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

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

REMPEC/WG.61/6/6
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Sliema, Malta, 13-15 May 2025

Agenda Item 6: Illegal and accidental oil and HNS pollution from ships

Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) and related activities

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Note by the Secretariat

This document presents the developments on funding the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU), to provide assistance at no cost for the Mediterranean coastal States upon request in case of emergency and proposes raising the Special Revolving Fund at a level equivalent to the average expenses of an additional month mission to ensure adequate funding of the MAU to ensure its state of readiness to assist the Mediterranean coastal States for any eventuality in case emergencies.

Introduction

1 The Eighth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Antalya, Türkiye, October 1993) established by Decision (UNEP(OCA)/MED.IG.3/5) the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) following a proposal adopted by the Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, September 1992) within the framework of the Emergency Protocol (1976).

2 The MAU is an expert advice capability which is mobilized by REMPEC upon request of a Contracting Party (CP) in case of an emergency. Currently, the MAU is based upon six agreements between REMPEC and selected Centres of expertise which provide expert advisory service. These are Cedre based in Brest, France, the Adriatic Training and Research Centre for Accidental Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response (ATRAC) based in Rijeka, Croatia, Federazione Nazionale dell'Industria Chimica (FEDERCHIMICA) based in Milan, Italy, Sea Alarm based in Brussels, Belgium, and Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) based in Rome, Italy.

3 The experience obtained from activating the MAU in the following events: the grounding of "Costa Concordia" incident off the coast of Italy (January, 2012); the oil tar ball pollution along the Israeli and Lebanese shorelines on February and March 2021, respectively; the "Banyas" oil spill in the Syrian Arab Republic (December 2021), which all occurred during the COVID pandemic period, and the shipwreck of the "Xelo Tanker" in Tunisia April 2022 emphasized the need for additional financial support for REMPEC, to enable the Centre to be in a position to provide, through the MAU, immediate and adequate expert assistance.

4 The Fifteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of REMPEC (Malta, June 2023) considered the information on the MAU, its achievements since its inception in 1993 by Decision IG.3/5 of COP 8 (Türkiye, October 1993), the important role of its members, as well the developments on funding of the MAU through Decision IG.17/18 of COP 15 (Spain, January 2008) to maintain the funding of the MAU to the average expenses of one month mission, as set out in document REMPEC/WG.56/3/3.

5 The Fifteenth Meeting, stressed the need to raise the funding of the MAU Revolving Fund to cover an additional month with a view that the Revolving Fund would be able to fund a two months' expert mission, subject to the availability of funds, for consideration by the next meeting of the UNEP/MAP Focal Points, as set out in paragraph 59 of the report of the Meeting (REMPEC/WG.56/8).

6 The process continued with the MAP Focal Points in September 2023; however, there was no follow-up to the COP. The meeting focused on requests and recommendations from REMPEC, including a draft decision for the COP and it was agreed that considering the transition period at REMPEC and following consultations with the UNEP/MAP Coordination Unit, the process was postponed to the present Meeting for further consideration

7 In this context, the Secretariat reiterates the proposal, put forward in document REMPEC/WG.56/3/3, with a view to submitting the draft Decision of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention regarding the increase in the funding of the MAU, as set out in the **Annex**.

Actions requested by the Meeting

8 **The Meeting is invited to:**

- .1 **take note** of the information provided in the present document; and
- .2 **request** the Secretariat to submit the draft decision set out in the **Annex** to the next MAP Focal Points Meeting of the Contracting Parties in view of the adoption by COP 24.

Annex

Draft Decision on Revision of the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) Revolving Fund

Draft Decision IG.XX/XX

Revision of the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) Revolving Fund

The Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its Protocols at their 23rd Meeting,

Recalling Decision of the Eighth Meeting of the Contracting Parties, Antalya, Türkiye, 12-15 October 1993, to establish a Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) to combat accidental marine pollution (UNEP(OCA)/MED IG.3/5),

Further recalling Decision IG.17/8 of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties, Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008, on the Programme of Work and Budget for the 2008-2009 biennium,

Recognizing the value of the MAU as recently demonstrated,

1. *Approves* the proposal of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Focal Points of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) to raise the funding of the MAU Revolving Fund to cover an additional month with a view that the Revolving Fund will be able to fund a two months' expert mission,

2. *Agrees that* additional funding would be funded through the transfer of any unused funds allocated to the budget line for the MAU, subject to availability of funds.
