

**3rd International Expert Meeting on Marine Biodiversity
in the Adriatic "Towards a representative network
of Marine Protected Areas in the Adriatic",
Piran, October 28th–29th, 2010**



**ZAVOD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE
ZA VARSTVO NARAVE**

The Adriatic Sea is a very special part of the Mediterranean region, with distinctive geographic, geomorphological, oceanographic and ecological characteristics. At the same time, the Adriatic marine environment is particularly vulnerable due to intense human pressure, such as coastal degradation, land-based pollution sources, fisheries, and tourism, over its limited water volume.

In 2006 and 2008, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation organized two workshops on the conservation and threats to marine biodiversity in the Adriatic. The first was held on the occasion of the release of a book on endangered marine species and habitat types in the Slovenian sea, while the second workshop was dedicated to human impacts on marine biodiversity.



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Taking into account the "Regional Working Programme for the Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean Including the High Seas", adopted within the framework of the Barcelona Convention, as well as the 2012 target adopted within the Convention on Biological diversity and the environmental policy of the European Union, in October 2010 the Institute decided to organize the third workshop on marine biodiversity conservation in the Adriatic. The organization of the workshop was financially supported by the Principality of Monaco and partly by the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas of the Barcelona Convention, which accepted the role of a co-organizer. The direct objective of the meeting was to contribute to the implementation of the above mentioned programme and consequently, the central topic of the meeting were scientific basis, as well as procedural issues, ways and means to make a step forward towards a representative network of marine protected areas in the Adriatic. More than fifty experts from the countries around the Adriatic and from the wider Mediterranean area participated in the two-day workshop, 19 papers were presented and a number of posters, dealing with single protected areas were exhibited.

Two topics were addressed, namely the methodology and identification of priority conservation areas in the Adriatic and the identification of sites for the development of a representative network of MPAs in the Northern Adriatic. The introductory papers were presented by Chedly Rais (Okianos), Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciarra (CIESM, ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee), Evangelos Papatthanassiou (Research Director, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, SESAME project), Tullio Scovazzi (International Law, University of Milano-Bicocca) and Joachim Claudet (National Center for Scientific Research, University of Perpignan). The program of the workshop and the two working documents are available on: http://www.zrsvn.si/dokumenti/73/2/2010/Program_2_089.pdf

At the end of the workshop, the participants agreed on the following set of conclusions and recommendations:

1. The current situation of MPAs in the Adriatic (Mediterranean) is unsatisfactory in terms of representativity and in terms of management.
2. The MPA agenda is progressing too slowly to be able to accomplish the goal of protecting the region's biodiversity in order to halt and reverse degradation effectively.
3. An evaluation on the national level of the status, the representativity and the effectiveness of the marine and coastal protected areas should be carried out throughout the Adriatic countries as soon as possible. National strategies that aim to ensure conservation for all types of marine biodiversity, including resources, should be elaborated, ensuring also that appropriate human and financial resources are made



The opening session of the Workshop. (Photo A. Popić)

available to protected areas so that they can meet their goals.

4. An *ad hoc* multi-disciplinary working group of experts should be set up to:
 - take stock of existing habitat inventorying and/or mapping initiatives in the area,
 - initiate studies on connectivity throughout the Adriatic (habitat mapping, tagging, genetics etc.) and agree on a common assessment methodology and on a monitoring plan that could be conducted on a regular basis,
 - use a precautionary approach when data limitation cannot be overcome in an appropriate time frame;
 - identify missing scientific information concerning EBSAs and propose ways and means to secure this missing information, and
 - on the basis of the EBSA defined in the Adriatic, and the findings of the relevant recent investigations, further develop the identification of marine areas that could be proposed as SPAMIs.
5. The relevant organizations such as RAC/SPA, IUCN, WWF, etc. are invited to provide support and facilitate the setting up of this working group as well as the progress of the work.
6. The administrative and legal constraints to the establishment of SPAMIs in areas beyond the territorial waters, including deep waters should be identified.
7. Based on the national strategies and regularly updated with the newly achieved scientific information, a sub regional (Adriatic) strategy with the aim to ensure conservation for all types of marine habitats in

8. In addition to the development of a representative network of MPAs, it is of the uttermost importance in terms of conservation that the national strategies, as well as the regional ones, focus also on a better governance system outside MPAs. In this context, The EU Integrated Maritime Policy, in particular Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) has the potential to help further integration of the MPAs with the other seas uses. Identification, design and effective management of MPAs should be included as a priority in the process of Marine Spatial Planning.



The above conclusions and recommendations were for further consideration sent to the UNEP MAP Coordinating Unit in Athens and to the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas, to the Mediterranean Action Plan and Specially Protected Areas National Focal Points, to the Commission for the protection of the Adriatic and its Coastal Zone and to the European Commission's Environment Directorate-General.

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