



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

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL
PROTECTION DIRECTORATE GENERAL
(ECHO)**

INFORMATION DAY
Brussels, Belgium
4 June 2014

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REPORT
OF THE
INFORMATION DAY

Brussels, Belgium, 4 June 2014

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Information Day “INFODAY” was held in Brussels, Belgium on 4 June 2014 at the Conference Centre A. Borschette, Ground Floor, Room AB-OB. It commenced at 09:00 hrs and ended at 17:30 hrs.

2. The Meeting was organised by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate-General (DG ECHO). The Meeting was co-financed by the European Commission and the EU-funded Mediterranean Decision Support System for Marine Safety (MEDESS-4MS) Project.

3. The “INFODAY” was convened pursuant to the recommendations issued from the discussion on “Sub-Regional, Regional, European, International, Industry Mechanisms and Databases” of the Workshop on the Regional Response Capacity and Coordination to Major Oil Spill in the Mediterranean Sea (MEDEXPOL 2013) held in Athens, Greece between 10 and 12 December 2013.

4. The principal objectives of the Meeting were:

- a) to introduce the European Union (EU) Civil Protection Mechanism as it results from Decision N^o 1313/2013/EU, to present its role in marine pollution and explain how non-EU Member States in the Mediterranean Sea may call on the activation of this mechanism, in particular through the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS). This part of the “INFODAY” was followed by a visit to the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC);
- b) to present the three-year Mediterranean Decision Support System for Marine Safety (MEDESS-4MS) Project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the framework of the Project Strategy of the European MED Programme and to make demonstrations on the services offered by the Project; and
- c) to hold preliminary discussions regarding the possible use of CECIS and MEDESS-4MS tool within the regional response mechanism.

5. All REMPEC OPRC Focal Points were invited to nominate jointly and in consultation with national authorities concerned their representatives at the Meeting. The participation of representatives responsible for policy issues regarding preparedness for and response to accidental marine pollution at national level (designated as such in the National Contingency Plan) and officers in charge of effectively coordinating the response operations particularly in emergency response or operational coordination centres in their countries was strongly encouraged.

6. The invitation to attend the Meeting was also extended to two Regional Activity Centres (RACs) of the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) namely the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) and Plan Bleu, MEDESS-4MS Partners and the Global Oil and Gas Industry Association for Environmental and Social Issues (IPIECA).

7. The Meeting was attended by delegations from the following Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention:

ALGERIA	MALTA
CROATIA	MONTENEGRO
EUROPEAN UNION	SLOVENIA
FRANCE	SPAIN
GREECE	TUNISIA
ISRAEL	TURKEY
ITALY	

by a representative of the following UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centre:

- Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC)

by representatives of the following Mediterranean Decision Support System for Marine Safety (MEDESS-4MS) Project Partners:

- Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution (CEDRE)
- Department of Merchant Shipping, Cyprus (DMS)
- Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR)
- Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (INGV)
- National Research Council (CNR)
- Technological Institute Foundation for the Development of Maritime Industries (INNOVAMAR)
- Oceanography Centre, University of Cyprus
- Luiss University of Rome
- University of Malta
- Joint Technical Secretariat Med Programme

by the following representatives of the oil industry:

- The Global Oil And Gas Industry Association For Environmental And Social Issues (IPIECA)
- Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (Eni S.p.A.).

8. A complete list of participants appears in **Annex I** to the present report.

9. The Meeting consisted of two (2) sessions - EU Services and Tools: Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution and the MEDESS-4MS Project. The final agenda distributed during the Meeting appears in **Annex II** to the present report.

10. The working languages of the Meeting were English and French. Simultaneous English/French/English interpretation was provided during the Meeting.

Opening of the Meeting

11. Mr Frederic Hebert, Director of REMPEC, welcomed the participants to the Meeting and thanked them for their contribution. He thanked the European Commission and the speakers for their support in the preparation of the event. He highlighted the objectives of the Meeting and invited the participants to actively contribute to the discussions with a view to the possible integration of the tools presented during the Meeting in the Mediterranean oil spill response mechanism. He highlighted that CECIS and the MEDESS-4MS tools, which were going to be presented in detail during the Meeting, played a very important role in assisting countries to improve capacities in preventing and mitigating maritime risks deriving from oil spills and to coordinate oil spill operations through the use of these communication and decision-supporting tools. He further underpinned that whilst MEDESS-4MS' beneficiaries were European Mediterranean coastal States, the Project involved non-European Mediterranean coastal States in the data collection and it intended extending its deliverables also to the latter. Mr Hebert added that within the framework of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, EC also projected the opening of CECIS to European Neighbouring Policy Countries and Regional Agreements.

12. Mr Hans Das, Head of Unit, DG ECHO A5 - Civil Protection Policy, European Commission, then took the floor to address the Meeting. He stressed the essential role of communication in case of an oil spill incident and explained that this issue was to be addressed in detail during the Meeting in the presentation of tools and mechanisms developed to facilitate cooperation and response. He then provided an overview on the key messages to be derived from the presentations which were being delivered during the first session of the Meeting.

13. Mr Hebert invited the Meeting to proceed to the first session on the EU Services and Tools: Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution.

Union Civil Protection Mechanism and its Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)

14. Mr Hans Das introduced the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and its Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). He recalled that the Union Civil Protection Mechanism was established in 2001 and was recently reformed to ensure a coherent European Union response to natural and man-made disasters occurring inside and outside the European Union, including marine pollution and major accidents at sea.

15. He underlined that the Mechanism aimed at ensuring adequate co-operation arrangements to facilitate the provision of the European Union assistance from 30 Participating States¹ and EMSA and at defining the role of ERCC in liaison with the relevant stakeholders.

16. Mr Das stated that the Mechanism aimed at enhancing disaster prevention, preparedness and response and presented activities undertaken in those areas. He presented work on establishing knowledge-based disaster prevention policies, facilitating peer reviews, running an extensive training program, supporting creation of modules for response operations and supporting expert missions to provide advice on prevention and preparedness. He then described the yearly call for proposals on prevention, preparedness and exercises, open to the Participating States to the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, including enlargement and European Neighbouring Policy (ENP) Countries.

17. At this stage, Mr Hebert informed the Meeting that REMPEC invited Western Mediterranean States (EU and non-EU Member States) to participate in the submission of a project proposed in the 2014 EC call for proposals. He further explained the content of the project's proposals on preparedness and response and a large-scale exercise. However, since the Centre did not receive enough confirmations from the States concerned to prepare a coherent bid, the proposal had been postponed. He then informed the Meeting that a proposal was submitted by CEDRE to the 2014 call for proposals to extend the Project on Preparedness for Oil-polluted Shoreline Clean-up and Oiled Wildlife Interventions (POSOW) to the Southern Mediterranean region.

18. Mr Das then presented the ERCC highlighting that the 24/7 Centre focuses on all types of disasters (flood, earthquakes, forest fires, tornado, pollution...) and that its main functions include disasters monitoring, centralisation of requests for and offers of assistance, facilitation of communication and response coordination between affected country, Participating States and experts sent on site, technical and transport support, channelling marine pollution response capacity from EMSA and an in-house Commission coordination with other services.

19. He further informed the Meeting that upon receipt of a request for assistance as a result of a disaster within or outside EU boundaries, ERCC would disseminate the request to Participating States who may offer assistance. The requesting country would then confirm which offers are accepted or rejected. ERCC ensures that appropriate communication between stakeholders is maintained throughout the entire process including deployment of assistance.

Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS)

20. Ms Asta Mackeviciute, Policy Officer at DG ECHO, presented CECIS by making an online demonstration on the use of the tool and the process for requesting and offering assistance. She underpinned that it is an EC funded password-protected common emergency communication and information system linking crisis centres in the 30 Participating States to the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, the ERCC and EMSA.

21. She then detailed its content and functionalities including an emergency logbook, requests and offers overview, a database on Member States' and EMSA's pollution response capacity, experts and policies.

¹ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway.

22. Whilst recalling that the European Union is Party to Regional Sea Conventions around Europe (i.e. Bonn Agreement, Lisbon Agreement, Helsinki Convention and Barcelona Convention), she highlighted that CECIS is currently being adapted to open its access to Contracting Parties to those Regional Agreements.

23. She concluded her presentation with case studies on EU assistance through the Mechanism in Lebanon Oil Spill, July, 2006; Black Sea Oil Spill, November, 2007; "Hebei Spirit" Oil Spill, December, 2007 and Deepwater Horizon, 2010.

24. A presentation with relevant screenshots presenting CECIS' functionalities and the request and offer procedure has been made available on REMPEC's Website with the rest of the presentations delivered during the "INFODAY".

Links with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and Regional Agreements

25. Mr Victor Diaz Seco, Senior Project Officer - Pollution Response Services (EMSA), referred to the Action Plan for Response to Marine Pollution from Oil and Gas Installations adopted by the EMSA's Administrative Board, in November 2013, complementing the Oil and HNS Action Plans.

26. He introduced the pollution response services offered by the Agency (e.g. Network of Stand-by Oil Spill Response Vessels, CleanSeaNet, MAR-ICE Network), underpinning that EMSA's operational assistance was in line with its "top-up" mandate and the need for cost efficiency.

27. The new approach regarding the provision of dispersant capability was then described. The target of the Agency is to offer the Member States a pollution response "tool-box" including dispersants in selected stockpiles as well as spraying arrangements in combination with the existing mechanical recovery capability, which will remain as the primary response option.

28. Whilst inventorying the Network of stand-by oil spill response vessels, Mr Diaz highlighted that the net storage capacity of the vessels available in the Mediterranean Sea was of 24,500 m³. He presented the activities scheduled for 2014 including 24 Quarterly Drills, 3 Acceptance Drills, Seaborne dispersant application projects concerning Malta and Cyprus, 4 operational exercises and notification exercises. The mobilisation process of the oil spill response vessels for EU and for third countries sharing a regional sea basin with the Union was explained.

29. Following a detailed presentation on CleanSeaNet and its capacity, he informed the Meeting about related capacity building actions in the framework of the SAFEMED III Project implemented by EMSA.

30. Mr Diaz concluded his presentation introducing the Marine Intervention in Chemical Emergencies (MAR-ICE Network), detailing the composition of the network, its procedures and services offered to EU Member States, Coastal EFTA/EEA and EU Candidate Countries.

Discussion

31. The Meeting was then invited to discuss the issues introduced in the morning session.

32. In response to the question raised by the Meeting on cooperation for rescue operation following an incident at sea and the possible use of CECIS to facilitate the coordination of requests for additional aerial and naval rescue means based on the experience and practice of existing Civil Protection Mechanism on land, the Representative of the EC confirmed that the tool is applicable to all emergencies and to all types of requests of assistance. Ms Mackeviciute further highlighted that CECIS aims at facilitating communication between stakeholders including Civil Protection and Marine Pollution authorities and recognised that some capacities are land based and might be available for both. To take into account different incidents at sea that may require international assistance, it was proposed to consider changing the logo « CECIS Marine Pollution » into "CECIS Accident at Sea".

33. Concerning bilateral or multilateral agreements for search and rescue at sea, the representative of EC underpinned that the tool was not restricted to any particular bilateral or multilateral agreement.

34. Taking into consideration that in certain countries several authorities may be involved in response operation at sea, the Meeting raised the question of the access rights to CECIS from different authorities. The Representative of the EC highlighted that currently the access was provided to one contact point from Civil Protection and one contact point from a Marine Pollution Authority per country.

35. The Director of REMPEC recognised the value of CECIS to support the coordination of requests for assistance in case of a major incident. He further recommended an open dialogue to ensure synergies between EU and Regional Agreements and respect of international and regional communication format (e.g. POLREP, POLWARN, POLINF). He then recalled that the use of CECIS within the framework of the Barcelona Convention would require the endorsement of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, taking into account the mandate of REMPEC and in particular its role in Mediterranean assistance coordination.

36. The Project Leader of MEDESS-4MS, Mr E. Georgoudis, highlighted the importance of risk assessment to ensure that commensurate response means are available in particular locations. He then opened the question on the possible integration of private means within CECIS. The representative of the EC explained that private assets could be entered into CECIS database, however such registration and eventual offer of those assets would need to be done by a national authority since private entities do not have access to CECIS. The Director of REMPEC pointed out that the integration of private sector assets would require specific agreements between governments and the private sector to set the conditions of use of private assets (e.g. availability, cost, etc...).

37. It was noted that the inventory of response means is currently being dealt by several institutions at European and regional level, however CECIS has been agreed to be an entry point for Member States' resources at EU level. Recognising the potential need to review criteria of resources to be entered in the CECIS database and the need for additional discussions to ensure the consistency of countries' inventory of equipment in CECIS and on REMPEC's website, the Director of REMPEC invited the Meeting to proceed with the next session on MEDESS-4MS and to consider, under the current convergence period on inventory of response means, MEDESS-4MS complementarity with EU tools.

General Presentation on MEDESS-4MS Project and Risk Assessment

38. The MEDESS-4MS Project Leader presented the unique web portal which includes different service scenarios, multi-model data access and interactive capabilities including multilayers operational Geographical Information System (GIS) integrated information on response equipment, accidents and environmental and socio-economic sensitivity maps. He further explained that the Project integrate Meteorological and Oceanographic analyses and forecasts, Oil Spill Satellite monitoring data, Automatic Identification System (AIS) information and five different oil spill forecasting models from five partners. All this information is available through the "Network Data Repository" System. The Project's service functionalities will be tested by key-end users in two operations ("Serious Games").

39. Whilst referring to oil spill risk and impact assessment study for the Mediterranean region currently being carried out within the framework of the Project, Mr Georgoudis stated that the evaluation and monitoring of risks was based on the experience of the Brisk and BE-AWARE Projects carried out respectively under the HELCOM and the Bonn Agreement. The study includes analysis of ship traffic, oil transport data, historical accident data, and socio-economical and sensitivity mapping. On the latter, data was collected from UNEP/MAP RACs (i.e. Plan Bleu, SPA/RAC and REMPEC) and from the oil industry (ENI).

40. Mr Georgoudis concluded his presentation explaining that the Risk Management of oil spills within the MEDESS-4MS Project integrates Risk Assessment, Risk Treatment and Risk Monitoring. In this regard, he detailed the following activities which have been or will be implemented:

- a. **AIS collection:** The data was collected with the authorisation of EU Member States;
- b. **AIS analysis:** Whilst the analysis provides information on traffic density by ship size and type, some limitations related to AIS coverage and the lack of oil transport data were noted;
- c. **Oil transport data analysis** have been produced through the analysis of oil flow data and AIS data;
- d. **Parameter identification:** The sensitivity and vulnerability to an oil spill have been divided into *environmental parameters*, such as, types of shorelines, protected areas, flora and fauna and *socio-economic parameters*, such as, tourism, ports/terminals, power plants, desalination plants, fish grounds and farm winds. The corresponding data was collected by REMPEC as specified above.
- e. **Sensitivity weighting matrix:** Sensitivity parameters will be weighed with the support of environmental and socio-economical experts including SPA/RAC and Plan Bleu experts and the corresponding scored layers will be aggregated to provide a sensitivity map for the entire region.
- f. **Oil response inventory:** gathering in a GIS system information provided by Mediterranean coastal States including type of equipment, location and ownership;
- g. **Accidents at sea analysis**, based on the data gathered from Mediterranean coastal States, CEDRE, the International Tanker Owner Pollution Federation Ltd (ITOPF) and REMPEC; the 'analysis of accidents at sea' will determine the probability (frequency) of a specific accident to occur and be combined with AIS data and statistical parameters.
- h. **Accidental spill of oil analysis:** The outcome of the accident at sea analysis and the oil transport data analysis will be combined to forecast/predict the amount and type of oil spill at sea, and identify high risk areas.
- i. **Environmental Damage Assessment:** The Environmental Damage Assessment will be determined combining the accidental oil spill analysis and the sensitivity analysis. Using the MEDESS-4MS forecasting system, the shoreline impact and damage will be assessed for the entire region.

User Interface Demonstration

41. Ms Michela De Dominicis, Researcher at the Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (INGV), was invited to provide a demonstration of the MEDESS-4MS User Interface. She first detailed the different MEDESS-4MS Service Scenarios:

- **Real time:** Automatic simulations based on spills detected from satellite images;
- **Delayed mode:** Simulations using historical data to process past observations and for hazard-risk assessment purposes; and
- **Management of emergency situations:** Real time simulations executed by users in cases of emergency providing oil slick forecasting movement to support decision making process.

42. Ms Dominicis further explained that the running of oil spill simulations includes:

- a. **Definition of the oil spill geometry and descriptors** (e.g. oil spill location, depth; date and time, duration of oil spill release, volume of spilled oil and type of oil);
- b. **Simulation instructions** (e.g. selection of simulation duration, output time step, ocean model, wind model, wave model and forecasting model).

43. She then delivered an on-line step-by-step demonstration on the use of the system. She emphasised that the five oil spill models could be chosen taking into account that some cover the entire Mediterranean Sea whilst other are focused on a particular area of the region.

44. Ms Dominicis then demonstrated the results of the simulation underpinning that the evolution in time of the oil spill position and concentration could be visualised with additional operational layers such as sea currents speed and direction, wind speed and direction, wave height and direction, socio-economic and environmental sensitivity maps as well as response equipment.

45. Ms Dominicis then introduced the MEDESS-4MS Serious Games, referring to the first operation aimed at testing and validating the MEDESS-4MS oil spill forecasting capabilities, through direct observations performed by a vessel and/or airplane of the Italian Coast Guard and use of buoys. She further informed the Meeting that training on the system will also be delivered to end-users before the end of the project.

46. Mr Leonidas Perivoliotis, Researcher at the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research was then invited to provide additional technical information on the system's functionality. He informed the Meeting that the MEDESS-4MS Project will deliver an integrated operational multi-model oil spill prediction service in the Mediterranean, connected to existing monitoring platforms (CSN, AIS), using well-established oil spill modelling systems, data from the Marine Core Services and national ocean forecasting systems. He highlighted that the four already operational oil spill models (MEDSLIK, MEDSLI-II, POSEIDON OSM and MOTHY) will be connected in order to form the multi-model oil spill system of MEDESS-4MS. The MEDESS-4MS oil spill service will be coupled with the environmental data from the Marine Core Service and the associated national ocean forecasting systems. He underlined that nine (9) institutions and centres in the Mediterranean are providing marine and atmospheric forecasting data in real time whilst twenty-eight (28) forecasting data sets will be available through the unique web portal.

47. Mr Perivoliotis then further detailed the MEDESS-4MS forecasting systems including fourteen (14) Oceanographic models, seven (7) Atmospheric models and seven (7) wave models. He explained that the Project built an interconnection between the oil spill models and the environment forecasting systems above mentioned.

48. Mr Perivoliotis concluded his presentation listing the remaining tasks to be completed before the end of the Project:

- Finalizing the User Interface taking into account comments from End-Users Meeting to provide a complete and easy access to the end users;
- Triggering simulation scenarios introducing directly to the system oil spill detected by satellites;
- Using the results from the Serious Games, to enhance the forecasting skill of the oil spill models; and
- Delivering an error free oil spill multi-model forecasting system for the Mediterranean region.

49. The Director of REMPEC, concluded that from these presentations, one can see the added value of the MEDESS-4MS tool, which offers a range of forecasting models from where the most appropriate model can be selected according to particular circumstances of an incident. He further underlined that the system provides a variety of crisis management tools supporting decision makers in case of emergency.

50. He further highlighted the integration of efforts carried out in the framework of the Barcelona Convention through the interaction and exchange of data between its RACs and underlined that the system, which is built on a regional scale, could offer a level of flexibility to enable countries to fine tune their sensitivity maps.

51. As regards the GIS on response means, he suggested to aim, in the future, at producing a system providing real time equipment availability.

Outcome of the meeting

52. Mr Frederic Hebert invited the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the *tour de table* to give their feedback on their interest in using CECIS and/or MEDESS-4MS tools.

53. In general, all the Contracting Parties Representatives present at the Meeting recognised the usefulness of both CECIS and the MEDESS-4MS tools and the need to integrate these tools in their country, whilst highlighting the difficulties which could be encountered in this process. With regard to CECIS, the main challenge identified was related to the number of actors involved in decision making on emergency management and the need to find an agreement on who would be the national contact point in charge.

ANNEX(E) I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

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ANNEX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting

2. EU Services and Tools: Preparedness and Response to Marine Pollution
 - 2.1 Presentation of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and its Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)
 - 2.2 Links with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and Regional Agreements
 - 2.3 Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS)
 - 2.4 Discussion

3. Mediterranean Decision Support System for Marine Safety (MEDESS-4MS) Project
 - 3.1 General presentation on MEDESS-4MS Project and Risk Assessment
 - 3.2 User Interface Demonstration
 - 3.3 Discussion

4. Visit to ERCC