REPORT OF THE REGIONAL TRAINING COURSE ON SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION COORDINATION

Safi, Malta, 16 July to 10 August, 2012

Organized by

The International Maritime Organisation
within the framework of the Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme,

in partnership with

The Maritime Safety and Security Training Centre,
Armed Forces of Malta
Title: SAR Mission Coordination

Host: Malta

Venue and date: Maritime Safety and Security Training Centre (MSSTC) of the Armed Forces of Malta, 16 July – 10 August 2012.

Type: Regional

Organized by: IMO  Supported by: ITCP

No. of participants and no. of countries: Total number of 12 participants, two from each of the following countries: Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine.

Summary: The students showed some concerns over some overlapping Search and Rescue areas of responsibilities. However MSSTC stressed on the point of how important is the cooperation between the MRCCs which share the same sea. The attention of the participants was drawn to the fact that cooperation in SAR will ultimately safe lives, which in most of the cases has to happen in the shortest time possible.

During a lecture on GMDSS and Alerts which was part of the training program, the importance of providing information to IMO according to MSC.1/Circ.1382/Rev.1 and GMDSS.1/Circ.13 was highlighted to the participants.

The MSSTC also stressed on the importance of Regional Exercises between the SAR Organisations of the Black Sea which ultimately will enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the response. Exercises like RODELTA and GEODELTA invite more international participation from all Black Sea countries. This will increase the regional cooperation in response to distress alerts and lead to a Regional SAR Plan for Black Sea.

Key words: Maritime Safety, SAR


Co-ordinator: Mr Ivaylo Valev, Head, CIS and Eastern Europe Section, Technical Cooperation Division, IMO

NOTE: The views expressed in this mission report are those of the MSSTC and not attributed in any way to the United Nations or the International Maritime Organization.
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1. Introduction

A four week regional training course on Search and Rescue Mission Coordination was held in Safi, Malta at the Maritime Safety and Security Training Centre (MSSTC) from 16 July to 10 August, 2012, designed for the representatives of the Black Sea littoral states i.e. Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine.

The training course was organised as part of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Integrated Technical Cooperation Program (ITCP) and was hosted by the MSSTC, Malta. The course was based on the IMO Model Course 3.14 and the need for immediate and extensive SAR training in the Black Sea region identified in the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) report prepared in 2003 by IMO Consultants. Training places were awarded to a maximum of two participants from each country from the above-mentioned region. The course was intended for those governmental or other authorities with responsibilities in connection with SAR Operations.

The training course was dedicated in promoting the implementation of the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979. Although the obligation of ships to go to the assistance of vessels in distress was enshrined both in tradition and in international treaties (such as the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974), there was, until the adoption of the
SAR Convention, no international system covering search and rescue operations. As its title implies, the SAR Convention is designed to improve existing arrangements and provide a framework for carrying out search and rescue operations following accidents at sea. Despite the fact that many countries have their own established plans for such emergencies this was the first time international procedures had been adopted. The Convention entered into force in 1985.

The Maritime Safety and Security Training Centre (MSSTC) of the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) was established in 2010 as a successor to the Search and Rescue Training Centre (SAR-TC) which operated between 2003 and 2009. During this initial period the curriculum of the school was limited to competencies related to maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) including courses for SAR Mission Coordinators and On Scene Coordinators.

The student body of the MSSTC not only serves for training to AFM personnel, but training slots are also made available to overseas students from a variety of African and European countries. Since 2003 the two institutions have provided training to over 400 personnel, of which more than one third has come from foreign Navies, Coastguards, Maritime Authorities and Emergency Response Organisations with students hailing from 26 different countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Instructors are sourced from within the AFM as well as guest lecturers provided by other organisations including the US Coastguard, and other experts on SAR organization.

2. Objective

The objective of the course was to train the personnel from RCCs and RSCs in order to strengthen the total SAR capacity in the Black Sea region and increase the co-operation between States pursuant to Chapter 3 of the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979. The respective National Authorities were invited to nominate only participants with the necessary professional background and official responsibilities as SAR service personnel. Preference was given to RCC and RSC watchstanders who were qualified and experienced masters or deck officers of ocean-going vessels, radio operators, instructors of air or maritime navigation, traffic controllers, maritime pilots and naval navigators and plotters.

3. General evaluation of the course

The delivery of the regional training course on Search and Rescue Mission Coordination, for the countries of the Black Sea was highly successful, and generally met the overall objectives. The invited participants were active and involved themselves in the course case-studies and exercises over the four week training period.
The general organization of the course was handled by the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme. Hosting arrangements for the course were done by the MSSTC of the Armed Forces of Malta. The course material was provided by MSSTC with lecturers mainly from the AFM with the participation of the US Coast Guard Attaché in Malta. Decisions regarding planning and the agenda, as well as arrangements for all associated exercises and excursions were handled by the MSSTC administration.

The feedback from the participants and the lecturers indicated that the course was effective in terms of communicating the information at the appropriate level, as well as engaging the participants and keeping their interest throughout all lectures. Most of the participants indicated the desire for follow-up activities in their home countries or to participate in further related regional activities.

A verbal request was expressed from the participants from Ukraine to organize an On-scene Coordinator training during next year. The IMO representative took note of the request.

4. Venue, dates, roles and participants

The course was organized by MSSTC with the technical and financial support of the IMO. It took place from 16 July to 10 August 2012 in Safi, Malta. The lecturers from MSSTC had considerable theoretical and practical experience in dealing with SAR responses. A total number of 12 participants from Bulgaria (2), Georgia (2), Romania (2), Russian Federation (2), Turkey (2) and Ukraine (2) participated actively in this course. The list of participants can be found at Annex II to this report. The representatives of all Black Sea countries in attendance had been requested, prior to the training course, to prepare a short presentation on their National Plan for SAR.

5. Activities and proceedings

All travel and DSA arrangements were done through UNDP.

5.1 Opening Ceremony

The IMO Representative Mr Valev delivered a welcome speech on behalf of the Secretary General of IMO. Mr Valev on behalf of IMO expressed his sincere appreciation to the Government of Malta and particularly to the MSSTC of the AFM for their collaboration in the organization of this important course. He highlighted the main goal of the course in giving the participants the adequate training and knowledge to use the state-of-the-art methods, techniques, tools and equipment to conduct an efficient maritime search and rescue (SAR) services in their respective SAR regions. Mr Valev continued by emphasizing the role of IMO in developing SAR regulations to ensure effective services by coastal States in saving lifes at sea. The opening remarks can be found at Annex III.
The participants were also addressed by Colonel Mallia on behalf of the MSSTC’s staff and main lecturers who mainly come from the HQ Operations Branch of the Armed Forces of Malta.

5.2 Introduction to the course and participants

The organizers went through the course agenda and made a general brief of the course content. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves, including a brief description of their role back in their home country. General preparations were handled in time for the training course to be delivered as planned and no major problems or disruptions were observed. The course presentations, notes and programme were followed as planned.

5.3 Training Package Content

The training package for the training course was provided by the MSSTC based on the IMO Model Course for SAR Mission Coordination.

The training package main aims for the SAR Mission Coordinator students were mainly:
- Understand the SAR System and Organisation;
- Investigate and obtain information about an incident to initiate response to a SAR incident which will be vital for the success of the operations;
- Correctly use Search and Rescue Planning Software (SAR PC) to enhance SAR missions;
- Prepare and make a Search and Rescue Action Plan for Search and Rescue Units to carry out the Operation;
- Coordinate, execute plans, and monitor the SAR System up and down the chain of command; and
- Be able to conclude operations.

The course syllabus was as follows:

- SAR System and Organisation
- Awareness and Initial Actions of a SAR incident
- Drift Theory, Total Water Current and Datum
- Aviation resources and incidents
- SAR Communications
- Search Planning variables
- Components of the GMDSS system
- Surface Resources
- Maritime Assistance Policy
- Operational Risk Management
- SAR Key Persons Responsibilities
- Surface Resources
- Public Affaires
- Interviewing and Briefing skills
- Successive searches
- SAR Plans and Procedures
- SAR Legal Issues
- Mission Conclusion
- Visits to SAR Units

The students were thought how to use the SAR Planning software SAR PC throughout the course. Practical exercises in simulation of SAR operations followed the lectures.

The students were also regularly assessed each week with theory tests and further on with practical tests. The overall success rate of the participants was 75%.

5.4 Presentations & course structure

The course structure was mainly presentations followed by practical exercises using the SAR Planning Software. The course followed the natural progression of a SAR Incident, i.e. the awareness stage, the initial actions, the planning phase, operations and mission conclusion.

Course presentations and materials were given in hard copy both for theory and practical lectures before the actual lecture was done. Furthermore all the course presentations and relevant conventions related to SAR were given as a soft copy on a Flash Memory Stick in a shape of a credit card provided by IMO in advance.

During the program each day consisted of lectures and practical exercises. Students were also given small breaks for a coffee between each lecture with Lunch in the middle of the day.

The students were assessed each week. In the first two weeks they were assessed theoretically and from then on both theoretically and practically, so that they were able to issue a Search Action Plan for a successful SAR Operation.

5.5 Visit to RCC MALTA

In the last week of the course the participants visited RCC Malta. Apart from the RCC itself they have been able to see the Malta Coast Radio Station and the Malta Coastal Vessel Traffic Service which are located in one building. The students were also presented with a demonstration of how the SMC plans the case in the SAR Planning room which he/she then passes on to the Operators for onwards transmission to the Search and Rescue Unit (SRU).

6. Closing ceremony
Mr Valev summarized the achievements during the training course and expressed his gratitude to the hosts MSSTC for their excellent support and hospitality and thanked the participants for their endurance and professionalism shown not only at the practical exercises but also during the regular tests at the end of every module. Brigadier Martin G. Xuereb, Commander Armed Forces of Malta delivered the closing statement on behalf of the MSSTC, AFM. The participants who successfully passed the final test were given certificates of completion. Three participants failed to pass the test and were presented with certificates for attendance. All certificates were presented by Mr Valev and Brigadier Xuereb at an official ceremony which was followed by a photo session.

7. Achievements, conclusions and recommendations

The students showed some concerns over some overlapping Search and Rescue areas of responsibilities. However MSSTC stressed on the point of how important is the cooperation between the MRCCs which share the same sea. It was stressed that cooperation in SAR will ultimately safe lives, which in most of the times has to happen in the shortest time possible. So cooperation is of vital importance for the people in distress and who need our help.

During a lecture on GMDSS and Alerts which was part of the training program, the importance of providing information to IMO according to MSC.1/Circ.1382/Rev.1 and GMDSS.1/Circ.13 was highlighted to the participants.

The MSSTC also emphasized on the importance of Regional Exercises between the SAR Organisations of the Black Sea which will ultimately lead to an efficient and effective response. Exercises like RODELTA and GEODELTA invite more international participation from all Black Sea countries. This increases the regional co-operation in response to distress alerts and will hopefully bring all Parties to a conclusion for preparation and adoption of a Regional SAR Plan for Black Sea.

The MSSTC Recommendation is also to hold On Scene Coordinator Training and SAR related exercises between these countries which will serve to encourage them to work together. On scene Coordination exercises are very important because the chosen On Scene Coordinator will be in charge on Scene, and will be solely responsible for the safe conduct of Rescue Operations and for any Search Action Plan in the absence of the Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator (SMC). The On Scene Coordinator is ultimately responsible to see that all Search Action Plans are being implemented and that all the information is passed / relayed to the RCC for any subsequent actions. On Scene Coordination exercises will also be useful in terms of practicing Operational Risk Management and to see that operations are conducted safely, especially where a number of Search and Rescue Units are deployed within the same area of Operations.
SAR Planning software SAR PC was made available free of charge to all participants in order to help the regional co-operation between the MRCCs around Black Sea. The participants are strongly encouraged to make use of SAR PC as they deem it appropriate.

It is also recommended that SAR Administrator Courses are organised. These can also be hosted at the AFM MSSTC or a mobile team can be sent to any country in need for such training.

8. Participants’ reactions

The participants’ reactions were very positive and most of the participants have showed interest to learn during the course so that they can take the opportunity to learn something useful related to their duties. From the feedback MSSTC staff have received, even through the evaluation questionnaires the students were very satisfied with the SMC Program and that it will be very useful for them. For the students the objective of the course was met and they gained the knowledge required for performing the duty of SAR Mission Coordinator. For all participants the course was an overall very good experience.

9. Assessment and anticipated outcome

All participants from the States in attendance were officials from Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCCs) responsible for coordinating SAR Operations in the Black Sea. There was also one SAR Coordinator (SC) from MRCC Malta who took part in the course on the expense of AFM.

At the beginning and at the end of the course, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding any feedback they had on the course. The summary below highlights the various comments and answers given in the completed questionnaires. The originals were returned to the IMO for further use and reference.

The questionnaires were collected on the last day of the course. All 12 participants returned the Evaluation questionnaires duly completed. The following are the main conclusions from the synthesized data collected on each question through the questionnaires (part I and II).

Part I

9 – Information received prior to participation?

YES: 12  NO: 0  N/A: 0

10 – Pre-event assignment given?

YES: 10  NO: 2  N/A: 0
11 – Pre-event assignment practical?

YES: 9  NO: 3  N/A: 0

12 – Did you have any special problems or difficulties in applying for or preparing to attend the event?

YES: 0  NO: 12  N/A: 0

14 – Any suggestions for improving the advance admin arrangements for similar events?

YES: 2  NO: 10  N/A: 0

‘A set of training documents to be sent in advance to the participants to allow better preparation’; and
‘It would be good to have the same course repeated and allow more colleagues to be trained.’

Part II

3 – Was the event:

Too long: 1  Just right: 9  Too short: 2

4 – Rating of the event as regard the following:

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5 – Rating of documentation and course materials:

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6 – Rating with regard to supporting materials/resources:
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7 – Rating of lecturers:

**Lt Col Andrew Mallia AFM**

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**Redt Maj Anthony Zammit AFM**

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**Capt. Marvin Mangion AFM**

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Several presentations were delivered by Lt Commander William Woityra, US Coast Guard Attache in Malta. Unfortunately he was not rated by the participants in the evaluation questionnaires.
10 – Are there any topics you would find relevant to add to the programme of the event?

11 – Were the pre-event assignments given to you useful?

12 – Were your expectations with regard to the event fulfilled?

13 – Do you consider that the objective of the event was met?

14 – IMO intends to organize events similar to this one. Have you any suggestions for their further improvement?

15 – Do you see any need for further assistance by IMO in the field covered by this event?

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Evaluation Summary:

The course was generally well-received by the majority of participants who indicated their satisfaction with the organization, content, length and quality of the lectures and lecturers. The majority also stated that their objectives for the workshop were met.

Topics that were of most interest:

- SAR PC Theory and practical exercises
- SAR Legal Aspects
- SAR System and Organisation
- Search Plan Variables
- Duties of SC SMC SRUs
- Effort Allocation
- Briefing Skills/ Public Affairs
- Risk Management

Any topic you find relevant to add to the Programme of the event?
- EPIRB – ELT locating Positions of Distress
- Cooperation between MRCCs
- Simulator training

Suggestions for further improvement: Mostly responded No, but below are some suggestions:
  - Visits to SAR Units so that the students are able to see SRUs.
  - Practical Exercises on a SAR simulator.

Do you see any need for further assignment from IMO in the field covered by this event?
  - On Scene Coordinator Courses
  - SAR Administrator Courses for persons designated to be SAR Coordinators (SC)
  - More persons to attend this course at the MSSTC.
ANNEX I

THE TRAINING COURSE COORDINATION AND DELIVERY

**International Maritime Organisation (IMO):**

Mr. Ivaylo Valev  
Head, CIS and Eastern Europe Section,  
Technical Co-operation Division  
International Maritime Organization  
4 Albert Embankments  
London, SE1 7SR  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0) 207 587 3228  
Fax: +44 (0) 207 587 3210  
E-mail: ivalev@imo.org

**AFM Headquarters Training Branch**  
Colonel Harold Stivala AFM  
Colonel Capabilities and Training  
Luqa Barracks, Luqa  
Malta  
Tel: 00356 2249 4014  
Email: harold.stivala@gov.mt

**Maritime Safety and Security Training Centre (MSSTC) AFM:**  
Capt Marvin Mangion AFM  
Officer in Charge, MSSTC  
Safi Barracks, 3 Regt  
Safi CMR 02  
Malta  
Tel: 00356 2249 7100/2/4/5  
Fax: 00356 22497116  
Email: msstc@gov.mt
ANNEX II

List of participants

at the

Regional Training Course on SAR for Black Sea countries,
16 July – 10 August 2012, MSSTC Malta

Bulgaria

Mr Penchev, Kiril Konstantinov
MRCC VARNA duty Officer, Expert
Maritime Administration Varna
17 Kiril and Metodii Street
Varna – 9003
Bulgaria
Kiril.penchev@marad.bg
Tel+ 359899182424

Mr Dimov, Svetoslav Petpov
MRCC VARNA duty Officer, Expert
Maritime Administration Varna
Oborishte Str. N46, AP, 62
Varna
Bulgaria
Svetoslav.dimov@marad.bg
Tel+ 35952624993

Georgia

Mr Gegenava, Avtandil
Head, Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre
Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia
23 Ninoshvili Str.
Batumi 6010
Georgia
a.gegenava@mta.gov.ge
Tel +995 422 273913
Fax +995 422 27 39 05

Mr Tsintsadze, Vitali
Duty Radio-operator
Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia
23 Ninoshvili Str.
Batumi 6010
Georgia
vt.tsintsadze@gmail.com
Tel +995 422 273913
Fax +995 422 273905

Romania

Mr Alexe, Adrian Gheoghe
Director, Maritime Coordination Centre
Romanian Naval Authority
Apartment 8 BL.DR8
Dezrobirii Str, 98
Constanta City
Romania
aalex@gmail.ro
Tel + 40 722 369280
Fax + 40 241 606065

Ms Vasile, Simona
Street Aleea Pelicanului, no. 3
Bl. AV29 sc. A ap 16,
Constanta
Romania
900 138
svasile@rna.ro
Tel + 40 241 615949
Fax +40 241 656060

Russia

Mr Kukhol, Alexey Fedorovich
Head of Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre of Novorossiysk
353905 Russia
NOVOROSSIYSK
St. Isaeva
B6, ap. 69
Mrcc1@ampnovo.ru
Tel + 786 17 676 419
Fax + 78617 676 420

Mr. Strizhkov, Vladimir Anatolevich
353910, Naberezhnaya st,
53 A, ap.22
Novorossiysk
Krasnodar REG
Russian
mrcc@ampnovo.ru
Tel +7 8617 676419
Fax + 7 8617 676420
Turkey

Mr Karlik, Ismail
Main Search and Rescue coordination Centre
Republic of Turkey Ministry of Transport Maritime Affairs and communications
GMK BULVARI No. 128/A
Maltepe
Ankara
Turkey
ismailkarlik@yahoo.com
Tel + 00903122319105
Fax + 00903122320823

Mr Arat, Omer Faruk
RCC and IT Officer
Main Search and Rescue coordination Centre
Republic of Turkey Ministry of Transport Maritime Affairs and communications
GMK BULVARI No. 128/A
Maltepe
Ankara
Turkey
fomer@uma.gov.tr
Tel + 90 312 231 9105
Fax + 90 312 230 0823

Ukraine

Mr Grets, Igor
Deputy Director, Supervision of SAR, Marine and Safety Operations
State Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre of State Enterprise
1, Lanjeronovskaya Str.
Odessa 65026
Ukraine
i.grets@sar.gov.ua
Tel 38 067 487 33 08
Fax 380 48 787 44 33

Mr Kryuk, Volodymyr
Head of MRCC, Coordination of SAR Operations
State Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre of State Enterprise
1, Lanjeronovskaya Str.
Odessa 65026
Ukraine
v.kryuk@sar.gov.ua
Tel 38 067 487 34 43
Fax 380 48 787 44 33
Search and Rescue Mission Coordination Regional Course for Black Sea countries

16 July to 10 August 2012
Malta

IMO WELCOMING ADDRESS

by

Ivaylo Valev
Head, CIS/ Eastern Europe Section
Technical Co-operation Division
IMO
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

It is my honour and pleasure to be here this morning in the Maritime Safety and Security Training Centre of the Armed Forces of Malta to open, on behalf of Mr. Koji Sekimizu the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, the Search and Rescue Mission Coordination Regional Training Course for Black Sea littoral States.

I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Malta for hosting and supporting this important training and, in particular, a warm Thank You to Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Mallia, Major Pisani and their colleagues from the Maritime Safety and Security Training Centre for the significant assistance and efforts in organizing this event. These efforts will, I am certain, ensure that the next one month will result in a fruitful outcome and the knowledge gained will help all participants to improve their skills to conclude SAR operations in the Black Sea.

While the advances in shipbuilding and marine technology and in the development of high training and qualification standards for seafarers have made ships safer than ever before, seafaring is still a challenging and, sometimes, hazardous occupation. As much as we try to guard against them, accidents can, and do, occasionally happen and, when they do, the sea can suddenly become a very lonely, isolated, dangerous and, at times, deadly workplace.

That is why comprehensive, effective and worldwide provision of state-of-the-art maritime search and rescue services, utilizing properly designed and equipped lifeboats and attendant equipment, entrusted to the hands of adequately educated and trained professionals, has long been an important objective for the entire maritime community and, in particular, for IMO, as the United Nations agency with prime responsibility for the safety of life at sea.

And, although many traditional maritime countries had in place a decent SAR infrastructure, it was eventually IMO, who enshrined, in its conventions, the obligation for all coastal States to provide an adequate search and rescue capability. The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, for example, requires contracting Governments “to ensure that necessary arrangements are made for distress communication and coordination in their area of responsibility and for the rescue of persons in distress at sea around its coasts”. Such arrangements are required to include the establishment, operation and maintenance of such search and rescue facilities as are deemed practicable and necessary.

This fundamentally humanitarian obligation is backed up by the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, concluded at the end of an IMO Conference convened in Hamburg in 1979, which requires that contracting Governments “ensure that assistance be provided to any person in distress at sea…”.

Moreover, while not an IMO Convention, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea imposes an obligation on every coastal State Party to “promote the establishment, operation and maintenance of an adequate and effective search and
rescue service regarding safety on, and over, the sea and, where circumstances so require, by way of mutual regional arrangements co-operate with neighbouring States for this purpose”.

The development of an adequate regulatory regime governing the rescue of persons in distress at sea remains one of the main tasks of IMO’s Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications and Search and Rescue.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to inform you that at its last session held in March this year COMSAR 16 had the important matter of LRIT on its agenda for the first time following the decision of MSC 90.

Some of the main outcomes of COMSAR 16 were finalization of amendments to:

first, the Revised performance standards and functional requirements for LRIT;

second, LRIT Technical documentation;

third, the MSC circular on Principles and guidelines relating to the review and audit of the performance of LRIT Data Centres and of the International Data Exchange; and

fourth, the resolution MSC 298(87) on Establishment of a distribution facility for the provision of LRIT information, in order to add polling functionalities.

Finally I hope that you will enjoy during this course an interactive discussion of all topical issues related to SAR activities in the Black Sea. Much can be achieved by sharing of experiences between the countries and I hope we all can learn in practical terms about the successes achieved and the challenges you face in the area of SAR services.

Thank you for your kind attention and I wish you every success with your training during these four weeks.
## ANNEX IV

### SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION COORDINATOR FOR BLACK SEA COUNTRIES (IMO) – MSSTC

**16-07-12 TO 10-08-12**

### WEEK 1

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**KEY:**
AZ – Retd Maj Anthony Zammit  
EM – Col Emanuel Mallia  
AM – Lt Col Andrew Mallia  
MM – Capt Marvin Mangion  
SSS – Capt Stephen Spiteri Staines  
KC – Lt Keith Caruana (PI Cell)  
US COGATT - LCDR – Woityra WC