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

**CENTRE REGIONAL MEDITERRANEEN POUR L'INTERVENTION
D'URGENCE CONTRE LA POLLUTION MARINE ACCIDENTELLE (REMPEC)**

**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN
PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MEDITERRANEE**



7th Meeting of Focal Points of the
Regional Marine Pollution Emergency
Response Centre for the Mediterranean
Sea (REMPEC)

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**EC/MEDA FINANCED PROJECT ON EUROMED COOPERATION ON
MARITIME SAFETY AND PREVENTION OF POLLUTION FROM SHIPS (SAFEMED)**

Note by REMPEC

1. The Mediterranean, our common heritage, is challenged by human activities some of which may result in loss of life and pollution of the marine environment. Although it is acknowledged that shipping is one of the most safe and environmentally friendly modes of transport, serious shipping casualties highlight the need to enhance maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment and to strengthen co-operation.

2. In order to further develop Euro-Mediterranean (Euromed) co-operation in the field of maritime safety and security and prevention of pollution from ships, the idea of a project on Euromed cooperation on maritime safety and prevention of pollution from ships (SAFEMED) was launched by the European Commission (EC) within the framework of the Euromed Transport Forum¹. With a view to addressing a number of important issues jointly with the Mediterranean Partners, the project takes into consideration the achievements of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the added value created by the European Union (EU) maritime legislative framework.

3. The primary objective of the SAFEMED project is to mitigate the existing imbalance in the application of maritime legislation in the region between the Mediterranean Partners that are not members of the EU and those that are members, through promoting a coherent, effective and uniform implementation of the relevant international conventions and rules aimed at better protection of the marine environment in the Mediterranean region by preventing pollution from ships. The general objectives of the project are:

- To procure a sustainable improvement in the protection of Mediterranean waters against the risks of accidents at sea and marine pollution

¹ The need to focus cooperation on strengthening maritime safety and security in the Mediterranean has been underlined in the European Commission's Communication to the Council and the European Parliament on the development of a Euro-Mediterranean transport network, COM (2003) 376 final of 24 June 2003.

- To further reduce the capacity gap between the application of international regulatory framework and the EU legislative framework, in order to ensure a coherent, effective and uniform implementation of the international rules for maritime safety and security and the prevention of pollution from ships in both the Mediterranean area and the European Union.

4. The SAFEMED project foresees the implementation of some thirty-two tasks contained in eight main groups of activities namely:

- (i) Towards an effective flag State implementation and monitoring of classification societies
- (ii) Ensuring the safety of navigation through the development of traffic monitoring systems
- (iii) Protection of the marine environment
- (iv) The human element, a permanent source of concern within the maritime safety culture
- (v) Security of ships and port facilities in the Mediterranean area
- (vi) SAFEMED web site
- (vii) Coordination with other projects
- (viii) Follow up of the SAFEMED project

5. The project activities aim to enhance the European Union co-operation and transfer of knowledge and experiences with the non-EU countries in the Mediterranean Sea. The common interest to promote a coherent, effective and uniform implementation of the relevant international conventions and related EU legislation should enhance maritime safety and the protection of marine environment in the Mediterranean region. Through the project, the Mediterranean partners' maritime administrations will be encouraged to promulgate national legislation in accordance with relevant international (IMO) conventions and related EU legislation.

6. The activities of the project are planned to cover all aspects of the intended transfer of knowledge in progressive action: from evaluation of the initial situation and identification of needs, continuing with elaboration of studies and provision of direct technical advice, assistance in the countries where necessary, and complementing the works with training programmes and recommendations or guidelines.

7. The EC felt that the role of IMO in the development and implementation of maritime transport related conventions and the important role and activities of its Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), operating within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the Regional Seas Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), merited the involvement of these bodies in the project. In this regard, in 2004, with a view to the SAFEMED project being managed and implemented by REMPEC, the EC approached REMPEC to develop a project proposal based on guidelines initially prepared by the Commission and which were eventually discussed and approved by the Euromed Transport Forum. The EC subsequently decided that, due to technical and institutional reasons, the SAFEMED project will be managed by REMPEC and that it will conclude a service contract with IMO on behalf of REMPEC.

8. The SAFEMED project proposal, including the "Technical Annex" and the budget, was prepared by a consultant, in close collaboration with REMPEC staff and IMO, between July and October 2004, and subsequently amended in conformity with the comments of the relevant services of the EC and IMO. In the preparation of the project proposal, particular attention was paid to its compatibility with the draft Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships, which is expected to be endorsed by the present Meeting and proposed for approval by the next Meeting of MAP National Focal Points.

9. The project, which is valued around four million Euro, is expected to be implemented by REMPEC as a stand alone project during the period 2005-2008 in ten Mediterranean Partners namely, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.² Under the overall co-ordination of the EC and with backstopping from IMO, REMPEC, with the technical and administrative support of three long-term experts and the necessary short-term

² Cyprus and Malta are not included among the beneficiary countries as since they became EU Members on 1 May 2004, their Administrations already have implemented the "acquis communautaire" and received technical assistance.

experts recruited specifically for and financed by the project, will manage the implementation of all the tasks of the project. The implementation of the project is subject to the conclusion and signing of a service contract between the EC and IMO, which, at the time of writing, was still pending.

10. The proposed programme of activities of REMPEC for the biennium 2006/2007 (REMPEC/WG.26/10) was prepared taking into consideration both the draft Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships as well as the proposed SAFEMED project and assuming that the said project will be approved for implementation by the Centre during the period 2005-2008. In this regard, a number of activities complementing some tasks of the SAFEMED project were included in the proposed programme of activities of the Centre for 2006/2007 to be carried out in the thirteen Mediterranean coastal States which are Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention but which are not eligible for funding under the SAFEMED project.

The Meeting of Focal Points is invited to take note of the information provided on the SAFEMED project and to take it into consideration during the deliberations on Agenda Item 9 (Regional Strategy for prevention of and response to marine pollution from ships) and Agenda Item 10 (Proposed programme of activities and budget estimates for biennium 2006/2007).