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

9th Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC)

Malta, 21-24 April 2009

REMPEC/WG.30/5
16 March 2009

Original: English

Agenda Item 5

CO-OPERATION AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Note by the Secretariat

Background

1. Amongst the Objectives and Functions of a Regional Centre for the implementation of the Emergency Protocol, as adopted by the Twelfth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, (UNEP(DEC)/MED IG.13/8, Annex IV, Appendix 1, Monaco, 17 November 2001), it was agreed that REMPEC should develop and maintain close working relationships with other Regional Activity Centers of the Mediterranean Action Plan and with the "specialized regional organisms" which play a coordinating role as set forth in the Mediterranean Action Plan, particularly with the scientific institutions within the region.

2. The issue of co-operation with other organizations is addressed also within the Regional Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (hereinafter referred to as "the Strategy"), which was adopted in 2005 by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (UNEP(DEC)/MED IG.16/3, Portoroz, Slovenia, 8-11 November 2005).

3. In view of assisting the Mediterranean coastal States in developing and enhancing their capacities in the field of marine pollution from ships, under Specific Objective 17 of the Strategy, which is related to the participation of the regional scientific and technical institutions in research and development activities, REMPEC is requested to assist regional institutions and industry in identifying fields of research in which there is a need for enhancement of the state of the art of spill preparedness and response technologies and techniques. Furthermore, Specific Objective 18 of the Strategy, addressing the improvement of decision-making process in case of marine pollution incidents through development of technical and decision support tools, states that the Centre shall endeavor to cooperate with scientific institutions in the region in order to provide the Contracting Parties with decision support tools developed taking into consideration specific characteristics of the Mediterranean region.

4. In order to accomplish its functions and meet the relevant objectives defined within the Strategy, REMPEC has developed a close working relation with scientific institutions, the Industry, other Regional Activity Centres of the Mediterranean Action Plan and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which provide the Centre with technical expertise on various issues related to prevention of, preparedness for and response to marine pollution from ships. To facilitate and strengthen such collaborations, particularly with those organizations addressing various matters of interest for the Centre and implementing similar tasks, REMPEC has developed specific Co-operation Agreements.

5. The present document is intended to update the Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points on some co-operation agreements which have recently been established and others which are currently under development, and proposes steps forward to foster existing collaboration, highlighting their value in

providing assistance to the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in the field of marine pollution from ships.

Co-operation with the Scientific Community

Co-operation with the Mediterranean Operational Oceanography Network (MOON)

6. The Mediterranean Operational Oceanography Network (MOON) is an operational monitoring and forecasting Network, including thirty-one oceanographic Institutes/Agencies (the full list is given in Annex) of the Mediterranean region, which was set up with the following objectives:

- To consolidate the operational observational/modelling system in the Mediterranean.
- To demonstrate the usage of the marine environmental prediction system for integrated management of open ocean and coastal marine areas.

MOON is coordinating a multiplatform observing system (in situ and remote sensing), a Mediterranean basin scale ocean forecasting system and several higher resolution forecasting systems in the Mediterranean sub-basins and coastal zones. Additional information may be found on MOON's website: www.moon-oceanforecasting.eu

7. In consideration of the sound knowledge of MOON in oil spill monitoring and forecasting, REMPEC requested the assistance of the Network in various circumstances related to both accidental and operational marine pollution from ships.

8. As a result, the Centre was promptly provided with meteo-oceanographic data and oil spill simulations predicting the movement of the oil at sea and highlighting, in case of accidental pollution, the areas of the coast more likely to be affected by oil.

9. In MOON, four oil spill models, namely MEDSLIK, MOTHY, POSEIDON OSM and TESEO, are coupled operationally with MOON's regional, sub-regional and coastal ocean forecasting systems in the Mediterranean Sea. With a view to minimize the adverse effects of a possible marine pollution incident, the MEDSLIK forecasting model was recently utilized to predict the evolution of hypothetical oil spills originating in the aftermath of various accidents which occurred in the region thus enabling the Centre to better assist, if needed, the Authorities in charge of pollution control in their decision making process.

10. Such models have fully demonstrated their efficacy in both real and test situations. In the last years, several validation exercises have been performed to evaluate the accuracy of the systems and to better calibrate the model parameters. However, it has to be noted that their reliability can be limited for some areas of the Mediterranean Sea, due to the lack of high resolution meteo-oceanographic data. This was the case for the simulations performed following the collision of the MV NEW FLAME and the MV TORM GERTRUDE off Gibraltar on 12 August 2007, which were readily provided by MOON upon request of the Centre. The MEDSLIK forecasting model was used with the MFS (Mediterranean Forecasting System) basin scale low resolution model which, in such coastal area, was able to provide only a rough indication of the areas of the coast more likely to be affected by pollution in case of a major oil spill.

11. Another interesting case of assistance was provided by MOON on the 24 January 2008, following the notification received by REMPEC from the Maritime Safety Department of Montenegro of a possible pollution detected by satellite (through the CleanSeaNet service of the European Maritime Safety Agency), located 32 nautical miles off the Montenegrin coast. On the basis of the available information concerning the oil at sea, the MOON Network provided REMPEC with the relevant MEDSLIK simulations for a period of up to six days, which simulations were forwarded to Montenegro in order to assist the national Authorities in charge of verifying the remote sensing data.

12. Within the activities related to illicit discharges from ships, MOON assisted the Centre in carrying out a project based on satellite monitoring of sea based oil pollution, by providing meteo-oceanographic data of the affected area and oil spill drifting predictions which facilitated the verification on site of the oil slicks detected by satellite. Furthermore, additional work is planned to be carried out in order to develop oil spill applications able to backtrack the spills which, integrated with satellite images, oceanographic data and AIS images of traffic, would enhance the possibility of identifying the polluting ship.

13. The valuable support provided by MOON fully demonstrated the advantages of having such a Network developed in the Mediterranean region and paved the way for the development of a Co-operation Agreement aimed at ensuring maximum coordination of the work and activities of MOON and REMPEC.

14. The Agreement, which was developed jointly by REMPEC and MOON members, is expected to enter into force this year and will have a duration of five years subject to renewal. To date, thirteen members of the MOON Network joined the Agreement, although additional Members may join at a later stage.

15. The Agreement defines in detail the objectives of Co-operation as well as the relevant procedures for ensuring a proper exchange of communication amongst the Parties. In particular, it states that MOON Members and REMPEC shall endeavour to:

a) share information and outputs of their respective activities;

b) utilise the MOON Members' expertise in the activities which are regularly carried out by REMPEC (e.g. training, organization of workshops, conferences and assistance in contingency planning);

c) collaborate in assisting the Mediterranean coastal states, upon request, in emergency situations. In particular, relevant MOON Members will provide the Centre with meteoceanographic forecasting data and oil spill drifting predictions for the affected area, for prompt dissemination by REMPEC as appropriate. The MOON Members will further endeavour to identify and establish contact with other relevant oceanographic institutes which could assist REMPEC during the emergency phase;

d) collaborate in the development of projects for the prevention of operational pollution from ships in the Mediterranean region. The relevant MOON Members will make available meteoceanographic data and oil spill applications (forecasting/hindcasting modelling) to enhance the possibility of identifying the polluting ship;

e) collaborate in the development of the MOON Network with a view to enhancing high resolution meteoceanographic forecasting data in areas of the Mediterranean where at present there is a lack of data; and

f) co-operate in the development of oil risk maps for the Mediterranean region.

16. Some of these topics were developed on the basis of the outcome of the collaborations mentioned in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 above, which highlighted relevant issues on oil spill monitoring and forecasting where further effort is required. In particular, the availability of high resolution meteoceanographic forecasting data for the whole Mediterranean Sea was recognized as a major need for providing reliable oil spill drifting predictions following a marine pollution incident. It was acknowledged that the Agreement for Co-operation represents the proper framework for the development of such data.

17. It should be noted that the issue of oil spill monitoring and forecasting is highly considered also at the international level. During the Seventh Meeting of the OPRC-HNS Technical Group of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the work carried out in this field by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Expert Team on Marine Accident Emergency Support (ETMAES) was thoroughly discussed. The Meeting recognized the high value of operational ocean forecasting systems in supporting oil spill preparedness and response and concurred with the need to encourage the use of this kind of data during marine pollution emergencies. In this respect, REMPEC reported on the work implemented by the MOON Network in the Mediterranean region, highlighting the usefulness of the information provided to the Centre in emergency situations.

18. In this regard, the Centre strongly supports the activities carried out by MOON and recommends that all Mediterranean countries share their expertise in the field and collaborate through the Network in order to enhance the capacities of the Mediterranean region in responding to marine pollution. To this end, REMPEC encourages the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, which are not yet part of MOON, to endeavour to join the Network in the nearest future and to support the implementation and further improvement of the oil spill monitoring and forecasting systems in the Mediterranean, enforcing the collaboration with MOON.

Co-operation with the Industry

Co-operation with the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) – ICE Network

19. Since 1992, The European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) provides assistance to European countries (currently seventeen countries) in case of land based chemical spills through the International Chemical Environment (ICE) Network.

20. With a view to minimise the adverse consequences of a chemical incident, ICE has been established as the co-operative programme of chemical companies which aims at developing, in each European country, a framework for providing assistance by:

- making use of the emergency response schemes of individual chemical companies;
- building on existing emergency response schemes - local, regional and product-related;
- co-operating with national authorities through the National Chemical Federation; and
- promoting mutual assistance within the chemical industry.

21. Within the countries which are members of the Network, a national ICE Centre has been established to provide the national Authorities with immediate advice on how to control a chemical spill. The said Centre is also responsible for alerting the relevant producing company, for obtaining further information via other national ICE Centres and, if appropriate, for mobilizing mutual assistance.

22. Since many years, with a view to better assist the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in responding to marine pollution incidents involving Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS), REMPEC has been collaborating with ICE through annual communication exercises (sophisticated tests) and in real incidents. In both cases, REMPEC has been acting as the liaison Centre between the ICE Network and the affected Mediterranean coastal State.

23. The communication exercises are aimed at testing the procedure for handling emergency calls related to a chemical spill and at verifying the effectiveness of the ICE Network in providing, through REMPEC, relevant information (safety data sheets) on the chemicals involved in the incident. In particular, these exercises intend to test the efficiency of the flow of information whenever a Mediterranean coastal State, which is Party to the Barcelona Convention but not part of the ICE Network, requests the assistance of ICE through REMPEC.

24. In recent years, two sophisticated tests, simulating a chemical spill in Greek and Egyptian territorial waters respectively, were successfully carried out by REMPEC. The participating countries were provided with the relevant data within 60 - 90 minutes from the initial call for assistance.

25. The operational procedures of the Network were further tested in February 2008 following the shipping casualty of the Ro-Ro vessel “UND ADRIATIK” off the Croatian coast. REMPEC requested the assistance of the ICE Network to provide the Croatian Authorities with relevant information regarding the chemical products which were carried on board the ship and posing a major risk for the marine environment. The Network proved to work very efficiently, as the Company producing those products was immediately contacted through the ICE Centre and the relevant safety data sheets were promptly transmitted to the Croatian Authorities through REMPEC.

26. In view of the entry into force of the OPRC-HNS 2000 Protocol and in order to foster the longstanding collaboration between REMPEC and the ICE Network, the Centre is willing to develop an Agreement of Co-operation with ICE. This Agreement will officially define the service offered by the Network, ensuring, through the standard ICE procedures, the effective transfer to the Mediterranean coastal States of information on chemical substances spilled in marine pollution incidents. In this regard, all Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention will be able to benefit from the knowledge and experience of the ICE Network thus enhancing their capacities to respond to chemical spills.

27. The service offered by the Network would complement the assistance already provided by REMPEC in this field through the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU), which provides expertise on site in case of specific requests from Mediterranean coastal States affected by HNS.

28. It should be noted that the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) has recently signed a similar Agreement with CEFIC and CEDRE (Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution) establishing the MAR-ICE Network (Marine Intervention in Chemical Transport Emergencies), which aims at supporting European Union Member States in responding to marine pollution emergencies involving chemicals. This service, which is based on the ICE Network, will provide, upon request, all EU Member States and coastal EFTA States with product-specific information and advice on chemicals involved in a marine pollution incident by contacting, through CEDRE, experts of the chemical industry.

Co-operation with the Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG) and the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA)

29. It should be recalled that Resolution 5 of the Conference on International Co-operation on Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response and Co-operation of 1990 calls for co-operation with the oil and shipping industries with a view to:

a) assist developing countries to implement Article 6 of the OPRC Convention (*National and regional systems for preparedness and response*), including an assessment of the need for oil spill combating equipment stockpiles on a regional or subregional basis in addition to those already established; and

b) develop a plan on the establishment of oil spill combating equipment stockpiles on a regional or sub-regional basis.

30. Likewise the Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea addresses the issue of Co-operation with the industry in Article 11:

- Each Party shall require that authorities or operators in charge of sea ports and handling facilities […] have pollution emergency plans or similar arrangements […] that are coordinated with the national system.

- Each Party shall require operators in charge of offshore installations […] to have a contingency plan to combat any pollution incident, which is coordinated with the national system.

31. In this regard, at regional level, the Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG) comprised of oil companies and associates, was institutionalized in 2004 with the purpose of strengthening the Co-operation between the government and the industry in the Mediterranean Sea.

32. At the international level, the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA) was established in 1974 following the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The IPIECA Oil Spill Working Group was established in 1987 and serves as a key international industry forum to assist, worldwide, in the improvement of oil spill contingency planning and response.

33. During the Workshop organised by the Mediterranean Oil Industry Group (MOIG) in Malta in May 2007, which was held concurrently with the Eighth Meeting of Focal Points of REMPEC, representatives from the Mediterranean coastal States and MOIG members discussed various topics related to contingency planning, in particular on the integration of contingency plans of the industry with governments' plans. One of the recommendations of the Meeting was to support the organisation of a joint government-industry workshop aimed at the exchange of information on the status of preparedness and response to marine pollution in the region.

34. As a follow-up, MOIG and REMPEC initiated, in Co-operation with IPIECA, an assessment exercise with a view to obtain a national and regional overview of the situation in the Mediterranean, with regard to preparedness for and response to oil pollution from a government and an industry perspective. The assessment, carried out by correspondence, will be thoroughly discussed in the Regional Government and Industry Workshop on Co-operation, Preparedness for and Response to Oil Spills in the Mediterranean Sea, to be held in Marseille, from the 11 to the 12 May 2009. The event will be organised by REMPEC and MOIG in Co-operation with IMO and IPIECA.

35. The conclusions and recommendations resulting from the said Workshop shall enable REMPEC and MOIG to prepare a short, medium and long term joint programme of work addressing the gaps identified in the region in this field. The final objective would be to enhance the preparedness and response capacity level in the Mediterranean as well as regional Co-operation.

Co-operation in the field of protection of wild life and biodiversity in cases of emergency

Co-operation with the SEA ALARM Foundation

36. The Sea Alarm Foundation is a non-profit, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) established to advance and coordinate responses to oiled wildlife contingencies. Its main objectives are focused on facilitating Co-operation between NGOs, the oil industry and governmental organizations in responding professionally and effectively to oiled wildlife incidents.

37. Sea Alarm is very well known for its involvement worldwide in the development of oil spill contingency planning and wildlife response capabilities and several international organizations, such as *inter alia* ITOPF and IPIECA, have already established a close working relation with the Foundation.

38. Having recognized the great value of the work carried out so far by the Foundation, as well as its capacity of providing expertise in case of a pollution event involving wildlife and of transferring the relevant knowledge by means of specific training activities, REMPEC identified Sea Alarm as an important partner for the Mediterranean region. Moreover, the initial outcome of the assessment being carried out by REMPEC for the preparation of the "Regional Government and Industry Workshop on Co-operation Preparedness for and Response to Oil Spills in the Mediterranean Sea" (11-12 May 2009, Marseilles, France) highlighted that the issue of fauna protection is rarely considered within the National Contingency Plans for oil pollution of the Mediterranean coastal States. Hence, the Centre started to explore possible ways for collaboration with Sea Alarm.

39. As a result, a collaboration Agreement is currently being prepared by REMPEC and the Sea Alarm Foundation with a view to provide the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention with the required assistance to enhance their capacities in responding to oiled wildlife incidents. Such Agreement for Co-operation will focus on the development of national contingency plans particularly with regard to the protection of sensitive species, on the relevant training activities to be carried out in the region as well as on the operational procedures to be implemented in cases of emergency.

Co-operation with ACCOBAMS

40. The Centre has also been approached by the Secretariat of ACCOBAMS (Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic Area) with regard to the development of a Co-operation agreement for emergency situations.

Co-operation with the UNEP/MAP Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC)

41. Taking into consideration the expected developments concerning cooperation with the above mentioned organizations, the Centre has approached SPA/RAC in order to develop a joint approach on the issue of protecting wildlife and biodiversity in case of an emergency. It is thus intended to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the two Centers which would facilitate the setting up of a network of recognized NGOs specialized in the mitigation of damage to wildlife, develop training activities in this field, and cover issues related to sensitivity mapping.

Co-operation with other Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Co-operation with the International Ocean Institute (IOI)

42. The International Ocean Institute is a non-governmental, non-profit international organization devoted to the protection and conservation of the ocean and to the sustainable development of its resources.

43. A Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation between REMPEC and IOI was signed in December 2005 with the aim of facilitating the sharing of information and the implementation of activities of mutual interest. In the framework of this Memorandum, the Centre has provided lecturers

to the Annual IOI-Malta Training Course on Ocean Governance for the Mediterranean and Eastern European Countries.

The Meeting of Focal Points is invited to:

- **take note** of and comment on the information provided in the present document;
- **provide views and comments** on the proposal highlighted by the Secretariat in paragraph 18 of the present document; and
- **endorse** the approach of the Centre in implementing its activities in collaboration with other organizations as highlighted in the present document.

ANNEX

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN OPERATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHY NETWORK (MOON)

1. **Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia**
   Via di Vigna Murata 605
   00143 Roma
   Italy

2. **Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, Sede di Ravenna**
   Centro Interdipartimentale per la Ricerca sulle Scienze Ambientali
   Via S. Alberto 163
   48100 Ravenna
   Italy

3. **International Marine Center**
   Fondazione IMC - ONLUS
   Loc. Sa Mardini
   09072 Torregrande (OR)
   Italy

4. **Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Istituto di Scienze Marine**
   San Polo, 1364 - Palazzo Papadopoli
   30125 Venezia
   Italy

5. **Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Istituto di Scienze dell'Atmosfera e del Clima**
   Area di Ricerca
   Via Gobetti 101
   40129 Bologna
   Italy

6. **Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Istituto per l'Ambiente Marino Costiero, Sezione di Messina**
   Spianata S. Raineri 86
   I-98122 Messina
   Italy

7. **Ente per le Nuove tecnologie, l'Energia e l'Ambiente**
   Progetto Speciale Clima Globale
   Centro Ricerche Casaccia
   Via Anguillarese 301
   00060 Santa Maria di Galiera Roma
   Italy

8. **Istituto Nazionale di Oceanografia e di Geofisica Sperimentale**
   Borgo Grotta Gigante 42/c
   34010 Sgonico (Trieste)
   Italy

9. **Mercator Ocean**
   8/10 rue Hermes
   Parc Technologique du Canal
   31520 Ramonville St Agne
   France

10. **Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer**
    155, rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau
    92138 Issy-les-Moulineaux Cedex
    France

11. **Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique**
    Laboratoire d'Oceanographie de Villefranche
    Station Zoologique
    06234 Villefranche-sur-Mer Cedex,
    France

12. **Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique**
    Pole d'Océanographie Côtière de l'Observatoire Midi-Pyrenees
    Laboratoire d'Aérologie
    14, avenue Edouard Belin
    31400 Toulouse
    France

13. **University of Athens**
    University Campus
    Bldg PHYS-V
    15784 Athens
    Greece

14. **Hellenic Centre for Marine Research**
    46.7 km Athens-Sounio Ave
    Anavyssos, Attica
    GR-190 13
    Greece

15. **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**
    University Campus
    GR-54124 Thessaloniki
    Greece

16. **Institute of Accelerating Systems and Applications**
    University of Athens Campus
    Bldg. 9
    10024 Athens
    Greece

17. **Israel Oceanographic & Limnological Research**
    Tel-Shikmona
    Haifa 31080
    Israel

18. **Bar Ilan University**
    Department of Geography and Environment
    Ramat Gan 52900
    Israel

19. **Oceanography Centre of Cyprus**
    University of Cyprus
    P.O. Box 20537
    1678 Nicosia
    Cyprus

20. **Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas**
    C/ SERRANO, 117
    E-28006 Madrid
    Spain

21. **Labortory d'Enginyeria Maritima**
    Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya
    Jordi Girona, 1-3, Campus Nord-UPC, Edi. D-1
    08034 Barcelona
    Spain

22. **Puertos del Estado**
    Avda. del Partenón 10,
    28042, Madrid.
    Spain

23. **Middle East Technical University**
    Institute of Marine Sciences,
    P.K. 28 Erdemli
    Mersin 33730
    Turkey

24. **International Ocean Institute-Malta Operational Centre**
    University of Malta
    43/1, Valley Road
    Birkirkara, BKR 10
    Malta

25. **National Institute of Biology**
    Marine Biology Station
    Fornace, 41
    Piran 6330
    Slovenia

26. **Andrija Mohorovicic Geophysical Institute,**
    Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb,
    Horvatovac bb
    10000 Zagreb
    Croatia

27. **Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Istituto di Studi sui Sistemi Intelligenti per l'Automazione, Sezione di Genova**
    Via de Marini 6,
    16149 Genova
    Italy

28. **Instituto Espanol de Oceanografia**
    Avda. del Brasil, 31
    28020, Madrid
    Spain

29. **Alexandria University**
    Faculty of Science
    Alexandria
    Egypt

30. **Institut National de Recherche Halieutique**
    02, Rue Tiznit
    Casablanca 20 000
    Morocco

31. **Méteo France**
    1 quai Branly
    75340 Paris Cedex 07
    France