

**Decision IG.23/9**

**Identification and Conservation of Sites of Particular Ecological Interest in the Mediterranean, including Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance**

*The Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols at their twentieth meeting,*

*Having regard* to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, in particular article 8 and annex I thereof, on the establishment of the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance and the common criteria for the choice of protected marine and coastal areas that could be included in the list respectively,

*Recalling* decision IG.17/12, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their fifteenth meeting (COP 15) (Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008), on the procedure for the revision of the areas included in the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, stating that for each of the Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, a periodic review should be carried out every six years by a mixed national/independent technical advisory commission,

*Recalling also* decision IG.19/13, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their sixteenth meeting (COP 16) (Marrakesh, Morocco, 3-5 November 2009), on the regional working programme for the coastal and marine protected areas in the Mediterranean, including the high sea,

*Recalling further* decisions IG.22/13 and IG.22/14, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their nineteenth meeting (COP 19) (Athens, Greece, 9-12 February 2016), on the road map for a comprehensive coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 in the Mediterranean and on the list of specially protected areas of Mediterranean importance respectively,

*Mindful* of the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 14,

*Noting* the results of the evaluation of the implementation of the regional working programme for the coastal and marine protected areas in the Mediterranean Sea, including the high sea, supported by the road map for a comprehensive coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 in the Mediterranean,<sup>1</sup>

*Expressing appreciation* for the efforts of the Contracting Parties in establishing and managing marine protected areas effectively, thus contributing to a comprehensive coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas in the Mediterranean region,

*Committed* to further streamlining the Mediterranean Action Plan ecological objectives and associated Good Environmental Status and targets, as well as the Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and Coast and related assessment criteria into the management plans of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance and marine protected areas,

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<sup>1</sup> See UNEP(DEPI)/MED WG.443/Inf.9.

*Having considered* the proposal made by France, pursuant to article 9(3) of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, to include a new area in the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, and the agreement reached in that regard by the focal points for specially protected areas at their thirteenth meeting,

*Having considered* a proposal made by Spain pursuant to article 9 (3) of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean to include the new area Cetaceans Migration Corridor in the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, and the discussion in that regard by the focal points for specially protected areas at their thirteenth meeting.

1. *Decide* to include the Calanques National Park (France) in the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance;
2. *Welcome* the proposal by Spain and recognize the regional value of the Cetaceans Migration Corridor and the sound scientific basis provided for the inclusion of this area in the list, and encourage Spain to finalize the ongoing procedures at the national level to award to the area the status of marine protected area in line with the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean in order to formalize at the twenty-first Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention its final inclusion in the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance.
3. *Encourage* the Contracting Parties to strengthen their efforts to expand the list of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance;
4. *Also encourage* the Contracting Parties to undertake further efforts to improve the management of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance by strengthening collaboration through the promotion of tools such as twinning partnerships or other proven mechanisms for developing and managing Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance, thus contributing to a comprehensive coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas in the Mediterranean region;
5. *Further encourage* the Contracting Parties to ensure stakeholder involvement at the local and national levels with a view to facilitating a comprehensive and participatory process in developing and managing Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance;
6. *Request* Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre to continue supporting the use of the online evaluation system of Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance for evaluating coastal national Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance and test the online evaluation system for transboundary high-sea Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance;
7. *Also request* Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre to work with the relevant authorities in France, Italy, Lebanon, Monaco, Spain and Tunisia to carry out the ordinary periodic review for the nineteen Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance listed below, in accordance with the procedure established in decision IG.17/12, adopted by the Contracting Parties at their fifteenth meeting (COP 15) (Almeria, Spain, 15-18 January 2008), and bring the outcome of that review process to the attention of the Contracting Parties at their twenty-first meeting.

The following seven Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance are to be reviewed in 2018:

- Blue Coast Marine Park (France)
- Embiez Archipelago - Six Fours (France)
- Porto Cesareo Marine Protected Area (Italy)
- Capo Carbonara Marine Protected Area (Italy)
- Marine Protected Area of Penisola del Sinis - Isola di Mal di Ventre (Italy)
- Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (Lebanon)
- Palm Islands Nature Reserve (Lebanon)

The following twelve Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance are to be reviewed in 2019:

- Port-Cros (France)
- Pelagos Sanctuary for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (France, Italy and Monaco)
- Alboran Island (Spain)
- Natural Park of Cabo de Gata-Níjar (Spain)
- Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria (Spain)
- Natural Park of Cap de Creus (Spain)
- Medes Islands (Spain)
- Mar Menor and the Oriental Mediterranean zone of the region of Murcia coast (Spain)
- Columbretes Islands (Spain)
- La Galite Archipelago (Tunisia)
- Kneiss Islands (Tunisia)
- Zembra and Zembretta National Park (Tunisia)

