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

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

REMPEC/WG.61/12
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Sliema, Malta, 13-15 May 2025

REPORT

**SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINTS OF THE
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
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INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Sixteenth 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 Sliema, Malta, from 13 to 15 May 2025, to the pursuant Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget for 2024-2025 of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), also referred to as “UNEP/MAP”, adopted by the Twenty-third 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 23) (Portorož, Slovenia, 4-8 December 2023).

1.2 The principal objectives of the Meeting were:

- .1 to review the implementation and deliverables by REMPEC pursuant to the approved UNEP/MAP PoWs and Budgets for the biennia 2022-2023 and 2024-2025, since the Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Kappara, Malta, from 13 to 15 June 2023); and
- .2 to discuss and agree upon the activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP PoW for the biennium 2026-2027, as proposed by REMPEC, prior to their submission, for approval by the next meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 16-19 September 2025), and for adoption by the Twenty-fourth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 24) (Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025).

1.3 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.

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

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
CROATIA
CYPRUS
EGYPT
EUROPEAN UNION
FRANCE

LIBYA
MALTA
MONACO
MONTENEGRO
MOROCCO
SLOVENIA

GREECE
ITALY
LEBANON

SPAIN
TÜRKIYE

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

- INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO)

by representatives from the following inter-governmental organisation:

- INTERNATIONAL OIL POLLUTION COMPENSATION FUNDS (IOPC FUNDS)

by representatives from other organisations:

- ADRIATIC TRAINING AND RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ACCIDENTAL MARINE POLLUTION PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE (ATRAC)
- BIRDLIFE MALTA
- CENTRE OF DOCUMENTATION, RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTATION ON ACCIDENTAL WATER POLLUTION (CEDRE)
- CENTRAL EUROPEAN INITIATIVE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT (CEI)
- CITTADINI PER L'ARIA
- EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY (EMSA)
- ITALIAN FEDERATION OF THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY (FEDERCHIMICA)
- INTERNATIONAL OCEAN INSTITUTE (IOI)
- ITOPF LIMITED
- MALTA INTERNATIONAL SHIPOWNERS' ASSOCIATION (MISA)
- NATURE TRUST FEE MALTA
- OCEANCARE LTD.
- SEA ALARM
- SECRETARIAT OF THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN
- WESTMED

1.5 A complete list of participants is set out in **Annex I**.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

1.6 The Meeting was opened by Mr. Ivan Sammut, Head of Office of REMPEC. He welcomed the participants and set out the objectives for the Meeting, presenting an overview of the main achievements of REMPEC since the previous meeting and highlighting the main issues to be addressed over the course of the Meeting. He expressed gratitude to the Contracting Parties for their continued support, to Malta for its long-standing hospitality as host country, and to the REMPEC team for their dedication. It was highlighted that the Meeting was an important opportunity to review progress, enhance regional cooperation, and define future actions in preventing and responding to marine pollution. Key achievements over the past biennium were acknowledged, including the successful effective application of the Mediterranean Sulphur Oxide Emission Control Area (Med SO_x ECA) on 1 May 2025—an important step toward improving air quality and advancing sustainable maritime transport. Ongoing capacity-building efforts, progress in addressing emerging risks such as biofouling and decarbonisation, and strengthened partnerships were also underlined.

1.7 Ms. Patricia Charlebois, Deputy Director, Marine Environment Division, IMO, provided some opening remarks. In highlighting the importance of the Mediterranean Sea for the region, she stressed the critical role that REMPEC has played over almost fifty years, underpinned by the longstanding partnership between IMO and the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP). She further underscored the impact of the anticipated amendments to MARPOL Annex VI at IMO later this year, that will have sweeping impacts for the maritime sector and will provide opportunities and challenges, with REMPEC ready and available to support the implementation of the Net Zero Framework, as the sector moves away from traditional bunker fuels, towards low carbon alternatives.

1.8 Hon. Minister Dr. Miriam Dalli, Minister for the Environment, Energy and Regeneration of the Grand Harbour, welcomed participants to Malta, underscoring the importance of the Mediterranean Sea to all countries in the region and expressing Malta's pride in hosting and promoting the work and principles of REMPEC. The Minister conveyed that the Mediterranean Sea is under pressure from human activity, pollution and climate change, and that in the face of this, regional cooperation was essential to tackling these challenges, with REMPEC and the Focal Points Meeting providing important platforms for facilitating such cooperation. The Minister reaffirmed Malta's commitment to the principles of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols and pledged ongoing support to and promotion of REMPEC as a key institution for catalysing regional cooperation to address an increasing range of maritime issues that will ensure the sustainable management of the Mediterranean Sea.

ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

Rules of Procedure

1.9 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

1.10 The Meeting unanimously agreed to elect the following officers of the Meeting:

Ms Cristina Farchi (Italy)	Chairperson
Ms Biserka Vištica (Croatia)	Vice-Chairperson
Ms Rehab Abou El Fadl (Egypt)	Rapporteur

Working Languages

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

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1.12 The Chairperson thanked the Meeting for supporting her election and proposed that the Provisional Agenda, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.61/1 and annotated in document REMPEC/WG.61/1/1, be adopted.

1.13 The Meeting adopted the provisional 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 FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE FOCAL POINTS OF REMPEC

2.1 The Meeting considered the report provided by the Secretariat outlining the progress made in implementing its Programme of Work and the activities carried out over the biennium, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.61/2.

2.2 Having noted the information, the Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for the considerable body of work carried out by REMPEC over the biennium and noted, in particular:

- .1 REMPEC's success in securing nearly €1 million, in external funding for capacity-building activities directed to the prevention of, preparedness for, and response to marine pollution from ships, from the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security; the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs; the European Union, and through IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP);
- .2 the challenges faced stemming from limited staff levels and a high turnover during the 2024-2025 biennium and the measures introduced to ensure the smooth and efficient delivery of work, including the engagement of a Junior Professional Officer financed by the Government of Malta;
- .3 the need for Contracting Parties to advise REMPEC of any changes to the designated focal points across the range of REMPEC's work;
- .4 the efficiencies proposed by REMPEC to the Contracting Parties for more efficient implementation of activities aimed at reducing administrative burdens and optimizing use of financial resources (e.g. timely nomination of participants for activities and ensuring appropriate approvals prior to confirming participation in REMPEC-organised events; last minute travel and visa issues; and the provision of accurate banking information for processing of DSA).

2.3 The delegation of Egypt expressed its thanks to REMPEC and IMO for organising a national workshop on the implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, with a focus on SO_x Emission Control Area (ECA), and to REMPEC and the European Union for the launch of the Marine Litter MED Plus Project, which will allow for enhanced management of marine litter in their selected port.

2.4 The representative of Cyprus expressed its appreciation for the work undertaken, recognizing, in particular, the significance of the entry into force of the Med SO_x ECA. It, however, expressed concern regarding the current staffing levels at REMPEC, recommending consideration be given to strengthening staff capacity, in particular given the anticipated new work related to the Net Zero Framework expected to be adopted at IMO in October 2025 and related challenges arising from the new low carbon alternative fuels, most of which are hazardous and noxious substances.

2.5 The representative of the European Union congratulated the Contracting Parties for the entry into force of the Med SO_x ECA, and REMPEC and IMO for their work in this regard. The delegation further expressed

the need for additional support to facilitate its implementation, in particular to those countries that had yet to ratify MARPOL Annex VI.

2.6 The Meeting concluded on the agenda item by noting the information presented, acknowledging the considerable work carried out over the biennium, and expressing its appreciation for the support provided to REMPEC for capacity building activities by the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF), the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP), the discretionary voluntary contributions from the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE) and the European Union.

AGENDA ITEM 3: DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN MAP RELATED TO THE OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF REMPEC

3.1 No documents were submitted under this agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 4: DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN IMO RELATED TO THE OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF REMPEC

4.1 The representative of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/4, providing a summary of the latest developments within the IMO in the fields of prevention of, preparedness for and response to marine pollution from ships. The Meeting noted, in particular, the work of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) and the Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR), as well as the recent activities implemented under IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme as set out in document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.21.

4.2 The representative of the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds) presented document REMPEC/WG.61/4/1, providing information on the latest developments related to compensation for ship-source pollution damage and the work of the IOPC Funds since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC. The representative shared information on recent incidents it had been involved in, the implications of recent developments and decisions of the IOPC Funds' governing bodies, as well as resulting output of the Organisation during that period. The representative also highlighted the recent update of an Memorandum of Understanding related to standardized rates for the utilisation of EU response vessels and response resources in the event of a pollution incident. The representative also covered relevant insurance and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) issues, and made reference to the online claims submission system, available promotional materials and new publications.

4.3 The Meeting welcomed the information presented by both IMO and the IOPC Funds on recent developments of interest to the work of REMPEC.

AGENDA ITEM 5: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGY FOR PREVENTION OF, AND RESPONSE TO MARINE POLLUTION FROM SHIPS (2022-2031) AND ITS ACTION PLAN

5.1 The Meeting recalled that the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022–2031) (Mediterranean Strategy), adopted at COP 22 in December 2021, through Decision IG.25/16, remains central to achieving its vision of “a clean and healthy Mediterranean marine and coastal environment with a sustainable and pollution-free maritime sector.”

5.2 The Meeting noted that there were three documents to be considered under this agenda item as follows:

1. Progress on the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (REMPEC/WG.61/5);
2. Consideration of the Draft Guidance on the Preparation of NAPs (REMPEC/WG.61/5/1);
3. The development of a Policy Framework on Gender and Mainstreaming (REMPEC/WG.61/5/2);
and
4. Complimentary information provided by Contracting Parties on ongoing activities that complement the implementation of the Strategy (European Union) (WG.61/INF.22 and WG.61/INF.23);

5.3 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/5 providing an overview of the progress made in implementing the Mediterranean Strategy, drawing particular attention to the outcomes of the Second Coordination meeting held in November 2024, the report of which is set out in REMPEC/WG.61/INF.20.

5.4 The representative from Cyprus expressed concern regarding the efficacy of establishing a ten-year strategy, noting that this did not provide sufficient flexibility to address emerging issues, for example the IMO Net Zero Framework. The representative further expressed disappointment that only three of the planned seven intersessional working groups (IWGs) had been established and concurred with the proposed restructuring of the IWGs and related improved distribution of work proposed in the document. The representative also concurred with the proposal to integrate future Coordination Meetings into the Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points, as a more efficient and cost-effective way forward.

5.5 The representative of Morocco thanked REMPEC for its ongoing support and expressed the view that the Mediterranean Strategy provided an important framework to facilitate cooperation. The representative noted the progress it had made on its National Action Plan but highlighted that more work was needed. It had no objections to the proposal to conduct the Coordination Meetings biennially, alongside the Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points, if enough time is given to the Contracting Parties to review all the relevant documents.

5.6 The representative of France supported the proposal for restructuring the IWGs and also agreed that future Coordination Meetings be organised prior to the Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points, in order to report outcomes to the Meeting of the Focal Points.

5.7 The Secretariat thanked delegations for their contributions and clarified that indeed the intention was to add a day to the next Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points, with the first day dedicated to addressing the implementation of the Strategy, followed by the usual three-day Meeting of the Focal Points, which would offer financial savings and more streamlined planning and logistics.

5.8 The Secretariat expressed its thanks to the current IWG coordinators from France, Italy and OCEANCARE and urged other countries to consider the possibility of volunteering to coordinate the remaining groups that did not currently have coordinators.

5.9 The Meeting endorsed the recommendations of the Biennial Review Report and the proposed restructuring of the IWGs, instructing the Secretariat to initiate the required preparations for the Mid-Term Review of the Strategy to be conducted in 2026. The Meeting further agreed to the scheduling of the next Mediterranean Strategy Coordination Meeting alongside the 17th Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points and urged Contracting Parties to consider volunteering to coordinate the three CSOs that did not currently have a coordinator since their work cannot be initiated until such time that a coordinator is appointed.

5.10 The Meeting welcomed a presentation delivered by the European Union based on the information contained in documents WG.61/INF.22 and WG.61/INF.23, which provided information the European Maritime Transport Environmental Report 2025 (EMTER 2025) and the EU NAVISON Project on Underwater radiated noise from ships. The Meeting, having requested the Secretariat to make the presentation available to delegates, noted that it would be uploaded to the website as part of the submitted document.

5.11 The Meeting considered document REMPEC/WG.61/5/1 presented by the Secretariat, introducing the Draft Guidance Document on the Preparation of National Action Plans (NAPs) for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031).

5.12 The Meeting, having noted that the Guidelines aimed to support Contracting Parties in translating the regional Mediterranean Strategy into practical nationally tailored action plans to ensure consistency, coherence, and effectiveness in national-level implementation, endorsed the Guidelines as contained in document REMPEC/WG.61/5/1.

5.13 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/5/2 on Gender and Youth Mainstreaming, within the context of the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy. The Secretariat highlighted, in

particular the draft framework aimed at integrating gender equality and youth engagement into all relevant policies, activities, and partnerships developed under the Strategy.

5.14 The representative of Italy thanked the Secretariat for its work on this matter and confirmed its intention to support this initiative, being of the view that progress on this issue was essential, noting that similar work was being undertaken under other regional conventions.

5.15 The representative of Cyprus highlighted the work of IMO in this regard, notably the designation of an International Day for Women in Maritime that is celebrated on 18 May of each year. The representative further commended the balanced gender representation at the Meeting of the Focal Points and reported that Cyprus is currently carrying out a study aimed at identifying the representation of women in shipping sectors.

5.16 The Meeting concluded by noting the information provided and endorsing the framework set forth in the document.

AGENDA ITEM 6: ILLEGAL AND ACCIDENTAL OIL AND HNS POLLUTION FROM SHIPS

6.1 The Meeting noted that there were sixteen documents to be considered under this agenda item, and agreed to consider these in the following order:

REMPEC/WG.61/6	Maritime traffic and Offshore Oil and Gas Activities – Trends and Outlook
REMPEC/WG.61/6/1	Marine Pollution Monitoring: Results of the Survey on Needs of Capacity Building on the use of IMAP CI
REMPEC/WG.61/6/2	Lowering of the Threshold for Reporting on Oil Spills
REMPEC/WG.61/6/3	Common Emergency Communication Mediterranean (Joint REMPEC-DG ECHO)
REMPEC/WG.61/6/4	Update of Guidelines and Tools
REMPEC/WG.61/6/4/1	Review of the Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/6/4/2	Upgrading of Databases and REMPEC Platforms
REMPEC/WG.61/6/5	Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) and related activities
REMPEC/WG.61/6/6	Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) and related activities
REMPEC/WG.61/6/7	Preparedness and Response Contingency Planning
REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/1	Guidelines for the Development of Joint spill Response Exercises within the Framework of the Sub-regional Contingency Plans

REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/2	Improvement Process for Advanced Level of Preparedness for OSR and Harmonizing Response for HNS Incidents
REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/3	Readiness of the Mediterranean Region to respond to Marine Pollution Incidents involving Low-Sulphur Fuels and Alternative Fuels
REMPEC/WG.61/6/8	Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and related activities
REMPEC/WG.61/6/8/1	Possible Creation and Operation of a regional “Blue Fund”
REMPEC/WG.61/6/8/2	Final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report

- **Maritime Traffic and Offshore Oil and Gas Activities - Trends and Outlook**

6.2 The Meeting noted the information contained in document REMPEC/WG.61/6 introduced by the Secretariat and endorsed the draft Terms of Reference for the update of the Study on maritime traffic and offshore oil and gas activities (December 2021), instructing the Secretariat to undertake the update of the study in the coming biennium.

- **Marine Pollution Monitoring: Results of the Survey on Needs of Capacity Building on the use of IMAP CI**

6.3 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/6/1 providing an update on the results of the survey on the capacity building needs on the use of Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme Common Indicator (IMAP CI) in accordance with the conclusions and recommendations of the regional Workshop on Reporting, Monitoring and Data Sharing, held in Malta in September 2024 (see document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.5).

6.4 Having noted the information, the Meeting agreed that the surveys should continue on a quarterly basis and invited Contracting Parties to complete the surveys, even for nil reports, noting they provide important information on spill trends in the Mediterranean region that can provide inform decision making on pollution preparedness response matters and future capacity building needs.

- **Marine Pollution Reporting: Lowering the threshold of Oil Spill Reporting**

6.5 The Meeting considered document WG.61/6/2 introduced by the Secretariat, containing a proposal for lowering the threshold for reporting of oil spills to REMPEC, in alignment with that adopted by other regional conventions, in order to provide better quality data and an improved picture of oil spills occurring in the Mediterranean region that will help identify trends for improved decision making and prioritisation of capacity building requirements.

6.6 The Meeting, having noted the rationale provided, agreed with the lowering of the minimum threshold for reporting of oil spill events to REMPEC to 10 t/m³ and encouraged Contracting Parties to also submit information on spills below the minimum threshold to the extent possible, noting that a full data set would assist in providing the best statistical overview of oil spills in the Mediterranean region.

- **Marine Pollution Reporting: Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean**

6.7 The Meeting recalled that the 14th Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points had agreed on the use of the EU Common Emergency and Information System for Marine Pollution (CECIS Marine) by all Contracting Parties, as the common emergency communication system for the Mediterranean, for requesting and offering assistance in the event of an oil pollution incident. The Meeting further recalled that it had requested REMPEC to work with the European Commission's DG ECHO to ensure that the requirements of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention were integrated in the next phase of development of the CECIS MP.

6.8 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/6/3 providing a status report on progress over the biennium regarding the further development of the CECIS Marine and the integration of REMPEC's requirements for the extension of its use as the common emergency communication system for the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

6.9 The Meeting noted that MEDEXPOL 2024 had discussed and provided recommendations on requirements for the system and that the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) was also contributing by providing continuous input on the development of the system and would be participating in the testing, as well as in addressing requirements for non-EU States that are Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

6.10 The Meeting considered the additional information report provided by the European Union on CECIS Marine, underscoring that the main function of the system is its use as the platform for requesting assistance in the event of a pollution incident, to coordinate offers of assistance, and as a secure channel for emergency communications. The representative of the EU highlighted that there were dedicated spaces already available for the HELCOM and Bonn Agreements, and it was now in the process of developing the system to accommodate the requirements of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The representative further clarified that given the system was somewhat dated, it was undertaking a full modernization of the system and had established a user group to provide input to its development, to which REMPEC had been participating and providing input, in particular, on the requirements of non-EU States.

6.11 The Meeting noted that a test version was expected to be completed by October and would be opened up to users for testing, with a particular invitation to non-EU States to participate. In order to accommodate

this, there was a need for each Contracting Party to identify an Administrator that had the authority within their country to request international assistance, or to offer assistance in the event of an incident in another country. The Administrator would also be required to approve and administer national level system users. The EU representative requested that required contact information for Administrators and other users be submitted as soon as possible, and no later than mid-September 2025.

6.12 The Secretariat expressed its appreciation for the progress made on the system and stressed to the Contracting Parties that this Meeting served as its last opportunity to provide input to the Secretariat for the development of the system and it was therefore essential that the Contracting Parties provide clear direction in order for REMPEC to progress effectively in its dialogue with DG ECHO on the matter, reminding the Meeting that all requests for assistance to REMPEC would be handled through CECIS MP going forward.

6.13 The representative of Egypt thanked the EU for the information provided and asked whether Contracting Parties could send requests for assistance for larger spills (tier 3) to REMPEC directly for assistance rather than going through IMO.

6.14 The representative of IMO explained that any country could request assistance from IMO directly or, in the Mediterranean, could approach REMPEC directly, clarifying that in either case, REMPEC would serve as the main platform for coordinating such assistance, whether the requests came to IMO or to REMPEC. For larger incidents, IMO would generally provide additional backstopping to REMPEC, when its capacity was exceeded.

6.15 The representative of Egypt asked whether the assistance could cover the provision of equipment and whether a contract was needed when assistance was provided. The European Union explained that it could support the logistics in some cases, but the platform will provide the Contracting Party the possibility to communicate directly with the agency to assist with the response. The European Union also confirmed that no contract is required.

6.16 The Meeting concluded by:

.1 welcoming the progress on the development of CECIS MP and its further modification to address the requirements of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, and expressed its appreciation to the European Commission for its support in this regard;

.2 inviting Contracting Parties to submit the required national level contact information for Administrators and other users by mid-September 2025; and

.3 urging Contracting Parties, in particular those from non-EU States to participate during the testing phase to ensure the system adequately addressed end-user requirements.

- **Update of Guidelines and Tools**

6.17 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/6/4, setting out a proposal for reviewing and updating a number of manuals and guidelines developed by REMPEC, as well as their conversion, or parts thereof, to electronic versions.

6.18 Having reviewed the information contained in the document, the representative of Sea Alarm noted that the wildlife manual under the POSOW project did not include the latest forms in respect of wildlife response, which had since been updated, and noted that Sea Alarm could provide a more updated version of the forms for inclusion on the website.

6.19 The representative of France indicated that it was important to have these tools in a format that was easily accessible on the REMPEC website.

6.20 The Secretariat acknowledged the point and noted that there was need for a refresh and update of the REMPEC website, as a whole, noting that the aim was to include this item in the Programme of Work for 2026-2027.

6.21 The Meeting, having considered the information presented, welcomed the initial review of the resources developed by REMPEC and instructed the Secretariat to proceed with the update and/or digitization of the tools/resources set out in the annex to document REMPEC/WG.61/6/4, subject to availability of funds.

- **Review of the Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region**

6.22 The Secretariat introduced REMPEC/WG.61/6/4/1, setting out the results of a review of the Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region, notably the information that required updating in the document in part II of the manual.

6.23 The Meeting, having considered the review, approved the proposed revisions to Part II of the Guidelines, set out in the annex to document REMPEC/WG.61/6/4/1.

- **Upgrading of Databases and REMPEC Platforms**

6.24 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/6/4/2, setting out a proposal for the upgrading of the databases and platforms managed by REMPEC, as well as the various tools listed in the Annex to the document, taking into account the recommendations from the 15th Meeting of the Focal Points and MEDEXPOL 2024. It was also highlighted that in view that the REMPEC databases and platforms have been developed over a decade ago, the technology has since advanced, and it would require substantial time and resources to update same. Following advice sought from an IT expert, it was recommended that it might be more effective to rebuild the databases and platforms from scratch using modern technologies, resulting in better operation, management and portability.

6.25 Further to the information provided on the status of the various REMPEC-managed databases and tools outlined in the document, the representative of the European Union highlighted that there were a number of other available databases, making specific reference to the Dynamic Overview of National Authorities (DONA) system developed by EMSA and that duplication of work should be avoided. The representative indicated that although the system was primarily for EU Member States, there was a provision for the extension of its use to the beneficiaries of the SAFEMED project and other new projects that would be launched in July 2025. The representative further indicated that there was a possibility of extracting statistical data from other EMSA databases that could be shared. The representative concluded by indicating that EMSA would be pleased to work with REMPEC to look at possible synergies that would reduce expenses associated with developing a new system.

6.26 The representative of France indicated that the country profiles had been updated during the course of the WestMoPoCo Project and further underscored the need to ensure that there was no duplication of work and that costs kept to a reasonable level in the development of any new system.

6.27 Taking into account the views expressed and the information provided on other databases that could provide possible synergies, the Meeting requested REMPEC to undertake a detailed assessment of available systems, together with the effort and resource requirement for upgrading the REMPEC tools and platforms required to meet the obligations of the Barcelona Convention, and to submit this to the 17th Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points.

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

6.28 The Meeting considered document REMPEC/WG.61/6/5 introduced by the Secretariat, providing a summary of the work of the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG), and proposals for future activities to be integrated into its work programme for the 2024-2025 biennium. In particular, the Meeting noted the extension of the work of the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group to include tasks related to acute pollution monitoring and impact assessment on the marine environment within the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP).

6.29 The Meeting, having noted the information provided, concurred with the proposed future work of the MTWG, taking into account the decisions taken under related topics under this agenda item.

- **Mediterranean Assistance Unit**

6.30 The Meeting considered document REMPEC/WG.61/6/6 presented by the Secretariat providing a status report on the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) and the proposal to increase the MAU Special Revolving Fund to cover up to a maximum two months of an expert mission in the event of a pollution incident, a month longer than what is currently allowed.

6.31 The Meeting concluded by concurring with the proposal for increasing the value of the MAU revolving fund from the current one-month allocation to cover an expert mission to a period of a maximum of two months, for eventual agreement by the UNEP/MAP Focal Points and decision by COP 24 of the Barcelona Convention.

- **Preparedness and Response Contingency Planning**

6.32 The Meeting considered document REMPEC/WG.61/6/7 introduced by the Secretariat outlining REMPEC's work in supporting preparedness and response contingency planning that highlighted key developments over the biennium.

6.33 In its presentation, the Secretariat highlighted a number of items that had been delivered, including the endorsement of the Adriatic Marine Pollution Incident Contingency Plan (2023), the preparatory work for the Joint Spill Response Exercise CypEx 2024 to test the plan and the Guidelines on Joint Spill Response Exercises within the Sub-Regional Contingency Plan (2025) (see document REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/1) and its contribution to the work on the IMO International Operational Guide on the Response to Spills of HNS.

6.34 The meeting considered the additional information provided by the representatives of CEI, Croatia and Slovenia regarding the Adriatic Sensitive Areas Protection (ASAP) project addressing preparedness and response for the north Adriatic, with the intention of eventually expanding collaboration to the entire Adriatic basin. The meeting recognised the importance of Subregional Contingency Planning and related activities which represent a benefit not only for competent national authorities of two or more countries to co-operate in co-ordinating and integrating their response to marine pollution, but also for enhancing national and regional systems for preparedness to respond to marine pollution.

6.35 The representative of Monaco made reference to the regular exercises undertaken under the RAMOGE Agreement between France, Italy and Monaco, which helped to facilitate cooperation and communications

when real incidents occur, such as the collision between the ro-ro vessel **Ulysse** and the container ship **Virginia** off the coast of Corsica in 2018.

6.36 The Meeting noted the information presented and thanked the Secretariat for its efforts on preparedness and response contingency planning matters.

- **Guidance Document on Joint Spill Response Exercise within the Sub-regional Contingency Plans**

6.37 The Meeting considered document REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/1, providing guidance on the planning and organisation of joint spill response exercises undertaken under sub-regional contingency plans.

6.38 The representative of Sea Alarm expressed its appreciation for the inclusion of wildlife response in the document, however noting that it only included rescue and rehabilitation of wildlife. The representative took the opportunity to highlight the document developed by Sea Alarm which considered the wider wildlife response considerations for exercises available on their website, notably the Guidelines for exercise development specific to wildlife developed under the EU-funded EUROWA 2 project¹, with a suggestion to link the two documents.

6.39 The representative of France shared information on the exercises planned under RAMOGEPOL and the Lyon Plan, noting the latter included an HNS component.

6.40 The representative of the European Union recommended removing the reference to ‘cutting edge’ technology related to aircraft support and suggested keeping to the satellite information under CleanSeaNet contained within the document, noting the complexities of obtaining necessary clearance for aircraft use in exercises.

6.41 The representative of Malta highlighted that although it was not part of a sub-regional plan, it had participated in two joint exercises with Italy that proved to be very important means for Contracting Parties to exchange information and improve the response to incidents involving multiple countries.

6.42 The Meeting noted the information provided and approved the Guidelines, as amended, based on the comments provided during the discussion.

¹ <https://civil-protection-knowledge-network.europa.eu/projects/eurowa-2#inpage-section-outputs-results>

- **Continuous Improvement Process for Maintaining Advanced Levels of Preparedness for Oil Spill Response and Harmonizing Response Approaches for HNS Incidents**

6.43 The Meeting considered the following documents:

- .1 REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/2, providing the measures undertaken to ensure continuous improvement for maintaining advanced levels of oil and HNS pollution response, including the status of contingency planning at national levels, and the assessments carried out using the Readiness evaluation tool for oil spills (RETOS);
- .2 REMPEC/WG.61/INF.24 submitted by the European Union (EMSA) providing information on the Marine Intervention in Chemical Emergencies Network (MAR-ICE service), a 24/7 Information Service for marine emergencies involving chemicals, provided by EMSA to the EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries; and
- .3 REMPEC/WG.61/INF.7 and REMPEC/WG.61/INF.8 submitted by Sea Alarm providing an update on its ongoing projects and additional available tools related to oiled wildlife response.

6.44 The Meeting noted the information provided in the various documents to contribute to advancing levels of pollution preparedness throughout the Mediterranean region and urged Contracting Parties to ensure timely development and updating of National Contingency Plans and to ensure a regular assessment of capacity using the RETOS tool, taking into account the available tools and resources to support both preparedness and response to oil and HNS pollution incidents.

- **Readiness of the Mediterranean Region to Respond to Marine Pollution Incidents involving Low-Sulphur Fuels and Alternative Fuels**

6.45 The Meeting considered document REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/3 introduced by the Secretariat, setting out the results of a study on the readiness of the Mediterranean region to respond to marine pollution incidents involving low-sulphur and alternative fuels, with the full study was set out in document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.9.

6.46 The representative of Cyprus congratulated REMPEC on this work, however, highlighting that the work on alternative fuels may be somewhat premature given the ongoing work at IMO on this topic. The representative further underscored the need for training of both port authorities and seafarers given the knowledge gap that existed on responding to the anticipated alternative fuels, most of which were considered hazardous and noxious substances (HNS).

6.47 The representative of Italy was of the view that this topic was of paramount importance, and why they had funded the study. The representative further shared that Italy would be delivering a presentation on this topic at the Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC 3) in June and would seek to further engage with stakeholders on this topic.

6.48 The representative of the European Union concurred with the view of Cyprus, indicating that it would be important not to proceed too quickly, further noting that there were many types of low-sulphur fuels with differing properties.

6.49 The Secretariat thanked Italy for its contribution to support the study and further clarified that its initial intention was to determine the level of available capacity in the event of a LSF incidents that had decided to extend the study to alternative fuels, given the direction of the work at IMO.

6.50 The representative of France drew attention to similar studies it had supported under the Bonn Agreement and noted the current studies being undertaken at CEDRE, in collaboration with other partners. Consequently, the representative of France highlighted the need to consider the full breadth of work that existed and to build on existing knowledge in order to adapt and strengthen existing capacity to address these emerging fuels, where possible.

6.51 The representative of Greece welcomed the study as a good starting point towards preparing to respond to incidents involving alternative fuels. The representative noted that whilst the study considered preparedness and response aspects, there was equally a need to address the use of such fuels and to have appropriate guidance on those aspects going forward.

6.52 The Meeting concluded by noting the information presented and the comments provided, in particular with respect to the need for developing capacity and knowledge on preparedness and response to the various alternative fuels, following adoption of the Net Zero Framework and related amendments by IMO later in the year.

- **Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials Relating to MARPOL with the Framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS) and related activities**

6.53 The Meeting considered document WG.61/6/8 presented by the Secretariat, providing an update of the outcomes of the Sixth Meeting of MENELAS, held in Lija, Malta, on 4-5 December 2024, the report of which is presented in document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.10.

6.54 The Meeting considered, in particular:

- .1 a draft Decision on Common Minimum Fines;
- .2 the establishment of a MENELAS Database:
- .3 a review of the Terms of Reference of MENELAS, taking into consideration the operation of similar bodies in the Baltic and North Sea; and
- .4 the proposed activities to be undertaken in the 2026-2027 biennium.

6.55 The representative of Lebanon, referring to paragraph 6a of the terms of reference set out in the Annex to the document, highlighted that it is the responsibility of the maritime administration of each Contracting Party to implement conventions such as MARPOL and its annexes and correspondingly is responsible for issuing fines for lack of compliance. Consequently, Lebanon requested clarification on paragraph 6a, notably on the role of the Prosecutor in such cases, where there may be separation of powers between the executive and judicial authorities.

6.56 The Secretariat clarified that paragraph 6a was to be taken within the context of the chapeau of the paragraph, which states that the overall aim of article 6 is that MENELAS should facilitate cooperation at the regional level on the listed tasks that followed. It was not intended to replace national mechanisms nor interfere with the mandate and powers of national authorities.

6.57 The Meeting, having noted the outcome of the Sixth Meeting of MENELAS, concurred that the establishment of a database on MENELAS be placed on hold awaiting the outcome of the harmonized reporting template being developed by the EU, and endorsed, subject to availability of funds, the recommendation for a common application of minimum fines, and the activities proposed by the Meeting of MENELAS. The Meeting also approved the revised Terms of Reference on the Establishment of MENELAS, as presented in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.61/6/8 and instructed the Secretariat to submit same for consideration and adoption by COP24.

- **Legal Analysis to assess the implications of the possible creation and operation of a regional “Blue Fund”**

6.58 The Meeting recalled that in 2017 it had considered a proposal by France on enhanced regional judicial cooperation for prosecuting marine pollution offenses that included the concept of the establishment of a regional “Blue Fund”, financed partially through pollution-related fines, to support enforcement and environmental protection measures.

6.59 The Meeting further recalled that the Fifth MENELAS Meeting (2023) had acknowledged the need to further explore the fund's governance and financing structure. Consequently, the Secretariat (REMPEC) was tasked with preparing terms of reference for a legal and operational assessment, which were agreed at COP 23 (2023), and an item on the finalization of these modalities, including a comprehensive legal analysis, was included in the 2024-2025 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work.

6.60 The Meeting considered document WG.61/6/8/1 setting out the operational considerations and legal analysis on the possible creation and operation of a regional “Blue Fund”, based on the request and decision of COP 23.

6.61 Having considered the specifics of the legal analysis, a number of delegations took the floor to indicate that they could not support the establishment of a Blue Fund, citing a number of concerns, including issues related to governance, financing and jurisdiction, amongst others.

6.62 Given the general lack of support for the establishment of a Blue Fund at this time, taking into account the points raised, and in view of the limited time and other priorities on the agenda of the MENELAS, the Meeting agreed to place the matter in abeyance for the 2025-2026 biennium and to undertake further work, in the future, using an informal approach.

- **Final Common Marine oil pollution detection/investigation report**

6.63 The Meeting having considered document REMPEC/WG.61/6/8/2, proposing updates to the common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report to bring it in line with the common reporting framework used by HELCOM and the Bonn Agreement, endorsed the final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report, set out in the Appendix to the document, for use within the framework of the Barcelona Convention.

AGENDA ITEM 7: AIR POLLUTION FROM SHIPS

7.1 The Meeting considered document REMPEC/WG.61/7 introduced by the Secretariat providing information on the latest developments related to the prevention of air pollution from ships in the Mediterranean Sea, in particular the effective application from 1 May 2025 of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SO_x ECA) and actions taken by the Secretariat during the last biennium on this issue.

7.2 The Meeting, in considering the information, noted the report of the Regional Workshop on the consistent implementation of IMO 2020 under MARPOL Annex VI and the 0.10% sulphur limit in the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SO_x ECA) (Malta,

22-23 May 2024), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.18. It also considered the updated draft regional fundraising strategy to support Contracting Parties in the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, as well as the implementation of the Med SO_x ECA and linked compliance measures, set in document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.12.

7.3 The European Union congratulated REMPEC on its work in respect of the Med SO_x ECA and thanked Italy for the funding provided to support the studies. The representative of the European Union reminded the Meeting that the EU is ready and able to support Contracting Parties on the ratification of MARPOL Annex VI, under the SAFEMED Project, specifically referencing support to the transposition of regulations into national law. The representative further noted that it would soon be delivering training on the use of ammonia as one of the possible future alternative fuels with a recorded version available on their website. During the same intervention, the EU representative sought further insight on a possible timeline as to when the five Contracting Parties that have not yet ratified MARPOL Annex VI, will do so.

7.4 The representative of France congratulated the Contracting Parties for the entry into force of Med SO_x ECA and indicated it would be ready to support in the ratification of MARPOL Annex VI. The representative further highlighted that France also stood ready to support feasibility studies in respect of the Med NO_x ECA.

7.5 The representative of Egypt noted that whilst it was not yet in position to ratify MARPOL Annex VI, all technical approvals had been achieved, and the matter was now in the political domain. The representative expressed the need for more capacity building support, notably with regard to establishing the required regulatory measures, and also with respect to implementation. In addition, the representative indicated the need for assistance with port infrastructure, adequate reception facilities and instruments to measure air pollution in ports, noting that Egypt ships can currently not run on low carbon fuels. The representative also requested the Secretariat to mobilise resources and connect Egypt with relevant donors, funding institutions or investors.

7.6 The representative of Greece extended its congratulations on the entry into force of the Med SO_x ECA, thanked the Secretariat for the draft guidance and urged all to progress with earliest implementation of the MED SO_x ECA.

7.7 The Secretariat highlighted that since most of the Contracting Parties are members of the Mediterranean Memorandum of Understanding on port State control (MED MOU), this Guidance Document is forwarded to the MED MoU Secretariat for dissemination to all Port State Control Officers who follow MED MoU procedures during inspections. The representative of EMSA informed the Meeting that the next meeting of the MED MOU MAB will be held at EMSA, and the matter will be brought to the attention of the meeting.

7.8 The Meeting concluded by noting the information provided and endorsing the Draft Guidance Document on the consistent implementation of the 0.10% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI in the Med SO_x ECA,

as set out in the Appendix 1 of the document. The Meeting urged earliest ratification of MARPOL Annex VI for those five Contracting Parties that have not yet done so, and timely implementation of the Med SO_x ECA for the rest of the Contracting Parties.

7.9 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/7/1 on the Study on the Environmental and Legal Impacts of the Use of Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS) in the Mediterranean Sea, noting that the study was set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.11.

7.10 The representative of Malta extended its thanks to the Government of Italy for funding the Study. She further recognized that washwater discharges that posed certain threats to the marine environment and noted that there were a number of new regulations arising in a fragmented way and endorsed a more holistic approach. The representative further highlighted that within industry, some early movers had invested in this technology and that some grandfathering clause should be introduced to apply this to new ships

7.11 France thanked the Secretariat and Italy for the work undertaken and for supporting the Study. The representative highlighted that France has an ambitious approach to implementing these regulations and that France would support the prohibition of scrubbers in the Mediterranean Sea.

7.12 Egypt expressed concerns regarding a move to ban scrubbers, given that some Contracting Parties, including Egypt, still use scrubbers as a means of compliance and there is lack of adequate port reception facilities, therefore request the closed loops systems not to be prohibited until more studies can be introduced.

7.13 The representative of the European Union expressed appreciation to Italy and REMPEC for this timely study and noted that the document served as a good basis for discussion on EGCS systems, however noting that more than 40 countries had already applied restrictions to the use of EGCS. The representative further noted the discussions initiated by the EU countries at IMO on the potential toxicity of the use of these systems. Consequently, the representative expressed a more cautionary approach to the wording of the recommendations and indicated it could not endorse all the recommendations, notably any recommendation encouraging the use of closed loops systems. The representative also encouraged consideration of the efforts of other regions, including HELCOM and OSPAR, that are currently developing regulatory frameworks and road maps towards the implementation of MARPOL Annex VI.

7.14 The representative of Cyprus indicated a need to be cautious with respect to EGCS given ongoing work on scrubbers at IMO, noting that IMO's PPR Sub-committee would discuss this matter at its next meeting in early 2026. Consequently, the representative suggested that the Meeting note the recommendations and to review the matter, once IMO has considered and decided on the matter.

7.15 The representative of Monaco thanked REMPEC for its efforts and expressed its appreciation to Italy for funding the Study and indicated that they were open to further discussions on the matter.

7.16 The representative of Birdlife Malta congratulated the Contracting Parties on the MED SO_x ECA, but expressed concern regarding the use exhaust gas cleaning systems as an alternative means of compliance and believed that some of the recommendations contained in the document should not be endorsed, as EGCS washwater discharges contain many environmental toxins and that alternate means of compliance, such as the use of cleaner distillate fuel, provides a pathway to compliance without harming the environment.

7.17 The representative of Greece acknowledged that this is a challenging issue and emphasized the need to examine all possible solutions and await the outcome of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee, noting that this would shed more light on this issue. The representative agreed that a cautious approach should be taken but could not agree on the proposal for a total ban of the EGCS option as a means of compliance.

7.18 The representative of France indicated it could not support a recommendation encouraging the use of closed loop scrubbers and that the installation of scrubbers should be considered with extreme caution, in anticipation of the international regulations that were expected and would set out further restrictions.

7.19 Having considered the various comments, the Meeting noted the information provided, notably the implications of the use of open loop systems, and welcomed the information on the work being undertaken at IMO to harmonize the guidance on EGCS

7.20 Following a lengthy discussion and given the general lack of agreement on some of the recommendations presented in the Study, the Meeting agreed to delete the reference to closed loop or hybrid systems as a recommended means of achieving compliance.

7.21 The Meeting considered the update on the preparation of a detailed Technical and Feasibility Study to Assess the Relevant Existing and on-going Studies, as well as to examine the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides (Med NO_x ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, contained in document REMPEC/WG.61/7.

7.22 In considering the information presented, the representative of Italy highlighted the need for continual updating of the feasibility study, so that it remained current.

7.23 Having considered, in particular, the proposed draft work plan and timetable for the work set out in Appendix 2 to document REMPEC/WG.61/7, the Meeting thanked the Secretariat for the work undertaken and endorsed both. .

AGENDA ITEM 8: REDUCTION OF GHG EMISSIONS FROM SHIPS

8.1 The Meeting noted that there were seven meeting documents and a number of information documents to consider under this agenda item and agreed to consider these as follows:

REMPEC/WG.61/8	A roadmap for transitioning to low carbon shipping in the Mediterranean Sea
REMPEC/WG.61/8/1 and REMPEC/WG.61/INF.13	Effective Implementation of the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Ships in the Mediterranean region, and Study on the Effective Implementation of the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/8/2 and REMPEC/WG.61/INF.14	Legal and Technical Implications of the European Union Emission Trading Scheme (EU ETS) for shipping in the Mediterranean Study to Assess the Legal and Technical Implications of the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) for Shipping in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/8/3 and REMPEC/WG.61/INF.15	Implementation of Emission Control and Energy Efficiency Measures for Ships in Port Areas in the Mediterranean Region Study on the Implementation of Emission Control and Energy Efficiency Measures for Ships in Port Areas in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/8/4 and REMPEC/WG.61/INF.16	Impact of Biofouling on the Energy Efficiency of Ships and the GHG Abatement Potential of Biofouling Management Measures in the Mediterranean region Study Analysing the Impact of Biofouling on the Energy Efficiency of Ships and the GHG Abatement Potential of Biofouling Management Measures in the Mediterranean Sea region
REMPEC/WG.61/8/5 and REMPEC/WG.61/INF.17	Implementation of possible Green Shipping Routes (Corridors) and Maritime Hubs (Green Hubs) to reduce GHG emissions from shipping in the Mediterranean region Study on the Implementation of Possible Green Shipping Routes (Corridors) and Maritime Hubs (Green Hubs) to Reduce GHG Emissions from Shipping in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/8/6	Guidance Document on the Development of National Action Plans (NAPs) to address Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Ships in the Mediterranean Region

8.2 The Meeting considered the draft roadmap for transitioning to low carbon shipping in the Mediterranean Sea, submitted by the Secretariat, set out in document REMPEC/WG.61/8.

8.3 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/8 containing the draft Roadmap for Transitioning to Low Carbon Shipping in the Mediterranean Sea, that aimed to address GHG emissions from ships and at the ship-shore interface, in compliance with legal regulations aimed at contributing to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from ships and controlling greenhouse gas emissions from ships, in conformity with international law, under the aegis of United Nations specialized agencies, and in particular of the IMO.

8.4 The Meeting endorsed the draft Roadmap as set out in the Annex to the document without further comment.

8.5 The Meeting considered the results of the various Studies undertaken by the REMPEC during the 2023-2024 biennium relating to the Reduction of GHG emissions from ships, as set out in documents: REMPEC/WG.61/8/1, REMPEC/WG.61/8/2, REMPEC/WG.61/8/3, REMPEC/WG.61/8/5, together with the results of the studies themselves set out documents REMPEC/WG.61/INF.13, REMPEC/WG.61/INF.14, REMPEC/WG.61/INF.15 and REMPEC/WG.61/17.

8.6 The Meeting had no specific comments on the various Studies, and consequently noted the information contained within the various documents.

8.7 The representative of Cyprus, having noted that document REMPEC/WG.61/8/2 included a proposal for the creation of a fund and recalling the lack of agreement on a similar proposal for a “Blue Fund” under agenda item 6, was of the view that this equally could not be agreed as a way forward, which was confirmed by the Meeting.

8.8 The representative of the EU introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.25 providing an overview of a series of Studies that EMSA had undertaken related to the use of non-fossil fuels by shipping, which were duly noted by the Meeting.

8.9 The Meeting considered and endorsed the draft Guidance Document on the Development of National Action Plans (NAPs) to Address Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Ships in the Mediterranean region, introduced by the Secretariat, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.61/8/6.

8.10 Having decided on the various items, the Meeting referred the draft Roadmap for Transitioning to Low Carbon Shipping in the Mediterranean Sea, as presented in document REMPEC/WG.61/8, to the UNEP/MAP Focal Points for approval, for onwards submission to COP 24 to the Barcelona Convention for adoption.

AGENDA ITEM 9: INTRODUCTION OF NON-INDIGENOUS SPECIES BY SHIPPING ACTIVITIES

9.1 The Meeting considered document REMPEC/WG.61/9 introduced by the Secretariat, providing information on the Mid-Term Review of the Ballast Water Management Strategy (BWS) for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027), assessing progress and identifying challenges encountered and associated recommendations and proposals to ensure the successful completion of its objectives by 2027.

9.2 The representative of Lebanon indicated the difficulties faced in achieving the targets set out in the BWS, in view of limited funding, and expressed concern regarding the burden placed on Contracting Parties in meeting the targets set out in the Strategy.

9.3 The representative of Türkiye noted that it had signed on the Ballast Water Management Convention and have initiated a national project regarding invasive species.

9.4 The representative of Cyprus indicated that the work should also address biofouling and that this should also be included in the title.

9.5 The Secretariat clarified that any amendment to the title of the Strategy would require approval by the COP to the Barcelona Convention, noting that the Strategy had been adopted as a COP decision. The Secretariat also indicated that the lack of implementation of certain actions contained in the Strategy with respect to capacity building were limited by availability of allocated funding under the Mediterranean Trust Fund and Programme of Work. The Secretariat further highlighted that the resource mobilisation strategy was intended to provide an outline on what actions could be taken to attract the necessary funding to support the implementation of the BWS.

9.6 The representative of Lebanon expressed appreciation to the European Union (EMSA) for the support provided for the transposition of the legal text in Lebanon but raised concerns regarding its ability to fully implement the Strategy and requested further assistance with securing grants and funding.

9.7 The Secretariat clarified that this element was included in the resource mobilisation strategy along with other available options for mobilizing resources, in order to provide necessary capacity, however underscoring that Contracting Parties must decide the methodology that best suited their requirements.

9.8 The Meeting welcomed the information contained in document REMPEC/WG.61/9/1 introduced by the Secretariat on the draft Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027) and endorsed the draft Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027), as set out in the Annex thereto.

AGENDA ITEM 10: ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES OF THE DRAFT UNEP/MAP PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2026-2027

10.1 The Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/10 setting out the activities and deliverables to be included in the draft /MAP Programme of Work for the biennium 2026-2027, proposed by REMPEC, outlining the rationale used for the inclusion of the various work items.

10.2 The Meeting approved the Programme of Work, set out in the annex to the document, as amended taking into account its decision under agenda item 6 in respect of the establishment of a “Blue Fund”, 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 to COP 24 of the Barcelona Convention.

AGENDA ITEM 11: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Under this agenda item, the Secretariat introduced document REMPEC/WG.61/11 that set out a proposal on various activities to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of REMPEC that will be celebrated in 2026.

11.2 The Meeting took note of the proposed options for commemorating REMPEC’s anniversary, which included an outreach campaign, a dedicated event to celebrate the anniversary and a digital media campaign. Over and above the outreach and celebratory aspects, the Meeting noted that the document also proposed a strategic review and repositioning of REMPEC’s identity, including a possible name change.

11.3 Having considered the information presented, the Meeting concurred with the proposals for commemorating the occasion, as well as the strategic review of REMPEC’s work, however noting the concerns raised by several delegations in respect of the proposal for a change of name.

11.4 The representatives from Cyprus, Slovenia and IMO were of the view that whilst the formal name could be changed to better reflect the Centre’s current remit, the name ‘REMPEC’ should be retained as it was widely known and represented the identity of the Centre. Notwithstanding, all were of the view that the official name of the Centre could be changed, even if it no longer fully aligned with the acronym.

11.5 The Meeting noted the presentation by the representative of CEDRE, introducing document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.26 on the MANIFESTS GENIUS Project. A Workshop was held on Thursday 15 May 2025, on the margins of the Meeting, providing information to all delegations on the Project, that paves the way for improved emergency planning, the development of operational guidelines, and the upgrading of decision-support systems related to hazardous and noxious substances and supports the safe integration of new

propulsion energies like methanol and ammonia into refuelling stations and coastal industries, while providing cross-sectoral intervention protocols and valuable training tools.

Note of Appreciation

11.6 The Contracting Parties, having noted that this Focal Points meeting would be Mr Malek Smaoui's last meeting due to retirement later in the year, extended their warm thanks and appreciation for Mr. Smaoui's ten years of service and wished him all the best in his retirement.

AGENDA ITEM 12: ADOPTION OF THE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 The Rapporteur presented the draft conclusions and recommendations of the meeting, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.61/WP.1, and adopted these with minor amendments.

12.2 The meeting noted that the final version would be included as an Annex to the report of the Meeting to be prepared by the Secretariat and circulated following the Meeting, in accordance with the established deadlines. The Meeting adopted the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Meeting, as detailed in Annex IV to the present report.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

13.1 The Chairperson thanked the Contracting Parties for their engagement which contributed to the success of the Meeting and wished all a safe return to their home countries.

13.2 The Head of Office of REMPEC expressed his appreciation to the Chairperson for the smooth running of the proceedings and thanked all REMPEC staff for their work throughout the Meeting. He also thanked all delegations for their participation as well as the interpreters and technicians for their support.

13.3 The Chairperson closed the Meeting on Thursday, 15 May 2025 at 1500 hours.

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

CONTRACTING PARTIES / PARTIES CONTRACTANTES

ALBANIA / *ALBANIE*

Ms Morgana MARKU

Specialist

Sector of Internal Projects and Coordination of Projects with Donors

Water Resources Management Agency

Ms Sidorela SPAHIU

Specialist at Chemical Sector

National Environment Agency, Ministry of Tourism and Environment

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA / *BOSNIE & HERZÉGOVINE*

Ms Selma ČENGIĆ

Executive Director

Hydro-Engineering Institute Sarajevo

Ms Senida DŽAJIĆ-RGHEI

Researcher

HEIS

CROATIA / *CROATIE*

Mr Sinisa ORLIĆ

Director of the Maritime Safety Directorate

Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure

Mrs Biserka VIŠTICA

Head of Service for at sea and inland waters environmental protection

Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure

CYPRUS / *CHYPRE*

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Director, Safety & Environmental Protection Directorate

Shipping Deputy Ministry

Mr Stavros IOANNIDES

Senior Officer

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General Manager of Environmental Crisis
Ministry of Environment

Mrs Rehab ABOU EL FADL

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Italian Coast Guard Hq- Marine Environmental Department

Mrs Cristina FARCHI

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LEBANON / *LIBAN*

Mr Tony ASSAF

Chief of Legal Department

Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport

Ms Ilham MANSOUR MANSOUR EL KHABBAZ

Chief of Maritime Transport Division

Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport

LIBYA / *LIBYE*

Mr Ali TANTOSH

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Dr Angela BARTOLO

Senior Officer

Environment and Resources Authority

Dr Corinne CASHA

Deputy Director Global Affairs

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ANNEX II

AGENDA

Opening of the Meeting

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Progress report on REMPEC activities since the Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC
3. Developments within MAP related to the objectives and functions of REMPEC
4. Developments within IMO related to the objectives and functions of REMPEC
5. Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)
6. Illegal and accidental oil and HNS pollution from ships
7. Air pollution from ships
8. Reduction of GHG emissions from ships
9. Introduction of non-indigenous species by shipping activities
10. Activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for the biennium 2026-2027, as proposed by REMPEC
11. Any other business
12. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations

Closure of the Meeting

LIST OF DOCUMENTS**WORKING DOCUMENTS**

REMPEC/WG.61/1	Provisional Agenda
REMPEC/WG.61/1/1	Annotated Provisional Agenda and Draft Timetable
REMPEC/WG.61/2	Progress Report on REMPEC activities since the fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC
REMPEC/WG.61/4	Developments within IMO related to the Objectives and Functions of REMPEC
REMPEC/WG.61/4/1	Latest Developments in the field of Compensation for Ship-Source Pollution Damage
REMPEC/WG.61/5	Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)
REMPEC/WG.61/5/1	Draft Guidance Document on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031)
REMPEC/WG.61/5/2	Development of a Regional Policy Framework on Gender and youth Mainstreaming within the Context of the Mediterranean Strategy 2022-2031
REMPEC/WG.61/6	Maritime traffic and Offshore Oil and Gas Activities – Trends and Outlook
REMPEC/WG.61/6/1	Marine Pollution Monitoring: Results of the Survey on Needs of Capacity Building on the use of IMAP CI
REMPEC/WG.61/6/2	Lowering of the Threshold for Reporting on Oil Spills
REMPEC/WG.61/6/3	Common Emergency Communication system for the Mediterranean (Joint REMPEC-DGECHO)
REMPEC/WG.61/6/4	Update of Guidelines and Tools
REMPEC/WG.61/6/4/1	Review of the Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/6/4/2	Upgrading of Databases and REMPEC Platforms
REMPEC/WG.61/6/5	Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) and related activities
REMPEC/WG.61/6/6	Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) and related activities
REMPEC/WG.61/6/7	Preparedness and Response Contingency Planning
REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/1	Guidelines for the Development of Joint spill Response Exercises within the Framework of the Sub-regional Contingency Plans

REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/2	Improvement Process for Advanced Level of Preparedness for OSR and Harmonizing Response for HNS Incidents
REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/3	Readiness of the Mediterranean Region to respond to Marine Pollution Incidents involving Low-Sulphur Fuels and Alternative Fuels
REMPEC/WG.61/6/8	Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and related activities
REMPEC/WG.61/6/8/1	Possible Creation and Operation of a regional “Blue Fund”
REMPEC/WG.61/6/8/2	Final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report
REMPEC/WG.61/7	Prevention of air pollution from ships in the Mediterranean Sea
REMPEC/WG.61/7/1	Environmental and Legal Impacts of the Use of Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS) in the Mediterranean Sea
REMPEC/WG.61/8	A roadmap for transitioning to low carbon shipping in the Mediterranean Sea
REMPEC/WG.61/8/1	Effective Implementation of the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Ships in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/8/2	Legal and Technical Implications of the European Union Emission Trading Scheme (EU ETS) for shipping in the Mediterranean
REMPEC/WG.61/8/3	Implementation of Emission Control and Energy Efficiency Measures for Ships in Port Areas in the Mediterranean Region
REMPEC/WG.61/8/4	Impact of Biofouling on the Energy Efficiency of Ships and the GHG Abatement Potential of Biofouling Management Measures in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/8/5	Implementation of possible Green Shipping Routes (Corridors) and Maritime Hubs (Green Hubs) to reduce GHG emissions from shipping in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/8/6	Guidance Document on the Development of National Action Plans (NAPs) to address Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Ships in the Mediterranean Region
REMPEC/WG.61/9	Mid Term Review of the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027)
REMPEC/WG.61/9/1	Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027)
REMPEC/WG.61/10	REMPEC activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP-MAP PoW 2026-27
REMPEC/WG.61/11	REMPEC’s 50 th Anniversary

INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

REMPEC/WG.61/INF.1	List of Documents
REMPEC/WG.61/J/1	Provisional list of participants
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.2	List of participants
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.3	List of updated Focal Points and Designated Representatives
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.4	Report of the Regional Workshop on the Preparation of National Action Plans for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (Lija, Malta, 20 November 2024)
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.5	Report of the Regional Workshop on Reporting, Monitoring, and Data Sharing (MEDEXPOL 2024) (Lija, Malta, September 2024)
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.6	Manual on National mechanisms for the mobilization of response equipment and personnel in case of emergency (2023)
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.7	Strengthening oiled wildlife preparedness and response
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.8	Future response to incidents involving alternative fuels
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.9	Study on the Readiness of the Mediterranean Region to Respond to Marine Pollution Incidents Involving Low-Sulphur Fuels and Alternative Fuels
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.10	Report of the Sixth Meeting of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS) (Lija, Malta, 4-5 December 2024)
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.11	Study on the Environmental and Legal Impacts of the Use of Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS) in the Mediterranean Sea
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.12	Overview of potential key finance and funding opportunities, actors, and mechanisms in relation to the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI as well as the implementation of the Med SO _x ECA and linked compliance measures
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.13	Study on the Effective Implementation of the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.14	Study to Assess the Legal and Technical Implications of the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) for Shipping in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.15	Study on the Implementation of Emission Control and Energy Efficiency Measures for Ships in Port Areas in the Mediterranean region

REMPEC/WG.61/INF.16	Study Analysing the Impact of Biofouling on the Energy Efficiency of Ships and the GHG Abatement Potential of Biofouling Management Measures in the Mediterranean Sea region
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.17	Study on the Implementation of Possible Green Shipping Routes (Corridors) and Maritime Hubs (Green Hubs) to Reduce GHG Emissions from Shipping in the Mediterranean region
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.18	Regional Workshop on the consistent implementation of IMO 2020 under Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and the 0.10% sulphur limit in the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for sulphur oxide and particulate matter (Med SO _x ECA) (Lija, Malta, 22-23 May 2024)
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.19	Leaflet on the Effective Implementation of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for sulphur oxides and particulate matter (Med SO _x ECA)
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.20	Report of the Second Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) (Lija, Malta, 21 November 2024)
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.21	Activities related to the protection of the Marine Environment involving Mediterranean States, delivered through IMO's integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) and long-term thematic projects in 2024 and 2025
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.22	European Maritime Transport Environmental Report 2025 (EMTER 2025)
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.23	Underwater radiated noise from ships: presentation of the outcome of the NAVISON Project
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.24	Marine Intervention in Chemical Emergencies Network (MAR-ICE service)
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.25	Relevant studies published by EMSA on the decarbonization of shipping
REMPEC/WG.61/INF.26	MANIFESTS <i>Genius</i> (From Gases and Evaporators risk assessment towards an Integrated management of sea and land pollution incidents) training course

ANNEX IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sixteenth 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 Sliema, Malta, from 13 to 15 May 2025:

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

1 **welcomes** the progress reported on REMPEC activities since the Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, 13-15 June 2023), as set out in document REMPEC/WG.61/2;

2 **values** the work carried out by the Secretariat since the Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC;

3 **expresses** appreciation for the financial support provided to the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) for capacity building activities, by the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF), the International Maritime Organisation’s (IMO) Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP), the discretionary voluntary contributions from the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE) and the European Union;

4 **encourages** the Mediterranean coastal States as well as the relevant regional and international organisations to provide voluntary contributions to support further activities in relation to the prevention of, preparedness for, and response to marine pollution from ships;

5 **urges** the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (CPs), which have 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;

6 **noted** the importance of maintaining updated the network of Focal Points and Designated Representatives and encourages all CPs to do their utmost to keep the network updated and to those CPs, that have not yet done so, to nominate the respective Focal Points and Designated Representatives;

7 **acknowledges** the challenges being encountered by REMPEC in facilitating the implementation of its activities, leading to additional administrative burden and overheads; and

8 **encourages** CPs to consult and coordinate at national level with all authorities concerned, when replying to official communications/invitations sent by REMPEC;

Agenda Item 4 Developments within IMO related to the objectives and functions of REMPEC

9 **values** the update provided by IMO on the latest developments within IMO in the fields of

prevention of, preparedness for and response to marine pollution from ships and highlighting the recent activities and projects currently implemented by IMO concerning the protection of the marine environment;

10 **notes** the update provided by the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds) on the latest developments in the field of compensation for ship-source pollution damage and the work of the IOPC Funds since the last Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC;

11 **urges** CPs to take a more active role in ongoing discussions at IMO and IOPC Funds on various issues of particular importance in the field of prevention of pollution from ships and compensation for ship-source pollution damage; and

12 **encourages** CPs to take a more active participation in ongoing projects undertaken by IMO's ITCP to the benefit of the protection of the marine environment;

Agenda Item 5 **Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031)**

13 **notes** the outcome of the Second Coordination Meeting on the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) (Malta, 21 November 2024), hereinafter referred to as the Second Coordination Meeting, as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.20;

14 **recognises** that the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) remains a key tool in tackling marine pollution from shipping in the region, however its success is reliant on appropriate engagement and support from all CPs and relevant stakeholders;

15 **recognises further** that the full and timely implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022- 2031) requires commitment from CPs and relevant stakeholders, through the provision of the necessary human and financial resources, as appropriate;

16 **endorses** the recommendations of the Biennial Review Report;

17 **thanks** the Secretariat for taking into consideration the priority actions identified by the CPs and relevant stakeholders during the Intersessional Working Groups (IWGs) and contained in the revised Joint Work Plans, as endorsed by the Second Coordination Meeting, for the elaboration of the United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) Programme of Work (PoW) for 2026-2027;

18 **agrees** to the establishment of the six restructured (IWGs), with revised Terms of References, each with the aim to identify the needs of CPs to fulfil the relevant Common Strategic Objectives (CSO) of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031);

19 **agrees** further that no further work will be carried out on the IWGs that do not have yet a coordinator;

20 **encourages** CPs and Stakeholders to volunteer as coordinators of IWGs for CSOs 4, 5 and 6;

21 **urges** the CPs and Stakeholders to actively contribute to the work of the IWGs and to ensure that the necessary leadership, ownership and contribution is given throughout the forthcoming biennium;

22 **approves** the establishment of a Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) Inter-Secretariat Group to support coordination amongst relevant stakeholders and consider the needs and priority actions put forward by each of the IWGs, and define programmes of work, coordinating activities, to support Contracting Parties in achieving the CSOs of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), based on the needs identified by the IWGs;

23 **encourages** regional and international institutions to formalise their cooperation defined during the Meeting through participation in the newly established Inter-Secretariat Group, and through the establishment of sustainable partnership agreements to provide financial and technical support to Contracting Parties for the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031);

24 **instructs** the Secretariat to secure the necessary funding and undertake the necessary work to prepare the Mid-Term Review of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) in 2026, to be presented at the 17th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC;

25 **agrees** that the biennial Coordination Meeting envisaged under the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031) is considered as a standing agenda item on the Agenda of the Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC, without the need to organise a separate thematic meeting;

26 **adopts** the Guidance Document on the Preparation of National Action Plans (NAPs) for the Implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), hereinafter referred to as the Guidance Document, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.61/5/1;

27 **instructs** the Secretariat to publish the adopted Guidance Document on REMPEC website;

28 **urges** CPs to implement the recommended actions in the Guidance Document to develop and finalise their NAPs in line with the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031);

29 **encourages** the participation of relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, shipping industries, and environmental organizations, in the NAPs preparation and implementation processes that will contribute to the Mid-term Review process;

30 **requests** the Secretariat to provide ongoing technical assistance and capacity building to CPs to support the development and implementation of their NAPs;

31 **instructs** the Secretariat to develop the Framework on Gender and Youth Mainstreaming, aiming to ensure that gender and youth considerations are integrated into all aspects of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031), promoting equality, inclusivity and empowerment throughout the Mediterranean region for consideration at the 17th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC;

32 **values** the presentation by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) providing an overview of the second edition of the European Maritime Transport Environmental Report (EMTER 2025) and the results from the NAVISON Project aiming at quantifying underwater radiated noise;

33 **acknowledges** the efforts undertaken by EMSA under the SAFEMED V Project to implement targeted actions aligned with the objectives of the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031);

Agenda Item 6 **Illegal and accidental oil and HNS pollution from ships**

• Maritime Traffic and Offshore Oil and Gas Activities – Trends and Outlook

34 **notes** the experience gained with the development of the 2017 and 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Reports (MED QSR), and the valuable contribution of the *Study on Maritime Traffic and Offshore Oil and Gas Activities - Trends and Outlook* (December 2021) in this process;

35 **welcomes** the process for updating and enhancing the Study in view of the forthcoming third edition of the MED QSR;

36 **concurs** with MEDEXPOL 2024 findings, encouraging CPs to agree on the preparation of an

update of the Study and to consider other emerging topics;

37 **endorses** the Draft Terms of Reference for the update and upgrade of the *Study on Maritime Traffic and Offshore Oil and Gas Activities – Trends and Outlook*, as contained in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.61/6;

38 **requests** the Secretariat, subject to availability of funds, to undertake the update of the Study during the forthcoming biennium;

- **Marine Pollution Monitoring - Results of the Survey on Needs of Capacity Building on the use of IMAP CI**

39 **notes** the results of the *Online Periodical Survey to update on oil and HNS Spills* initiated in January 2024 and continued on a three-month basis until March 2025;

40 **acknowledges** that the surveys neither duplicate nor replace any existing reporting system, and provide preliminary information on spills, serving as a reference for additional reporting when detailed investigation of specific incidents is required;

41 **recognizes** the very limited response from CPs to the surveys and that the results may not be representative, as expected, of the current situation in the Mediterranean when it comes to occurrence of spills;

42 **concurs** with MEDEXPOL 2024 on the usefulness of the survey;

43 **calls** on CPs to consider more closely the added value and benefits at national and beyond (e.g. statistical purposes, trends and outlooks) of reporting on and implementation of the legal instruments;

44 **agrees** on the continuation of the survey process every quarter, during the next biennium;

45 **encourages** the CPs to complete the surveys, even if no spill has occurred during the survey period, to ensure the consistency of the statistics;

- **Lowering of the Threshold for Reporting on Oil Spills**

46 **recalls** the requirements set out in COP 23 Decision IG.26/3, to improve quantity and quality of data for the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast (IMAP) Common Indicator 19 (CI 19), and to align the definition of the minimum threshold for reporting with those used under other regional sea conventions and within the framework of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD);

47 **welcomes** the informal consultation carried by the Secretariat with the relevant competent organizations including UNEP/MAP-MEDPOL, the IMO/MED, HELCOM, OSPAR and the Bonn Agreement, the European Commission, and ITOPF, on the spills measurement unit, the definition and significance of acute pollution, the reporting obligations on oil spills in the Mediterranean, spill trends and the state of play within other regional sea conventions and organisations;

48 **concurs** that a lower minimum threshold for reporting oil spill events in the Mediterranean Sea, for statistical purposes and volumetric estimations, is beneficial;

49 **encourages strongly** CPs to send information related to detected spills below 10 t/m³ classified in 4 categories according to their volume: < 5 m³ / 5-10 m³ / 10-100 m³ / > 100 m³ to be used for statistical purposes;

50 **recommends** lowering the minimum threshold to 10 t/m³, for reporting in the BCRS and that this threshold value should be considered as mandatory;

51 **requests** the Secretariat to present the lowering of the minimum threshold of 10 t/m³ at the CORMONs meeting for adoption, including recommendations for the development of the implementation of IMAP CI 19 in case of accidental spills, identification/Designation of responsible authorities overseeing the monitoring of accidental spills from shipping and Oil and Gas offshore activities, and effective information on stations, list of contaminants;

• **Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean**

52 **recalls** the agreement at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, on the use of the Common Emergency Communication and Information System for Marine Pollution (CECIS Marine), as a Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean for the request of assistance;

53 **welcomes** the consultations conducted by the Secretariat and DG ECHO to progress in the development of the functionalities identified during the 14th Meeting of the Focal Points, and the ongoing work of the established 'CECIS MP User Working Group' by DGECHO (the Group), to discuss and decide on the functionalities of the new CECIS Marine to address existing concerns and to facilitate easy transition to the new system;

54 **notes** that within the work of the Group, EU Member States provide their inputs directly to DG ECHO;

55 **considers** the involvement of REMPEC and the Mediterranean Technical Working Group (MTWG) in the work of the Group;

56 **requests** non-EU CPs to take preparatory steps required to access and use the new CECIS Marine, by end September 2025, to:

.1 **appoint** national CECIS Marine administrator/s and map national user authorities to allow having main (constant) users and those that can be relevant and 'activated' in specific circumstances or emergencies with the read-only or read-and-write rights, determined by the administrator; and

.2 **create** an EU login account to enable access to CECIS Marine;

57 **decides** that CPs, who are not SafeSeaNet (SSN) users, shall:

.1 exchange the whole POLREP from the alert phase to the request for assistance through CECIS Marine; and

.2 use a standard request and offer window in CECIS Marine rather than the forms that are now agreed at REMPEC. However, if needed, the option to attach the Standard forms to complement the request, may be envisaged;

58 **requests** CPs who are members of the EU to support the authorisation of REMPEC to be granted access to parts of the SSN data by the SSN High Level Steering Group;

59 **agrees** to include the list of equipment currently maintained on MEDGIS-MAR to CECIS Marine considering that the two systems are not compatible;

60 **agrees** that the request for assistance of MAU experts will be submitted through the CECIS

Marine, once this is operational;

61 **requests** the Secretariat and DGECHO to:

- .1 **create** a link to CECIS Marine authentication screen on REMPEC's website;
- .2 **integrate** the Standard Form for request of experts from the MAU under CECIS Marine;
- .3 **ensure** that when operational, CECIS Marine will:
 - provide a platform for all CPs to share incident information and requests/offers of assistance with the other CPs and REMPEC;
 - grant access to REMPEC to receive and share information and to coordinate assistance within the framework of the MAU;
 - provide for a URL link which would enable access to REMPEC's Country Profile;

- **Update of guidelines and tools**

62 **welcomes** the initial review of the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Guidelines developed by REMPEC over the years, with the aim to identifying those that require full or partial updates in light of developments since their adoption and publication;

63 **notes** the list of revised guidelines since 2018 and the recent digitalised version of the Oiled Shoreline Assessment Form of the Mediterranean Oiled Shoreline Assessment Guidelines (2009);

64 **endorses** the conclusion of the initial review regarding the selected guidelines enquiring an update, and the identification of operational parts of the Mediterranean Guidelines that could potentially be converted into electronic formats to facilitate better use by officers in the respective Contracting Parties;

65 **requests** the Secretariat, subject to availability of funds, to update and/or digitalise, the list of guidelines, as provided in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.61/6/4;

- **Review of the Guidelines for the use of dispersants for combating oil pollution at sea in the Mediterranean region**

66 **recognises** the value of the *Guidelines for the Use of Dispersants for Combating Oil Pollution at Sea in the Mediterranean* (REMPEC 2011);

67 **recalls** that the 15th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC instructed the Secretariat to review Part II of the Guidelines on *Basic Information on Dispersants and their Application*;

68 **welcomes** that the revision process tailored to reflect the specific characteristics of the Mediterranean region, incorporating the latest developments on dispersants since 2011 as well as updated data on dispersants, oil spills response techniques, along with enhanced information on Mediterranean ecosystems; and

69 **approves** the revised Part II of the Guidance Document *Basic Information on Dispersants and their Application* (2025) included as Annex to document REMPEC/WG.61/6/4/1;

- **Upgrading of Databases and REMPEC Platforms**

70 **recalls** the outcomes of the previous Focal Points Meetings with regards to the REMPEC

databases and platforms, with a view to assisting the CPs in fulfilling their commitments on dissemination and exchange of information, and the repeated encouragements to the CPs to regularly update their Country Profile and MEDGIS-MAR, as appropriate;

71 **recognises** that although information on spills continues to be collected, this data remains under reported and not necessarily representative of oil spills from ships under the threshold of 50 m³ or from sources other than ships, hence the recommendation of the 15th Focal Points Meeting on a new layer on ‘spills’;

72 **urges** the CPs to get better organised for reporting activities at national level in order to facilitate the exchange of reporting needs;

73 **requests** the Secretariat, subject to availability of funds, to assess possible future developments of MEDGIS-MAR to enable:

- .1 possible interconnection with the Country Profile pages to allow for a unique update by CPs;
- .2 easier update of the layer “accidents”; and
- .3 avoid duplication with MIDSIS-TROCs 4.0 regarding HNS pollution incidents.

74 **requests further** the Secretariat, subject to availability of funds, to carry an evaluation to assess ways to upgrade the Country Profile and MEDGIS-MAR, as adopted by the 11th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC (June 2015), to enhance its practicability for reporting, exchange information, and improve the visibility of national actions and activities **and submit** a proposal, including financial repercussions, for consideration to the 17th Meeting of the Focal Points. The assessment should consider ways to include, but not limited to:

- .1 key national achievements, developments in the field of Preparedness and response to Oil and HNS pollution;
- .2 ongoing Actions and future plans, projects, strategies;
- .3 list and links to relevant websites and platforms that facilitate data sharing and exchange of information; and
- .4 list the links to documents, reports, and templates, such as the template of the *Manual on national mechanisms for the mobilization of response equipment and experts in case of emergency*, Part III of the BCRS template;

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

75 **welcomes** the progress made by the MTWG since the Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, June 2023);

76 **endorses** the proposal to combine the Correspondence Group on Data Sharing, Monitoring, and Reporting, established by the 15th Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC to the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group and to inherently strengthen its composition by incorporating entities and officials with the necessary knowledge and experience in the Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS);

77 **encourages** the CPs, that have not yet done so, to nominate their national entities and/or officials as contact points for the OPRC-HNS Correspondence Group;

78 **concurs** with MEDEXPOL 2024 findings on reporting on incidents and spills and on collecting data on impacts on biota under IMAPI CI 19;

79 **tasks** the MTWG, through the OPRC HNS Correspondence Group to:

.1 support the Secretariat in the preparation of the assessment on future improvement and upgrade of MEDGIS-MAR;

.2 contribute to the review of the Country Profile and its upgrade with the aim to facilitate the collection and utilization of datasets for statistical analysis and studies at regional level and improve the visibility of national actions and activities;

.3 contribute to strengthening the national monitoring system by integrating key elements that enable the monitoring assessment of the impact on the marine environment using IMAPI CI19. This includes to any extent possible all the data required in DD&DS, and on impacts on biota, defining the competent responsible authority, engaging operational institution experts, etc;

.4 continue assisting the Secretariat in cooperation with the EC during the different phases of the development of the Common Emergency Communication System for the Mediterranean; and

.5 assist the Secretariat in implementing the findings and recommendations of the Study on the Readiness of the Mediterranean Region to Respond to Marine Pollution Incidents Involving Low Sulphur Fuels or Alternative Fuels, as deemed appropriate;

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

80 **welcomes** the information on the MAU, its achievements during the last three decades, since its inception, and the important role of its members, and **notes** with interest the developments on funding of the MAU;

81 **recalls** the need to raise the funding of the MAU Revolving Fund to cover an additional month with a view that the Revolving Fund will be able to fund a two months' expert mission, subject to the availability of funds;

82 **considers** the context that led to the postponement of the process with the MAP Focal Points and follow-up to the COP to the present Meeting, for further consideration; and

83 **requests** the Secretariat to submit the draft decision of the Contracting Parties, as set out in the Annex thereto, for approval by the next Meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points;

- **Preparedness and Response Contingency Planning**

84 **acknowledges** that the Subregional Multilateral Agreements on the Subregional Contingency Plans (SCPs) developed in accordance with Article 17 to the *2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol*, provide an additional legal framework, complementing those established at the regional and subregional level by the Barcelona Convention and its 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, respectively;

85 **recognises** that these SCPs benefit not only competent national authorities of two or more countries in charge of the SCP to co-operate in co-ordinating and integrating their response to marine pollution but also contribute through the implementation of respective programme of activities to identifying activities to that enhance national and regional systems for preparedness to response the

marine pollution;

86 **welcomes** the SCPs new developments, made during the period under review, namely, the finalisation of the draft Adriatic Marine Pollution Incident Contingency Plan and the review of the Trilateral Agreement on the SCP between Cyprus, Egypt, and Greece;

87 **requests** the Secretariat in coordination with the National Operational Authorities of the SCPs, in force, to review and update the Study on Synergy between the three sub-regional agreements and contingency plans of the Western Mediterranean, referred to in document REMPEC/WG.51/INF.4, to cover all SCPs;

88 **encourages** particularly CPs that are not yet members of SCPs, to develop new bilateral or sub-regional agreements on SCPs in order to benefit from the support mentioned above;

- **Guidelines for the Development of joint Spill Exercises within the Framework of the Sub-regional Contingency Plans**

89 **acknowledges** that SCP activities are jointly planned and carried out in accordance with the agreed programme of activities on short, medium and long-term capacity-building and trainings on various SCP related themes and despite the numerous activities achieved under the different SCPs, joint exercises involving two or more SCP members were notably lacking;

90 **welcomes** the development of the *Guidelines for the Development of Joint Spill Response Exercises within the Framework of the Subregional Contingency Plans*;

91 **recognises** that the Guidelines are intended for use by Mediterranean countries members of SCP(s) to conduct joint tabletop and real-case exercises and are intended to facilitate the preparatory work for participating countries and to address any technical or logistical issues that may arise during the design, planning, preparation and execution of such exercises;

92 **approves** the *Guidelines for the Development of joint Spill Exercises within the Framework of the Sub-regional Contingency Plans*;

93 **encourages** the CPs to make use of the adopted Guidelines in the planning and execution of Joint thematic tabletop, as well as real-case exercises; and

94 **invites** the CPs to also consider the HNS Manual – Multi- Regional Bonn Agreement, HELCOM and REMPEC while preparing and conducting Tabletop exercise on HNS Spills;

- **Improvement Process for Advanced Level of Preparedness for OSR and Harmonizing Response for HNS Incidents**

95 **notes** that the total number of developed National Contingency Plans (NCP) in the Mediterranean amounts to twenty out of the twenty-one CPs;

96 **acknowledges** the role of REMPEC, within its mandate, in continuing to assist CPs in strengthening national capacities for maintaining their NCP and ensuring their effective implementation in case of emergency;

97 **welcomes** the national assessments of the level of preparedness to respond to oil spills, using the worldwide recognized “Readiness Evaluation Tool for Oil Spills (RETOS™)”, including its accompanying manuals thereby ensuring standardised results that supported definition of clear and coherent developments to enhance contingency planning programmes;

98 **takes note** of the information provided in document REMPEC/WG.61/6/7/2 and its Annex providing an overview of the outcome of the Assessments;

99 **requests** the Secretariat to continue the joint efforts with other regional Secretariats to facilitate the use of the HNS Manual's decision trees, as listed in the Annex to REMPEC/WG.61/6/4 Update of Guidelines and Tools, and related fact sheets in the design and execution of exercises and drills on HNS Spills;

100 **urges** the CPs to:

- .1 maintain a periodic national assessment to reach the higher two-levels B and C;
- .2 extend the evaluation process to the other Scope (industry and ports) with the aim to achieve a comprehensive integrated approach encompassing all levels of preparedness within the scope of Government-Industry collaboration; and
- .3 incorporate the use of the innovative support tools into the planning and execution of their upcoming exercises and drills;

101 **requests** the Secretariat, upon request and subject to the availability of funds, to provide assistance to CPs:

- .1 in the implementation of the recommendations made in the national assessments; and
- .2 in facilitating the use of the updated RETOSTM ;

- **Readiness to respond to LSF and AF pollution incidents**

102 **welcomes** the Secretariat follow up on the recommendation of the 15th Focal Points Meeting of REMPEC (Malta, June 2023) to support the consistent implementation of the 0.10% sulphur limit in the Med SO_x ECA through commissioning in 2024 a *Study on the Mediterranean Region readiness to Respond to Marine Pollution Incidents Involving Low Sulphur Fuels or Alternative Fuels*;

103 **agrees** on the proposed Strategic Roadmap to implement the Study recommendations on the Short-Medium-Long term;

104 **considers** the action plan to operationalise the Strategic Roadmap for the short-term phase (0-2 years), as provided in the Study;

105 **requests** the Secretariat, as appropriate and subject to availability of funds, to:

- .1 conduct, a gap analyses and align with IMO developments, in relation to preparedness and response;
- .2 coordinate with CPs to establish national implementation committees within their NCP;
- .3 develop standardised spill procedures tailored to alternative fuels for use in the Mediterranean region; and
- .4 liaise with EMSA and other stakeholders to organise joint capacity building activities focused on alternative fuel spill response;

- **Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention and related activities**

106 **notes** the outcome of the Sixth Meeting 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) (Malta, 4-5 December 2024), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.10;

107 **concurs** that the establishment of a MENELAS database on illicit ship pollution discharges in the Mediterranean is put on hold until further developments were achieved on the harmonised reporting template under the EU Ship-Source Pollution Directive;

108 **endorses**, subject to availability of funds, the recommendations concerning the consolidated draft decision to apply criteria for a common minimum level of fines for each offense provided for under the Annexes to MARPOL, within the framework of the Barcelona Convention, hereinafter referred to as the “draft decision”, as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.59/2, namely to:

.1 undertake further work on the consolidated draft decision, as adjusted, taking into account the outcome of the discussions held at the Meeting;

.2 carry out a detailed study on the possible criteria and possible minimum level of fines for each offense provided for under the Annexes to MARPOL, as set out in the consolidated draft decision, as adjusted, taking into consideration the specificities of each CP; and

.3 develop associated draft guidelines to ensure the uniform and effective implementation of the consolidated draft decision, as adjusted, in the Mediterranean region, taking into consideration information from CPs on how quantities of waste discharged from polluting ships might be measured;

109 **agrees** to the re-establishment of the Working Group within MENELAS to oversee, through correspondence coordinated by the Secretariat, the completion of the work referred to above, ahead of the next meeting of MENELAS;

110 **approves** the draft Terms of Reference on the Establishment of a Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL, as presented in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.61/6/8;

111 **instructs** the Secretariat to submit the draft Terms of Reference, referred to in paragraph 110 above, for consideration and adoption to COP 24;

- **Possible creation and operation of a regional “Blue Fund”, including in terms of governance and financing**

112 **recalls** that the Twenty-third Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 23) (Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023) agreed to include the finalisation of modalities of possible creation and operation of a regional “Blue Fund”, including in terms of governance and financing, as well as a comprehensive legal analysis, in the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025 of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);

113 **welcomes** the preparation of the Legal Analysis to assess the implications of the possible creation and operation of a regional “Blue Fund”, including in terms of governance and financing, in the Mediterranean region (hereinafter referred to as the “Legal Analysis”), as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.61/6/8/1;

114 **notes** that there were three (3) potential approaches for the possible creation and operation of a regional “Blue Fund”, including in terms of governance and financing, in the Mediterranean region, as follows:

- .1 a formal approach, which could be:
 - .i either an amendment to the Barcelona Convention; or
 - .ii an amendment to the Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea to the Barcelona Convention; or
 - .iii the adoption of a new Protocol to the Barcelona Convention; or
 - .iv the adoption of a COP Decision;
- .2 an informal approach based on a voluntary or trust fund model like The MedFund or the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA); and
- .3 a hybrid approach transitioning from an informal approach at first to a formal approach at a later stage;

115 **acknowledges** the various concerns raised by the CPs on the possible creation and operation of a regional “Blue Fund”, including in terms of necessity to establish such a fund as well as in terms of its governance and financing;

116 **instructs** MENELAS not to pursue further work on the possible creation and operation of a regional “Blue Fund”, during the forthcoming biennium and to look into the matter at future sessions, should the agenda and funds allow, focusing on the informal approach;

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

117 **recalls** that the Fifteenth Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points endorsed the final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report, as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.56/3/1;

118 **notes** the outcome of the discussions held with the relevant regional organisations, namely the North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors (NSN)¹, the Bonn Agreement, as well as HELCOM;

119 **further notes** 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 2023 within the framework of the RAMOGE Agreement²;

120 **endorses** the final draft common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report, as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.61/6/8/2, 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 a body associated with the OSPAR Commission.

² 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 Combatable Spills (IMO), as set out in Part C of the Appendix thereto.

121 **requests** the Secretariat to continue liaising with the OSPAR Commission/Bonn Agreement Secretariat and the HELCOM Secretariat to further explore the possibility to jointly endorse the adopted common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report referred to above, for use in the Bonn Agreement, HELCOM and Mediterranean Sea areas;

122 **also requests** the Secretariat to liaise with the Secretariat of the RAMOGE Agreement with a view to ensuring that the adopted common marine oil pollution detection/investigation report referred to **Error! Reference source not found.**above, be used during future OSCAR-MED operations to obtain further practical experience in the Mediterranean region;

Agenda Item 7 **Air Pollution from Ships**

- **Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SOX ECA)**

123 **welcomes** the effective application on 1 May 2025, of the Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides and Particulate Matter (Med SO_x ECA);

124 **recalls** the urgency of ratification, transposition into national laws and effective implementation and enforcement of MARPOL Annex VI by all CPs;

125 **encourages** the CPs, which have not yet done so, to ratify and effectively implement MARPOL Annex VI, as soon as possible;

126 **calls upon** the Secretariat to continue provide technical support and capacity building to the CPs, which so request, to ratify and effectively implement and enforce MARPOL Annex VI, in synergy with the IMO and other relevant stakeholders, pursuant to the Programme of Work (PoW) and Budget for 2026-2027 of UNEP/MAP;

127 **appreciates** the Secretariat's efforts for securing the necessary funds and the discretionary voluntary contributions from the IMO's ITCP and the Governments of France and Italy to make possible the successful organisation of the Regional Workshop on the consistent implementation of the 0.10% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI in the Med SO_x ECA (Malta, May 2024) and 3 National Workshops on the Ratification and Effective Implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, during 2024;

128 **adopts** the Guidance Document, as contained in Appendix 1 to document REMPEC/WG.61/7 and **requests** the Secretariat to carry out final editing and any editorial corrections, as appropriate, before publishing it on REMPEC's website;

129 **requests** the CPs to bring the draft Guidance Document, as adopted, to the attention of Administrations, port State authorities, other designated authorities, shipowners, ship operators, ports, fuel oil suppliers, shipbuilders, and any other interested groups such as environmental organisations, industry associations, research institutions and local communities, as appropriate;

130 **calls upon** the CPs to implement the draft Guidance Document, as adopted, as appropriate;

131 **encourages** the CPs that are also Members of the Mediterranean Memorandum of Understanding on port State control (MED MOU), to take the necessary steps to bring the Guidance Document, as adopted, to the attention of the Secretariat of the MED MOU;

132 **recommends** to the Mediterranean coastal States that are not yet Parties to MARPOL Annex

VI, to take into account the Guidance Document, as adopted, when planning their ratification process and when carrying out enforcement in their ports to ensure the consistent implementation of the 0.10% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI in the Med SO_x ECA across the whole Mediterranean region;

133 **encourages** the CPs to provide full support, both technically, in terms of expertise, and financially, in terms of voluntary contributions, to the necessary technical assistance and capacity building activities in the Mediterranean region;

134 **calls** upon the Secretariat to continue to promote the work on the designation of the Med SO_x ECA in various fora, as appropriate;

135 **welcomes** the in-kind support provided by the LIFE4MECA Project Partnership to update the *Overview of Key Financing and Funding Opportunities in Mediterranean Coastal State supporting the Implementation of the Med SO_x ECA*, as contained in REMPEC/WG.61/INF.12;

136 **appreciates** the offer made by EMSA to continue providing capacity building to CPs, who have not yet ratified MARPOL Annex VI, under the SAFEMED V and IPA III Projects;

137 **requests** 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 CPs' needs;

138 **commends** the Secretariat for the *Our Mediterranean, Your Responsibility* awareness campaign, which was built on the fundamental message: *the well-being of the Mediterranean is a shared duty, and every maritime stakeholder plays a crucial role in protecting it* and for the production of the bi-lingual leaflet to enhance awareness on the effective implementation and enforcement of the Med SO_x ECA;

139 **encourages** CPs to actively make use of the campaign material and the digital leaflet and disseminate key information to their respective maritime stakeholders;

- **Environmental and Legal Impacts of the Use of Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS) in the Mediterranean Sea**

140 **appreciates** the discretionary voluntary contribution from the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE) to enable the Secretariat to prepare the Study on the Environmental and Legal Impacts of the Use of Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (EGCS) in the Mediterranean Sea, as presented in document REMPEC/WG.61/INF.11;

141 **notes** the various challenges and growing environmental and legal concerns with EGCS discharge water, that have led to countries to come up with their local and regional policies to safeguard their jurisdictional water;

142 **notes further** that Open-loop EGCS discharge water contains various pollutants, including heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which may pose risks to marine ecosystems, especially in enclosed or semi-enclosed seas like the Mediterranean;

143 **recognises** that there is a lack of comprehensive data on the long-term environmental impacts of EGCS discharges in the Mediterranean and that existing studies highlight the necessity for further research to understand the cumulative effects on marine life and water quality;

144 **reaffirms** that the designation of the Mediterranean Sea as a Sulphur Emission Control Area (Med SO_x ECA) effective from May 1, 2024, underscores the region's commitment to reducing air pollution from ships;

145 **recognises** that this development may necessitate a re-evaluation of the use of EGCS, particularly open-loop systems, in compliance strategies in view that the Mediterranean Sea is a major shipping traffic lane and the use of EGCS may have a negative environmental impact on marine ecosystems in the region;

146 **welcomes** the ongoing discussions regarding risk assessments, impact assessments, and potential regulatory measures at the IMO that has recognized the need to evaluate and harmonize rules concerning EGCS discharge water;

147 **encourages** the CPs to:

- .1 actively participate in ongoing discussions at IMO to develop harmonized standards and guidelines for EGCS discharge water, ensuring consistency and environmental protection across the region;
- .2 implement robust monitoring systems to track EGCS discharges and their environmental impacts, facilitating data collection and informed decision-making;
- .3 involve industry stakeholders, environmental organizations, and scientific communities in the development of national policies and regulations concerning EGCS use and discharges, ensuring a balanced and effective approach;
- .4 support research initiatives aimed at understanding the long-term effects of EGCS discharges; and
- .5 provide full support, both technically, in terms of expertise, and financially, in terms of voluntary contributions, to the necessary technical assistance and capacity building activities, related to EGCS discharges, in the Mediterranean region;

148 **urges** the Secretariat to liaise with other regional organisations, such as HELCOM and OSPAR/Bonn Agreement, to closely follow developments in their respective regions on the matter and to update the next meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC;

- **Mediterranean Sea Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides (Med NO_x ECA)**

149 **welcomes** the establishment of the Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) Emission Control Area (ECA) Technical Committee of Experts (NECA TCE);

150 **notes** the progress made on the detailed Technical and Feasibility Study to assess the relevant existing and on-going studies as well as to examine the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Nitrogen Oxides (Med NO_x ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, including health and socio-economic impacts on the Mediterranean region and the individual CPs (hereinafter referred to as the Technical and Feasibility Study);

151 **urges** those CPs that have not yet nominated any representative to the NECA TCE, to do so, through their REMPEC Prevention Focal Points, jointly and in consultation with their REMPEC Governmental Focal Points;

152 **encourages** all CPs to actively participate and contribute to the work of the NECA TCE, in view of the importance of the matter;

153 **endorses** the Tentative Detailed Work Plan and Timetable for the work of the NECA TCE, as contained in Appendix 2 to document REMPEC/WG.61/7;

154 **instructs** the Secretariat to finalise the Technical and Feasibility Study under the guidance of the NECA TCE, together with the related roadmap, during the biennium 2026-2027, for consideration by the Seventeenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC, to be tentatively held in 2027, as appropriate;

Agenda Item 8 **Reduction of GHG emissions from ships**

155 **acknowledges** that the decarbonisation of shipping in the Mediterranean is both a regional imperative and a global responsibility. The Mediterranean, as a semi-enclosed sea with high traffic density and environmental sensitivity, faces unique challenges and opportunities in aligning with international climate goals, particularly the IMO 2023 GHG Strategy and evolving EU regulatory frameworks;

156 **recognises** that effective regional cooperation, technical innovation, and harmonised policy implementation are essential to enable a just and equitable transition to low- and zero-carbon maritime transport;

157 **welcomes** the revised IMO 2023 GHG Strategy, adopted at the 80th Session of the Marine Environment Protection (MEPC 80), that sets ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping;

158 **recalls** the recent approval of the IMO Net-Zero Framework at MEPC 83 in April 2025, that aims to introduce binding global measures, including a greenhouse gas (GHG) fuel intensity standard and a pricing mechanism, set to take effect from 2027. These developments underscore the urgency for Mediterranean stakeholders to align regional strategies with international commitments, ensuring a cohesive and effective transition towards net-zero emissions by or around 2050, as agreed under the IMO 2023 GHG Strategy;

159 **emphasises** that the successful decarbonisation of the maritime sector in the region requires a systemic and coordinated approach. This includes addressing the legal, technical, and operational dimensions of GHG reduction, improving ship-port interface efficiency, fostering clean technologies, and supporting the development of green corridors and hubs. Active engagement of all stakeholders—States, industry, ports, and civil society—is key to building momentum and achieving tangible results;

160 **urges** CPs and stakeholders to strengthen regional cooperation frameworks under the Barcelona Convention, particularly through REMPEC, to ensure consistent implementation of international and regional GHG reduction measures in the maritime sector, including through capacity building, technical assistance, and information exchange;

161 **appreciates** the discretionary voluntary contributions from the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE) to enable the Secretariat to prepare the various Studies, as presented in documents REMPEC/WG.61/INF.13, REMPEC/WG.61/INF.14, REMPEC/WG.61/INF.15, REMPEC/WG.61/INF.16 and REMPEC/WG.61/INF.17;

162 **stresses** that achieving the targets agreed under the IMO 2023 GHG Strategy requires coordinated efforts among Mediterranean coastal States, including the development of National Action Plans (NAPs) and collaboration with ports to facilitate the uptake of low- and zero-carbon technologies;

163 **encourages** all CPs to develop and submit voluntary NAPs outlining strategies to reduce GHG emissions from ships and to promote partnerships between ports and the shipping sector to support the adoption of energy-efficient practices and alternative fuels;

164 **adopts** the Guidance Document, as contained in Annex 1 to document REMPEC/WG.61/8/6 and requests the Secretariat to carry out final editing and any editorial corrections, as appropriate, before publishing it on REMPEC's website;

165 **calls** upon the CPs to take the Guidance Document, as adopted, into consideration when preparing their NAPs, as appropriate;

166 **encourages** the interested CPs to provide voluntary contributions in terms of expertise and financial support, to facilitate the development of NAPs when requested by other CPs;

167 **acknowledges** the importance of optimizing the ship-port interface for reducing GHG emissions, as inefficiencies can lead to increased fuel consumption and emissions during port calls;

168 **recognises** that technological advancements, such as digitalization and automation, offer opportunities to enhance port operations and reduce environmental impacts;

169 **urges** CPs to seek ways to optimise the ship-port interface in their ports by:

- .1 implementing best practices for port call optimization, including Just-In-Time (JIT) arrival and departure procedures;
- .2 investing in digital infrastructure to facilitate real-time information exchange between ships and ports; and
- .3 encouraging the adoption of shore-side electricity and other emission-reduction technologies at ports;

170 **recognises** that Biofouling increases hull resistance, leading to higher fuel consumption and GHG emissions and that the revised IMO Biofouling Guidelines aim to enhance biofouling management practices to minimize environmental impacts;

171 **encourages** CPs to implement the revised Biofouling Guidelines among Mediterranean shipping stakeholders and support research and development of innovative antifouling technologies and hull cleaning methods;

172 **urges** CPs to work towards the establishment of regional cooperation frameworks for sharing best practices and experiences in biofouling management;

173 **requests** the Secretariat, subject to availability of funds, to provide technical assistance and capacity building, to CPs that request, on the implementation at national level of the IMO Biofouling Guidelines;

174 **urges** CPs to take an active role in the ongoing discussions at IMO on the development of a legally binding instrument on Biofouling Management;

175 **acknowledges** that green corridors and green hubs represent strategic initiatives to accelerate the decarbonization of maritime transport by focusing on specific routes and ports and that successful implementation requires collaboration among Governments, industry stakeholders, and international organizations;

176 **instructs** the Secretariat, subject to availability of funds, to undertake work to identify and prioritize potential green corridor routes within the Mediterranean region, develop action plans for establishing green hubs, including infrastructure upgrades and policy incentives and foster partnerships among Mediterranean countries to share knowledge and coordinate efforts in developing green corridors and hubs;

177 **notes** the information provided by EMSA on a number of studies related to the use of non-fossil fuels by shipping;

178 **recalls** that regional collaboration is essential to address the unique challenges of the Mediterranean maritime landscape. Given the region's dense shipping traffic and ecological sensitivity, a coordinated approach is vital to implement the IMO 2023 GHG Strategy;

179 **welcomes** the draft Roadmap for Transitioning to Low Carbon Shipping in the Mediterranean Sea, hereinafter referred to as Roadmap, as presented by the Secretariat and contained in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.61/8, that provides a clear and practical framework to guide regional transition;

180 **endorses** the draft Roadmap and **agrees** to submit it to the COP24 for adoption;

181 **requests** the Secretariat to further strengthen regional cooperation through joint projects, training programs and knowledge sharing platforms to support implementation and promote equity in capacity across the Mediterranean region;

182 **instructs** the Secretariat to establish a mechanism, to track progress and secure the necessary funding through voluntary contributions or partnership in projects to support implementation and to report on progress to the next Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC;

183 **encourages** CPs to align their national policies with the Roadmap and begin developing NAPs that contribute to international GHG reduction targets;

184 **urges** stakeholders to invest in low and zero emissions technologies, alternative fuels and port infrastructure capable of supporting the transition in the Mediterranean region;

185 **calls** on all CPs and stakeholders to ensure at all times continued alignment with IMO regulations and relevant regional initiatives and broader environmental commitments under the Barcelona Convention;

Agenda Item 9 **Introduction of non-indigenous species by shipping activities**

186 **welcomes** the preparation of the Mid-Term Review on the Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027) (the "Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027)");

187 **reaffirms** that one of the objectives of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022-2027) is to establish a framework for a regional harmonised approach in the Mediterranean on ships' ballast water control and management that is 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;

188 **recalls** that shipping is one of the pathways and ballast water is one of the vectors for the introduction of alien and invasive species, but that there are other pathways and vectors that need to be addressed, as appropriate, by the relevant MAP Components;

189 **acknowledges** that further ratification of the BWM Convention by Mediterranean coastal States is needed and that the adoption of relevant national legislation to enforce the BWM Convention remains incomplete;

190 **emphasises** that there is a need for targeted technical support and capacity-building initiatives to assist CPs in ratifying and implementing the BWM Convention. This includes providing training, technical assistance, and resources to build the necessary infrastructure and expertise, by the appropriate

institutions;

191 **encourages** the CPs, which have not yet done so, to ratify and effectively implement the BWM Convention, as soon as possible;

192 **recalls** the relevance of addressing the emerging issue of biofouling management, and that this requires coordinated efforts and alignment with ongoing developments in the field, especially at IMO, with progress on the development of a legally binding instrument;

193 **recognises** that financial constraints and resource limitations present significant challenges to the successful implementation of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027) and that certain activities contained therein, require substantial financial resources, further hindering progress;

194 **instructs** the Secretariat to establish, as a matter of priority, the regional online BWM Working Group with a view to drive the process towards further harmonisation of BWM measures in the region;

195 **approves** the revised work plan and implementation timetable of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027) to address the identified challenges in the Mid-Term Review Report, contained in document REMPEC/WG.61/9, and adjust the timelines where necessary to ensure that Actions and associated Activities can still be implemented within the overall timeframe of the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027);

196 **adopts** the Resource Mobilisation Strategy to implement the Mediterranean BWM Strategy (2022–2027), as contained in document REMPEC/WG.61/9/1;

197 **calls upon** the Secretariat to provide targeted technical support to the CPs, which so request, for the ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention;

Agenda Item 10 **Activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP Programme of Work for the biennium 2026–2027, as proposed by REMPEC**

198 **agrees** upon the activities and deliverables of the draft UNEP/MAP PoW for the biennium 2026–2027 set out in the Annex to document REMPEC/WG.61/10, as amended, and **requests** 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 24;

Agenda Item 11 **Any other business**

199 **notes** the information concerning the 50th Anniversary of REMPEC and the recommendations, as contained in document REMPEC/WG.61/11;

200 **recognises** the outstanding contributions made by REMPEC over the past five decades in addressing marine pollution and fostering cooperation among Mediterranean coastal States;

201 **appreciates** the valuable services provided by all REMPEC staff over the years in supporting the Mediterranean coastal States in the establishment of robust emergency response systems, development of national pollution contingency plans, successful capacity-building initiatives, and the facilitation of regional agreements and collaborations that have significantly strengthened Mediterranean marine protection;

202 **agrees** that as REMPEC celebrates its 50th anniversary, launching a digital campaign and hosting a commemorative event, subject to availability of funds, will not only honour the Centre's achievements but also raise awareness about the ongoing challenges of marine pollution and the actions taken by the coastal States of the Mediterranean;

203 **requests** the Secretariat to engage stakeholders through social media, videos, and commemorative materials, that will foster a sense of collective responsibility for Mediterranean marine preservation;

204 **instructs** the Secretariat to carry a study, for consideration at the next meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC, for the renaming of REMPEC, with a view to adopt a more concise and accessible name that reflects its core mission and resonates with both maritime professionals and the public, including a new logo and visual identity, ensuring that REMPEC remains relevant and impactful in the future;

205 **agrees** to a comprehensive redesign of the REMPEC website which is crucial to improve navigation, enhance user experience, and provide better access to essential documents for CPs. This modernization should prioritize content organization, accessibility, and secure sections for members;

206 **requests** the Secretariat to develop a Five-Year Strategic Plan for Implementation with a clear roadmap for the next five years to ensure that REMPEC's work continues to align with the Mediterranean Strategy (2022-2031). This plan should include an updated mission and vision that incorporates long-term sustainability objectives, focusing not just on emergency response but on proactive measures to prevent pollution, enhance compliance, and ensure the health of the Mediterranean ecosystem for future generations;

207 **further requests** the Secretariat, subject to availability of funds, to further strengthen technical support, training, and capacity-building programs for CPs to ensure effective implementation of marine pollution prevention and response strategies;

208 **instructs** the Secretariat to continue exploring new technologies and practices, such as those related to alternative fuels, to support Mediterranean countries in meeting emerging environmental challenges and improving their pollution prevention and response capabilities;

209 **agrees** that the endorsed actions are included under the UNEP/MAP PoW for the biennium 2026-2027;

210 **welcomes** the Workshop provided by the representatives of CEDRE in relation to the MANIFESTS Genius Project, that paves the way for improved emergency planning, the development of operational guidelines, and the upgrading of decision-support systems related to hazardous and noxious substances and supports the safe integration of new propulsion energies like methanol and ammonia into refuelling stations and coastal industries, while providing cross-sectoral intervention protocols and valuable training tools;
