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Meeting of the MAP Focal Points

Athens, Greece, 16-19 September 2025

Agenda Item 5: Specific Matters for Consideration and Action by the Meeting, including Draft Decisions

Draft Decision IG.27/9: Mandate of the Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change and Terms of Reference of its Focal Points

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Note by the Secretariat

1. The 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP23, Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023) through Decision IG.26/12 on the Establishment of the Regional Activity Center on Climate Change (CC/RAC), decided “*to establish the MAP Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change (CC/RAC) as one of the Components of the MAP system, in accordance with the common operational principles for MAP Components*”. Furthermore, through the same Decision, Contracting Parties requested “*the Secretariat to develop an independent mapping exercise including a fully-fledged assessment of the UNEP/MAP system and its different components with a view to define the mandate and integrate the newly established CC/RAC within the UNEP/MAP system, the results of which shall be submitted in a timely manner to all Contracting Parties for consideration of the MAP Focal Points Meeting of the biennium 2024-2025, then for decision at COP24 in order to operationalize the CC/RAC. Such assessment should be developed in a transparent and inclusive way, taking into account all governance, legal, financial, and administrative aspects and should ensure full complementarity and synergies, for the benefit of the Mediterranean region and the implementation of global and regional commitments;*”.
2. The process was agreed to be led by the MAP Coordinating Unit, with support from an independent expert. The issue was discussed at the 52nd Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (Vratchi, Greece, 17-19 January 2024) as well as at the 54th Meeting of the Executive Coordination Panel (Split, Croatia, 17-19 September 2024), where the consultant was present and had the opportunity to have individual interviews with the Directors of MAP Components. The issue was also discussed at the three Bureau meetings of the biennium, namely the 96th Bureau meeting (Ljubljana, Slovenia, 3-4 April 2024), the 96th Bureau meeting (Cairo, Egypt, 19-20 November 2025), and the 97th Bureau meeting (Evia, Greece, 1-2 July 2025).
3. Following this, the independent expert finalized the study which includes a draft proposal for the mandate of the newly established CC/RAC. The full Report of Independent Mapping Exercise with a view to define the mandate and integrate the newly established CC/RAC within the UNEP/MAP system is presented in Information Document UNEP/MED WG.620/Inf.18. The overall study contains the following parts: an introduction/background section, a section on the Context for the Preparation of the Draft CC/RAC Mandate, the UNEP/MAP Guidance for Component Mandates as contained in previous COP decisions, the Mandates of MAP Regional Activity Centres as well as of the UNEP Climate Change Division, a section on the Climate Activities of the RACs, a Comparative Analysis of Climate Change in Mandates and Activities of RACs, as well as a section on the Draft CC/RAC Mandate Proposal. The Report contains four appendices, namely (i) the Consultant Terms of Reference, (ii) the RAC Mandates, (iii) the Climate Activities of PB/RAC, PAP/RAC and SPA/RAC, and (iv) the Preliminary proposed Terms of Reference for the CC/RAC prepared by Türkiye.
4. The proposed mandate is presented in Annex I of the present Draft Decision, while the proposed Terms of Reference of the CC/RAC Focal Points, based on those of other RACs as included in Decision IG.17/5 “*Governance Paper*” adopted at the COP 15, are presented in Annex II of the present draft Decision.
5. The implementation of this Draft Decision is included in the PoW 2026-2027 and especially under activities 5.2.3 and 5.2.5.
6. This proposed Decision and its Annexes are hereby submitted to the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 16-19 September 2025) for consideration and possible transmission to the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP24, Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025).

Draft Decision IG.27/9

Mandate of the Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change and Terms of Reference of its Focal Points

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 24th Meeting,

Welcoming the outcome document of the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) entitled “Our ocean, our future: united for urgent action”, reaffirming the strong global commitment to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources and reconfirming the need to strengthen the role of regional seas conventions and action plans,

Being inspired by the high level celebration of the anniversary of the 50 years of the UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan and the 30 years of the Post-Rio Barcelona Convention, in UNOC-3, on 10 June 2025, as a strong sign of renewed commitment of the Contracting Parties, as reflected in their Ministerial Declaration,

Noting with appreciation Resolution 6/15 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024, on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/296 of July 2022, entitled “Our Ocean, Our future, Our responsibility”,

Recalling also Decision IG.17/5 “Governance Paper” adopted at the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008) and in particular Section 8 on “Role of Focal Points”, as well as Decision IG.19/5 “Mandates of the Components of MAP” adopted at the 16th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 26, Marrakesh, Morocco, 3-5 November 2009),

Recalling further Decision IG.26/12 adopted at COP23 (Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023) on the establishment the Climate Change Regional Activity Centre (CC/RAC) within the framework of UNEP/MAP, as a strategic step to further strengthen the UNEP/MAP system by enhancing institutional coherence in its responses to climate change, and recognizing the Centre’s role in actively engaging in regional climate initiatives, promoting synergies, and fostering coordination and collaboration among relevant stakeholders,

Acknowledging the pressing need to reinforce institutional coherence and cross-sectoral coordination in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change in the Mediterranean region, including through strengthened integration of climate considerations into national and regional policy frameworks and planning processes as well as to maximize coordinated support to RACs,

Noting with concern that due to anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases, the rate of climate change in the Mediterranean basin, both historical and projected, is faster than global trends and *deeply concerned* that 2024 was the hottest year on record according to the World Meteorological Organization,

Recalling the commitments under the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and *emphasizing* the importance of regional governance frameworks, such as the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention, in contributing to the achievement of global climate objectives,

Recognizing the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF) 2026-2035 as a key policy instrument under UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention and its ICZM Protocol to guide and support climate resilience efforts in the Mediterranean and *emphasizing the need* for its effective implementation in line with the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and the region’s evolving climate challenges, to ensure coordinated and science-based climate action across marine and coastal areas,

Taking note of the outcome of the Independent Mapping Exercise with a view to define the mandate and integrate the newly established CC/RAC within the UNEP/MAP system,

1. *Adopt* the Mandate of the Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change, set out in Annex I to this Decision;
2. *Approve* the Terms of Reference for the Focal Points of the Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change, set out in the Annex II to this Decision;
3. *Request* the Contracting Parties to appoint Focal Points to the Regional Activity Centre on Climate Change, *encouraging* them to appoint as appropriate experts who are Focal Points of other MAP Components, depending on the Contracting Parties' priorities;
4. *Invite* the Government of Türkiye to take as soon as possible the necessary institutional, structural and budgetary measures to enable a smooth operation of CC/RAC;
5. *Request* the Secretariat to support the Host Country and CC/RAC, and to follow up the implementation of this Decision and report to the Bureau meetings in 2026 and 2027 and to next COP25 on its progress.

Annex I

Mandate of the Climate Change Regional Activity Centre

Background

The adverse and worsening climate change context for the Mediterranean Region requires urgent and ambitious remedial action. A series of landmark scientific reports (IPCC 2020, PB/RAC 2020, MedECC 2020 and 2023) have confirmed the climate change fragility of the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean region is warming 20 percent faster than the global average, confirming its “hot spot” reputation. Climate change impacts will exert further pressure on already strained ecosystems and on vulnerable economies and societies. And coastal zones face heightened disaster risks, including flooding and erosion, and the salinization of river deltas and aquifers that sustain food security and livelihoods.

The 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP23, Portoroz, Slovenia, December 2023) committed to “advance decarbonisation” and “enhance actions to address climate change in the Mediterranean and increase protection of the marine ecosystems against the detrimental impacts from climate change, and strengthen scientific knowledge and expertise in this area such as through the Network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC)” (UNEP/MED IG.26/22). The Contracting Parties at the same meeting confirmed the establishment of the MAP Climate Change Regional Activity Centre (CC/RAC) in Istanbul by Decision IG.26/12.

In this context, the CC/RAC is expected to play a central and catalytic role in supporting the implementation of the 2026-2035 Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF), in alignment with the 2026-2035 Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD).

Objective and mission statement

“The CC/RAC will support the Mediterranean countries to substantially increase their resilience to the adverse impacts of climate variability and change. This will be achieved through the application of co-working and cooperation, transparency, accountability, participatory governance and considerations of solidarity and equity.”

The mission of CC/RAC is “to provide the services which enable Contracting Parties to strengthen their climate-resilient capabilities to withstand the adverse effects of climate change on human and marine life and health, sea temperatures, acidification and deoxygenation of the sea, sea level rise, shifts in the abundance and distribution of marine species, and the increase of invasive alien species and degradation of marine biodiversity” (COP 23, Portoroz Ministerial Declaration).

Scope of action and key issues

1. Strengthen the regional scientific climate knowledge base in the region

- *Synergise joint working with MedECC, and providing support to MedECC in its delivery, in collaboration with Plan Bleu/RAC.*
- *Draft and prepare recommendation and guidance based on findings of MedECC reports, in particular on technical solutions.*

2. Harness opportunities for climate change collaboration and partnering in the region using coordination approaches and in consultation with the Secretariat

3. Support Contracting Parties to strengthen the integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, policies and programmes into national planning and budgeting systems

- *Support the preparation and implementation of national climate change planning and management guidelines for National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); and for integrating climate change into national development planning and budgeting processes, with a particular focus on the marine and coastal environment.*

- *Increase Contracting Parties' [and other regional and national stakeholders'] awareness and engagement on climate change in cooperation with other MAP Components.*
- *Undertake activities and exchanges of best practices to reinforce national adaptation and mitigation policy responses to climate change by providing the interface with scientific evidence for relevant stakeholder bodies.*

4. Support Contracting Parties in testing, piloting and demonstrating adaptation solutions

- *Support collecting information at national level, considering these processes are key enablers for scaling up actions especially for livelihoods adaptation.*
- *Support Contracting Parties in identifying and exchanging experiences on the application of Nature-based Solutions for climate change.*

5. Mobilise climate finance opportunities for adaptation and mitigation

- *Assess the international climate finance landscape and support Contracting Parties with guidelines and practical support where needed to access domestic and international climate finance opportunities.*
- *Lead the formulation of MAP project proposals for international funding in collaboration with Contracting Parties and MAP Components with a particular focus for the implementation of the RCCAF 2026-2035.*

6. Pursue opportunities for internal and external institutional synergies

- *Identify potential synergies with regional climate adaptation programmes such as IUCN, WWF, GWP and with the UNEP Climate Change Division and its Climate Change Adaptation Unit.*
- *Follow up from a technical point of view the work of UNFCCC to recommend as appropriate relevant actions to be taken under the MAP- Barcelona Convention system.*

7. [Consolidate the profile, brand and role of the CC/RAC across the region

- *Further strengthen Contracting Parties' engagement in regional climate change activities by emphasising the opportunity to establish strong collaborative links with CC/RAC in close collaboration with all MAP Components, through an integrated approach.]*

8. Coordinate the monitoring of the implementation of the RCCAF on periodical basis for the consideration of the Contracting Parties through the preparation and follow up of a smooth efficient monitoring and evaluation framework using indicator-based approaches.

Annex II

Terms of Reference for the CC/RAC Focal Points

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CC/RAC FOCAL POINTS

Designation

The CC/RAC Focal Point shall be designated by the competent Ministry/body of the Contracting Party, in consultation with the MAP Focal Point.

The CC/RAC Focal Point shall be an appropriately empowered person appointed by the governmental/administrative body responsible for broader policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation for the support of sustainable development.

The name and functions of the designated Focal Point shall be communicated by the MAP Focal Point to the MAP Secretariat and CC/RAC Director, as well as to concerned bodies in the Contracting Party.

Tasks

CC/RAC Focal Points shall be responsible for:

- Maintaining the relationship between CC/RAC and governmental/administrative bodies;
- Contributing to the preparation of CC/RAC Focal Point meetings through comments and proposals either made on their own initiative or relating to documents prepared by CC/RAC, after consultation with Contracting Party bodies as required;
- Attending the CC/RAC Focal Points meetings and reporting on their conclusions to governmental/administrative bodies and MAP Focal Points;
- Disseminating CC/RAC technical and information documents, guidelines, studies, etc., to concerned bodies;
- Following, in consultation with MAP Focal Points, the implementation of relevant decisions and recommendations of the Meetings of the Contracting Parties;
- Liaising with NGOs, the academic and scientific community and socioeconomic actors concerned with CC/RAC activities;
- Communicating to MAP Focal Points all information and documents needed for the execution of their tasks;
- Liaising with local representatives of international financial facilities, institutions and programmes for the support of projects related to the implementation of CC/RAC activities;
- Disseminating and promoting CC/RAC documents and publications among concerned governmental/administrative bodies, along with public and private institutions and interested individuals;
- Organizing, where necessary, presentations and discussions with partners and experts, with the participation of CC/RAC, to promote the Centre's activities;
- Assisting CC/RAC to obtain relevant climate mitigation and adaptation information by identifying relevant sources and key contact persons;
- Contributing to the preparation of MCSD meetings through comments and proposals Related to climate change, either made on their own initiative or relating to documents prepared by CC/RAC, after consultation with national bodies;
- Producing, where necessary, joint publications with CC/RAC;
- Assisting CC/RAC in the identification of relevant experts for specific initiatives or Consultations;
- Following activities in relation to the obligations of global and regional instruments related to climate change.

Support measures

In order to fulfil their tasks, it is advisable for CC/RAC Focal Points to receive the following support as appropriate:

Contracting Party bodies shall:

- Associate CC/RAC Focal Points with the formulation and implementation of Contracting Party policies and strategies on climate change, including the production of related statistics and indicators;
- Transmit to CC/RAC Focal Points all necessary information, in particular for following up relevant decisions and recommendations of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties;
- Provide CC/RAC Focal Points with adequate resources as required for the execution of their tasks, within the context of the broader fiscal and staffing policies and priorities of the Contracting Party.

CC/RAC shall:

- Provide Focal Points with all information needed for the execution of their tasks including technical details considered useful for proper understanding and evaluation;
- Provide support, including appropriate training, to CC/RAC Focal Points to enable them to carry out their tasks.