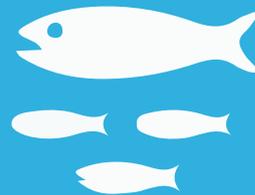




Blue eco forum

Dialogues, workshops &
festival for a Sustainable
Mediterranean Sea

Barcelona — 25·11·2016



FINAL REPORT

Blue Eco Forum is co-organized by eco-union, Fundació ENT, EUCC; produced by Loom Sostenible Experiences and Posidonia Green Project; and supported by Barcelona City Hall, Catalan Government and Maritime Museum of Barcelona, among other private and public partners.

This report has been written by Julia Ruff and Aritz Bellver, under the coordination of Jérémie Fosse (all eco-union) with the support of Carolina Perez (EUCC) and Lydia Chaparro (ENT).

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INTRODUCTION



“Our beloved Mediterranean Sea is under deadly threats.”

Jérémie Fosse, president of eco-union & director of Global Eco Forum

“Our sea is sick.”

Frederic Ximeno, Commissioner of Ecology at Barcelona City Council

“Today economy does not address the challenges of our planet.”

Marta Subirà, Secretary of Sustainability at the Government of Catalonia

These quotes sum up the challenges which not only the Mediterranean region but the entire world is currently facing. The Mediterranean Sea, as **Jérémie Fosse (eco-union)** pointed out, has always been a key driver for economic development in this area. In order to keep taking advantage of such a productive asset there is an urgent need to turn the economic structure into a sustainable, circular and healthy eco-system based on the Blue, Green and Inclusive Economy.

Both, Catalonia and Barcelona make strenuous efforts to bring the region's economic goals with existing and undeniable ecological limits in line. Catalonia, member of the Mediterranean Protected Areas Network (MedPan), has launched diverse projects regarding green infrastructure and environmental recovery such a posidonia restoration in the north coast of the region. **Marta Subirà (Government of Catalonia)** highlighted the good performance of the Catalan Water Agency which provides service to 97% of the population and takes care of the water quality of the coast and beach areas. In addition, the Agency is taking action to optimize the water consumption in the tourism sector.

Frederic Ximeno (Barcelona City Council) explained that the 2017 Coast Strategic Plan will focus on the seafront and beaches and it will have an integral vision thanks to a participatory methodology. The Barcelona City Council is a member of *Aliança Mar Blava*¹, a civil society platform which advocate for a Mediterranean free from oil and gas explorations. As **Frederic Ximeno** stated, to act in accordance with *Climate Paris Agreement*², oil and gas activities in the Mediterranean must be stopped. In addition, in order to take care of the nature's biodiversity, the Council supports the maritime corridor for cetaceans.

Both institutional representatives agreed that good governance is the key to address the current and future challenges. A well coordinated and coherent collaboration between public and private sectors is crucial to be successful.

¹ www.alianzamarblava.org

² www.cop21.gouv.fr

STATE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

A region under stress



“Our priorities are all wrong”, stated **George Saliba, Ambassador at the Union for the Mediterranean**, referring to regional political decisions which clearly reflected a lack of global vision, cooperation and long term strategy. Policies based on short term and “national economic interest” had direct impact on crisis such as the war in Syria, jihadi terrorism, Libya’s instability, refugee and migrant crisis and especially on the environmental degradation.

In addition to this, and probably due to the same political failures, Europe remains immersed in a deep economic crisis which is stressing social and economic inequalities. Consequently, the institutional and social crisis are becoming deeper. The Brexit and the increasing influence of Eurosceptic and Populist parties are a clear example. Thus, the European Union is facing an existential crisis in which its values are put in danger. How this crisis is resolved will be critical for the continent’s future and thereby for the future of the Mediterranean region.

In 2016, more than 4.600 people died or were reported as missed in the Mediterranean waters, a sad and terrible record (Figure 1). The European Union reacted to this huge humanitarian tragedy by strengthening the border controls and providing very poor assistance. In fact, some of the weak assistance measures are far from being implemented such as the relocation programme.

Figure 1: Migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea



Source: *Missing Migrants Project, IOM, Dec. 2016*

³ <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/mediterranean>



Unfortunately, this humanitarian crisis goes beyond the conflicts and instability the South of the Mediterranean is suffering from. As **Mathieu Amiraux, Head of Logistics at MSF Spain**, pointed out: “Whatever we do to sort out the problems Libya and Syria are confronted with, this migrant influx to Europe will not stop”. Two arguments support his statement. First, no significant change in the numbers of migrants took place in the recent years. Second, a considerable part of the migrant influx comes from non-Mediterranean regions such as Asia and sub-Saharan Africa

Figure 2: Migration routes



Source: Thomson Reuters

Regarding the socioeconomic state of Southern Mediterranean region, we must take into account that not only Syria and Libya are in trouble. Tunisia, Egypt and Turkey are also suffering from high instability and turmoil contributing to a lower tourism income, higher youth unemployment and lower food and water access.

This sub-region is experiencing a significant socio-demographic transformation. First, the population in Arab countries is sharply increasing. According to the UN the Arab population is expected to reach half a billion by

2025 (UNDP, 2013). Second, the average age of Arab countries is decreasing. As Javier Albarracín, Head of the Socio-Economic Department at the European of the Mediterranean (IEMed), explained: “70% of the Arab population is under 30 years old”. Third, women are increasing their demands and pressures in order to reduce the existing gender gap. Apart from that, there is a strong migration from rural to urban areas due to higher incomes of the latter.

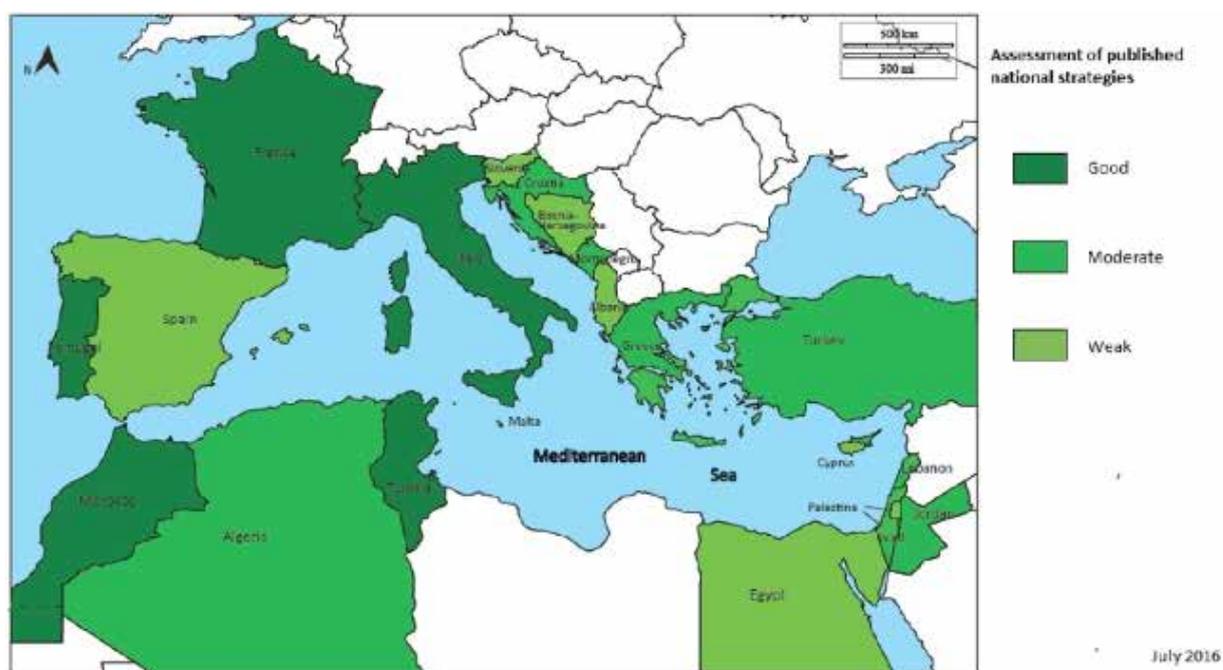
The economic perspectives for the North of the Mediterranean remain poor due to low economic growth and high unemployment. For instance, Greece and Spain are facing unemployment rates of 23% and 19%, respectively. If we focus on youth unemployment, the problem is exacerbated, as the ratio hits 43%, 43% and 37% for Greece, Spain and Italy, respectively (Eurostat, July 2016).



Concerning the environment, the UN conferences on climate Change COP21 and COP22, both held in Mediterranean countries (France and Morocco), have clearly stated the threat that climate change represents globally and the vulnerability of the Mediterranean region as a biodiversity hotspot. In this context, **María José Cornax, Campaign Director at Oceana**, emphasized the extent of the problem: “The Mediterranean is suffering the biggest ecological crisis in a global level”. Biodiversity loss, improperly managed Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and a terrible fishery sector management were some of the reasons leading to the fact that 93% of the fish stocks are overexploited.

The Mediterranean has never been a priority for decision makers. The Green Economy Strategies in the Mediterranean study presented by **Kristian Petrick, Senior Expert at Eco-Union**, proves the lack of political will. In fact, “only 5 in 21 countries have good national strategies on green economy and sustainable development, [...] most of the stakeholders having a low commitment to the implementation of Green Economy (GE)”, in **Kristian Petricks (Eco-Union)** words (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Assessment of Green Economy and Sustainable Development Strategies



Source: *State of Green Economy in the Mediterranean*, eco-union, MIO-ESCDE & GEC, 20164

4 <http://www.medgreeneconomy.org/>



Recommendations to improve social, economic and environmental state

“It is time to start thinking as a region”, as **Javier Albarracín (IEMed)** asserted. Political will, dialogue and cooperation between the North and South Mediterranean are essential, if we want the region to be better off. Regarding the humanitarian crisis, as **Mathieu Amiraux (MSF)** stated, “Europe must offer safe passages to migrants”. This is urgent and cannot be postponed anymore.

Another priority for the region, according to **George Saliba (UfM)**, is job creation which will help to reduce social instability and increase inclusiveness in particular for youth and women. To tackle this challenging issue, Blue Economy implemented through the use of clean technology is seen as promising opportunities for the future.

Finally, regarding the protection of environment, awareness, commitment and involvement of all stakeholders need to be improved. This, according to **María José Cornax (Oceana)**, should be done by developing a sense of ownership. **Kristian Petrick (eco-union)** added the need for consistent, coherent and ambitious Green Economy and Sustainable Development strategies at national and local levels.



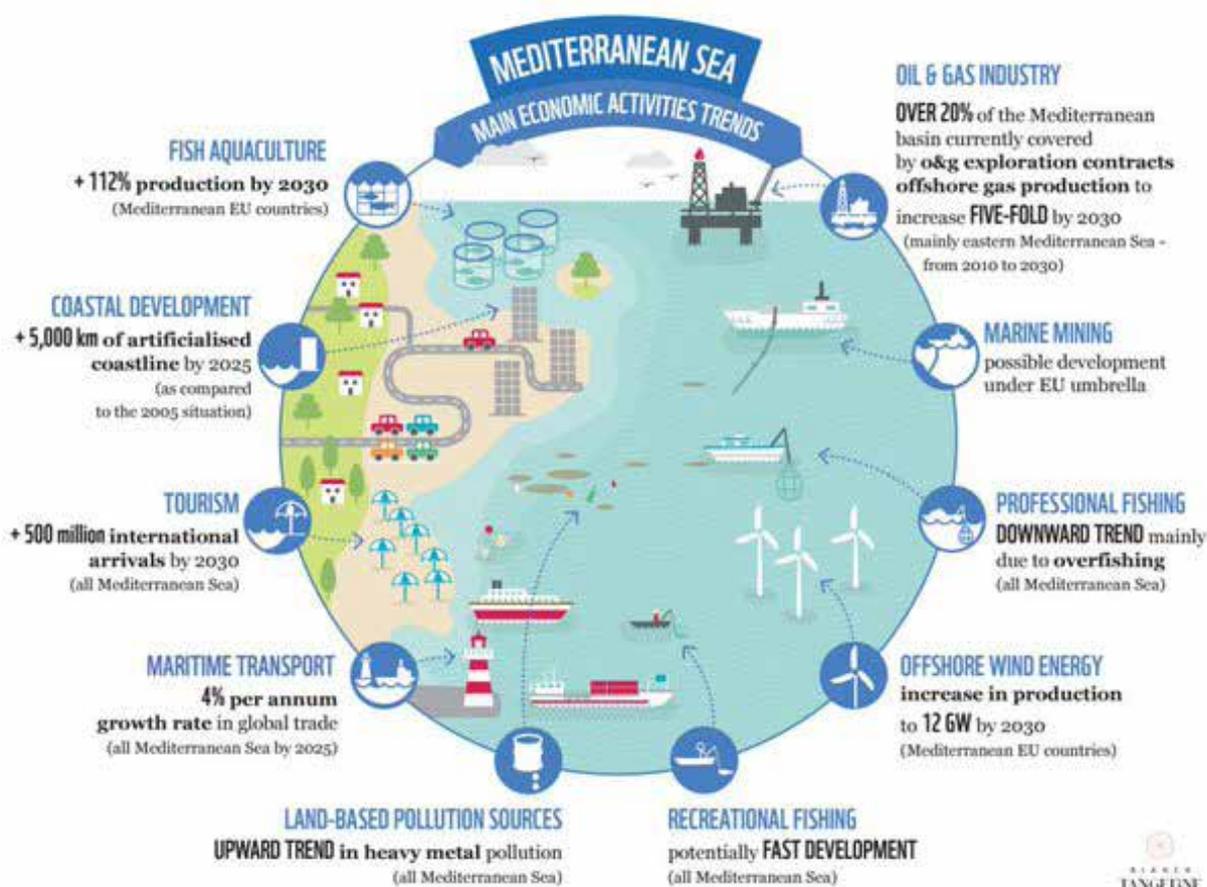
BLUE ECONOMY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Swimming across opportunities and challenges



The Mediterranean Sea is a rich and dynamic region, dominated by large economic industries, such as tourism, energy, shipping, fishery and aquaculture which will increase significantly in the next 15 years according to the WWF MedTrends Report 2015 (figure 4)⁵. As **Oscar Esparza, MPA Coordinator at WWF Spain**, pointed out, “there is a fast and unorganized development of the sectors related to Blue Economy. Proper national and regional regulation is urgently needed in order to avoid an environmental and economic impoverishment”.

Figure 4: Blue Economy trends in the Mediterranean Sea



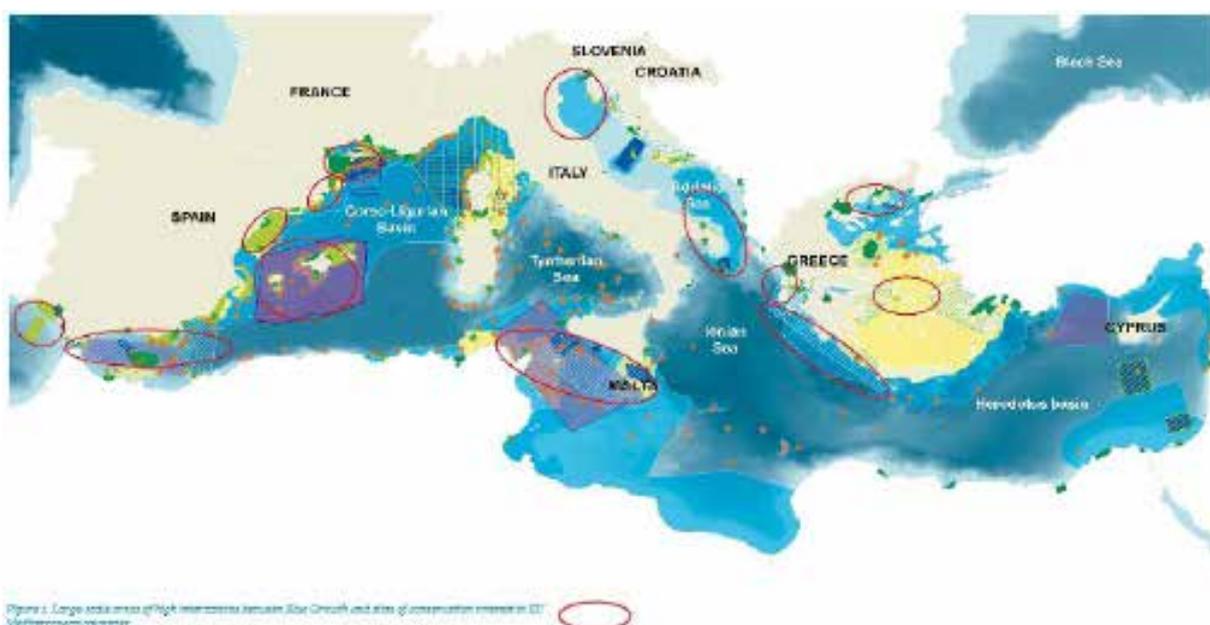
Source: Med Trends Report, WWF, 2016

⁵ Blue Growth in the Mediterranean Sea: The Challenge of Good Environmental Status, WWF, 2015. http://www.medtrends.org/reports/MEDTRENDS_REGIONAL.pdf



The only sector which is expected to decrease is traditional fisheries. Unfortunately, this is not due to a proper management but years of overexploitation of resources. In this context, renewable energies, energy-efficient shipping, sustainable water and waste management, the restructuring of coastal and cruise tourism, the stop of overfishing and the resilience of marine ecosystems need to be further developed and implemented. Thus, the Mediterranean is facing a huge challenge ahead: to make economic development environmentally sustainable while protecting the natural ecosystem health (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Areas of conflicts between Blue Growth activities and conservation areas



Source: *Blue Growth in the Mediterranean Sea: The Challenge of Good Environmental Status*, WWF, 2015

Recommendations to implement a sustainable Blue Economy in the Mediterranean

As **Anne-France Didier (Plan Bleu)** commented, progress has been made in terms of regulation. The recently approved Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)⁶ which contains indicators for a better monitoring of the implementation process is seen as step forward. However, it is also true that in terms of implementation alarmingly little has been done since the oceans and the Mediterranean sea started to be present in the political agenda. Consequently, “the Good Environmental Status (GES) of EU marine waters by 2020” will not be achieved.

⁶ Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016–2025, UNEP MAP, 2016.
http://planbleu.org/sites/default/files/upload/files/MSSD_2016-2025_final.pdf



In order to tackle this huge challenge, **Oscar Esparza (WWF)** describes as a first step the obligation to comply with the current legal framework and to establish proper environmental management. A clear example why the former is imperative is the fact that although “the MAP area in the Mediterranean accounts for 8,5%, only 1% is properly managed.”

Ann Dom (Seas at Risk) advocates for “going back to holistic thinking, recovering values and going away from a consumerist society”. Although this might be the best solution for protecting our natural resources, the truth is that such an economic system shift will not take place in the short term and thus other feasible solutions need to be explored.

A wide consensus exists about the fact that policy makers must take into account both healthy environment and sound economy. The involvement of all stakeholders is also crucial to achieve overall sustainability goals. Not only policymakers, private sector, NGOs and scientists must be involved but also young people and consumers, **Frederic Valls, Director of the Fishing and Nautical School of Catalonia**, and **Javier Ojeda (APROMAR)** respectively explained. Again, in order to engage with those actors, **Aniol Esteban, Program Director from New Economics Foundation (NEF)**, appealed to launch creative communication campaigns based on emotional, beauty and identity feelings.



A SEA OF CHALLENGES

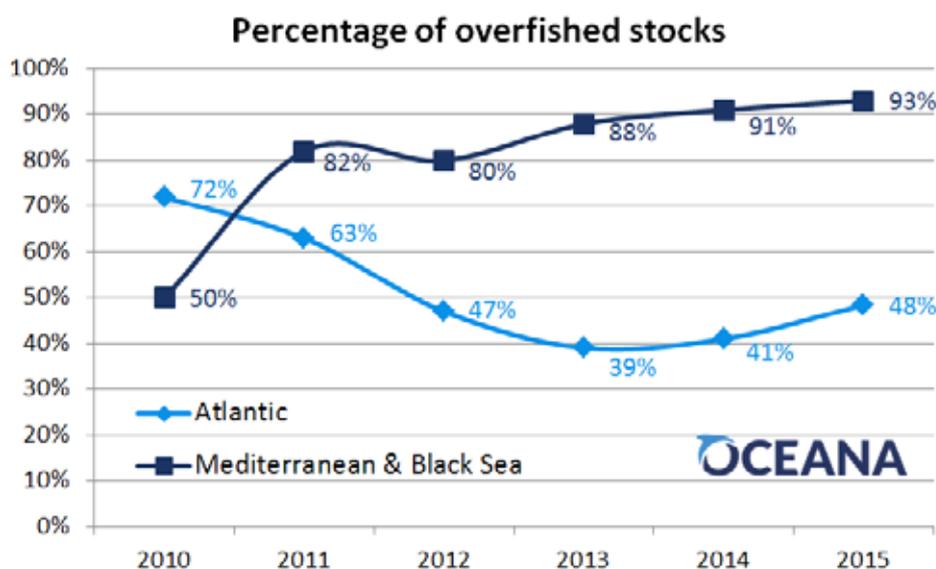
Present and future of Mediterranean fisheries



At current time, 93% of Mediterranean fish stocks are overfished⁷ (figure 7), seabed habitats are irreversibly destroyed, daily, the loss of marine biodiversity is a reality, and the marine ecosystem is on the verge of collapse. Industry's overcapacity, damaging fishing methods and an expanding demand for food, are some of the main reasons which lead to the current unsustainable situation.

The sea is still a large unknown place for people, “a hidden part of the world where scientific data is missed for”, admitted **Sergio Rossi, Senior Scientific Researcher at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ICTA-UAB)**. We have to integrate ecology in our society as our current economic system ignores environmental limits.

Figure 7: Percentage of overfished stocks in Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean and Black Sea



Source: Status of fish stocks conflicts with political commitments, Oceana, 2015

Regarding fisheries, the European Union agreed to an ambitious reform of its **Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)**⁸ that entered into force in 2014. The CFP aims to ensure that fishing and aquaculture are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. More specifically, in order to ensure the recovery of fish stocks in European waters, the CFP includes a binding commitment to end overfishing by 2015 or at the latest by 2020.

⁷ Consultation on fishing opportunities under the Common Fisheries Policy, European Commission, 2015.

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/maritimeaffairs_fisheries/consultations/fishing-opportunities-2016/doc/com_2015_239_en.pdf

⁸ Common Fisheries Policy, Official Journal of the European Union, 2013.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0022:0061:EN:PDF>



Lydia Chaparro, Fisheries Coordinator at Fundació ENT, pointed out that legal compliance is essential to achieve healthy marine environments, profitable fisheries, and viable coastal communities. However, “In the last decades many regulations and rules has been agreed, but the coastal and marine ecosystems degradation has constantly increase. Therefore, how to ensure the recovery of fish stocks in the Mediterranean and at the same time ensure a future for our fishermen becomes a serious challenge.”

María José Cornax (Oceana) stated that “there are large gaps between this set of rules and fisheries management tools. On the one hand, EU ministers succumb to short-term political pressures ignoring science and long-term sustainability. On the other hand, the Mediterranean has one of the oldest government structures for fisheries: The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) is more than 50 years old”.

Brian O’Riordan, Deputy Director of the Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE Platform) supported her opinion: “Unfortunately, we wasted 40 years on establishing big institutions which are inappropriate to the reality”. Besides this, he deplored that there is not any effective control for fisheries in the Mediterranean, neither in the North, nor in the South. According to Oceana, “More than 50% of the fish stocks worldwide are on the verge of decline beyond the point of no return and thereby threatened with extinction especially in the Mediterranean. Thus, urgent action is needed to be taken to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, adjust the fishing capacity and introduce emergency measures and recovery plans”.⁹

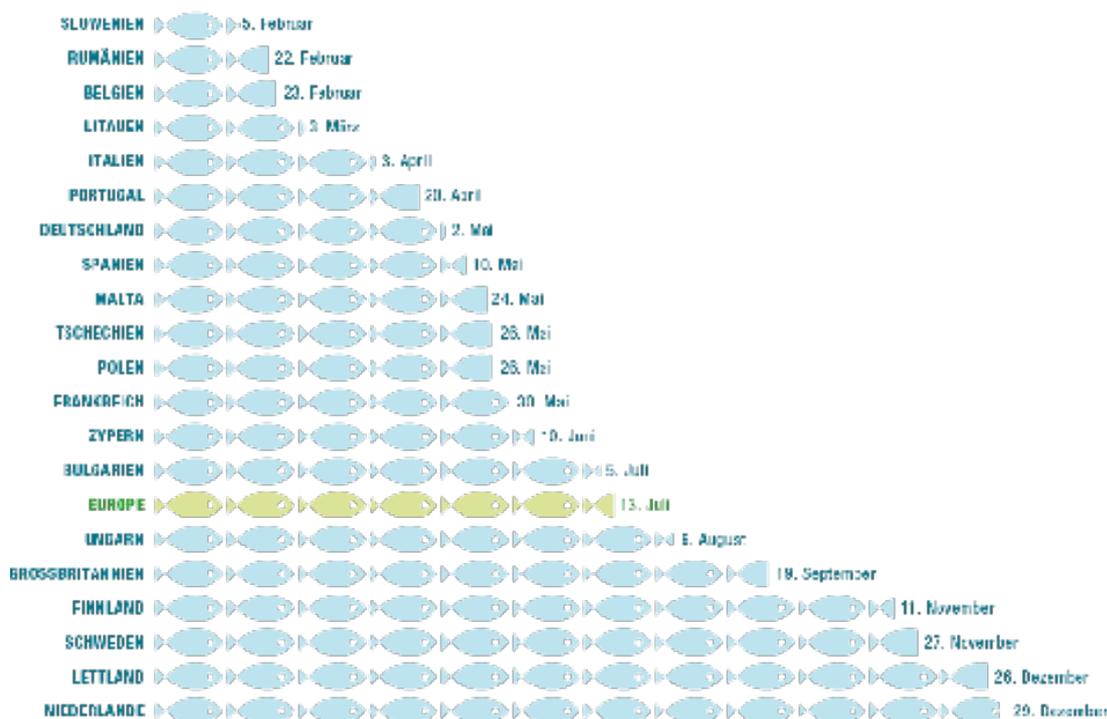
Another alarming index represents the annual Fish Dependence Day, presented by **Aniol Esteban, Program Director at the New Economics Foundation (NEF)**. This index estimates the degree of self-sufficiency of european countries (figure 8). The fact that the EU’s Fish Dependence Day 2016 has been “celebrated” on 13 July implies that almost one-half of the consumed fish has been sourced from non-EU waters this year. Spain has already exploited his own fish resources on 10 May, including its output of aquaculture. In general, as Aniol Esteban (NEF) stated, we can observe a continuous shift of the fish dependence days to earlier dates. The fish dependency is thereby negatively affecting other Mediterranean parts like North Africa, which are much more in need of these food and job resources.¹⁰

⁹ High Level Seminar on the state of stocks in the Mediterranean and on the CFP approach, Oceana, 2016. http://oceana.org/sites/default/files/oceana_med_joint_ngo_statement_eng.pdf

¹⁰ Fish Dependence - 2016 Update, New Economics Foundation, 2016. <http://neweconomics.org/fish-dependence-2016-update/>

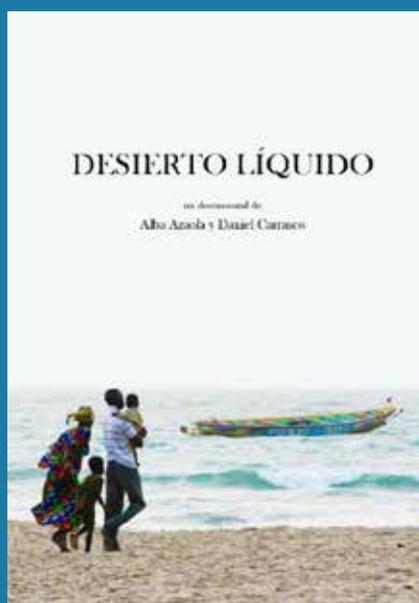


Figure 8: Fish Dependence Day



Source: New Economics Foundation, 2016

In brief, besides fisheries, it seems that there are many challenges also to address regarding compliance and seafood market policies, but what is indubitable is that ending overfishing can bring multiple benefits to the society. EU member states need to look beyond the short-term costs of fish stock restoration and turn the potential long-term benefits that healthy marine resources can provide into a reality.



Documentary: Desierto Líquido The North-South Divide of The Fishing Industry

Our seas are on the verge of losing their vitality. Dead coral reefs, empty sea beds, vanished species, this is the image the title of the documentary alludes to. As closing event of the Blue Eco Forum, the presentation of this investigative work provided a deep insight into the devastating effects of current unsustainable fishing practices on the economy and society in West African communities. The film took the Spanish directors Alba Azaola and Daniel Carrasco on a journey from the Iberian Peninsula to Mauritania and Senegal. In order to guarantee the supply for its own fish consumption, Europe gets the West African coast into economic and social trouble. As in some regions up to 80% of economic activities depend on the fishing industry, the people's jobs and professional perspectives disappear proportionally to the ocean's fish. By supporting artisanal fisheries and promoting responsible consumption in Europe, the disadvantageous situation in Spanish coastal communities can be solved, as well as the economic and social tragedy in Western Africa.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/141605150>



As Aniol Esteban (NEF) stressed out, “research shows that sustainable fisheries management would increase revenues and create jobs more effectively than the current management. Healthy fish stocks mean more food, jobs and profits.” The results from the Bio-Economic Model of European Fisheries (BEMEF)¹¹ show that rebuilding commercial EU fish stocks in North Atlantic waters would deliver 2,052,639 tonnes of additional fish per year and €824 million additional net profits per year which could support up to 64,092 new jobs. A recent report¹² also shows that when fishing in EU waters is brought within sustainable limits, the marine ecosystem, fishing industry, and coastal communities recover.

Recommendation to improve the state of Mediterranean fisheries and industry

Brian O’Riordan (LIFE) affirmed that “empowering low impact fisheries instead of conventional fishing operations is the future we should build on. Social networks are crucial to support little fishers and artisanal fish markets, added. The distance between the consumer and the fish itself has to be reduced to raise awareness about what we buy, ingest and finally support. Less consumption, more information and more consciousness are the fundamental principles for recovered fish stocks and a healthy ecosystem.”

On the same note, researcher **Sergio Rossi (ICTA-UAB)** appealed to follow a bottom-up strategy, to get mindful and respectful to our oceans and to the species sharing with us this world. In this context, **Lydia Chaparro (Fundació ENT)** declared “we have to produce and consume more quality than quantity. Seafood should also be correctly labeled in our markets”. “But do we have the entire power as a consumer?”, asked **Aniol Esteban (NEF)**, “we are confronted with huge flows of information. It is also up to the economy and government to provide easily accessible details about the entire supply chain”.

Likewise, **Sergi Tudela, General Director for Fisheries and Marine Affairs of the Government of Catalonia**, pleaded for the devolution of executive power to local levels, the fishermen themselves or the coastal communities. As he stated, “in Catalonia, a new governmental decree offers a practicable guidance for bioeconomic management taking all stakeholders into account”. The regulatory handbook is elaborated by a committee consisting of managers, scientists, fishers and other actors on different levels. In this regard, Catalonia has a pioneer role by putting co-responsibility into practice by trying to establish a holistic socio-economic fishery policy.

¹¹ <http://neweconomics.org/managing-eu-fisheries-in-the-public-interest/>

¹² <http://www.consult-poseidon.com/fishery-reports/Poseidon%20Management%20Works%20Report.pdf>

MARINE LITTER

Towards a cleaner Mediterranean sea



Marine litter is a critical problem for the Mediterranean. As **Magali Outter, Senior Expert at SCP/RAC (UNEP/MAP)** stated, in relative terms there is up to eight times more marine litter in the Mediterranean compared to the rest of the oceans¹³. This level of plastic pollution (Figure 9) has a tremendous negative environmental, economic, safety, health and cultural impact. According to the European Commission¹⁴, approximately 80% of the marine litter comes from the land and 20% from sea activities.

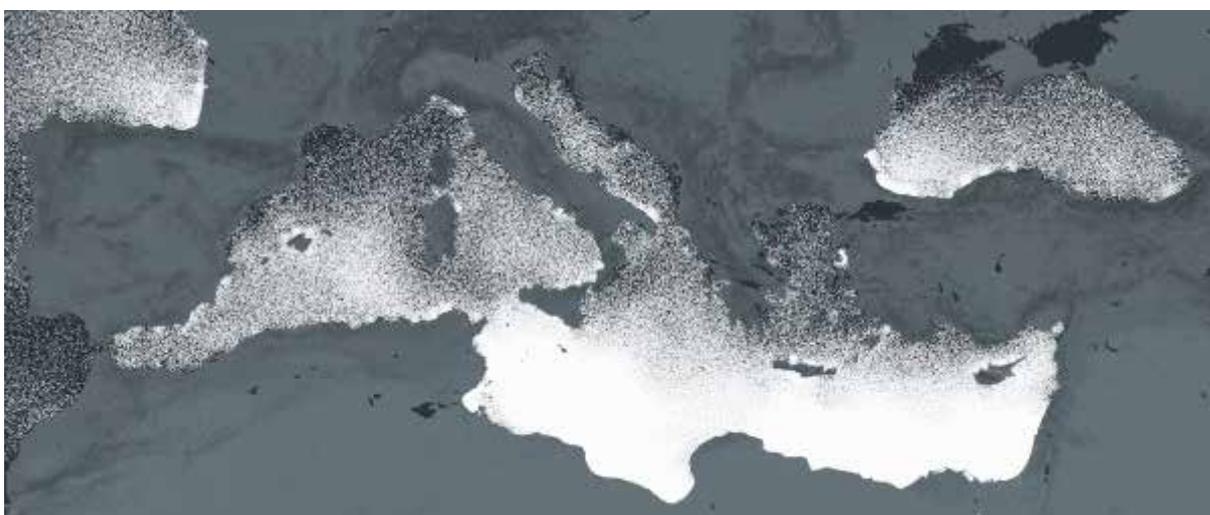


Figure 9: Estimation of floating plastics in Mediterranean Sea (white dot = 20kg plastics)
Source: *Sailing Seas of Plastic*¹⁵

The regional migration from rural to urban areas is going to increase waste production. Thus, if action is not urgently taken, we might end up in “a possible scenario with more plastic than fish”, as Ann Dom (Seas at Risk) suggested. As Carolina Pérez, Director at ECCC Mediterranean Centre, stated in the introductory words, a dense coast population, 30% of the world maritime traffic crossing its waters and the basin’s limited exchange with the oceans are some of the main factors which have made the Mediterranean a “marine litter hotspot”.

¹³ Plastic Pollution in the World Oceans, Eriksen/Lebreton et al., 2014.

¹⁴ European Commission, Good Environmental status, Website.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/good-environmental-status/descriptor-10/index_en.htm

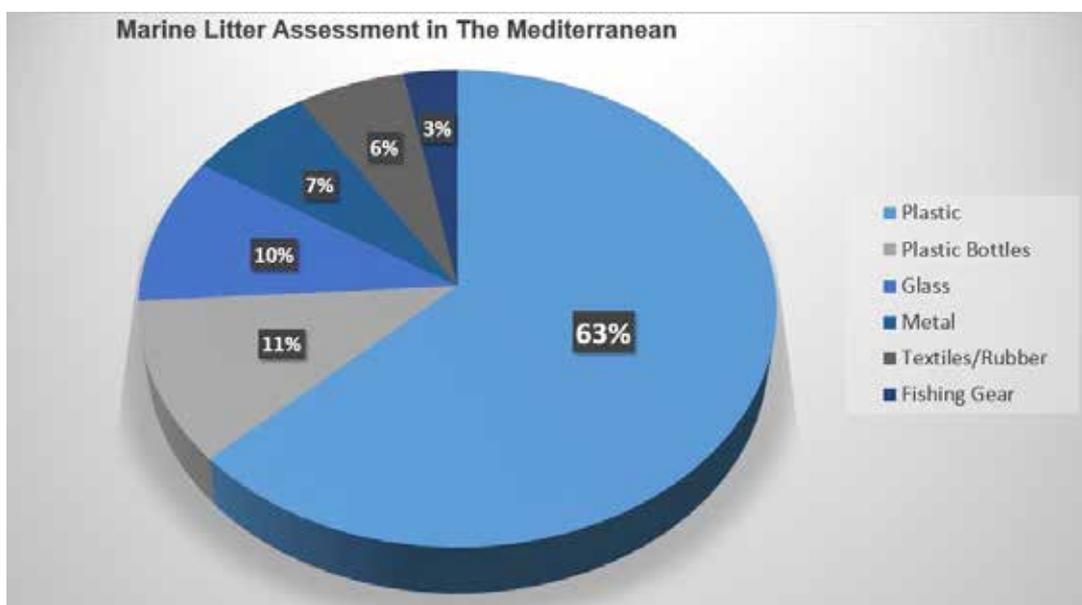
¹⁵ <http://app.dumpark.com/seas-of-plastic-2/#oceans/MED>



According to the research done by *Clean Sea Project*¹⁶ shared by **Pedro Fernandez of the EUMC Mediterranean Centre**, evidence of significant impacts of marine litter on growth and reproduction of marine species was found. In fact, most of the macro and micro marine litter settles on the sea bottom which have toxicologic effects for the ecosystem. On the opinion of **Rafael Sarda, researcher at The Blanes Centre for Advanced Studies (CSIC)**, “we have to know how to measure marine pollution to be able to manage it”. He stressed the importance of doing more research, particularly in areas such as environmental accounting, litter traceability and the consequences for the society’s well-being.

In this line, **María Ferreira, International Programme Manager at Coastal and Marine Union (EUMC)**, highlighted the importance to measure and monitoring marine litter (figure 10). She shared the work carried out by the *MSFD EU Marine Litter Technical Group* as guidelines for the development of monitoring programmes. Access to existing information and data is essential. To this end the EU has set up a *MSFD Competence Centre*¹⁷ to store and share all existing information through a web portal. She also asserted that stakeholders must be involved in order to understand the problem, collect data and develop knowledge to address it. Finally, she encouraged the audience to think globally to improve field coordination.

Figure 10: Topology of debris collected in the Gulf of Lion, France



Source: *Marine litter assessment in the Mediterranean*, UNEP/MAP MED POL, 2015

¹⁶ The CleanSea project: An interdisciplinary study of marine litter in the EU, EUMC CleanSea, 2015.

http://www.cleansa-project.eu/drupal/sites/default/files/project%20results/CleanSea%20D7.29_FINAL.pdf

¹⁷ <http://mcc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>



Recommendation to reduce marine litter in the Mediterranean sea

Commitment exists among diverse stakeholders. As **Ann Dom (Seas at Risk)** explained, the clear link between human being action and marine litter helps to raise awareness of the problem. Not only NGOs are committed to a significant marine litter reduction, but also the EU is working on this issue, for example, by initiating *The Circular Economy Package Action Plan* which has the target to recycle 65% of municipal waste by 2030.

Measures are being taken to tackle this environmental crisis. “The European Commission is encouraging the reduction of Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) systems. As a result, the marine litter situation will improve significantly”, informed **Enrique Gutierrez, Director of Urban Drainage at Aigües de Barcelona (Agbar)**. When rain and waste waters are canalised together, treatment plants are unable to manage the flow in heavy rain episodes. Barcelona is using the network of anti-flooding deposits to counteract this problem. However, these are very expensive infrastructures and consequently it is difficult to extend it throughout the Mediterranean Region.

In this context, **Magali Outter (SCP/RAC)** stressed the crucial role of prevention measures. Promoting the accountability of the producer, public sustainable purchases and economic and fiscal measures to stimulate the reduction of plastic bags were some of the actions proposed in the UNEP MAP Regional Plan for Marine Litter Management. The representative of SCP/RAC stressed the efforts of Morocco and Tunisia as two examples of progress in terms of plastic bag reduction through either bans or voluntary agreements.

At a national level, **Marta Martinez Gil, Sea Protection Area Manager at the Spanish Ministry of Environment and Marine Affairs (MAGRAMA)**, informed that more than 25% of the Maritime National Strategy is focused on preventing and reducing marine litter. This strategy tackles four different areas: maritime sources, land-based sources, cleaning up measures and raising awareness. She also raised attention on the Spanish Marine Litter Monitoring Programme and the efforts that the administration is placing on deepening knowledge on micro-litter amounts, sources, types and impacts to be able to design effective abatement measures.



At national (Spain) and regional level (Catalunya), public authorities are collaborating with fishermen to extract and analyse marine litter from the Mediterranean sea. For example the *Marviva* initiative¹⁸ presented by **María Vidal** from the **Catalan Recycling Agency (ARC)** helps to raise awareness, to monitor the situation, to recycle fishing nets and organize marine litter workshops.

Although many steps have been done in terms of research, tools and measures, a better understanding of the problem is crucial. Environmental accounting, litter traceability, deepen knowledge on impacts as well as strategies for prevention and marine litter abatement are key topics which future projects should focus on. In order to do this, efficient governance instruments and improved communication strategies and tools will be required.



¹⁸ http://residus.gencat.cat/es/ambits_dactuacio/tipus_de_residu/brossa-marina/projectes/projecte-marviva/

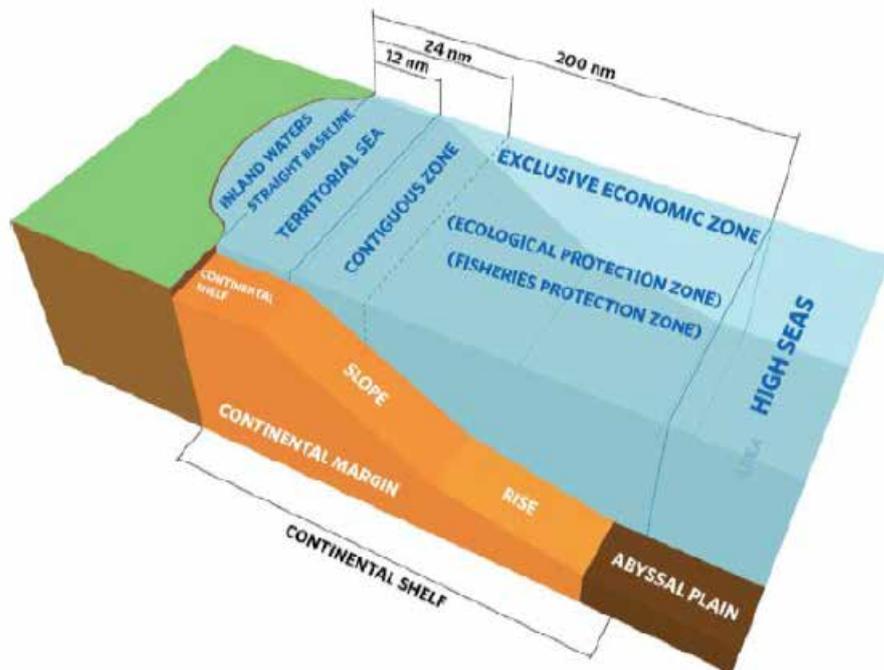
SEA GOVERNANCE

Managing the Commons



Sea governance refers to the control of marine and coastal activities, such as maritime transport, offshore energy, oil and gas production, port development, fisheries and aquaculture. The sea is an open and vulnerable ecosystem (figure 11) that requires a strong cooperation between decision-makers and stakeholders to manage it sustainably. What kind of collaborative entities and inclusive processes have emerged so far to (re)invent models of governance based on the participation of civil society, public administration and private actors?

Figure 11: Jurisdictional Waters in Mediterranean and Black Seas

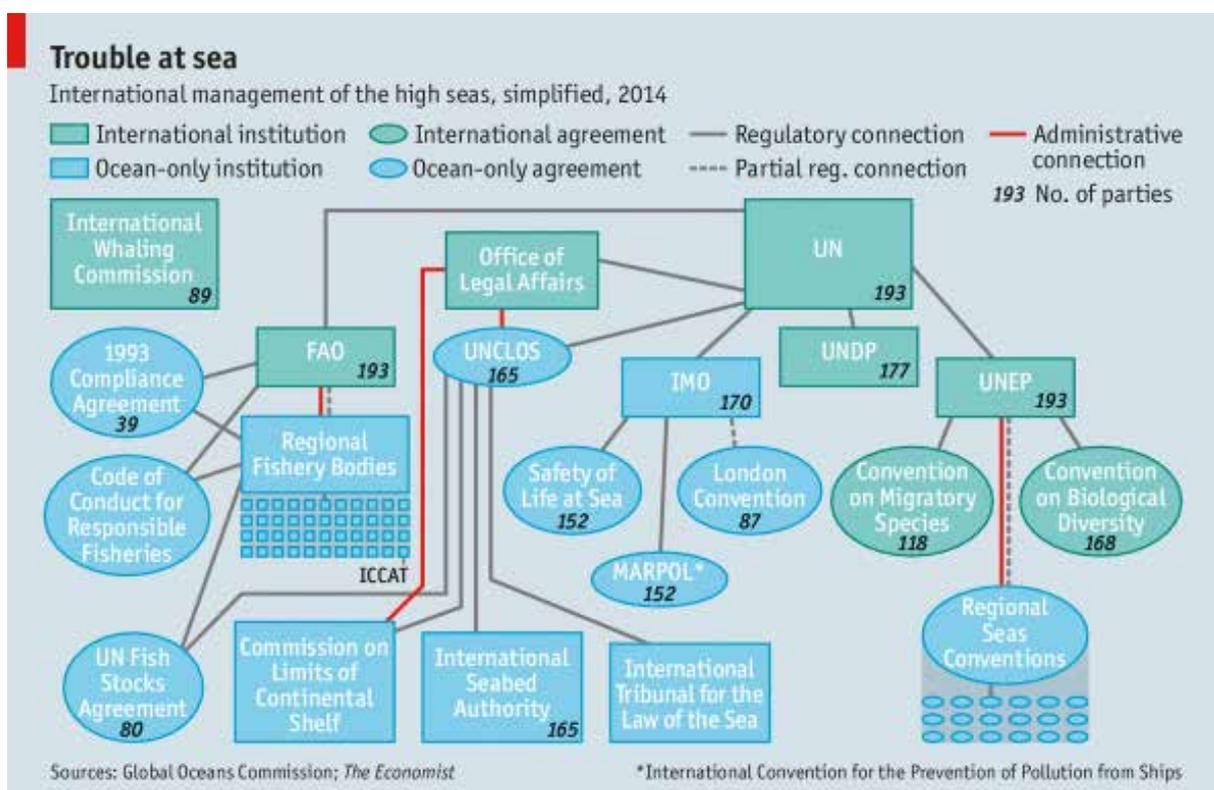


Source: *Jurisdictional Waters in Mediterranean and Black Seas*, European Parliament, 2010



The *Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean*, coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP / MAP)¹⁹, laid in 1976 the foundation for an international legal framework to protect the region’s marine and coastal environments. In 1996, as part of the MAP, the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) was created as a multi-stakeholder committee to endorse the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)²⁰, reviewed recently to include green and blue economy objectives.

Figure 12: Governance mechanisms in high Seas



Source: *The Economist*, 2014

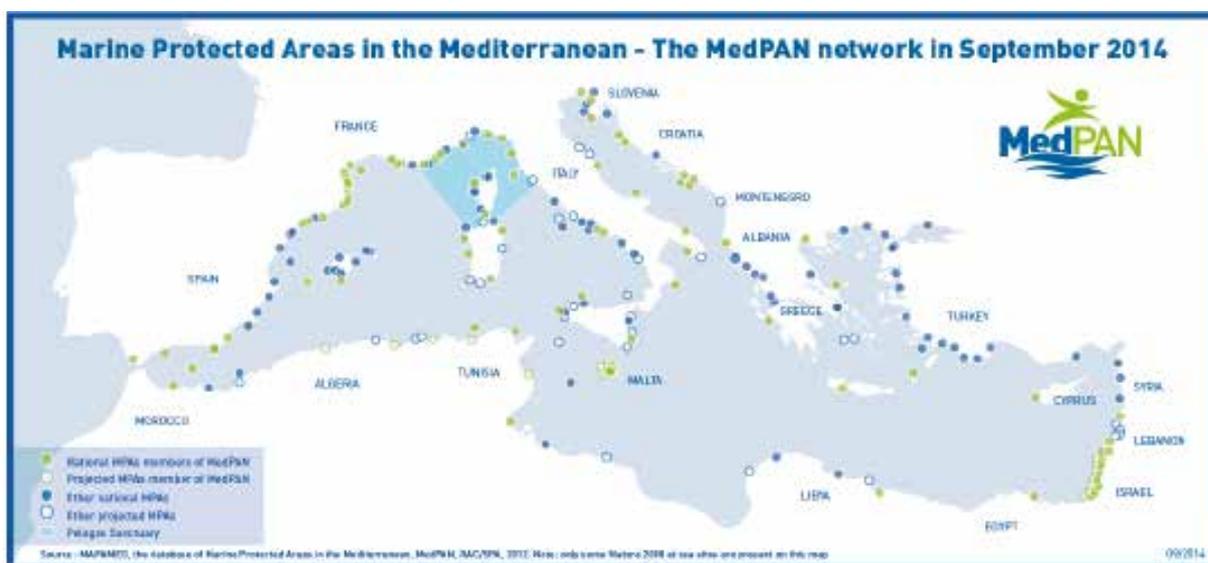
Furthermore, a high number of non-governmental organizations interact to establish sustainable governmental structures in the Mediterranean. So does MedPAN, a network of Marine Protected Areas managers (Figure 13) who share their knowledge and skills. “It is a form of soft governance which works well due to its dynamic co-work mentality, raising creativity and innovation”, commented **Puri Canals, President of MedPAN**.

19 <http://web.unep.org/uneppmap/>

20 <http://planbleu.org/en/publications/mediterranean-strategy-sustainable-development-2016-2025-investing-environmental>



Figure 13: Marine Protected Areas in the Med - MedPAN Network



Source: Network of Marine Protected Areas Managers, MedPAN, 2014

In contrast to the latter, *Alianza Mar Blava* solely focused on the protection of the seabed around the Balearic Islands against offshore petroleum exploitation and consists of different entities like NGOs, companies or city councils. According to **Sandra Bebeniste, Director of the Foundation Preservation Ibiza**, the clue for its good cooperation is that every project is rated as high at others, no matter which organization brought it into play. Besides, the alliance puts emphasis on the citizen's role and offers, supported by its colourful composition, several opportunities to take action.

A similar close connection to stakeholders is a fundamental part in the work of the **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)**, a recent Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) formed by the Mediterranean countries and European Union member states. Its **Senior Environmental Officer, Alessandra Sensi**, pointed UfM's strong network out which includes policy and decision makers as well as the civil society, NGO's, universities and businesses, to promote a more sustainable and inclusive mediterranean region.

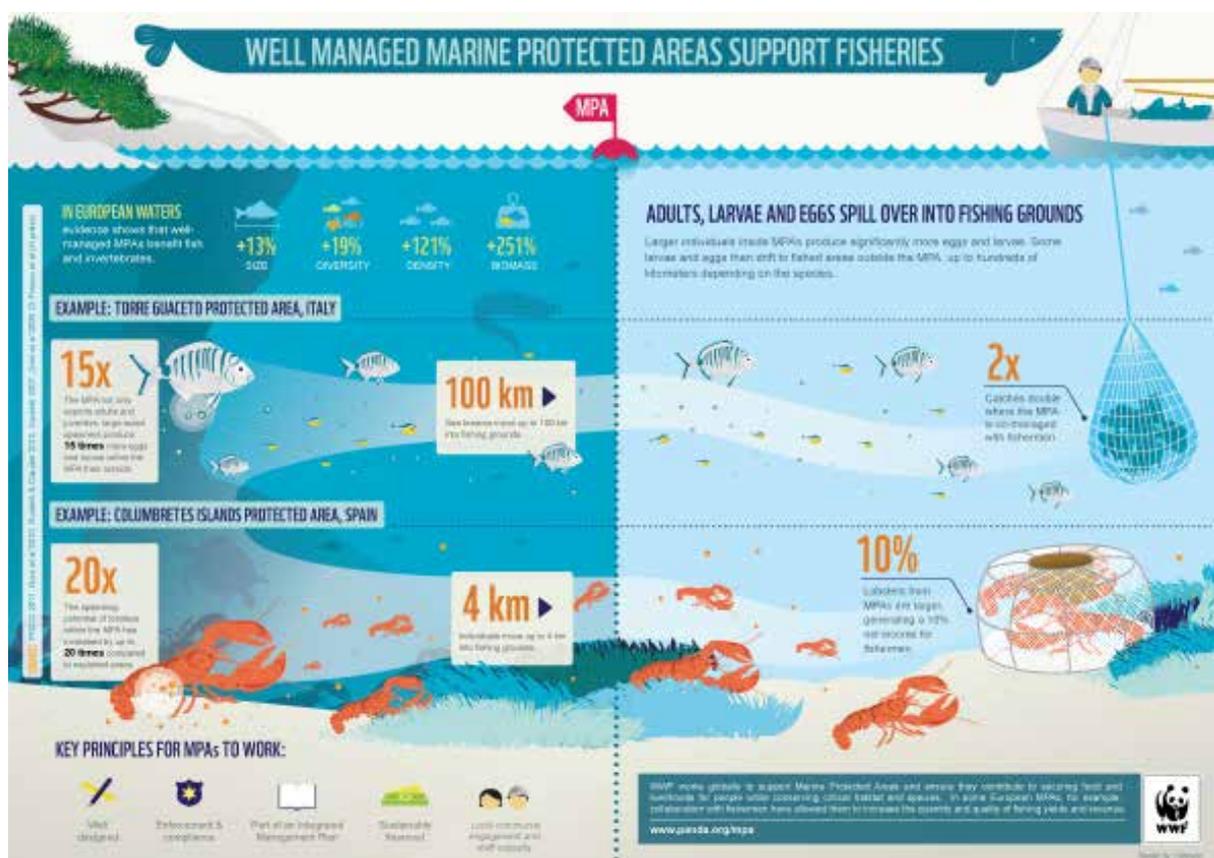


Recommendation to improve environmental governance of the Mediterranean sea

“Governance is a continuous process of learning”, explained **Oscar Esparza (WWF Spain)**. Learning about the needs and willingness of his counterpart, respecting each other, creating mutual confidence and attaching to every stakeholder the same value, is the way how quality management and symbiotic cooperation are created. Diversity and differences have to be considered as opportunity to grow, for example by collective brainstorming and a continuous exchange of ideas and knowledge. An horizontal, inclusive and participative co-governance is strongly needed for a successful implementation of a sustainable blue economy.

Transversal collaboration helps to boost creativity and prevents overlaps, for example, of research or field projects. Although there was a broad consensus on co-governance as a key driver for Mediterranean development, it will be difficult to put collaborative structures into practice in a world in which vertical hierarchies are still the rule. Nonetheless, the aforementioned organisations prove that it is possible and that such a management style contributes to desired results (figure 14). As **Andrés Alcántara, from the Mediterranean Center of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**, remarked we should keep in mind: “United, we are stronger to achieve ambitious goals”.

Figure 14: Well Managed Marine Protected Areas Support Sustainable Fisheries



Source: *The Case for MPAs*, WWF, 2014

CONCLUSION



The Mediterranean region is facing major humanitarian and environmental crisis of huge magnitude and dramatic consequences. Unemployment, inequalities and climate change increases existing social, economic and political turmoils. Job creation, especially for the youth is urgent, not only in the South Mediterranean but also in the North. Women inclusion is also needed to take benefits of all the talents. Regarding the migrant and refugee crisis, legal and safe passages must be developed immediately. Basic human rights have to be respected by all countries of the region, including wealthy European ones, that should lead by example.

Urgent action is needed to protect the biodiversity and health of the Mediterranean Sea. Currently, 93% of the Mediterranean fish stocks are overexploited and the region holds eight times more plastic than the rest of the oceans in relative terms. Moreover, sectors such as tourism, shipping, aquaculture and fossil fuel are expected to dramatically increase in the next 15 years and thus their negative impact for the environment, too. Not to forget the dramatic impact of Climate Change that reduces water availability, decreases food production and produces more natural disasters.

In this context, the new paradigm of a Blue, Green and Inclusive Economy becomes crucial to drive economic development while protecting the natural ecosystem health and people's well-being. To make this a reality, policy and decision makers must start thinking globally from a regional perspective to scale up and connect local actions and good practices. Collaborative dialogue and knowledge sharing must be encouraged between and within countries and communities.

Although environmental criteria increasingly emerged on governmental agendas, current international institutions are not able to cope alone with the size and complexity of those issues. Not only because of national political pressures, but also due to long communication channels, administrative machinery and complicated multilateral negotiations. Local authorities and communities as well as NGOs can bring efficiency, knowledge and flexibility to implement concrete solutions on the field.

If the region wants to solve the challenges ahead, it has no other option but implement Good Governance. Good Governance does not only consist of developing, implementing and monitoring sustainable strategies where all stakeholders are involved, but also to work in a coordinated and collaborative manner with the whole region to achieve a more secure, inclusive and prosperous Mediterranean.



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