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19th 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

Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016

Agenda item 3: Thematic Decisions

Draft Decision: List of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI List)

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Note by the Secretariat

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. Furthermore, 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, 33 areas, including the Pelagos Sanctuary, are included in the SPAMI List.

Decision IG.17/12 of COP 15 (Almeria, Spain, January 2008), adopted the *Procedure for the revision of the areas included in the List of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI List)* and requested SPA/RAC to implement the adopted Procedure.

The 12th Meeting of Focal Points of SPA/RAC (Athens, Greece, May 2015), based on the experience gained from the SPAMI evaluations undertaken so far and given the urgency of the matter, agreed to elaborate a revised Format with a view to submitting it for adoption by COP 19. The meeting invited SPA/RAC to prepare a first draft and take advantage of the SPAMI Conference (Tunis, Tunisia, June 2015) in order to consult with the attending Focal Points, before circulating the revised Ordinary Review Format for further comments and finalization in time for submission to the forthcoming meeting of MAP Focal Points (mid-October 2015). In this context, SPA/RAC prepared a first draft and circulated it to all the Focal Points for SPAs and relevant partner organisations. The comments and suggestions received were integrated in the draft Format presented hereinafter.

Following the running, during July 2015, of the e-mail consultation with the Focal Points of SPA/RAC and relevant partner organizations, it was decided to present the “Revised Format for the Periodic Review of SPAMIs” to COP 19 as an information document (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.421/Inf.27) and not in view of its adoption.

Furthermore, the present version is intended to be tested, further developed and improved during the 2016-2017 biennium, especially in view of adapting it to the case of transboundary SPAMIs or SPAMIs covering ANBJ zones. The final version of the format will be then presented for adoption by COP 20 in 2017.

SPA/RAC received a proposal from Albania concerning the inclusion of the Karaburun-Sazan National Marine Park in the SPAMI List. The proposal was elaborated with the support of SPA/RAC (the MAVA-funded MedKeyHabitats project). The candidate SPAMI Presentation Report was submitted to the 12th Meeting of Focal Points of SPA/RAC (Athens, Greece, May 2015) who evaluated the conformity of the proposed site with the criteria set out in the SPA/BD Protocol and in its Annex I (Common criteria for the choice of protected marine and coastal areas that could be included in the SPAMI List). The Meeting agreed to submit the Albanian proposal to COP 19 for inclusion in the SPAMI List. The executive summary of the Presentation Report of the Karaburun-Sazan National Marine Park appears as Annex XIII to the SPA/RAC Focal Points meeting Report (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.421/Inf.25).

The proposed draft decision was reviewed by the Meeting of MAP Focal Points (Athens, Greece, 13-16 October 2015) and endorsed for submission to COP 19.

This decision contributes to the implementation of Outputs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 but also 3.4.1 and 3.5.2 of the Medium Term Strategy 2016-2021.

Draft Decision IG.22/14

List of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI List)

The 19th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, hereinafter referred to as “the Barcelona Convention”,

Recalling Article 8 of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, hereinafter referred to as the “SPA/BD Protocol”, on the establishment of the List of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI List) and its Annex I related to the Common Criteria for the Choice of Protected Marine and Coastal Areas that Could be Included in the SPAMI List;

Considering the proposal made by Albania, pursuant to Article 9, paragraph 3 of the SPA/BD Protocol, to include a new area in the SPAMI List;

Having considered the report of the 12th Meeting of Focal Points of SPA/RAC (Athens, Greece, May 2015) regarding the evaluation of its conformity with the criteria provided for in Article 16 of the SPA/BD Protocol;

Recalling Decision IG.17/12 of COP 15 (Almeria, Spain, January 2008) on the Procedure for the Revision of the Areas Included in the SPAMI List, stating that for each SPAMI, a Periodic Review should be carried out every six years by a mixed national/independent Technical Advisory Commission;

Decides to include the Karaburun-Sazan National Marine Park (Albania) in the SPAMI List;

Requests the concerned Party to take the necessary protection and conservation measures specified in its SPAMI proposal in accordance with Article 9, paragraph 3 and Annex I to the SPA/BD Protocol;

Requests the Secretariat in cooperation with SPA/RAC to inform the competent international organizations of the new SPAMI including the measures taken in that SPAMI, as provided for in Article 9, paragraph 5 of the SPA/BD Protocol;

Takes note of the “Revised Format for the Periodic Review of SPAMIs” (UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.421/Inf.27) prepared by SPA/RAC in consultation with the Focal Points of SPA/RAC;

Requests SPA/RAC to test it and, on this basis, to further develop it in consultation with Focal Points of SPA/RAC for consideration by COP 20, by:

- Preparing an online version of the Revised Format and using it on a trial basis for the evaluation of SPAMIs of 2017, along with the old version of the Evaluation Format;
- Investigating options to further adapt the Evaluation Format to the case of transboundary SPAMIs or SPAMIs covering ANBJ zones;
- Preparing guidelines for evaluators, aiming to provide them with information and guidance on the methodology, assessment criteria and scoring system; and
- Exploring the possibility of harmonization of the SPAMI Review Format with relevant tools used in similar contexts of other regional seas, e.g. OSPAR, and other relevant regulatory initiatives;

Requests SPA/RAC to work with the relevant authorities in Algeria and Italy to carry out during 2017 the Ordinary Periodic Review for the following three SPAMIs, according to the procedure adopted by the Contracting Parties, and while using the online version of the Revised Format on a trial basis, along with the old version of the Evaluation Format:

- Banc des Kabyles Nature Reserve (Algeria);
- Habibas Islands (Algeria); and
- Portofino Marine Protected Area (Italy).