

1st Mediterranean Coast Guard Services Forum

ACTION PLAN FOR THE SECRETARIAT

1 OVERVIEW

The *Mediterranean Coast Guard Services Forum* (*MEDFORUM*) is an informal organization, not bound by treaty, bringing together representatives from Mediterranean Coast Guard services and maritime administrations to facilitate multilateral cooperation on a wide range of issues, aimed at enhancing maritime safety, security and environmental protection activities within the Mediterranean basin as well as the potential partnership for their application, seeking solutions to common problems and issues confronting participating countries by sharing expertise and best practices in a cooperative and consensual manner.

Its aim is to provide a forum for the adequate level of discussion, exchanging information on juridical, technical and operational experiences within the framework of current international law, and in close relationship with existing international and regional organizations specialized on maritime matters, in order to build working relationships and networks among concerned services.

Observer countries and international or regional organizations may participate to the periodical meetings of MEDFORUM on a voluntary basis. Other countries or organizations may be invited as “*friends of the chair*” on a one-by-one basis.

The inaugural meeting has been hosted by Italy (Genoa, May 6th-7th 2009). An invitation letter has been sent to the Heads of Coast Guard services or Maritime Administrations of 23 Mediterranean Countries (Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestinian National Authority, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey), 19 Observer Countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Sweden, Ukraine,

United Kingdom), 8 “*friends of the chair*” (Argentina, Congo, Djibouti, India, Malaysia, Togo, U.S.A., Yemen), and 10 international or regional organizations (European Union, International Maritime Organization, European Maritime Safety Agency, FRONTEX, CFCA, REMPEC, RAMOGE, MED MoU, North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum, North Pacific Coast Guard Forum).

The first MEDFORUM addressed the following issues: maritime traffic monitoring; training and regional cooperation; marine environment; fisheries control; safety of life at sea.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Following similar initiatives in the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean, as well as in the Baltic Sea and in the Black Sea, the Italian Coast Guard Headquarters and its Commandant, Admiral Raimondo Pollastrini, promoted the organization of the 1st *Mediterranean Coast Guard Services Forum*. The idea of hosting such event (first launched in 2008) gained the support of the main reference institutions, starting with the Minister of Infrastructure and Transport Mr. Altero Matteoli (which added the Forum to its strategic objectives for the year 2009) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Franco Frattini.

Italy, assumed the relevance for involving the whole mediterranean community in this process, also gained the support of the partnership initiative called ‘*Union for the Mediterranean*’ launched in July 2008 within the framework of the French EU Presidency.

The strong involvement of MFA Franco Frattini and Under Secretary Mrs. Stefania Craxi allowed, on the occasion of the EU’s MFA meeting of Marseilles on November 2008, the adoption of a statement calling for the hosting in Italy of the Forum, with the aim of providing an occasion for the exchange of experiences on basic issues (marine/coastal environment prevention and protection from pollution; maritime safety; search and rescue; safeguard of human life at sea).

Another relevant matter comprises the development of cooperation activities aimed at creating a favourable environment for the implementation of vessel traffic monitoring and information systems, so as to allow - for non-military aims - the highest levels of vigilance and control of maritime trafficking and provide a safe maritime space open to the participation of all Mediterranean countries.

However, MEDFORUM is not a part of the UfM process nor a EU activity, being a specific and autonomous initiative launched by a network of Coast Guard services of the participating countries, and gaining its validation only through visibility and recognition within Mediterranean and Observer Countries, as well as relevant International/Regional Organizations. This is the reason why the initiative gained a wide consensus, which takes into consideration the primary role which the ITCG plays on a few international maritime issues such as S.A.R. services, safety and security of navigation, port state control inspections, environmental protection and international law.

The city of Genoa has been the appropriate choice for hosting the Forum, due to its well-known maritime history and long international tradition for maritime shipping (it is the seat, among other things, of the *ITCG Training Centre for the safety of navigation*, the *Italian Merchant Fleet Academy* and the *International Maritime Safety, Security and Environment Academy*). The Provincial Administration of Genoa and its President, Mr. Alessandro Repetto, immediately supported the event and, together with the Municipality of Genoa and the Liguria Region, offered a precious assistance for the logistical organization of the Forum.

Also the most important national industries showed great interest for the event, with stands and reserved areas allotted within the space of the meeting.

With the aim of providing the participants a wide range of opinions, highly qualified international and italian experts, university lecturers and Heads of involved Mediterranean Coast Guard agencies have been called as speakers within the 5 sessions which made up the Forum's agenda. Further interventions have been made by

representatives of international/regional organizations as well as non-mediterranean countries.

3 MEMBERSHIP

MEDFORUM is voluntarily comprised of the countries represented at his meetings. No formal membership is required to attend the meetings and other events sponsored by the Forum.

To the aim of MEDFORUM, the term “Coast Guard” may be referred to any national administration whose main functions and duties comprise one or more issues within the matters of interest of MEDFORUM itself, notwithstanding of its official denomination.

Each participating country may attend the periodical MEDFORUM meetings with representatives of more than one administration.

4. PERIODICAL MEETINGS

MEDFORUM meets annually with a plenary session (or summit) bringing together the Heads of Coast Guard services, or their equivalents, from participating countries. A different schedule of work may be decided at the plenary sessions, with the candidacy of a Host Country. However, MEDFORUM work continues year round through the Secretariat.

MEDFORUM summit may be divided into sessions or panels, so as to address the main issues of interest for Coast Guard services. The speakers for such sessions may be chosen amongst the same Heads of concerned agencies, or their representatives, as well as university professors, experts from international or regional organizations or qualified lecturers on maritime issues.

The meeting sets forth a plan of action, or equivalent (such as, for instance, a chairman’s statement) for the work schedule in the year ahead, that will become the

basis of future MEDFORUM activities. It also may prepare analysis and studies on issues of interest, seek common solutions to maritime issues of general concern, apply common activities and methods to strengthen cooperation among concerned agencies, improve and develop bilateral and multilateral relations, draft recommendations and proposals.

The plenary session may also decide to hold annually one or more experts meeting, where experts from national administrations meet as working groups to focus on specific items.

5 HOSTING MEDFORUM MEETINGS

The responsibility of hosting the periodical MEDFORUM meetings is rotated among participating countries on a voluntary basis. Each participating countries may suggest its own candidacy to host the next plenary session editions: in case more than one country is willing to host a meeting, the chair will act so as to reach a consensual agreement on the designation of the next host country.

A consensual agreement on the designation of the following year's host country should be reached on the occasion of periodical plenary sessions of MEDFORUM.

If no country suggests its candidacy, or no agreement is reached on that occasion, the Secretariat will conduct to this aim informal contacts year round and will duly inform participating countries on the results.

To date, the plenary session meeting will be hosted as follows:

YEAR	HOSTING COUNTRY
2009	ITALY
2010	TBD
2011	TBD
2012	TBD

The host country is responsible for planning and scheduling meetings at a suitable location with appropriate technical equipment. Typically social and cultural side events may be built into the program. The host country assists the delegations of participating countries in obtaining visas (if required for travel) and provides detailed information about logistics and transport, as well as for the official attire required at all planned events.

The host country provides all meeting documents for participants upon registration, and is responsible for translation services and publicity. The working languages of MEDFORUM are English and French. Simultaneous translations may be provided at the plenary sessions. Each country's representative should either speak English or French (or the language of that year's host country or his/her own official language, if simultaneous translations are provided).

Formal invitations to attend the meetings are sent by the designated host country, with the possible assistance of the Secretariat which may support the responsible Coast Guard agency with necessary tools (relating, for instance, the list and addresses of delegations attending the previous meetings, or a copy of relevant documents of interest).

If not otherwise decided, the Head of Delegation of the host country serves as Chair of the plenary session.

As a general rule, the host country should bear the costs of inland transport and boarding and should provide at least one social event (gala dinner) for participants. The participants will bear the costs of travel and accommodation, if not otherwise planned by the host country.

For the first edition of the MEDFORUM, accommodation costs for the Heads of Delegation of Mediterranean Countries have been provided by Italy.

6 ROLE OF THE CHAIR

The chair of the plenary sessions and other events (such as, for instance, experts meetings) is held by the Head of Delegation of the host country. The chair should take measures to:

- deliver post-meeting reports of the session's accomplishments and decisions;
- suggest the establishment of issues to be addressed by the MEDFORUM meetings;
- provide point of contact information for MEDFORUM public activities;
- identify lecturers and speakers for the MEDFORUM meetings;
- tentatively identify and evaluate possible host countries for next MEDFORUM meetings;
- create the operational environment for success through targeted public awareness campaigns, thus strengthening MEDFORUM through increased visibility and recognition;
- invite interested parties (extra Mediterranean countries as well as international or regional organizations) to attend MEDFORUM meetings as observers.

7 ROLE OF THE HEAD OF DELEGATION

The Head of Delegation is the official spokesperson for his/her country at the meeting, and may intervene as a speaker or a lecturer at the sessions/panels/working groups or may previously appoint a representative for intervention at the meeting.

Each participating country is expected to have a national delegation on, and make contributions to, MEDFORUM meetings.

Each country's delegation members must be duly registered with the host country's responsible administration before the attendance of MEDFORUM meetings.

8 ROLE OF THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat oversees the smooth planning, running and future development of MEDFORUM. As such, it is the depository of all documents and papers developed within the framework of MEDFORUM meetings and events.

The Secretariat is also responsible for harmonizing MEDFORUM work, operating as a permanent point of contact with the various participating countries, international or regional organizations, national Coast Guard services or relevant maritime administrations, maintaining after-action reports and collecting news and articles on MEDFORUM, and coordinating the use of MEDFORUM logo and website.

The Secretariat, when requested, may support each year's designated host country for the planning and organization of MEDFORUM meetings (providing, for instance, the list and addresses of delegations attending the previous meetings, or a copy of relevant documents of interest).

The Italian Coast Guard Headquarters will assume, if agreed upon, responsibility for the Secretariat of the MEDFORUM.

9 DECISION MAKING

MEDFORUM is a voluntary initiative. Decisions taken at plenary sessions and other events are made by consensus. Its documents are not compulsory.

Participating countries undertake to meet deadlines and to carry out the different tasks according to the Action Plan.

10 USE OF MEDFORUM LOGO AND WEBSITE

The MEDFORUM logo is the intellectual property of the host country during the year in which the plenary session will be hosted in that country. It may be displayed publicly and freely reproduced on printed materials and on the



MEDFORUM website. The MEDFORUM logo is not meant, in any way, to reproduce State borders.

A MEDFORUM website may be activated by each year's host country, to inform the participating countries and any interested subject on the MEDFORUM aims and next meetings. For the 1st MEDFORUM, the following website has been activated within the framework of the Italian Coast Guard official website: <http://www.guardiacostiera.it/medforum>.

Any use of the MEDFORUM logo and website is coordinated through the Secretariat.