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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



8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Focal Points of the  
Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response  
Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

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Agenda Item 12

**Project on Regional - AIS (Automatic Identification System)**

**Document submitted by Italy**

**Description area**

1. Mediterranean Sea (surface: 2,51 million of km<sup>2</sup>). Borders: Atlantic Ocean to West, through the Gibraltar Strait; Marmara and Black Sea to East, through Dardanelli and Bosforo Straits (Marmara Sea is generally considered part of the Mediterranean).

**Law in force**

2. The maritime traffic control systems have international legal support both in the "London Convention 1974 about safety of life at sea" (SOLAS 74) and in the European Directive 2002/59/CE (entered in force in Italy after Legislative Decree n. 196/2005).

3. The Italian Coast Guard is charged to control the system and, because of the deep knowledge of information on maritime and port traffic (arrival and departure of ships, loading and unloading of dangerous goods, movement and placement of cargo on the ship and within harbour areas, management of ship's movements within harbour areas, harbour work, pilotage, mooring, towing), can interact efficiently with the whole system.

**Considerations on marine environment**

4. Taking into account that the Mediterranean is a semi-closed sea, the discharge of noxious or pollutant substances can produce a serious environmental damage. The A.I.S. is a good tool for handling promptly environmental emergencies.

**System in force**

5. The *Automatic Identification System* (AIS) is a system of identification, automated, independent and continuous. It acts on frequencies of radio-mobile maritime service, in order to avoid collisions between ships and to supervise naval units within VTS areas. It gives a more detailed image of maritime traffic into coastal areas and ports, and consents identification and tracking of dangerous goods on ships so as to give more protection from the dangers connected with such substances. It can also transmit a large number of

information about a determined ship (identification code, position, speed or direction of movement, dimension or type of ship, cargo on board) to other ships and earth Stations.

6. The obligation to have a Regional Center of monitoring maritime traffic is established by Directive 2002/59/CE, that mandates Member States and the European Commission to cooperate with third Countries in order to realize EU purposes.

7. IMO. resolution MSC.74 (69) requires the AIS system to operate: anti-collision avoidance (Ship/Ship); as useful tool for States in order to find information about ships at sea and on the coast; as useful tool of VTS for computerizing both the identification of radar traces and voice communication. Reg. V-19 of SOLAS Convention establishes the mandatory presence of AIS system on ships over 300 g.t. used for international voyages, and on ships over 500 g.t. used in national voyages, to enter into force within 2008 (depending on the type of ships and their gross tonnage). The primary aim of this approach is to supply ships, as soon as possible, with AIS installations which, for their dimensions or use, can produce problems to security and marine environment. A few naval units are not subjected to SOLAS and the Administrations concerned have to determinate which functionality of AIS should be extended to: ships of less than 300 g.t., independently from the route; ships of less than 500 g.t., not involved in international routes; fishing vessels.

8. Some Member States of the Baltic and Barents Sea have taken specific initiatives for exchanging data between their national maritime monitoring traffic systems. So far, the most significant experience has been established in the Baltic Sea and concerns Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Germany, Poland, Russia and Sweden (Helsinki Agreement), and has recently been extended to the North Sea and the English Channel.

9. In Europe, the AIS paved the way to a serious program of maritime traffic monitoring and made available the necessary information. This system allowed the development of virtual monitoring Centers (sharing the same image of traffic, without creating one operational centre), producing positive results: the image sharing of the whole naval traffic (ships with AIS navigating within a determined area), in real time, between different local stations; the processing of statistics and databases on traffic within a specific area, with the assessment of hazards and adoption of appropriate safety measures.

10. The AIS program of the Italian Coast Guard plans the development of 3 different phases (phases 1 and 2 have already been realized): 1) acquisition of 40 local stations covering the whole national maritime area; 2) acquisition of a centralized system of local stations, for the picture of maritime traffic in a central unit; 3) acquisition of a correlation system of radar tracks and A.I.S., for a complete picture of national maritime traffic, as well as for the identification of SOLAS ships. Italy, for its geographic position and activities in force, has proposed itself as **Regional Mediterranean Center for monitoring maritime traffic**.

11. The emergence of a European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), as well as the ratification of community laws connected with "Erika package", has facilitated the process, even under the thrust of national industry that has made projects to those under way in northern Europe. During the European workshop of Brussels, organized by EMSA on May 8th 2006, the candidacy of Italy for the location of the Regional Mediterranean Center was first launched. The proposal, supported by EMSA, has gained the support of France, Spain, Portugal, Malta, Croatia, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Cyprus.

12. On October 11<sup>th</sup> 2006 REMPEC, with the support of the Italian Coast Guard, has organized in Trieste the VTMISS Info-day, with the participation of 16 Mediterranean Countries. The project aims at improving safety and security, as well as protection of marine environment in the Mediterranean Sea. The participating States agreed on the necessity of application of international rules, recognizing that Italy is (for its organization in maritime

safety and security and for its geographical position) a good place for the above mentioned Regional Mediterranean Center.

### **Proposed Measures**

13. The purposes of REMPEC, as remarked in the "*Regional Strategy for prevention of and response to marine pollution caused by ships*" (annex 2 - section 10), consist in the improvement of maritime traffic control by means of the following activities: 1) identification, by 2010, of Mediterranean areas where the control of maritime traffic will be improved with the creation of a regime based on the use of AIS (together with VTS); 2) strengthening, by 2010, of international cooperation and data exchange between VTS centers; 2) negotiation, by 2014, on financial assistance for the institution of this regime. Italy, in full compliance with Directive 2002/59/CE, has paved the way for the implementation of a centralized system to which national AIS systems of any other Mediterranean State can connect for the exchange of data, so as to facilitate the creation of a regional system (that could be enlarged, under art. 9 of European Directive n. 2002/59/CE, in order to allow other Mediterranean States to be participants of the system). For the above mentioned reasons, **Italy intends to confirm its candidacy as Regional Mediterranean Center for monitoring maritime traffic.**

14. For the widest involvement of non-UE States, Italy can play the same role of coordination and mutual exchange of AIS data with other Mediterranean Countries, and can activate cooperation projects (within INTERREG framework) in order to support by a technical point of view any State who would adhere to the initiative, looking forward to strengthening national capacities in safety, security and maritime police matters.

**The Meeting of Focal Points is invited to** take note of the information provided in this document and to comment as appropriate.