



*pour une planète vivante*



**IUCN**  
The World Conservation Union



**Port-Cros** Parc National  
**Porquerolles** Conservatoire Botanique National Méditerranéen



CENTRE FOR  
**Mediterranean**  
COOPERATION



## **PORT-CROS DECLARATION\***

The Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean (MedPAN), the Port-Cros National Park and WWF, coordinator of the network, organized the 1st Conference of the Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Network from 24 to 27 October 2007 on the island of Porquerolles (France), in close partnership with the Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas (United Nations Environment Programme) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The Conference brought together more than 110 experts in marine conservation from the management bodies of Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), different governments from around the Mediterranean, non-governmental, intergovernmental and international organisations, the French National Fisheries Committee as well as the scientific community. Participants wished to draw up this Declaration to foster the development of measures designed to improve the levels of protection and conservation of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Mediterranean environmental heritage is unique in the world because of its biodiversity, high level of endemism and its specific characteristics. Over the centuries, the interactions between humans and natural resources have become the cause of increasing environmental impacts. At present, the loss of biodiversity is evident and, all over the Mediterranean, a series of rapidly increasing threats are jeopardizing the survival of many species, of their habitats and the good functioning of the ecosystems to which they belong.

In order to protect the marine environment, most governments around the world have recognized the usefulness of Marine Protected Areas and have committed to create and sustain a coherent network by 2012 (World Sustainable Development Summit, Johannesburg 2002) and to protect at least 10% of each of the world's ecological regions by 2010 (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2004).

At regional level, the adoption and the coming into force of the new protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity in the Mediterranean, under the aegis of the Barcelona Convention, has prompted Contracting Parties to foster the establishment of Specially Protected Areas and provides a legal framework for the establishment of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance and offers guidelines and tools in this respect. Moreover, European states are committed to the establishment of the Natura 2000 network.

Compared to the terrestrial environment, applying the concept of protecting the marine environment is a much more recent approach, and consequently, less widespread and entailing some specific problems. Today, these factors are hindering, in spite of the progress already observed from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until today in terms of protection, conservation and restoration of marine ecosystems.

Specifically:

- Some MPAs do not meet completely the fundamental objectives of biodiversity conservation;
- Present coverage of MPAs in the Mediterranean is insufficient in particular in the High Sea and in certain geographical regions;
- The involvement of local authorities in the establishment, implementation and management of MPAs is often lacking;
- MPAs in the Mediterranean are not designed and managed to enhance the ecological resilience of the ecosystems to global challenges such as climate change and invasive species.

The participants of this Conference recommend to all concerned parties to promote collaboration and action relevant to:

1. Creating a coherent, representative and effectively managed ecological network of MPAs in the Mediterranean by 2012 to halt the loss of biodiversity and achieve set conservation objectives;
2. Establishing action plans aimed at solving present problems and at developing tailored techniques to optimize the preservation of this vast Mediterranean natural heritage and to foster the harmonious development of communities it includes,

ensuring the provision of adequate financial and human resources to implement them;

3. Communicating more actively the value of the services provided by the Mediterranean marine environment, the importance of issues related to its conservation and the predominant role of MPAs in improving livelihood and promoting long-term social resilience of local communities;
4. Ensuring a closer and more efficient cooperation between MPA managers, the MedPAN network, political authorities, the scientific community, the relevant public administrations, national, regional, international, non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations, users, in order to encourage the exchange of information and data, the sharing of responsibilities and promoting efficient cooperation of all these actors to achieve the 2012 objective;
5. Promoting North-South and East-West collaboration across the Mediterranean, sharing knowledge and lessons learned, and identifying actions that help in strengthening the management effectiveness of MPAs;
6. Strengthening research, improving knowledge and information on under-studied and under-protected species, habitats and landscapes of the Mediterranean Sea in order to undertake a comprehensive regional analysis that will guide conservation action of the Mediterranean Sea;
7. Improving governance structures, financing mechanisms and legal frameworks at international, national and/or local level that contribute to the establishment and maintenance of a representative network of Mediterranean MPAs.

*Declaration adopted by unanimity on 26 October 2007*

\* On 25th October 2007, at the Third Meeting of the Parties of ACCOBAMS, held in Dubrovnik, the Parties adopted Resolution 3.22 supporting in principle the creation of the MPAs shown above, as well as others to be defined, and welcoming the criteria and guidelines for setting up additional MPAs in the region which include management plans to address threats to cetaceans. The Parties have agreed to begin the process to work with local communities to designate these and other areas as set out in the criteria and guidelines.