Indicator 19 (CI 19) as well as the final version of IMAP CI 19, as set out, respectively, in Annex 2 and Annex 3 to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/4/Rev.1.

76 The Secretariat further referred to the document on best practices review of Descriptor 8 (D08C03, D08C04) of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)⁶, as laid down in document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.6, which contributed to the development of the IMAP CI 19, and the proposed elements related to IMAP CI 19 to be considered in the IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters for the MED QSR 2023, as laid down in document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.7.

77 The Meeting noted the information and progress on the IMAP Common Indicators (CIs) to support the IMAP Info System, *inter alia* the IMAP Common Indicator 19 related to acute pollution.

78 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to provide data using the revised Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for IMAP Common Indicator 19, as developed by the Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication (INFO/RAC), in cooperation with REMPEC, according to the established criteria for oil and HNS spills, as set out in Annex 2 to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/4/Rev.1.

79 The Meeting agreed with the Initial assessment findings related to IMAP Common Indicator 19 to contribute to the preparation of the MED QSR 2023, as set out in Annex 3 to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/4/Rev.1.

80 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to continue working on the development of IMAP Common Indicator 19, with a view to considering information from CleanSeaNet.

AGENDA ITEM 4: AIR POLLUTION FROM SHIPS

81 The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to provide information on the latest developments related to the prevention of air pollution from ships in the Mediterranean Sea, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.56/4.

82 In its presentation, the Secretariat referred to the adoption of the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI concerning the Med SO_x ECA at MEPC 79 (London, United Kingdom, 12-16 December 2022).

83 The Meeting considered the proposals put forward by the Secretariat in document REMPEC/WG.56/4.

84 Following an exchange of view, the Secretariat provided clarifications in response to queries raised by delegations on specific items, in particular: 1) the status of ratification of MARPOL Annex VI by Mediterranean coastal States; 2) the need for technical support and capacity building, notably for the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which had not as yet ratified MARPOL Annex VI; 3) the process for the establishment of the Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts and the subsequent development of the Terms of Reference for a specific Technical and Feasibility Study related to the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Nitrogen

⁶ Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive).

Oxides (Med NO_x ECA); and 4) the progress on the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Med Project proposal as well as the study on the opportunities for greening regular passenger and freight lines between France and Algeria.

85 The representative of IMO stressed the need for the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to make substantial progress on the ratification of MARPOL Annex VI and the implementation of the Med SO_x ECA before making a proposal to the IMO concerning the Med NO_x ECA.

86 The Meeting welcomed the adoption of the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI concerning the Med SO_x ECA by MEPC 79, as well as noted its expected date of entry into effective application on 1 May 2025.

87 The Meeting recalled the urgency of ratification, transposition into national laws, and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI.

88 The Meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which had not yet done so, to ratify and effectively implement MARPOL Annex VI, as soon as possible, at least by the date of entering into force of the Med SO_x ECA.

89 The Meeting called upon the Secretariat to:

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

90 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to provide technical support and capacity building to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which so requested, 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.

91 The Meeting also requested the Secretariat to 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 needs of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, notably, within the framework of the joint intersessional working group for Common Strategic Objective (CSO) 2 (Climate Change) and CSO 3 (Air Emissions from Ships) established by the First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (Floriana, Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022).

92 The Meeting further requested the Secretariat to:

- .1 establish the (NO_x 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 and on-going studies as well as gather further knowledge on the possible designation of the Med NO_x 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_x ECA pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI under the guidance of the Med NO_x ECA Technical Committee of Experts, together with the related roadmap, during the biennium 2024-2025, for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be tentatively held in 2025, as appropriate.

AGENDA ITEM 5: INTRODUCTION OF NON-INDIGENOUS SPECIES BY SHIPPING ACTIVITIES

93 At the invitation of the Chairperson, the Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.56/5 providing information on the final draft regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean Sea, hereinafter referred to as “the final draft regional harmonised procedures”.

94 In its presentation, the Secretariat referred to:

- .1 the report of the Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the BWM Convention (Kappara, Malta, 22-23 March 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.5;
- .2 the brief overview of the status of harmonisation of Ballast Water Management (BWM) measures prepared by REMPEC, as set out in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.8; and
- .3 the draft updated Action Plan concerning species introductions and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea prepared by the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) and agreed upon by the Sixteenth Meeting of Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) Focal Points (Malta, 22-24 May 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.9.

95 The Meeting considered the proposals put forward by the Secretariat in document REMPEC/WG.56/5 and examined the final draft regional harmonised procedures, as set out in the Annex thereto.

96 Following an exchange of view, the Secretariat provided clarifications in response to queries raised by delegations on specific items, in particular: 1) the status of BWM.2/Circ.35⁷ and BWM.2/Circ.39⁸; and 2) the management of ships’ biofouling in the Mediterranean region.

97 The delegate of Israel recalled that, according to research, the main pathway of the introduction of alien and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea was not shipping, and stressed that other pathways should be addressed, as appropriate.

98 The Meeting welcomed the adoption of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027) (the “Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027)”) by COP 22, as well as noted that one of its objectives was to establish a framework for a regional harmonised approach in the Mediterranean on ships’ ballast water control and management that was consistent with the requirements and standards of the BWM Convention, as outlined in Article 13(3) thereof.

99 The Meeting requested the MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat and MAP components, as appropriate, to address other pathways and vectors for the introduction of alien and invasive species, recalling that shipping was only one of the pathways and ballast water was one of the vectors for the introduction of such species in the Mediterranean Sea.

⁷ Communication received from the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC): Harmonized voluntary arrangements for ballast water management in the Mediterranean Region.

⁸ Communication received from the Administration of Croatia: General guidance on the voluntary interim application of the D1 ballast water exchange standard by vessels operating between the Mediterranean Sea and the North-East Atlantic and/or the Baltic Sea.

100 The Meeting noted:

- .1 the outcome of the Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the BWM Convention (Kappara, Malta, 22-23 March 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.5;
- .2 the brief overview of the status of harmonisation of BWM measures, as set out in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.8; and
- .3 the draft updated Action Plan concerning species introductions and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea prepared by the SPA/RAC and agreed by the Sixteenth Meeting of SPA/BD Focal Points (Malta, 22-24 May 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.9.

101 The Meeting also welcomed that the final draft regional harmonised procedures addressed aspects of the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention for which regional harmonisation in the Mediterranean region was essential, which consisted of seven (7) parts, as follows:

- .1 Introduction (Section 1);
- .2 Harmonised Procedure: Ballast Water Exchange Areas (Section 2);
- .3 Harmonised Procedure: Regulation A-4 Exemptions (Section 3);
- .4 Harmonised Procedure: Sediment Reception Facilities (Section 4);
- .5 Harmonised Procedure: Contingency Measures (Section 5);
- .6 Harmonised Procedure: Additional Measures (Section 6); and
- .7 Harmonised Procedure: Warnings (Section 7).

102 The Meeting endorsed the final draft regional harmonised procedures referred to in paragraph 101 above, and requested the Secretariat to carry out final editing and any editorial corrections, as appropriate, before submitting them for approval by the next Meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points.

103 The Meeting called upon the Secretariat to communicate the regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean Sea to the IMO so that they might subsequently be circulated to IMO Member States for their information and action as appropriate, once they were eventually adopted within the framework of the Barcelona Convention.

104 The Meeting requested the Secretariat (REMPEC and SPA/RAC) to establish the regional online BWM Working Group referred to in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) with a view to driving the process towards further harmonisation of BWM measures in the region coordinated by REMPEC, in cooperation with SPA/RAC.

105 The Meeting tasked the regional online BWM Working Group referred to in paragraph 104 above to develop a harmonised procedure on Ballast Water Reporting, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the BWM Convention (Kappara, Malta, 22-23 March 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.5, for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be tentatively held in 2025, as appropriate.

106 The Meeting also requested the Secretariat to liaise with the IMO Secretariat as well as the OSPAR Commission/Bonn Agreement Secretariat and the HELCOM Secretariat prior to the next Meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points to assess the implications of the possible adoption of regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean Sea, within the framework of the Barcelona Convention, on BWM.2/Circ.35 and BWM.2/Circ.39, and identify actions that might need to be taken.

107 The Meeting encouraged the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which had not yet done so, to ratify and effectively implement the BWM Convention, as soon as possible.

108 The Meeting also called upon the Secretariat to provide targeted technical support to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which so requested, for the ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention, as well as the implementation of the regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean Sea once they were eventually adopted within the framework of the Barcelona Convention.

AGENDA ITEM 6: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES OF THE DRAFT UNEP/MAP PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIAL 2024-2025, AS PROPOSED BY REMPEC

109 The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the activities and deliverables proposed to be implemented by the Centre during the biennium 2024-2025 as well as explain the rationale used to prepare them, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.56/6.

110 The Meeting considered the rationale put forward by the Secretariat in document REMPEC/WG.56/6 as well as examined the activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP PoW for the biennium 2024-2025, as set out in the Annex thereto.

111 Following an exchange of view, the Secretariat provided clarifications in response to queries raised by delegations on specific items, in particular: 1) the outcome of the consultations carried out with REMPEC Focal Points and MAP Focal Points; 2) the Blue Fund (main activity 1.2.9, deliverable b); 3) integrating oiled wildlife response in national contingency plans (main activity 1.2.10, deliverable i); 4) facilitating the entry into force of the Med SO_x ECA (main activity 1.4.2, deliverables a and b); 5) Med NO_x ECA (main activity 1.4.2, deliverable c); 6) clean ports (main activity 3.2.2, deliverable b); 7) MEDEXPOL 2024 (main activity 6.3.14, deliverable c); and 8) enhancing public awareness and outreach (main activity 7.2.2, deliverable d).

112 The delegate of Israel expressed concerns on the feasibility of the possible creation and operation of a regional "Blue Fund", as well as stressed that a comprehensive legal analysis should be prepared to that end.

113 The Meeting agreed upon the activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP PoW for the biennium 2024-2025 set out in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.56/6, as amended, and requested the Secretariat to propose them for approval by the next meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points prior to their submission for adoption by COP 23.

AGENDA ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

114 Under this agenda item, the Chairperson invited any organisation wishing to provide brief information on their activities that might be of interest to the Meeting.

115 The Meeting noted the presentation by the delegate of France introducing document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.10 in relation to the IRA-MAR Project – Improving the Integrated Response to pollution Accident at sea and chemical risk in port – Project progress.

116 The Meeting also noted the presentation by the representative of the Sea Alarm Foundation introducing document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.11 on International Developments in Oiled Wildlife Preparedness and Response.

117 The Meeting further noted the information provided by the delegate of the European Union on recent developments relevant to REMPEC mandate.

AGENDA ITEM 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

118 The Chairperson invited the Rapporteur to read through the draft conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting, which had been prepared by the Secretariat, and circulated to all delegates, as document REMPEC/WG.56/WP.1, for their consideration, review, amendment, and adoption.

119 Following interventions by some delegations to express their views on the draft conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting, and after having entrusted the Secretariat to carry out final editing and any editorial corrections that might be identified, as appropriate, the Meeting adopted the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Meeting, as detailed in **Annex V** to the present report.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

120 Before closing the Meeting, the Chairperson thanked all the delegations for their active participation and REMPEC, as Secretariat, for the preparation and successful organisation of the Meeting. He also thanked the interpreters and the technicians for their support.

121 The representative of IMO congratulated the REMPEC Focal Points for the important outcome of the Meeting and thanked the organisation for its support.

122 The Interim Head of Office of REMPEC expressed his appreciation to the Chairperson, Mr Mevric Zammit, for the smooth running of the proceedings and he thanked all REMPEC staff for their excellent work throughout the Meeting. He also thanked all the delegations for their participation as well as the interpreters and technicians for their support.

123 The Chairperson closed the Meeting at 1630 hours on Thursday, 15 June 2023.

ANNEX(E) I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

CONTRACTING PARTIES / PARTIES CONTRACTANTES

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Mr Delmy Halim HABET

Directeur

Ministère de l'Environnement et des Énergies Renouvelables

Mme Nacera HADJALI

Directeur

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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA / BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE

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Researcher

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CROATIA / CROATIE

Ms Dolores BRENKO ŠKERJANC

Harbour Master

Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure

Mrs Biserka VIŠTICA

Head of Department for Safety of Navigation and Environmental Protection

Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure

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Mr Marinos IOANNOU

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Department of Fisheries and Marine Research

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Senior Researcher in International Conventions & Treaties Department

Maritime Transport Sector

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Policy Officer, European Commission

Ms Asta MACKEVICIUTE

Policy Officer, European Commission

FRANCE / FRANCE

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Chargée de mission

Secrétariat général de la mer

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Mr Dimitrios PETRAKIS

Desk Officer, International Cooperation Unit, Marine Environment Protection Directorate

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Director, Marine Environment Protection Division (MEPD)

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Ch. Eng. Yosef YOHANA

Head, Shipping and Ports Inspectorate

Shipping and Ports Administration, Ministry of Transport

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Mrs Cristina FARCHI

Officer

Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE)

CDR Tommaso PISINO

Head of Vessel Monitoring Section

Italian Coast Guard

LEBANON / LIBAN

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Chief of Maritime Transport Division

Ministry of Public Works and Transport - Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport

Mr Tony ASSAF

Chief of Legal Department

Ministry of Public Works and Transport - Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport

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Mr Mohamed Said A ZAYED

Head of Division for Monitoring the Implementation of the International Conventions
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Mr Mevric ZAMMIT

Head, Marine Operations and Incident Response
Ports and Yachting Directorate, Authority for Transport in Malta

Dr Robert VASSALLO

Senior Manager Legal, EU and International Affairs
Ports and Yachting Directorate, Authority for Transport in Malta

Ms Evangelia POULI

Assistant Registrar
Merchant Shipping Directorate, Authority for Transport in Malta

Ms Kristina DARMANIN

Assistant Registrar
Merchant Shipping Directorate, Authority for Transport in Malta

Mrs Nadine MERCIECA

Team Manager Ambient Quality
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MONACO / MONACO

Mr Pierre BOUCHET

Pilote
Direction des affaires maritimes de Monaco

MONTENEGRO / MONTÉNÉGRO

Mr Darinka JOKSIMOVIĆ

Senior Advisor, Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships Division
Maritime Safety and Ports Management Administration

MOROCCO / MAROC

Mme Naoual ZOUBAIR

Chef du Service

Ministère de la Transition Energétique et du Développement Durable

Mr Hamza BEZIA

Ingénieur d'État au sein de la division de la sécurité maritime

DIRECTION DE LA MARINE MARCHANDE

Mr El Fatmi MOHAMMED AMINE

Directeur Commandant Sûreté-Sécurité

Tanger Med Port Authority

Mr Elhor ABDERRAHMANE

Chef de département CSSE-Commandant du port

Agence Nationale des Ports

SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE

Mr Arturo STEFFÉ

Head of Division

Slovenian Maritime Administration

Mr Aleš GOMBAČ

Guardian of the Coastal Sea

Slovenian Maritime Administration

SPAIN / ESPAGNE

Mr Pablo PEDROSA REY

Head Pollution Response Unit

Dirección general de la marina mercante

TUNISIA / TUNISIE

Mr Alaya SAGAAMA

Directeur de la pollution marine

Agence nationale de protection de l'environnement (ANPE)

TÜRKIYE / TÜRKIYE

Mr Levent AKABA

Head of Department

Directorate General of Maritime Affairs, Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure

Ms Derya Didem UĞUR

Environmental Engineer

Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change

ORGANISATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS / ORGANISATIONS DES NATIONS UNIES

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Deputy Director, Subdivision for Implementation
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UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME/MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (UNEP/MAP) / PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT / PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE (PNUE / PAM)

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MAP Coordinator, MAP Coordinating Unit
MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION/ ORGANISATION INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE

INTERNATIONAL OIL POLLUTION COMPENSATION FUNDS (IOPC FUNDS) / FONDS INTERNATIONAUX D'INDEMNISATION POUR LES DOMMAGES DÛS À LA POLLUTION PAR LES HYDROCARBURES (FIPOL)

Chiara DELLAMEA

Senior Claims Manager

Mr Mark HOMAN

Claims Manager

OTHER ORGANISATIONS / AUTRES ORGANISATIONS

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Mr Houcine MEJRI

Director

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Dr Carlo EUGENI

Ms Francesca RODRIGUES

SECRETARIAT / SECRÉTARIAT

REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC) / CENTRE RÉGIONAL MÉDITERRANÉEN POUR L'INTERVENTION D'URGENCE CONTRE LA POLLUTION MARINE ACCIDENTELLE (REMPEC)

Capt. Joseph ZERAFA
Interim Head of Office

Dr Stefan MICALLEF
Assistant Interim Head of Office

Mr Franck LAUWERS
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Mr Christopher SACCO
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Mr Pierre MAZZACANO D'AMATO
Secretary / Administrative Assistant

Ms Amanda INGLIS
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Mr Gérard BONA-FONOLL
Project Assistant

REMPEC CONSULTANTS / CONSULTANTS DU REMPEC

Dr Guillaume DRILLET
REMPEC Associate Consultant

ANNEX II

AGENDA

Opening of the Meeting

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Progress Report on REMPEC activities since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC
3. Illegal and accidental oil and HNS pollution from ships
4. Air Pollution from Ships
5. Introduction of non-indigenous species by shipping activities
6. Activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for the biennium 2024-2025, as proposed by REMPEC
7. Any other business
8. Conclusions and recommendations

Closure of the Meeting

ANNEX III**LIST OF DOCUMENTS****WORKING DOCUMENTS**

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| REMPEC/WG.56/1/Rev.3 | Provisional agenda |
| REMPEC/WG.56/1/1/Rev.1 | Annotated provisional agenda and draft timetable |
| REMPEC/WG.56/2 | Progress report on REMPEC activities since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC |
| REMPEC/WG.56/3/1 | Final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report |
| REMPEC/WG.56/3/2 | Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) and related activities |
| REMPEC/WG.56/3/3 | Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) and related activities |
| REMPEC/WG.56/3/4/Rev.1 | Data sharing, monitoring, and reporting |
| REMPEC/WG.56/4 | Prevention of air pollution from ships in the Mediterranean Sea |
| REMPEC/WG.56/5 | Final draft regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention in the Mediterranean Sea |
| REMPEC/WG.56/6 | Activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for the biennium 2024-2025, as proposed by REMPEC |
| REMPEC/WG.56/WP.1 | Draft conclusions and recommendations |
| REMPEC/WG.56/8 | Report of the Meeting |

INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| REMPEC/WG.56/INF.1/Rev.1 | List of documents |
| REMPEC/WG.56/J/1 | Provisional list of participants |
| REMPEC/WG.56/INF.2 | List of participants |
| REMPEC/WG.56/INF.3 | Report of the First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (Floriana, Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022) |

REMPEC/WG.56/INF.4

Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS) (Floriana, Malta, 22-23 February 2023) (English only)

REMPEC/WG.56/INF.5

Report of the Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (Kappara, Malta, 22-23 March 2023)

REMPEC/WG.56/INF.6

Best practices review of Descriptor 8 (D08C03, D08C04) of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (English only)

REMPEC/WG.56/INF.7

Proposed IMAP Pollution Cluster Chapters for the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR 2023) (English only)

REMPEC/WG.56/INF.8

Brief overview of the status of harmonisation of Ballast Water Management (BWM) measures (English only)

REMPEC/WG.56/INF.9

Draft updated Action Plan concerning species introductions and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea

REMPEC/WG.56/INF.10

IRA-MAR Project – Improving the Integrated Response to pollution Accident at sea and chemical risk in port – Project progress (English only)

REMPEC/WG.56/INF.11

International Developments in Oiled Wildlife Preparedness and Response (English only)

ANNEX IV**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF CYPRUS**

Cyprus would like to commend on the invaluable assistance of REMPEC both during the development of the Sub regional Contingency Plan as well as on the follow-up procedures towards its implementation. We have surely acknowledged the importance of REMPEC's contribution, the tireless work, the dedication, the time and effort of the Secretariat to facilitate in every possible manner the implementation of a political decision taken by the three Contracting Parties, Cyprus, Israel and Greece. We already enjoy the fruits of our trilateral agreement. We all recognize that while countries may have boundaries, oil pollution and marine life do not. The importance of cooperation and joining forces proves to be the only sustainable roadmap to safeguard our shared marine ecosystem against common threats in the vulnerable and fragile ecosystem of the east Mediterranean. Cyprus, and I certainly believe, all Contracting Parties are grateful to REMPEC for helping materialize a political decision and transforming it into a powerful and dynamic cooperation tool.

ANNEX V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), hereinafter referred to as “the Meeting”, which was held in Kappara, Malta, from 13 to 15 June 2023, with in-person participation complemented by the use of hybrid meeting capabilities:

Agenda Item 2: Progress Report on REMPEC activities since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC

1 **appreciated** the progress reported on REMPEC activities since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), as set out in document REMPEC/WG.56/2;

2 **welcomed** the adoption of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (the “Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)”) by 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);

3 **noted** the outcome of the First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (Floriana, Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.3;

4 **urged** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which had not yet done so, to ratify the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (the “2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol”) to the Barcelona Convention, in order to achieve universally the objectives of the said Protocol in the Mediterranean region;

Agenda Item 4: Air Pollution from Ships

5 **welcomed** the adoption of the amendments to Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) concerning the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SO_x ECA) by the 79th Session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)’s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 79) (London, United Kingdom, 12-16 December 2022), as well as **noted** its expected date of entry into effective application on 1 May 2025;

6 **recalled** the urgency of ratification, transposition into national laws, and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI;

7 **encouraged** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which had not yet done so, to ratify and effectively implement MARPOL Annex VI, as soon as possible, at least by the date of entering into force of the Med SO_x ECA;

8 **called upon** the Secretariat to:

.1 provide support for the consistent implementation of the 0.10% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI in the Med SO_x ECA during the biennium 2024-2025; and

- .2 continue to promote the work on the designation of the Med SO_x ECA in various fora, as appropriate.

9 **requested** the Secretariat to provide technical support and capacity building to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which so requested, to ratify and effectively implement MARPOL Annex VI, in synergy with the IMO and other relevant stakeholders, pursuant to the Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget for 2022-2023 of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), also referred to as UNEP/MAP, and also during the biennium 2024-2025;

10 **also requested** the Secretariat to 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 needs of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, notably, within the framework of the joint intersessional working group for Common Strategic Objective (CSO) 2 (Climate Change) and CSO 3 (Air Emissions from Ships) established by the First Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (Floriana, Malta, 29 November-1 December 2022);

11 **further requested** the Secretariat to:

- .1 establish the Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) 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 and on-going studies as well as gather further knowledge on the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides (Med NO_x 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_x ECA pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI under the guidance of the Med NO_x ECA Technical Committee of Experts, together with the related roadmap, during the biennium 2024-2025, for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be tentatively held in 2025, as appropriate.

Agenda Item 5: Introduction of non-indigenous species by shipping activities

12 **welcomed** the adoption of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027) (the “Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027)”) by COP 22, as well as **noted** that one of its objectives was to establish a framework for a regional harmonised approach in the Mediterranean on ships’ ballast water control and management that was consistent with the requirements and standards of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships’ Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (Ballast Water Management or BWM Convention), as outlined in Article 13(3) thereof;

13 **requested** the MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat and MAP components, as appropriate, to address other pathways and vectors for the introduction of alien and invasive species, recalling that shipping was only one of the pathways and ballast water was one of the vectors for the introduction of such species in the Mediterranean Sea;

14 **noted:**

- .1 the outcome of the Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the BWM Convention (Kappara, Malta, 22-23 March 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.5;

- .2 the brief overview of the status of harmonisation of Ballast Water Management measures, as set out in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.8; and
- .3 the draft updated Action Plan concerning species introductions and invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea prepared by the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC) and agreed by the Sixteenth Meeting of Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) Focal Points (Malta, 22-24 May 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.9.

15 **also welcomed** that the final draft regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention in the Mediterranean Sea, as set out in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.56/5, hereinafter referred to as “the final draft regional harmonised procedures”, addressed aspects of the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention for which regional harmonisation in the Mediterranean region was essential, which consisted of seven (7) parts, as follows:

- .1 Introduction (Section 1);
- .2 Harmonised Procedure: Ballast Water Exchange Areas (Section 2);
- .3 Harmonised Procedure: Regulation A-4 Exemptions (Section 3);
- .4 Harmonised Procedure: Sediment Reception Facilities (Section 4);
- .5 Harmonised Procedure: Contingency Measures (Section 5);
- .6 Harmonised Procedure: Additional Measures (Section 6); and
- .7 Harmonised Procedure: Warnings (Section 7).

16 **endorsed** the final draft regional harmonised procedures referred to in paragraph 15 above, as well as **requested** the Secretariat to carry out final editing and any editorial corrections, as appropriate, before submitting them for approval by the next Meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points;

17 **called upon** the Secretariat to communicate the regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean Sea to the IMO so that they might subsequently be circulated to IMO Member States for their information and action as appropriate, once they were eventually adopted within the framework of the Barcelona Convention;

18 **requested** the Secretariat (REMPEC and SPA/RAC) to establish the regional online BWM Working Group referred to in the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) with a view to driving the process towards further harmonisation of BWM measures in the region coordinated by REMPEC, in cooperation with SPA/RAC;

19 **tasked** the regional online BWM Working Group referred to in paragraph 18 above to develop a harmonised procedure on Ballast Water Reporting, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Regional Expert Meeting on the harmonisation of procedures in the Mediterranean pursuant to the BWM Convention (Kappara, Malta, 22-23 March 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.5, for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be tentatively held in 2025, as appropriate;

20 **also requested** the Secretariat to liaise with the IMO Secretariat as well as the OSPAR Commission¹/Bonn Agreement² Secretariat and the HELCOM³ Secretariat prior to the next Meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points to assess the implications of the possible adoption of regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean Sea, within the framework of the Barcelona Convention, on BWM.2/Circ.35⁴ and BWM.2/Circ.39⁵, and identify actions that might need to be taken;

21 **encouraged** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which had not yet done so, to ratify and effectively implement the BWM Convention, as soon as possible;

22 **also called upon** the Secretariat to provide targeted technical support to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which so requested, for the ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention, as well as the implementation of the regional harmonised procedures for the uniform implementation of the BWM Convention in the Mediterranean Sea once they were eventually adopted within the framework of the Barcelona Convention;

Agenda Item 3: Illegal and accidental oil and HNS pollution from ships

• **Final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report**

23 **noted** the outcome of the Fifth Meeting of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS) (Floriana, Malta, 22-23 February 2023), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.4;

24 **also noted** with interest that the draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report had been finalised within the framework of MENELAS, taking as a basis the standard forms to report detected pollution adopted by relevant regional and international organisations, namely the IMO, the North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors (NSN)⁶, the Bonn Agreement, as well as HELCOM, and adapting them to the Mediterranean Sea area by adding appropriate references to the Barcelona Convention;

25 **further noted** with satisfaction the first-hand experience in the Mediterranean region on the use of the draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report in the margins of a coordinated aerial surveillance operation for illicit ship pollution discharges in the Mediterranean (OSCAR-MED) held in 2022 within the framework of the RAMOGE Agreement⁷;

26 **endorsed** the final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report, as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/1, consisting of:

- .1 the Standard Pollution Observation/Detection Log and Completion Guide, as set out in Part A and Part B respectively of the Appendix thereto; and

¹ the OSPAR Commission was established by the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention).

² Agreement for Cooperation in Dealing with Pollution of the North Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances, 1983.

³ the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission or HELCOM) is the governing body of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention).

⁴ Communication received from the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC): Harmonized voluntary arrangements for ballast water management in the Mediterranean Region.

⁵ Communication received from the Administration of Croatia: General guidance on the voluntary interim application of the D1 ballast water exchange standard by vessels operating between the Mediterranean Sea and the North-East Atlantic and/or the Baltic Sea.

⁶ a body associated with the OSPAR Commission.

⁷ Accord relatif à la Protection de l'Environnement Marin et Côtier d'une Zone de la Mer Méditerranée.

.2 the Pollution Observation/Detection Report on Polluters and Combatabile Spills (IMO), as set out in Part C of the Appendix thereto.

27 **requested** the Secretariat to liaise with the OSPAR Commission/Bonn Agreement Secretariat and the HELCOM Secretariat to explore the possibility to jointly endorse the final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report referred to in paragraph 26 above for use in the Bonn Agreement, HELCOM and Mediterranean Sea areas;

28 **also requested** the Secretariat to liaise with the Secretariat of the RAMOGE Agreement with a view to ensuring that the final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report referred to in paragraph 26 above be used during OSCAR-MED 2023 to obtain further practical experience in the Mediterranean region;

- **Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) and related activities**

OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group

29 **welcomed** the progress made by the MTWG since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021);

30 **encouraged** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which had not yet done so, to nominate their national entities and/or officials as contact points for the Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances (OPRC-HNS) Correspondence Group;

31 **considered** that risks associated with the transport by ships of oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) with possible harmful consequences on biota and ecosystems could not be eliminated and that accidents could and still did occur, including those causing acute pollution;

32 **invited** the MTWG to consider the following tasks:

.1 to contribute to the development of the Post 2016-2024 Mediterranean Offshore Action Plan through the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group in cooperation with the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Groups on Environmental Impact and on Health and Safety; and

Correspondence Group on Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting

.2 to establish a new Correspondence Group on Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting to:

.1 improve the contribution of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to activities related to Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting on Oil and HNS Spills in the Mediterranean; and

.2 contribute to the preparation of a Regional Workshop to enhance Regional Cooperation in Responding to Marine Oil and HNS Pollution in the Mediterranean (MEDEXPOL 2024) on Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting.

33 **also encouraged** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to designate through the REMPEC OPRC Focal Points, the appropriate national entities and/or officials as contact points for the Correspondence Group on Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting, once established;

Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean

34 **noted** the agreement of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), as set out in document REMPEC/WG.51/9/2, on the use of the Common Emergency Communication and Information System for Marine Pollution (CECIS MP), to progress on the establishment of a Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean and the launch by the European Commission (EC) of the project for the renewal and upgrade of CECIS MP;

35 **also noted** the progress made by the EC for the renewal of the CECIS MP;

36 **agreed** to maintain the task assigned to the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group to assist the Secretariat in cooperation with the EC during the different phases of the development of the Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean and to test it once developed;

Marine HNS Response Manual – Multi-Regional Bonn Agreement, HELCOM, REMPEC

37 **noted** the submission to the Tenth session of the IMO's Sub Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR 10) by REMPEC, in cooperation with HELCOM and the Bonn Agreement, and pursuant to the recommendation of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), of the Marine HNS Response Manual – Multi-Regional Bonn Agreement, HELCOM, REMPEC, with the view to contributing to the development of an IMO Operational Guide on the Response to HNS Spills;

38 **encouraged** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to use the Marine HNS Response Manual – Multi-Regional Bonn Agreement, HELCOM, REMPEC;

Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region and Oiled Shoreline Assessment Form

39 **requested** the Secretariat to:

- .1 review Part II of the Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region with a special focus on the issues of salinity range, nutrient levels and the risk of using dispersants in the vicinity of desalination plants in the Mediterranean Sea;
- .2 develop an electronic version of the Oiled Shoreline Assessment Form in the 2009 Mediterranean Oiled Shoreline Assessment Guidelines and the 2013 Oiled Shoreline Assessment Manual; and
- .3 submit both for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be tentatively held in 2025, as appropriate.

Condensates – Chemical Intervention Guide for the Mediterranean

40 **noted** the revision made to the “Condensates – Chemical Intervention Guide for the Mediterranean” submitted to the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), as set out in Annex I to document REMPEC/WG.51/10/1;

41 **endorsed** the final draft version of the “Condensates – Chemical Intervention Guide for the Mediterranean”, as set out in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/2;

- **Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) and related activities**

42 **welcomed** the information on the MAU, its achievements during the last three decades, since its inception, and the important role of its members, as well as **noted** with interest the developments on funding of the MAU;

43 **also noted** the information provided by Cedre and ITOPF, as members of the MAU, on the assistance given to countries and REMPEC in the recent accidents;

44 **stressed** the need to raise the funding of the MAU Revolving Fund to cover an additional month with a view that the Revolving Fund would be able to fund a two months' expert mission, subject to the availability of funds, for consideration by the next meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points;

- **Data sharing, monitoring, and reporting**

45 **noted** the information on the progress made on data sharing, monitoring, and reporting since the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021);

REMPEC platforms development

46 **acknowledged** the importance of the Country Profiles as well as the Mediterranean Integrated Geographical Information System on Marine Pollution Risk Assessment and Response (MEDGIS-MAR) databases and datasets, and also the contribution of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in the maintenance and updating of these databases;

47 **recognised** that, although the information on spills continued to be collected, this data remained under reported and not necessarily representative of oil spills from ships under the threshold of 50 m³, acute pollution, and those from sources other than ships;

48 **noted** the lack of visibility and knowledge on the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool and the need to facilitate its use by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention;

49 **agreed** to:

- .1 adopt an approach of periodic updating through online surveys facilitating the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to inform on their last update on both databases;
- .2 encourage the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to contribute to this work, which was also beneficial for their reporting under the MARPOL Convention as well as the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, respectively;
- .3 instruct the Secretariat to develop a new layer on MEDGIS-MAR related to spills in the Mediterranean to be evaluated during the forthcoming MEDEXPOL 2024 on Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting;
- .4 also instruct the Secretariat to prepare an evaluation report on the reporting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention using the new layer of the MEDGIS-MAR on spills in the Mediterranean, for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC to be tentatively held in 2025, as appropriate;

- .5 invite the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to incorporate the Oil Spill Waste Management Plan (OSWMP) procedures into national and regional systems for preparedness and response to marine pollution;
- .6 include the use of the Mediterranean Oil Spill Waste Management Decision Support Tool in the scenario of exercises and drills for oil spills;
- .7 examine the feasibility of allowing users other than REMPEC OPRC Focal Points to input national information in the appropriate sections of the OSWMP; and
- .8 agree on the proposal to upload the final OSWMP of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in their Country Profiles.

Manual on National Mechanisms for the Mobilisation of Response Equipment and Experts in case of Emergency

50 **noted** the changes made on the template of the “Manual on National Mechanisms for the Mobilisation of Response Equipment and Experts in case of Emergency”, in accordance with the recommendations of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021), as set out in paragraph 62.2 of document REMPEC/WG.51/9/3;

51 **invited** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to:

- .1 endorse the revised template of the “Manual on National Mechanisms for the Mobilisation of Response Equipment and Experts in case of Emergency”, as set out in Annex 1 to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/4/Rev.1;
- .2 populate the revised template with relevant information;
- .3 update the information directly on MEDGIS-MAR and Country Profiles, or by updating the latest pre-filed forms;
- .4 communicate to the Secretariat any recommended improvements on the revised template, with a view to improving its user friendliness, and facilitating the link with other databases in relation to response equipment; and
- .5 agree on the proposal to upload the latest version of the Manual in the Country Profiles.

Reporting on the implementation of the Protocols

52 **welcomed** the first results of the assessment of the reporting by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention on the implementation of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol and 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”) to the Barcelona Convention for the biennium 2020-2021 showing an increase in the number of Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention that prepared their respective reports;

53 **noted** the digitalisation of the reporting through the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS) which facilitated the progress in reporting under the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol and the Offshore Protocol by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, and **also noted** that discrepancies still existed between the information reported under BCRS on operational aspects and incidents and those available on the Country Profiles and MEDGIS-MAR ‘accidents’ and ‘equipment’ databases;

54 **invited** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to maintain updated Country Profiles and MEDGIS-MAR to facilitate their periodic reporting;

IMAP revised Guidance Fact Sheets for the Common Indicators 6 and 19

55 **noted** the information and progress on the IMAP Common Indicators (CIs) to support the IMAP Info System, *inter alia* the IMAP Common Indicator 19 related to acute pollution;

56 **invited** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention to provide data using the revised Data Standards and Data Dictionaries for IMAP Common Indicator 19, as developed by the Regional Activity Centre for Information and Communication (INFO/RAC), in cooperation with REMPEC, according to the established criteria for oil and HNS spills, as set out in Annex 2 to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/4/Rev.1;

57 **agreed** with the Initial assessment findings related to IMAP Common Indicator 19 to contribute to the preparation of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (MED QSR 2023), as set out in Annex 3 to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/4/Rev.1;

58 **requested** the Secretariat to continue working on the development of IMAP Common Indicator 19, with a view to considering information from CleanSeaNet;

Agenda Item 6: Activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for the biennium 2024-2025, as proposed by REMPEC

59 **agreed** upon the activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP PoW for the biennium 2024-2025 set out in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.56/6, as amended, and **requested** the Secretariat to propose them for approval by the next meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points prior to their submission for adoption by the Twenty-third Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 23) (Portorož, Slovenia, 4-8 December 2023);

Agenda Item 7: Any other business

60 **noted** the presentation by the delegate of France introducing document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.10 in relation to the IRA-MAR Project – Improving the Integrated Response to pollution Accident at sea and chemical risk in port – Project progress;

61 **also noted** the presentation by the representative of the Sea Alarm Foundation introducing document REMPEC/WG.56/INF.11 on International Developments in Oiled Wildlife Preparedness and Response; and

62 **further noted** the information provided by the delegate of the European Union on recent developments relevant to REMPEC mandate.
