

**STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE:
TOWARDS AN INITIATIVE FOR THE SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLUE ECONOMY
IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

Barcelona, 2nd of February 2017

Briefing Note – Panel 2A

**Advancing governance
in the western Mediterranean basin**



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PANEL 2.A - ADVANCING GOVERNANCE IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

Introduction and framing the activity of the panel

Objectives of the panel

Maritime sectors in the western Mediterranean region (e.g. maritime transport, coastal and nautical tourism, exploitation of mineral and biological resources, among others) are at the origin of a wide spectrum of increasing pressures affecting coastal and marine ecosystems and contributing to their rapid degradation. The panel will discuss how to develop more structured and inclusive approaches to ensure that planning and integrated management at sea and coasts allow for the development of a sustainable blue economy and reduce pressures on marine and coastal environments in the region.

Introducing the speakers

Co-chairs:

- Mr Christos Economou, Head of Unit Sea basin strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission
- Mr Enrique de Villamore, Director, Sustainable Consumption and Production/Regional Activity Centre

Panelists:

- Mr Rachid Annane, Director, National Centre for Research and Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CNRDPA), Algeria
- Mr Aomar Bourhim Maritime fisheries department. Morocco
- Ms Purificaciò Canals, President, Network of Marine Protected Area in the Mediterranean (MedPAN)
- Mr Bruno Frachon, Director General, Naval Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service, France
- Mr Rafik Moualek, Studies' Director, Ministry, Fisheries and Aquaculture / Agriculture and rural development Algeria
- Mr Josep Lluís Pons Hinojosa, Director General for Research and Innovation, Regional Government of Balearic Islands, Spain
- Mr Riccardo Rigillo, Director General, Fisheries, Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies, Italy
- Mr Abdellah Srou, Secretary General, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
- Mr Sergi Tudela, Director General, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Regional Government of Catalonia, Spain
- Mr Antonio Troya, Director, International Union for Nature's Preservation (IUCN), Malaga

Setting the topic of the panel

What is the challenge at stake?

Achieving a Good Environmental Status of marine environment and conservation of coastal ecosystems in balance with socio-economic development in the western Mediterranean region is a major challenge demanding a solid and well-coordinated managerial framework, able to equilibrate competing demands for limited natural resources and limited space. Environmental concerns in the western Mediterranean have been well-identified under different long-lasting and consolidated governance frameworks¹. Environmental concerns in the western Mediterranean region have been well-identified under different long-lasting and consolidated governance frameworks². Among these, the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its protocols provide the legally-binding set of instruments for addressing common environmental issues and protecting marine environment and coastal region of the Mediterranean. While, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean provides an equivalent legally binding framework for fisheries management in support of environmentally sustainable harvesting of biological resources.

A tradition of cooperation on marine and maritime issues is in place in the Mediterranean, and a wide range of agreements and strategic initiatives (e.g. International Maritime Organization Blue Belt by FAO, UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan, Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter, and Integrated Coastal Zone Management Action Plan among others) have been adopted and ratified by most of the surrounding countries. In particular, environmental issues have been the subject of various initiatives under the framework of UNEP/MAP – and in most cases, in partnership with other regional structures³ - the implementation of which is supported by a solid network of Regional Activity Centres (RACs)⁴.

What are the persisting problems and gaps identified?

A number of persisting problems in the current governance arrangements remain, such as weak engagement, involvement and participation of stakeholders in the decision-making processes. Improved integration and networking within administrations, between administrations and with economic and community institutions outside/beyond administrations open up new forms of arrangements and partnerships, and offer a way forward for a smart and sustainable development and management of maritime activities.

The private sector, traditionally left behind, must be actively involved as a generator of financial benefits emerging from an increased eco-efficiency and an eco-industry able to produce growth and jobs while fully respecting and protecting public health and natural resources. Key players are also academia and other professional communities (e.g. industry), as vectors of generation and transmission of scientific and technical knowledge and information that need to be leveraged in the service of the sustainable development (and use of biological and mineral resources), to stimulate innovation and improve competitiveness and efficiency of industry, public authorities and researchers. Finally, stronger engagement of citizens is needed to spur governments and companies and support their continued commitment on the long-term.

In the Mediterranean Sea marine life is heavily threatened by habitat degradation mostly due to human activities, such as fisheries, ship traffic, water pollution, coastal anthropization.

¹ UNEP/MAP - Barcelona Convention, UfM, FAO/GFCM, 5+5 Dialogue, EU, ACCOBAMS, MedPAN, etc.

² Described in Report 3 to be soon published on the initiative website (<http://www.westmed-initiative.eu>).

³ MoU signed between UNEP/MAP and FAO-GFCM (2012), IUCN (2013), UfM (2013), ACCOBAMS (2016), UNEP/MAP Joint Strategy with GFCM, ACCOBAMS, IUCN-MED in cooperation with MedPAN, other.

⁴ UNEP/MAP RACs: Plan Bleu, REMPEC, Sustainable Consumption and Production, Priority Actions Programme, Specially Protected Areas and INFO/RAC.

The cetacean populations are currently affected by heavy pollution which contaminates the marine food web by overexploitation of marine resources due to unsustainable and not selective fishery, and also by direct and indirect take of cetaceans.

Coastal development, intensive tourism, and land reclamation for agriculture place pressures on key wildlife habitats in the Mediterranean. Local and regional problems related to pollution, specifically effluents from domestic and industrial sources, oil transportation and refineries, and agricultural runoff, are beginning to have an impact on wildlife.

Additionally, intense development, sand excavation, urbanization, and the release of untreated sewage into the sea is a major public health issue, as increased numbers of microorganisms have led to an increase in several diseases. The fisheries of this region have been overexploited and many local fisheries are declining as a consequence of indiscriminate trawl fishing and high levels of by-catch.

Besides, the enforcement of already adopted and new environmental regulation relies upon the existence of a structured institutional and administrative framework, well-organised at all levels (international, regional, national, local), and able to provide coordinated and results-based planning, management and implementation. In order to support this, there is a need to strengthen the capacity to attract sustained financial resources and investments, by facilitating, catalysing and enhancing access to inclusive financial mechanisms while keeping balanced governance (global/regional, private/public). There is also a need to set up adequate financial resources management and allocation models to make available sufficient financial and human resources to assure appropriate public organisation and participation, particularly at local level.

Discussion on potential interventions to be supported by the initiative

Spatial planning and integrated coastal management

- How can spatial planning and ecosystem-based management (e.g. MSP and ICZM) strike a balance among different interests in the shared maritime space of the western Mediterranean, in particular between environmental conservation, sustainable use of biological (fisheries, aquaculture) and mineral (including hydrocarbon) resources, coastal and nautical tourism, maritime transport, and developing renewable energies? How to ensure adequate stakeholder involvement in the planning and management of maritime space and coastal zone?
- How can we achieve the 10% target of coastal and marine areas conservation through well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)⁵. How to ensure that the measures in these areas achieve the conservation objectives? How to ensure adequate stakeholder involvement in the definition and management of both Marine Protected Areas and fisheries conservation measures?
- How can these policies and processes help overcome sector-based, institutional (competences) and administrative fragmentation? At which scale should they be implemented? In which way? (E.g. through permanent structures, new or using existing schemes?)

Marine environment and maritime knowledge/data

- How can Good Environmental Status be achieved in the Mediterranean by 2020?

⁵ Fixed by the Aichi biodiversity target 11 and adopted under Sustainable Development Goal 14.5.

- How can information and knowledge exchanges between private and public stakeholders be fostered at the regional level, in order to increase public and private sectors' competitiveness, and at which level (national, regional, local)?
- How can data collection, maintenance and storage be promoted in an efficient and effective manner? Are the existing sources/databases appropriate for being expanded geographically and thematically across the region (e.g. European Marine Observation and Data Network and the Virtual Knowledge Centre)? Do we need to deploy further efforts to develop an integrated observation system in the region?
- Would it be possible to develop a science-policy interface (ISP) as a means of using effectively science and other forms of knowledge in decision and policymaking? Notably, for fisheries, where high quality data is essential for policy makers.

Enhancing cooperation and governance

- How can stakeholders' participation and engagement in decision-making processes be improved at the scale of the region, in particular the private sector (e.g. use of innovative methods in stakeholder engagement, launching online collaborative platforms to targeted audiences; Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) in the form of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) present in the EU could be a model for coastal and fishing community development on the southern Mediterranean shore)?
- In which manner countries can be better assisted (financially, providing capacity building, technical assistance, or acting as a catalyst for the latter) to address the implementation gaps, so that cooperation initiatives are put in place and result effective throughout the sub-basin?