



**UNITED  
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**Mediterranean  
Action Plan**  
Barcelona  
Convention

20 October 2025  
Original: English

24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the  
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment  
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2025

**Agenda Item 3: Thematic Decisions**

**Agenda Item 5: Ministerial Session**

**Reports of the Meetings of the Bureau (95<sup>th</sup> , 96<sup>th</sup> and 97<sup>th</sup>)**

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UNEP/MAP  
Athens, 2025



UNITED  
NATIONS

UNEP/MED BUR.95/7



**Mediterranean  
Action Plan**  
Barcelona  
Convention

13 May 2024  
Original: English

95<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the  
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment  
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Ljubljana, Slovenia, 3-4 April 2024

## **Report of the Meeting**

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UNEP/MAP  
Athens, 2024

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## **Introduction**

1. At the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, in accordance with Article IV.2 of the Terms of Reference of the Bureau and in consultation with the President and members of the Bureau, the 95<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of 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 was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 3-4 April 2024.

## **Participation**

2. The meeting was attended by the President of the Bureau, Mr. Mitja Bricelj, accompanied by advisors; the Vice-Presidents: Mr. Ali Abou Sena (Egypt); Ms. Marie Thérèse Gambin (Malta); Ms. Nassira Rheyati (Morocco); Ms. Itziar Martin Partida (Spain); the Rapporteur, Ms. Djurdjina Bulatovic (Montenegro) and the Ex-Officio Member, Ms. Vildan Bolukbasi Atay (Türkiye). The Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit (Coordinator and Programme Management Officer - Governance). The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

### **I. Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting**

3. The meeting was opened at 10:00 (UTC+1) on Wednesday, 3 April 2024, by Mr. Mitja Bricelj, President of the Bureau, who welcomed the Bureau members to the first Bureau meeting of the biennium and thanked the Secretariat and Bureau Members for the hard work done during this period. He emphasized that the President of the Sava Youth Parliament was present and would address the meeting and informed the meeting that the heads of the three Regional Conventions, Barcelona Convention, Black Sea Commission and Danube River Protection Convention, would meet in May in Istanbul, Türkiye, to discuss ways to strengthen collaboration between these Conventions.

4. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Ms. Tatjana Hema, welcomed all participants to the meeting and thanked the Government of Slovenia for kindly hosting the meeting. She also stressed the importance of the meeting, which was expected to address a number of issues in view of the follow-up of COP 23 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023), including the implementation of the Portorož Ministerial Declaration and the Program of Work and Budget for 2024-2025.

5. The President of the Sava Youth Parliament, Mr. Blaž Lipovšek, explained that this initiative is bringing together youth (18-25 years old) from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. He also highlighted the work of the Sava Youth Parliament and the importance of youth involvement in relation to the global and regional sustainable development challenges.

6. The members of the Bureau welcomed the presentation of Mr. Lipovšek, encouraging such initiatives and the enhanced involvement of youth in the work of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention. They also noted the importance of bringing together youth from the north and south of the Mediterranean.

### **II. Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work**

7. The Bureau reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda as contained in document UNEP/MED BUR.95/1. No other issues were added in the Agenda.

### **III. Agenda Item 3: Progress Report for October 2023 - February 2024**

8. The MAP Coordinator introduced the document “*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period October 2023 - February 2024*” (UNEP/MED BUR.95/3). The Coordinator also referred to document “*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Implementation of COP23 Decisions*” (UNEP/MED BUR.95/4).

9. The Coordinator summarized the progress achieved in the implementation of the seven Programmes of the 2022-2027 UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy during the reporting period. She referred to the implementation of projects related to pollution and marine litter, as well as on the implementation of COP 22 Decision on the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea as an Emission Control Area for Sulphur Oxides (Med SOx ECA). In relation to biodiversity and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), the Coordinator referred to the implementation of existing European Commission (EC) and GEF funded projects as well as to the preparation of a new project on

Mediterranean Forests by UNEP, MAP and FAO. She also noted the importance of adhering to the 30x30 biodiversity commitment, and referred to the amendments to the Annexes of the SPA/BD Protocol agreed at COP 23. In relation to climate change she referred to the limited funds available for this theme and to the preparation of a mapping exercise in relation to the climate change work of MAP, following the relevant COP 23 decision. On the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources including circular and blue economy, the Coordinator highlighted the collaboration with the EC on blue economy, the progress in the CAMP projects and the relevance of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) which is currently being updated.

10. Regarding governance, Ms. Hema referred to the efforts to increase ratification of Protocols (especially ICZM and Dumping), to the update of the MSSD and of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework and the possibility to also include in the latter resilience, to the financial support by Italy, France and the EC, and to partnerships with other Conventions such as ESPOO. Regarding the revised reporting format she noted that the first draft is expected in summer 2024, that it will include new legally binding measures adopted by the last COPs as well as considerations to simplify its format, adding that it will be difficult to have a dedicated meeting while the draft will be open for feedback by the Contracting Parties through online tools. Regarding monitoring, assessment, knowledge and vision of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast, she referred to the progress in the preparation of the Summary for Policy-Makers of the 2023 MED QSR, to the progress in monitoring and to the revision of IMAP, to the finalization of the MAP Knowledge Management Policy by INFO/RAC, to the revamped UNEP/MAP website to be ready soon, to the finalization of the MED2050 Foresight Study and to the MSSD Dashboard. Finally, regarding advocacy, awareness, education and communication, the Coordinator referred to the publication of the Parliamentarians' Guide to protecting the Mediterranean Sea and coast, to the publication of the 2023 MED QSR, and to the Young Person's Guide to the Mediterranean Action Plan and the Barcelona Convention.

11. The President and the Members of the Bureau congratulated the Secretariat for the significant progress achieved during this short reporting period and for the effort put in this detailed report.

12. One Bureau member referred to the importance of the implementation of the Med SOx ECA Decision, while one other referred to his country's progress in relation to the ratification of MARPOL Annex VI, noting also the interest of his country in desalination.

13. Regarding biodiversity loss and ecosystem services, the President of the Bureau noted the importance of action at national level, together with collective action. In relation to the annexes of the SPA/BD Protocol, one Bureau member referred to the need to proceed with the socio-economic analyses in order to find a solution in relation to the reservations set in the relevant COP 23 Decision. On non-indigenous species, one Bureau member referred to the need to work more on the accuracy of the percentages of contribution of different ways with which they enter the Mediterranean. The Coordinator noted that in relation to fisheries, FAO/GFCM has opened a funding stream for countries and that Contracting Parties can make their proposals to GFCM, together with SPA/RAC.

14. Regarding sustainable use of coastal and marine resources including circular and blue economy, one Bureau member referred to the importance of Nature based Solutions (NbS) and to the relevant UNEP and IUCN guidelines. He noted that links should be more clearly provided between the work of MAP on this issue and these guidelines.

15. In relation to governance, the President referred to the work of EUSAIR and the different scenarios prepared in relation to effective spatial planning in MPA management, noting the need to further strengthen synergies with this strategy/initiative.

16. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau expresses its appreciation for the work done in the period October 2023 - February 2024 as presented by the Secretariat, and its satisfaction for the efforts and results achieved so far through the integrated work of the Coordinating Unit and MAP Components;**

**(b) The Bureau encourages the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties to participate in global and regional fora and events of UNEP/MAP relevance and to showcase the Mediterranean achievements and best practices.**

#### **IV. Agenda Item 4: Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues**

17. The MAP Coordinator presented to the Bureau members a financial and administrative update as contained in the “*Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues*” (UNEP/MED BUR.95/5), addressing the status of financial contributions, personnel, administrative matters and consultancy reporting. She highlighted the good collection rate of assessed contributions, the positive balance of the MTF and the healthy financial situation. She added that the Secretariat is following-up with Contracting Parties in arrears, noting that there is some progress in collecting arrears and adding that continued support will be provided to Contracting Parties facing difficulties. The Coordinator stressed that Bureau members should lead by example and kindly asked to finalize the payment of their countries’ assessed contributions for 2023. She highlighted the importance of early payment of contributions, so that there is a timely transfer of funds to MAP components for the implementation of their respective mandates/activities.

18. Regarding the level of the budget consumption for the biennium 2022-2023, the Coordinator noted that the exact rate of expenditure will be available in July 2024, when the accounts will be closed and audited. She explained the situation regarding Programme Support Costs (PSC), and the relevant exchanges with the UNEP Headquarters, noting that the UN controller has clarified that no exception should be made to the PSC of 14%. She added that the Secretariat will explain this to Greece in relation to the Host Country Contribution and that at the next Bureau meeting the Secretariat will be in a position to provide more information in this respect. Regarding consultancy reporting, she noted that since this is only the beginning of the biennium, relevant information will be provided at the next Bureau meeting. Finally, she referred to the progress on Human Resource issues, as well as to the refurbishment of the UNEP/MAP premises.

19. The Bureau members welcomed the information provided by the Secretariat. One Bureau member requested the Secretariat to send the letter and invoice on the payment of contributions as early as possible in the year, so that the internal process of payment can be timely initialized.

#### **20. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the Financial Statements provided in response to the Conclusions and Recommendations of the 94th Bureau meeting requesting for the certified and audited financial statements for the year 2023 to be shared as soon as they are available;**

**(b) The Bureau notes with appreciation the contributions received for the years 2022 and 2023 and encourages the Contracting Parties which did not pay to do so as soon as possible;**

**(c) The Bureau draws the attention of the Contracting Parties to adhere to Procedure 4.2.b of the Financial Regulations and Rules and Procedures, which states that contributions for each calendar year are expected within the first quarter of that year and should be paid promptly and in full;**

**(d) The Bureau encourages the Contracting Parties in arrears to pay them as soon as possible, while noting the specific circumstances of each Contracting Party in arrears;**

**(e) The Bureau supports the efforts made by the Secretariat and urges the Secretariat to continue its efforts to maximize the collection of contributions and arrears in line with the Financial Rules and Procedures;**

**(f) The Bureau takes note of the status of the financial implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023 and requests the Secretariat to provide the final picture at the next Bureau meeting after the closure of the respective accounts;**

**(g) The Bureau takes note of the efforts by the Secretariat to close the Audit recommendations and to operationalize the PoW and Budget 2024-2025 into Project Documents and Legal Instruments in a timely manner, noting that information on the financial implementation of the first semester of the PoW and Budget 2024-2025 will be provided at its 96<sup>th</sup> Meeting;**

**(h) The Bureau takes note of the Audit recommendation and the advice of UNEP HQs for the revision of Programme Support Costs on the MAP contributions/funds and request the**

**Secretariat to initiate a dialogue on this matter with the concerned Contracting Parties and to report the outcome at its 96<sup>th</sup> Meeting;**

**(i) The Bureau takes note of the status of recruitment and welcomes the new RAC Directors to the MAP system;**

**(j) The Bureau takes note of the efforts made with regards to the refurbishment of the UNEP/MAP premises and requests the Secretariat to accelerate the process with the support of the Greek Government and to report the progress to the next Bureau meeting.**

#### **V. Agenda Item 5: Specific Issues**

21. The MAP Coordinator presented the “*Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues*” (UNEP/MED BUR.95/6).

22. The meeting discussed the matters as summarized in the following paragraphs.

#### **A. Ratification, Reporting and Compliance**

23. The Coordinator, referred to issues related to ratification, reporting and compliance, noting that two ratifications are pending for the entry into force of the Amendments of the Dumping Protocol and that the Secretariat is following-up with relevant Contracting Parties on this issue. Regarding reporting, she highlighted that reporting rates are low and that although reporting is not mandatory for Parties that have not ratified a Protocol, reporting by all Parties is very useful in assessing the situation in the Mediterranean region. On Compliance she noted that two nominations have been received for the position of a Member from Group III (as reflected in documents UNEP/MED BUR.95/6 and its Add.1), while no nomination was received regarding an Alternate Member from Group III. The Coordinator highlighted the importance of a full Compliance Committee membership for the smooth operation of the Committee.

24. One Bureau member noted that her country is close to finalizing the procedure for the ratification of the Offshore Protocol, while adding that there are challenges related to the ratification of the Hazardous Waste Protocol. Regarding the Compliance Committee membership, she asked the Secretariat to continue efforts for the nomination of an Alternate Member by Group III. She also noted that regarding the nominations of a Compliance Committee Member from Group III, preference should be given to the candidacy nominated by a Contracting Party who has not been in the Compliance Committee before. The other Bureau members agreed with this proposal.

25. Another Bureau member noted the difficulties faced in reporting as well as in collecting data and expressed appreciation for the establishment and operationalization of the Reporting Implementation Task Force in this respect.

#### **26. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the current status of ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, noting also the limited progress in ratifications during the last biennium and urges the Contracting Parties which have not yet done so to make efforts for the ratifications of the Protocols, with particular focus on the Dumping Protocol to ensure its entry into force as soon as possible;**

**(b) The Bureau encourages the President and the Secretariat to enhance their efforts with the respective Contracting Parties to achieve the full ratification of the Protocols to the Barcelona Convention;**

**(c) The Bureau calls on Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports for the period 2022-2023 by December 2024 and strongly urges those Contracting Parties who have not yet done so, to submit their national implementation reports for the previous reporting periods 2012–2013 and 2014–2015 (2 Contracting Parties), 2016-2017 (4 Contracting Parties), 2018-2019 (9 Contracting Parties) and/or 2020-2021 (12 Contracting Parties) without further delay, implementing COP 23 Decision IG.26/1;**

**(d) The Bureau, in relation to the membership of the Compliance Committee for the biennium 2024-2025, elected Mr. Weckel, nominated by Monaco, as a Member of the Compliance**

Committee;

**(e) The Bureau, following the adoption of the amendments to MARPOL Annex VI concerning the Med SOx ECA at the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 79) (London, UK, 12-16 December 2022), recalls the urgency of ratification, transposition and effective implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, by the six remaining Contracting Parties particularly in view of the expected date of entry into effective application of the Med SOx ECA on 1 May 2025.**

#### **B. COP23 Key Mandates-Timeline and Milestones for their Effective Delivery**

27. The Secretariat informed the members of the Bureau about the progress in relation to key COP 23 mandates, with a focus on the processes and on the actions taken as well as on the next steps for their efficient delivery. The Coordinator noted that the update of the Mediterranean Strategy of Sustainable Development would be discussed during the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (Athens, Greece, 18-19 April 2024). Regarding the revision of the Ecosystem Approach roadmap she noted that it will take place in parallel with the evaluation of the implementation of the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme. She also referred to the revision of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework, and the relevant possibilities for funding. She referred then to the 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, for which the process of hiring an independent consultant is under way, noting also that the Director of Climate Change/RAC, Mr. Mustafa Baskara, has been officially appointed. She also presented the progress regarding the Internal Evaluation of Coherence of the MAP System to the "Common Operational Principles for MAP Components", noting that this has been discussed in the Executive Coordination Panel and is proceeding with the cooperation of all MAP Components. Regarding this issue, the Coordinator added that a recent evolution is related to the organization of meetings by MAP Components: according to UN rules, participants deserve at least 20% of the DSA even if their expenses are paid based on receipts.

28. One Bureau member highlighted the importance of MAP Components to have Host Country Agreements and asked the Secretariat to share the first assessment of the situation with the Bureau at its next meeting.

29. On the issue of Host Country Agreements, the Coordinator highlighted that the Secretariat is also considering what other Multilateral Environmental Agreements are doing in relation to their regional centers (e.g. the Basel Convention and the Cartagena Convention) and that it is preferable that all UNEP/MAP RACs apply the UN Rules and Regulations. She added that the Secretariat will present the first outcome of this exercise at the next Bureau meeting, while the final outcome will be presented in the last Bureau meeting of the biennium, planned for June 2025. She also expressed appreciation for the collaboration of the directors of MAP Components in this endeavour.

30. **Conclusion:**

**(a) The Bureau notes with appreciation the information provided on the key mandates of COP23 and their implementation and requests the Secretariat and the respective MAP Components to ensure all steps are undertaken for their effective and timely implementation.**

#### **C. Collaboration and Partners**

31. The Coordinator presented the work of the Secretariat, which has been very active in enhancing partnerships during this reporting period. She referred to the active contribution of UNEP/MAP in UNEA-6 (Nairobi, Kenya, 26 February–1 March 2024), where, *inter alia*, the Coordinator was a key speaker in the side event on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Regional Seas as well as to the Resolutions adopted at UNEA-6, four of which were very relevant to the work of UNEP/MAP. Furthermore, the Coordinator referred to the active involvement of UNEP/MAP in the 9<sup>th</sup> Our Ocean Conference (Athens, Greece, 15-17 April 2024).

32. The Bureau members congratulated the Secretariat for the work done and the progress achieved in relation to partnerships and collaboration. One member of the Bureau noted that the EU Marine Directors meeting, which took place in November 2023 during the Spanish Presidency of the

EU, invited the Coordinators of the UNEP Regional Seas to participate and thanked the Coordinator for her active presence in that meeting where she presented the 2023 MED QSR. She suggested that it would be very relevant for Regional Seas representatives to be present at all the EU Directors meetings that take place twice per year, so that they are informed on marine and freshwater issues.

33. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau notes with appreciation the UNEA 6 Resolution on Ocean Governance highlighting the Regional Seas as a key contributor to this process and welcomes the work of the Secretariat in enhancing ocean governance at regional and global level and the strengthening of cooperation and partnerships with global and regional organizations for joint impact on the ground;**

**(b) The Bureau welcomes the work by the Secretariat to strengthen participation and involvement in global processes and to raise the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system's profile, its work and its contribution to the implementation of the SDGs, and encourages the Secretariat to further work in this direction;**

**(c) The Bureau appreciates the existing collaboration of the Regional Seas surrounding Europe with the work undertaken for the implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and to this aim, encourages further strengthening of this collaboration within the established mechanisms and related meetings;**

**(d) The Bureau welcomes the involvement of UNEP/MAP in the BlueMissionMed Initiative, especially in relation to the preparation of the updated MSSD and its future implementation;**

**(e) The Bureau endorses the results of the evaluation conducted by the Secretariat of the new application submitted by the Mediterranean Youth Foundation for Development, by Banlastic Egypt and by the European Public Law Organization (EPLO) as MAP Partners and requests that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 24 for consideration and endorsement.**

**D. Outreach, Communication and Advocacy**

34. The Coordinator reported on the information and communication activities conducted and on the plans for the current biennium in this area, in the context of the most important global and regional events. To this end, the Coordinator referred to the outreach activities of UNEP/MAP in the upcoming 9<sup>th</sup> Our Ocean Conference (Athens, Greece, 15-17 April 2024): Ms. Hema would participate in the Ministerial Lunch and in the high-level panel of the Plenary Session VIII on "The Challenges & Solutions of the Mediterranean Countries"; INFO/RAC organized the booth of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system; a side event of UNEP/MAP and Italy on the implementation of the Agreement between UNEP/MAP and the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security was approved by the organizers.

35. The Coordinator highlighted the plans to use the 2025 UN Ocean Conference, to take place in Nice, France, in June 2025, as an opportunity to boost visibility of the work of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention, since 2025 marks the celebration of the 50 years of MAP and of the 30 years of the "Post-Rio" Barcelona Convention. She added that the celebrations will take place under the leadership of France (host of UNOC 2025), Slovenia (COP23 Presidency), Spain (Depositary and Contracting Party that has hosted the diplomatic conferences where MAP and the Barcelona Convention were adopted in 1975, 1976, 1995), and Egypt (COP24 Host).

36. The Bureau members thanked the Secretariat for the very good work done, discussed outreach, communication and advocacy issues and concluded as follows.

37. **Conclusion:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the Secretariat's efforts in the field of outreach, communication and advocacy and requests the Secretariat to proceed with the arrangements for the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MAP in 2025 in order also to enhance the visibility of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system.**

## **VI. Agenda Item 6: Calendar of Meetings and events**

38. The Bureau was informed on the “*Tentative Calendar of UNEP/MAP Meetings and Major International Events in 2024*” (UNEP/MED BUR.95/Inf.3). The Secretariat noted that the structure of the document has been revised to better reflect the different types of meetings.

39. The Bureau reviewed the first section of the calendar, on Institutional Meetings of UNEP/MAP, and made appropriate changes. The meeting agreed that this Section will accompany the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting.

40. In relation to the dates of COP 24, the representative of Egypt suggested that these will be between 2-5 December 2025, so as not to coincide with UNEA-7 that was decided to be held in Nairobi, from 8 to 12 December 2025. The Bureau members agreed with this proposal.

### **41. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau agreed with the Secretariat proposal to change the order of the organization of the Bureau meetings for the Biennium with a view to holding the last one at the Duty Station of the Coordinating Unit if there is no hosting invitation by another Bureau member, as appropriate;**

**(b) The Bureau took note of the proposed Calendar of MAP meetings by the Secretariat with an emphasis on those planned in 2024 and requested the Secretariat to conclude the 2025 meetings and events calendar as early as possible, to allow a smooth planning of participation by the Contracting Parties representatives. The list of institutional meetings/events for 2024 and 2025 is attached as Annex to these conclusions.**

## **VII. Agenda Item 7: Date and Venue of the 96<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau**

42. The representative of Egypt kindly offered that the next, 96<sup>th</sup> Bureau meeting would take place in Egypt, in Cairo or Alexandria. The Bureau members expressed their appreciation to Egypt and agreed that the next Bureau meeting would take place in Egypt, on 19-20 November 2024.

### **43. Conclusion:**

**(a) The Bureau agreed to hold its second meeting in Egypt on 19-20 November 2024 in Cairo or Alexandria, to be confirmed.**

## **VIII. Agenda Item 8: Any Other Matters**

44. No other issues were raised by the Bureau members.

## **IX. Agenda Item 9: Conclusions and Recommendations**

45. The Bureau adopted the conclusions as set in this report.

## **X. Agenda Item 10: Closure of the Meeting**

46. The meeting was closed by the President at 18:00 (UTC+1) on Thursday, 4 April 2024.

**Annex I**  
**List of Participants**

**MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU AND ADVISORS/MEMBRES DU BUREAU ET  
CONSEILLERS**

**SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE  
(PRESIDENT)**

**Mr. Mitja Bricelj**  
Secretary  
Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning

**Mr. Iztok Škerlič**  
Public agency for promotion of entrepreneurship  
and developing projects of Municipality of Izola

**Mr. Tilen Obradović**  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning

**Mr. Dejan Guduraš**  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning  
Water Directorate  
Water Management Division

**Ms. Helena Caserman,**  
Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia

**Ms. Klara Jarni**  
Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia

**Mr. Blaž Lipovšek**  
President of the Sava Youth Parliament

**EGYPT / ÉGYPTE  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Dr. Ali Abu Sena**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)

**MOROCCO / MAROC  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Ms. Nassira Rheyati**  
Head of the International Cooperation Division  
Partnership, Communication and Cooperation  
Division  
Environment Department  
Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable  
Development

**MALTA / MALTE  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Ms. Marie Thérèse Gambin**  
Unit Manager Thematic | Biodiversity & Water  
Environment & Resources Authority

**SPAIN / ESPAGNE  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Ms. Itziar Martin Partida**  
Deputy General Director  
Ministry of Ecological Transition

**MONTENEGRO / MONTÉNÉGRO  
(RAPPORTEUR)**

**Ms. Djurdjina Bulatovic**  
Directorate for Nature Protection

Ministry of Tourism, Ecology, Sustainable  
Development and Northern Region Development

**TÜRKIYE / TÜRKIYE**  
**(EX-OFFICIO MEMBER)**

**Ms. Vildan Bölükbaşı Atay**  
Head of Department  
Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate  
Change

**SECRETARIAT TO THE BARCELONA CONVENTION AND COMPONENTS OF THE  
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN / SECRÉTARIAT DE LA CONVENTION DE  
BARCELONE ET COMPOSANTES DU PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**

**Ms. Tatjana Hema**  
Coordinator

**Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis**  
Programme Management Officer

**Ms. Elli Sfyroeras**  
Programme Management Assistant

## **Annex II**

### **Agenda**

## **Agenda**

### **Agenda Item 1 Opening of the Meeting**

### **Agenda Item 2 Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work**

### **Agenda Item 3 Progress Report for October 2023 - February 2024**

### **Agenda Item 4 Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues**

### **Agenda Item 5 Specific Issues:**

- Ratification, Reporting and Compliance
- COP23 Key Mandates-Timeline and Milestones for their Effective Delivery:
- MSSD Revision
- ECAP Roadmap
- Climate Change Adaptation Regional Framework
- Independent Mapping Exercise on the Climate Change/RAC
- Internal Evaluation of Coherence of the MAP System to the “Common Operational Principles for MAP Components”
- Other Mandates
- Collaboration and Partners
- Outreach, Communication and Advocacy
- Other Issues

### **Agenda Item 6 Calendar of Meetings and Events**

### **Agenda Item 7 Date and venue of the 96<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau**

### **Agenda Item 8 Any Other Matters**

### **Agenda Item 9 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Agenda Item 10 Closure of the Meeting**

### **Annex III**

#### **List of institutional meetings/events for 2024 and 2025**

**Tentative Calendar of Institutional Meetings of UNEP/MAP  
(4/4/2024)**

| ORGANIZERS  | MEETING                                                                                                                                                                               | DATE                                                         | VENUE               |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>2024</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                              |                     |
| Secretariat | 95 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau                                                                                                                                                | 3-4 April                                                    | Ljubljana, Slovenia |
| Secretariat | 25 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee                                                                                                                               | 18-19 April                                                  | Athens, Greece      |
| SPA/RAC     | 6 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SAPBIO Advisory Committee                                                                                                                              | 30 April                                                     | Teleconference      |
| SPA/RAC     | 10 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SAPBIO National Correspondents                                                                                                                        | 5 June                                                       | Teleconference      |
| SPA/RAC     | CORMON Meeting on Biodiversity and Fisheries                                                                                                                                          | 6-7 June                                                     | Teleconference      |
| Secretariat | 20 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Compliance Committee                                                                                                                                  | 19-20 June                                                   | Athens, Greece      |
| MED POL     | Preparatory Meeting for the Development of new NAPs and initiation of NBBs Reporting cycle                                                                                            | 25-26 June                                                   | Athens, Greece      |
| Secretariat | 11 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of EcAp Coordination Group                                                                                                                                   | 2 October                                                    | Teleconference      |
| Secretariat | Meeting of the Extended MCSD Steering Committee on the MSSD Update                                                                                                                    | 15 October                                                   | Teleconference      |
| MED POL     | CORMON (Pollution and ML)                                                                                                                                                             | 5-6 November<br>(Pollution)<br>7 November<br>(Marine Litter) | Teleconference      |
| Secretariat | 96 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau                                                                                                                                                | 19-20 November                                               | Cairo (TBC), Egypt  |
| REMPEC      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Coordination Meeting on the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy for the Prevention of, Preparedness, and Response to Marine Pollution from Ships (2022-2031) | 19-20 November                                               | Teleconference      |
| Secretariat | Meeting of the Extended MCSD Steering Committee on the MSSD Update                                                                                                                    | 11 December                                                  | Teleconference      |

*Mediterranean Celebration/Observance Days*

|         |                         |              |                        |
|---------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| SPA/RAC | SPAMI Day               | 15 May       | Tunis, Tunisia         |
| PAP/RAC | Mediterranean Coast Day | 25 September | Algiers, Algeria (TBC) |

*Meetings for which dates are not yet set*

|             |                                                                                               |               |                |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Secretariat | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of PAMEx and its Local Investment Finance Facility | (TBC)         | Athens, Greece |
| SPA/RAC     | 5 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Ad hoc Group of Experts on MPAs in the Mediterranean-AGEM      | October (TBC) | Teleconference |

| 2025                   |                                                                                                                         |                                                  |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| SPA/RAC                | 6 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Ad hoc Group of Experts on MPAs in the Mediterranean-AGEM                                | 21 January (TBC)                                 | Teleconference          |
| MED POL                | Progress Meeting on the Development of new NAPs and NBBs Reporting Cycle                                                | 29-30 January                                    | Istanbul, Türkiye (TBC) |
| Secretariat            | Ad hoc meeting of the MCSD on the MSSD Update                                                                           | Week of 10 February                              | Athens, Greece (TBC)    |
| PAP/RAC                | CORMON on Coast and Hydrography                                                                                         | March (TBC)                                      | (TBC)                   |
| SPA/RAC                | 6 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SAPBIO Advisory Committee                                                                | April                                            | Teleconference          |
| MED POL                | CORMON (Pollution and Marine Litter)                                                                                    | 1 April (Marine Litter)<br>2-3 April (Pollution) | Athens, Greece          |
| Secretariat/<br>REMPEC | 5 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact | Week 7 April                                     | Malta                   |
| Secretariat            | 26 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee                                                                 | Week 14 April                                    | Athens, Greece          |
| SPA/RAC                | CORMON Meeting on Biodiversity and Fisheries                                                                            | May (TBC)                                        | (TBC)                   |
| PAP/RAC                | Meeting of PAP/RAC Focal Points                                                                                         | 6-7 May                                          | Split, Croatia          |
| REMPEC                 | 16 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points                                                                         | 13-15 May                                        | Malta                   |
| INFO/RAC               | Meeting of INFO/RAC Focal Points                                                                                        | 20-21 May                                        | Rome, Italy             |
| SPA/RAC                | 11 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SAPBIO National Correspondents (Back-to-back to the 17 <sup>th</sup> SPA/BD FP meeting) | 19-20 May                                        | (TBC)                   |
| SPA/RAC                | 17 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SPA/BD Focal Points & SPA/RAC 40 <sup>th</sup> anniversary                              | 21-23 May                                        | (TBC)                   |
| Plan Bleu/RAC          | Meeting of Plan Bleu/RAC Focal Points                                                                                   | 27-28 May                                        | Marseille, France       |
| SCP/RAC                | Meeting of SCP/RAC Focal Points                                                                                         | 28-29 May                                        | Barcelona, Spain        |
| MED POL                | Meeting of MED POL Focal Points                                                                                         | 3-4 June                                         | Athens, Greece          |

|             |                                                                                          |                 |                |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Secretariat | 97 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau                                                   | 4-5 June        | Athens, Greece |
| UN/France   | UN Ocean Conference (incl. UNEP/MAP event on 50 years of MAP and 30 years of amended BC) | 9-13 June       | Nice, France   |
| Secretariat | 21 <sup>st</sup> Meeting of the MCSD                                                     | 17-19 June      | (TBC)          |
| Secretariat | 21 <sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Compliance Committee                                     | 24-25 June      | Athens, Greece |
| Secretariat | 12 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of EcAp Coordination Group                                      | 15 September    | Athens, Greece |
| Secretariat | Meeting of the MAP Focal Points                                                          | 16-19 September | Athens, Greece |
| SPA/RAC     | 7 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Ad hoc Group of Experts on MPAs in the Mediterranean-AGEM | November (TBC)  | Teleconference |
| Secretariat | 24 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 24)                             | 2-5 December    | Egypt          |

*Mediterranean Celebration/Observance Days*

|         |                         |              |                               |
|---------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| SPA/RAC | SPAMI Day               | 15 April     | Teleconference+ in the SPAMIs |
| PAP/RAC | Mediterranean Coast Day | 25 September | (TBC)                         |



**UNITED  
NATIONS**

UNEP/MED BUR.96/7



**Mediterranean  
Action Plan**  
Barcelona  
Convention

20 December 2024  
Original: English

96<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the  
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment  
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Cairo, Egypt, 19-20 November 2024

## **Report of the Meeting**

For environmental and cost-saving reasons, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

UNEP/MAP  
Athens, 2024

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## **Introduction**

1. At the kind invitation of the Government of Egypt, in accordance with Article IV.2 of the Terms of Reference of the Bureau and in consultation with the President and members of the Bureau, the 96<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of 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 was held in Cairo, Egypt, on 19-20 November 2024.

## **Participation**

2. The meeting was attended by the President of the Bureau, Mr. Mitja Bricelj; the Vice-Presidents: Mr. Ali Abo Sena, accompanied by Ms. Heba Sharawy (Egypt); Ms. Marie Thérèse Gambin (Malta); Mr. Houcine Kasmi (Morocco); Ms. Itziar Martin Partida (Spain); the Rapporteur, Ms. Djurdjina Bulatovic (Montenegro) and the Ex-Officio Member, Ms. Vildan Bolukbasi Atay (Türkiye). Mr. Javier Villar Burke also attended the meeting as an observer (European Commission). The Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit (Coordinator, Principal Advisor of UNEP Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit, and Programme Management Officer - Governance). The Coordinator participated online. The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

### **I. Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting**

3. The meeting was opened at 10:00 (UTC+2) on Tuesday, 19 November 2024, by Mr. Mitja Bricelj, President of the Bureau, who welcomed the Bureau members to the second Bureau meeting of the biennium and thanked the Secretariat and Bureau Members for the hard work done during this period. Mr. Bricelj emphasized the importance of the Source-to-Sea approach in the work of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention and the links with inter-regional cooperation. He also introduced to participants Ms. Isabel Martinez, Principal Advisor of UNEP Corporate Services Division/Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit, temporarily assigned to the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit.

4. The Chief Executive Officer of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), Mr. Ali Abo Sena, welcomed the participants to Cairo and provided links with the work under COP29 of UNFCCC, which took place in parallel in Baku, Azerbaijan. He also reiterated the commitment of Egypt and of the Minister of Environment, H.E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad, for the successful preparation of COP24 of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (Cairo, Egypt, 2-5 December 2024).

5. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Ms. Tatjana Hema, welcomed all participants to the meeting and thanked the Government of Egypt for kindly hosting the meeting. She stressed the importance of the meeting as a key milestone in the preparations for COP24. She noted the progress in the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025 and of the Portorož Ministerial Declaration, adopted at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols (COP23, Portorož, Slovenia, 5-8 December 2023). She also referred to important global evolutions and commitments, such as the preparations for the 2025 UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3, Nice, France, 9-13 June 2025), the negotiations on the new Treaty on Plastic Pollution, including in the marine environment (Plastic Pollution Treaty) and the importance of ratification of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement).

### **II. Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work**

6. The Bureau reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda as contained in document UNEP/MED BUR.96/1. No other items were added to the Agenda.

### **III. Agenda Item 3: Progress Report for March - October 2024**

7. The UNEP/MAP Programme Management Officer-Governance introduced the document *“Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period March - October 2024”* (UNEP/MED BUR.96/3). He also referred to document *“Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Implementation of COP23 Decisions”* (UNEP/MED BUR.96/4).

8. The President and the Members of the Bureau congratulated the Secretariat for the significant progress achieved during this short reporting period and for the effort put in this detailed report and

welcomed the presentation of this agenda item through a PowerPoint display.

9. One Bureau member asked for further clarifications regarding the Contingency Plans on marine pollution from ships, as well as regarding the possible support to Contracting Parties regarding GHG Emissions from ships. She also noted that her country will be soon ready to join the SEMPA project.

10. In relation to the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources including circular and blue economy, the Chair noted the importance of Marine Spatial Planning and the bottom-up approach implemented through the establishment of the dedicated Working Group which is also linked to the update of the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development (MSSD).

11. In relation to governance, the Chair stressed the significant progress in implementation as well as the steps taken regarding the Source-to-Sea approach. To this end, he referred to the collaboration between the Barcelona Convention, the Black Sea Commission and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and, in particular, to the coordination meeting that took place in Istanbul, Türkiye, in May 2024, as well as to the relevant side event at COP29 of UNFCCC. He added that Danube is the most international river globally and that Slovenia will take over the Presidency of ICDPR in 2025, and for this reason this inter-regional collaboration is one of the priorities of the Slovenian Presidency of the Barcelona Convention. He added that in the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention (MOP10, Ljubljana, Slovenia, October 2024), links to the work of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention were also provided.

12. One member of the Bureau referred to progress under the OSPAR Commission, where her country is also a Contracting Party. She reported on the annual meeting (“Collective Arrangement”) between OSPAR, the Regional Fisheries Management Body for North-East Atlantic, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), and noted that it is a very useful concept that could possibly be replicated in the Mediterranean.

13. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau expresses its appreciation for the work done in the period March - October 2024 as presented by the Secretariat, and its satisfaction for the efforts and results achieved so far through the integrated work of the Coordinating Unit and MAP Components;**

**(b) The Bureau expresses appreciation to France for the additional voluntary contribution of 972,420 € and encourages all Contracting Parties to continue supporting the effective implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget.**

**IV. Agenda Item 4: Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues**

14. The Principal Advisor of UNEP Corporate Services Division, Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit presented to the Bureau members, through a PowerPoint presentation, a financial and administrative update as contained in the “Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues” (UNEP/MED BUR.96/5), addressing the status of financial contributions, personnel, administrative matters and consultancy reporting. The Coordinator provided further clarifications and highlighted the importance of early payment of contributions, so that there is a timely transfer of funds to MAP components for the implementation of their respective mandates/activities.

15. The President and Bureau members welcomed the information provided by the Secretariat and expressed support to the work of the Secretariat in relation to Financial and Administrative Issues. One Bureau member noted that holding technical meetings online could be a good solution to reduce expenditures.

16. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the 2023 Financial Statement provided;**

**(b) The Bureau notes with appreciation the contributions received for the years 2024-2025 as well as for 2023 and encourages the Contracting Parties which did not pay, to do so as soon as possible;**

- (c) The Bureau draws the attention of the Contracting Parties to adhere to Procedure 4.2.b of the Financial Regulations and Rules and Procedures, which states that contributions for each calendar year are expected within the first quarter of that year and should be paid promptly and in full;
- (d) The Bureau encourages the Contracting Parties in arrears to pay them as soon as possible, while noting the specific circumstances of each Contracting Party in arrears;
- (e) The Bureau supports the efforts made by the Secretariat and urges the Secretariat to continue its efforts to maximize the collection of contributions and arrears in line with the Financial Rules and Procedures;
- (f) The Bureau takes note of the status of the financial implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023;
- (g) The Bureau takes note of the status of the financial implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025 as of September 2024 and requests the Secretariat to provide an update at the next Bureau meeting;
- (h) The Bureau welcomes the new SOP introduced by UNEP's MEA Unit/Corporate Services Division;
- (i) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to provide at the next Bureau meeting the projection of the unutilized positive balance expected at the end of the 2024-2025 biennium;
- (j) The Bureau takes note of the Audit recommendation and the advice of UNEP HQs for the revision of non-standard PSC and request the Secretariat to report on this matter at its 97<sup>th</sup> Meeting;
- (k) The Bureau takes note of the status of recruitment and urges UNEP to speed up the recruitment processes. The Bureau welcomes the new PAP/RAC Director to the MAP system;
- (l) The Bureau takes note of the efforts made with regards to the refurbishment of the UNEP/MAP premises and requests the Secretariat to accelerate the process with the support of the Greek Government and to report the progress to the next Bureau meeting.

## V. Agenda Item 5: Specific Issues

17. The MAP Coordinator presented the "*Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues*" (UNEP/MED BUR.96/6).

18. The meeting discussed the matters as summarized in the following paragraphs.

### A. Ratification, Reporting and Compliance

19. The Coordinator referred to issues related to ratification, reporting and compliance, noting that two ratifications are pending for the entry into force of the Amendments of the Protocol for the prevention of pollution of the Mediterranean sea by dumping from ships and aircraft (Dumping Protocol) and that the Secretariat is following-up with relevant Contracting Parties on this issue. Regarding reporting, she highlighted that reporting rates are low and that the level of commitment of Contracting Parties should increase. To this end, it may be advisable to reconsider providing some financial support to the Contracting Parties to enhance reporting capabilities in the submission of National Implementation Reports and include this in the next biennium UNEP/MAP Programme of Work. The Coordinator added that the upgrade of the reporting format will mainly focus on the six new/updated Regional Plans adopted at COP22 and COP23, under the Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol, noting that this will be examined in June 2025, at the level of MEDPOL Focal Points, and then at the MAP Focal Points Meeting, before submission to COP24. On Compliance, she referred to the outcome of the 21<sup>st</sup> Compliance Committee meeting and the two cases of possible non-compliance examined by the Committee.

20. One Bureau member stressed the importance of enhancing support to the Contracting Parties on reporting and asked the Secretariat to continue the systematic notification of Contracting Parties on

report submission.

21. Another Bureau member proposed specific comments in the Revised Rules of Procedure on Compliance, which were annexed to the Report on Specific Issues (UNEP/MED BUR.96/6). The Coordinator noted that these proposals, which are presented in Annex III of the present Report, will be submitted to the next meeting of the Compliance Committee before submission to the MAP Focal Points meeting and COP24.

**22. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the current status of ratification of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, noting also the limited progress in ratifications during the current biennium and urges the Contracting Parties which have not yet done so to make efforts for the ratifications of the Protocols, with particular focus on the Dumping Protocol to ensure its entry into force as soon as possible;**

**(b) The Bureau, recalling the expected date of entry into effective application of the Med SOX ECA on 1 May 2025, strongly urges those Contracting Parties who have not yet done so to ratify, transpose and implement MARPOL Annex VI, in an effective and timely manner to ensure the consistent implementation of the 0.10% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI in the Med SOX ECA;**

**(c) The Bureau notes with concern the limited number of national implementation reports submitted for the 2022-2023 biennium (2 Contracting Parties) and calls upon Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports for the period 2022-2023 by December 2024, as a priority;**

**(d) The Bureau strongly urges those Contracting Parties who have not yet done so, to submit their national implementation reports for the previous reporting periods and especially for 2018-2019 (8 Contracting Parties) and/or 2020-2021 (9 Contracting Parties) without further delay, implementing COP23 Decision IG.26/1;**

**(e) The Bureau takes note of the work done by the Secretariat and MAP Components to update the reporting format and agrees with the proposed approach and process in order to allow its finalization for submission to the relevant bodies and final approval by the MAP Focal Points meeting and COP24;**

**(f) The Bureau takes note of the outcomes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Compliance Committee meeting; the Bureau has considered and adopts the amendments to the Rules of Procedure, subject to endorsement by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.**

**B. Delivering COP23 Key Mandates:**

**- MSSD and Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework Revision**

*MSSD Revision*

23. The Coordinator noted that the update of the MSSD would be discussed during the ad hoc thematic meeting of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD - Istanbul, Türkiye, 11-13 February 2025) and, with this occasion, expressed appreciation to France for the additional voluntary financial contribution which will also support the MSSD update. She explained that the plan is not to have a full revision of the MSSD text, which is still valid to a large extent, but to update it in order to align it with the evolving global and regional agendas. She added that the governance part will be strengthened, while the part on monitoring and indicators will be also updated. The Coordinator noted that the new flagship initiatives were presented in the Report on Specific Issues, while there was a consideration to add a further initiative to strengthen the 30x30 target of Marine Protected Areas, building on the current MedFund flagship initiative. She explained that three dedicated working groups were formed - namely on Marine Spatial Planning, on Circular Economy and on Ocean Economy/Sustainable Finance – and already met once, and that the Executive Coordination Panel (ECP) was also mobilized and provided feedback on the update of the MSSD at its 54<sup>th</sup> meeting (Split, Croatia, 17-19 September 2024).

24. The Coordinator also explained the process for the preparation of the updated MSSD, noting that the extended Steering Committee established at the last MCSD meeting (Marseilles, France, June 2023) met already twice in February and November 2024, while a third meeting is planned for 20 December 2024. Then the updated MSSD will be submitted to the ad hoc thematic MCSD meeting (Istanbul, Türkiye, 11-13 February 2025), before submission to the ordinary, 21<sup>st</sup> MCSD meeting of June 2025 and then to the MAP Focal Points meeting (Athens, Greece, September 2025) and COP24 (Cairo Egypt, December 2025) for endorsement. At this point, the Coordinator invited the Bureau members to consider hosting the 21<sup>st</sup> MCSD meeting.

25. One Bureau member noted that the nomination of representatives to the established working group should be formal, through the MAP Focal Points; the Secretariat checked their records and confirmed that the nominations were made through a formal request letter sent to the MAP Focal Points and MCSD members.

#### RCCAF Revision

26. The Coordinator referred to the revision of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF), noting that this process has started more recently since work has up to now focused on the MSSD update. She added that a consultant is under recruitment, who will first look at the recent evolutions in the global and regional agendas, including the national adaptation strategies of the Contracting Parties. On the process, she explained that the updated RCCAF will be discussed at the ad hoc thematic MCSD meeting (Istanbul, Türkiye, 11-13 February 2025), before submission to the relevant MAP Components' Focal Points meetings (planned for May 2025), then to the ordinary, 21<sup>st</sup> MCSD meeting of June 2025, and then to the MAP Focal Points meeting (Athens, Greece, September 2025) and COP24 (Cairo Egypt, December 2025) for endorsement.

27. The meeting welcomed the progress achieved and agreed that the revised version of the RCCAF will also have its strategic part updated and will further consider the issue of resilience.

#### **28. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the composite work advanced so far by the Secretariat on the update of the MSSD and invites the MCSD members to actively participate and provide substantive and policy input during the Thematic Ad Hoc meeting of the MCSD that will take place in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 11-13 February 2025;**

**(b) The Bureau welcomes the preparation of the new flagship initiatives of the MSSD and invites the Secretariat to continue its work on giving priority to the identification of sound partnerships, ambitious objectives and concrete actions. The Bureau strongly encourages the MCSD Members to actively participate and contribute to the design and implementation of the new flagship initiatives;**

**(c) The Bureau welcomes the work undertaken on the update of the RCCAF and the proposed timeline. The Bureau invites the MCSD members to actively participate and provide substantive and policy input during the upcoming Thematic Ad Hoc meeting of the MCSD that will take place in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 11-13 February 2025.**

#### **- Revision of ECAP Roadmap**

29. Regarding the revision of the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Roadmap, the Coordinator noted that this is an important priority for the Secretariat, following up also on the relevant Decision IG.26/3 adopted at COP23. She referred to the 11<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group meeting (online, 2 October 2024), which was followed by a set of questions sent to the MAP Focal Points and EcAp Coordination Group members in order to facilitate their understanding and contribution to this important process. She added that there is good progress in this respect and that implication of the Contracting Parties from an early stage was important so as to capture their ideas in advance. She also referred to the approval of the Summary for Policy Makers of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report (2023 MED QSR) at the 11<sup>th</sup> EcAp Coordination Group meeting as well as to the upcoming official launch of the publication of the 2023 MED QSR. She concluded by welcoming suggestions from the Bureau members regarding

important events where the 2023 MED QSR could be promoted.

30. The representative of the observer Contracting Party noted that the evaluation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) was finalized and will be probably adopted by the European Commission within 2024.

31. The Chair welcomed the progress achieved by the Secretariat on this agenda item, noting that the EcAp is also in the heart of the MSSD. He added that the implementation of the EU MSFD is essential for all, EU and non-EU countries, and that it is based on a modern methodology for the sustainable use of the coastal and marine environments.

32. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the preliminary proposals shared by the Secretariat for updating the Ecosystem Approach Policy for the Mediterranean and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and Related Assessment Criteria (IMAP), and requests the Secretariat to complete this process for submission to ECAP Coordination Group, MAP Focal Points meeting and COP24;**

**(b) The Bureau encourages Contracting Parties to provide timely feedback in the EcAp and IMAP updating process, to be taken on board as early as possible in the process;**

**(c) The Bureau welcomes the progress achieved in the preparation of the Summary for Policy Makers of the 2023 MED QSR, appreciates the contribution of the Working Group established for its preparation, and requests the Secretariat to conclude the work for its publication and dissemination as well as of the 2023 MED QSR as early as possible.**

**- Independent Mapping Exercise with a view to define the mandate and integrate the newly established CC/RAC within the UNEP/MAP system**

33. The Coordinator referred to the 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 Climate Change/RAC (CC/RAC) within the UNEP/MAP system. She noted that the first elements of this exercise were presented in the Report on Specific Issues (UNEP/MED BUR.96/6) emphasizing the relevant gap analysis and noting that a number of RACs already work on climate change issues. She added that future steps will include also a very first proposal of the mandate of the new CC/RAC.

34. The representative of Türkiye thanked the Secretariat for the first findings, adding that her country identified similar issues on the gap assessment and that they have already started working on the possible mandate.

35. The Coordinator noted that it is expected that Türkiye will provide further information to the Bureau and the Secretariat on the internal steps taken to institutionalize CC/RAC, adding that Türkiye is planning to visit one or two RACs to see how the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system operates. Regarding the preparation of the mandate of CC/RAC the Coordinator noted that this will follow the gap assessment exercise, in line with COP23 Decision IG.26/12 which states that “On the basis of the outcome of the above mentioned exercise a draft proposal for a mandate for the CC/RAC shall be developed for decision by COP24”.

36. **Conclusion:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the preliminary work and tentative findings of the independent mapping exercise, and asks the Secretariat to provide 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 in a timely manner for consideration of the next Bureau meeting and submission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting and COP 24.**

**- First elements of Analysis of Coherence of the MAP System to the “Common Operational Principles for MAP Components”**

37. The Coordinator presented the progress regarding the Internal Evaluation of Coherence of the MAP System to the “Common Operational Principles for MAP Components”, noting that this stems from the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025 and it is done internally and with no external expertise, since there is no budget available. She added that this is done by the Secretariat in close collaboration with the RACs and in consultation with the UNEP Headquarters. She explained that a questionnaire was sent to the RACs and that, based on the responses received, a summary analysis was made which was presented in the Report on Specific Issues (UNEP/MED BUR.96/6), from which it is indicated that the RACs have different understanding of the common operational principles. She added that the next step should be a first discussion with the competent authorities of the host countries of the RACs.

38. The Coordinator noted that more comprehensive information will be provided at the next, 97<sup>th</sup>, Bureau meeting planned for July 2025, including on how the discussions with the RACs’ Host Countries went, on how the Secretariat sees the operation of RACs, and on how the MTF and external funds can best support the operation of the Secretariat and MAP components.

39. One member of the Bureau, noting that she is a representative of a RAC Host Country, asked to have access to the full questionnaires as completed by the RACs. She explained that she would like to see how other RACs operate to possibly replicate good practices. She also asked for more information of the timescale of this exercise. She, as well as another Bureau member, asked why REMPEC is not fully included in the exercise.

40. The Coordinator responded that the Secretariat took note of the requests and noted that, regarding the timescale, further discussions were expected at the 97<sup>th</sup> Bureau meeting in order to present a proposal to the MAP Focal Points meeting and then to COP24 for endorsement. In parallel, there will be consultations with UNEP Headquarters on the type and content of host country agreements of RACs. Finally, depending on the decision taken at COP24, there is a possibility to put forward a proposal on the optimum structure of RACs at the 98<sup>th</sup> Bureau meeting. The Principal Advisor of UNEP Corporate Services Division Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit added that the Secretariat is also looking at the agreements that other MEAs have for their centres, providing the examples of the Cartagena Convention and the Basel-Rotterdam-Stockholm (BRS) Conventions Secretariat. She noted that BRS uses “Framework Agreements”, since “Host Country Agreements” in the UN are used only to establish offices with UN status or to organize meetings.

41. Regarding REMPEC, the Coordinator clarified that REMPEC is included in the overall exercise since it is a RAC; however, it is not included in relation to its modus operandi since it is a UN entity. She added that this is also the case for the Coordinating Unit.

**42. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau notes with appreciation the progress achieved in the internal evaluation of coherence of the MAP System to the “Common Operational Principles for MAP Components”;**

**(b) The Bureau asks the Secretariat to initiate the discussion with host countries of RACs (REMPEC not included) to explore ways and means to have harmonized approaches on issues such as the recruitment of consultants and the organization of meetings, by taking into consideration the previous relevant COP decisions, including on the Common Operational Principles for MAP Components, and provide information at the next Bureau meeting.**

**- Celebration of Post-Rio MAP/Barcelona Convention Anniversary at UNOC-3**

43. The Coordinator informed the Bureau members that the preparations of the celebration are proceeding well, in collaboration with France as Host Country of UNOC-3, and in line with the Portorož Ministerial Declaration. She noted that one of the issues on which the guidance of the Bureau is important is the participation of Contracting Parties in the High-Level Session of the event, which will also include thematic sessions, as presented in the concept note attached as Annex III to the Report on

Specific Issues. (UNEP/MED BUR.96/6). The Coordinator concluded by noting that she plans to send a letter to Contracting Parties on the High-Level Event and on the voluntary commitments to be submitted in view of UNOC-3.

44. The Bureau members noted that on one hand it will not be possible to involve all 22 Contracting Parties at the High-Level Session of the event while on the other hand participation should be expanded beyond the four “champion” Contracting Parties (Egypt, France, Slovenia and Spain). They noted that a reasonable number of Contracting Parties could be involved, for example up to 11, depending also on the timing of the event and considering criteria such as the hosting of MAP Components and volunteering, especially regarding southern Contracting Parties to keep a geographical balance.

45. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the work done and the progress achieved by France and the Secretariat for the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UNEP/MAP and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Post Rio Barcelona Convention at UNOC-3, and agrees with the planned content of the Mediterranean Day and the proposed way forward;**

**(b) The Bureau welcomes the proposal for the High-Level Session and recommends that the participation of Contracting Parties will be expanded, considering firstly the members of the Bureau and also other Contracting Parties that may volunteer taking into account criteria such as geographical and gender balance as well as level of representation at UNOC-3;**

**(c) The Bureau encourages the Contracting Parties and the Secretariat to prepare and submit voluntary actions pursuant to UNEA-6 Resolution UNEP/EA.6/Res.15, which invited the secretariats of the regional seas conventions and action plans, as appropriate, upon request by their contracting parties to develop and present joint voluntary actions for the regional seas covered by the relevant convention at UNOC-3, in order to address pertinent environmental issues in the area in question.**

### **C. Collaboration and Partners**

46. The UNEP/MAP Programme Management Officer-Governance presented the work of the Secretariat in enhancing collaboration and partnerships during this reporting period. The Coordinator provided clarifications on some specific aspects of collaboration. Regarding the BBNJ Agreement she noted there may be financial support to promote its ratification by Contracting Parties through UNEP and through the GEF-funded MedProgramme. Regarding the negotiations on the Plastic Pollution Treaty she highlighted that these are ongoing and that it seems that the negotiations will not be concluded in INC-5 taking place in Busan, Republic of Korea, in November 2024. The Coordinator also referred to the importance of the relevant work on plastic pollution of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans and of UNEP/MAP in particular. Regarding the possible mission of the Coordinator and the Slovenian Minister to Brussels, she noted that the goal is to have high level meetings including with EU Commissioners, aiming to improve the visibility of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention in the EU and in different Directorates of the European Commission, adding that the EU is a very supportive and committed Contracting Party.

47. The representative of the EU welcomed the proposal and suggested that the mission to Brussels should better take place in the first quarter of 2025 due to the late nomination of the members of the new European Commission.

48. The Chair highlighted the importance of the activities to implement the Source-to-Sea approach in line with the Portorož Ministerial Declaration, and especially the inter-regional collaboration between the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention and the Black Sea Commission (e.g. the meeting held in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 16 May 2024) to reduce pressures and impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems and enhance resilience to climate change.

49. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the work of the Secretariat on enhancing ocean governance and on strengthening cooperation and partnerships with global and regional organizations for joint**

impact on the ground;

**(b) The Bureau welcomes the work by the Secretariat to strengthen participation and involvement in global processes and to raise the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system's profile, its work and its contribution to the implementation of the SDGs, and encourages the Secretariat to further work in this direction;**

**(c) The Bureau strongly recommends that MAP applies for accreditation at UNFCCC as an IGO observer, so that RACs can participate under a common MAP umbrella at UNFCCC COPs and activities;**

**(d) The Bureau strongly encourages the ratification of the BBNJ Agreement by the Contracting Parties, as an important step to implement the relevant commitment made through the Portoroz Ministerial Declaration to halt the degradation of marine and coastal biodiversity and benefit from this process for effective implementation of the SPA/Biodiversity Protocol of the Barcelona Convention with regards to BBNJ areas;**

**(e) The Bureau encourages full participation from the Contracting Parties to support the work of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans in relation to the negotiations on the new Plastics Treaty with a view to promote synergies between the ongoing work under MAP-Barcelona Convention and other relevant MEAs/Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans and ensure complementarities;**

**(f) The Bureau welcomes the initiative of Slovenia, as Bureau presidency, to organize joint high-level meetings of the Slovenian Minister of Environment and the MAP Coordinator with the relevant EU Commissioners, to further strengthen cooperation between EU and the MAP-Barcelona Convention system and its Contracting Parties;**

**(g) The Bureau endorses the results of the evaluation conducted by the Secretariat of the new application submitted by the Association for Protection of Environment and Sustainable Development of Bizerte (APEDDUB) and by Seas at Risk as MAP Partners and requests that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 24 for consideration and endorsement.**

#### **D. Outreach, Communication and Advocacy**

50. The UNEP/MAP Programme Management Officer-Governance reported on the information and communication activities conducted and on the plans for the current biennium in this area, in the context of the most important global and regional events, with emphasis on "The Odyssey reloaded", a pan-Mediterranean digital campaign to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MAP and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the amended Barcelona Convention through a constellation of events around the Mediterranean Sea, as well as on the Mediterranean Coast Day and the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI) Day.

51. The Coordinator referred more specifically to the proposal to officially recognize Mediterranean Coast Day as part of the UN International Days calendar. She stressed that this will also enhance the implementation of the ICZM Protocol, noting that the Bureau and the MAP Focal Points will be kept informed of any relevant progress.

#### **52. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the Secretariat's efforts in the field of outreach, communication and advocacy;**

**(b) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to proceed with the "The Odyssey reloaded" campaign in order to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MAP and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the amended Barcelona Convention and enhance the visibility of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system;**

**(c) The Bureau welcomes the proposal to officially recognize Coast Day as part of the UN International Days calendar and asks the Secretariat and PAP/RAC to bring this proposal to the**

## **MAP Focal Points Meeting and subsequently to COP24.**

### **E. Other Issues**

#### **- Strengthening the involvement of Youth and Women in the work of the MAP/Barcelona Convention System**

53. The Coordinator presented the work of the Secretariat to strengthen the involvement of Youth and Women in the work of the MAP/Barcelona Convention System. She noted that the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system is implementing the UN Gender and Youth Promotion Initiatives, referring to the relevant activities at COP21, COP22 and COP23 for youth and in COP22 and COP23 for women. She explained that the Secretariat is considering how to better institutionalize this involvement and that the MSSD is the right tool to use in this respect; for this reason, two relevant flagship initiatives will be proposed for inclusion in the updated MSSD.

#### **54. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the preparation of the new flagship initiatives of the MSSD, specifically dedicated to gender by promoting the women leadership for environment and sustainable development and to youth involvement as well as the inclusion of youth and women as non-state actors of a reinforced MSSD systemic governance.**

#### **- Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award: Simplification of the Application Form**

55. The Coordinator referred to the work of the Secretariat on the simplification of the application form to the Award, while maintaining the four categories identified by the Decision IG.22/19, and asked the Bureau for guidance on how to further promote the Award.

56. The representative of the observer Contracting Party noted that when the application is launched it can be also circulated to the European Council for promotion and visibility in EU member states.

#### **57. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau notes with appreciation the information provided on the implementation of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition (2024/2025) Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award and approves the proposed simplification procedure, in order to facilitate a broader participation from the Mediterranean municipalities, in line with the Award categories identified by the Decision IG.22/19 and as per the indications of the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the MCSD Steering Committee.**

#### **- Membership of the MCSD**

58. The Coordinator noted that, based on the MCSD Constitutive Documents (Decision IG.22/17), the mandate of 11 Members of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development is expiring. She added that, while for the two Members representing Parliamentarians, the endorsed amendment of the COP22 Decision IG. 25/3 (Governance) related to the MCSD Constitutive Documents, allows to renew the mandate for more than one additional term, eligible candidate organizations should be identified to replace the other nine members. She added that possible candidates will also be explored for the parliamentary members, since Decision IG. 25/3 does not imply permanent renewal of accreditation.

#### **59. Conclusions**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the preparatory work and approach of the Secretariat to update the list of MCSD Members and recommends to ensure equitable geographical distribution, supporting the active participation on MAP Partners and promoting the outreach towards new partners that can substantially contribute to the objectives and activities of the MSSD.**

**- Work of UNEP/MAP on Environmentally Harmful Subsidies**

60. The Coordinator referred to the Report on Environmentally Harmful Subsidies issued by Plan Bleu/RAC, with the kind support of the voluntary contribution of France and in line with the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025.

61. One member of the Bureau noted the importance of the issue and its links with the updated MSSD and kindly asked for the report to be disseminated to the Bureau members.

**62. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the effort that Plan Bleu/RAC will make to disseminate the report on Environmentally Harmful Subsidies to a large audience and main stakeholders in order to enhance awareness on this important and sensitive issue for the protection of marine and coastal environment of the Mediterranean;**

**(b) The Bureau advises the Secretariat to bring this discussion to the attention of all Contracting Parties and to include this discussion in relevant MAP policies, as appropriate.**

**- Preparation of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2026-2027**

63. The Principal Advisor of UNEP Corporate Services Division, Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit presented the progress in the preparation of the 2026-2027 PoW and Budget in the framework of the MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2027.

64. The Coordinator noted that the Secretariat will soon send a letter to the MAP Focal Points to inform them on the process for the preparation of the PoW. She added that the indicative budget will propose using the full positive MTF balance in the next two biennia, with the exception of the Working Capital Reserve, as per COP23 Decision. She stressed that, however, by doing so it will be difficult to disperse funds to RACs in a timely manner to implement activities, especially since the use of the UN Financial system (Umoja) has limited the flexibility. To try and alleviate this, the Secretariat will further work with Contracting Parties and UNEP Headquarters.

**65. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau takes note of the considerations by the Secretariat in relation to the Programme of Work and Budget 2026-2027 and encourages the Secretariat to lead an inclusive process involving the MAP Components and Contracting Parties with the view to preparing a realistic and ambitious POW to contribute to the effective delivery of the UNEP/MAP MTS and maximise synergies with the relevant programmatic and strategic processes undertaken at global level by UNEP;**

**(b) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to prepare the budget for 2026-2027 as provided by COP23 decision as indicated in the Report on Specific Issues for absorbing the whole remaining unutilized positive balance of the MTF in the two following biennia, for consideration at the next Bureau meeting.**

**VI. Agenda Item 6: Calendar of Meetings and events**

66. The Bureau was informed on the “*Tentative Calendar of UNEP/MAP Meetings and Major International Events in 2024*” (UNEP/MED BUR.96/Inf.3).

67. The representative of Egypt, host country of COP24, confirmed that the COP will take place in Cairo, Egypt on 2-5 December 2025.

**VII. Agenda Item 7: Date and Venue of the 97<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau**

68. The Bureau discussed the possible dates of its next meeting and, noting the relevant meetings of the international calendar, agreed to hold its next meeting in Greece, on 1-2 July 2025.

69. **Conclusion:**

**(a) The Bureau agrees to hold its third meeting of the biennium in Athens or another place in Greece, on 1-2 July 2025.**

**VIII. Agenda Item 8: Any Other Matters**

70. The Coordinator noted that the preparations of COP24 have started and that bilateral meetings will take place between the Secretariat and Egypt for defining the theme of the Ministerial Session of the COP. To this end, it was noted that the proposed theme of the seventh session of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7, Nairobi, Kenya, December 2025), will be “Equitable solutions for a resilient planet”. She added that more details will be provided at the next Bureau meeting.

**IX. Agenda Item 9: Conclusions and Recommendations**

71. The Bureau adopted the conclusions as set in this report.

**X. Agenda Item 10: Closure of the Meeting**

72. The meeting was closed by the President at 15:00 (UTC+2) on Wednesday, 20 November 2024, who thanked the government of Egypt for the excellent hospitality and the Secretariat for the excellent organization of the meeting. The Coordinator thanked the Bureau members for the very fruitful meeting and the interesting discussions and expressed appreciation to Egypt for the great hospitality and to the Chair for his leadership. The Principal Advisor of UNEP Corporate Services Division, Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit, expressed appreciation to the President and Bureau members, thanked the Coordinator for the opportunity to participate in the meeting and Egypt for their great hospitality, and highlighted the constructive discussions and the commitment shown by the Bureau members.

**Annex I**  
**List of Participants**

**MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU AND OBSERVERS/MEMBRES DU BUREAU ET  
OBSERVATEURS**

**SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE  
(PRESIDENT)**

**Mr. Mitja Bricelj**  
Secretary  
Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning

**EGYPT / ÉGYPTE  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Dr. Ali Abo Sena**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)

**Dr. Heba Sharawy**  
Head of Loans and Grants Follow-up Unit  
Head of ICZM Central Department  
General Manager for Environmental Economy  
Ministry of Environment

**MOROCCO / MAROC  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Mr. Houcine Kasmi**  
Multilateral Cooperation Unit  
Department of Sustainable Development  
Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable  
Development

**MALTA / MALTE  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Ms. Marie-Thérèse Gambin**  
Unit Manager Thematic / Biodiversity & Water  
Environment & Resources Authority

**SPAIN / ESPAGNE  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Ms. Itziar Martin Partida**  
Deputy General Director  
Ministry of Ecological Transition

**MONTENEGRO / MONTÉNÉGRO  
(RAPPORTEUR)**

**Ms. Djurdjina Bulatovic**  
Directorate for Nature Protection  
Ministry of Tourism, Ecology, Sustainable  
Development and Northern Region Development

**TÜRKIYE / TÜRKIYE  
(EX-OFFICIO MEMBER)**

**Ms. Vildan Bölükbaşı Atay**  
Head of Department  
Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate  
Change

**OBSERVER / OBSERVATEUR**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION /  
COMMISSION EUROPEENNE**

**Mr. Javier Villar Burke**  
Policy Officer  
Directorate-General for Environment  
Unit C.2 - Marine Environment and Clean Water  
Services

**SECRETARIAT TO THE BARCELONA CONVENTION AND COMPONENTS OF THE  
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN / SECRÉTARIAT DE LA CONVENTION DE  
BARCELONE ET COMPOSANTES DU PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**

**Ms. Tatjana Hema**

Coordinator

**Ms. Isabel Martinez**

Principal Advisor

Corporate Services Division

UNEP Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit

**Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis**

Programme Management Officer-Governance

## **Annex II**

### **Agenda**

## **Agenda**

**Agenda Item 1** Opening of the Meeting

**Agenda Item 2** Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work

**Agenda Item 3** Progress Report for March - October 2024

**Agenda Item 4** Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues

**Agenda Item 5** Specific Issues:

- a) Ratification, Reporting and Compliance
- b) Delivering COP23 Key Mandates:
  - MSSD and Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework Revision
  - Revision of ECAP Roadmap
  - Independent Mapping Exercise with a view to define the mandate and integrate the newly established CC/RAC within the UNEP/MAP system
  - First elements of Analysis of Coherence of the MAP System to the “Common Operational Principles for MAP Components”
  - Celebration of Post-Rio MAP/Barcelona Convention Anniversary at UNOC-3
- c) Collaboration and Partners
- d) Outreach, Communication and Advocacy
- e) Other Issues
  - Strengthening the involvement of Youth and Women in the work of the MAP/Barcelona Convention System
  - Istanbul Environment Friendly City Award: Simplification of the Application Form
  - Membership of the MCSD
  - Work of UNEP/MAP on Environmentally Harmful Subsidies
  - Preparation the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2026-2027

**Agenda Item 6** Calendar of Meetings and Events

**Agenda Item 7** Date and venue of the 97<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau

**Agenda Item 8** Any Other Matters

**Agenda Item 9** Conclusions and Recommendations

**Agenda Item 10** Closure of the Meeting

### **Annex III**

#### **Amended Rules of Procedure of the Compliance Committee (with proposals by the Bureau)**

## **Amended Rules of Procedure of the Compliance Committee**

### **Rules of Procedure of the Compliance Committee (revised following the adoption of Decision IG.26/1)**

#### **Purposes**

##### **Rule 1**

Within the framework of the implementation of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, hereinafter called “compliance procedures and mechanisms”, contained in the annex to decision IG.17/2 on compliance procedures and mechanisms, hereinafter called decision IG 17/2, as adopted by the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties, these rules of procedure shall apply to any meeting of the Compliance Committee, hereinafter called "the Committee", under the Convention and its related Protocols.

##### **Rule 2**

The Rules of Procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols shall apply mutatis mutandis to any meeting of the Committee unless otherwise stipulated in the rules set out herein and in decision IG 17/2, and provided that rules 18 and 19 on representation and credentials of the Rules of Procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties do not apply.

#### **Definitions**

##### **Rule 3**

For the purposes of these rules:

1. “Convention and its related Protocols” means the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) adopted in 1976 and amended in 1995 and its related Protocols: Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency (Emergency Protocol), Barcelona, 1976; Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (Prevention and Emergency Protocol), Malta, 2002; Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft (Dumping Protocol), Barcelona, 1976; amendments to the Dumping Protocol, recorded as Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea, Barcelona, 1995; Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources (LBS Protocol), Athens, 1980; amendments to the LBS Protocol, recorded as Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities, Syracuse, 1996; Protocol concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (SPA Protocol), Geneva, 1982; Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA and Biodiversity Protocol), Barcelona, 1995; Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol), Madrid, 1994; Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Hazardous Wastes Protocol), Izmir, 1996; Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (ICZM Protocol), Madrid, 2008.
2. “Compliance procedures and mechanisms” means the procedures and mechanisms on compliance under the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols adopted by the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties and set out in the annex to decision IG.17/2, as amended by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Contracting Parties and set out in the annex to decision IG.26/1.

3. "Contracting Parties" means Contracting Parties to the Convention and its related Protocols, including the amended versions, if any, for which the Convention and the related Protocols and their respective amendments are in force.
4. "Party concerned" means a Party in respect of which a question of compliance is raised as set out in section V of the compliance procedures and mechanisms.
5. "Committee" means the Compliance Committee established by section II, paragraph 4, of the compliance procedures and mechanisms and by decision IG 17/2 of the 15th Meeting of the Contracting Parties.
6. "Member" means a member of the Committee elected under section II, paragraph 5, of the compliance procedures and mechanisms.
7. "Alternate member" means an alternate member of the Committee elected under section II, paragraph 5, of the compliance procedures and mechanisms.
8. "Chairperson" means the Chairperson of the Committee elected in accordance with rule 7 of the present rules of procedure.
9. "Vice-Chairpersons" means the Vice-Chairpersons of the Committee elected in accordance with rule 7 of the present rules of procedure.
10. "Secretariat" means the Coordinating Unit that is designated by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as responsible for the administration of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), referred to in paragraph 42 of the compliance procedures and mechanisms.
11. "Representative" means a person designated by the Party concerned to represent it during the consideration of a question of non-compliance.
12. "The public" means one or more natural or legal persons and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organizations or groups.
13. "Bureau" means the Bureau of the Contracting Parties referred to in article 19 of the Convention.
14. "Observers" means the organizations referred to in article 20 of the Convention and those included in the list of MAP partners as approved by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties and members of the civil society which have been granted the status of observers by the Compliance Committee on a case-by-case basis as per the compliance procedures and mechanisms.

### **Membership of the Committee**

#### **Rule 4**

1. Each member of the Committee is elected and shall serve in her or his individual capacity and shall act objectively in the interest of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea and its coastal area avoiding any conflicts of interest. A Committee member is not entitled to designate a substitute.
2. The term of office of a member shall commence at the end of an ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties immediately following her or his election and run until the end of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties four years thereafter, as applicable.
3. Every member serving the Committee shall, before taking up her or his duties, make a solemn declaration in a meeting of the Committee that she or he will perform her or his functions objectively as provided in Rule 12 of the present rules of procedure.
4. When a member of the Committee resigns or is otherwise unable to complete the assigned term of office, the Committee shall immediately request the Secretariat to start the replacement procedures. Therefore, the Bureau shall appoint a new member from the list of

candidates nominated by the Contracting Parties or, subsidiary, shall request the Party which nominated that member to nominate a replacement to serve for the remainder of the term.

5. When a member is absent for two consecutive meetings without providing any reasonable grounds, the term of office of the member concerned expires and new election proceeds, according to the provisions of Rule 4 of the present rules of procedure.

### **Place, dates and notice of meetings**

#### **Rule 5**

1. The Committee shall normally meet twice per biennium preferably once a year. It may recommend the Secretariat to hold additional meetings subject to workload requirements arising from submissions by concerned Contracting Parties, referrals by the Secretariat and referrals by the Committee on its own initiative, subject to availability of funds.

2. Unless it decides otherwise, the Committee shall meet at the seat of the Secretariat. Any additional costs that may rise by changing of the place of the meeting shall be met by the host country.

3. At each meeting, the Committee shall decide in consultation with the Secretariat on the place, dates and duration of its next meeting.

#### **Rule 6**

Notice of Committee meetings shall be sent by the Secretariat to the members and alternate members and any representative, as the case may be, with a copy to the MAP Focal Points of all Contracting Parties, at least three months before the opening of the meeting.

### **Officers**

#### **Rule 7**

The Committee shall elect a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons for a term of two years. No officers shall serve for more than two consecutive terms.

#### **Rule 8**

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere in these rules, the Chairperson shall:
  - (a) Preside over the meeting;
  - (b) Declare the opening and closure of the meeting;
  - (c) Ensure the observance of these rules;
  - (d) Accord the right to speak;
  - (e) Put questions to the vote and announce decisions;
  - (f) Rule on any points of order;
  - (g) Subject to these rules, have complete control over the proceedings and maintain order.
2. The Chairperson may also propose:
  - (a) The closure of the list of speakers;
  - (b) A limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of interventions on an issue;
  - (c) The adjournment or closure of debate on an issue;
  - (d) The suspension or adjournment of the meeting.

## **Agenda**

### **Rule 9**

1. In agreement with the Chairperson, the Secretariat shall draft the provisional agenda for each meeting of the Committee. The agenda of the Committee shall include items arising from its functions as specified in section IV of the compliance procedures and mechanisms and other matters related thereto.
2. The Committee, when adopting its agenda, may decide to add urgent and important items and to delete, defer or amend items.

### **Rule 10**

The provisional agenda and the annotated agenda for each meeting, the draft report of the previous meeting and other working and supporting documents shall be circulated by the Secretariat to members and alternate members at least six weeks before the opening of the Committee's meeting.

## **Conflict of Interest**

### **Rule 11**

1. Each member of the Committee shall, with respect to any matter that is under consideration by the Committee, avoid direct or indirect conflicts of interest. Any matter that may constitute a conflict of interest shall be brought as soon as possible to the attention of the Secretariat, which shall forthwith notify the members of the Committee. The concerned member shall not participate in the elaboration and adoption of findings, measures and recommendations of the Committee in relation to such a matter.
2. If the Committee considers that a material violation of the requirements of objectivity expected of a member or alternate member of the Committee has occurred, it may decide to recommend, through the Secretariat to the Bureau of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties, to revoke the membership of any member or alternate member concerned, after having given the member or alternate member the opportunity to be heard.
3. All decisions of the Committee taken under this rule shall be noted in the annual report of the Committee to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

## **Oath/Solemn Declaration**

### **Rule 12**

Each member and alternate member of the Committee shall take the following written oath:

"I solemnly declare that I shall perform my duties as a member of the Committee objectively, and act in the interest of the Barcelona Convention avoiding any conflict of interest, I shall not disclose any confidential information coming to my knowledge by reason of my duties in the Committee, and I shall disclose to the Committee any personal interest in any matter submitted to the Committee for consideration which may constitute a conflict of interest."

## **Distribution and consideration of information**

### **Rule 13**

1. The information received in accordance with paragraphs 21-22 section V on "Procedure" of the

procedures and mechanisms on compliance shall be distributed by the Secretariat to the members and alternate members of the Committee.

2. Any submission received in accordance with paragraph 21(a) of section V "Procedure" of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance shall be transmitted by the Secretariat to the members of the Committee and their alternates as soon as possible but no later than thirty days of receipt of the submission.
3. A submission received in accordance with paragraphs 21(b) and 27 of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance and any issues raised by the Secretariat as provided for in paragraph 26 of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance shall be transmitted by the Secretariat to the members of the Committee and their alternates as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after the six-month time frames provided for in the above-mentioned paragraphs have expired.
4. Any information to be considered by the Committee shall, as soon as possible but no later than two weeks after receipt, be made available to the Party concerned.

### **Public access to documents and information**

#### **Rule 14**

The provisional agenda, reports of meetings and any official documents subject to rule 13 above and paragraph 34 of section V of the compliance procedures and mechanisms, and any other non-confidential information documents shall be made available to the public.

### **Participation in proceedings of the Committee**

#### **Rule 15**

1. Unless the Committee or the Party whose compliance is in question decides otherwise, the meetings of the Committee will be open to other Contracting Parties and to observers.
2. Observers shall be entitled to receive copies of publicly distributed documents, submit written comments and make oral statements at meetings. The Committee reserves the right to give the floor to the attending public, upon request, if it deems it useful.
3. In accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 21, 31 and 33 of the compliance procedures and mechanisms, the Party concerned is entitled to participate in the Committee's proceedings and make comments thereon. It may furthermore, in accordance with the criteria adopted by the Committee and at the request of the latter, take part in the preparation of its findings, measures and recommendations. The Party concerned shall be given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings, measures and recommendations of the Committee. Any such comments shall be forwarded with the report of the Committee to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.
4. The Committee may invite experts to provide expert advice through the Secretariat. In that case it shall:
  - (a) Define the question on which expert opinion is sought;
  - (b) Identify the expert(s) to be consulted, on the basis of a roster of experts prepared and regularly updated by the Secretariat;
  - (c) Lay down the procedures to be followed.
5. Experts may also be invited by the Committee to be present during the formulation of its findings, measures or recommendations.
6. Secretariat officials may be also invited by the Committee to attend the Committee's

deliberations in order to assist in the drafting of its findings, measures or recommendations.

### **Conduct of business**

#### **Rule 16**

Seven members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. For the purpose of the quorum, the replacement of members by alternates shall take into consideration equitable geographical representation, consistently with the composition of the Committee as set out in the third paragraph of decision IG 17/2 and the fifth paragraph of Annex I of decision IG.26/1.

#### **Rule 17**

1. With respect to a notification or document sent by the Secretariat to a Contracting Party, the date of receipt shall be deemed to be the date indicated in a written confirmation from the Party or the date indicated in a written confirmation of receipt by the expedited delivery courier, whichever comes first.

2. With respect to a submission, request or other document intended for the Committee, the date of receipt by the Committee shall be deemed to be the first business day after receipt by the Secretariat.

#### **Rule 18**

1. Electronic means of communication may be used by the members of the Committee for the purpose of conducting informal consultations on issues under consideration and decision-making on matters of procedure. Electronic means of communication shall not be used for making decisions on matters of substance related in particular to the preparation of findings, measures and recommendations by the Committee.

2. The Committee may use electronic means of communication for the transmission, dissemination and storage of documentation, without prejudice to normal means of circulation of the documentation, as the case may be.

### **Voting**

#### **Rule 19**

Each member of the Committee shall have one vote.

#### **Rule 20**

1. The Committee shall make every effort to reach agreement by consensus on its findings, measures and recommendations. If all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted, the Committee shall as a last resort adopt its findings, measures and recommendations by at least six members present and voting.

2. For the purpose of these rules, “members present and voting” means members present at the session at which voting takes place and casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members who abstain from voting shall be considered as not voting.

### **Secretariat**

#### **Rule 21**

1. The Secretariat shall make all necessary arrangements for meetings of the

2. Committee and provide it with services as required.
3. In addition, and subject to availability of technical and financial means, the Secretariat shall perform any other function assigned to it by the Committee with respect to the work of the Committee.

### **Languages**

#### **Rule 22**

English and French shall be the working languages of the Committee. However, the Committee will accept communications or submissions, as well as corroborating information in any of the four official languages of the meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties.

#### **Rule 23**

1. The submissions from the Party concerned, the response and the information referred to in section V of the compliance procedures and mechanisms shall be provided in one of the four official languages of the Meetings of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention and its related Protocols. The Secretariat shall make arrangements to translate them into English and/or French if they are submitted in the other official languages of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention and its related Protocols.
2. Any representative taking part in the Committee proceedings and/or meetings may speak in a language other than the working languages of the Committee if the Party provides for interpretation.
3. Final findings, measures and recommendations shall be made available in all official languages of the Meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Convention and its related Protocols.

### **General procedures for submissions**

#### **Rule 24**

The time frame for submissions is as follows:

1. For cases concerning a submission by a Contracting Party in respect of its own actual or potential situation of non-compliance: at the latest six (6) weeks before the opening of the ordinary meeting of the Committee.
2. For cases concerning a submission by a Contracting Party in respect of another Party's situation of non-compliance: at the latest four (4) months before the opening of the ordinary meeting of the Committee allowing the Contracting Party whose compliance is in question at least three months to consider and prepare its response.
3. The time frames for cases concerning a submission by a Contracting Party in respect of another Contracting Party's situation of non-compliance also apply to issues raised by the Secretariat.
4. All the above time frames are indicative and may be extended according to the necessities warranted by the circumstances of the matter at hand and in accordance with the Committee's rules of procedure and due process. In this respect, Contracting Parties may submit additional documentation, comments and written observations to be considered by the Committee.

#### **Rule 25**

1. A submission by any Contracting Party raising a question of non-compliance with respect to itself shall set out:

- (a) The name of the Contracting Party making the submission;
- (b) A statement identifying the question of non-compliance, supported by substantiating information setting out the matter of concern relating to the question of non-compliance;
- (c) Its legal basis and the relevant provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols and decision IG. 17/2 and as subsequently amended that form the basis for raising the question of non-compliance;
- (d) Any provisions of the decisions of the Meeting of the Contracting Parties and the reports of the Secretariat that are applicable to the question of non-compliance.

2. The submission shall also include the list of all documents annexed to the submission.

## **Rule 26**

1. A submission by any Contracting Party raising a question of non-compliance with respect to another Party shall set out:

- (a) The name of the Contracting Party making the submission;
- (b) A statement identifying the question of non-compliance, supported by substantiating information setting out the matter of concern relating to the question of non-compliance;
- (c) The name of the Party concerned;
- (d) Its legal basis and the relevant provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols and decision IG. 17/2 and as subsequently amended that form the basis for raising the question of non-compliance;
- (e) Any provisions of the decisions of the meetings of the Contracting Parties and the reports of the Secretariat that are applicable to the question of non-compliance.

2. The submission should also include the list of all documents annexed to the submission.

## **Rule 27**

The Secretariat shall make the submission and any supporting information, submitted under rule 14 above, including any expertise reports, available to the representative designated by the concerned Party.

## **Rule 28**

Within the framework of general procedures for submissions as provided for under rule 25 above, comments and written observations by the Party concerned in accordance with the provisions of section V of the compliance procedures and mechanisms on the Committee's preliminary and final findings, measures and recommendations shall include:

- (a) A statement of the position of the Party concerned on the information, findings, measures and recommendations or question of non-compliance under consideration;
- (b) An identification of any information provided by the Party that it requests should not be made available to the public in accordance with paragraph 34 of section V of the compliance procedures and mechanisms;

- (c) A list of all documents annexed to the submission or comment.

## **Rule 29**

1. Any submission, comment and/or written observations under rules 13 and 28 above shall be signed by the MAP Focal Point or the representative of the Contracting Party and be delivered to the Secretariat in hard copy and by electronic means of communication.
2. Any relevant documents in support of the submission, comment or written observations shall be annexed to it.

## **Rule 30**

1. Findings, measures or recommendations shall contain, mutatis mutandis:
  - (a) The name of the Party concerned;
  - (b) A statement identifying the question of non-compliance addressed;
  - (c) The legal basis and the relevant provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols and decision IG. 17/2 as subsequently amended and other relevant decisions of the Meetings of the Contracting Parties that form the basis of the preliminary findings, measures and recommendations and their final versions;
  - (d) A description of the information considered in the deliberations and confirmation that gives the Party concerned an opportunity to comment in writing on all information considered;
  - (e) A summary of the proceedings, including an indication of whether its preliminary finding or any part of it as specified is confirmed;
  - (f) The substantive decision on the question of non-compliance, including the consequences applied, if any;
  - (g) The background, conclusions and reasons for the findings, measures and recommendations;
  - (h) The place and date of the findings, measures and recommendations;
  - (i) The names of the members who participated in the consideration of the question of non-compliance and in the elaboration and adoption of the findings, measures and recommendations.
2. Written comments on the findings, measures and recommendations submitted within 45 days of their receipt by the Party concerned shall be circulated by the Secretariat to the members and alternate members of Committee and shall be included in the Committee's biennial report to the Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

## **Admissibility and Communication procedures**

### **Rule 31**

#### **A. Admissibility criteria under paragraph "V. Procedure" of the procedures and mechanisms**

1. Communications addressed to the Committee under paragraph V. Procedure of the procedures and mechanisms shall be in writing or in electronic form through the Secretariat. The communications shall be supported by substantiating documentation.
2. When determining admissibility, the Compliance Committee shall consider whether the communication is:

- (a) anonymous;
- (b) de minimis;
- (c) manifestly ill founded;
- (d) incompatible with the provisions of this compliance procedure or with the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

3. The Committee should, at all relevant stages, take into account any available domestic remedy unless the application of the remedy is unreasonable prolonged or obviously does not provide an effective and sufficient means of redress.

4. With respect to communications by any member of the public and observers submitted to the Compliance Committee, the following procedures shall apply.

### **B. Handling and circulation of Communications**

1. Communications shall be in writing or in electronic form through the Secretariat and as concise and concrete as possible. It is preferable that the communication shall not be more than twelve pages in total. Visual means are also welcomed.

2. The minimum requirements to be included in any such communication are:

- (a) Name and contact details of the communicant, whether this is a natural or legal person, it will however respect any request of confidentiality by the communicant;
- (b) Clear identification of the Party or Parties concerned;
- (c) One to two-page summary with the main facts of the case;
- (d) A document presenting the facts of the alleged non-compliance, and clearly stating how the facts presented constitute a case of non-compliance with the Barcelona Convention and/or its Protocols;
- (e) Indication of whether steps have been taken to use the remedies available at the national and/or international level.

3. Communications shall be addressed to the Compliance Committee through the ~~Unit~~ Secretariat. Upon receipt of a communication the Secretariat shall register it, send an acknowledgement of the receipt, and transmit the communication to the Party concerned and to the Compliance Committee within two weeks from the receipt clarifying that, at the present stage, it has not been deemed admissible by the Compliance Committee. Communications forwarded by the Secretariat will be considered by the Committee at its next meeting for the Committee to take a decision whether to enter into their preliminary admissibility.

### **C. Preliminary Determination of Admissibility**

1. Upon circulation of a communication, the Compliance Committee shall consider the preliminary admissibility of communications addressed to it. To that end the Chair of the Compliance Committee in consultation with the Members of the Compliance Committee shall appoint from among its members a Rapporteur for each communication. The Rapporteur shall not be a ~~citizen national~~ of the Party concerned.

2. If translation of substantiating material is required, the Committee shall decide on the extent to which more material, other than that which is already available in English, should be translated, taking into account both the costs of translation and the delay involved. The Committee may also request the communicant to provide an English translation of certain materials.

3. If the Compliance Committee determines that the communication is inadmissible, it shall inform the Party concerned and the communicant accordingly, through the Secretariat, and close the file. Such determination shall be final.
4. If the Compliance Committee determines that the communication is admissible on a preliminary basis, it opens a file, and shall notify the Party concerned and the communicant accordingly, through the Secretariat. The Committee should in principle consider preliminary determination of a communication not later than at its second meeting following the receipt of the communication.
5. The Compliance Committee may, after making a positive decision on admissibility, present the questions raised with the Party concerned, if any, when forwarding the communication. Such questions will be transmitted to the Party concerned by letter from the Secretariat, together with the confirmation of preliminary admissibility.
6. The Compliance Committee may also address any questions to the communicant it might find necessary to clarify the facts of the communication. Such questions will be transmitted to the communicant by letter from the Secretariat, together with the confirmation of preliminary admissibility.
7. The Party concerned should, as soon as possible but no later than two months from the date of the Secretariat's letter, submit written explanations or statements on the matter.
8. When forwarding a communication to the Party concerned on behalf of the Committee, the Secretariat will prepare a cover letter with: (a) a request to the Party concerned to acknowledge receipt of the communication; (b) a reminder of its obligation under paragraph 12 of the Barcelona Convention to submit as soon as possible, but not later than two months after the communication has been brought to its attention, written explanations or statements clarifying the matter and describing any response that it may have made; (c) a reference to the determination of preliminary admissibility with the request to inform the Committee as soon as possible if it intends to comment on admissibility issues; (d) specific points of discussion and questions to be addressed in the response, as identified by the Committee.
9. If the Party concerned consents to the admissibility of the communication, the Compliance Committee will consider this, and the communicant will be given an opportunity to comment and/or provide additional information.
10. If the Compliance Committee confirms the admissibility of the communication, it will proceed to the examination of the substance of it. Otherwise, the Compliance Committee will reverse its preliminary decision. The non-admissibility of the communication by the Committee is final. The Compliance Committee will inform the Party concerned and the communicant through the Secretariat.
11. The Compliance Committee should start the formal discussion on all particular communications at the first meeting that takes place following either the receipt of a response to the communication from the Party concerned or ~~within the deadline of two months~~ if no response has been received ~~by then~~ within the deadline of two months.
12. When the Compliance Committee discusses the substance of any communication at a particular meeting, the Secretariat will notify the Party concerned and the communicant that the communication will be discussed following mutatis mutandis the procedures established in paragraphs 28 to 34 of the Procedures and Mechanisms on Compliance.

### **Amendments to the rules of procedure**

#### **Rule 32**

Any amendment to these rules of procedure is adopted by consensus by the Committee and submitted for consideration and adoption by the Bureau, subject to endorsement by the Meeting of the

Contracting Parties.

**Overriding authority of the Convention and its related protocols and decision IG. 17/2 as subsequently amended**

**Rule 33**

In the event of a conflict between any provision in these rules and any provision in the Convention and its related Protocols or decision IG. 17/2 as subsequently amended, the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols ~~or, as the case may be, decision IG. 17/2 as subsequently amended,~~ shall prevail.

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**UNITED  
NATIONS**

UNEP/MED BUR.97/7



**Mediterranean  
Action Plan**  
Barcelona  
Convention

28 July 2025  
Original: English

97<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the  
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment  
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Evia, Greece, 1-2 July 2025

## **Report of the Meeting**

For environmental and cost-saving reasons, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.

UNEP/MAP  
Athens, 2025

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## Introduction

1. In accordance with Article IV.2 of the Terms of Reference of the Bureau and in consultation with the President and members of the Bureau, the 97<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bureau of 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 was held in Evia, Greece, on 1-2 July 2025.

## Participation

2. The meeting was attended by the President of the Bureau, Mr. Mitja Bricelj; the Vice-Presidents: Ms. Heba Sharawy (Egypt); Ms. Marie Thérèse Gambin (Malta); Mr. Salah Eddine Ait Bella (Morocco); Ms. Itziar Martin Partida (Spain); the Rapporteur, Ms. Djurdjina Bulatovic (Montenegro) and the Ex-Officio Member, Ms. Fatma Varank, Deputy Minister accompanied by Mr. Fatih Turan, Mr. Ali Erhan Yilmaz, and Mr. Mehmet Tamer Çobanoğlu (Türkiye). Mr. Javier Villar Burke (European Commission) and Mr. Lavrendios Vasiliades (Cyprus) also attended the meeting as observers. The Secretariat was represented by the Coordinating Unit (Coordinator and Programme Management Officer - Governance). The list of participants is attached as Annex I to this report.

### I. Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

3. The meeting was opened at 10:00 (GMT+3) on Tuesday, 1 July 2025, by Mr. Mitja Bricelj, President of the Bureau, who welcomed the Bureau members to the third Bureau meeting of the biennium and thanked the Secretariat and Bureau Members for the hard work done during this period. He added that the high-level event held on 10 June 2025 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNEP/MAP and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Post-Rio Barcelona Convention, during the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3), held in Nice, France, was the common success of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention system. He noted that UNOC-3 discussions confirmed the importance of the Portoroz Ministerial Declaration and of the “Source-to-Sea approach”, as also showcased through the collaboration between the Barcelona Convention, the Black Sea Commission and the Danube River Protection Convention.

4. The UNEP/MAP Coordinator, Ms. Tatjana Hema, welcomed all participants to the meeting and stressed the importance of the Bureau meeting in providing guidance to the Secretariat and for progressing the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention agenda. She thanked the observers for their participation and reiterated the importance of the successful high-level event celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNEP/MAP and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Post-Rio Barcelona Convention. She also referred to the Ocean Action Panel 8 “Promoting and supporting all forms of cooperation, especially at the regional and sub regional level” at UNOC-3, co-chaired by two Mediterranean countries, Italy and Morocco, and to the importance placed on Regional Seas and especially the Mediterranean.

5. The Deputy Minister for Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change of Türkiye H.E. Ms. Fatma Varank, thanked the Secretariat and the Contracting Parties for the progress achieved and highlighted the importance her country places on issues such as zero waste, sustainable agriculture, sustainable tourism, Marine Spatial Planning, and climate change, noting also the establishment of Climate Change Regional Activity Centre (CC/RAC) in Istanbul, during COP 23 (Portoroz, Slovenia, December 2023). She also noted that Türkiye has submitted its candidacy to host UNFCCC COP31, and that on 8-9 July Türkiye will host the Regional Meeting on Climate Change Adaptation in Istanbul.

6. The Bureau Member of Egypt, Ms. Heba Sharawy, highlighted the importance of the high-level event held at UNOC-3, expressing also the appreciation of her Minister, and added that she looks forward to welcoming all Bureau members at COP 24 in Cairo.

### II. Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Organization of Work

7. The Bureau reviewed and adopted the Provisional Agenda as contained in document UNEP/MED BUR.97/1. No other items were added to the Agenda.

### III. Agenda Item 3: Progress Report for November 2024 - May 2025

8. The Coordinator introduced the document “*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Activities Carried Out for the Period November 2024 - May 2025*” (UNEP/MED BUR.97/3) and also

referred to document “*Progress Report by the Secretariat on the Implementation of COP23 Decisions*” (UNEP/MED BUR.97/4), and presented the progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Work for this reporting period, since November 2024.

9. The Coordinator noted that this is the last Bureau meeting before the COP and therefore the focus of the discussions should be on the products that will be submitted to the MAP Focal Points Meeting of September 2025 and subsequently to COP 24, on the format and theme of the COP 24 Ministerial Session in order to ensure high-level participation, as well as on the draft Decisions. She highlighted therefore the importance of the meeting.

10. The President and the Members of the Bureau congratulated the Secretariat for the significant progress achieved during this short reporting period and for the effort put in this detailed report. They noted that they like the way the report is prepared while they also asked the Secretariat to continue the previous practice of using a PowerPoint presentation to present progress.

11. One Bureau member thanked the Secretariat on the progress achieved in relation to climate change and noted the importance of considering how to best integrate the new CC/RAC in the MAP system, without “stopping” ongoing work by the other RACs.

12. The Bureau also highlighted the importance for the MAP-Barcelona Convention system to benefit from GEF-9 anticipating relevant actions from the very beginning.

13. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau expresses its appreciation for the work done in the period 2024 - May 2025 as presented by the Secretariat, and its satisfaction for the efforts and results achieved so far through the integrated work of the Coordinating Unit and MAP Components.**

#### **IV. Agenda Item 4: Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues**

14. The Coordinator presented to the Bureau members a financial and administrative update as contained in the “Report by the Secretariat on Financial and Administrative Issues” (UNEP/MED BUR.97/5), addressing the status of financial contributions, personnel, administrative matters and consultancy reporting. The Coordinator provided further clarifications and highlighted the importance of early payment of contributions, so that there is a timely transfer of funds to MAP components for the implementation of their respective mandates/activities. She also stressed that, noting the late payment of contributions, the positive balance is important so as to be able to timely provide funds to RACs so that they can start implementing activities in the beginning of the biennium.

15. As a follow up to the last Bureau meeting, the Coordinator provided information regarding the Programme Support Costs (PSC). It is confirmed that, based on a decision of the UN controller with the view to harmonize the PSC policy as of next year, the PSC for the EU discretionary voluntary contribution will increase from 4.5% to 7.0%. The Coordinator said that she will inform formally the EU about this change after the bureau meeting.

16. The President and Bureau members welcomed the information provided by the Secretariat and expressed support to the work of the Secretariat in relation to Financial and Administrative Issues. The Bureau also asked for information to be provided to the Bureau in a regular basis on financial implementation of all funds, including projects and beyond the information provided in Project Fiches.

17. The Coordinator clarified that projects, such as Interreg etc., go directly to RACs who include them both in the Project Fiches (UNEP/MED BUR.97/Inf.5) and in the information provided in the Progress Report (UNEP/MED BUR.97/3). She also explained that RACs implement the Programme of Work and this is the sole purpose for which they use project funds; they submit relevant information at the Project Documents (including staff salaries), while they also report to their donors. She added that when RACs participate in consortia/calls for proposals they receive first the approval of the Coordinator, inter alia to ensure that different RACs do not participate in competitive consortia for the same call.

18. Regarding human resources, the Coordinator noted that the request to report on consultancies is obsolete now, since this information was asked in the past in relation to the financial deficit. She

referred to the internal functional review at UNEP due to the overall financial situation, noting that Multilateral Environmental Agreements are included in the measures taken, due to fairness considerations. Such measures include that contracts are issued on annual basis for all staff and that new staff are recruited on a “Fixed Term Limited” contract. Finally, referring to the renovation of the Coordinating Unit premises, she noted that this is expected to be finalized in early 2026 and an event is planned to take place for their inauguration.

**19. Conclusions:**

- (a) The Bureau requests the Secretariat to provide the unaudited 2024 Financial Statement to the Bureau and the audited one to the MAP Focal Points meeting;**
- (b) The Bureau highlights the need to provide clear picture on the status of fund balances and to this aim requests the Secretariat to circulate the financial statements for information, even if they are not yet audited, to each Bureau meeting;**
- (c) The Bureau notes with appreciation the contributions received for the years 2024-2025 and encourages the Contracting Parties which did not settle, to do so as soon as possible;**
- (d) The Bureau takes note of the importance of retaining a net cash balance carried forward from the preceding fiscal year for initiating activities in the first quarter of the following fiscal year;**
- (e) The Bureau draws the attention of the Contracting Parties to adhere to Procedure 4.2.b of the Financial Regulations and Rules and Procedures, which states that contributions for each calendar year are expected within the first quarter of that year and should be paid promptly and in full;**
- (f) The Bureau urges the Contracting Parties in arrears to pay them as soon as possible, while noting the specific circumstances of each Contracting Party in arrears;**
- (g) The Bureau urges the Secretariat to continue its efforts to maximize the collection of contributions and arrears in line with the Financial Rules and Procedures;**
- (h) The Bureau takes note of the status of the financial implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025, as of March 2025, and requests the Secretariat to ensure that up to date information is provided to the Bureau for the period until one month before the Bureau meeting, and to provide any update as necessary afterwards, including during the meeting of the Bureau;**
- (i) The Bureau highlights the importance for the Secretariat to provide to the Bureau meetings information on the financial implementation of the projects (currently funded by the EU and GEF) as well as of the voluntary contributions and Host Country contribution, as it is done for the MTF;**
- (j) The Bureau takes note of the audit recommendation and the advice from UNEP Headquarters regarding the revision of the non-standard Programme Support Cost (PSC) arrangement, and requests the Secretariat to report on the outcome of its consultations with the European Commission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting in September 2025;**
- (k) The Bureau takes note of the status of recruitment.**

**V. Agenda Item 5: Specific Issues**

20. The MAP Coordinator presented the “*Report by the Secretariat on Specific Issues*” (UNEP/MED BUR.97/6).

21. The meeting discussed the matters as summarized in the following paragraphs.

**A. Ratification, Reporting and Compliance**

22. The Coordinator referred to issues related to ratification, reporting and compliance, noting that there is no progress regarding ratifications and especially for the two ratifications that are pending for

the entry into force of the Amendments of the Protocol for the prevention of pollution of the Mediterranean sea by dumping from ships and aircraft (Dumping Protocol). She added that the Secretariat is following-up with relevant Contracting Parties on this issue. Regarding MARPOL Annex VI, she noted that there is one further ratification during this reporting period, while five ratifications are still missing and added that the Secretariat (REMPEC) is supporting Contracting Parties in this process.

23. One Bureau member referred to the low number of ratifications of the Hazardous Waste Protocol. The Coordinator noted that the Secretariat will make an analysis, as was done in the past, to understand better the low level of ratifications of the Hazardous Waste Protocol.

24. It was noted that ratification is a political process under each country's responsibility and existing mechanisms can be used wisely to promote ratification, including for example the enlargement process of the EU for some Contracting Parties.

25. Regarding reporting, the Coordinator highlighted that reporting rates are still low and that Contracting Parties should increase their efforts in this respect, noting that the Secretariat is ready to include some budget in the Programme of Work and Budget for 2026-2027 to support Contracting Parties at least to submit their first report.

26. The Bureau members agreed that reporting is very important, and that the Bureau should provide recommendations on the low reporting rates, welcoming at the same time the proposal of the Secretariat to support Contracting Parties to fulfil their reporting obligations.

27. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau notes with concern the limited progress in ratifications during the current biennium and urges the Contracting Parties which have not yet done so to make efforts for the ratifications of the Protocols, with particular focus on the Dumping Protocol to ensure its entry into force as soon as possible;**

**(b) The Bureau, recalling the date of entry into effective application of the Med SOX ECA on 1 May 2025, strongly urges those Contracting Parties who have not yet done so to ratify, transpose and implement MARPOL Annex VI, in an effective and timely manner to ensure the consistent implementation of the 0.10% sulphur limit under MARPOL Annex VI in the Med SOX ECA;**

**(c) The Bureau notes with concern the limited number of national implementations reports of Barcelona Convention which have been submitted for the 2022-2023 biennium (11 Contracting Parties) and calls upon Contracting Parties to submit their national implementation reports for the period 2022-2023 by December 2025, as a priority;**

**(d) The Bureau strongly urges those Contracting Parties who have not yet done so, to submit their national implementation reports for the previous reporting periods and especially for 2018-2019 (8 Contracting Parties) and/or 2020-2021 (8 Contracting Parties) without further delay, implementing COP 23 Decision IG.26/1;**

**(e) The Bureau also recommends the Secretariat to consider the possibility for the Contracting Parties as provided for in Point (d) above, to provide on an exceptional basis a combined report that may include the measures taken in the last three biennia in one single report of the last reporting biennial cycle, subject to the MAP Focal Points meeting/COP24 consideration;**

**(f) The Bureau highlights the importance of submission of national implementation reports not only to comply with a legally binding obligation as provided for in the Convention and Protocols, but primarily to allow the timely assessment of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols as well as of the difficulties faced by the Contracting Parties in implementing the Convention, its Protocols and the related legally binding measures.**

## **B. MSSD Revision**

28. The Coordinator presented an update on the process of preparation of the updated MSSD, following also the discussions held at the Thematic Ad Hoc meeting of the MCSD (Istanbul, Türkiye,

11-13 February 2025) and at the 21<sup>st</sup> MCSD meeting (Corinth, Greece, 24-26 June 2025). She noted that the Secretariat followed a prudent approach on updating the document to ensure that a high-level of ambition is retained. She added that the Flagship Initiatives comprise one of the most important parts of the MSSD that has been updated (10 new Flagship Initiatives proposed) and that they form a very good basis for project proposals. She also referred to the independent evaluation of the Strategy, noting that it builds upon the mid-term evaluation and that it was well received and approved by the 21<sup>st</sup> MCSD Meeting (Corinth, Greece, 24-26 June 2025). The Coordinator also informed the meeting that the MCSD is preparing its input to COP 24 and its Ministerial Declaration.

29. The Bureau members thanked the Secretariat for the work done on the MSSD and discussed the MSSD update. Following a question by one Bureau member, the Coordinator noted that the final MSSD text will be submitted directly to COP24 for its consideration and approval, following an editorial finetuning of the document by the Secretariat, while only the text of the draft decision on the MSSD will be presented to the MAP Focal Points meeting for their review.

30. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the outcome of the composite work of the MCSD, including of the 21<sup>st</sup> MCSD meeting held in Corinthos, on the successful delivery of the MSSD and looks forward to the completion of all steps for the submission of this important document to COP 24 for approval;**

**(b) The Bureau takes note with appreciation of the proposed new flagship initiatives of the MSSD and invites the Secretariat to continue its work giving priority to the identification of sound partnerships, ambitious objectives and concrete actions. The Bureau strongly encourages the MCSD Members to actively participate and contribute to the implementation of the new flagship initiatives and calls upon the Contracting Parties to contribute and take the lead for their implementation.**

**C. Independent Mapping Exercise with a view to define the mandate and integrate the newly established CC/RAC within the UNEP/MAP system**

31. The Coordinator introduced the progress regarding the 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. She noted that the full report of the independent consultant is presented in information document UNEP/MED BUR.97/Inf.7, while the main elements of the CC/RAC mandate are also presented in the Report on Specific Issues (UNEP/MED BUR.97/6), and invited the Bureau to discuss the proposed mandate and to provide ideas on the draft Decision. She added that the draft Decision is planned to include two Annexes, one on the CC/RAC mandate and one on the Terms of Reference of the CC/RAC Focal Points.

32. The representative of Türkiye presented a brief summary of the actions taken by his country to implement COP 23 Decision IG.26/12 on the “Establishment of Regional Activity Center on Climate Change”. He referred to the many pressures related to climate change that the Mediterranean is facing and to the main steps taken by Türkiye: nomination of a CC/RAC Director; preliminary consideration of possible issues to be addressed by CC/RAC, which were shared with the individual contractor as input to his work; allocation of premises to CC/RAC (the initial premises were partially destroyed by a fire and new premises were then allocated); creation of draft logo and further information, to be provided during the MAP Focal Points meeting in September 2025. He also referred to the hosting by Türkiye in Istanbul of the Regional Meeting on Climate Change Adaptation on 8-9 July. On the draft mandate of CC/RAC, he noted that several MAP Components already work on climate change and CC/RAC will not duplicate their work or compete with them, but will complement their work under the guidance of the Coordinating Unit.

33. The Bureau members thanked Türkiye for the steps taken for hosting CC/RAC and the Secretariat for the progress achieved. One observer noted that DG Clima of the European Union has been contacted to support Türkiye and CC/RAC in this process.

34. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau appreciates the work undertaken on the independent mapping exercise and the draft proposed elements of the mandate of the newly established CC/RAC, and asks the Secretariat to further refine these elements based on the comments received at the 97<sup>th</sup> Bureau meeting, before submission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting and subsequently to COP 24 for endorsement.**

#### **D. Analysis of Coherence of the MAP System to the “Common Operational Principles for MAP Components”**

35. The Coordinator provided an update on the progress regarding the internal evaluation to assess the coherence of the MAP system to the provisions of the “*Common Operational Principles for MAP Components*”, as adopted by COP 22 Decision IG.25/3. She noted that the RACs are obliged to apply the national legislation and that this sometimes has created difficulties and is affecting the coherence of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system. The Coordinator added that based on the discussions with headquarters the Secretariat saw that there is room for flexibility in this respect. Regarding the staffing of RACs, the Coordinator clarified that in some RACs all staff members are under the MTF, while in other RACs the MTF covers very limited staff costs.

36. The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the efforts to address difficulties faced by some Regional Activity Centers and noted that this is a complex issue, adding that the Host Countries need to work with the Secretariat to ensure that the RACs have the appropriate means to effectively deliver their mandate.

37. **Conclusion:**

**(a) The Bureau thanks the Secretariat for the information provided regarding the internal evaluation of coherence of the MAP System to the “Common Operational Principles for MAP Components” and the efforts to address difficulties faced by some Regional Activity Centers, and agrees that the Secretariat submits this information to the MAP Focal Points meeting and considers its relevant aspects in the POW for the next biennium;**

**(b) The Bureau highlights the need to emphasize and to reflect in the Draft Decision on the Programme of Work and Budget 2026-2027 that the Regional Activity Centers are in primis Centers of Expertise for the implementation of the Programme of Work, in line with their respective thematic mandates, while part of their work is also Project and Programme Management. The Bureau appreciating the support and Host Country contribution to the RACs, also recommends that every effort should be made by the Host Countries to ensure the effective delivery of the respective RACs’ mandates.**

#### **E. Main directions of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2026-2027**

38. The Coordinator updated the Bureau on the preparations of the 2026-2027 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget and presented its main directions for the consideration of the Bureau. She noted that 2026-2027 is the last biennium of the current UNEP/MAP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and in the preparation of the Programme of Work both achievements and gaps in the MTS implementation were taken into consideration.

39. Regarding financial implementation, the Coordinator noted that preliminary estimates suggest that an unutilized positive balance of approximately EUR 3.5 million may be available, subject to the final implementation rate and other accounting factors such as exchange rate fluctuations by the end of 2025 and review/clearance by UNEP Headquarters, and that the Secretariat proposal is to take a prudent approach to utilize EUR 2.5 million in 2026-2027 and to rephase EUR 1 million into 2028-2029. She noted that the proposed 2026-2027 budget includes the assessed contributions plus the EUR 2.5 million, and that therefore there is some decrease in budget and respective activities compared to the current biennium.

40. The Coordinator also highlighted that the full commitment of the unutilized MTF positive

balance would cause difficulty to the timely payment to the RACs, due to possible lack of cash liquidity considering that the majority of the payments of the assessed contributions may reach the UNEP account during the period April-September of each year of the biennium.

41. The Bureau agreed with the proposals by the Secretariat regarding the main directions of the 2026-2027 UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget. The Bureau also agreed that there should be an increase in the budget by 2.5%, which for the next two biennia should be covered by the MTF unused positive balance and after that by an increase in the assessed contributions of the Contracting Parties to the MTF.

42. **Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the inclusive process led by the Secretariat for the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2026-2027 and of the principles and main elements for the PoW 2026-2027;**

**(b) The Bureau, takes note of the proposed budget scenarios and recommends the Secretariat to prepare the POW as per COP 23 Decision requirements and agrees to support the use of 2.5 million EUR from the unutilized positive balance of the MTF;**

**(c) The Bureau takes note of the concerns expressed by the Secretariat regarding the implications on the financial implementation of the POW with regards to payment of the RACs, in case the full amount of unutilized MTF balance is absorbed;**

**(d) The Bureau recommends the need for a regular increase in the annual assessed contributions as it is the practice of MEAs;**

**(e) The Bureau recommends for the next biennia that an increase of 2.5% in the assessed contributions with respect to 2025 (base year) is considered to be covered by the use of the unutilized positive balance of the MTF; therefore, Contracting Parties' actual contributions will remain stable until the unutilized positive balance of the MTF is absorbed at the level agreed by the Contracting Parties.**

## **F. Preparations for COP 24: Format, Ministerial Session and Declaration, List of proposed draft Decisions, Host Country preparations**

43. The Coordinator introduced this agenda item, with reference to the theme and format of the Ministerial Session and the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration, as well as to the list of proposed draft decisions and to organizational matters. She clarified that the Ministerial Session will take place at the third day of the COP, on 4 December, and that she expects a high-level participation.

44. The Bureau member from Egypt, host country of COP 24, informed the Bureau of the progress in the preparation of COP 24, noting that a venue has been identified and will be soon announced and the Egypt is working with the Secretariat to finalize the Host Country Agreement of COP 24. Regarding the theme of the COP she highlighted the importance her country places on the theme of Blue Economy, including on circular economy, climate resilience and financial investments, adding that the national Strategy on Blue Economy was recently submitted to the Minister's cabinet with the intention to be launched during COP 24.

45. The Bureau members expressed appreciation to the host country and to the Secretariat for the work done. They agreed on the theme "Sustainable Blue Economy for a resilient and healthy Mediterranean". Regarding the Ministerial Declaration the Bureau noted that this could use as a basis also the Declaration of Ministers of the Mediterranean of UNOC-3, and that the process will include the following steps: discussion at the MAP Focal Points meeting; creation of online working group, under the leadership of Egypt; negotiations of the text of the Declaration at the online working group; submission of the text at the COP; adoption during the Ministerial Session of COP 24.

46. **Conclusions**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the work by Egypt and the Secretariat for the preparation of COP 24, and urges all Contracting Parties to ensure high level participation to the extent possible to maximize the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention's system visibility;**

**(b) The Bureau agrees with the proposed theme "Sustainable Blue Economy for a resilient and healthy Mediterranean" of the Ministerial Session and requests the Secretariat to timely proceed on the preparation of the Ministerial Session of COP24;**

**(c) The Bureau agrees with the approach proposed by the Secretariat for the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration, and encourages both the Secretariat and the Host Country to draft the concept note and the first main elements of the Ministerial Declaration for submission to the meeting of the MAP Focal Points, where the theme will be agreed and the main elements of the Ministerial Declaration subsequently discussed;**

**(d) The Bureau takes note of the proposed list of draft Decisions for consideration by the MAP Focal Points and requests the Secretariat to finalize their preparation, taking into account the considerations of the Bureau at its 97<sup>th</sup> Meeting, in a timely manner for submission to the meeting of the MAP Focal Points.**

### **G. New and Updated Partnerships**

47. The Secretariat updated the Bureau on the efforts to create new partnerships and strengthen and update existing ones, in order to enhance the impact of the MAP-Barcelona Convention system.

48. With reference to Decision IG.26/2 on Governance and in particular its Annex V on MAP Partner Policy, the Secretariat presented to the Bureau members the outcome of the evaluation of the two applications received by civil society organizations for accreditation as MAP Partners, for the Bureau's review and possible endorsement.

49. The Secretariat also referred to the preparation of two MoUs with key partners, namely MedCities and Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), for submission to the MAP Focal Points Meeting and subsequently to COP 24.

### **50. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau welcomes the work of the Secretariat on enhancing ocean governance and on strengthening cooperation and partnerships with global and regional organizations for joint impact on the ground;**

**(b) The Bureau welcomes the work of the Secretariat for expanding collaboration with different partners in the region, including on the preparation of MoUs or other cooperation modalities in line with the relevant COP Decisions and the Barcelona Convention provisions with regard to Observer status. In this respect, the Bureau asks the Secretariat:**

**- to conclude the preparation of an MoU with CEDARE for submission to the MAP Focal Points meeting;**

**- to conclude the preparation of a possible MoU with MedCities for submission to the MAP Focal Points meeting;**

**- to encourage the finalization of the MoU between REMPEC and the Pelagos Agreement;**

**(c) The Bureau also endorses the results of the evaluation conducted by the Secretariat of the new application submitted by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe InterMediterranean Commission (CPMR), and by BETA Technological Centre of the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (BETA TC) as MAP Partners and requests that the Secretariat submits them to the MAP Focal Points and to COP 24 for consideration and endorsement.**

### **H. Applications for new MCSD Members**

51. The Secretariat presented the issue of the new MCSD membership and the outcome of the relevant discussions at the 21<sup>st</sup> MCSD meeting. Reference was made in particular to the proposal by the MCSD to increase the number of MCSD non-Contracting Party members to 20 in order to include two Women and Youth organizations, as well as to the proposal by the MCSD to renew for two terms (i.e. 4 years) the mandates of two MCSD members under the category of parliamentarians, namely the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians on Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), which is in line with COP 22 Decision IG.25/3.

52. The Bureau members agreed with the proposals and welcomed the inclusion of Youth and Women organizations in the MCSD.

**53. Conclusions:**

**(a) The Bureau supports the decision of the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the MCSD on the addition of two new categories from the non-Contracting Parties membership to the Commission, namely one of Youth and one of Women organizations, as per the criteria adopted by the COP, considering their important contribution and the increase of their involvement in the MAP-Barcelona Convention system;**

**(b) The Bureau supported the extension of the mandate of two MCSD members from the category of the Parliamentarian, considering the lack of other similar organizations in the region, and requests the Secretariat to include these changes in the MCSD Constituency documents for the consideration of the MAP Focal Points meeting and COP 24.**

**VI. Agenda Item 6: Calendar of Meetings and events**

54. The Bureau was informed on the “*Tentative Calendar of UNEP/MAP Meetings and Major International Events in 2024*” (UNEP/MED BUR.97/Inf.3).

55. The meeting briefly discussed the Bureau meetings of the 2026-2027 biennium and suggested that the first Bureau meeting takes place in Egypt (COP24 Host Country), the second Bureau meeting takes place in the COP25 Host Country, and the third Bureau meeting takes place in Athens, Greece (premises of the Secretariat).

**VII. Agenda Item 7: Any Other Matters**

56. The Secretariat referred to the proposal to designate Mediterranean Coast Day as a United Nations International Observance of Coast Day, noting that the Mediterranean Coast Day is included as a flagship initiative under the updated Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), and that this proposal is aiming to elevate global awareness and political commitment to sustainable coastal management. It was added that this designation has to be proposed to the UN General Assembly, by one or more UN Member States.

57. The Bureau members agreed to include this proposal under the Governance draft Decision to be submitted to the MAP Focal Points Meeting for discussion.

**58. Conclusion:**

**(a) The Bureau agrees with the proposal to submit the Mediterranean Coast Day to be recognized as a UN Day and asks the Secretariat to submit a relevant proposal to the MAP Focal Points meeting for consideration and follow the procedures as appropriate.**

**VIII. Agenda Item 8: Conclusions and Recommendations**

59. The Bureau members adopted the conclusions of the meeting as set out in this report.

**IX. Agenda Item 9: Closure of the Meeting**

60. The meeting was closed by the President at 17:30 (GTM+3) on Wednesday, 2 July 2025, who thanked the Secretariat for the excellent organization of the meeting. The Coordinator thanked the Bureau members for the very fruitful meeting and the interesting discussions and expressed appreciation to the President and Bureau members, highlighting the constructive discussions and the commitment shown by the Bureau members.

**Annex I**  
**List of Participants**

**MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU AND OBSERVERS/MEMBRES DU BUREAU ET  
OBSERVATEURS**

**SLOVENIA / SLOVÉNIE  
(PRESIDENT)**

**Mr. Mitja Bricelj**  
Secretary  
Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning

**EGYPT / ÉGYPTE  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Ms. Heba Sharawy**  
Head of loans and grants follow up unit  
Head of ICZM Central Department  
General Manager for Environmental Economy  
Ministry of Environment

**MOROCCO / MAROC  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Mr. Salah Eddine Ait Bella**  
Head of the United Nations and Affiliated Bodies  
Cooperation Unit, International Cooperation  
Division, Sustainable Development Department  
Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable  
Development

**MALTA / MALTE  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Ms. Marie-Thérèse Gambin**  
Unit Manager Thematic / Biodiversity & Water  
Environment & Resources Authority

**SPAIN / ESPAGNE  
(VICE-PRESIDENT)**

**Ms. Itziar Martin Partida**  
Deputy General Director  
Ministry of Ecological Transition

**MONTENEGRO / MONTÉNÉGRO  
(RAPPORTEUR)**

**Ms. Djurdjina Bulatovic**  
Directorate for Nature Protection  
Ministry of Tourism, Ecology, Sustainable  
Development and Northern Region Development

**TÜRKİYE / TÜRKİYE  
(EX-OFFICIO MEMBER)**

**Ms. Fatma Varank**  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate  
Change

**Mr. Fatih Turan**  
General Manager of the Environmental  
Management

**Mr. Ali Erhan Yilmaz**  
Head of Department

**Mr. Mehmet Tamer Çobanoğlu**  
Expert  
Department of Marine and Coastal Management  
Directorate General of Environmental Management  
Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate  
Change

**OBSERVERS / OBSERVATEURS**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION /  
COMMISSION EUROPEENNE**

**Mr. Javier Villar Burke**  
Policy Officer  
Directorate-General for Environment  
Unit C.2 - Marine Environment and Clean Water  
Services

**REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS /  
REPUBLIQUE DE CHYPRE**

**Mr. Lavrendios Vasiliades**  
Fisheries Attaché  
Permanent Representation of the Republic of  
Cyprus to the European Union

**SECRETARIAT TO THE BARCELONA CONVENTION AND COMPONENTS OF THE  
MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN / SECRÉTARIAT DE LA CONVENTION DE  
BARCELONE ET COMPOSANTES DU PLAN D'ACTION POUR LA MÉDITERRANÉE**

**Ms. Tatjana Hema**  
Coordinator

**Mr. Ilias Mavroeidis**  
Programme Management Officer-Governance

**Ms. Elli Sfyroeras**  
Programme Management Assistant-Governance

## **Annex II**

### **Agenda**

## **Agenda**

- Agenda Item 1      Opening of the meeting**
- Agenda Item 2      Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and organization of work**
- Agenda Item 3      Progress Report for November 2024 - May 2025**
- Agenda Item 4      Report by the Secretariat on financial and administrative issues**
- Agenda Item 5      Specific Issues:**
- a) Ratification, reporting and compliance
  - b) MSSD revision
  - c) Independent Mapping Exercise with a view to define the mandate and integrate the newly established CC/RAC within the UNEP/MAP system
  - d) Analysis of Coherence of the MAP System to the “Common Operational Principles for MAP Components”
  - e) Main directions of the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work and Budget 2026-2027
  - f) Preparations for COP 24: Format, Ministerial Session and Declaration, List of proposed draft Decisions, Host Country preparations
  - g) New and Updated Partnerships
  - h) Applications for new MCSD members
- Agenda Item 6      Calendar of meetings and events**
- Agenda Item 7      Any Other Matters**
- Agenda Item 8      Conclusions and recommendations**
- Agenda Item 9      Closure of the meeting**