



**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 regards to the "Barcelona Convention" and the "Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean" and its protocols,
- having regards 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 regards to the Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem,
- having regards 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 regards to the Communication from the European Commission of 5 September 2006 entitled: "Establishing an environment strategy for the Mediterranean" (COM(2006) 475 Final),
- having regards to the Communication from the European Commission of 11 September 2009 entitled: "Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean",
- having regards to the 2005 United Nations Environment Programme's Guidelines for the Establishment and Management of Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas,
- having regards to the 2009 United Nations Environment Programme's report on the State of the environment and development in the Mediterranean,
- having regards 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 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,

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 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,

E. 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,

F. 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,

G. 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,

H. 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,

I. 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),

J. 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

K. 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,

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

M. 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,

N. Whereas fisheries 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,

O. 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,

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

Q. Whereas in most Mediterranean States, each sectorial 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.

R. 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,

S. 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

1. 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,
2. 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,
3. 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,
4. 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,
5. 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,
6. 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,
7. 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,
8. 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,
9. 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,
10. 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,

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,

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,

12. 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,

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,

Innovative governance, cooperation and mobilisation mechanisms

14. Recognises the need to integrate environmental concerns at all stage of development and sectorial 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,

15. 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,

16. 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,

17. 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,

Annexe



Source: Plan bleu