

1st Mediterranean Coast Guard Services Forum

Vice Admiral (ITCG) Raimondo POLLASTRINI Final statement of the chair (May 7th 2009)

1. The Mediterranean basin faces a lot of transnational threats to economic, social and institutional prosperity, as well as to its people's well being, which concerned national administrations counter with different juridical, technical and operational national experiences. Because of the wide ranging nature of this threats, the best approach to maintain a peaceful and stable region is a cooperative one. The *Mediterranean Coast Guard Services Forum (MEDFORUM)* brings together representatives from Mediterranean Countries, Observer Countries, concerned International and Regional Organizations and "friends of the chair" countries to address maritime issues of mutual interest and concern.

2. According to the Action Plan already delivered, elevating technical and operational standards on use by Coast Guard services all over the Mediterranean Sea is the ultimate aim of MEDFORUM, as well as the basic foreword for the sustainable development of Mediterranean coastal areas involved with the task of granting protection of coastal communities.

A considerable cooperation already exists between Mediterranean countries, and MEDFORUM participating countries agree that it would be obvious to extend the effective sub regional cooperation to a regional forum by use of the *best practice* principle. The Coast Guard services of the Mediterranean Countries constitute a professional network with the potential to bridge between traditional organizations and a connection to the U.N. system (through I.M.O. and REMPEC) as well as other international and regional agreements and organizations.

The true dimension of MEDFORUM and its periodical meetings is the creation of a hosting environment aimed at building a basis for the exchange of experiences relating to the protection of national maritime transport systems, so as to allow the



trafficking of people and cargoes in the most efficient and secure way without hampering both maritime safety and security, as well as the protection of marine environment, thanks also to the use of new technologies in the fields of interest and, moreover, to the uniform implementation of international law rules within the framework of the existing systems of bilateral and regional cooperation.

3. The permanent Secretariat, aimed at maintaining a net of relations among involved administrations, will be held - if agreed - by the Italian Coast Guard.

4. If no candidacy will be advanced within a 6-months period, Italy will consider the opportunity of hosting the next edition of the event in the year 2011 and, therefore, will reassume the Presidency for the whole period 2009/2011. Meanwhile we take note, with profound appreciation, that a few candidacies to host the next edition of MEDFORUM are about to be submitted and, in this context, the various options will be duly considered.

5. The stability of MEDFORUM participating countries depends upon the safe and secure use of the Mediterranean Sea, which is required so as to achieve the objectives of maintaining vibrant maritime trade and to counter threats from environment pollution and other dangerous elements. Since all Mediterranean countries benefit from the secure use of the oceans, they bear a common responsibility for promoting and maintaining international efforts enhancing the safety and security of the maritime domain while preserving freedom of the seas for legitimate purposes. Success cannot be achieved by any one country unilaterally, but requires a partnership of intents among like-minded nations, aimed at strengthening cooperation under international and domestic laws, as well as increased situational awareness developed through information sharing and exchange of experiences, thus facilitating identification of, and timely response to, issues debated within the framework of MEDFORUM.

MEDFORUM represents a chartered collaborative framework, where the nations working to address their maritime interests contribute to collective



engagement on the shared maritime issues of regional neighbours and international partners through information and expertise sharing, as well as the development and exercise of international maritime law and existing agreements. MEDFORUM participating countries engage themselves to work on the improvement of the livelihood of coastal communities and sustainability that comes from the sea, reducing or minimizing the negative impacts on the Mediterranean Countries' economies arising from today's maritime trafficking and other uses of the seas.

Over the next 20 years, the Mediterranean Sea will encounter accelerating change across all environments, and there will likely be more change in the next 20 years than in the previous 100 years. The maritime domain will become increasingly complex, and the incidence of major events and industry advances will increase and accelerate. There will be greater use and competition for resources in the Mediterranean, on the ocean floor and below it. As leaders in the maritime community, the Heads of Coast Guard services of the Mediterranean Countries are responsible for developing the legal and policy regimes to guide this process. Hence, MEDFORUM participating countries should focus their efforts to meet the following strategic objectives:

- develop cooperation and dialogue among Mediterranean countries to work together so as to prevent harm to the environment, to enhance safety standards and to improve economies of concerned communities;
- forge a cooperative effort among regional partners, providing a suitable forum for debating operational activities or national experiences developed under international maritime law or current agreements;
- develop cooperative ways to assist Mediterranean countries with limited or no Coast Guard capability (with education, training and cooperation efforts, as well as with previously mutually agreed operational activities) in prevention, recovery or mitigation of natural and man-made maritime



disasters, as well as in organizing and developing adequate Coast Guard services according to internationally set standards (for instance, in maritime search and rescue and safety of navigation fields).

6. The next MEDFORUM edition shall address a range of issues, starting with the same which were the subject of the 1st meeting: maritime traffic monitoring; training and regional cooperation; marine environment; fisheries control; safety of life at sea. Other issues could be added, according to the suggestion of participating countries and the final evaluation of the Host Country. The Action Plan will be the basis of our future work. To this aim, in the following months - separating us from the next edition of the MEDFORUM - the Mediterranean Countries' delegations are kindly asked to suggest to the Secretariat any proposal, if necessary, for modifying or integrating consequently the Action Plan, and to submit their approval for its adoption and implementation in view of the next meeting.

Within the framework of the next MEDFORUM edition, moreover, particular care should be devoted to holding a session debating the institution of a "Search and Rescue Coordinating Committee", for the enhancing of SAR services and relevant cooperation activities in the Mediterranean, according to I.M.O. MSC Circular n. 1289 dated December 9th 2008 calling for the institution at a regional level of such technical committees so as to develop shared measures and multilateral approaches to the issue.

On this occasion, let me also inform you that Sub Prefecto Nacional Naval CINGOLANI - whom I would like to thank once again for his participation to the Forum, as witness of the profound friendship linking the Prefectura Naval Argentina to the Italian Coast Guard - has represented to me that, within the framework of the 2nd century of glorious history of the P.N.A., the International Maritime Organization will celebrate in Buenos Aires in the year 2010 the "World Maritime Day Parallel Event".



7. Our special thanks to the City of Genoa, the local administrations, the Provincial Administration of Genoa and its President, as well as to procurement maritime industries, for the invaluable support and precious assistance in hosting the 1st MEDFORUM in this wonderful city.