

NEWS RELEASE

Montenegro hosts international dialogue on biodiversity protection and a participatory management of natural resources

Podgorica, 18 May 2018 – During three days of open discussions and practical workshops, Mediterranean and Adriatic scientists, environmentalists and policy-makers have looked at common challenges and innovative collaborative mechanisms to protect Mediterranean ecosystems and biodiversity, with the Adriatic region featuring high on the agenda.

Opening the interactive debate connecting experts from EU, IPA countries and beyond, the State Secretary for Environment at the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro Mr **Saša Radulović** acknowledged on 16 May 2018 the importance of promoting cooperation through projects like the Interreg Med Biodiversity Protection in the region: *All of us present today share common priorities in managing significant cross-border resources. The entire region prerequisite for sustainable development is a clean and productive Mediterranean Sea.*

The Director of ETC-UMA, leader in the project, framed the event with the pressing need of addressing the integrity of ecosystems in management practices as *Ecosystems underpin all human life and activities, and only healthy ecosystems are capable of providing indispensable ecosystem services to sustaining well-being, and to ensuring future economic and social development.*

Addressing innovative participatory governance mechanisms for a sustainable management of natural resources and its services related particularly to wetlands and small-scale fisheries, **Sergi TUDELA**, Director General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Government of Catalonia, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food, underlined *“There is consensus on the need to radically improve governance in Mediterranean natural resource management. Devolution of decision-making powers to multi-stakeholder groups through co-management is a key enabling condition for sustainable integrated management. Besides, adapting management to the scale that matters, most often the local one, requires new monitoring and assessment methods adapted to data-poor situations. Overall, a major capacity-building effort across the region is highly needed.”*

Dr Ameer Abdulla from the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas added that *Countries can no longer limit their management to national boundaries if they would like to maintain the health of their seas and associated natural resources, such as fisheries, and protect them from cross border impacts such as climate change and pollution. Consequently, we now need to use approaches that maintain the integrity of ecoregions and that will need multiple country commitment.* The need for an ecoregional approach to achieve effective conservation was agreed as crucial, which requires looking at transboundary management options to conserve ecologically significant areas extending across and beyond protected areas and national boundaries.

The meta-analysis of land and sea interactions and economic activities towards integrated ecosystem monitoring and management was identified as a requirement to support marine spatial plans that incorporate biodiversity as a key resource to protect and manage. **Alyssa Clavreul** from UNEP MAP PLAN BLEU, partner in this project, noted that *“Crossing parameters and fostering*

integrated approaches are critical points for ecosystem-based management. Numerous tools are currently being implemented in the Mediterranean region, and linking them with existing policy frameworks or management plans is key to ensure their prolongation beyond the projects' lifetime".

The debate and seminar, co-organized by the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) of Montenegro, welcomed high level government representatives, environmental institutes and international organisations such as the Coastal Zone Management Institute of Montenegro, UNEP/MAP PAP/RAC, MedPAN, WWF, MedCem, IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, and EU initiatives like the European MSP platform, EUSAIR ADRION and Interreg MED.

Governance challenges and monitoring tools by the MED Biodiversity Protection projects were presented to promote exchanges among researchers, scientists, policy-makers and Marine Protected Area managers for an enhanced ecosystem-based management. The event offered a unique opportunity to EU and non-EU institutions to network, tighten their links and share best practices and experiences towards a more integrated protection and conservation of biodiversity and a common vision on the Mediterranean and Adriatic-Ionian area as biodiversity hotspots in need of effective shared actions.

More information and images available from:

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Notes to editor:

The objective of the Interreg Med Biodiversity Protection Community featured by the project [PANACeA](#) is to streamline networking and management efforts in Mediterranean Protected Areas (PAs) as a mechanism to enhance nature conservation and protection in the region.

The project aims at ensuring synergies between relevant Mediterranean stakeholders –including managers, policymakers, socio-economic actors, civil society and the scientific community –, and to increase the visibility and impacts of their projects' results towards common identified strategical targets.

PANACeA builds a community of nature conservation stakeholders in the Mediterranean and acts as the Communication and Capitalisation instrument of the projects dealing with protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems. Through its tool, the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Knowledge Platform, PANACeA ensures the transfer of synthesised projects' outcomes and their dissemination across and beyond the region.

The main thematic focus areas include coastal and marine management, biodiversity monitoring, sustainable use of natural resources, management of protected areas, global changes, governance and cooperation and scientific and innovative methodologies, under the umbrella of a series of projects: ACT4LITTER, AMAre, CONFISH, ECOSUSTAIN, FishMPABlue2, MEDSEALITTER, MPA-ADAPT, POSBEMED, WETNET, PLASTIC BUSTERS MPAs and PHAROS4MPAs.