



Intersessional Meeting of the GloBallast Regional Task Force
Malta, 22 April 2009

REMPEC/WG.31/5
28 April 2009
English

REPORT

INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE GLOBALLAST REGIONAL TASK FORCE

MALTA, 22 APRIL 2009



Introduction

1. The Intersessional Meeting of the GloBallast Regional Task Force (RTF) was convened in Malta on the 22 April 2009 by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), in the framework of the GEF / UNDP / IMO Project "Building partnerships to assist developing countries to reduce the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms in ships' ballast water (GloBallast Partnerships)", and following a decision of the First Meeting of the regional Task Force which took place in Dubrovnik, Croatia, between 11 and 12 September 2008. The Intersessional Meeting of the GloBallast Regional Task Force was organized on the margins of the 9th Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points (21-24 April 2009).

2. The main objectives of the Intersessional Meeting of the GloBallast Regional Task Force Meeting were:

- a) to present and discuss the submissions by the leaders of the Focus Groups; and
- b) to discuss and agree upon the future steps for the consolidation of the draft Mediterranean strategy on ships' ballast water management.

3. All GloBallast Focal Points members of the Regional Task Force were informed of the organization of the Intersessional Meeting of the GloBallast Regional Task Force by REMPEC and, in this respect, were invited to liaise with their representatives in the 9th Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points. In total, twelve delegations included the GloBallast Focal Point of their respective countries or his/her representative in their Focal Point Meeting delegation. In total, the Intersessional Meeting was attended by representatives of all twenty-one Contracting Parties. Representatives of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the Mediterranean Operational Oceanography Network (MOON) also attended the Meeting. The full list of participants is given in **Annex I** to the present report. The working documents of the Meeting were disseminated prior to the Meeting. A final list of documents is provided in **Annex II** of the present report.

Opening of the Meeting, adoption of the Agenda and organizational matters

4. The Meeting was opened at 16.00 hrs on Wednesday 22 April by Ms. Maja Markovčić-Kostelac (Croatia), Chair of the Regional Task Force, who acted as a Chairperson of the Meeting.

5. It was recalled that the main objectives of the Intersessional Meeting of the RTF were to present and discuss the submissions of the leaders of the Focus Groups, and to discuss and agree upon the future steps for the consolidation of the draft Mediterranean strategy on ship's ballast water management. The delegates adopted the agenda of the Meeting as proposed by the Secretariat in document REMPEC/WG.31/2/1, and which appears in **Annex III** of the present report.

Brief overview of the development of the draft strategy on ships' ballast water management

6. The Chairperson recalled that during the First RTF Meeting, four Focus Groups, each led by a Mediterranean coastal State, were established. These are the Focus Group on Legal Aspects (Croatia), the Focus Group on Capacity Building (Cyprus), the Focus Group on Policy and Monitoring (Italy) and the Focus Group on Risk Assessment (Turkey). These groups were established in order to develop specific elements of the "Proposed format and elements for the development of a Mediterranean strategy on ships' ballast water management and of an Action Plan for its implementation" agreed upon by the RTF (document REMPEC/WG.31/INF.4). The Chairperson recalled that all members of the RTF were requested to contribute to the work of the various Focus Groups to develop the Strategy and its Action Plan, and invited the leaders of the Focus Groups to present their respective proposals to the Meeting.

Presentation of submissions by leaders of the Focus Groups

7. The proposed relevant legal framework for the Strategy (Document REMPEC/WG.31/4/1) was introduced by Croatia. The Meeting was provided with a review of relevant international, regional and sub-regional instruments, mechanisms and initiatives which are relevant for the development of the Regional Strategy on ship's ballast water management in the Mediterranean.

8. Following a request of Greece, calling for additional information on sub-regional initiatives and national regulations and practices, Croatia agreed to disseminate shortly a paper informing the members of the RTF of the initiatives undertaken at sub-regional level within the Adriatic Sea. It was also agreed that the Focus Group will continue its work by collecting information on sub-regional and national practices. The members of the RTF were also invited to provide any relevant information on the matter to the Focus Group on Legal Aspects.

9. The Meeting agreed on the proposal presented by the Focus Group on Legal Aspects with respect to applicable relevant instruments mechanisms and initiatives to be taken into account when drafting the relevant section of the Strategy (International, regional and sub-regional instruments and mechanisms).

10. The Meeting then considered document REMPEC/WG.31/4/2 which was presented by Cyprus as leader of the Focus Group on Capacity Building. In the presentation, the key role of training was highlighted and an indicative list of training activities and other capacity building activities to be carried out in the region was presented.

11. The Meeting agreed on the proposal presented by the Focus Group on Capacity Building, which should be taken into account when drafting the relevant section of the Strategy (Capacity Building).

12. The representative of Italy, leader of the Focus Group on Policy and Monitoring, presented document REMPEC/WG.31/4/3 and detailed the fields where monitoring should be undertaken. Regarding a possible ballast water management regime applicable to the Mediterranean region, it was noted that only four areas within the Mediterranean Sea fulfil the requirements for ballast water exchange in accordance with the B-4 1 .2 parameters (50 nm from nearest land, and at least 200 m deep) of the BWM Convention. Therefore, this situation, combined with the time which is required for a ship to exchange its ballast water, makes it impossible for some ships to proceed with ballast water exchange operation in the region. To address this situation, a proposal was put forward by the Group, making a distinction between ships entering the Mediterranean from the Atlantic (Non Med origin – Med destination/non Med destination) and ships voyaging within the basin (Med origin - Med destination). The proposal was to consider the option of requiring ships in transit to undertake ballast water exchange (according to B-4 .2 regulation) before entering the Mediterranean Sea, and, to complement this measure, to designate areas for ballast water exchange according to regulation B-4. 2 for intra-Mediterranean traffic, but also for ships that may not have the necessary time or may have geographical constraints to complete ballast water exchange before entering the Mediterranean Sea (for example a ship entering the Mediterranean from the Black Sea or from the Red Sea).

13. Whilst recognizing that the designation of ballast water areas in the Mediterranean was needed, it was specified that any ballast water management measures decided upon should be based on a risk assessment and analysis. The representative of IMO recommended drawing on the experience of other regions which had similar geographical configuration, i.e. with adjacent enclosed or semi-enclosed seas. The Meeting also took note of the offer by the representative of the MOON to provide oceanographic data relevant for a risk assessment.

14. The Chairperson requested the Focus Group led by Italy to further develop the proposal on a regime for ships' ballast water management taking into account the elements discussed by the Meeting.

15. The representative of Greece pointed out that it was expected that the BWM Convention would enter into force soon, and therefore urgent action for capacity building was needed. He highlighted the need for a roadmap for ratification and implementation of the BWMC and invited other Mediterranean coastal States, particularly those who ratified it, to share their experience on how they were implementing the Convention.

16. The Meeting then considered a scientific paper submitted by Turkey, as leader of the Focus Group on Assessment, in document REMPEC/WG.31/4/4.1 and agreed that its content should serve to draft the introductory part of the Strategy (Environmental conditions of the region and state of the art of ship's mediated introduction of harmful invasive species). The Meeting took also note of the interesting content of a set of scientific papers on alien species introduced in the Mediterranean submitted by Israel (REMPEC/WG.31/INF.3). These papers could also be taken into consideration

when drafting the introductory part of the Strategy. Members of the RTF were encouraged to provide other relevant studies.

17. The leader of the Focus Group on Assessment then introduced a proposal for an Exchange Information System which structure was detailed in document REMPEC/WG.31/4/4.2. Following this presentation, the representative of Cyprus stated that, having considered that positive developments aimed at protecting the marine environment of the Mediterranean Sea by reducing the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens in ship's ballast water are desirable, Cyprus had no objection to the proposal of Turkey regarding an information exchange system, with the understanding that any information posted in that system will not, in any way, undermine the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus. It requested that this statement be communicated to the sponsors of the Project.

18. The Meeting agreed on the need to develop a regional information exchange system on ballast water which should also serve as a decision making tool. Following a discussion on whether the system should be part of the UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan, the Meeting recommended to the Secretariat to investigate the possibility for REMPEC to host such a system. The Meeting also requested the Secretariat to investigate possible sources of financing to assist Turkey in further developing the proposed regional information exchange system.

19. Turkey then introduced document REMPEC/WG.31/4/4.3 which presented, in tabular form, information collected from answers to questionnaires which had been sent to the members of the RTF, on relevant institutes and studies carried out in the Mediterranean. The Meeting agreed to provide Turkey with additional scientific studies relevant for the Mediterranean region.

20. The Chairperson congratulated the four Focus Groups for the work carried out during the Intersessional period and brought to the attention of the Meeting the fact that some elements of the Strategy had as yet, not been covered, particularly those regarding compliance and monitoring. Greece volunteered to lead a Focus Group on these issues and the Meeting consequently agreed to establish, within the RTF, a fifth Focus Group on Compliance and Monitoring. An updated list of Focus Groups appears in **Annex IV** of the present report.

21. The meeting took note of the information provided by the representative of the European Community who briefly presented document REMPEC/WG.31/INF.3 highlighting interim ballast water management strategies developed in regional seas around Europe, such as North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) and within the Baltic Sea (HELCOM).

Future steps for the consolidation of the draft Mediterranean strategy on ship's ballast water management

22. The Meeting agreed that all Focus Groups should, as far as possible, finalize the assigned work by the end of 2009 in order to submit a consolidated draft to the second Meeting of the RTF scheduled for 2010. The Meeting further agreed to endeavour to finalise the Draft Strategy and its Action Plan earlier than initially planned under the GloBallast Project (i.e. finalisation by 2012 and subsequent adoption by the Contracting Parties Meeting in 2013). In this respect, it was pointed out that ideally, a final draft should be ready for submission to the next Meeting of the REMPEC Focal Points (mid-2011) and subsequently to the MAP Focal Points and to the Contracting Parties Meetings which are expected to take place in the third quarter of 2011.

23. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that taking into consideration the drafting workload to consolidate the Strategy and its Action Plan, as well as time constraints, IMO agreed to investigate the possibility of assisting the RTF by making available expertise to consolidate the document.

Other business and closure of the Meeting

24. The Meeting was closed by the Chairperson at 18.30 hrs.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

WORKING DOCUMENTS

REMPEC/WG.31/2/1	Provisional agenda.
REMPEC/WG.31/2/2	Annotated provisional agenda.
REMPEC/WG.31/4/1	Review of relevant international, regional and sub-regional instruments, mechanisms and initiatives (Submitted by Croatia – Focus Group on Legal Aspects).
REMPEC/WG.31/4/2	Development of Training Programmes to Implement the Ballast Water Management Convention (Submitted by Cyprus – Focus Group on Capacity Building).
REMPEC/WG.31/4/3	Harmonized ballast Water Regime and Monitoring System (Submitted by Italy – Focus Group on Policy and Monitoring).
REMPEC/WG.31/4/4/1	Assessment of the Situation (Submitted by Turkey – Focus Group on Assessment).
REMPEC/WG.31/4/4/2/Rev.1	Proposal for an Information Exchange System (Submitted by Turkey – Focus Group on Assessment).
REMPEC/WG.31/4/4/3	Review of experience and Research Studies in the Mediterranean (Submitted by Turkey – Focus Group on Assessment).
REMPEC/WG.31/5	Report of the Meeting.

INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

REMPEC/WG.31/INF.1	List of documents.
REMPEC/WG.31/INF.2	List of participants.
REMPEC/WG.31/INF.3	Briefing Paper on Ballast Water management in Europe (Submitted by the European Community).
REMPEC/WG.31/INF.4	Proposed Format and Element for the Development of a Mediterranean Strategy on Ships' Ballast Water Management and of an Action Plan for its Implementation (Submitted by the Secretariat).
REMPEC/WG.31/INF.5	Papers on aliens species in the Mediterranean (Submitted by Israel).

ANNEX III
PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Adoption of the Agenda and organizational matters.
3. Brief overview on the status of development of the draft Mediterranean strategy on ships' ballast water management.
4. Presentation of submissions by leaders of the Focus Groups.
5. Future steps for the consolidation of the draft Mediterranean strategy on ships' ballast water management.
6. Other business.
7. Closure of the Meeting.

ANNEX IV

List of Focus Groups

Focus Groups	Lead country	Contact person	Related key elements
Assessment Group	Turkey	<p>Eng. Murat KORÇAK</p> <p>Chemical Engineer MSc, Undersecretariat for Maritime Affairs of Turkey General Directorate for Maritime Transport Denizcilik Mustesarligi GMK Bulvari No.128 - Kat 6 ODA: 603 Maltepe Ankara</p> <p>Tel: +90 (312) 232 38 50/2174 Fax:+90 (312) 231 33 06 E-mail: murat.korcak@denizcilik.gov.tr</p>	<p>a) thorough assessment of issues related to the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens through ships' ballast water and sediments, and their effects on the Mediterranean region.</p> <p>c) review of experience and research relevant to ships' ballast water management in the Mediterranean region.</p>
Legal Aspects Group	Croatia	<p>Mrs. Maja MARKOVIĆ-KOSTELAC</p> <p>Head of Legal and International Department Directorate of Maritime Traffic, Maritime Domain and Ports Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure Prisavlje 14 10000 Zagreb</p> <p>Tel: +385 (1) 61 69 070 Fax : +385 (1) 619 59 56 E-mail: maja.markovic@pomorstvo.hr</p>	<p>b) review of all relevant international, regional and sub-regional instruments and mechanisms, and any other initiatives.</p>
Capacity Building Group	Cyprus	<p>Mr. Ioannis EFSTRATIOU</p> <p>Marine Surveyor A Department of Merchant Shipping Ministry of Communications and Works Kyllinis Street, Mesa Geitonia CY-4007 Lemesos</p> <p>Tel.: +357 25 848 100, + 357 25 848 273 Fax: +357 25 848 200 Email: jefstratiou@dms.mcw.gov.cy</p>	<p>h) regional system for capacity building, knowledge transfer and training of personnel involved in ballast water management and related issues.</p>

<p>Policies and Monitoring Group</p>	<p>Italy</p>	<p>Dott. Roberto GIANGRECO</p> <p>Divisione X° "Salvaguardia aree terrestri e costiere e gestione integrata della fascia costiera"</p> <p>Settore salvaguardia ecosistemi marino costieri e gestione integrata della fascia costiera Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare Via Cristoforo Colombo 44 00147 Roma</p> <p>Tel +39 (06) 57228406 Fax +39 (06) 57228424 E-mail: Giangreco.Roberto@minambiente.it</p>	<p>d) harmonised BWM regime, i.e. a set of policies and accompanying operational arrangements for the management of ships' ballast water in the region, based on IMO and other relevant requirements and detailing responsibilities of all key stakeholders.</p> <p>g) uniform regional monitoring system for the species profile at port level to ensure inter-compatibility at the regional level.</p>
<p>Compliance and Monitoring Group</p>	<p>Greece</p>	<p>Com.der SAMPATAKAKIS Elias</p> <p>Director of the Marine Environment Protection Directorate Hellenic Ministry of Mercantile Marine, Aegean and Island Policy Akti Vasileiadi – Gate E1-E2 (inside port) 18510 Piraeus</p> <p>Tel No: +30 (210) 419 1132 Fax No: +30 (210) 422 04 40 E-mail: esamp@yen.gr</p> <p>ZERVOUDAKI Soultana</p> <p>Researcher Hellenic Technical University of Athens A/6.7 km Athens Sounio Anavyssos</p> <p>Tel No: +30 2291 763 75 Fax No: E-mail: tanya@ath.hcmr.gr</p>	<p>i) harmonised procedures incorporated in a compliance monitoring and enforcement system that could be readily implemented by all countries of the region.</p>