

Meeting of the Focal Points of the
Regional Marine Pollution Emergency
Response Centre for the Mediterranean
Sea (REMPEC)

REMPEC/WG.18/7
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Agenda Item 7

**CO-OPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS
AND THE OIL, CHEMICAL AND SHIPPING INDUSTRIES**

Note by REMPEC

1. The International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990 (OPRC 90), as well as a series of related Resolutions adopted by the Conference on International Co-operation on Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (London, 19-30 November 1990), emphasized *inter alia* importance of co-operation between governments and oil and shipping industries in the field of accidental marine pollution preparedness and response.
2. According to the OPRC Convention the States, Parties to the Convention, shall require that ships flying its flag, the operators of offshore units, sea ports and oil handling facilities, have oil pollution emergency plans co-ordinated with respective national systems. The Parties to the Convention are also invited to co-operate, as appropriate, with the oil and shipping industries in setting up pre-positioned response equipment stockpiles, in developing programmes of exercises and training, establishing communication capabilities, and in establishing arrangements for mobilizing necessary resources.
3. A Diplomatic Conference held from 9 to 15 March 2000 at the London headquarters of IMO, has adopted The Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances, 2000 (OPRC-HNS Protocol). The Protocol aims at providing a global framework for international co-operation in combating major incidents or threats of marine pollution from ships carrying Hazardous and Noxious Substances, such as chemicals and follows the principles of the OPRC 90 Convention. Like the OPRC Convention, Parties to the HNS Protocol will be required to establish measures for dealing with pollution incidents, either nationally or in co-operation with other countries. Ships will be required to carry a shipboard pollution emergency plan to deal specifically with incidents involving HNS. The Protocol, as well as the Resolutions adopted by the Diplomatic Conference call for the co-operation between Governments of the Contracting Parties, the shipping industry and the industries involved in hazardous and noxious substances.
4. In accordance with the principles introduced by the OPRC 90 Convention and recently by its HNS Protocol, and with a view to facilitating the co-operation between the governments of the Mediterranean coastal States and the oil, chemical and shipping industries, REMPEC has been developing close co-operation with the

organizations representing these sectors during the last decade. The overall objective of these activities was to promote the incorporation of the industries' contribution in the development and implementation of arrangements adopted by the governments in the field of preparedness for, response to and co-operation in case of marine pollution incidents.

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND THE OIL INDUSTRY

5. The intensifying, over the last couple of years, of co-operation in the field of oil spill preparedness and response between governments of the Mediterranean coastal States and the oil industry present in the region could be observed at several levels.

6. REMPEC, and therefore Contracting Parties, directly benefited from the secondment by the Environment and Security Division of French oil company Elf Aquitaine (TotalFinaElf Group) of a junior engineer to REMPEC. Since October 1997, Elf Aquitaine financed successively three such engineers, for a period of 16 months each, which corresponds to the duration of compulsory national service in France. Recognising the benefits of such collaboration for both by both the oil industry and the governments, Elf Aquitaine has indicated its intention to continue such practice until the statutory basis for it exists in France. The contribution of the engineers seconded by the French oil industry to various REMPEC's activities was significant and assisted a great deal in meeting the expectations of the Contracting Parties, that could have been difficult to satisfy without such assistance. **Taking into consideration the heavy workload of REMPEC, similar initiatives by other members of the oil industry and/or by the individual Contracting Parties would be most welcome.**

7. Following the initiative launched by the representatives of the petroleum sector included in national delegations at the 1994 Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points and the representatives of the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA), the Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG) has been founded. Since its establishment MOIG provided a forum for exchange of information and discussing matters related to oil spill response within the industry and between the industry and the governments of the Mediterranean coastal states.

8. The role of MOIG in strengthening co-operation between the governments and the oil industry was particularly evident in:

- attending meetings organized by one of the partners (either Governments or industry) by the representatives of the other partner;
- organizing or attending oil spill response exercises and other related activities organized in the region;
- providing lecturers in various training courses organized by REMPEC for the representatives of national administrations of the Contracting Parties to the Emergency Protocol;
- facilitating the exchange of information;

9. A brief summary of activities in which both MOIG, as the representative of oil industry and the governments of the Mediterranean coastal States, through REMPEC worked closely together includes:

Meetings

10. REMPEC attended as observer the meetings organized by MOIG, in Malta 24-25, November 1998 (that coincided with the Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points), in Bizerte, Tunisia, 6-8 July 1999, and in Istanbul, Turkey, 7-8 June 2000. The representative of the Centre will also attend the next Meeting of MOIG. that has been convened for 26-27 October 2000 in Malta, parallel with the Meeting of Focal Points.

11. The representatives of the oil industry, who were included in their respective national delegations, attended the last Meeting of REMPEC's Focal Points (Malta, 25-28 November 1998), and are also expected to attend the present Meeting.

12. Following the invitation by the Tunisian authorities, REMPEC facilitated the participation of a representative of the Italian oil industry in the one-day Workshop on major accidental marine pollution, held in Tunis on 28 June 2000. An official representative of MOIG from Tunis attended the Workshop and made a presentation on behalf of MOIG Chairman.

Training and Exercises

13. Following the invitation by REMPEC, the Chairman of MOIG attended and presented lectures in the following training courses organized by REMPEC since the last Meeting of Focal Points:

- Regional Training Course on Accidental Marine Pollution Crisis Management (MEDEXPOL 99), Tunis, Tunisia, 11-16 October 1999.
- National Workshop on National Contingency Plan for Preparedness for and Response to Accidental Marine Pollution, Beirut, Lebanon, 10-12 April 2000.

A report on MEDEXPOL 99 was subsequently published in Issue No.3 of "MOIG Newsletter".

14. MOIG has also been invited to present a lecture in the next MEDEXPOL regional training course that should be held in Naples, Italy in November 2000.

15. REMPEC attended and actively participated in a regional oil spill response exercise, organized jointly by Tunisian national authorities and MOIG in Bizerte, Tunisia on 7 July 1999.

16. The engineer seconded by the French oil industry actively participated, as part of the REMPEC's team, in the Joint Subregional Oil Spill Response Exercise, organized within the framework of the EC/LIFE Third Countries project for the development of the spill response capabilities of Cyprus, Egypt and Israel, in Haifa Bay in Israel in November 1999. "MOIG Newsletter" subsequently published in May 2000 a report on the Exercise.

Exchange of information

17. REMPEC prepared several articles for "MOIG Newsletter" on the activities of the Centre that might be of interest to the oil industry. It regularly provided the MOIG secretariat with information on activities carried out by the Mediterranean coastal States in the field of oil spill preparedness and response. In the same way MOIG kept REMPEC regularly informed on its activities.

18. IPIECA is invited to present in more detail the current and planned activities of both IPIECA and MOIG.

Activities outside the framework of MOIG

19. In addition REMPEC also continued working relations with those representatives of the national oil industries who had indicated that they would like to contribute to specific activities included in the work-plan of the Centre. During the period under observation several meetings were held with the representatives of the Italian oil industry in order to define the ways in which the Italian petroleum sector could assist REMPEC in e.g. the field of training, providing temporary professional assistance to the Centre and in supporting the activities of the Mediterranean Assistance Unit.

CO-OPERATION WITH THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

20. In recent years, the concern on the transport and storage of hazardous substances which may present a danger to the public and the environment, if not handled properly, have increased greatly. Because of the large variety of chemicals, local emergency services have increasingly resorted to the knowledge and experience of experts from the chemical industry in accidents involving chemical products. Cognisant of this, the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) launched a co-operative programme in May 1990 called "the International Chemical Environment (ICE) under its "Responsible Care Initiative".

21. One of the main purposes of this program is to offer rapid and competent assistance to emergency services responding to transport accidents occurring in Europe. This is achieved by having a scheme of mutual assistance between chemical companies in a country based on a register of participating companies which commit themselves to providing assistance when requested by the authorities. This scheme is administered by the National Chemical Federation of the country and within each scheme is a national response centre which maintains 24hr/day cover, keeps a register of contacts and has access to relevant chemical data. In the case of a transport accident which occurs in a country different from where the product has originated, the national response countries are in charge for the exchange of information between countries.

22. The following countries participate in ICE: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

23. Through the system, the chemical industry offers three levels of assistance:

- expert advice over the telephone/fax;
- expert advice on the spot;
- technical assistance on the spot.

24. In line with REMPEC's strategy to implement a policy of preparedness and response to chemical substances and more specifically to enhance co-operation between industry and government, formal contacts have been established so that the Centre and hence the Governments of the Mediterranean Coastal States can benefit from such a network in case of a chemical marine accident. To this end, the Centre has formally been accepted as part of the ICE scheme through which information could be channelled to and from the chemical industry in case of chemical marine accidents. In this regard, two communication exercises have been carried out on 23 June 1999 and 19 July 2000 between the French and Spanish ICE National Response Centres respectively and REMPEC to test the procedure for handling calls established within the framework of ICE for the request of chemical information.

25. At the 18th Meeting of the ICE Integration Group (22 September 1999), a presentation of the Mediterranean experience and the activities of the Centre in the field of preparedness and response to chemical substances were given. During the presentation, the possibility of integrating expertise from the chemical industry into the Mediterranean Assistance Unit was launched. A positive feedback was obtained and it was suggested by the CEFIC/ICE Secretariat that REMPEC take up the initiative with the individual National Response Centres. To this end, during the same meeting, REMPEC had preliminary contacts with the German delegation and formal contacts were established in July 2000 with the BASF Fire Department in Ludwigshafen, Germany, which is the designated National Response Centre within the CEFIC/ICE scheme. The BASF Fire Department employs 208 fire fighters split over two stations and is supported by a state-of-the-art fleet of vehicles (60) and specialized equipment. In addition to assuming its traditional role in fighting fires and providing assistance in technical emergencies to the BASF Group production site, the Department has developed emergency plans for the 350 chemical plants at the Ludwigshafen site which are spread over a 7 km² area and which also includes an inland waterways port.

26. It is hoped that a Memorandum of Understanding can be concluded between REMPEC and the BASF Fire Department in the near future which will outline the modalities under which co-operation can take place for the organization of a regional specialized training course at BASF, the use of the Fire Department's expertise in other training courses and assistance that the Fire Department can provide to the Mediterranean Assistance Unit.

27. The chemical industry is invited to submit an information document providing more information on the topics listed above and to present its views on the issue of the co-operation between government and the chemical industry on preparedness and response to maritime related accidents involving hazardous substances in the Mediterranean region.

CO-OPERATION WITH THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY

28. Over the last two years the relations between REMPEC and the shipping industry were less intensive than those with the oil and chemical industries. However, in the field of training REMPEC continued the long established and very fruitful co-operation with the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited (ITOPF), and ITOPF provided lecturers in various regional, subregional and national training courses and workshops organized by REMPEC during the period under observation.

29. In April 2000 REMPEC requested its National Focal Points to update ITOPF Country Profiles that provide a summary of oil spill response arrangements and resources in maritime countries. Replies received so far from competent national authorities have been forwarded to ITOPF with a view to modifying the section of Country Profiles dedicated to the Mediterranean.

30. In case of certain oil spills outside the Mediterranean region that nevertheless affected some Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention ("Volgoneft 248", Turkey, 1999; "Erika", France 1999), ITOPF regularly provided REMPEC with the first hand reliable information that was transmitted as necessary to the competent national authorities of the Mediterranean coastal States.

31. ITOPF took part in the regional oil spill response exercise, organized jointly by Tunisian national authorities and MOIG in Bizerte, Tunisia on 7 July 1999. ITOPF also attended and actively participated in the third joint sub-regional oil spill response exercise, organized by REMPEC under the LIFE Third Countries project for the development of spill response capabilities of Cyprus, Egypt and Israel, in Haifa Israel in November 1999.

32. ITOPF is invited to inform the Meeting of the most important recent developments within the shipping industry concerning international co-operation in the field of oil spill preparedness and response.

Action Requested of the Meeting of Focal Points

33. The Meeting is invited to:

- a) consider, discuss and express its view concerning the status of co-operation between governments and the industry in the Mediterranean region;
- b) examine the role REMPEC can play in enhancing this co-operation.