



**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE  
UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN**



**COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND WATER**

**- Draft report –**

**The creation of marine parks in the Mediterranean  
as a means of preserving biodiversity**

tabled by the rapporteur

**Luigi Ramponi (Italy)**

*The Committee on Energy, Environment, and Water,*

- considering the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, defining the rights and responsibilities of nations in their use of the world's seas and oceans, which entered into force in 1994 and has been signed so far by 161 countries;
  - considering the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution, a legal and operative instrument of the UN Mediterranean Action Plan, which has been so far ratified by 23 countries;
  - especially considering the Barcelona Convention's Protocol concerning specially protected areas and biological diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD) and the Protocol concerning offshore activities;
  - considering the European Commission 2007 Guidelines for the extension of Natura 2000 also to the marine environment;
  - considering the European Commission's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC);
  - considering the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament "Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean" (COM (2009) 466 final);
  - considering the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), entered into force in 1993 and signed so far by 193 countries, which endorsed, amongst other things, a Strategic Plan 2010-2020 and a Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity at its Tenth Conference at Nagoya in October 2010 (CDB/COP X/2,29);
  - considering Census of marine life, an international research project on the marine world, whose first results were published in October 2010;
- A. appraising that the impact of human activities is proportionally higher on the Mediterranean than on other seas in the world, also in view of the Mediterranean being an almost completely closed basin with a slow rate of water renewal;
- B. acknowledging that such factors as urbanisation and human pressure, pollution from the land and maritime transport, illegal fishing practices and overfishing of several biological marine resources, heavy maritime traffic, excessive and insufficiently controlled exploitation of underground resources and climate change have a growing and unsustainable impact on the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mediterranean;
- C. bearing in mind that the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of the marine environment account for an immediate liability in case of urgent action following accidents relating to the shipping of hazardous material or the activities of offshore platforms, and directly affect Mediterranean perspectives for medium- and long-term growth;
- D. realising that protected maritime areas and marine reserves are recognised by several international agreements and by the European Union as essential instruments for a comprehensive marine environment conservation strategy leading to a sustainable use of sea resources and action against loss of biodiversity;

- E. whereas, as far as the conservation of fishing stocks and marine mammals is concerned, spawning and nursery areas, areas with high diversity of species and areas rich in ecosystems and vulnerable ecosystems are those most in need of maximum protection through the establishment of marine reserves;
- F. whereas the creation of protected marine areas and marine reserves is in the interest of all Member States of the PA-UfM, and not merely of coastal States;
1. underlines the urgent need to establish an ecosystem approach as an essential tool for integrated and sustainable management of human activities using Mediterranean resources;
  2. calls on all the States Parties to the Nagoya decisions to commit to the immediate implementation of the Strategic Plan 2010-2020 and the Decision on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity both in the respective countries and through international cooperation for the Mediterranean Sea, especially by promoting the mainstreaming of ecosystem services in domestic budgets;
  3. urges the States that have transposed the European Commission's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) to implement consistently and cooperatively the legislative, regulatory and administrative measures necessary to attain a "good environmental status" by 2020;
  4. upholds an approach whereby every coastal State should establish Ecological Protection Zones (EPZ) extending beyond the limits of its territorial waters, as foreseen by international law, in order to render its environmental protection legislation applicable to growing stretches of sea, thus ensuring adequate environmental protection and a sustainable use of environmental resources;
  5. holds that effective cooperation among coastal and neighbouring States is necessary in order to plan and establish protected marine areas and marine reserves, which may also be shared, in the areas foreseen by the Barcelona Convention;
  6. hopes that concrete operating proposals for the creation of high-sea protected marine areas – to be accompanied by relevant funding and management criteria – will be introduced and considered at the next meeting of the Barcelona Convention in October 2011;
  7. urges the Union for the Mediterranean, as the governmental counterpart to the PA-UfM, to support politically and economically projects aimed at establishing protected marine areas both through its own resources or through public-private co-funding, and urges the European Union to support and assist such projects, be they domestic or international.