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Roundtable "Enhancing Regional Coordination on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean"

Athens, Greece, 6 September 2016

Report of the Meeting

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Introduction

1. With the adoption by COP 18 of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean (Decision IG.21/7), the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention took an important commitment with regard to marine litter management. The Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean is the first ever legally binding regional plan containing measures and timeframes for their implementation on marine litter management, including prevention, reduction, monitoring and assessment. A well-established cooperation at national, regional and international level has been acknowledged by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention as an important asset to facilitate in an efficient manner the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean.

2. In this context, at the invitation of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, representatives of 19 organizations around the Mediterranean Sea, being actively involved on several aspects of marine litter management and assessment, were gathered together in Athens, Greece on the 6th September 2016 to participate on a round table discussion entitled "Enhancing Regional Coordination on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean to initiate a discussion on the establishment of a partnership for the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean.

Participation

3. The following organizations attended the roundtable: ACCOBAMS, GIZ, SDSN-MED, EEA, GFCM, HELMEPA, IWRS, IUCN/ IUCN-MED, JRC/MSFD TG ML, MEDASSET, MEDITS, MIO-ECSDE, PLASTICSEUROPE, SWEEP-NET, UNEP/GPA, WASTE FREE OCEANS. UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat was represented by its Coordinating Unit and the MAP components, MED POL, SCP/RAC and REMPEC. The full list of participants is attached as Annex I to the present report.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

4. The meeting was opened by Mr. Gaetano Leone, Coordinator of UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention Secretariat; welcoming the participants he pointed out the importance of the first ever legally binding Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management for the Mediterranean, focusing on the management of marine litter, giving the regional dimension to the problem, based on specific objectives and principles, which finally introduces specific and targeted marine litter reduction and prevention measures. He highlighted the need and importance to develop a strong partnership on marine litter in the region and he listed the actions and initiatives that UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat is willing to take on towards that direction. He thanked the participants for their interest and commitment shown for attending and contributing to this regional round table on marine litter in the Mediterranean.

5. A "tour-de-table" followed with all participants presenting themselves and their respective organizations including brief introductions of their mandates and future plans and actions on marine litter.

Agenda item 2: Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean: Review of key obligations, mandates and work plan as adopted by COP 18 of the Barcelona Convention.

6. Mrs Tatjana Hema, UNEP/MAP MED POL Programme Officer gave a detailed presentation on the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean and it's key obligations, mandates, and detailed work plan as adopted by COP 18 of the Barcelona Convention. She presented in details the specific objectives and principles of the Regional Plan along with the specific measures and operational target that should be implemented by the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 3: Review of marine litter related mandates and recent activities of Partner Organizations

7. Under this Agenda item all participants gave a brief but detailed presentation on their organizations mandates, recent activities, future plans and actions on marine litter. The information presented during the meeting was used to adjust Annex II of document UNEP/DEPI MED 425.2 describing the profile of each partner organization on marine litter.

Agenda item 4: Partnership for implementing the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean and the need for coordinated action Proposed Terms of Reference for a Regional Coordination Group and its Membership

8. Under this Agenda item Mr. Leone introduced document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.

9. The participants embarked on an in depth discussion and provided substantive inputs and comments on the proposed ToR "Collaboration Mechanism to Facilitate the Implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean". Participants agreed on a revised version of the ToRs, which was to be sent out for further review and comments. Following comments received the final ToRs are presented in Annex III to this report.

10. It was also agreed to provide comments in writing regarding document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2 after the meeting. The revised version of this document is reissued as UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.Corr1 reflecting all comments received.

Agenda item 5: Main elements for a joint work plan to support the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean:

11. Under this Agenda item the Secretariat explained the rational and made some proposals with good potential for coordination and joint action as appropriate: a) Review/update of the list of the existing guidelines related to marine litter management; b) Marine litter monitoring and data collection including related information system; c) Capacity Building, Awareness, Educational and Clean up Campaigns; d) Identification of priority research needs with a focus on implementation of measures.

Agenda item 6: Next steps and conclusions

12. Following discussions it was agreed to work together as appropriate on the following points;

a. Review and complete the list of existing guidelines on marine litter management provided under the UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/Inf.4 Information Document and identify the needs for updated and or developing new ones. It has been also agreed to finalize this document by end of September so to be in a good position to assess together where we stand and what are the needs of the region for new or updated technical marine litter guidelines.

b. Support the implementation of marine litter monitoring programmes with a particular focus on regional, sub-regional related activities and corresponding information systems/databases/research needs.

c. Promote among respective networks the UNEP/GPA on-line course on marine litter to be available in January-May 2017.

d. Work together to ensure large regional/international participation of our networks in a common clean-up campaign in 2017 (exact date and event to be jointly selected among the partners).

e. Finally if a major event on ML is organised in the region, demonstrate our platform as a tool to enhance marine litter regional governance in the Mediterranean.

Agenda item 7: Closure of the Meeting

13. Mr. Leone thanked the participants for their contribution to building together a Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean as an important regional initiative to enhance impacts of our common action and serve at best the Mediterranean region to meet their ambitious marine litter commitment and targets. After the expression of usual courtesies he closed the meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday 6 September 2016.

Annex I
List of Participants

List of Participants

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Annex II
Agenda

Agenda

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

Agenda item 2: Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean: Review of key obligations, mandates and work plan as adopted by COP 18 of the Barcelona Convention, 2013

Agenda item 3: Review of marine litter related mandates and recent activities of Partner Organizations

Agenda item 4: Partnership for implementing the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean and the need for coordinated action Proposed Terms of Reference for a Regional Coordination Group and its Membership

Agenda item 5: Main elements for a joint work plan to support the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean:

a) Review/update of the list of the existing guidelines related to marine litter management
b) Marine litter monitoring and data collection including related information system
c) Capacity Building, Awareness, Educational and Clean up Campaigns
d) Identification of priority research needs with a focus on implementation of measures

Agenda item 6: Next steps and conclusions

Agenda item 7: Closure of the Meeting

Annex III
Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The participants agreed that the effective coordination of actions, as appropriate, of all relevant actors will maximize results and enhance the impact on marine litter management. In that respect, the participants agreed upon the establishment of a voluntary basis, open ended group of regional and international partners with mandates and activities contributing to the environmentally sound management of marine litter in the Mediterranean.

2. Upon proposal by the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, the meeting agreed on establishing the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean. The Regional Cooperation Platform will be implemented through the establishment on a voluntary basis, of an open ended group of regional and international partners with mandates and activities contributing to the environmentally sound management of marine litter in the Mediterranean. The cooperation platform will offer to its members the opportunity to provide, on an equal footing and as appropriate, concrete contributions and inputs for the implementation of the Regional Plan based on their individual mandates, expertise, work plans, and the decisions and recommendations of their respective governing bodies.

3. The following priorities will be considered by the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean:

    a. Enhance a better understanding and provide advice on the further development of policy related issues including where appropriate the harmonization of measures taking into account the strong transboundary dimension of marine litter impacts (Points 7-17, 41 of the Work Plan provided in Document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.Corr 1);

    b. Support the coordinated and coherent implementation of priority measures, including prevention, favoring the integration and cooperation among the various sectoral branches of national administration and administrative stakeholders at different levels and regional/national scales (Points 5, 6-15, 17-20, 27, 39 of the Work Plan provided in Document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.Corr 1);

    c. Provide support for potential common and/or harmonized monitoring tools to improve standardization, comparability, ensure validation and appropriate quality assurance and control of datasets, and organize marine litter data exchange through appropriate formats and databases based on the SEIS principles (Points 26, 29, 31-34 of the Work Plan provided in Document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.Corr 1);

    d. Contribute to the preparation/update/adjustment/implementation of specific technical guidelines addressing different aspects of marine litter management in line with international rules and standards taking into account existing guidelines where appropriate (Points 1, 30, 36 of the Work Plan provided in Document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.Corr 1);

    e. Encourage coordinated and focused research on Marine Litter with the view to advise as appropriate on research needs related to marine litter management (Point 35 of the Work Plan provided Document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.Corr 1);

    f. Encourage data collection from existing monitoring programmes and scientific cruises (i.e. MEDITS Programme) and capitalization of existing data sets (Point 28 of the Work Plan provided in Document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.Corr 1);

    g. Support actions in order to identify and locate marine litter accumulation zones and hot-spot areas in the Mediterranean Sea (Points 21, 22, 26 of the Work Plan provided in Document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.Corr 1);

h. Promote coordinated action of regional cleanup programmes and involve large numbers of national actors at different levels in such programmes (Points 16, 23, 24, 25 of the Work Plan provided in Document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.Corr 1);

i. Undertake coordinated public awareness-raising campaigns and education activities with regard to marine litter management (Points 24, 38 of the Work Plan provided in Document UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.425/2.Corr 1).

4. Based on the state of play analysis of regional programs, initiatives and organizations[1] with clear mandates on marine litter management presented in Annex II of document UNEP/DEPI MED 425.2, the following non-exhaustive list of regional and sub-regional actors were invited and expressed their interest to participate and contribute to the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean. Further adjustment of the list shall be considered when appropriate.

- UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat (including MEDPOL) supported by the relevant RACs (i.e. REMPEC, SCP/RAC, SPA/RAC) and in consultation with UNEP/GPA
- GFCM
- ACCOBAMS
- CIESM
- EEA
- IWRS
- IUCN/ IUCN-MED
- SWEEP-NET
- GRID-ARENDAL
- SDSN-MED
- HELMEPA
- MEDASSET
- MIO-ECSDE
- WASTE FREE OCEANS
- PRINCE ALBERT II MONACO FOUNDATION
- JRC/MSFD TG ML
- MEDITS
- PLASTICSEUROPE
- DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ) GMBH

Other potential Actors:
- Representatives of FISHERMEN ORGANIZATIONS, TOURISM INDUSTRY SHIPPING-MARITIME, PORTS, AGRICULTURE AND AQUACULTURE, EUROPEAN BIOPLASTIC, WASTE MANAGEMENT

5. The modalities of work will be implemented according to the following ways:
- Via correspondence through a web based communication tool.
- Annual face-to-face meetings pending availability of resources to review progress and ensure coordination of actions.

[1] Particular attention will be given to programmes, initiatives and organisations addressing waste management and relevant industrial sectors