



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



COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

**- Draft report -
Protection of the marine environment**

tabled by the co-rapporteurs

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The Committee on Energy, Environment and Water,

- having regard to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean ("Barcelona Convention") and its protocols such as the Protocol concerning specially protected areas and biological diversity in the Mediterranean (1995) and the Protocol on integrated coastal Zone Management (adopted 2008),
- having regard to the Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean (MAP Phase II),
- having regard to the Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem,
- having regard to the Communication from the European Commission of 12 April 2005 entitled "Tenth Anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: A work Programme to meet the challenges of the next five years" (COM (2005) 139 final) and the "Horizon 2020" initiative,
- having regard to the Communication from the European Commission of 5 September 2006 entitled: "Establishing an environment strategy for the Mediterranean" (COM(2006) 475 final),
- having regard to the Communication from the European Commission of 11 September 2009 entitled: "Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean",
- having regard to the 2005 United Nations Environment Programme's Guidelines for the Establishment and Management of Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas,
- having regard to the 2009 United Nations Environment Programme's report on the State of the environment and development in the Mediterranean,
- having regard to the Convention on Biodiversity,

A. Whereas the Mediterranean marine environment constitutes a unique economic, social, health and cultural common heritage for all neighbouring countries,

B. Whereas anthropogenic factors have influenced the general patterns and temporal trends of Mediterranean marine diversity with varying degrees of intensity, and whereas most important threats in this region are habitat loss, degradation and pollution, overexploitation of marine resources, invasion of species, and climate change,

Intense use of the Mediterranean Sea

C. Whereas the ever more intense use of the Mediterranean Sea by sectors such as shipping, fisheries, energy, tourism and research, combined with climate change, have added to the pressure on the marine environment,

D. Whereas the Mediterranean bears 30% of global sea-borne trade in volume from or into its more than 450 ports and terminals and a quarter of worldwide sea-borne oil traffic, and whereas tourism-related transport is a major source of environment impacts,

E. Whereas, as a "transport sea", the Mediterranean is subject to a very dense traffic with a high risk of collision, leading to a massive pollution with 100,000 to 150,000 tons of oil ending up yearly in the water, without huge tanker accidents, but because of illegal pumping, leakage and

carelessness, and whereas a "guilty" vessel is difficult to identify and the majority of such events remain unpunished,

F. Whereas relevant critical factors exist for the establishment in the Mediterranean sea of so-called PSSA proposals (particularly sensitive sea area) already recognized by the IMO (International Maritime Organization), and whereas so far no agreement for the establishment of PSSA areas has been reached,

G. Whereas, with the increasing industrial use of the Mediterranean, noise in the sea has reached threatening proportions and various sources of noise - including shipping, oil and gas exploration and promotion, the use of floating excavators, construction work and military activity - led to a dramatic increase of noise level, certain forms of noise in the oceans being of cause death, serious injury, reproductive output reduction, numbness and increasing vulnerability to disease among whales and other marine mammals as well as fish,

Biodiversity

H. Whereas the Mediterranean Sea, home to 7/8% of all marine species known, while representing only 0.8% of the planet's ocean surface, is an important ecological area for the unique diversity of life hosted in its waters, the high number of endemic species, and critical areas for the reproduction of pelagic species,

I. Whereas at Mediterranean level, the latest edition of the IUCN red lists shows that, generally speaking, 19% of Mediterranean known species are endangered in the Mediterranean or in the world and 1% are already extinct at regional level,

J. Whereas all Mediterranean countries ratified the Convention on Biodiversity and agreed on the law that compels them to reduce the biodiversity loss, and committed to reach a target of protecting at least 10% of each ecoregion by 2020,

Overfishing

K. Whereas marine protected and managed areas in the Mediterranean cover 97,410 km², or approximately 4% of the Mediterranean, and excluding the Pelagos Sanctuary (87,500 km²), the area covered by coastal marine protected areas amounts to only 9,910 km², which is 0.4% of the total surface of the Mediterranean Sea,

L. Whereas fishery remains a major source of livelihoods and food resources, as well as an important economic sector, across the Mediterranean region, and whereas overfishing and semi-industrial fishing fleets resulted in the progressive exhaustion in many of the main Mediterranean fish stocks,

M. Whereas despite the general drift net ban in all EU waters since 2002, numerous infringements remain because of monitoring and surveillance difficulties, thus leading every year to thousands of whales, dolphins, seals and sea turtles death in net systems, capturing even young and small fish, thus preventing the recovery of fish stocks,

N. Whereas in recent years fishing activity has increased in catch quantity, and while quality have steadily and sometimes dramatically decreased, overfishing being a permanent factor of disturbance of the coastal and marine environment of the Mediterranean and one of the main cause of food loss

O. Whereas many fishermen follow the rules regarding size and age of the catch, illegal and unregulated fishing activities and "pirate fishermen" continue operating

P. Whereas breeding holding pools should deal with this lack of fish such as tuna, but actually aggravate it since young fish not yet ready for reproduction are caught and imprisoned in an

artificial environment, leading to the fact that for each kilogram of tuna 20 kilograms of bycatch are required and breeding pools contaminate large marine areas with faeces, food residues and antibiotics, and an increased risk of disease from bacteria and viruses,

Climate Change

Q. Whereas the limited data available still indicates that climate change is already visible at sea level, with both the deep waters and the coastal waters of the western basin becoming warmer (by around 1°C for coastal waters over the last 30 years),

Pollution

R. Whereas Article 4.1 of the Barcelona Convention requests the Contracting Parties to prevent, abate, combat and to the fullest possible extent eliminate pollution of the Mediterranean Sea Area and to protect and enhance the marine environment in that Area so as to contribute towards its sustainable development,

S. Whereas Mediterranean terrestrial ecosystem highly interacts with the marine environment, and the protection of these ecosystems, such as wetlands, has already been identified as a positive factor in reducing the impact of land base pollution on the marine environment,

T. Whereas industrial emissions, municipal waste and urban waste water, responsible for up to 80% of pollution in the Mediterranean Sea, and whereas marine litter particularly affect both high sea and coastal areas,

U. Whereas Mediterranean countries adopted in June 2010 new concrete measures and mandatory timelines to limit the impact of dangerous chemicals and pesticides originating from industrial and agricultural activities on the marine environment in the region,

Tourism

V. Whereas the Mediterranean coasts are home to more than 150 million inhabitants, a figure which doubles during the tourist season,

W. Whereas tourism represents a vital economic sector for all Mediterranean countries, playing a key role in poverty alleviation and economic development in the Southern Mediterranean, and whereas seasonal and spatial concentration aggravates environmental impacts of tourism generated from transit and out-of-home stay,

International Cooperation

X. Whereas in most Mediterranean States, each sectoral policy is pursued by its own administration, just as each international agreement is performed within its own set of rules, making an overview of the cumulative impact of maritime activities a difficult objective to attain,

Y. Whereas the large proportion of the Mediterranean marine space is made up of high seas which make difficult for coastal States to plan, organise and regulate activities that directly affect their territorial seas and coasts.

Towards reducing the impact of human activities on the Mediterranean marine environment

Intense Use of the Mediterranean Sea

1. Calls the Union for the Mediterranean to promote the development of an integrated maritime transport policy for the region, focusing on transport infrastructure projects which most effectively prevent negative impact on the environment, and paying particular attention to harbour infrastructures building, enlargement and management with the undertaking of systematic Environmental Impact Assessment at local and regional level,
2. States that pollution due to vessels oil discharge should be combated with more rigorous and strict control, notably enhanced by an improved cooperation within the Mediterranean prosecutors' network and the reinforcement of the implementation of bordering states' control measures. Such control should also be complemented with improved docking ships harbouring conditions, in particular through further development of recycling facilities for ballast waters,
3. Notes that the Mediterranean sea, in light of the 2010 disaster the Gulf of Mexico, would suffer dramatic and irreversible consequences, while the protection of PSSA areas in the Mediterranean, which must be established, would take effect only upon a comprehensive risk assessment for the entire Mediterranean and liability insurance of ships and installation,

Biodiversity

4. Considers the protection of the marine environment as a factor of sustainable development for the Mediterranean region,
5. Encourages contracting parties of the Convention on Biodiversity to establish new Marine Protection Areas, supplementing the existing ones and contributing in reaching their commitment objective, starting with identified priority areas,
 - synergies among existing policies, strategies and other instruments relevant to the Mediterranean region countries, as well as management and implementation tools need to be developed/forged ensuring to the extent possible the necessary coherence and greater alignment with the identified biodiversity related priorities.
 - Biodiversity protection concerns and measures should be mainstreamed in all relevant sectoral policies and development plans
 - Adequate assistance in terms of financial and capacity building support should be provided to countries in the region for the implementation of biodiversity conservation measures
 - Communication, coordination and cooperation within the Mediterranean region on protected areas should be enhanced
 - The wider public should be fully informed about the real implications of biodiversity losses for their daily lives and should be encouraged to commit themselves toward the conservation of biodiversity through various activities.
 - Mediterranean region research needs to focus on the assessment of the status and the underlying trend of threatened ecosystems which underpin conservation planning at regional and national level
 - Research approaches should be broadened to ensure the integration of social sciences and economics with biodiversity research

Overfishing

6. Stresses that Article 4.3(e) of the Barcelona Convention requests Contracting Parties to promote the integrated management of coastal zones, taking into account the protection of areas of ecological and landscape interest and the rational use of natural resources,

7. Stresses on the benefits of an extended development of marine protected areas, not only in terms of biodiversity gains, but also as an efficient way to foster the recovery of the Mediterranean fish stocks, thus contributing to a sustainable maintenance of fishery in the region,

Pollution

8. Welcomes the recent adoption by the contracting parties of the Mediterranean Action Plan of mandatory targets to reduce and eliminate obsolete chemicals, pesticides and pollutants originating from land-based industrial activities and agriculture, and calls for a close monitoring and reporting of the progresses made in achieving the set objectives by 2019,

9. Stresses on the need to further assess and evaluate the efficiency of and potential loopholes in waste treatment and recycling processes, including sewage treatment, in all Mediterranean countries in order to further reduce direct land-base pollution such as marine litter and in particular plastic debris,

10. Recommends the creation or further development of in-country coastal area protection programmes and policies, addressing comprehensively all sources of pollutants and polluting activities on these areas and protecting Mediterranean coastal ecosystems such as forests, wooded lands and wetlands, thus contributing to the reduction of the impact of land-base pollution on the marine environment,

The protection of the marine environment as a factor of sustainable development for the Mediterranean region

11. Believes that the protection of the Mediterranean marine environment and the reduction of negative impacts from human activities contributes to the improvement of the overall environment and health of local populations, and should be promoted as a social and societal benefit,

Tourism

12. Considers that the protection and promotion of the Mediterranean marine environment could constitute an asset for the development of sustainable tourism in the region, thus reducing negative impacts of mass tourism and stabilizing coastal areas,

- tourism contributes to the overexploitation of water resources and the degradation and destruction of freshwater ecosystems in the Mediterranean
- in the tourism sector, there is still a high potential for water savings. Water consumption can be reduced by up to 50 % if appropriate measures are taken by the tourism industry, the government and the individual tourist
- available water resources could suffice to satisfy the water demand of the forecasted doubling in tourist numbers in the Mediterranean if appropriate water saving measures are taken
- water saving devices are readily available for new installations as well as for retrofitting
- installing water saving devices is an investment that can render long term economic as well as environmental benefits
- governments should favour a legislative environment that creates incentives to save water and ensures the existence of freshwater ecosystems
- tourism development in coastal areas should follow a land management plan that takes wetland conservation and environmental protection into consideration
- good examples for reducing water consumption exist in the Mediterranean but it is time, that a concerted effort is made to replicate them on a wider scale
- preserving wetlands also means preserving one of the attractions that tourists come to see

- all forms of renewable energies, in particular the use of solar energy and photovoltaic, are to be promoted in the tourism sector and in the water supply (hydrosolar) infrastructure
- especially cooling through solar energy, as the Mediterranean solar plan calls for, must prevail as examples in tourism and hotel resorts
- the investment in tourist resorts offers the opportunity to enforce both renewable and environmentally friendly measures in the Mediterranean region as an example through appropriate regulations

Climate change

13. Calls for a greater attention to be paid to the impacts of climate change on the Mediterranean marine environment and the need to increase the effort in combating them, thus reducing long term negative impacts such as floods, increased sea levels and coastal erosion,

14. Emphasizes that the Mediterranean has an enormous energy potential with the use of wind, streams and waves energy sources

Innovative governance, cooperation and mobilisation mechanisms

International cooperation

15. Considers of utmost importance the development of sound and comprehensive policies aiming at reducing the direct and indirect impact of human activities and asks all contracting parties of the Barcelona Convention to continue and strengthen their effort in order to fill in the current gaps and meet the objectives of the Mediterranean Action Plan,

16. Demands for further monitoring of environmental impacts, including water use and treatment, of tourism activities at destination level, which could feed into the development of environmental management schemes in touristic region, including specific provisions to combat pollution from beaches and tourism navigation activities,

17. Calls for a greater coordination of all institutions and organisations involved in fishery management in the Mediterranean region, in order to promote a comprehensive and integrated fishery strategy focusing on the recovery of the Mediterranean fish stock, the conservation of the different Mediterranean marine ecosystems and the promotion of biodiversity,

18. Recognises the need to integrate environmental concerns at all stage of development and sectoral policies, as well as the need for innovative governance and cooperation mechanisms in order to foster the coordination of actions aiming at protecting marine environment undertaken by the Union for the Mediterranean, including a greater involvement of civil society organisations in decision making processes,

19. Stresses on the added value of the exchange of good practices in all policy sector towards the reduction of negative impacts of human activities on the Mediterranean marine environment, notably with the creation of thematic networks building capacities in local and regional institutions, management bodies and communities,

20. Highlights the need to further develop and facilitate access to accompanying financing mechanisms in order to support projects, programmes and political initiatives aiming at protecting the Mediterranean marine environment,

21. Recommends the development of in-country awareness and communication campaigns in order to better involve and mobilise public opinions towards marine environment protection initiatives, thus supporting individual behaviours and responsibilities towards this objective,

22. Underlines the need for international cooperation with a common structure and an operating system for the coordination of emergency measures in case of accidents and the need for more investment in the expansion of coastguard staffs, their training, and the update of their equipment with the latest technologies. Controls could be simplified, for example by using satellite surveillance, and pollution could be more quickly detected and combatted,

23. Points out that the Mediterranean is commonly used and common rules and greater international co-operation are needed; for example, existing agreements which could already at present improve the situation should be ratified quickly and a code of international rules to protect the ecosystem of the Mediterranean should be established,

24. Considers that the PSSA Convention or other protective measures should be incorporated by the riparian countries, and those who carry responsibility for ships and shipping should be trained. When crews undermine the goals of PSSA areas by lack of understanding, a sustainable efficiency cannot be guaranteed. Therefore there must be an information campaign and instruction for shipping companies and skippers,

Awareness raising

25. Highlights the need for further research and study in order to better evaluate, anticipate and address the impact of human activities on the Mediterranean marine environment, and encourages the collection of region-wide and sector specific data, which could part of an overall environmental impact assessment project undertaken by the Union for the Mediterranean,

26. Points out the importance of targeted awareness-raising campaigns among populations, especially among young people, and highlights the need for greater investments in science, research and adaptation of curricula,

Annexe



Source: Plan bleu