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**Agenda Item 5: Specific Issues**

**The Action Plan “The Mediterranean, a model sea by 2030” and its Governance Mechanism**

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**The Mediterranean: a model sea by 2030**



**MINISTÈRE  
DE L'EUROPE  
ET DES AFFAIRES  
ÉTRANGÈRES**

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## **“The Mediterranean: a model sea by 2030”**

### **PREAMBLE**

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The Mediterranean has significant biodiversity, specific habitats and an extremely high rate of endemism. Despite an area of 0,7 % of the world's oceans, it is one of the most biologically diverse seas in the world with over 17,000 listed species representing 8% of the world fauna and 18 % of the flora.

This diversity is threatened by certain human activities, including maritime transport, overfishing and IUU fishing, offshore drilling, tourism, coastal and seabed land-take, coastal landfills and marine pollution in all its forms, including marine litter, micro-plastics, lost, abandoned and otherwise discarded fishing gear underwater noise, oil spill and hazardous materials.

Additionally, as reported by 2019 IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and the IPCC Special Report on climate change on the Ocean and Cryosphere, the adverse effects of climate change, leading to sea level rise, ocean deoxygenation and acidification and increase in seas temperature, have been recognized as the majors drivers of ocean biodiversity loss.

According to the “State of the Environment and Development in Mediterranean (SoED)” report (2020, Plan Bleu), the Mediterranean region has one of the highest rates of biodiversity loss in the world: 40% of its marine species are deemed to be in decline.

Only “profound economic, social, political and technological changes” (IPBES) can reverse this trend and help meet the objective of sustainable development aiming to sustainably conserve and use oceans, seas and marine resources. The conservation and sustainable use of the Mediterranean's resources can be achieved through the sustainable development of traditional and emerging maritime sectors aimed at progressively reaching carbon neutrality and generating new job and income opportunities. These far-reaching economic, social, environmental and technological changes can only take place gradually, taking into account each country's national circumstances, capacities and priorities.

Acting in the context of existing international and regional commitments and Mediterranean organizations and determined not to create duplications or overlaps, an action plan entitled “The Mediterranean: a model sea by 2030” is launched to increase the visibility of the Mediterranean Sea through the implementation of concrete actions.

This action plan, to be implemented in accordance with international law, including the UNCLOS, could be a catalyst for broader regional cooperation and discussions in multilateral and regional bodies for the environment and the management of fisheries and aquaculture, including the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda in particular the SGD 14, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Environment Assembly work on marine pollution and micro-plastic governance, the Barcelona Convention and its protocols, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, the FAO General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the Union for the Mediterranean agenda and portfolio of activities on blue economy, environment and climate action and related ministerial declarations.

The action plan will in particular contribute to response to the recommendations of the First Mediterranean Assessment Report prepared by the independent network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and environmental Change (MedECC), in the frameworks of the Barcelona Convention and UfM, which assesses the best available scientific knowledge on climate and environmental change and associated risks in the Mediterranean Basin. It will also address the challenges identified in the State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries (SoMFi) report, produced biennially by the GFCM.

The implementation of the action plan will require the concrete commitments of donors and stakeholders in order to get the adequate, predictable funding and to increase technology development as well as capacity building in order to implement the action plan on both sides of the Mediterranean sea by 2030.

The **[signatories]** **[countries endorsing the Action Plan]** shall undertake to:

**1- Increase ambition for preserving marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean**

**Action 1: implement the specific marine and coastal biodiversity objectives at Mediterranean level;**

- *Promote the goal to protect 30% of the Mediterranean, through the collective efforts of all Mediterranean countries including 10% under strict protection, by 2030, where possible and taking into account socio-economic impact on the coastal communities and the participatory process of all actors concerned in view of an ambitious post 2020 global biodiversity framework taking into account national circumstances and capacities.*
- *Voluntarily support the MedFund launched by France, Monaco and Tunisia which finances marine protected areas in the Mediterranean and support the work of MedPAN and SPA/RAC.*
- *Call for the establishment of an ambitious Post-2020 Strategic Action Programme for the Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Mediterranean Region, in the framework of the SPA/BD Protocol to the Barcelona Convention.*

**Action 2: Speed up the acquisition and spread of scientific knowledge and educational programmes on marine and coastal ecosystems;**

- *Support the work of the BlueMed Initiative and other relevant initiatives from regional organizations within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for*

*Sustainable Development, including the GFCM Forum on fisheries science in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.*

- *Promote the Mediterranean network of training courses for seafaring professions, resulting from the Summit of the Two Shores.*
- *At national level, strengthen awareness programs for the benefit of populations and stakeholders, in particular young people, on the importance of protecting marine and coastal ecosystems from anthropogenic environmental threats, such as climate change and oil spills.*
- *Promote a network of maritime clusters and twinning initiative at national and regional level of stakeholders involved in the field of marine protection.*
- *Develop a regional network dealing with the exchange of research results on marine and coastal ecosystems evolution, including launching alerts regarding the ecosystem malfunction, inter alia epidemic and mortality of marine fauna.*

**Action 3: Support the ecological transition of the tourism sector to foster the sustainable development of countries in the Mediterranean region;**

- *Call for the development of national sustainable tourism strategies and/or strengthening of existing strategies to mainstream biodiversity considerations into marine and coastal tourism planning supported by adequate data and monitoring.*
- *Combine ecotourism and sustainable fishing, notably to ensure stable incomes.*
- *Encourage ecotourism through the valorization of coastal cultural heritage, local and traditional knowledges and values.*
- *Encourage the diversification of itineraries, as appropriate, in order to alleviate the pressures exerted by mass tourism particularly in over-frequented destinations as well as seasonality, contributing to a better distribution of flows in space and time and thus to a more sustainable and balanced growth of the sector with reduced pressures on the environment and local communities.*
- *Promoting training and skills development through education and vocational training and transfer of knowledge, through inter-alia efficient network and twinning, for a better cooperation perspectives among different stakeholders involved in the tourism sector.*

**Action 4: Preserve, sustainably manage and restore the Mediterranean coastline;**

- *Promote the sustainable management of the coastal zones including shores and strengthen related actions to preserve the integrity of coastal ecosystems, landscape and geomorphology.*
- *Promote maritime spatial planning, including through using the recommendations of the IOC-UNESCO MSP Global Project and the principles of integrated coastal zone management in accordance with the Protocol to the Barcelona Convention on Integrated Coastal Zone Management.*
- *For all : Identify key existing coastal ecosystems with a high biological richness and high potential for climate change adaptation and mitigation and develop measures to effectively and efficiently protect them in line and synergy with the work done at regional level by the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention.*

## **2- Promote and develop sustainable fishing to end overfishing by 2030**

**Action 5:** Implement the MedFish4Ever Declaration on sustainable fisheries, the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), the Cape Town Agreement and the 1995 Agreement relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks;

- *For non-signatories: invite these countries to sign the MedFish4Ever declaration.*
- *For non-contracting parties: encourage these countries to sign these agreements.*

**Action 6:** Develop the new General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean Strategy for 2021-2030 by further including marine biodiversity preservation issues;

- *Support the work of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean so that it further takes into account the adverse impacts of overfishing, by-catch, climate change and non-indigenous species on marine biodiversity based in the best scientific evidence available.*

**Action 7:** Increase the ambition of regional management plans to maintain fishing resources at a maximum sustainable yield level which guarantees food security, social and economic objectives and encourages the implementation of an action plan for sustainable aquaculture in the Mediterranean;

- *Call for the full implementation of the recommendations and action plans of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and the establishment of a sustainable aquaculture action plan setting a concrete 10-year roadmap for the sustainable development of Mediterranean aquaculture based on the GFCM aquaculture strategy and taking into account related national plans and strategies.*
- *Increase efforts to create, where appropriate, new Fisheries Restricted Areas (FRAs) based in the best scientific evidence available, and to improve enforcement and control measures in existing FRAs.*
- *Support increased efforts to reduce and, when possible, eliminate the incidental catch of vulnerable species such as cetaceans, turtles and seabirds. Additionally, collect further data aiming at improving knowledge regarding the interaction between fisheries, marine ecosystems and the above-mentioned of vulnerable species.*

**Action 8:** Secure Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries based on the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines:

- *Support the GFCM Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black-sea (RPOA-SSF) to strengthen and support small-scale fisheries.*
- *Support the establishment of simple and cost effective monitoring control and surveillance systems appropriate for Small-Scale fleet.*

**Action 9:** Continue the fight against IUU fishing activities by strengthening fisheries management and control measures, improving satellite observation capabilities, increasing training and capacity building;

- Support cooperation, exchange of information and capacity building in order to combat IUU fishing.
- Support the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean Regional Plan of Action against IUU fishing (RPOA-IUU) and effective implementation of the GFCM joint international control and inspection schemes.
- For WTO members: renew the efforts to reach a consensus aiming at eliminating all subsidies contributing to overfishing and IUU fishing.

### **3- Redouble efforts to combat marine pollution, particularly so that no plastic is discharged into the Mediterranean by 2030**

**Action 10:** Foster actions at international, regional and national levels involving all stakeholders including private sector to urgently address the increase in plastic waste generation and the leakage of plastic waste into the environment, in particular the marine environment;

- At national level, adapt, where appropriate, legislation to progressively eliminate the most environmentally damaging single-use plastic products and promote sustainable alternatives of plastic products such as bio-sourced materials.
- At national level, support activities on collecting marine litter including through implementation of “Fishing For Litter” practices.
- Encourage measures on the marking of fishing gears targeting the issue of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear in particular by endorsing the FAO voluntary guidelines, and support fishers in their key role to prevent the occurrence and assist in the recovery of ghost gear at sea, based on the work done at global and regional level including by the FAO and the GFCM.
- At regional level, contribute to the BLUEMED “Healthy, plastic-free Mediterranean Sea” and the BeMed pilots initiatives, ensure the full implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management of the Barcelona Convention and contribute to the Interreg Biodiversity Protection Community work on marine litter.
- At regional level, intensify actions towards the achievement of 20 % reduction of beach litter taking into account national circumstances and capacities and a significant and measurable decrease of other marine litter items by 2030, taking into account the progress of the related work at the regional level by UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention.
- At international level, support, where feasible, at UNEA level, a new international agreement on plastic pollution addressing the full lifecycle of plastics, as an overarching framework, complementary to on-going actions at the national, regional and global levels.

**Action 11:** Increase the collection and recycling of plastic waste in particular by funding new recycling plants by 2030

- Identify the financing needs and mechanisms and technology transfer as regards recycling infrastructure.
- Adopt national plans to progressively evolve towards the objective of separate collection of all packaging waste by 2025 in line with national circumstances and capacities.
- Support efforts to improve the efficiency of port reception facilities and processing methods to reduce plastic waste in the marine environment.

- *Adopt a circular economy model for the design and production of plastics and plastic products, and for the proper environmental management of plastic waste, respecting the waste hierarchy and promoting the use of more sustainable materials.*

**Action 12: Encourage stakeholders, especially companies, based in the Mediterranean basin to harmonize their standards on manufacture, formulation, supply and use of plastic materials in order to improve their environmental performance and recyclability;**

- *Encourage efforts by stakeholders especially, companies committing to global initiatives such as the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's "Global Commitment".*
- *Support coordinated actions of the private sector with other key stakeholders, through the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter established in the Mediterranean.*

**Action 13: By 2025, identify land-based pollution hot spots in the Mediterranean and by 2030 work towards finding the most appropriate solutions, including scientific, in order to prevent and significantly reduce pollution, including transboundary waste pollution, from these sources;**

- *Support MED POL work and ensure the implementation of pollution reduction/prevention Regional Plans adopted in the framework of the Barcelona Convention.*
- *Take decisive action, including by providing adequate financing, to establish adequate urban sewerage systems, wastewater treatment plants, and waste management systems to prevent wastewater contaminant discharge as well as run-off and riverine inputs of litter, including plastic waste and microplastics.*

#### **4- Promote maritime transport practices which protect the marine environment and combat climate change**

**Action 14: Promote green Mediterranean ports and marinas via the electrification of port infrastructures including wharves and provision of alternative, in particular low or zero carbon, fuels ;**

- *For Western Mediterranean countries, support cooperation in the framework of the WestMED Initiative technical group on green shipping.*
- *Set up a network of green Mediterranean ports and encourage progress towards the transition to low-carbon energy sources for shipping and propose financing mechanisms for investments in equipment, in particular for the electrification of wharves by giving priority to wharves receiving passenger ships and cruise passengers.*

**Action 15: For States which have not already done so, initiate a reflection on the ratification of Annex VI of the MARPOL Convention regarding the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships and respect the agreed Roadmap on the possible designation of the Mediterranean Sea, as a whole, as a Sulphur Emission Control Area**

- *For non-contracting parties: invite these countries to initiate a reflection on the ratification of Annex VI of the MARPOL Convention.*



- *For the Parties to the Barcelona Convention: Support discussions on the possible designation of a SECA in the Mediterranean as a whole and the submission of a proposal thereof with the view of formally submitting it to the 78th Session of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC78) in 2022 according to the agreed Roadmap.*

**Action 16: Support the work of the IMO for the greening of international maritime transport;**

- *For IMO members : Support measurable reduction of noise emissions from shipping within the framework of the Organization.*
- *Spain, Monaco, Italy, France : Encourage agreement from these countries to identify the Northwest Mediterranean waters as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area under OMI and propose specific mitigation measures including the possibility to create a reduced speed zone for vessels based on ACCOBAMS, PELAGOS and RAMOGE's work.*

**Action 17: For States which have not yet done so, work towards the ratification of the Ballast Water Management Convention to prevent, manage and fight against the spread of non-indigenous species**

- *For non-contracting parties: invite these countries to consider signing and ratifying the Convention.*
- *Welcome the work of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean on non-indigenous species towards a comprehensive methodology.*
- *Support the work of UNEP/MAP on the development and implementation of a Ballast Water Management Strategy for the Mediterranean Sea (2022-2027).*

**Action 18: Secure commitment from maritime transport stakeholders to protect the marine environment;**

- *Increase the number of signatories to the SAILS Charter.*
- *Promote the "Ocean framework", a platform to help companies measure and reduce their impact on the ocean based on SDG 14.*
- *Foster the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) technology in order to achieve a higher level of control of illegal oil spills and emissions from ship sources.*

**Action 19: Step up the fight against oil dumping and pollution from hydrocarbons and other harmful substances in the Mediterranean.**

- *Improve national capacities to fight against pollution by hydrocarbons and noxious and potentially dangerous substances and support regional cooperation notably through capacity building, training of control inspectors and common simulation exercises.*
- *Support the work of the MENELAS network to strengthen the application of the MARPOL Convention and improve cooperation in monitoring events and prosecutions against the perpetrators of illicit discharges.*
- *Call to support the work of REMPEC and the implementation of the post-2021 Mediterranean strategy for the prevention and control of marine pollution from ships.*

**Action 20: [Implement this action plan in accordance with the agreed governance]**

**Governance Mechanism**

**(Draft, 1 July 2021)**



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1 July 2021- V4

## **DRAFT**

### **Follow-up “The Mediterranean: a model sea by 2030”**

The implementation of the action plan “The Mediterranean: a model sea by 2030,” supported by Mediterranean countries and relevant regional organisations and launched during the 2021 IUCN Congress, will be an important step towards reversing the alarming trend of biodiversity loss and towards biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean region, developing sustainable fishery, combating marine pollution and developing sustainable maritime transport practices.

The implementation of the action plan and the obligations arising from this will not create an additional administrative nor reporting burden to the participating countries and the action plan will not duplicate already on-going and existing initiatives, frameworks and institutional bodies but rather try to lead by example to an increased coordination among them to strengthen synergies and partnerships and enhance coherence, towards the overall objective of raising the profile of the Mediterranean globally.

In this context, four bodies will be in charge, at different levels, of the implementation of the four axes of the action plan :

I/ Voluntary countries, acting as leaders of the different axes of the plan, will give political guidance and impulsion for their selected axis,

II/ all countries and regional organisations, represented by their focal points, will report on their national and regional actions;

III/ a Chair alternating every two years between a Northern and a Southern shore country will be designated by the participating countries on a consensual approach (see the description of its role below).

IV/ a technical expert will be engaged within the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit to support the Chair and the countries, at a technical level, for the implementation of the action plan (see the description of its role below).

The implementation of the action plan on both sides of the Mediterranean sea by 2030 will require concrete commitments from donors and stakeholders to obtain adequate, predictable funding as well as to increase technology development and capacity building.

International or regional events could provide opportunities to highlight the achievements of the action plan through side–events or high level segments. Concrete Mediterranean projects would be presented in order to showcase what has been achieved by

countries and regional organisations in the Mediterranean Sea and, if needed, to call for donors to support the implementation of the projects.

The overall governance arrangements of this action plan, as described below, are intended to be as informal, flexible and lean as possible, aiming at ensuring effectiveness and further enhance the spirit of cooperation, partnership diffusion of best practices and dialogue that already existing in the Mediterranean region.

## **I/ LEADERS OF THE AXES**

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Each axis will be led by 2 volunteer countries, ideally a northern and a southern country of the Mediterranean Sea.. For now, several countries have declared their interest to champion the axes as follow:

1/ increase ambition for preserving marine and coastal biodiversity in the Mediterranean: **Monaco, Algeria**

2/ promote and develop sustainable fishing to end overfishing by 2030: **Spain**

3/ redouble efforts to combat marine pollution, particularly so that no plastic is discharged into the Mediterranean by 2030: **Italy, Morocco, Greece (tbc)**

4/ promote maritime transport practices which protect the marine environment and combat climate change: **Egypt, France.**

The role of the lead country is to:

- Moderate the focal point meeting dedicated to its axis.
- Select the actions to be privileged in the axis, especially for the first two years of implementation
- Follow up on the implementation of its axis, in contact with the Chair and the technical expert.
- Involve, where and if necessary, related regional or national stakeholders, as appropriate, civil society organisation, the private sector, academia and other actors involved or who could be involved and contribute to the promotion of the implementation of the activities under the axis.

In case a country informs of difficulties in continuing leading the axis or new interested countries / organisations state their willingness to assume leading, then the leaders of an axis can change on a voluntary basis..

Regional and international organizations, including CPMR, GFCM, UfM and UNEP/MAP, will contribute to support the above mentioned axes according to their mandates, resources, agendas and portfolio of activities.

## **II/ FOCAL POINTS MEETINGS**

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Each country shall designate a maximum of two focal points (for example, one representative of the MoFA and one representative of the ministry of Environment or any

other competent ministry) that will represent them during the follow-up meetings of the action plan. Besides, each delegation can be supported by its own technical experts in consideration of the agenda of the meeting. Countries are strongly encouraged to nominate their focal points building on existing comprehensive governance networks which are in place in the region, with a view to avoiding duplication of work and strengthening synergies with existing instruments and initiatives. Each delegation can be supported by its own technical experts in consideration of the agenda of the meeting. Focal point meetings shall be convened at least once a year, arranged by the Chair with the support of the technical expert. The meetings may be divided in 4 parts corresponding to each axis of the action plan. If needed, each leader can organise meetings on its own axis (including virtual meetings) if it wants to focus the axis on a specific action to achieve. They will invite the chair and the technical expert (see below) to these meetings to ensure continuity in their involvement.

It is recommended to hold back to back meetings with existing relevant institutional set up meetings to the extent possible to maximise synergies and reduce meeting organisations costs. Virtual Meetings will also be considered as appropriate.

The costs of the Focal Points meetings will be taken up by France. In case of physical meeting in a Mediterranean city, a maximum of one focal point per country may be supported financially.

### **III/ CHAIR**

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Countries supporting the action plan shall designate a country as Chair for the implementation of the Action Plan. The Chair will be designated for two years on a North/South rotation basis between a Southern and a Northern Shore country. Her/his role is to :

- Contribute to Organizing and prioritizing the implementation's work with the leaders.
- Arrange and moderate the focal points meetings with the support of the technical expert.
- Engage with other Mediterranean countries to promote and enlarge the participants to the action plan.
- Involve the civil society, the private sector and all stakeholders interested in the implementation and follow-up of the action plan, with the support of the technical expert.

### **IV TECHNICAL EXPERT**

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A technical expert will be engaged within the UNEP/MAP Coordinating Unit in Athens to coordinate the implementation of the action plan ensuring synergies with regional instruments and initiatives work. Her/his role is to:

- Coordinate the implementation of the Action Plan, in contact with the Chair, the leaders and the regional organisations;
- Inform the focal points meetings of the state of implementation of the action plan;

- Act as Technical Secretary of the meetings organized in the framework of the Plan in line with its institutional set up and UN rules and regulations, including follow-up and dissemination actions;
- Select some projects, complying with one of the axes, with the Chair and the leaders (on the basis of the projects presented and discussed with countries and stakeholders) to be presented through a side-event or a high-level segment on the margin of an international or regional event.
- Report on the implementation of the action plan, using to the extent possible existing relevant reporting tools and modalities at regional level.