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20th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment
and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols

Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017

Agenda item 3: Thematic Decisions

Draft Decision IG.23/9: Identification and Conservation of Sites of Particular Ecological Interest in the Mediterranean, including Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2017

Note by the Secretariat

1. By Decision IG.22/13 of the 19th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 19) (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016), the Contracting Parties requested the Secretariat to undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the 'Regional Working Programme for the Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean Sea including the High Sea' (2009) supported by the 'Roadmap for a Comprehensive Coherent Network of Well-Managed MPAs to Achieve Aichi Target 11 in the Mediterranean' (2016), and report the results to COP 20.
2. SPA/RAC prepared such evaluation report in close consultation with the Focal Points of SPA/RAC. The report is presented to this meeting as document UNEP(DEPI)/MED IG.23/Inf.7.
3. The SPAMI List was established in 2001 (Monaco Declaration) in order to promote cooperation in the management and conservation of natural areas, as well as in the protection of threatened species and their habitats. The areas included in the SPAMI List are intended to have a value of example and model for the protection of the natural heritage of the region. To date, 34 areas, including the Pelagos Sanctuary, are included in the SPAMI List.
4. Decision IG.17/12 of COP 15 (Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008) adopted the Procedure for the revision of the areas included in the SPAMI List and requested SPA/RAC to implement the adopted Procedure.
5. COP 19 (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016), by its Decision IG.22/14, took note of the proposed revised format for the periodic review of SPAMIs and requested SPA/RAC to test it and, on this basis, develop it in consultation with Focal Points of SPA/RAC for consideration by COP 20, mainly by preparing an online version of the revised format and using it on a trial basis for 2017 SPAMI evaluation, along with the old version of the evaluation format.
6. During the current biennium, SPA/RAC prepared the online SPAMI evaluation system and tested it during the 2017 ordinary review of three coastal national SPAMIs in Algeria and Italy. The system has been improved following comments made by the relevant technical advisory commissions.
7. During their 13th meeting (Alexandria, Egypt, 9-12 May 2017), the Focal Points of SPA/RAC recommended that SPA/RAC continue to use the online SPAMI evaluation system for coastal national SPAMIs and finalise its testing for transboundary high-sea SPAMIs, such as the Pelagos Sanctuary, which would be the subject of an ordinary review in 2019.
8. SPA/RAC received two proposals of areas for inclusion in the SPAMI List: the Calanques National Park and the Cetaceans migration corridor in the Mediterranean, by France and Spain, respectively.
9. The candidate SPAMIs presentation reports (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.431/9 Rev.1) were submitted to the 13th Meeting of Focal Points of SPA/RAC (Alexandria, Egypt, 9-12 May 2017).
10. The meeting agreed to submit the French proposal to COP 20 for inclusion on the SPAMI List, and encouraged Spain to submit its proposal to the present MAP Focal Points meeting once it is confirmed as MPA at national level. The meeting requested that the Secretariat prepare an analysis of the legal status of the candidate SPAMI in relation to paragraph 2, section C (Legal status) of Annex I to the SPA/BD Protocol and other eligibility elements in the report proposal.
11. The implementation of this Decision is linked to Outputs 3.1.1, 3.1.2 and 3.2.2 of the proposed Programme of Work. It has budgetary implications on MTF and external resources, reflected in the proposed budget.
12. The draft Decision was reviewed by the MAP Focal Points Meeting (Athens, Greece, 12-15 September 2017) which forwarded it for consideration by the Contracting Parties at their 20th Meeting. Specific parts of the draft Decision remained in brackets, pending the finalization of the national process in Spain of giving the status of marine protected area to the proposed "Cetacean Migration Corridor" Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance.

Draft decision IG.23/9

Identification and Conservation of Sites of Particular Ecological Interest in the Mediterranean, including Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance

The Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols at their twentieth meeting,

Having regard to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, in particular article 8 and annex I thereof, on the establishment of the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance and the common criteria for the choice of protected marine and coastal areas that could be included in the list respectively,

Recalling decision IG.17/12, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their fifteenth meeting, on the procedure for the revision of the areas included in the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, stating that for each of the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, a periodic review should be carried out every six years by a mixed national/independent technical advisory commission,

Recalling also decision IG.19/13, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their sixteenth meeting, on the regional working programme for the coastal and marine protected areas in the Mediterranean, including the high sea,

Recalling further decisions IG.22/13 and IG.22/14, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their nineteenth meeting, on the road map for a comprehensive coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 in the Mediterranean and on the list of specially protected areas of Mediterranean importance respectively,

Mindful of the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 14,

Noting the results of the evaluation of the implementation of the regional working programme for the coastal and marine protected areas in the Mediterranean Sea, including the high sea, supported by the road map for a comprehensive coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 in the Mediterranean,¹

Expressing appreciation for the efforts of the Contracting Parties in establishing and managing marine protected areas effectively, thus contributing to a comprehensive coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas in the Mediterranean region,

Committed to further streamlining the Mediterranean Action Plan ecological objectives and associated Good Environmental Status and targets, as well as the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and related assessment criteria into the management plans of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance and marine protected areas,

Having considered the proposal[s] made by France [and Spain], pursuant to article 9 (3) of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, to include [a] new area[s] in the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, and the agreement reached in that regard by the focal points for specially protected areas at their thirteenth meeting,

1. *Decide* to include the Calanques National Park (France) [and the Cetaceans Migration Corridor in the Mediterranean (Spain)] in the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance;

¹ See UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.443/Inf.9.

2. *Encourage* the Contracting Parties to strengthen their efforts to expand the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance;

3. *Also encourage* the Contracting Parties to undertake further efforts to improve the management of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance by strengthening collaboration through the promotion of tools such as twinning partnerships or other proven mechanisms for developing and managing Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, thus contributing to a comprehensive coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas in the Mediterranean region;

4. *Further encourage* the Contracting Parties to ensure stakeholder involvement at the local and national levels with a view to facilitating a comprehensive and participatory process in developing and managing Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance;

5. *Request* Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre to continue supporting the use of the online evaluation system of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance for evaluating coastal national Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance and test the online evaluation system for transboundary high-sea Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance;

6. *Also request* Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre to work with the relevant authorities in France, Italy, Lebanon, Monaco, Spain and Tunisia to carry out the ordinary periodic review for the nineteen Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance listed below, in accordance with the procedure established in decision IG.17/12, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their fifteenth meeting, and bring the outcome of that review process to the attention of the Contracting Parties at their twenty-first meeting.

The following seven Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance are to be reviewed in 2018:

- Blue Coast Marine Park (France)
- Embiez Archipelago - Six Fours (France)
- Porto Cesareo Marine Protected Area (Italy)
- Capo Carbonara Marine Protected Area (Italy)
- Marine Protected Area of Penisola del Sinis - Isola di Mal di Ventre (Italy)
- Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (Lebanon)
- Palm Islands Nature Reserve (Lebanon)

The following twelve Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance are to be reviewed in 2019:

- Port-Cros (France)
- Pelagos Sanctuary for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (France, Italy and Monaco)
- Alboran Island (Spain)
- Natural Park of Cabo de Gata - Níjar (Spain)
- Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria (Spain)
- Natural Park of Cap de Creus (Spain)
- Medes Islands (Spain)
- Mar Menor and the Oriental Mediterranean zone of the region of Murcia coast (Spain)
- Columbretes Islands (Spain)
- La Galite Archipelago (Tunisia)
- Kneiss Islands (Tunisia)
- Zembra and Zembretta National Park (Tunisia)