

INTRODUCTION

The database on alerts and accidents in Mediterranean Sea, the associated documents and Geographical Information System (GIS) have been prepared by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), as a contribution to the implementation of the "Protocol concerning Cooperation in Prevention pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea".

The database, the associated documents and GIS aims at providing competent authorities of the Contracting Parties to 1976 Emergency Protocol and of the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol, as well as other interested parties with a set of data on accidents in the Mediterranean, which should be used in conjunction with other data such as those relating to maritime transportation of oil and chemical substances, to identify more precisely the risk of accidental pollution and subsequently to facilitate taking appropriate measures concerning preparedness and response at both national and regional levels.

BACKGROUND

In February 1976, the coastal States of the Mediterranean region, by adopting the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, committed themselves *inter alia* to inform each other, either directly or through the Regional Centre, of all accidents causing or likely to cause pollution of the sea by oil or other hazardous substances and of the presence of spillages observed at sea, as well as of their assessments and actions taken to respond to the pollution and the evolution of the situation. The same commitment remained in the new Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, adopted in January 2002.

According to the Guidelines for Co-operation in Combating Oil Pollution (adopted in 1987) the Contracting Parties should report to the Regional Centre, at least all spillages or discharges of oil in excess of 100 cubic metres, as soon as they have knowledge of them.

The Centre started collecting data on oil spills and accidents likely to cause spillages of oil in the Mediterranean in August 1977. Since 1988 this information has been complemented with the information on incidents involving hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) other than oil, and since 1989 all such information recorded at REMPEC has been stored in the Centre's database, which has been revised and modified several times. Information regarding both accidents involving oil or other hazardous and noxious substances in Mediterranean Sea are kept in a single database.

Very often REMPEC is requested by various regional institutions, media and individuals for data that could be extracted from the database maintained and updated by REMPEC. The previous structure of the database did not permit its placing on the REMPEC website, and therefore each such request had to be dealt individually by the Centre. The present application gives public access to any party looking for information on accidents in the Mediterranean Sea at any time directly from REMPEC's website.

CONTENT AND UPDATE

The database is regularly updated. The information on each event recorded in the database includes information on the date and place of the spill or accident, the ship(s) or installation(s) involved, the source of information, the type and quantity of pollutant, a brief description of the accident and, when available, of actions taken and consequences of the accident.

There is a large number of shipping accidents that occur in the Mediterranean every year and REMPEC is regularly informed of these through Lloyd's Casualty Reporting Services (LCRS), Lloyd's List, its national Focal Points or through other sources. Since majority of such accidents neither result in pollution of the sea nor pose any risk of marine pollution, the lists included in the present document record only the accidents that **actually caused pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by oil or other hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) or were likely to cause it**. The accidents that have been included in the list include those that satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- Accident happening in the Mediterranean Sea as defined in the Barcelona Convention. Mediterranean Sea is bounded to the west by the meridian passing through Cape Spartel lighthouse, at the entrance of the Straits of Gibraltar, and to the east by the southern limits of the Straits of the Dardanelles between the Mehmetcik and Kumkale lighthouses;
- Accident involving any type of ship, which actually resulted in an oil spill, a spill or release of a hazardous and noxious substance, or in a loss or damage to a container containing HNS;
- Accidents on land (terminals, storage tanks, pipelines, industries, power plants, etc.) that resulted in entry into the sea of oil or HNS;
- Accident involving one or more oil tankers or chemical tankers (either laden or not);
- Collisions, groundings or other accidents causing serious damage to the ships involved, in particular if these carried or could carry significant quantities of fuel oil as bunkers;
- All accidents involving sinking of vessels that had on board any quantity of oil as bunkers;
- All accidents involving sinking of vessels that carried HNS as cargo (either in bulk or in packaged form);

The alerts and accidents in Mediterranean Sea data are available in different versions:

- On-line database ;
- Report containing the data and statistical analysis; and
- A Geographical Information System (GIS).

From the **on-line database**, accidents can be sorted by:

- date;
- accident location (country);
- vessel type; and
- release quantity and type.

In order to enable database users to use the information in a personalized manner, the application enable the end user to export data, entirely or partly after a query, in different formats (.pdf, .doc and .csv).

The information contained in the alerts and accidents database are also reported in « **List of Alerts and Accidents in the Mediterranean** » which forms the Section 2 of Part C of the Regional Information System (RIS). The publication includes an explanatory introduction to the different elements of the accident reports and a statistical analysis, for accidents occurring since 1977.

Moreover, the geographic coordinates for each accident recorded, enabled the Centre to present at a regional scale the distribution of the accidents in the Mediterranean Sea through a **Geographical Information System (GIS)**. Several files covering time period of 5 years since 1977, and separating accidents involving oil from HNS, are available on the REMPEC website ("Database & Tools" section). This information could be visualized using

GoogleEarth application (<http://earth.google.com>).

USER GUIDELINES FOR ALERTS AND ACCIDENTS DATABASE

The guideline, available on .pdf format, has been developed to facilitate the use of the tools made available by REMPEC. Terms and abbreviations used in the database are also described in this document.

NOTE

Due to technical limitations, for incident occurred prior 2004 involving several vessels, details concerning the pollution have been assigned, by default, to the first described vessel. Consequently, in these cases, the information provided does not state the real source of pollution; thus, the said pollution could result from the first described vessel, the second one, or both involved vessels.

Any use by third parties of the information should take into account this default presentation.

The IMO identification numbers are given here, when available, for merchant marine ships with gross tonnage (gt) superior to hundred and still operating in the year 2000. Warships, barges, fishing vessels, and pontoons do not have assigned IMO numbers in the database.

Geographical coordinates of the accidents are only approximate values and are merely given on a rough basis. Please note that, for a GIS representation purpose, the coordinates are given in degrees and hundredths and not in degrees and minutes.

DISCLAIMER

1- The designations employed and the presentation of the material in the database or associated documents do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) or of the REMPEC concerning the legal status of any State, Territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

2-No responsibility for any interpretation or use of the data in whatever form by third parties shall lie with REMPEC.

3- Any use or reproduction of the information made available in the database, associated documents and GIS, in any form should specify the source of the information as followed:

IMO/UNEP: Regional Information System. Part C: Databanks and Information Services. Section 2: List of Alerts and Accidents in the Mediterranean, REMPEC.