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Agenda Item 3: Status of implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) in the Mediterranean

Report on the status of implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol)

Note:

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Note by the Secretariat

In its Decision IG.23/1, the 20th Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP 20) (Tirana, Albania, 17-20 December 2017): (a) adopted the revised reporting format for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols; (b) urged Contracting Parties to use the revised reporting format when submitting their national implementation reports; and (c) requested the Secretariat to submit to each meeting of the Contracting Parties, on the basis of an analysis of the information contained in the national reports, a report on the general advances made in the region, including at the legal and institutional levels, in implementing the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols along with proposals for further measures, as necessary.

In response to this request, and in the spirit of the paragraph 2 (ii) of Article 18 of the Barcelona Convention, the Coordinating Unit and the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) invited the Focal Points for SPA/BD to provide a report, for the period running from January 2018 to December 2019, on the application of the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol)

SPA/RAC has prepared the “*Report on the status of implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol)*”, which is hereby presented. The status has been drafted on the basis of the information contained in the national implementation reports for the biennium 2018-2019, submitted by Contracting Parties through the new online Barcelona Convention Reporting System (BCRS), as of 10 May 2021. It provides for the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Protocol an overall assessment of the status of progress in implementation and associated main overall findings.

The reporting format is the one revised and adopted by the 20th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Decision IG 23/1) and includes the following parts:

- **Part I: Legal and Regulatory Measures.** Part I seeks to determine whether Contracting Parties have established the legal framework for the protection and conservation of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), including Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) and those endangered or threatened species of flora and fauna listed in Annexes II and III to the Protocol.
- **Part II: Specially Protected Areas (SPAs).** Part II seeks to collect information on the list of SPAs designated and the measures adopted for their management, including the development and adoption of a management plan for each SPA, which incorporates the elements listed in Article 7 of the Protocol.
- **Part III: Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs).** Part III seeks to gather information on the list of SPAMIs designated and the measures adopted for their management, including the development and implementation of a management plan for each SPAMI which includes regulation of dumping and releases of wastes likely to impair the integrity of the SPAMI, monitoring programmes, introduction and reintroduction of species, and activities carried out in the zone surrounding the area.
- **Part IV: Endangered and Threatened Species.** Part IV seeks to gather information on the protection measures adopted by Contracting Parties to protect those endangered or threatened species listed in the Annexes to the Protocol.
- **Part V: Monitoring.** Part V seeks to gather information on implementation of quality status monitoring and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment (IMAP).
- **Part VI: Enforcement Measures.** Part VI seeks to collect information on enforcement in order to verify compliance with the Protocol.
- **Part VII: Implementation of Regional Action Plans (RAPs).** Part VII seeks to collect information on measures put in place for the implementation of biodiversity RAPs adopted by the Meeting of the Contracting Parties:

- RAP for the conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans) (COP Decision IG 21/4)
- RAP concerning Species Introduction and Invasive Species
- RAP for the conservation of Bird Species (COP Decision IG 21/4)
- RAP for the conservation of Cetaceans (COP Decision IG 22/12)
- RAP for the conservation of Marine Vegetation (COP Decision IG 20/6)
- RAP for the conservation of Monk Seal (1985 COP Decision)
- RAP for the conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles (COP Decision IG 21/4)
- RAP on Dark Habitats (COP Decision IG 21/4)
- RAP for the conservation of Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions (COP Decision IG 22/12)

In this analysis, some of the same difficulties that were met for previous biennia were encountered, like incomplete reports, answers to some questions that are missing or different than what is explained in the comments.

The status of progress in implementation and the associated main overall findings should be understood within the limitations which arise from the fact that not all Contracting Parties have submitted their national implementation reports for the 2018-2019 biennium¹ and the difference in the amount of information submitted. The percentage used in presenting statistical responses is that out of the total reporting Contracting Parties. For the purpose of this report: “nearly all” is used for 90% or over, “most” for 70% or over, “many” for 40% or over, “some” for between 40% and 15% and “few” for less than 15%.

¹ Number of reports submitted by Contracting Parties on the 2018-2019 biennium: 12

Progress in Implementation

a) Legal and Regulatory Measures

1. Reporting Contracting Parties have reported on the legal and regulatory measures put in place to implement the SPA/BD Protocol, as shown in detail below.

2. *Designation of the terrestrial areas (including wetlands) under its jurisdiction which are in the area to which the SPA/BD Protocol applies (Article 2.1).* Most reporting Contracting Parties (10 out of 12) have designated these areas under different protected area management categories, encompassing Areas of Conservation Importance for Birds, Sites of Community Importance, Nature Reserves, National Parks, Marine Protected Areas or Sites of Biological and Ecological Interest (SBEI). One Contracting Party indicated that the question is not applicable, and one Party answered “no” to this question. Three reporting Contracting Parties raised as difficulties mainly administrative management.

3. *Protection, preservation and management in a sustainable and environmentally sound way of areas of particular natural or cultural value, notably by the establishment of SPAs (Article 3.1(a)).* Nearly all reporting Contracting parties (10 out of 11) indicated the existence of measure for the protection, preservation and sustainable management of SPAs, mainly through domestic nature protection, coastal protection, national parks or protected areas acts. Difficulties mentioned are mainly related to administrative management.

4. *Protection, preservation and management of endangered or threatened plant and animal species (Article 3.1(b)).* Nearly all reporting Contracting Parties (10 out of 11) have answered this question positively. For those Contracting Parties, the protection, preservation and management of endangered or threatened species of flora and fauna has been articulated through either general laws (e.g. nature protection acts and environment protection acts) or specific ones (e.g. flora, fauna and habitats protection acts). This adds to the (Red) Lists of endangered or threatened species of flora and fauna, the SPA/BD Protocol Protected species list, EU relevant Directives or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Difficulties reported refer to technical guidance and administrative management.

5. *Compilation of an inventory of the components of marine and coastal biodiversity (Article 3.3).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (5 out of 10) stated having conducted an inventory of the components of marine and coastal biodiversity. This has been mainly undertaken for marine areas within the framework of the SPA/BD Protocol, as well as relevant EU Directives, such as the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). Four reporting Contracting Parties indicated work under development and main difficulties reported are financial resources, policy framework and technical guidance.

6. *Formulation of a national strategy and an action plan to protect the components of marine and coastal biodiversity (Article 3.4).* Most reporting Contracting Parties (7 out of 10) stated having taken forward the protection of the components of marine and coastal biodiversity through their national biodiversity strategies and associated action plans, and/or Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) strategies. This adds to measures taken within the framework of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). A reporting Contracting Party indicated work under development and main difficulties reported are financial resources.

7. *Monitoring the components of marine and coastal biodiversity and those processes and categories of activities which have or are likely to have a significant adverse impact on them (Article 3.5).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (7 out of 9) answered to this question affirmatively by referring to programmes of observation and monitoring under the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) as well as the MSFD. A reporting Contracting Party indicated work under development and difficulties highlighted in this area are mainly financial resources.

8. *Taking into consideration, in the planning process leading to decisions on projects and activities that could significantly affect protected areas and species and their habitats, of possible direct or indirect, immediate or long-term, impact, including the cumulative impact of projects and activities on habitats (Article 17).* All reporting Contracting Parties (10) answered to this question positively by mainly noting their Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) regulations. Difficulties highlighted in this area are mainly administrative management and technical guidance.

b) Specially Protected Areas (SPAs)

9. *Setting up of protected areas within the Protocol's geographical coverage (Article 3.1(a)).* Nearly all reporting Contracting Parties (10 out of 11) answered this question positively by indicating the SPAs established on their territory during the current reporting period 2018-2019. Technical guidance and administrative management are the main challenges highlighted.

10. *Prohibition of the dumping and any discharge likely to directly or indirectly harm the integrity of SPAs (Article 6.b).* Most reporting Contracting Parties (8 out of 10) reported legislation to be in place prohibiting dumping activities in SPAs. Legislation mainly refers to legislative and administrative measures governing dumping activities in general, which also apply to SPAs. This framework includes maritime, coastal zone or port reception facilities regulations, wastewater treatment, hazardous wastes. This adds to the prohibition of dumping in place through specific laws on protected areas.

11. *Regulation of the passage of ships and all stopping or anchoring in the SPAs' extension zone (Article 6.c).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (6 out of 11) reported having put in place a legal framework regulating the passage and anchoring of ships in SPAs. In addition to the legislative and administrative measures regulating navigation, specifically designed measures are reported having been adopted restricting or prohibiting the passage and anchoring of ships in SPAs. This has been mainly prohibited through a variety of instruments, such as management plans and spatial planning guidelines. Key difficulty reported is technical guidance.

12. *Regulation of the introduction of any species not indigenous to the SPA or of genetically modified species (Article 6.d).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (5 out of 11) answered to this question positively. Two reporting Contracting Parties indicated work under development and the remaining ones left this question blank.

13. *Regulation or prohibition of all exploration activities or activities that involve modifying the soil or subsoil of the land part, of the seabed or of its subsoil in the SPAs (Article 6.e).* Most reporting Contracting Parties (8 out of 11) reported legal and regulatory measures to be in place dealing with offshore activities in SPAs. Relevant measures form part of broad laws concerning for instance nature protection or Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), as well as of more specific instruments governing the management of SPAs, such as their management plans.

14. *Regulation of scientific research in the SPAs (Article 6.f).* Most reporting Contracting Parties (9 out of 11) reported having adopted measures regulating scientific research in their SPAs. In general, scientific research is subject to a permit issued by the national competent authority or authorities, provided that certain conditions are met.

15. *Prohibition and regulation of all activities involving taking of species (i. e. fishing, hunting, taking of animals and harvesting of plants and their destruction as well as trade in animals, parts of animals, plants and parts of plants) which originate in SPAs (Article 6.g).* Most reporting Contracting Parties (9 out of 11) reported the taking of species which originate in SPAs to be regulated mainly by wildlife protection, protected areas or hunting and fishing laws, which are tightened up in some SPAs through their specific management instruments. Key challenge reported is administrative management.

16. *Regulation and, if necessary, prohibition of any other activity likely to have an adverse impact on the SPAs. These include activities that may harm or disturb the species or that might endanger the state of conservation of the ecosystems or species or might impair the natural or cultural*

characteristics of the SPA (Article 6.h). Many reporting Contracting Parties (9 out of 11) reported having in place measures regulating activities other than the ones above mentioned in their SPAs.

17. *Traditional subsistence and cultural activities of local populations taken into account when formulating protective measures for SPAs (Article 18)*. Many Contracting Parties (6 out of 11) answered this question positively.

c) Management of SPAs

18. *Adoption of planning, management, supervision and monitoring measures for SPAs (Article 7.1)*. Many reporting Contracting Parties (7 out of 11) indicated having adopted the required measures under article 7.1 of the SPA/BD Protocol.

19. *Elaboration and implementation of a management plan for each SPA (Article 7.2 (a))*. Many reporting Contracting Parties (7 out of 11) responded affirmatively. However, it is indicated by some reporting Contracting Parties that though management plans are not in place for some SPAs, measures for the protection of those SPAs have been put in place through other means.

20. *Programmes for the observation and scientific monitoring of changes in the Protocol Areas' ecosystems and on the impact of human activities (Article 7.2 (b))*. Some reporting Contracting Parties (4 out of 11) reported having developed scientific monitoring programmes tracking changes in the state of SPAs. This has been mainly done specifically through the instruments designating or managing SPAs. Work is reported to be ongoing in five reporting Contracting Parties. Difficulties reported referred mainly to administrative management and financial resources.

21. *Measures for the involvement of local communities in the process of managing the protected areas (Article 7.2(c))*. Some reporting Contracting Parties (4 out of 11) reported having put in place measures ensuring the involvement of local communities in the management of protected areas. In doing so, different strategies have been taken ranging from inclusion of local communities' representatives in the management bodies of SPAs, to public consultation on projects and activities in SPAs subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), or to the development of SPAs management plans.

22. *Provision of assistance to local inhabitants to compensate for the possible adverse impact which the protection measures introduced in the SPA might have on their income (Article 7.2 (c))*. Some reporting Contracting Parties (4 out of 11) reported having put in place measures to compensate local inhabitants affected by the establishment of SPAs, by either providing compensation to owners and users of the property right, for the restrictions in the use of protected areas or by employing local inhabitants in the management and maintenance of the protected areas through different projects, for instance eco-development projects. Work is reported to be ongoing in five reporting Contracting Parties.

23. *Funding mechanisms for managing and promoting the protected areas or income-generating activities that are compatible with the protection measures (Article 7.2(d))*. Many reporting Contracting Parties (8 out of 11) indicated having established funding mechanisms for managing and promoting protected areas, including income-generating activities such as swimming and recreational activities, entry fees, tourist boat route charges and national and fund raisers co-financing.

24. *Appropriate training for the technical managers and other qualified staff of the protected areas (Article 7.2 (f))*. Many Contracting Parties (7 out of 11) reported providing training to SPAs managers and staff. This has been taken forward in different ways (e. g. workshops, seminars etc.). Two reporting Contracting Parties indicated work under development in this area.

d) Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs)

25. *Setting up of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) (Article 3.1.a)*. Some reporting Contracting Parties (4 out of 11) reported having established SPAMIs. Four (4) SPAMI were designated during the current reporting period (2018-2019).

26. *Elaboration and implementation of a management plan for each SPAMI (Article 7.2.a)*. Many reporting Contracting Parties (5 out of 11) reported having elaborated and implemented a management plan for their SPAMIs.

e) Endangered and threatened species

27. *Drawing up of a list of endangered or threatened species of fauna and flora and identification of their distribution in the zones subject to Party's jurisdiction (Article 11.2).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (7 out of 11) have drawn up lists of endangered or threatened species of flora and fauna at national level (e. g. Red Lists, Red Data Book), transposing the SPA/BD Protocol and other agreements, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), or relevant EU Directives. In drawing up national lists a key driver has been the Med-MPA Network Project. Reporting Contracting Parties noted that the development of such lists is resource-intensive and that there is a gap in knowledge on the distribution of marine species.

28. *Management of species of flora and fauna listed in Annexes II and III to the Protocol, to ensure their favorable state of conservation (Article 11.2 and Article 12.1).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (5 out of 11) reported management measures concerning the species listed in Annexes II and III to the SPA/BD Protocol. This has been mainly achieved by either nature or environment protection acts or specific protected species acts. This adds in some reporting Contracting Parties to action and management plans.

29. *Controlling and, where appropriate, prohibiting the taking, possession or killing, the commercial trade, the transport and the exhibition for commercial purposes of protected species of fauna, particularly those listed in Annex II to the Protocol (Article 11.3.a and Article 12.2).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (5 out of 11) responded positively to this question. Three reporting Contracting Parties indicated work under development in this area.

30. *Controlling and where appropriate prohibiting the disturbance of protected wild fauna, particularly during the period of breeding, incubation, hibernation and migration (Article 11.3.b).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (7 out of 11) indicated having taken measures in that regard. The key difficulties reported in this area are financial resources, regulatory framework and administrative management.

31. *Establishment of bilateral or multilateral cooperation (including agreements) to protect and restore the population of migrant species in the area where the Protocol is applied (Article 11.4).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (6 out of 11) reported having established cooperation arrangements to protect and restore migrant species in the area where the Protocol applies. Cooperation has been established through multilateral agreements, mainly the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS Convention) and its associated agreements, and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). This adds to the existing multilateral agreement in place for protecting species in a determined area, such as the Pelagos Sanctuary.

32. *Regulating and where appropriate prohibiting all forms of destruction and disturbance of protected species of flora, particularly those listed in Annex II to the Protocol (Article 11.5 and Article 12.2).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (7 out of 11) answered positively to this question. Three reporting Contracting Parties indicated work under development in this area. No difficulties were reported at this level.

33. *Formulation and adoption of measures and plans concerning the ex-situ reproduction, particularly in captivity, of protected fauna, and the growing of protected flora (Article 11.6).* Ex-situ reproduction programmes addressing the conservation of protected species have been developed by Many reporting Contracting Parties (5 out of 11).

34. *Granting of exemptions to the prohibitions prescribed for the protection of the species listed in the Annexes to the Protocol for scientific, educational, or management purposes necessary to ensure the survival of the species (Article 12.6).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (7 out of 11) reported that exceptions to the prohibitions prescribed for the protection of the species listed in the Annexes to the SPA/BD Protocol are granted as stated in Article 12.6 of the Protocol

35. *Taking steps to deal with the deliberate or accidental introduction into the wild of non-indigenous or genetically modified species and prohibiting those that may have harmful impacts on ecosystems habitats or species (Article 13).* Many reporting Contracting Parties (7 out of 11) stated having adopted measures dealing with the deliberate or accidental introduction of non-indigenous or genetically modified species into the wild. Various legal, policy and administrative frameworks are reported to be in place.

f) Monitoring

36. This Part requires information on implementation of quality status monitoring and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment (IMAP), with focus on monitoring of biodiversity-related Ecological Objectives (EO) (i.e. EO-1 biodiversity, EO-2 non-indigenous species, EO-3 harvest of commercially exploited fish and shellfish, EO-6 sea floor integrity). Only some reporting Contracting Parties (4 out of 11) indicated having monitoring activities in place, and others noted ongoing work in this area.

g) Enforcement Measures

37. Five reporting Contracting Parties have provided information under this section.

h) Implementation of Regional Action Plans (RAPs)

i. Regional Action Plan on Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans)

38. Seven reporting Contracting Parties reported on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Cartilaginous Fishes (Chondrichthyans), as below.

39. *Formalize/reinforce synchronous submission of catch, bycatch and discard data to both scientific and management bodies, annually to the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).* None of the seven reporting Contracting Parties indicated they formalized the submission of data as requested. Three Contracting parties answered the negative and four of them indicated work being under development.

40. *Establish strict legal protection for species listed in Annex II and GFCM recommendation through national laws and regulations.* Three out of seven reporting Contracting Parties indicated action in that regard by the establishment of strict legal protection for the species listed in Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol and GFCM Recommendation through their national laws and regulations. In three reporting Contracting Parties work is indicated to be under development.

41. *Support GFCM finning prohibition by enacting national regulations and monitoring their implementation and enforcement.* Four out of seven reporting Contracting Parties answered this question positively. A reporting Contracting Party indicated that this question was not applicable and another one indicated work under development.

42. *Complete and disseminate inventories of critical habitats (mating, spawning and nursery grounds).* Only two reporting Contracting Parties have answered this question affirmatively. Three Contracting Parties indicated work under development in this area.

43. *Increase compliance with obligations to collect and submit species-specific commercial catch and bycatch data to FAO and GFCM, including through increased use of observers.* Only two out of seven reporting Contracting Parties answered this question positively. Three reporting Contracting Parties indicated work under development in this area.

44. *Comply with obligations under GFCM recommendations to collect and submit data on pelagic shark catches.* None of reporting Contracting Parties indicated action in this filed to comply with obligations under GFCM recommendations. Three Contracting Parties negatively answered this point, and two Parties indicated the question is not applicable.

45. *Improve programmes for the collection and reporting of data from coastal fisheries.* Only two out of seven reporting Contracting Parties answered this question positively and four Parties indicated work under development.

46. *Monitor Critically Endangered, Endangered and endemic species.* One reporting Contracting Party answered to this question affirmatively and three more indicated work under development.

Difficulties raised in this area are mainly financial resources. Four other reporting Contracting Parties answered the negative.

47. *Submit to the GFCM annual Shark Assessment Reports describing all national target and/or bycatch fisheries.* Only One of seven reporting Contracting Parties answered this question positively.

48. *Develop and adopt (where these do not exist) national Shark Plans and specific regulations for fisheries exploiting chondrichthyans, whether target or bycatch.* None of the reporting Contracting Parties answered this question and two Parties indicated work under development in this area. Three Parties responded negatively, and two Parties indicated the question is not applicable.

ii. Regional Action Plan concerning Species Introduction and Invasive Species

49. Six reporting Contracting Parties reported on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan concerning Species Introduction and Invasive Species, as below.

50. *Set up a mechanism to promote and coordinate the actions listed in paragraph 22 of the Regional Action Plan.* Only One reporting Contracting Party out of six answered this question positively. Two reporting Contracting Parties indicated work under development.

51. *Conduct a baseline study to feed the Marine Mediterranean Invasive Species (MAMIAS).* A reporting Contracting Parties out of six indicated action taken in that regard.

52. *Development of programmes for data collection and monitoring.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of six referred to the data collection and monitoring programmes developed under IMAP and the EcAPMed Project, as well as the MSFD. The main difficulties reported in this field are financial resources and technical capabilities.

53. *Launch the procedures for enacting or strengthening national legislation governing the control of alien species introduction.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of six underlined the general domestic legislation regulating the introduction of alien species, as well as the EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species (IAS Regulation). Two reporting Contracting Parties noted work under development in this area.

54. *Develop programmes to raise the awareness of the general public and target groups, including decision-makers, concerning the risks associated with species introduction.* Two reporting Contracting Parties out of six responded affirmatively to this question, basing their answers on the training and awareness raising programmes conducted on the risks linked to the introduction of non-native species and on ways of addressing this problem. Two Parties noted that work is under development.

iii. Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Bird Species

55. Seven reporting Contracting Parties reported on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Bird Species, as below.

56. *Protect legally all bird species listed in Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol.* Bird species are protected by legislation (e.g. nature protection laws, protected species and sites laws and protection and trade of wild flora and fauna laws) in all reporting Contracting Parties.

57. *Optimize synergies with international agreements and organizations dedicated to bird conservation.* Only one reporting Contracting Party answered negatively to this question.

58. *Organize specific training courses and workshops in coordination/synergy with international and/or national NGOs.* Five reporting Contracting Parties out of Seven indicated the organization of such courses and workshops and two Parties answered 'no' to this question.

59. *Establishment / support of research and monitoring programs to fill gaps in the knowledge of threatened species in partnership with other organizations.* Five reporting Contracting Parties referred to the already established research and monitoring programmes in the context of the Barcelona Convention.

60. *Establishment and implementation of National Action Plans for the conservation of endangered and threatened bird species in the Mediterranean.* Two reporting Contracting Parties out

of Seven indicated having action plans for one or several of the bird species listed in Annex II to the Protocol. Three Parties indicated work under development in this area.

61. *Identification of areas of important for birds on land and at sea (mapping of breeding, feeding and wintering areas).* Five reporting Contracting Parties out of Seven responded to this question affirmatively. The key difficulty reported is financial resources.

62. *Legal establishment of protected areas with adequate management plans at breeding sites.* All reporting Contracting Parties indicated the establishment of protected areas in their territories for the protection of bird species and breeding sites under the SPA/BD Protocol.

iv. Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Cetaceans

63. Eight reporting Contracting Parties reported on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Cetaceans, as below.

64. *Ratify the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS) and implement its Resolutions and Recommendations of relevance for the Mediterranean Sea.* Five out of eight reporting Contracting Parties indicated ratification of the ACCOBAMS Agreement.

65. *Ensure that cetaceans are covered, at national level, by appropriate regulation measures providing for the elimination of deliberate killing and for the mitigation of the adverse impacts from their interactions with human activities.* Seven reporting Contracting Parties reported having taken regulatory measures to protect cetaceans mainly through enforcement laws.

66. *Ensure, through regulation or other appropriate approaches, that whale-watching activity is environmentally sound and sustainably conducted.* Two reporting Contracting Parties out of eight referred to specific regulation to monitor and follow-up whale-watching activities. Two Other Parties indicated work in progress and three stated that this question is not applicable.

67. *Undertake the comprehensive survey of abundance and distribution of cetaceans being planned by ACCOBAMS (ACCOBAMS Survey initiative).* Six reporting Contracting Parties out of eight answered to this question affirmatively.

68. *Assess the cetacean bycatch and depredation in their fisheries and adopt mitigation measures.* Two reporting Contracting Parties out of eight indicated action taken in this regard. Three Parties noted that work is under development in this area and one that this question was not applicable. Key difficulties reported referred to the administrative management and financial resources.

69. *Pursue the development and the implementation of a basin-wide strategy for underwater noise monitoring in the Mediterranean under the Ecological Objective 11 of the EcAp process.* Only one reporting Contracting Party out of eight specifically referred to the development and implementation of a strategy for underwater noise monitoring. Five reporting Contracting Parties indicated ongoing work on this matter under the IMAP.

70. *Development of acoustic mapping to build a comprehensive picture of the spatial and temporal distribution of anthropogenic noise sources, in particular for the noise hotspot areas identified in the Mediterranean by ACCOBAMS.* No developments indicated by reporting Contracting Parties. Otherwise, three Reporting Parties indicated work being prepared.

71. *Promote awareness of the anthropogenic noise impacts on cetaceans, targeting in particular decision makers, key players in the industry organizations and the stockholders in the shipping sectors.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of eight have responded to this question positively. Difficulties reported referred to financial resources.

72. *Establish a list of marine areas under its jurisdiction identified as of special importance for cetaceans.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of eight indicated having set up marine protected areas for the protection of cetacean. Three others mentioned work being prepared in this field.

v. Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Vegetation

73. Seven reporting Contracting Parties reported on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Marine Vegetation, as below.

74. *Take new vegetation species in Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol into account.* Only two reporting Contracting Parties out of seven stated that new vegetation species included in Annex II to the SPA/BD Protocol has been considered in their domestic protection measures.

75. *Create MPAs to conserve marine vegetation.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of seven answered positively to this question, by referring to the MPAs established as well as Sites of Community Importance (pSCIs). Two Parties indicated work under development in this area for the designation of MPAs.

76. *Set up a programme for making national inventories on macrophyta species, with staggered planning according to the regions' priorities.* Only one reporting Contracting Party out of seven responded to this question affirmatively. Three Parties indicated that inventories of macrophyta species were under development and another Party referred to the need to update its existing inventory.

77. *Make theoretical probable distribution maps for the main plant assemblages.* One reporting Contracting Party out of seven responded to this question positively.

78. *Implement targeted mapping and inventorying actions (Annex II species, priority sites).* Two of the seven reporting Contracting Parties indicated having implemented targeted mapping and inventory actions. Two other reporting Contracting Parties stated that work in this area is under development.

79. *Establish a programme for setting up monitoring networks for the main marine plant assemblages at national and regional level.* One reporting Contracting Party out of seven reported having setting-up monitoring networks for the main marine vegetation assemblages. Two Parties indicated work under development in this area. Main difficulties pointed out are financial resources and technical guidance.

80. *Set up and/or extend their networks for follow-up of plants in the Mediterranean.* Only one reporting Contracting Party responded positively to this question.

81. *To develop short, medium- and long-term action plans according to national and regional priorities.* Five reporting Contracting Parties out of seven negatively answered this question.

vi. Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of the Monk Seal

82. Nine reporting Contracting Parties reported on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of the Monk Seal, as below

83. *Has the Party given the monk seal protection status?* Six reporting Contracting Parties out of nine reported having granted protection status to the monk seals.

84. *For fishing, does the Party explicitly ban the use of dynamite, the carrying of firearms on boats, and all fishing techniques that can endanger monk seals?* Six reporting Contracting Parties out of nine reported having banned fishing techniques that can endanger monk seals, including the use of dynamite.

85. *If the Party still has breeding monk seal populations, have measures been taken to isolate monk seals from any human activity?* Two reporting Contracting Parties answered this question positively. Six Contracting parties stated that this question is not applicable.

86. *In the Party's territory, have SPAs been created to conserve monk seal populations or their potential habitats?* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of nine indicated having established protected areas for the conservation of monk seal populations.

87. *Has the Party established a list of breeding caves and other habitats that are of importance for monk seal conservation?* Two reporting Contracting Parties reported having inventoried the

breeding caves and other habitats of importance for monk seals conservation. Two Parties indicated ongoing work in this field.

88. *Has the Party carried out programmes for data collection on the monk seal?* Four reporting Contracting Parties out of nine reported having in place programmes for the collection of data on monk seals.

89. *Has the Party developed programmes for awareness raising, information and training concerning monk seal conservation?* Four reporting Contracting Parties out of Nine reported having developed awareness raising and training programmes concerning monk seals. This has been channeled through the relevant ministries and/or NGOs and cover a variety of actions such as wider distribution of informative material (i.e. booklets, brochures, etc.). The main difficulty reported is financial resources.

90. *Does the Party have an action plan for the conservation of monk seals and its potential habitats?* Only one reporting Contracting Party indicated having developed an action plan for the conservation of the monk seal. However, one Party noted that although action plan are not in place, measures to protect monk seals have been taken in the framework of protecting species acts.

vii. Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles

91. Eight reporting Contracting Parties reported on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Mediterranean Marine Turtles, as below

92. *Protection of turtles—general species protection.* Six reporting Contracting Parties out of eight stated having a legal framework in place for the protection of marine turtles.

93. *Enforce legislation to eliminate deliberate killing.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of eight indicated enforcement measures to eliminate deliberate killing of marine turtles. Two Parties noted ongoing work in this area.

94. *Habitat protection and management (nesting, mating, feeding, wintering and key migration passages).* Six reporting Contracting Parties out of eight indicated the establishment of habitat protection and management programmes for marine turtles. Two Parties indicated work being in preparation in this point.

95. *Setting up and implementing management plans.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of eight answered this question affirmatively. One of them underlined the role of Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC) and MAVA foundation in the preparation of the plan.

96. *Restoration of damaged nesting habitats.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of eight answered this question positively. Five Parties indicated that this question was not applicable.

97. *Fishing regulations (depth, season, gear) in key areas.* Four reporting Contracting Parties out of eight reported having established fishing regulations in key areas. One of them noted its awareness raising programmes to fishermen and the action of the Coast Guard in preventing marine turtles fishing. Three Parties noted ongoing work in developing their legal framework to regulate fishing of marine turtles.

98. *Setting up and/or improving operation of rescue centers.* Four reporting Contracting Parties out of eight stated having established rescue centers for marine turtles. One of them noted that a project to that end was launched in 2017 and that it's been completed by 2019.

99. *Identification of new mating, feeding and wintering areas and key migration passages.* Four reporting Contracting Parties out of eight responded to this question affirmatively. One of them specifically mentioned its programme in the Adriatic Sea for the *caretta caretta*, which is an important area for the wintering and feeding of the *caretta caretta*. Two Parties noted work under development in this field.

100. *Elaboration and execution of cooperative research projects of regional importance aimed at assessing the interaction between turtles and fisheries.* Two reporting Contracting Parties out of eight

responded to this question affirmatively and two Parties indicated ongoing work to develop research projects assessing the interaction between turtles and fisheries.

101. *Tagging and genetic analysis (as appropriate)*. Three reporting Contracting Parties out of eight indicated having conducted tagging programmes and genetic analysis.

102. *Modification of gear, methods and strategies*. Only one reporting Contracting Party responded to this question affirmatively. Three Parties indicated work under development in this area.

103. *Setting up and/or improving long-term monitoring programmes*. Two reporting Contracting Parties responded to this question affirmatively, by referring to the programmes established within the framework of IMAP and relevant EU Directives, such as the Habitats Directive. Three Parties noted work under development in this field.

104. *Setting up stranding networks*. Four reporting Contracting Parties out of eight indicated the establishment of stranding networks for marine turtles.

105. *Public awareness and information campaigns in particular for fishermen and local populations*. Seven reporting Contracting Parties out of eight reported having established awareness raising programmes and training activities on the conservation of marine turtles targeting fishermen and local populations. This has been done through action in nesting sites or care centers for marine turtles.

106. *Training courses*. Two reporting Contracting Parties out of eight answered to this question affirmatively.

107. *Elaboration of national action plans and assessment of progress in implementation*. Three reporting Contracting Party responded to this question affirmatively.

viii. Dark Habitats Action Plan

108. Two reporting Contracting Parties Indicated that this hole subject is not applicable for them. Four other reporting Contracting Parties reported on the implementation of the Dark Habitats Action Plan, as below.

109. *Making a summary of knowledge of dark populations and their distribution around the Mediterranean in the form of a geo-referenced information system*. Only one reporting Contracting Party out of four noted studies undertaken to expand the knowledge of dark populations. Two Parties indicated ongoing work in this area.

110. *Identify and assess proven pressures on each of the various types of habitat*. Two reporting Contracting Parties out of four answered the negative to this question and two other Parties indicated ongoing work.

111. *Revise the reference list of types of marine habitat for the selection of sites for inclusion in the national inventories of natural sites of conservation interest, in order to take account of dark assemblages*. No affirmative response to this question was reported. Two Parties noted work under development in this area. Main difficulty mentioned referred to financial resources.

112. *Revise the list of endangered or threatened species in order to take account of dark assemblages' species*. No reporting Contracting Party responded to this question affirmatively and two Parties noted ongoing work in this field.

113. *Promote the identification of areas of interest for the conservation of dark assemblages in the Mediterranean and carry out concerted actions in national and/or cross-border sites*. A reporting Contracting Party out of four reported on actions to identify areas of interest for the conservation of dark habitats in the Mediterranean.

114. *Finalize the implementing of marine protected areas (MPAs) in already identified sites at national level and outside waters that lie within national jurisdiction*. No affirmative response to this question received. All the four responding Parties indicated work under development in this area. Difficulties reported referred mainly to administrative management.

115. *Propose the creation of new MPAs.* Only one reporting Contracting Party out of four referred to studies carried out addressing the creation of MPAs for the protection of dark habitats, and three noted ongoing work in this area.

116. *Extent existing MPAs to integrate nearby sites that host dark assemblages.* One reporting Contracting Party out of four answered this question affirmatively.

117. *Introduce national legislation to reduce negative impacts.* Two reporting Contracting Parties out of four answered this question.

118. *Integrate taking dark assemblages into account within impact studies procedures.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of four responded to this question affirmatively and a Party reported ongoing work to factor dark assemblages into impact studies procedures.

119. *Step up awareness and information about dark assemblages with the various actors.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of four reported ongoing work in this process.

120. *Implement monitoring systems.* Only one reporting Contracting Party out of four responded affirmatively to this question.

ix. Regional Action Plan for the conservation of Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions

121. Five reporting Contracting Parties reported on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for the conservation of Coralligenous and Other Calcareous Bio-concretions, as below.

122. *Improve habitat modeling methods could provide new predictive models on Coralligenous distribution and guide cost-effective field surveys for data acquisition.* Only one reporting Contracting Party out of five reported having improved habitat modeling methods and predictive models on Coralligenous distribution either through scientific research or ongoing projects.

123. *Promote research programs on Coralligenous assemblages and maerl beds.* Two reporting Contracting Parties out of five reported having promoted research programs on Coralligenous assemblages and maerl beds, and a Party stated that programmes are under development to that end.

124. *Develop and implement legislation initiatives for the conservation of Coralligenous assemblages.* Three reporting Contracting Parties out of five indicated having developed and implemented legislation initiatives to protect Coralligenous assemblages.

125. *Coordinate the design of an Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program for the assessment of the state Coralligenous/maerl assemblages in view to be included the assessment of the state of the Mediterranean.* Only one reporting Contracting Party out of five responded affirmatively to this question.

Conclusion & main overall findings

- The analysis made is based on eleven countries, Parties to the Barcelona Convention. The European Union, which is not a country, was not considered for the calculations. Thus, the present summary is made based on eleven national reports.
- From the BCRS reporting system, it appears that the biennium 2018-2019 got major efforts made in implementing the SPA/BD Protocol at regulation level.
- Indeed, some Parties adopted new regulatory arrangements (e. g. laws, decrees) that enabled the Protocol to be better implemented.
- Most reporting Contracting Parties have designated Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) during this reporting period, as well as the measures for their protection, preservation and sustainable management. The efforts made in this field are still ongoing as new SPAs have been established in most reporting Contracting Parties' territories, during the current biennium.

- Management Plans for SPAs are reported to having been developed by most reporting Contracting Parties. However, as specifically indicated by some reporting Contracting Parties, though management plans are not in place for some SPAs, measures for the protection of those SPAs have been articulated through other means. As regards the effective management of SPAs, it seems that further progress is needed in this area.
- In almost all reporting Contracting Parties, measures are indicated having been taken to regulate scientific research in their SPAs. Nearly all reporting Contracting Parties indicated the adoption of measures regulating offshore activities and the taking of species in their SPAs. Dumping activities in SPAs are reported to be regulated in most reporting Contracting Parties and many of them noted measures taken to regulate the passage and anchoring of ships in their SPAs.
- Appropriate training for the technical managers and other qualified staff of SPAs were established by most reporting Contracting Parties. This has been taken forward in different ways, such as through Projects and SPA/RAC training courses.
- As regards monitoring, it seems that the monitoring of the Biodiversity related Ecological Objectives within the framework of the Integrated Monitoring & Assessment Programme (IMAP) requires strengthening focus and efforts on EO2 (Non- indigenous species) and EO6 (Sea-floor integrity).
- The List of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs) currently consists of 39 sites. Within the 2018-2019 period four new SPAMIs were included.
- Regulatory protection measures for endangered or threatened species are reported to be in place in most reporting Contracting Parties.
- Inventories of the components of the biological diversity important for its conservation and sustainable use are indicated to be in place in many reporting Contracting Parties, with particular emphasis on marine areas. This has been mainly achieved by transposing the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol), as well as relevant European Union Directives, such as the Habitats Directive;
- Many reporting Contracting Parties mention listing species that are endangered or threatened at national level, or the ongoing updating of existing lists and identification of their distribution in the zones subject to Party's jurisdiction.
- Measures and plans concerning the ex-situ reproduction or reintroduction of wild protected fauna are indicated having been established in some reporting Contracting Parties.
- Regional Action Plan on Cartilaginous Fishes: data synchronization and submission, preparation, collection and submission of data on pelagic shark catches, development and adoption of national Shark Action Plans are areas which appear to require further action.
- Regional Action Plan on Invasive Species: it seems that further efforts should be made to effectively address the threats that invasive species represent to the marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean region. In particular, action should be reinforced as regards coordination between Parties and feeding the Marine Mediterranean Invasive Species (MAMIAS) with data.
- Regional Action Plan on Bird Species: great efforts have been made in advancing in the implementation of this plan by reporting Contracting Parties.
- Regional Action Plan on Cetaceans: A lot of efforts are made by Contracting Parties and it appears that efforts should be intensified specially in the areas of acoustic mapping to build a comprehensive picture of the spatial and temporal distribution of anthropogenic noise sources.

- Regional Action Plan on Marine Vegetation: it appears that there is a need to increase efforts to advance in the implementation of this plan, by developing national action plans according to new priorities.
- Regional Action Plan on the Conservation of the Monk Seal: efforts made by Contracting Parties for the conservation of the monk seal is linked to the presence of this species in national waters. It is worth pointing out that some reporting Contracting Parties are developing several projects and programmes aimed at protecting the Mediterranean Monk Seal.
- Regional Action Plan on Turtles: it appears that efforts should be intensified in the following areas to further advance in the implementation of the plan: Setting up and/or improving long-term monitoring programmes, establishment of cooperative research projects of regional importance and training courses.
- Regional Action Plan on Dark Habitats: a few initiatives have been put in place in some reporting Contracting Parties, which indicate the need to continue and strengthen efforts.
- Regional Action Plan on Coralligenous and other Calcareous Bio-concretions: actions taken by reporting Contracting Parties, which projects for implementing this plan, are a positive sign. To further enhance implementation, it seems that focus should be put on habitat data modelling and on designing an Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program for the assessment of the state coralligenous/maral assemblages.