



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

Regional Expert Meeting on the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SO_x ECA) pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI

REMPEC/WG.50/5
Date: 23 April 2021

Online, 27-28 April 2021

Original: English

Agenda Item 5

**DRAFT JOINT AND COORDINATED PROPOSAL ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE MED SO_x ECA
TO THE IMO**

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document provides information on the development of a draft joint and coordinated proposal for the designation of the proposed Med SO_x ECA to the IMO, pursuant to the Road Map for a Proposal for the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, within the Framework of the Barcelona Convention.

Actions to be taken: Paragraph 14

Related documents: REMPEC/WG.50/INF.3, REMPEC/WG.50/INF.4, REMPEC/WG.50/INF.5, REMPEC/WG.50/INF.6, REMPEC/WG.50/INF.11

Background

1 COP 21¹ adopted Decision IG.24/8 on the Road Map for a Proposal for the Possible Designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, within the Framework of the Barcelona Convention, hereinafter referred to as the road map, as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.50/INF.3.

2 The road map outlines the process towards a proposal for the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as defined in Article 1 of the Barcelona Convention, as an Emission Control Area (ECA) for Sulphur Oxides (SO_x) pursuant to Annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), within the framework of the Barcelona Convention ("the proposed Med SO_x ECA"), elaborating the goals, steps, timetable, including milestones and actions, which serve this purpose.

¹ Twenty-first 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 (Naples, 2-5 December 2019).

Completion of the knowledge gathering and preparations of further studies

3 COP 21 agreed to extend the mandate of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) SO_x ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts, until 30 April 2021, to oversee the completion of the knowledge gathering and the preparations of further studies, notably socio-economic impacts on individual Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention *inter alia* as indicated in the road map, including the development of their respective terms of reference, through correspondence coordinated by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), when examining the possibility of designating the proposed Med SO_x ECA.

4 As presented in document REMPEC/WG.50/INF.5, the SO_x ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts oversaw the completion of the necessary knowledge gathering, and the carrying out of the further studies to more fully address the criteria and procedures for designation of emission control areas laid down in Appendix III to MARPOL Annex VI.

Updating of the initial draft submission to the IMO for a proposal for the possible designation of the Med SO_x ECA

5 COP 21 requested the Secretariat to update the initial draft submission to the IMO for a proposal for the possible designation of the Med SO_x ECA, under the guidance of the SO_x ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts in line with the agreed road map.

6 As presented in document REMPEC/WG.50/INF.5, the SO_x ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts provided the necessary guidance on the updating of the initial draft submission to the IMO for a proposal for the possible designation of the Med SO_x ECA, which was based on the completed knowledge gathering and the further studies carried out.

7 The finalised draft submission to the IMO, which was prepared pursuant to the road map according to the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix I to document REMPEC/WG.50/INF.6, is presented in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.50/INF.11.

Continued assistance for the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI

8 As presented in document REMPEC/WG.50/INF.4, continued assistance for the ratification and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI has been provided by REMPEC to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which have so requested, through activities financed by the Mediterranean Trust Fund (MTF) and the IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP), during the biennium 2020-2021, in line with the road map.

Next steps and timeline

9 COP 21 agreed to finalise, based on the outcome of the further studies and the preparatory work, the development of a mutually agreed joint and coordinated proposal for the possible designation by the IMO of the Med SO_x ECA pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI.

10 According to the road map, the Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021) will:

- .1 review and consider the Note by the Secretariat (REMPEC), including draft IMO submission;
- .2 discuss on:
 - .1 whether or not to submit a proposal to IMO for the designation of the proposed Med SO_x ECA;
 - .2 the most appropriate timing for such a submission, if any; and
 - .3 the effective date of entry into force of the proposed Med SO_x ECA, if any.
- .3 endorse a joint and coordinated proposal for the designation of the proposed Med SO_x ECA to the IMO, if any.

11 In this context, and on the basis of the outcome of the further work of the SO_x ECA(s) Technical Committee of Experts, as referred to in paragraphs 4 and 6 above, the Secretariat proposes to take the finalised draft submission to the IMO, as set out in the Appendix to document REMPEC/WG.50/INF.11, as a basis for the development of a joint and coordinated proposal for the designation of the proposed Med SO_x ECA to the IMO.

12 COP 21 adopted the road map with the view of formally submitting the proposal to the seventy-eighth (78th) session of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 78) scheduled for 2022.

6 Since the goal of the process outlined in the road map is to first reach consensus amongst the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with a view to formulating a joint and coordinated proposal on the designation of the proposed Med SO_x ECA to the IMO, the Secretariat also proposes to hold an initial discussion on the issues raised in paragraphs 10.2.1, 10.2.2, and 10.2.3 with a view to facilitating the further process.

13 Further discussions on the possible designation of the Med SO_x ECA will be held in accordance with the road map, at the following meetings:

- .1 Fourteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (online, 31 May-2 June 2021);
- .2 Meeting of the MAP Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 14-17 September 2021); and
- .3 Twenty-second Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Antalya, Turkey, 7-10 December 2021).

Actions requested by the Meeting

14 **The Meeting is invited to:**

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