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

Seventh Meeting of the Mediterranean Network of Law
Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the
framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS)

REMPEC/WG.64/2
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Lija, Malta, 2-3 November 2026

Agenda Item 2: Progress Report on Activities Carried Out during the 2025-2027 biennium

**Report on the Activities of MENELAS for the period from November 2025 to October 2026, as requested by Decision
IG.27/11**

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Note by the Secretariat

This document presents the Report on the Activities of MENELAS for the period from November 2025 to October 2026, as requested by Decision IG.27/11, as set out in Annex to the present document, together with relevant information on the activities carried out, in the period April – October 2026, by the Working Group within MENELAS, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.64/INF.3.

Background

1 Pursuant to [Decision IG.27/11](#) on the *Revision of the Terms of Reference 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 Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean* (“the Barcelona Convention”) (MENELAS), adopted by the Twenty-fourth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP24) (Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025), the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), as the relevant Regional Activity Centre of the Barcelona Convention, acting as the Secretariat of this network, has been entrusted with reporting on its activities to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at each of their Ordinary Meetings.¹

2 The activities carried out by the Network during the 2024-2025 biennium were reported to the Twenty-fourth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP 24) (Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025), as laid down in document UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.15.

3 The Report on the Activities of MENELAS for the period from November 2025 to October 2026, as requested by Decision IG.27/11, is presented in the **Annex** to the present document.

Actions requested by the Meeting

4 **The Meeting is invited to:**

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

¹ The Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) within the framework of Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (“the Barcelona Convention”) (MENELAS) was originally established, pursuant to Decision IG.21/9, adopted by the Eighteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Istanbul, Türkiye, 3-6 December 2013)

Annex

**Report on the Activities of MENELAS for the period from November 2025 to October 2026, as
requested by Decision IG.27/11**

Report on the Activities of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials Relating to MARPOL within the Framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS) for the period from November 2025 to October 2026, as requested by Decision IG.27/11

Background

1 The Twenty-fourth 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 24) (Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025), recalling COP18 Decision IG.21/9², adopted [Decision 27/11](#) setting out the *Revised the Terms of Reference 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)*, the overall objective of which is to facilitate cooperation between its members in order to improve the enforcement of the international regulations regarding discharges at sea from ships as laid down in MARPOL.

2 The Sixth Meeting of MENELAS, held in Lija, Malta, on 4 and 5 December 2024, reviewed the progress in implementing the Network’s Programme of Activities for 2024 – 2025, including work on the harmonisation of administrative fines for MARPOL violations, the possible establishment of a regional Blue Fund and the development of a database on illicit ship-source pollution discharges.

3 The Meeting, in its conclusions and recommendations, agreed to re-establish the Working Group within MENELAS, coordinated by REMPEC, in its capacity as Secretariat, through correspondence, to advance the outstanding work. In particular, the Meeting identified as priorities for 2026-2027 the further development of the consolidated draft Decision to apply criteria for a common minimum level of fines for each offence provided for under the Annexes to MARPOL, within the framework of Barcelona Convention (hereinafter referred to as “draft Decision”), the undertaking of a detailed Study on possible criteria and possible minimum levels of fines for each offence provided for under the Annexes to MARPOL, and the preparation of Guidelines to support the uniform and effective implementation of the draft Decision.

4 Furthermore, the Sixth Meeting of MENELAS requested the Secretariat (REMPEC) to review the process leading to the election of Chair of the Network, including the relevant Terms of Reference as annexed to Decision IG.21/9 on the Establishment of a Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Official relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention.

5 So far, twenty Contracting Parties have nominated their Designated Representatives (DR) to participate in MENELAS.

Implementation of the MENELAS Programme of Activities for the period 2025-2026

6 Preliminarily it is recalled that, during the Sixteenth Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points, held in Malta on 13-15 May 2025, a lack of general support to the establishment of a regional “Blue Fund” was expressed by the Contracting Parties due to concerns relating, *inter alia*, to governance, financing and jurisdiction. In view of this lack of support and other MENELAS priorities, the Meeting agreed to place the matter in abeyance for the 2025-2026 biennium, without prejudice to possible future work, using an informal approach.

² Decision IG.21/9, *Establishment of a 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*, adopted by the Eighteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Istanbul, Türkiye, 3–6 December 2013)

7 With regard to the establishment of a MENELAS database on illicit ship pollution discharges, the Sixteenth Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points acknowledged the relevance of existing Country Profiles and MEDGIS-MAR datasets, while stressing the need to avoid duplication and promote a coordinated approach to reporting within the Mediterranean region. The establishment of the database was then placed on hold pending further progress on the EU harmonised reporting template under the Ship-Source Pollution Directive.³

8 Since November 2025, and with a view to implementing the MENELAS Programme of Activities for the period 2026-2027, REMPEC has been following up on the Conclusions and Recommendations adopted by the Sixt Meeting of MENELAS (4-5 December 2024), as endorsed by the Sixteenth Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points (Malta, 13-15 May 2025).

9 First, the Secretariat prepared revised Terms of Reference which were considered and endorsed by the Sixteenth Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC and subsequently submitted and adopted 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)⁴.

10 In April 2026, REMPEC, in its capacity as Secretariat, re-activated the Working Group within MENELAS, which carried out its work by correspondence in English, using the List of MENELAS Designated Representatives.

11 The Working Group within MENELAS completed four phases of work. The Secretariat issued guidance and circulated documents for review and comments for each phase. In particular, the work covered:

- Phase 1: collection of information on national penalty systems;
- Phase 2: initiation of the process for election of the Chair and Vice Chairs;
- Phase 3.1: review of the draft Study on possible criteria and possible minimum levels of fines for each offence provided for under the Annexes to MARPOL (hereinafter referred to as “the draft Study”);
- Phase 3.2: review of the draft Guidelines to ensure the uniform and effective implementation of the consolidated draft Decision as adjusted (hereinafter referred to as “the draft Guidelines”);
- Phase 4: preparation of the report of the Working Group for the Seventh Meeting of MENELAS.

12 On 14 April 2026, as part of Phase 1, the Secretariat launched a questionnaire to collect information on national penalty systems applicable to offences under the MARPOL Annexes, enforcement practices and relevant aspects of national legal frameworks. The deadline for submission of responses to the questionnaire, initially envisaged as 30 April 2026, was extended to 7 May 2026 and late contributions were accepted until 8 June 2026. Completed questionnaires were received from eight (8) Contracting Parties and information collected formed the basis for the preparation of the draft Study.

13 After that, at the beginning of June 2026, in accordance with the adopted revised Terms of Reference of MENELAS, the Secretariat initiated the process for nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of MENELAS for the biennium 2026-2027 and issued a reminder, via email, on 30 June 2026. Through Circular Letter No. 13/2026, dated 3 August 2026, the Contracting Parties were invited to submit nominations by 9 October 2026 for election at the Seventh Meeting of MENELAS, to be held on 2-3 November 2026.

14 The draft Study on possible criteria and possible minimum levels of fines for each offence provided for under the Annex to MARPOL was prepared by the Secretariat with the support of an

³ Directive (EU) 2024/3101 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 amending Directive 2005/35/EC as regards ship-source pollution and the introduction of administrative penalties for infringements.

⁴ UNEP/MED IG.27/21 - Decision IG.27/11

external consultant and circulated to the Working Group for consultation, from 3 August to 4 September 2026.

15 The draft Guidelines, prepared by the Secretariat with the support of the external consultant, were circulated to the Working Group for consultation, from 12 August to 4 September 2026. They address multiple aspects of a legal and technical nature, with a view to support the Contracting Parties in ensuring the uniform and effective implementation of the consolidated draft Decision, as adjusted, once adopted. At the same time, the draft Guidelines identify a number of matters requiring further consideration by Contracting Parties, as well as proposals for further refinement and amendment of the consolidated draft Decision, as adjusted. Comments and feedback were received from four (4) Contracting Parties, and a consolidated response matrix was prepared to record the comments received and the action taken or proposed.

16 Following the consultation processes carried out under Phase 3 (namely Phase 3.1 on the circulation of the draft Study and Phase 3.2 on the circulation of the draft Guidelines), the Secretariat took note of the comments received and while no specific revisions to the draft Study had been required, the draft Guidelines were reviewed to address the comments received by the Contracting Parties, and a revised version in track changes was prepared.

17 Finally, as part of the last stage of the work, namely Phase 4, and with a view to bringing the work to completion, the Secretariat prepared the draft report of the work carried out by the Working Group within MENELAS, providing a comprehensive account of the various phases undertaken during the period April-October 2026. The draft report was circulated to the Working Group within MENELAS for review and feedback, from 17 to 30 September 2026. No comments were received, and the report was adopted by the Working Group within MENELAS.

18 The final report, as approved by the Working Group within MENELAS, includes, as annexes, the consolidated matrix addressing the comments and feedback received from the Working Group during the consultation processes, together with the full draft Study and revised draft Guidelines in track changes, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.64/INF.3.

Cooperation with other regional and international Organisations

19 At COP 18, at the time of establishing MENELAS, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention acknowledged the relevant work carried out on the issue of ship sourced pollution and consequently stressed the need for the MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat in collaboration with REMPEC to further exploit possible synergies with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) within the framework of Decision IG.21/9. They also acknowledged the proven effectiveness of dedicated networks of investigators and sanctioning authorities established under the Regional Seas framework such as the NSN and the Network of Prosecutors on Environmental Crime in the Baltic Sea Region (ENPRO). This was reiterated by COP 24 through Decision IG.27/11, which reaffirmed the importance of cooperation with relevant regional and international frameworks in advancing MENELAS objectives.

20 In this respect, the Sixth Meeting of MENELAS called on the Secretariat (REMPEC) to liaise with the relevant regional and international organisations to which participating members were Parties with a view to ensuring the necessary cooperation, which might include regular exchange of information and reciprocal representation at their respective meetings, amongst others. It also asked participating members to inform the relevant regional and international organisations to which they were Parties of the outcome of the Meeting and to report on the outcome of discussions within the said organisations at the next meeting of MENELAS.

21 In particular, REMPEC attended, inter alia, the 83rd and 84th sessions of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee. Developments within MENELAS were presented, amongst others, at the 22nd Inter-Secretariat meeting between Regional Agreement Secretariats, European Commission and EMSA as well as the 4th Steering Committee Meeting of the SAFEMED V Project (Lisbon,

Portugal, November 2025) organised by EMSA. The developments within MENELAS were also presented at the OSPAR/BONN Agreement North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors (NSN) (April 2026).

22 In 2026, REMPEC attended, *inter alia*, the 4th, 5th and 6th meetings of the Ship-Source Pollution Reporting workstream, organised online by EMSA on 30 January, 15 April and 15 September 2026, respectively. The meetings contributed to the ongoing work on the concept and design of the new reporting tool supporting the implementation of the amended Ship-Source Pollution Directive, with a view to improving the reporting of illicit discharges and penalties.

23 As part of the ongoing cooperation with other regional frameworks, notably the Bonn Agreement and HELCOM, the Sixteenth Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points endorsed the Common Marine Oil Pollution Detection/Investigation Report (hereinafter referred to as “the Common Report”) and requested the Secretariat to continue liaising with the Bonn Agreement and HELCOM to promote its practical use during future operations. This Common Report is intended to be compatible and interoperable, to the greatest extent practicable, with the corresponding forms used in the Bonn Agreement and HELCOM areas.

24 During the intersessional period, the Secretariat continued technical exchanges with the Secretariats of the regional agreements, the European Commission and EMSA. At the Twenty-second Inter-Secretariat Meeting between Regional Agreement Secretariats, the European Commission and EMSA, held in Lisbon on 3-4 February 2026, amendments adopted by BONN 25⁵ to the Annex B – Standard Pollution Reporting Log Completion Guide, as set out in the Bonn Agreement Aerial Operations Handbook, were presented.

25 The above-mentioned amendments constitute an update of the pollution-type classification to align terminology more closely with MARPOL substance categories and improve data consistency and usability, without changing the operational purpose of the Common Report.

26 REMPEC, in its capacity as Secretariat, prepared a working document containing the revised draft of the Common Report in track changes, outlining the proposed update, for consideration by the Seventh Meeting of MENELAS.⁶

27 The Secretariat will continue to liaise with these and other relevant regional and international bodies, and to seek opportunities for practical experience with the Common Report during relevant operational activities and exercises.

⁵ 37th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Bonn Agreement (BONN 2025 - Spain 16-18 September 2025)

⁶ REMPEC WG.64/5