



# *Event Report*

**EPPA Sub-Regional Workshop on the implementation of the  
Barcelona Convention**

**4-5 May 2021**

**Live video conference**



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## 1 The event

The EPPA Sub-Regional Workshop on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention took place on May 4-5, 2021, via live video conference. The workshop was organized in cooperation with TAIEX, and under the EPPA project work programme, namely activity 3.3 “Assistance for the implementation of the Barcelona Convention”. It targeted the following EPPA beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Turkey.

The participants came from the relevant authorities of the EPPA beneficiaries involved in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention. They represented the Ministries with the environment, energy, infrastructure, transport, agriculture, and water portfolios, in addition to national environmental management and conservation agencies, water management bodies, and municipalities. Details are available in the list of participants. Civil society was represented by NGOs from the beneficiaries, namely: LIR Evolution (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Kados – Kadikoy Friends of Science, Culture and Art Association (Turkey). The EU Delegations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Turkey were also present.

The speakers represented EU Member States’ and EU institutions’ experience. There were experts from the relevant national authorities of Slovenia and Romania; and from DG Environment, European Commission. Additionally, the workshop mobilized contributions from UNEP/MAP and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Turkey. Details are available in the agenda and the presentations can be downloaded in both the TAIEX website and in the EPPA project website.

The aim of this second workshop organized regarding Barcelona Convention was to provide advice and guidance to strengthen the national capacities of the EPPA beneficiaries for effectively addressing implementation challenges and needs regarding the application of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. In particular, the workshop aimed at examining the content and implications in terms of national strategic documents of the requirements of implementing Barcelona Convention and three Protocols: (1) the Protocol for the Prevention and Elimination of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft or Incineration at Sea (Dumping Protocol); (2) the Protocol concerning Cooperation in Preventing Pollution from Ships and, in Cases of Emergency, Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea (Prevention and Emergency Protocol), and (3) the Protocol on the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Hazardous Wastes Protocol).

## 2 Proceedings and conclusions

The workshop gave a major opportunity for the EPPA beneficiaries to receive updates from the European Commission and from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) Secretariat regarding recent developments, as well as from the Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean (MED POL) and Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) regarding developments related to the Protocols of the Barcelona Convention, and how the experience gained in there has been used in other Regional Seas Convention, such as the Black Sea.

The Mediterranean situation with marine litter was presented. The Med is the first tourist destination in the world (av: 320M visitors/y); it is subject to waste from coastal zones, via the large rivers flowing through urbanized cities contributing with >200t of plastic into the sea/year. The wider region has some of the largest amounts of municipal solid waste generated (208 – 760 kg/year per person). In the Levantine Sea one finds the largest amount of floating litter (up to 64 million items/km<sup>2</sup>), with plastics being up to 95-100% of the total. In the seabed there are an estimated 0.5 billion items with densities of sometimes >100,000 items/km<sup>2</sup> (plastics >50 %). Microplastics at the surface of the Med Sea are above 100 000 items/km<sup>2</sup>, and more than 64 million floating particles/km<sup>2</sup> (Van Der Hal et al., 2017). Additionally, more than 20% of the global maritime traffic flows through the Mediterranean Sea.

In addition to the problem of pollution and other pressures of the sea, there are a number of governance problems that need to be solved: long-term information on marine litter impacts on biodiversity, human activities and well-being; harmonized monitoring tools; tools and knowledge to



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empower local managers of MPAS; clearly defined baselines and reduction targets; effective cross-border cooperation and coordination, especially with non-EU countries, in the implementation of existing policies. In this last point the role of UNEP/MAP is very important.

Nevertheless, a Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean exists (UNEP/MAP-2013) and countries have already established national monitoring programmes for ML. The Regional Plan is implemented in synergy and in conjunction with the EU Plastic Strategy, Circular Economy Action Plan and the EU Directive for the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment. The Regional Plan includes 19 National Action Plans/Programmes of Measures addressing marine litter, with 17 Mediterranean Countries having already banned single-use plastic bags. However, the Regional Plan is facing challenges, such as the strengthening the national Implementation of the Regional Plan of UNEP/MAP, upgrading the Regional Plan with additional measures (MPAs, Circular Economy) and have a focus on microplastics; engaging the Plastic Industry and Private Sector; maximising synergies with global actions (GPA, G7, G20, etc.); implementing the UNEP/MAP IMAP (Marine Litter Cluster); enhancing regional cooperation; taking advantage of the EU Green Deal.

In parallel, there are other projects tackling the Mediterranean Sea problems. For instance, PERSEUS (monitoring marine litter) has contributed to highlight that marine litter is one of the MSFD descriptors with the most gaps in data and method availability and it has proposed a multi-disciplinary approach to surveying marine litter, as well as monitoring recommendations for future action.

The project ACT4LITTER (2016-2020) aimed to facilitate efforts for tackling marine litter in MPAs through effective and targeted measures towards reaching their conservation targets. It has provided essential support to managers of MPAs to fast-track actions against marine litter. MPA managers and marine litter experts from 26 entities and 11 different countries (Albania, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain and Tunisia) have been brought together and evolved into a taskforce with a joint mission to curb marine litter. A central output of the ACT4LITTER project was the development of Action Plans to tackle marine litter in 9 MPAs (Croatia, Italy, Greece, Slovenia, Spain).

The project AMAre, another initiative, aims to to develop shared methodologies and geospatial tools for multiple stressors assessment, coordinated environmental monitoring, multi-criteria analyses and stakeholders' engagements; to develop concrete pilot actions and coordinated strategies in selected (MPAs) to solve hot spots of conflicts affecting marine biodiversity and the services it provides; to develop coordinated best practices, data access to share information and concrete stakeholder and users' involvement. The final aim is to scale up strategies and recommendations at transnational level adopting an ecosystem-based approach considering the goals of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) across MPAs (also for biodiversity monitoring).

The project Plastic Busters MPAs: Preserving biodiversity from plastics in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (2018-2022) aim is to maintain biodiversity and preserve natural ecosystems in pelagic and coastal MPAs, by defining and implementing a harmonized approach against ML. Its actions include addressing the whole management cycle of ML, from monitoring and assessment to prevention and mitigation, as well as actions to strengthen networking between and among pelagic and coastal MPAs located in Italy, France, Spain, Croatia, Albania and Greece.

The CLIAM project, in turn, involves 2 seas, 15 countries, 20 partners over a 48 month period (ending in October 2021). The objectives are to advance knowledge on the current status of marine plastic pollution; provide innovative technologies able to reduce the amount and impact of plastic pollution on the ecosystem based services of the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas; set the basis for operational forecasting of the impacts of marine plastic litter pollution on ecosystem services; and to provide advice for management decision making, including fostering social acceptance and assessment of economic impacts.

The workshop also contributed to ensure follow-up actions in the concerned beneficiaries and facilitate the exchange of best practices in order to achieve and/ or maintain the good ecological status of marine waters and preserve biodiversity according to the EU environmental acquis (MSFD, WFD, UWWTD). Additionally, Romania and Slovenia shared their experiences with maritime pollution control and the use of green/blue infrastructure solutions to meet integrated coastal zone management objectives and to increase the biodiversity potential of maritime conservation actions. Turkey reflected



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on the lessons it learned through its legislative alignment with the Water Framework Directive, as well as progress made in its implementation.

In particular, Romania shared its transferable experience with cooperation for prevention, reducing and control of the pollution of the marine environment within the Black Sea Convention. The Black Sea is a marginal sea of the Atlantic lying between Europe and Asia. The Black Sea covers 436,400 km<sup>2</sup> (not including the Sea of Azov). The Black Sea ultimately drains into the Mediterranean Sea, via the Bosphorus and the Aegean Sea. The 2 million km<sup>2</sup> drainage basin that flows into the Black Sea covers wholly or partially 24 countries. Its basin covers economic and social activities of more than 160 million people.

The major environmental problems currently present are eutrophication/nutrient enrichment; changes in marine living resources; chemical pollution (including oil); biodiversity/habitat changes, including alien species introduction. The Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution was signed by Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine on 21 April 1992 in Bucharest. It provides the general obligation of the Contracting Parties to prevent, reduce and control pollution in the Black Sea in order to protect and preserve the marine environment and to provide legal framework for co-operation and concerted actions to fulfil this obligation. It includes 4 Protocols: the control of land-based sources of pollution; dumping of waste; joint action in the case of accidents (such as oil spills); biodiversity and landscape conservation. The Black Sea Commission is the regional governing body of the Bucharest Convention.

The Convention launched its strategic action plan in 1996. The BS SAP was elaborated from consensus reached at a multinational level in relation to a series of proposals that include: Ecosystem Quality Objectives on short, medium and long term targets; and legal and institutional reforms and investments necessary to solve main environmental problems identified within the 2007 BS Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis. It includes provisions for integrated coastal zone management, an ecosystem approach and integrated river basin management. Although it has been updated 3 times with new deadlines, the activities foreseen have not been implemented, because the actions needed require a wider basin approach beyond the Black Sea countries jurisdiction.

In terms of Marine Litter, a Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Black Sea was adopted in 2018. Annex I to Plan with concrete activities on ML will be regularly revised and considered at the BSC Advisory Groups meetings in spring 2019. Draft Guidelines on Marine Litter (based on JRC experience) were finalized by nominated experts under Agreement with UNEP/MAP but were not adopted by the Black Sea Commission yet. Guidelines will be further considered by Advisory Groups, considering experience of other Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs) and relevant projects and organizations (cooperation with EMBLAS II Project). BSC PS plans a dedicated event to discuss implementation of RAP on ML and draft Guidelines on ML including activities on floating litter.

The main lessons from the experience with the governance of the Black Sea are: to strengthen cooperation for the protection of the Black Sea against pollution; to improve cooperation with the ICPDR; to have greater involvement from the other river basins which are discharging into the Black Sea; to develop efforts for the implementation of the measures in order to reach good environmental status; to prioritize biodiversity and habitats conservation.

Additionally, Romania also gave an overview of its experience with the prevention, reducing and control of pollution of the Black Sea from inland and offshore sources. The Romanian approach is based on regional cooperation through Integrated River Basin Management, thinking regionally and acting nationally in a coordinated manner, coordinating WFD River Basin Management Plan and MSFD Program of Measures, coordinating ICPDR and Black Sea Commission, and coordinating actions for pollution control between inland and offshore sources. The most significant water management issues in the Danube basin are organic pollution, nutrient pollution, hazardous substances pollution and hydro morphological alterations. This approach was translated in the improvement of urban wastewater treatment (access increased by 20% since 2007), tackling industrial pollution (most of the polluting industry has been closed or reduced the activity, whereas new facilities are meeting the EU standards related to water pollution and implementing IPPC/IED requirements, although problems remain with livestock farms and wastewaters from closed mines). Agriculture remains a challenge (nutrients) because



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the sector is polarized in small farms and large intensive farms, making structural reforms difficult in an impoverished countryside. Nevertheless, Romania plans to support investment in manure management sewage systems, to promote behaviour change at farmer level, updating legislation on soil and water, improving the water monitoring system and building institutional capacities.

In terms of maritime planning, Romania is setting policies aimed at contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the marine area, setting up plans which will contribute to meeting the objectives of the MSFD, particularly in relation to any measures which have a spatial dimension by applying an ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities, shaping activities within the marine area to support the goals of the MSFD, as well as those of other relevant pieces of EU legislation, and launching the process to develop a Maritime Spatial Plan for the Black Sea.

There are new developments for gas exploitation in the Black Sea. Strict requirements are imposed as related to the impact of the marine environment. Particularly attention is given to accidental pollution, for instance, through contingency planning legislation. The modification of the Governmental Decision 893/2006 concerning approval of the National Plan for preparedness, response and cooperation in case of marine pollution with oil and dangerous substances updated the administrative structure and improved institutional capacity.

Slovenia presented its experience with offshore and coastal blue corridors for biological diversity and sustainable fishery, from the perspective of ensuring ecosystem services through maritime spatial planning. Fisheries are particularly threatened as Adriatic ecosystems lose capacity to regenerate. Slovenia has integrated the idea of ecological corridors in its maritime planning, which are pathways connecting core habitats and ensuring a coherent network of biosystems with long-term sustainability. Green and blue corridors connect land and sea core habitats and are a part of well-functioning Green Infrastructure. This type of approach requires the understanding of the inter-dependency of action-reaction between human activities offshore and on the coastline (micro, mezzo, macro levels) and biodiversity and biological resources in order to cope with drivers (economic-social) which cause the pressures. Therefore, intersectoral planning is needed, incorporating sustainable use of biological and natural resources also at different spatial levels: local/national (National Marine Spatial Planning), (macro)regional (e.g. Adriatic; EUSAIR), considering UNEP/MAP –Barcelona Convention).

The preparation of the Marine Spatial Plan of Slovenia (MSP) had to take into account different uses and interests, such as marine traffic, tourism, fishing and aquaculture, nature protection. The recognition of blue corridors in the plan had to take into account the interconnection of main migration corridors of marine mammals, directions of main currents, locations of important coastline marine habitats and river estuaries at micro, mezzo and macro scales. This led to the restriction of fishing activities in areas identified as important blue corridors, with the goal to ensure biodiversity and a sustainable food supply for the inhabitants of the Gulf of Trieste. Slovenia is also making efforts to integrate the idea of payable ecosystem services as a form of conservation, in which monetized value is captured as a way of creating a sustainable balance point between demand and supply.

In the light of ecosystem services, Slovenia also presented how flood prone areas can be natural retention pools to support ICZM objectives. They provide the following services: flood control, groundwater replenishment, shoreline stabilisation and storm protection, sediment and nutrient retention and export, water purification, reservoirs of biodiversity, wetland products, cultural values, recreation and tourism, climate change mitigation and adaptation. Through the requirements of the EU Floods Directive, Slovenia mapped its flood prone zones along the coastline. The development of the Port of Koper and the adjacent nature reserve Škocjanski zatok were provided as examples of using a flood prone area to reach coastal zone management objectives (maintaining the functional integrity of the coastal resource systems; reducing resource-use conflicts; maintaining the health of the environment; facilitating the progress of multisectoral development). The challenge was to harmonize anthropocentric services (port, industry/commerce, settlement, infrastructure, intensive agriculture, ...) with ecosystem services. The area was then redeveloped to provide for open/green channels that retain water (both increasing water supply and preventing sea water intrusion), to regulate the microclimate, and act as a wind barrier, among other ecosystem services. Although the initial cost was higher than a traditional solution for the port, it has increased the supply of ecosystem services that are the backbone of



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adaptability to environmental and social challenges. In the long-run, this solution actually increases the resilience of the port of Koper, ensuring a competitive advantage for Slovenia.

The discussion that closed the meeting led to the participants agreeing that the implementation of the Barcelona Convention is essential to preserve the Mediterranean and counteract existing pressures. For instance, the EU Blue Economy Report 2020 provides an overview of the performance of the EU economic sectors related to oceans and the coastal environment. The report says that the EU blue economy is in good health, having a turnover of €750 billion in 2018. The recognition of the importance of a sustainable blue economy has steadily increased within the policy framework of the Mediterranean. The participants agreed that the Mediterranean region therefore needs to employ efforts to address the urgent challenges and threats. The countries of the region should make available human and financial resources at local, national, and regional levels for the governance and protection of ecosystems.

Furthermore, the workshop identified major challenges that shall be addressed, among others:

- Development of practical and cost-effective management plans for networks of MPAs,
- Sustainable financing and lack of the institutional and staff capacity,
- Harmonizing the monitoring methods,
- Encourage regional financing tool,
- Strengthen and support regional cooperation and data sharing among parties.

### **Workshop outputs**

The workshop's main outputs were:

- Strengthened capacity to address the implementation challenges of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
- Raised awareness on the latest policy developments and tools related to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
- Exchanged experiences in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols between EU Member States and the EPPA beneficiaries
- Increased regional dialogue on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
- Identified national obstacles towards the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

## **3 Evaluation**

The participants were asked to evaluate the workshop by TAIEX using an online survey after the event. The evaluation results are presented below in a summary table.



				No. Responses	Expert Score	Yes / Excellent	No / Good	Partially / Satisfactory
88762	Workshop - participant - A. Questions	1	Was the workshop carried out according to the agenda?	16	-	16 (100%)	-	-
		2	Was the programme well structured?	16	-	16 (100%)	-	-
		3	Were the key issues related to the topics addressed?	16	-	15 (94%)	-	1 (6%)
		4	Did the workshop enable you to improve your knowledge?	16	-	16 (100%)	-	-
		5	Was enough time allowed for questions and discussions?	16	-	16 (100%)	-	-
		7	Do you expect any follow-up based on the results of the workshop (new legislation, new administrative approach, etc.)?	16	-	14 (88%)	2 (13%)	-
		8	Do you think that further TAIEX - <i>Expr_c_abbreviation</i> assistance is needed (workshop, expert mission, study visit, assessment mission) on the topic of this workshop?	16	-	14 (88%)	2 (13%)	-
		Workshop - participant - B. Expert ratings	-	Mr. Constantin, Gheorghe - Speaker MS	15	93.33%	12 (80%)	2 (13%)
	-		Mr. Dimovski, Mihal - Other speakers	15	98.33%	14 (93%)	1 (7%)	-
	-		Ms. Popovici, Mihaela - Other speakers	15	98.33%	14 (93%)	1 (7%)	-
	-		Mr. Santl, Seoo - Speaker MS	15	95%	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	-
	-		Ms. Ivanica, Madalina - Speaker EJ	15	96.66%	13 (87%)	2 (13%)	-
	-		Mr. Pasathanassiou, Vangelis - Speaker MS	15	96.66%	13 (87%)	2 (13%)	-
	-		Ms. Hema, Tajana - Other speakers	15	93.33%	11 (73%)	4 (27%)	-
	80762	Workshop - participant - C. Logistic Ratings	1	Conference venue	8	-	7 (88%)	-
2			Interpretation	9	-	8 (89%)	-	1 (11%)
3			Hotel	5	-	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)
4			Flight	5	-	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)
5			Catering	5	-	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)
6			Was the communication leading up to the event satisfactory?	11	-	11 (100%)	-	-
7			Was the pre-event test useful?	8	-	7 (88%)	-	1 (13%)
8			Did you find the virtual event platform easily accessible?	13	-	13 (100%)	-	-
9			Was the platform user-friendly?	14	-	14 (100%)	-	-
10			Did the host provide adequate instructions during the event, on the use of the platform and in problem solving?	13	-	13 (100%)	-	-
11			Was the IT support provided adequate?	13	-	13 (100%)	-	-
Workshop - participant - D. Comments		-	As no arrangements are made due to COVID-19 pandemic, first 4 question is answered as "PARTIALLY"	-	-	-	-	-
Workshop - speaker - A. Questions		1	Did you receive all the information necessary for the preparation of your contribution?	6	-	6 (100%)	-	-
		2	Has the overall aim of the workshop been achieved?	6	-	6 (100%)	-	-
		3	Was the agenda well structured?	6	-	6 (100%)	-	-
	4	Were the participants present throughout the scheduled workshop?	6	-	6 (100%)	-	-	
	5	Was the beneficiary represented by the appropriate participants?	6	-	5 (83%)	-	1 (17%)	
	6	Did the participants actively take part in the discussions?	6	-	4 (67%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	
88762	Workshop - speaker - A. Questions	7	Do you expect that the beneficiary will undertake follow-up based on the results of the workshop (new legislation, new administrative approach etc.)?	6	-	4 (67%)	1 (17%)	-
		8	Do you think that the beneficiary needs further TAIEX - <i>Expr_c_abbreviation</i> assistance (workshop, expert mission, study visit, assessment mission) on the topic of this workshop?	6	-	6 (100%)	-	-
		9	Would you be ready to participate in future TAIEX - <i>Expr_c_abbreviation</i> workshops?	6	-	6 (100%)	-	-
	Workshop - speaker - C. Logistic Ratings	1	Conference venue	2	-	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	-
		2	Interpretation	1	-	1 (100%)	-	-
		3	Hotel	1	-	1 (100%)	-	-
		4	Flight	1	-	1 (100%)	-	-
		5	Catering	1	-	1 (100%)	-	-
		6	Was the communication leading up to the event satisfactory?	4	-	4 (100%)	-	-
		7	Was the pre-event test useful?	3	-	3 (100%)	-	-
		8	Did you find the virtual event platform easily accessible?	5	-	5 (100%)	-	-
		9	Was the platform user-friendly?	5	-	5 (100%)	-	-
		10	Did the host provide adequate instructions during the event, on the use of the platform and in problem solving?	4	-	4 (100%)	-	-
	11	Was the IT support provided adequate?	5	-	5 (100%)	-	-	
	Workshop - speaker - D. Comments	-	The host was excellent! The logistical arrangements for usual workshop were completed as "NO" as it was not applicable, I admit reading the header instructing to leave it blank too late	-	-	-	-	-

## Endnotes

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

## Annexes

Annex 1: Agenda (provided as a separate document)

Annex 2: List of Participants (provided as a separate document)

Annex 3: Presentations (provided as a separate document)





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