

**OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS
OF A REGIONAL CENTRE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EMERGENCY PROTOCOL**

Monaco, 17 November 2001

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OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF A REGIONAL CENTRE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

I. OBJECTIVES

1. To strengthen the capacities of the coastal States in the Mediterranean region with a view to preventing pollution of the marine environment from ships and ensuring the effective implementation in this region of the rules which are generally recognized at the international level, relating to the prevention of pollution from ships, and with a view to abating, combating and, to the fullest possible extent, eliminating pollution of the marine environment irrespective of the source.
2. To develop regional co-operation in the field of prevention of pollution of the marine environment from ships, and to facilitate co-operation among the Mediterranean coastal States in order to respond to pollution incidents which result or may result in a discharge of oil or other hazardous and noxious substances and which require emergency actions or other immediate response.
3. To assist coastal States of the Mediterranean region, which so request in the development of their own national capabilities for response to pollution incidents which result or may result in a discharge of oil or other hazardous and noxious substances and to facilitate information exchange, technological co-operation and training.
4. To provide a framework for exchange of information on operational, technical, scientific, legal and financial matters, and to promote dialogue aimed at conducting co-ordinated actions at national, regional and global levels for the implementation of the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Hazardous and Noxious Substances in Cases of Emergency.

II. FUNCTIONS

A: GENERAL FUNCTIONS

1. To ensure the follow-up of the implementation of the Protocol to the Barcelona Convention concerning Co-operation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Hazardous and Noxious Substances in Cases of Emergency, and to perform relevant secretariat functions. In order to achieve this goal, to organize regular meetings of national authorities responsible for policies in the field of prevention of pollution from ships, preparedness for, and response to and co-operation in case of emergency, and to report to the meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention.
2. To develop and maintain close working relationships with other Regional Activity Centres of the Mediterranean Action Plan and with the "specialized regional organisms" which play a co-ordinating role as set forth in the Mediterranean Action Plan, particularly with the scientific institutions within the region.
3. To co-operate as appropriate in activities of the Mediterranean Action Plan related to marine pollution.

B: FUNCTIONS CONCERNING PREVENTION OF POLLUTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM SHIPS

1. To assist the coastal States of the Mediterranean region in reinforcing their national capacities with a view to implementing in an efficient manner the international law and regulations for the prevention of pollution of the marine environment from ships:

- a) by collecting and disseminating information concerning legal and technical aspects of prevention of pollution from ships;
- b) by providing legal and technical assistance in their efforts to develop and implement regulations applicable to the States of the Mediterranean region;
- c) by promoting transfer of technology;
- d) by conducting training activities;
- e) by executing, at the request of the States and within the limits of available means, programmes and pilot projects;
- f) by providing technical assistance to the coastal States which so request.

2. To assist the coastal States of the Mediterranean region in developing regional co-operation with a view to implementing in an efficient manner the international regulations for the prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships:

- a) by promoting, at request of the States the dialogue aimed at conducting co-ordinated actions at national, regional and global levels;
- b) by assisting in the implementation of regional programmes approved by the Contracting Parties;
- c) by conducting studies on subjects of regional interest, at the request of the States.

C: FUNCTIONS CONCERNING PREPAREDNESS FOR AND RESPONSE TO ACCIDENTAL MARINE POLLUTION AND CO-OPERATION IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

1. To collect and disseminate information on:

- i) Competent national authorities responsible for receiving reports of pollution of the sea by oil and other hazardous and noxious substances and for dealing with matters concerning measures of assistance between Parties;
- ii) Inventories of experts, equipment and installations in each coastal State for response to pollution incidents which result or may result in a discharge of oil or other hazardous and noxious substances and which might be, under certain conditions, put at the disposal of the State which so requests in case of emergency;
- iii) General information, plans, methods and techniques for combating pollution by oil and other hazardous and noxious substances in order to assist as far as necessary countries of the region in the preparation of their national contingency plans;
- iv) Mediterranean coastal zones, with a particular attention to the zones which are especially sensitive to pollution by oil and other hazardous and noxious substances. This information could be used by risk predicting models and for the preparation of environmental sensitivity maps.

2. To establish, keep up to date and operate a partially computerized data base on chemicals and their properties, risks for human life and the marine environment, response techniques and combating methods.

3. To progressively develop and operate a marine pollution emergency decision support system with a view to providing rapidly to the Mediterranean coastal States information concerning behaviour, risks and different possibilities for action in cases of accidents involving oil and other hazardous and noxious substances.

4. To prepare, disseminate and keep up to date operational guides and technical documents.

5. To develop and maintain a regional Communications/Information system appropriate to the needs of States being served by the Centre.
6. To develop technological co-operation and training programmes for combating pollution of the sea by oil and other hazardous and noxious substances and to organize training courses.
7. To assist coastal States of the Mediterranean region, which so request, in the preparation and development of bilateral, multilateral or subregional operational agreements between neighbouring coastal States.
8. To prepare and keep up to date operational arrangements and guidelines, aimed at facilitating co-operation between Mediterranean coastal States in cases of emergency.
9. To organize and activate the Mediterranean Assistance Unit for combating accidental marine pollution created by a decision of the Eighth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Antalya, 12 - 15 October 1993) in the conditions described in this decision.
10. To assist coastal States of the Mediterranean region, which in cases of emergency so request, in obtaining assistance of the other Parties to the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and Other Hazardous and Noxious Substances in Cases of Emergency and Preventing Pollution from Ships, or when the possibilities for assistance do not exist within the region, in obtaining international assistance from outside the region.