



IMCO

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
MARINE POLLUTION, 1973
Committee II
Agenda item 2

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT TEXT OF ANNEX I OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PREVENTION
OF POLLUTION FROM SHIPS, 1973

Proposals concerning the provisions for "Special Areas"

Submitted jointly by the delegations of Cyprus,
Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Monaco,
Spain and Tunisia

Attached hereto at Annex are proposals concerning the provisions for
"Special Areas".

ANNEX

With this document the delegations wish to summarize the different reasons which led to the request to recognize the Mediterranean Sea as a "special area".

In reality, the special area concept was raised in consideration that the Mediterranean Sea in consequence of its peculiar oceanographic, ecological and transportation traffic characteristics requires a particular solution in order to preserve to the maximum extent its waters.

All the possible technical solutions so far known have been taken into consideration but we have reached the conclusion that the only valid defence consists in the prohibition of any discharge with the provision of suitable reception facilities.

In fact the Mediterranean is a closed sea whose turnover takes place only through the Straits of Gibraltar. Recent studies demonstrate that the turnover of the first 150 m of water in depth requires a period of about eighty years.

Considering that in general the Mediterranean is not very deep and that there are no appreciable thermo-clini vertical currents that favour the exchange and the consequential oxygenation of the water, it is evident that all that is being discharged into this sea remains there for a very long period of time, giving rise also to phenomena of accumulation if said discharge becomes continuous and is of great quantity. This phenomena is clearly reflected in the case of hydrocarbons that pass through the Mediterranean in ever increasing quantities which will reach 350 million tons in 1975, and approximately 450 million tons in 1980.

Of all these hydrocarbons which are being moved through the Mediterranean, approximately 300,000 tons/year have been conservatively estimated to be directly discharged in that sea. This quantity is certainly destined to increase in relation to the augmentation of the oil traffic.

Someone might observe that the LOT system has given appreciable results. If this is true for other seas and on other routes, it is not equally valid for the Mediterranean because of the short routes, for which the LOT system is of negligible significance. It must be remembered that short haul trips represent the major part of traffic in the Mediterranean.

An effective solution could be that of tankers with segregated ballast, but this solution would require some considerable time for implementation giving way in the meantime to a situation which would see the Mediterranean irreversibly and irrevocably compromised. Additionally, this solution leaves entire the question of cleaning the cargo tanks and disposing of tank washings.

Nothing remains therefore but the proposed solution of terminals with reception facilities, a solution to which all countries bordering the Mediterranean - who attended the preparatory meetings - are directing their attention, supporting the proposal put forward by the Italian delegation endorsing it with equal and at times exceptional determination. This summary is not intended to represent an analytical presentation of the motives which are caused as to request the recognition of special areas among which, in the first place, and in chronological order, should be the Mediterranean.

Documents such as Study V of IMCO presented at the preparatory meetings and document MP XIV/3(c)/12 presented by Italy, and furthermore the document prepared by FAO and put forward by the Italian delegation will be found to convey, even to the most sceptical, the true technical, ecological, environmental, touristic, social and economic motives which have urged the Mediterranean countries to support the principle with the "vehement plea" as it has been described and emphatically underlined.

With this precise determination therefore we reiterate that, whilst for others the matter may be one of such importance, for the Mediterranean countries it is a vital one.

Regulation 12 of Annex I is considered to be satisfactorily drafted. The Regulation may of course undergo some slight modifications and we will readily acknowledge all such modifications which will effect a greater security.
