



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

Meeting of National Experts on the
Revision of the Regional Strategy for
Prevention and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships

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Agenda Item 5

Draft Comparative Report on ongoing and existing Mediterranean, European and international strategies/sectorial action plans/initiatives on marine environment protection

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: The contains a comparative analysis of existing Mediterranean, European and International strategies/sectorial action plans/initiatives on marine environment protection, and a set of recommendations on potential synergies which were considered in the preparation of the Draft Revised Regional Strategy (2016-2021).

Action to be taken: The Meeting will be invited to comment and take note of the information provided in the present document and take action as deem appropriate.

Related documents: REMPEC/WG.36/4 and REMPEC/WG.36/6

**Revision of the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and
Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2005-2015)**

**Draft Comparative Report on ongoing and existing
Mediterranean, European and international strategies/sectorial
action plans/initiatives on marine environment protection**

6 February 2015

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Following the adoption, in 2002, of 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), and responding to a recommendation of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention, the 14th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention adopted, in 2005, a Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (the 2005 Regional Strategy). The 2005 Regional Strategy, designed to facilitate the implementation of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, consists mainly of 21 objectives to be implemented by 2015.

1.2 In parallel to the preparation of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP)'s Integrated Six Year Programme of Work for the period 2016 to 2021 (Mid-Term Strategy) and the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) during the biennium 2014-2015, the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) is carrying out a revision of the 2005 Regional Strategy, seen as an integral part of the MAP's Mid-Term Strategy.

1.3 Based on identified priorities, the Centre will develop a new and updated Draft Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) which, following discussion and review by the Contracting Parties at the REMPEC Focal Points Meeting and its ultimate adoption, will be integrated in UNEP/MAP's Mid-Term Strategy to be adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention). To help with this task, the Centre has engaged the services of a Consultant with specified Terms of Reference. As well as the preparation of a Synthetic Report, which was published on 4 February 2015 under the symbol REMPEC/WG.36/4, the Consultant's mandate also includes the preparation, in consultation with REMPEC, of a comparative report on ongoing and existing Mediterranean, European and international strategies/sectorial action plans/initiatives on marine environment protection.

2 REPORT STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS

2.1 The present report contains a comparative account of the most relevant, although non-exhaustive marine environment protection strategies, goals and legislation, either already developed and being implemented or in the process of being developed, at the following levels:

.1 Mediterranean: e.g. MAP Phase II, Draft UNEP/MAP's Mid-Term Strategy (2016-2021), Ecosystem Approach (EcAp), Review of Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), Regional Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management, Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management, Draft Offshore Protocol Action Plan;

.2 European: e.g. European Maritime Safety Agency Action Plan, Union Civil Protection Mechanism, Marine Strategy Framework, H2020 Initiative; and

.3 International: e.g. IMO Member State Audit Scheme, IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme priorities.

2.2 The main purpose of the present report is, thus, to provide recommendations on the potential marine environment protection synergies which should be reflected and addressed in the Revised Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2016-2021) (Revised Regional Strategy (2016-2021)).

2.3 The outcome of the comparative exercise is presented in the annex to this report, whilst the recommendations extracted therefrom, together with those emanating from the Synthetic Report, will be incorporated in the proposed draft Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021 once all the preparatory work is finalized.

3 ACTION REQUESTED OF THE MEETING OF NATIONAL EXPERTS

3.1 **The Meeting of National Experts is invited to** note the present report and take action as it may deem appropriate.

ANNEX
COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT OF THE MOST RELEVANT MARINE ENVIRONMENT
PROTECTION STRATEGIES, GOALS AND LEGISLATION

1 MEDITERRANEAN-SPECIFIC

1.1 MAP Phase II

1.1.1 The Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean (MAP Phase II) was adopted in 1995 to build up on the progress made through the implementation of the original MAP adopted in 1975 over a period of two decades. In order to stem the degradation of the Mediterranean sea and its coastal areas and to link sustainable resource management with development, MAP Phase II was assigned a set of priorities, among which are the following relevant general objectives:

- .1 to protect marine and coastal habitats and threatened species;
- .2 to make maritime activities safer and more conscious of the Mediterranean marine environment;
- .3 to monitor the spreading of invasive species; and
- .4 to limit and intervene promptly on oil pollution.

1.1.2 Twenty years later, the above priorities remain a fundamental constant in the pursuits of the Mediterranean countries, both individually and collectively, under the MAP umbrella. During that time, some of the priorities have been expanded to cover certain specific areas of concern and new objectives have been added to address fresh environmental challenges, chiefly by the multiannual programme of work of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD) (2005) and the Five-year Strategic Programme of Work 2010-2014 (2009). More specifically, in addition to these, the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships 2005-2015 and the 2012 Mediterranean Strategy on Ship's Ballast Water Management have provided Contracting Parties with a valuable tool to achieve the stated objectives. The fact remains, though, that only through continuous assessment and subsequent revision of the actions taken in pursuance of the main aims of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, together with the relevant priorities emanating from regional (EU) and international (IMO) rule-making organizations, can the Mediterranean countries adequately protect their waters and shores against pollution, in particular that caused by ships and other marine vehicles and structures.

1.1.3 The present exercise, therefore, building on the basis of the above MAP Phase II priorities and in the light of progress made through the implementation of the 2005 Regional Strategy, attempts to establish synergies between the identified aims and objectives of current and forthcoming action plans and strategies under the MAP and the relevant regulatory measures undertaken at the European and international levels in the field of marine and coastal environment protection against the possible harmful consequences that may arise from ships' and other offshore activities. Once established, such synergies will generate recommendations which, in turn, will be reflected as appropriate in a proposed draft Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021.

1.2 UNEP/MAP Midterm Strategy (2016-2021)

1.2.1 The 18th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Decision IG.21/13), recalling a previous decision underlining the Contracting Parties' commitment to continue strengthening the Governance system of the Barcelona Convention/MAP based on an increased involvement of the Contracting Parties, and bearing in mind the Paris Declaration adopted by the 17th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (2012) calling for the establishment of the conditions for transparent, effective and enhanced institutional Governance of the Barcelona Convention/MAP, *inter alia*, adopted measures to strengthen the Barcelona Convention/MAP Governance and Management and requested the Secretariat to prepare an issues paper for guidance of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties, leading to the development of a UNEP/MAP Midterm Strategy 2016-2021,

which should constitute the overarching policy document to be taken into account when addressing, in particular, the revision of the 2005 Regional Strategy. While the said issues paper is still in preparation, an overview of the current status of relevant programmes, strategies, action plans and guidelines is attempted hereunder.

1.2.2 In October 2014, the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) discussed and identified initial lists of strategic axes, responses/actions/techniques/approaches, strategies/action plans/legal framework, means/tools and guiding principles to be considered in the development process of the Midterm Strategy for UNEP/MAP. In January 2015, as a basis for the new Midterm Review, the ECP proposed "business areas", among which the following should be taken into account in the process of revising the 2005 Regional Strategy:

- **Land and Sea Based Pollution**

(1) To prevent and control contaminants inputs, oil discharges and spills, as well as human-induced eutrophication.

(2) To prevent marine litter generation and reduce its impact on coastal and marine environment.

- **Biodiversity and Ecosystems**

(2) To keep non-indigenous species introduced by human activities at levels that does not adversely alter the ecosystem.

(3) Sea-floor integrity is maintained, especially in priority benthic habitats.

- **Climate Change**

To enhance the resilience of the Mediterranean Region to impacts of climate change and variability on coastal and marine environment

- **Environmental Governance**

To strengthen the regional and national governance mechanisms for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols and the adopted Strategies and Action Plans

- **Mediterranean Environment under Review**

To deliver knowledge-based assessments of the Mediterranean environment and scenario development

1.2.3 These five overarching business areas should, therefore, be ever-present while preparing a draft Revised Regional Strategy 2006-2021. Taking into account that the Regional Strategy (2016-2021) will be integrated in UNEP/MAP Midterm Strategy (2016-2021), it is recommended to establish any required synergy between MAP Components for the effective implementation of the said strategies, within the overarching Strategy (i.e. UNEP/MAP Midterm Strategy (2016-2021)).

Five-year Strategic Programme of Work 2010-2015

1.2.4 The outcomes of the MAP's five-year Strategic Programme of Work for the period 2010 to 2014, adopted by the Contracting Parties in 2009 and extended to 2015 by the 18th Meeting of the Contracting Parties, are structured around six priority themes: Governance, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Biodiversity, Sustainable Consumption and Production, Pollution Prevention and Control and Climate Change. Of the stated priority themes, **pollution prevention and control** is the most relevant to the current Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships and should continue to serve as a primary term of

reference for the future and so should the programme of work outcome calling for land-based and **sea-based pollution reduction**, as well as the related outputs to establish **early warning of pollution** (spills of oil and HNS spills) and to achieve **lower levels of pollution in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environments**. Although these outputs are already included in some of the specific objectives of the 2005 Regional Strategy, and taking into account the outcomes of the survey responses on relevance of Programme of Work themes at basin level and at country level and with regard to MAP mandate, carried out within the framework of the Five-Year Strategic Programme of work review, (i.e. 87% of respondents rated Pollution prevention and control and ICZM to be 'highly important'. Responses were similar with regard to relevance at national level, with 82% of respondents indicating that Pollution prevention and control was 'highly important'), it is recommended to keep them in the draft Revised Regional Strategy, with any adaptations that may be considered necessary.

1.2.5 The other pertinent priority theme is **climate change**, an issue that is becoming more and more challenging as the rate of release of CO₂ into the atmosphere throughout the world is not being reduced to the levels recommended by the scientific community and the relevant UN Programmes and agencies. However, under the perspective of the revision of the 2005 Regional Strategy, action should be limited to the contribution that a **more efficient and cleaner shipping** would make to the general efforts that Contracting Parties should make, both in land and at sea, to stem the repercussions of climate change. It is, therefore, recommended that this priority theme be included in the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021, preferably in the context of compliance with the 2011 amendments to MARPOL Annex VI which introduce a new chapter 4 with regulations on energy efficiency for ships.

Ecosystem Approach (EcAp)

1.2.6 Through Decision IG.17/6 the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention have committed to progressively apply the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) to the management of human activities with the goal of making a real change in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment. In addition, Decision IG.17/6 outlines a roadmap for the implementation of EcAp, consisting of several subsequent steps, such as the development of ecological objectives, operational objectives and respective indicators, the development of Good Environmental Status (GES) descriptors and targets, the monitoring programmes, and finally the necessary management measures and programmes to achieve such GES.

1.2.7 In 2012, Decision IG.20/4 on "Implementing the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap" validated the work done so far with regard to the 11 ecological objectives, operational objectives and indicators for the Mediterranean. In addition, it mandated UNEP/MAP Secretariat to prepare an EcAp Monitoring Programme, to determine GES and targets and to prepare an in-depth socio-economic analysis of human activities that impact on, or benefit from, the quality and ecological health of coastal and marine ecosystems. Finally, it asked to integrate EcAp in the overall work of UNEP-MAP/Barcelona Convention and mandated the Secretariat to establish an EcAp governance framework. In particular, COP 17 adopted, *inter alia*, the following ecological objectives, which are all considered relevant to the revision of the 2005 Regional Strategy and, therefore, should be included or maintained in the revised Strategy:

- .1 non-indigenous species introduced by human activities are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystem;
- .2 contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health;
- .3 marine and coastal litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environment; and
- .4 noise from human activities causes no significant impact on marine and coastal ecosystems.

1.2.8 Decision IG.21/3 on the "Ecosystem Approach including adapting definitions of Good Environmental Status (GES) and targets" adopted by the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the

Contracting Parties (COP18, 2013), expresses the agreement on regionally common targets, lists of indicators to achieve GES in the Mediterranean, and integrated list of Mediterranean GES, targets and indicators. A roadmap was also agreed as part of this decision on how to achieve an integrated monitoring and assessment programme by the next meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP19), which would ensure a common basis of assessment for the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment.

1.2.9 As a follow up to the decision of COP 18, the Secretariat conducted an initial gap analysis of existing measures under the Barcelona Convention (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.401/5), relevant to achieving or maintaining a good environmental status (GES) of the Mediterranean sea, in line with the ecosystem approach. Although it was concluded that the said initial gap analysis should be followed by a more detailed analysis of national implementation status, the exercise identified, among others, some key gaps which should be further addressed in the future, in the areas of:

- .1 **public participation and science policy interface**, which relates to specific objective 17 of the 2005 Regional Strategy (to encourage the participation of the regional scientific and technical institutions in research and development activities and to facilitate transfer of technology);
- .2 **invasive alien species**, specifically concerning the MAMIAS (Marine Mediterranean Invasive Alien Species) system, which relates directly to the Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management;
- .3 **marine pollution**, although the initial gap analysis puts the accent on land-based sources of pollution, which relates to most of the specific objectives of the 2005 Regional Strategy; and
- .4 **marine litter**, with focus on developing implementation tools and enhancing implementation of the regional plan at national level and support countries accordingly. This gap would relate directly to the implementation of MARPOL Annex V – Regulations for the prevention of pollution by garbage from ships, the provision of reception facilities in ports and the delivery of ship-generated wastes (specific objectives 1, 4 and 5 of the 2005 Regional Strategy).

1.2.10 With all of the above in mind, it is recommended to integrate in the forthcoming Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021 all of the above ecological objectives, including the recommended actions to fill the identified gaps, as well as the upgrade/establishment of monitoring programmes in line with EcAp, enabling a **quantitative monitoring** of the status of the Mediterranean sea and coast on a regional basis, covering **biodiversity and non-indigenous species, coast and hydrography, and pollution and marine litter monitoring** in an interlinked manner, as well as ships' noise abatement in particular areas. Other specific challenges of the implementation of the EcAp Roadmap should also be considered such as **science-policy interface, sub-regional implementation needs, as well as data and information sharing.**

Review of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)

1.2.11 The Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) was adopted by the Contracting Parties in 2005, as a regional response to the global agenda about sustainable development. It focuses mainly on the integration of environmental concerns into the key economic development sectors, while giving due consideration to social and cultural dimensions (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.401/5).

1.2.12 The MSSD establishes four objectives aiming at promoting progress towards sustainability in the economic, social and environmental areas and in the field of governance, as follows:

Objective 1: Contribute to economic development by enhancing Mediterranean assets;

Objective 2: Reduce social disparities by implementing the Millennium Development Goals and strengthen cultural identities;

Objective 3: Change unsustainable production and consumption patterns and ensure the sustainable management of natural resources; and

Objective 4: Improve governance at the local, national and regional levels.

The MSSD establishes also seven priority fields of action, as follows:

1. Better management of water resources and demand;
2. Improved rational use of energy, increased renewable energy use and mitigation of and adaptation to climate change;
3. Sustainable mobility through appropriate transport management;
4. Sustainable tourism as a leading economic sector;
5. Sustainable agriculture and rural development;
6. Sustainable urban development; and
7. Sustainable management of the sea, coastal areas and marine resources

1.2.13 Following an assessment on the implementation of the MSSD for the period 2005-2010 that took place in 2011, it became evident that while for some objectives the situation is improving, much remained to be achieved for priorities such as climate change, energy intensity, water and sustainable tourism. From the report could also be concluded that regional activities should show a clearer link to the MSSD, and MAP should adapt existing work units (Regional Activity Centres) to provide a service of monitoring the existing programmes and further push forward existing linked activities of technical assistance, knowledge sharing, capacity-building, information exchange and monitoring.

1.2.14 Thereafter, the Contracting Parties decided at COP 18 to review the MSSD, in line with the outcomes of Rio+20 (UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.21/9). The MSSD review was formally launched in Malta, in February 2014 with the aim of providing measures that are horizontally key for the successful implementation of the Ecosystem Approach in the Mediterranean. Further, based on the 2013 Istanbul Declaration, the EcAp vision, and the results of a wide stakeholder consultation (April-May 2014), the Steering Committee of the MCSD recommended the following (provisional) vision to guide the development of the revised strategy:

“A prosperous and peaceful Mediterranean region in which people enjoy a high quality of life and where sustainable development takes place within the carrying capacity of healthy ecosystems. This is achieved through common objectives, cooperation, solidarity, equity and participatory governance”.

1.2.15 Furthermore, the Steering Committee of the MCSD (Malta Meeting, 11-12 June 2014) recommended the revised MSSD to be focused on six thematic areas in line with the global process to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, the first one being Seas and Coast, towards reaching Good Environmental Status of the Marine and Coastal Mediterranean environments, thus encompassing the EcAp objectives. Of the six identified thematic areas the following three are considered of relevance to the revision of the 2005 Regional Strategy:

Seas and coasts; including efforts towards reaching Good Environmental Status of Mediterranean marine and coastal ecosystems;

Climate; including the impacts of climate change on natural resources and socioeconomic sectors and possible responses; and

Governance; including financing, Aarhus Convention–related issues such as public participation, and cooperation.

1.2.16 Drawing from the current phase of the ongoing review of the MSSD, which envisages the drafting of MSSD 2.0 (2016/2025), the following draft strategic directions have been identified as appropriate for reflection, *mutatis mutandis*, in the draft Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021, pending final adoption by the COP:

Strategic Direction 1.1: Strengthen implementation and compliance to the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention and other regional policy instruments and initiatives (e.g. EcAp) supplemented by national approaches.

Strategic Direction 1.3: Develop capacity and implement schemes for sharing integrated monitoring data of the marine and coast in a sub-national, national and regionally cooperative manner.

Strategic Direction 3.1: Develop scientific knowledge and technical capacities to deal with climate change and ensure informed decision-making at all levels.

Strategic Direction 3.4: Encourage institutional, policy and legal reforms for the effective mainstreaming of climate change responses into national and local development frameworks.

Strategic Direction 6.1: Strengthen regional dialogue and cooperation in the Mediterranean in order to enhance security.

Strategic Direction 6.3: Promote structural reforms, in order to reinforce policy coherence and implementation on sustainable development.

Strategic Direction 6.4: Enhance capacity of national and local governments and other stakeholders, including the private sector. *Reference to specific objective 17 of the 2005 Regional Strategy.*

1.2.17 The MSSD 2.0 draft updated vision, the three thematic areas and the seven strategic directions identified above should, once adopted, underpin any environment protection-related actions currently being or planned to be implemented in the Mediterranean region, including those referring specifically to protection against pollutants and other contaminants generated by ships. It is thus recommended that the principles comprised in the said vision, thematic areas and strategic directions be incorporated as appropriate, either explicitly or by reference, in the draft Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021.

1.3 Regional Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management

1.3.1 The contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, in adopting the 2005 Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, in particular specific objective 1 – Ratification of relevant international conventions related to the protection of the marine environment, agreed to ratify the MARPOL Convention and its Annexes, as well as other IMO relevant international conventions to ensure their transposition into national law and full compliance with their provisions. Among these relevant IMO instruments was the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (the BWM Convention). Although this Convention has not entered into force yet, the conditions for it to become effective are nearly met, to the extent that its entry into force can be expected sometime during 2016, as a number of States have indicated that they are making arrangements to deposit their instruments of accession very soon.

1.3.2 The Contracting Parties, at their 17th Ordinary Meeting (Decision IG.20/11), desirous to address the risk arising from the introduction of invasive alien species through ships' ballast water, which has been recognized as one of the four greatest threats to the world's oceans; recalling the objectives of the BWM Convention and particularly its Article 13 whereby, to achieve these objectives, "the Parties bordering enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, shall endeavor, taking into account characteristic regional features, to enhance regional co-operation, including through the conclusion of regional agreements"; and further recalling Decision

IG.19/11 adopted at their 16th Ordinary Meeting to develop a regional strategy on ships' ballast water management in the Mediterranean within MAP, adopted the Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management (the BWM Mediterranean Strategy), including an associated Action Plan and Timetable.

1.3.3 The BWM Mediterranean Strategy, echoing the Convention from which it emanated, addresses the problem of aquatic organisms and pathogens being released into non-native environments within the Mediterranean sea after being transported from other parts of the world in ships' ballast water. Such organisms may survive and out-compete native species, becoming invasive and causing a great deal of damage to the local ecosystem. The general objective of the Strategy is to establish the framework for a regional harmonized approach in the Mediterranean on ships' ballast water control and management which is consistent with the requirements and standards of the BWM Convention.

1.3.4 Although the ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention counts among the objectives of the 2005 Regional Strategy for the Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, and should remain so in the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021, it is evident that the BWM Mediterranean Strategy, having been developed as a stand-alone instrument, should be related to the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021 by reference only, in association with the implementation of the BWM Convention. In this respect, REMPEC should be expected to play an essential role as the Contracting Parties, under Action 8 of the BWM Mediterranean Strategy's Action Plan, decided that the Centre should coordinate the implementation of the said Plan as the continuation of the present efforts of the Centre devoted to enhance expertise in the region on ballast water management issues; and also designated the Centre as the Regional Coordination Organization (RCO) for the implementation of the Globallast Partnerships Project in the Mediterranean in collaboration with the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA).

1.3.5 With the above considerations in mind, it is recommended that the BWM Mediterranean Strategy be referred to in the draft Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021 in connection with the implementation of the BWM Convention and any associated regional projects, such as the Globallast Partnerships Project in the Mediterranean. It is further recommended that REMPEC be provided with the necessary means and resources to carry out its coordination role in the implementation of the BWM Convention, the BWM Mediterranean Strategy, any regional projects related to BWM and, ultimately, the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021, once it is adopted by the Contracting Parties.

1.4 Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management

1.4.1 The 18th Meeting of the Contracting Parties, taking into account the work carried out within the framework of UNEP, both at the global and regional levels, and the pertinent provisions of international environmental agreements and other regional agreements of relevance, and taking also into account the legal obligations with regard to marine litter and the relevant work carried out in this field within the framework of the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention and its associated Protocols, adopted the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (the Marine Litter Regional Plan) in the framework of Articles 5 and 15 of the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities. The Parties also adopted a Work plan with timetable for the implementation of relevant Articles of the Marine Litter Regional Plan; of potential research topics to promote scientific research; and of elements for national biennial reports to enhance reporting on the implementation and effectiveness of measures.

1.4.2 In doing so, the Contracting Parties took note of the commitments endorsed by the Fifth International Marine Debris Conference and the Honolulu Strategy (2011), the UNEP Global Programme of Action (UNEP/GPA) Programme of Work on marine litter adopted in January 2012, as well as the International Conference on Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in European Seas, held in Berlin, Germany, from 10 to 12 April 2013. They were also inspired by the progress of the work carried out by Barcelona Convention/UNEP-MAP to implement the Ecosystem Approach Roadmap and recognized the need to fully harmonize the implementation of the Marine Litter Regional Plan with the Mediterranean Ecosystems Approach (EcAp) cycle.

1.4.3 The Contracting Parties also expressed their commitment to increase their efforts to tackle the regional challenges for the prevention of marine litter in an efficient and effective way to achieve good environmental status in synergy with EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and in harmony with the other European Regional Seas.

1.4.4 Within the Marine Litter Regional Plan it is recognized that the problem with marine litter originates not only from land-based sources but also from sea-based activities and, therefore, the Plan applies also to any operational discharges from ships, platforms and other man-made structures at sea. From the perspective of the revision of the 2005 Regional Strategy, the main objective of the Plan is to prevent and reduce to the minimum marine litter production in the Mediterranean and to manage marine litter in accordance with accepted international standards and approaches. Among the principles enshrined in the Plan, the following are shared by related regional and international instruments, such as MARPOL Annex V, and therefore should be underlined:

- .1 “integration”, by virtue of which marine litter management shall be an integral part of the solid waste management and other relevant strategies;
- .2 “prevention”, by virtue of which any marine litter management measure should aim at addressing the prevention of marine litter generation at the source;
- .3 “polluter-pays principle”, by virtue of which the costs of pollution prevention, control and reduction measures are to be borne by the polluter, with due regard to the public interest; and
- .4 “ecosystem-based approach”, by virtue of which the cumulative effects of marine litter on marine and coastal ecosystem, habitats and species with other contaminants and substances that are present in the marine environment should be fully taken into account.

1.4.5 Amongst the above, the principle of “prevention” is widely seen as the foundation on which any environment protection policy should be based. Efforts should, therefore, be concentrated on ensuring that ships, fishing vessels, pleasure craft and other marine structures fully comply with MARPOL Annex V and the Prevention and Emergency Protocol in all respects, and also with other related European and regional instruments. One of the most important prevention measures under MARPOL Annex V (and other Annexes) is the obligation for Parties to provide adequate reception facilities in ports. Although much has been done on this crucial issue at the international, European, Mediterranean and national levels, some coastal States still find it difficult, possibly on account of perceived excessive cost, to provide even their major ports with the reception facilities they are obliged to under the MARPOL annexes they have ratified, as concluded in recommendation 4 a) to 4 f) of the Synthetic Report REMPEC/WG.36/4.

1.4.6 The Marine Litter Regional Plan captures some of the preceding observations inasmuch as the Contracting Parties undertake, “in accordance with Article 14 of the Prevention and Emergency Protocol, to explore and implement to the extent possible by 2017, ways and means to charge reasonable cost for the use of port reception facilities or when applicable, apply No-Special-Fee system. The Contracting Parties also agree to take the necessary steps to provide ships using their ports with updated information relevant to the obligation arising from Annex V of MARPOL Convention and from their legislation applicable in the field.”

1.4.7 Mention should be made at this stage of the internet-based Port Reception Facility Database (PRFD), which went live to the public on 1 March 2006 as a module of the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS). The database provides data on facilities for the reception of all categories of ship-generated waste. Data for reception facilities can be updated only by the respective IMO Member States via a log-in password, while the public is allowed free access, following a simple initial registration, to all the information on a view-only basis. This module is aimed at improving the rate of reporting alleged inadequacies of reception facilities so that the problem can be tackled more effectively.

1.4.8 To address the ultimate fate of the waste collected, especially in port reception facilities, the Contracting Parties, under the Marine Litter Regional Plan, commit, where it is environmentally sound and cost effective, to remove existing accumulated litter, subject to Environmental Impact Assessment procedure. This would be preferably achieved by establishing a waste management strategy, based on the “reduce, reuse and recycle” principle, where port and maritime authorities would work in close coordination with other relevant municipal and national institutions. This waste management strategy should, naturally, be made extensive to wastes other than litter or garbage from ships whose reception in port facilities is required under international regulations.

1.4.9 It is clear that the **prevention of pollution by garbage from ships and other marine vehicles and structures; the provision of adequate reception facilities in ports; the sound disposing of collected wastes through an appropriate management strategy; and the reporting of information on such obligations** are issues that still require action at national and regional level in the Mediterranean. It is also acknowledged that the thorough and prompt implementation of the Marine Litter Regional Plan and any associated actions would go a long way towards helping Contracting Parties in the fulfilment of their obligations under regional, European and international mandatory instruments. Therefore, having identified strong synergies between such instruments in the pursuit of marine environment protection from ships' sourced litter, it is recommended that the said Plan be appropriately referred to in the draft Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021, together with any relevant observations made above, in particular as regards updates of the specific objectives 1, 4 and 8 of the 2005 Regional Strategy.

1.5 Draft Offshore Protocol Action Plan

1.5.1 Following the entry into force in 24 March 2011, after the ratification by Albania, Cyprus, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia¹ of the Protocol concerning the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (“Offshore Protocol”) of the Barcelona Convention, the 17th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, held in Paris, France, from 8 to 10 February 2012, adopted Decision IG.20/12 related to the Action Plan for the implementation of the Offshore Protocol. According to this Decision, the Contracting Parties request the Coordinating Unit to:

- .1 establish an ad hoc working group coordinated by REMPEC composed of representatives of the Contracting Parties and observers from representatives of the concerned industries, relevant international organizations and MAP partners with a view to lead the work for preparing an in depth assessment and stock-taking analysis of the existing practical measures in place in the Mediterranean countries with regard to Offshore activities as a baseline to measure progress towards Protocol implementation in the future and to prepare an Action Plan to facilitate the implementation of the Protocol;
- .2 request REMPEC, in accordance with the provisions of the Offshore Protocol and the Prevention and Emergency protocol (2002) as well as REMPEC mandate, to take into consideration, to the extent possible, offshore oil exploration and production activities when assisting in the revision of national or sub-regional oil pollution contingency plans; and
- .3 invite all the Contracting Parties to update annually the data provided through the questionnaire prepared by REMPEC in order to obtain a reference basis, and enable the Secretariat to develop an effective capacity building and assistance programme based on the needs of the Contracting Parties.

1.5.2 Subsequently, REMPEC organised the following events:

¹ On 17 December 2012, the Council of the European Union also adopted the Protocol

- .1 1st Offshore Protocol Working Group Meeting, Valletta, Malta, 13-14 June 2013;
- .2 2nd Offshore Protocol Working Group Meeting (MEDEXPOL 2013), Athens, Greece, 10-12 December 2013; and
- .3 3rd Offshore Protocol Working Group Meeting, Attard, Malta, 17-18 June 2014.

1.5.3 The analysis prepared by REMPEC on the existing practical measures in place in the Mediterranean countries with regard to offshore activities and the study on best international practices were presented in document WG.34.19 - Study on the International Best Practices-Rev1 at the Workshop on the Regional Response Capacity and Coordination to Major Oil Spill in the Mediterranean Sea (MEDEXPOL 2013) held in Athens, Greece, from 10 to 12 December 2013.

1.5.4 According to Decision IG.21/8 of the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Istanbul, Turkey, 3-6 December 2013), “the Secretariat and the ad hoc Working Group were requested to continue the necessary work with a view to achieve the drafting of the Offshore Protocol Action Plan by the end of 2014”. The Draft Offshore Protocol Action Plan (REMPEC/WG/35/4) was prepared by the Secretariat taking into account the findings of the studies and the recommendations made by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The Reviewed Draft Offshore Action Plan (REMPEC/WG/35/5) was adopted by the 3rd Offshore Protocol Working Group, Malta, 17-18 June 2014 and subsequently presented to the 4th Meeting of the EcAp Coordination Group, held from 9 to 10 October in Athens, Greece, which invited Contracting Parties to submit their comments in writing for their consideration at the MAP Focal Point Meeting.

1.5.5 Taking into account that “in cases of emergency the Contracting Parties shall implement *mutatis mutandis* the provisions of the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency”², and that Decision IG.20/12 requests REMPEC to take into consideration, to the extent possible, offshore oil exploration and production activities when assisting in the revision of national or sub-regional oil pollution contingency plans, it is recommended to make reference to the Offshore Protocol and its Action Plan in the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021 to ensure synergies between actions related to Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, as will be specified in the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021, and activities related to offshore oil exploration and production within REMPEC’s mandate. Notwithstanding, the latter should be addressed in the Offshore Protocol Action Plan.

1.6 Pleasure craft activities Guidelines

1.6.1 In addition to stipulating the reduction of pollution generated by pleasure craft activities as one of its specific objectives, the current 2005 Regional Strategy mandates the preparation of guidelines aiming at protecting the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment against pollution that might be caused by pleasure craft activities, and defines principles for the development and respect of the marine environment by pleasure craft activities in the Mediterranean Sea to be retained for the development of such guidelines (Annex 5 of the 2005 Regional Strategy).

1.6.2 The 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Decision IG 17/9), having considered the 2005 Regional Strategy, including in particular the specific objective mentioned above and the associated principles stated in Annex 5 of the Strategy, together with the recommendation adopted by the Contracting Parties at their 14th Ordinary Meeting, which invited the Secretariat (REMPEC) to prepare guidelines on pollution from pleasure craft activities, taking into consideration the said principles, and to present them to the following Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points for endorsement, prior to their submission for adoption to the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties, adopted the Guidelines concerning Pleasure Craft Activities and the Protection of the Marine Environment in the Mediterranean (the Pleasure Craft Activities

² Article 16 of the Offshore Protocol on Contingency Planning

Guidelines), and invited the Mediterranean coastal States to develop, as appropriate, measures and procedures for the implementation of the actions set out in the Guidelines, individually or in co-operation.

1.6.3 In adopting the Pleasure Craft Activities Guidelines, the Contracting Parties had in mind the provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its relevant Protocols, in particular the Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (Prevention and Emergency Protocol), as well as the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean Sea (SPA and Biodiversity Protocol), together with the measures adopted within the framework of the Regional Seas Programme of UNEP. Considering also that MARPOL Annexes I (Regulations for the prevention of pollution by oil) and V (Regulations for the prevention of pollution by garbage) apply to all ships, including pleasure craft, it is recommended that specific objective 8 of the 2005 Regional Strategy be kept, modified as necessary to refer to the Pleasure Craft Activities Guidelines. At the same time, the Secretariat (REMPEC) should be requested to continue assisting Mediterranean States in the development of measures and procedures for the implementation of the actions set out in the Guidelines, individually or in co-operation.

2 EUROPEAN

2.1 European Maritime Safety Agency Action Plans

2.1.1 Regulation (EC) No 1406/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council, establishing a European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), states *inter alia* that “the Agency should represent the technical body providing the Community with the necessary means to act effectively to enhance overall maritime safety and ship pollution prevention rules... and should provide the necessary support to ensure the convergent and effective implementation of such legislation throughout the Community.” Also, Article 17, as amended in 2004, provides that “the Agency shall be open to the participation of third countries, which have entered into agreements with the European Community, whereby they have adopted and are applying the Community Law in the field of maritime safety, maritime security, prevention of pollution and response to pollution caused by ships.”

2.1.2 Further, preambular paragraphs (34) and (35) of the 2013 amendments to the above Regulation, affirms that “the assistance of the Agency to the Member States and to the Commission with regard to the relevant work of international and regional organizations should be without prejudice to the relationship between those organizations and the Member States resulting from Member States’ membership of those organizations.” And since the Union has acceded to the Barcelona Convention, which established a regional organization in the Mediterranean, “the Agency should therefore provide technical assistance to Member States and the Commission to take part in the relevant work of those regional organizations”.

2.1.3 Finally, paragraph (36) of the 2013 amendments state that “in addition to those regional organizations, a number of other regional, sub-regional and bilateral coordination and cooperation arrangements exist with regard to pollution response. When providing assistance with regard to pollution response to third countries sharing a regional sea basin with the Union, the Agency should act, taking into account those arrangements.”

2.1.4 Taking the above into account and considering the successful outcome of previous cooperation arrangements between the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and EMSA, it is evident that there is a need for maintaining and, if possible, increasing coordination when defining the actions that should be included in the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021 concerning challenges of mutual interest. It is also clear that Contracting Parties that are not Members of the EU should aspire to bring their maritime safety, maritime security and, especially, ship-generated pollution prevention and response legislation and practices, in line with that of their Mediterranean neighbouring States which are EU Members. Therefore, the set of objectives that the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021 should embody would ideally have to be in full harmony, not only with the aims of UNEP/MAP’s strategies and action plans but also

with EU policies affecting the protection of the Mediterranean environment currently being, or about to be, implemented by EMSA.

2.1.5 Currently, there are two Action Plans for pollution preparedness and response developed by EMSA: one for oil and the other for hazardous and noxious substances (HNS). Regarding the former (hereinafter referred to as Oil Action Plan), the Mediterranean Sea, particularly the area along the tanker route from the Black Sea, has been identified as a priority area in European waters which require additional action.

EMSA's Oil Action Plan

2.1.6 The Oil Action Plan activities are divided into three categories: information, co-ordination and operational assistance. In dealing with the first category, the Plan calls for the development of a comprehensive information database and the study of possibilities to promote common simulation models for oil spill behaviour; the development of European guidelines for the use of dispersants; the undertaking of an assessment regarding HNS spills in European waters; and stimulating innovation of oil pollution response equipment. Also, EMSA is ready to disseminate best practices among regional agreements and to facilitate the exchange of observers to be present at exercises taking place in each other region.

2.1.7 EMSA is also prepared to work closely with the regional agreements at a practical operational and technical level, such as participation in joint oil pollution response activities, an action that the regional bodies have already welcomed. Another area which the Agency is addressing under the Oil Action Plan, also for the benefit of the regional agreements, is the strengthening of the response chain, including improving the guidance to vessels to suitable slicks, upgrading aerial and/or satellite surveillance and creating improved facilities for the discharge of recovered oil.

2.1.8 The synergies between the measures called for in EMSA's Oil Action Plan and the objectives of the 2005 Regional Strategy, in particular specific objectives 18 to 21, are all too evident. Therefore, in revising the relevant specific objectives, care should be taken to reflect all the Plan actions that are considered applicable to the Mediterranean, in particular those areas where EMSA's mandate is extended to cover third parties and regional agreements. Therefore, it is recommended that the requests of the Secretariat (REMPEC) under specific objectives 18, 19, 20 and 21 be modified to include a further request to carry out the actions in question taking into account the pertinent aims of EMSA's Oil Action Plan, as may be amended. Reference should also be made to paragraph 2.1.13 below.

EMSA's HNS Action Plan

2.1.9 Although at the beginning EMSA focused its tasks in the field of oil pollution, as indicated in the preceding paragraphs, it soon recognized that marine pollution caused by hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) other than oil needed to be addressed as well, and developed the Action Plan for HNS Pollution preparedness and Response (HNS Action Plan). The plan addresses, among other underlying issues, the potential hazards, risks and impacts linked to HNS marine pollution, together with the associated response options.

2.1.10 As per the case of the Oil Action Plan, the HNS Action Plan activities are divided into three categories: information, cooperation and coordination and operational assistance. In dealing with the first category, the latter Plan aims to address and understand the HNS marine pollution thematic and ultimately produce the necessary HNS specialized technical, scientific and operational information, including relevant statistical information and analyses; inventories of States' policies and response capacities; dissemination of specialized knowledge; and stimulation of R&D and innovation in the HNS pollution preparedness and response field.

2.1.11 Under the theme of cooperation and coordination, the Plan activities aim to expand the scope of cooperation between the Agency and the Regional Agreements and other key actors identified in the Oil Action Plan with the purpose of covering also HNS marine pollution, preparedness and response. In particular, the Plan calls for the development, in close cooperation with the Regional Agreements and other response organizations, of a guiding

document which combines the existing operational HNS response manuals. The development of national/regional HNS contingency planning; the harmonization of HNS incident reporting procedures; and the strengthening of international cooperation in HNS pollution response, all regulated by the 2000 OPRC-HNS Protocol, are also subjects for consideration under the HNS Action Plan.

2.1.12 Regarding the area of operational assistance, the Plan calls upon EMSA to develop an HNS-incident decision support software tool and building on their example (e.g. REMPEC's MIDSIS TROCS) in close cooperation with the Member States and the Regional Agreements. This tool should focus on providing practical information in a user-friendly way and supporting the Member States' decision-making process, support that, presumably, would be made extensive to the Regional Agreements.

2.1.13 The HNS Action Plan also contains a number of actions which would be taken should the need and means be identified, including the development of further studies and inventories aimed at further strengthening European preparedness and response to HNS pollution. The aims, objectives and activities of the HNS Action Plan, it may be safely concluded, are relevant to the Mediterranean region as a whole and, as was the case with the Oil Action Plan, should be captured in the Revised Regional Strategy, in particular those areas where EMSA's mandate is extended to cover third parties and regional agreements. Therefore, also considering the observations made in paragraph 2.1.8 above, it is recommended that the existing specific objectives 6, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 of the 2005 Regional Strategy, especially the requests made of the Secretariat, be modified accordingly.

2.2 Union Civil Protection Mechanism

2.2.1 According to the European Commission Implementation Decision of 16 October 2014, the general objective of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) is "to strengthen the cooperation between the Union and the Member States and to facilitate coordination in the field of civil protection in order to improve effectiveness of systems for preventing, preparing for and responding to natural and man-made disasters", including those affecting the marine environment. Contact among States in case of emergency is ensured by the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and a Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) guarantees authenticity, integrity and confidentiality of information among Member States. Furthermore, in view of the specificities of the response to marine pollution incidents, a separate version of CECIS will be created to provide access to third countries and, on an ad hoc basis, to the secretariats of the regional sea conventions and third countries sharing a regional sea basin with the Union.

2.2.2 Among the aims of the UCPM, *inter alia* available through the annual call for prevention and preparedness projects and a call for exercises in the field of civil protection and marine pollution, is the establishment of a training programme covering the prevention of, preparedness for and response to disasters, including marine environment emergencies. Participation in the training courses will also be open, *inter alia*, to the United Nations and its agencies, certain international organizations and third countries.

2.2.3 The UCPM enables the European Commission, in the case of a disaster occurring outside the Union which may require civil protection assistance, to inform the third country of the possibilities to request assistance under the mechanism. A request for assistance by a third country affected or threatened by a disaster, or by the United Nations and its agencies or certain international organizations, should be made in writing to the ERCC.

2.2.4 Considering that a marine environment disaster of catastrophic consequences can occur at anytime, anywhere in the Mediterranean; that disasters do not discriminate between national borders or territorial seas; and that many coastal States may not be able to adequately respond to such emergencies by themselves, even with the help of neighbouring countries and REMPEC, it is recommended that the above UCPM provisions be taken into account when revising the 2005 Regional Strategy, by modifying specific objectives 18, 19, 20 and 21 as appropriate.

2.3 EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive

2.3.1 European Directive 2008/56/EC establishes a framework for community action in the field of marine environment policy. In particular, it requires Member States sharing a marine region or sub-region to cooperate to ensure that the measures required to achieve the objectives of the Directive are coherent and coordinated across the marine region or sub-region concerned. To achieve this coordination, Member States are obliged to use existing regional institutional cooperation structures, including those under the Regional Sea Conventions, making every effort to coordinate their actions with third countries having sovereignty or jurisdiction over the waters concerned. Member States are also obliged, as far as possible, to build upon relevant existing programmes and activities developed in the framework of structures stemming from Regional Sea Conventions.

2.3.2 Given the direct bearing of the above Directive on the cooperation structures that should guide Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, including non-EU Members, when deciding upon the Mediterranean region marine strategies, and recognizing in particular that Contracting Parties share the commitment to achieve and maintain good environmental status in the Mediterranean marine environment through the application of the necessary marine strategies, such as the 2005 Regional Strategy and the forthcoming Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021, it is recommended that reference to the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive be made, as appropriate, in the general objectives of the Revised Regional Strategy.

2.3.3. In addition, as detailed in paragraph 1.3.4, further consideration should be given in the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021 to a new monitoring programme in line with EcAp.

2.4 H2020 Initiative

2.4.1 The Horizon 2020 Initiative is an umbrella programme drawing together all the policies, strategies and action plans, placing emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges, such as enhancing maritime protection. As such, it aims to improve the quality of life of more than 420 million citizens living in the 25 countries bordering the Mediterranean sea.

2.4.2 In this connection, Ministers in charge of environment and climate change from the 43 countries comprising the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), on the occasion of the first UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change (Athens, 13 May 2014) acknowledged the urgent need to address the impact of climate change on the Mediterranean region and shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns for a green and low emission economy. They highlighted the cross-sectorial nature of environment and climate change challenges and the importance of fostering growth and job creation while ensuring better quality of life and a sustainable future.

2.4.3 In particular, they renewed their support for the Horizon 2020 Initiative, reaffirming the continued relevance of its four components and the three sectors targeted (waste water, solid waste and industrial emissions); and agreed to strengthen its pollution prevention dimension and to pay attention to emerging and related issues, such as hazardous waste and marine litter. The Ministers further called for further strengthening of synergies with the Barcelona Convention and undertook to take firm steps to ensure the full implementation and enforcement of policies supporting the H2020 Initiative goals, in line with the Ecosystem Approach (ECAP), with the support of the capacity building component when required.

2.4.4 The Ministerial Meeting also undertook to address data needs by applying the principles of Shared Environment Information Systems (SEIS) in line with the commitments under the ECAP Decisions of the Barcelona Convention, also contributing to its regional integrated monitoring programme, and to take steps to accelerate the necessary reforms to create a favourable and sustainable investment environment, and to ensure adequate project preparation and implementation.

2.4.5 As a follow up to the above-mentioned Meeting, national representatives in charge of environmental policy from more than 20 Mediterranean countries joined participants from international financial institutions, regional organizations and other key stakeholders in adopting a strategic document outlining the key objectives over the period 2015-2020 for the H2020 Initiative for a cleaner Mediterranean as regards investments in pollution reduction, review and monitoring, capacity building and research. The document in question recognizes the need to reinforce investment activities in pollution reduction, with a wider thematic scope, information sharing and closer cooperation and synergies, in particular, regarding the work of UNEP/MAP under EcAP.

2.4.6 The second phase of the H2020 Initiative is clearly of great relevance to the purpose behind the revision of the 2005 Regional Strategy. Since the Initiative's overarching nature does not lend itself to being reflected under a specific objective, it is recommended that reference to the H2020 Initiative's second phase (2015-2020) be made, as appropriate, in the general objectives of the Revised Regional Strategy 2006-2021.

3 INTERNATIONAL

3.1 IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme priorities

3.1.1 The IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), at its sixty-seventh session (13 to 17 October 2014), approved the following selected thematic priorities relating to the protection of the marine environment for inclusion in the Organization's Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme (ITCP) for the biennium 2016-2017:

- .1 Assisting countries in implementing the MARPOL Convention and, more specifically, in providing port reception facilities, establishing of Special Areas or PSSAs, introducing waste management and in the uniform application of Annex VI on energy efficiency measures for ships.
- .2 Assisting countries in implementing the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol and enhancing regional cooperation in marine pollution preparedness, response and cooperation as well as addressing aspects of the implementation of the relevant international regimes on liability and compensation for oil and HNS pollution damage.
- .3 Strengthening national and regional capacity and fostering regional cooperation for the ratification and effective implementation of the Hong Kong Convention on Ship Recycling, the BWM Convention and ships' biofouling guidelines.
- .4 Assisting countries in ratifying and implementing the London Protocol on Prevention of Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter.

3.1.2 The above selected thematic priorities will be considered by the Technical Co-operation Committee in June 2015 (TC 65) for inclusion in the ITCP and apportioning of assistance and funds for their implementation worldwide. It is, therefore, important that Contracting Parties which plan to attend TC 65 endeavour, with the support of REMPEC, to obtain as much assistance as possible for the implementation of the priorities that may be identified for inclusion in the Revised Regional Strategy.

3.1.3 With reference to thematic priorities 3.1.1.1 above, it is clear that these are likely to be a recurring main concern of the MEPC for years to come and, therefore, it is most likely that they will remain relevant for the duration of the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021. New emphasis should be placed, though, on the implementation of waste management policies, principally regarding revised MARPOL Annex V, which, with very few exceptions, prohibits the discharge into the sea of all ship wastes and cargo residues, and the same argument may be applied to the 1996 London Protocol on Prevention of Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter. As a consequence, ships will have to dispose of increasing amounts of waste in port reception facilities, thus making the provision of environmentally sound shore waste management practices, based on the "reduce, reuse, recycle" principle, a real necessity.

Moreover, revised Annex VI requires the provision of adequate facilities for the reception of ozone depleting substances and exhaust gas cleaning residues, which, together with the facilities required by Annexes I, II, IV and V, should be considered in the development of the said waste management practices. Taking the thematic priorities under 3.1.1.1 above into consideration, together with recommendation 4 a) to 4f) made in the Synthetic Report (REMPEC/WG.36/4) under Specific Objective 4 (Provision of reception facilities in ports), it is recommended that the said Specific Objective in the Revised Regional Strategy be amended accordingly.

3.1.4 The revised Comprehensive Manual on Port Reception Facilities, expected to be approved for publication by MEPC 68 in 2015, and the Guide to Good Practice for Port Reception Facility Providers and Users (MEPC.1/Circ.671/Rev.1) contain material that could be of help in the attainment of existing specific objective 4 and of the amended objective.

3.1.5 The uniform application of revised MARPOL Annex VI is another IMO ITCP thematic priority that merits a separate reference in the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021. As indicated in recommendations 1 a) and 13 a), made in the Synthetic Report (REMPEC/WG.36/4), the ratification of MARPOL in general and of its Annex VI (1997 MARPOL Protocol) in particular should be a priority for Contracting Parties. It is, therefore, recommended that existing Specific Objective 13 of the 2005 Regional Strategy be modified to reflect such priority.

3.1.6 The other thematic priorities mentioned in paragraph 3.1.1.1 above (implementation of the MARPOL Convention, in general, and the establishment of Special Areas and PSSAs) will be covered by existing specific objectives of the 2005 Regional Strategy, provided the Contracting Parties agree to keep them in the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021.

3.1.7 As to the IMO ITCP thematic priorities specified in paragraph 3.1.1.2 above (implementation of the OPRC Convention and the OPRC-HNS Protocol and enhancing regional cooperation in marine pollution preparedness, response and cooperation), the related actions are already covered under existing specific objectives 19, 20 and 21 of the 2005 Regional Strategy. Therefore, these priorities would be reflected in the objectives of the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021 if the Contracting Parties agree with the Synthetic Report recommendations that the above mentioned three existing specific objectives should be maintained for the period 2016-2021.

3.1.8 With regard to the other thematic priority under paragraph 3.1.1.2, referring to the provision of assistance to address aspects of the implementation of the relevant international regimes on liability and compensation for oil and HNS pollution damage, it is recommended that the ratification and implementation of such regimes be specified when revising Specific Objective 1 of the 2005 Regional Strategy (Ratification of relevant international maritime conventions related to the protection of the marine environment), together with other instruments such as the 2009 Hong Kong Convention on Ship Recycling, the 2004 Ballast Water Management Convention, the 1996 London Protocol on Prevention of Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter and the Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks. The 2011 Guidelines for the control and management of ship's biofouling to minimize the transfer of invasive aquatic species (resolution MEPC.207(62)) should also be addressed in this context. It is, therefore, recommended that specific sub-objective 1 b) of the 2005 Regional Strategy be upgraded accordingly, with the ensuing sub-objectives renumbered and modified as appropriate.

3.1.9 The thematic priorities specified in paragraphs 3.1.1.3 and 3.1.1.4 may be considered covered under the above recommended upgrading. As mentioned in paragraph 3.1.2 above, it should be noted that IMO may be required by Member Governments to provide assistance for the implementation and delivery of the objectives referring to in the above IMO ITCP thematic priorities, once approved by the TC, and that the Secretariat should be requested to explore ways and means that would secure such assistance.

3.2 IMO Member State Audit Scheme

3.2.1 In acknowledging that the ultimate effectiveness of any international convention depends mainly upon all States becoming party to and implementing the said conventions fully and effectively, the IMO Assembly, in 2003, approved the establishment and further development of the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme (VIMSAS), without excluding the possibility in the future of it becoming mandatory, and urging Governments to volunteer to be audited in accordance with the Scheme and the associated principles to be developed. Two years later, the Assembly adopted Framework and Procedures for the VIMSAS, which have been used by Governments that have volunteered to be audited, including many Mediterranean Administrations. During this process, IMO has provided assistance to Member States that have requested support to undergo the voluntary audit, including the training of auditors under the Scheme.

3.2.2 Following the adoption by the 26th IMO Assembly, in 2009, of the timeframe and schedule of activities for the consideration and introduction of an institutionalized IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS), the same organ, at its 28th session in 2013, adopted the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code), which would constitute the new audit standard and would be made mandatory under the relevant international conventions, together with revised Framework and Procedures for the IMSAS. The Assembly, at the same time, urged Governments to continue to volunteer and make themselves available for audits under the mandatory IMO instruments previously covered by the VIMSAS, leading up to the entry into force of the amendments to relevant conventions to make the III Code mandatory, when the new IMSAS would become fully effective, possibly in 2016, a year that, incidentally, coincides with the beginning of the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021.

3.2.3 With the above background and developments in mind, already reflected in the Synthetic Report (recommendations 2 a) and 2 b)), it would be highly advisable to incorporate in the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021 a specific objective addressing this matter. It is, therefore, recommended that existing specific objective 2 b) of the 2005 Regional Strategy be upgraded, whilst the existing requests to the Secretariat under Specific Objective 2 c) and d) would have to be modified accordingly.

4 Additional issues

4.1 It may be argued that the main cause behind the poor implementation at the national level of many of the specific objectives of the 2005 Regional Strategy up to the present has been the lack of a well-structured and specific national implementation plan which would have helped the responsible authorities to face their obligations in an organized and timely manner, with the support of adequate budgetary provisions. It is, therefore, recommended that a new specific objective be integrated into the draft Revised Regional Strategy to request the establishment and implementation, with the support of REMPEC, of National Action Plans (NAP), which would define the required actions to enable each country to implement the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021. Such initiative would also facilitate the linking of the NAP with IMO efforts concerning the definition of IMO instruments compliance gaps, *inter alia*, the IMO Member State Scheme Audit Scheme (IMSAS), including the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code). In other words, the NAPs would provide a useful tool to assess progress in individual countries and guide them in their implementation efforts in a tailored manner, following a national assessment and the definition of the necessary remedial measures.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 In analysing and comparing the provisions contained in relevant Mediterranean, European and international instruments, strategies, plans and other initiatives, which one way or another address the prevention of and response to marine pollution from ships, sufficient evidence has been found to affirm that there exist clear synergies among the said instruments, strategies, plans and other initiatives to amply justify the proposed revision of the 2005 Regional Strategy, leading to the establishment of a fresh and up-to-date framework meant to protect the Mediterranean waters and shores from any adverse effects that may emanate from the operation of ships and other marine vehicles and structures. Thus, it is hoped that the Revised Regional Strategy 2016-2021, once adopted by the Contracting Parties, will be envisaged as an integral part of the UNEP/MAP Midterm Strategy for the same period.

5.2 The recommendations made in this report, together with those stated in the Synthetic Report (REMPEC/WG.36/4) will form the basis for the revision of the 2005 Regional Strategy. Other proposals made directly by Contracting Parties and Mediterranean/European/international institutions and organizations will also be incorporated as they become available. Cross-reference to the appropriate instruments, strategies, plans and other initiatives will be made in the draft Revised Strategy whenever it is considered necessary or helpful.

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44. Resolution A.946(23) - IMO Member State Audit Scheme
45. Resolution A.1070(28) - IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code)
46. UNEP Global Programme of Action (UNEP/GPA) Programme of Work on marine litter
47. UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.21/9 - Outcomes of Rio+20