

18th Meeting of the Thematic Steering Group for Pilar 3- Environmental Quality under EUSAIR

Preparation of the Action Plan for the contribution to the objectives
of nature protection set out in the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy

Bologna 28. 3.2023

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KEY EU COMMITMENTS IN THE FIELD OF NATURE PROTECTION

2030 EU BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY (COM 2020/380/final)

- 1. Legally protect a minimum of 30% of the EU's land and 30% of the EU's sea area and integrate ecological corridors, as part of the true Trans-European Nature Network.**
- 2. Strictly protect at least a third of the EU's protected areas, including all remaining EU primary and old growth forest.**
- 3. Effectively manage all protected areas, defining clear conservation objectives and measures, and monitoring them appropriately.**

How to achieve the stated goals in the AI region? Need for an Action Plan?



KEY OUTCOMES OF THE TSG3 PILLAR SESSION

1. **Identification of potential areas for future protection in the region and by countries** (MPAs, Natura/EMERALD, OECSs...) and plans for improvement of transboundary management effectiveness of existing MPAs.
2. **Proposal for establishment of the Action plan at TSG3 level with clear objectives in supporting identification and designation of MPAs, capacity development and networking.**
3. **Reinforcement of existing national activities** of partners/countries in combination with new **transnational/macroregional approaches** (blue and green) corridors, ecosystem services, charismatic species, interaction with other sectors, climate change process, new partnerships, innovative activities/tools.
4. **Extension of existing networks** (national MPAs, NATURA 2000 & EMERALD networks) & transboundary management (i.e. EGTC) with possible **combination of different legal basis and instruments** (i.e., Strait of Bonifacio case / MPAs/NATURA 2000 & EGTCs, SPAMI, PSSA).
5. To achieve long-term conservation goals and at the same time **establishing a legal instrument for transboundary MSP** in a coherent manner to ensure ecosystem-based management aiming at both biodiversity protection and sustainable economic development.



CONCEPT OF THE ACTION PLAN

1.ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE MPAs AND NETWORKS OF MPAS (AND OECMS) WITHIN EUSAIR MEMBER STATES, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POSSIBLE UPGRADING AND/OR EXPANSION (PHASE 1)

- A. Review of legal bases for the establishment of MPAs and OECMs in individual AI States, including a general overview of existing MPAs in each AI country.**
- B.Possible expansions or designation of new MPAs under national law in AI States.**
- C.C. Additional possible forms of protection in accordance with EU law (NATURA, MSP Directive, European Common Fisheries Policy)**
- D) Additional possible forms of protection in accordance with international conventions ratified by each country (e.g. Bern Convention, Barcelona Convention with protocols..).**



2. POSSIBLE APPLICATION OF AVAILABLE LEGAL BASES IN IDENTIFIED MARINE AREAS (EBSS, SPAMIs, ACCOBAMS..) (PHASE 2)

A.To additionally document and analyze the legal status of all identified marine areas where it would be advisable to establish a form of cross-border protection.

B. Identification of necessary steps in the form of a manual for designating legal protection based on individual (cross-border) legal grounds (SPAMI, Accobams, PSSA..).

C. To identify steps or propose forms of management and control, within designated forms of cross-border cooperation.



CONCEPT OF THE ACTION PLAN

The Analysis and Action Plan refers to the entire EUSAIR area with an emphasis on 4 important cross border areas:

- Gulf of Trieste (Northern Adriatic)
- Jabuka/Pomo Pit (Central Adriatic)
- Otranto channel (Southern Adriatic and Ionian Sea)
- Klek/Neum Bay



THE ADRIATIC (STATUS QUO)

The Adriatic Sea is a semi-closed basin extending from the northern continental shelf with an average depth of 35m for the southern Adriatic Pit (about 1300 m depth) and connected to the Ionian Sea through the Otranto Strait.

The Adriatic Sea plays an important role also for the large-scale dynamics of the Eastern Mediterranean, facilitating the formation of the dense water, which is the dominant component of the Eastern Mediterranean deep water.

The Adriatic Sea is characterised by a low coverage of MPAs (about 5%) and an inadequate representativity of the MPAs, mostly due to the low coverage in the Middle and South Adriatic sub-regions, whereas the North Adriatic has a MPA coverage of approximately 10%.

Overall, there is a decreasing trend in protection initiatives, from the shelf to offshore waters, indicating that the efforts of all the countries are towards shallow waters. Indeed, the MPAs coverage is higher in the infralittoral zone (about 13%), whereas low protection has been recorded in the circalittoral (about 6 %) and no protection at all for the marine space in the bathyal zone (0.01%).



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2. TABLE OF NATIONAL LEGISLATION

STATE	NATURE CONSERVATION (SOME RELEVANT LEGISLATION-LIST NOT EXHAUSTIVE)	FISHERIES (SOME RELEVANT LEGISLATION-LIST NOT EXHAUSTIVE)	MSP (SOME RELEVANT LEGISLATION-LIST NOT EXHAUSTIVE)
ALBANIA	The Protected Areas Act No. 81 of 2017	Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) No. 701 of 12.10.2016 "on the Approval of the National Fishery Strategy <u>2016-2021</u> ; - Law on Fisheries No. <u>64/2012</u> ; - Regulation No. 1 of 7.3.2014 of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration "on the Implementation of Law No. 64 of 31.5.2012 On Fisheries; - DCM No. 402 of 8.5.2013 "concerning Management Measures for the Sustainable Exploitation of Marine Fishery Resources".	Albania is a State Party to the <u>ICZM Protocol</u> to the Barcelona Convention since 2010.
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	The Nature Protection Act of 2013 (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Law on Fisheries of the <u>Hercegovacko-Neretvanska županija-canton</u> (2014)	Bosnia and Herzegovina has not ratified the <u>ICZM Protocol</u> and has not adopted yet specific legislation related to MSP, neither at the national, federal or cantonal level. See, however, in that regard

CROATIA	The Nature Protection Act of 24 June 2013	Law on marine fisheries. (2017)	Physical Planning <u>Act</u> ⁽²⁰¹³⁾
GREECE	The Law for the Management Agencies of Protected Areas in Greece (No. 4519 of 8 February 2018)	- Legislative Decree No. 420 introducing the Fisheries Code. (1970); - Law No. 1740 on the development and protection of coral formations, <u>aquaculture</u> and fish breeding areas (1987)	Law No. 4546 transposing into Greek legislation the EU Directive 2014/89 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and other provisions. (2018)
ITALY	- The Framework Law on Protected Areas (No. 394 of 6 December 1991); - National Biodiversity Strategy 2030.	Legislative Decree No. 4 rearranging the national legislation on fisheries and aquaculture	Legislative Decree 17 October 2016, n. 201. Implementation of Directive 2014/89 / EU establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning.
MONTENEGRO	-The Nature Protection Act of 2016, -Decision on declaring the protected area of the nature park " <u>Platamuni</u> (2021); - <u>Decision declaring the protected area of Nature Park "Stari Ulcinj"</u> (2021)	-Law on marine fisheries and mariculture.(2009); - Law amending the Law on marine fisheries and mariculture. (2015); -	Law on spatial planning and construction of facilities (201/)
SLOVENIA	The Nature Conservation Act of 1999	Marine Fisheries <u>Act</u> (2006)	Spatial Planning Act (2017); Decree on Maritime Spatial Plan Slovenia

B. Possible expansions or designation of new MPAs under national law in AI States.

- **Cohenet” project (2020)** *made a preliminary assessment of coherence of the current MPAs as possible nodes of a network focused on the Adriatic Sea.*

How to evaluate the candidate areas within an integrated planning and taking in account the priorities for advancing the Adriatic MPA network is the central issue. An effort to produce the spatial analysis of the existing data on key habitats and species in the Adriatic was performed in the COHENET EU Project

- **Study on Proposals for New Marine Protected Areas in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro (2021)**
- **The Coherence of the European Union Marine Natura 2000 Network for Wide-Ranging Charismatic Species: A Mediterranean Case Study (2018)**
- **Slovenia and Italy MSP proposal (Area of Marine Nature protection):**



FIGURE 39

Proposed MPA network in the Adriatic

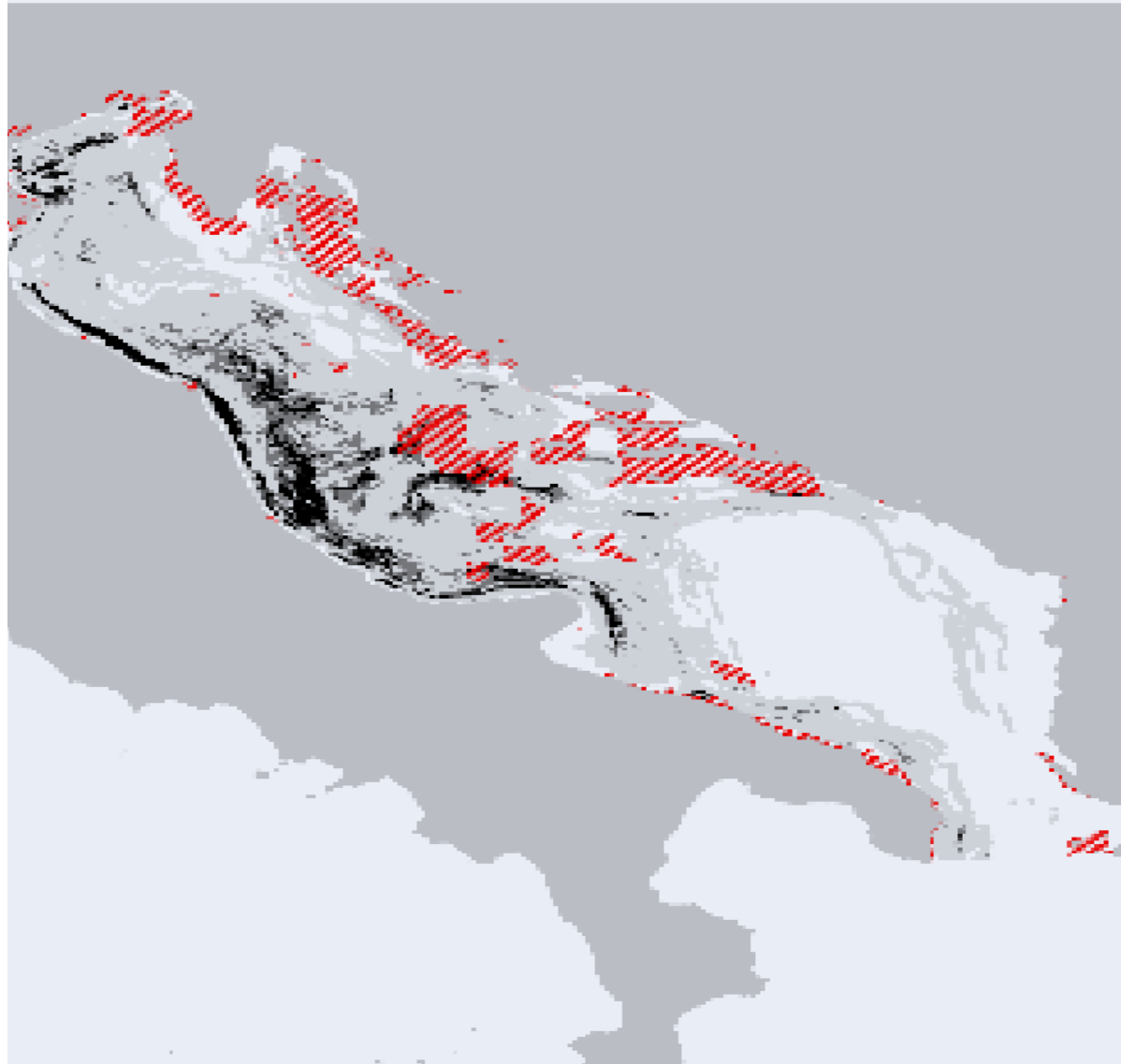
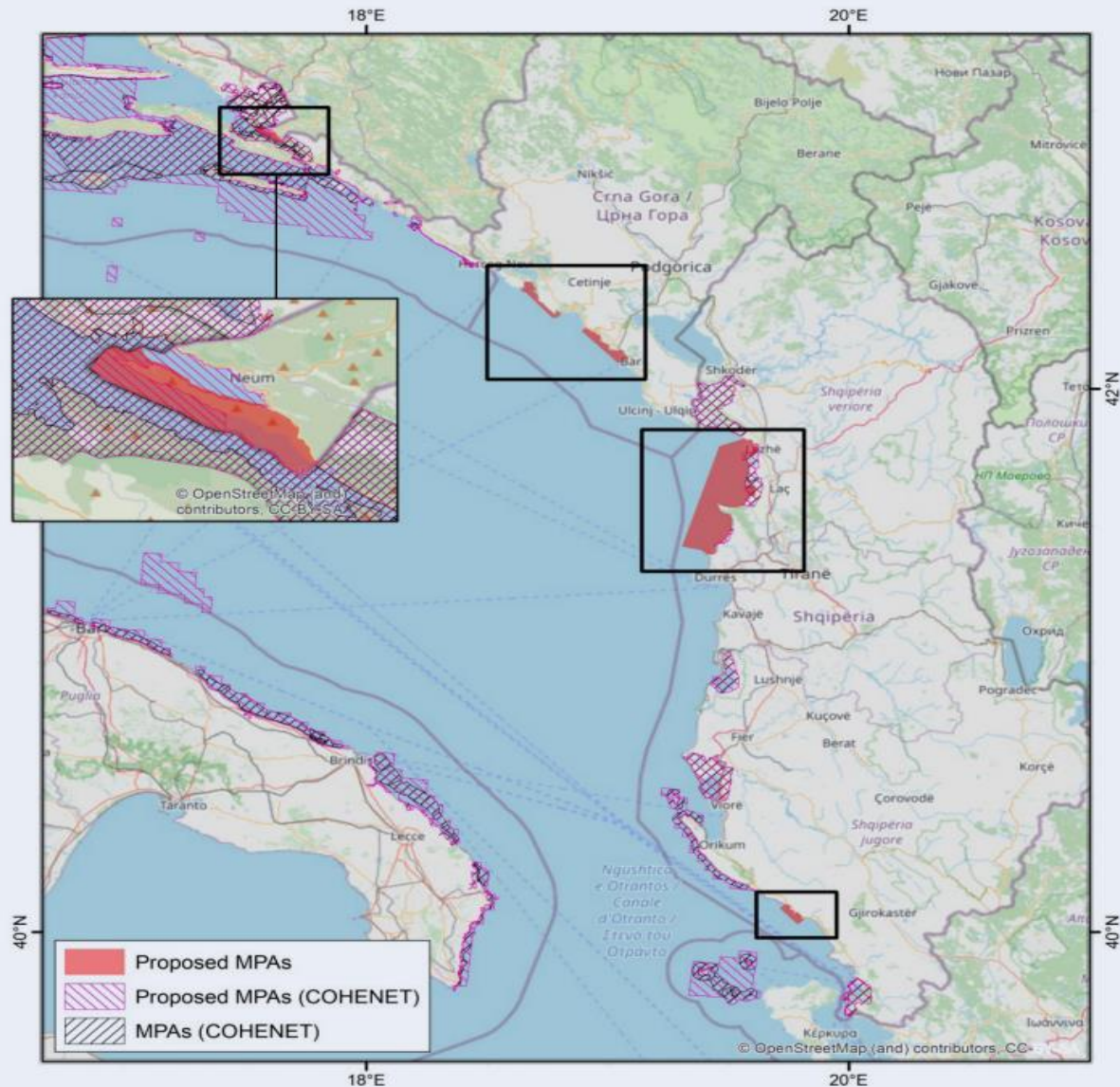
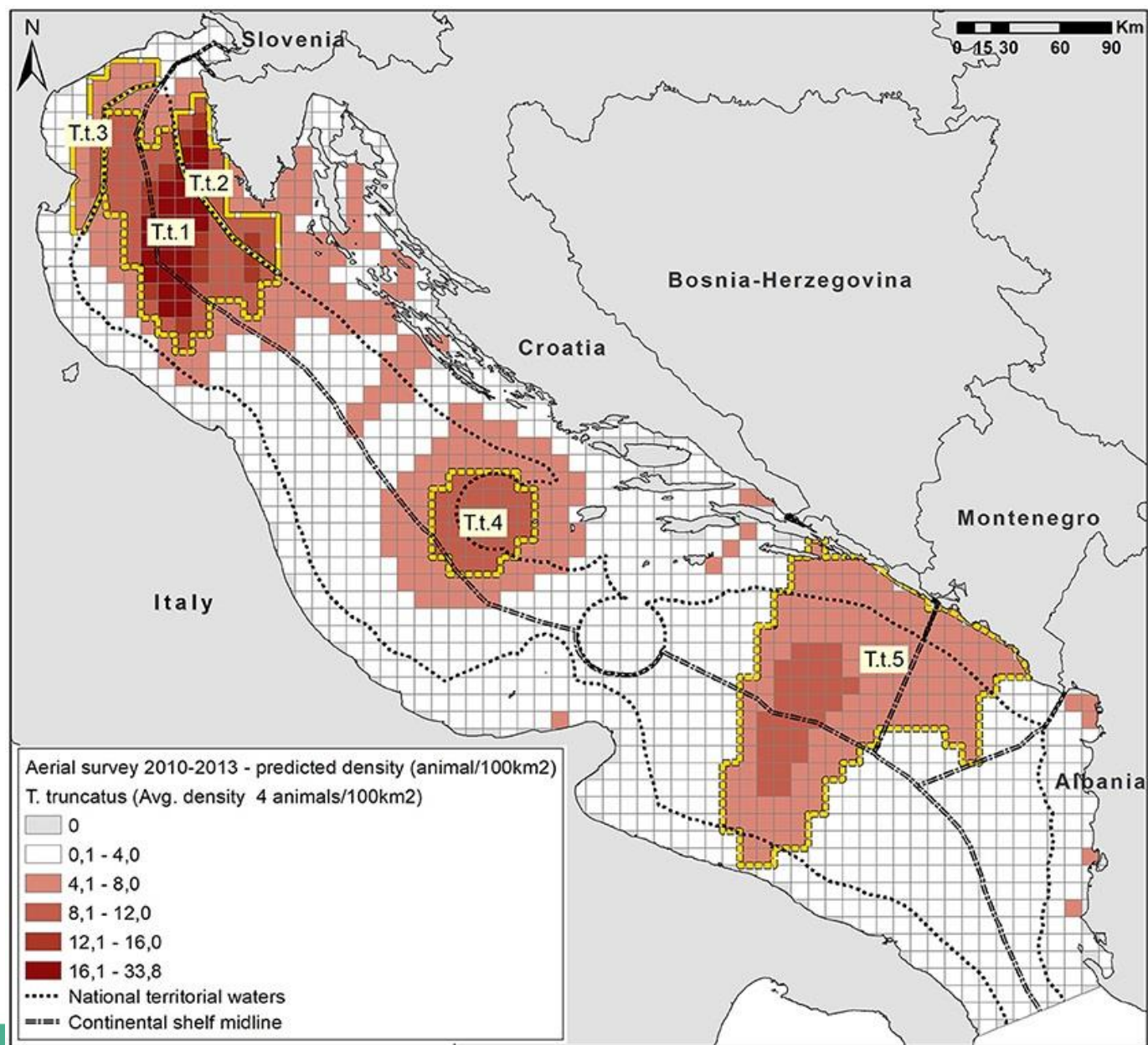


FIGURE 9

COHENET proposed network of MPAs in the Adriati, including the proposed MPAs in this report in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, and Montenegro.





- general presentation of protection regimes and restrictions
- protection expansion area





Figure 16 Planning Unit of the Maritime Area "Adriatic".



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- **Natura 2000 sites²³¹**



Overview: gaps in Natura 2000: relevant Habitats Directive features (species of annex II /habitat types of annex I of the Directive) in the Mediterranean biogeographical region concluded by the Commission in 2016.

	Number of habitat types in need for further research/additional proposals of SCIs (SR/IN MOD/IN MAJ)	Habitat type	Comments
Croatia	2	*Posidonia beds (Posidonion oceanicae)	SR
		Reefs	SUF/SR
Italy	4	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time	IN MOD/MIN
		Reefs	IN MOD
		Submarine structures made by leaking gases	IN MAJ/IN MIN
		Submerged or partially submerged sea caves	IN MOD
Greece	3	*Posidonia beds (Posidonion oceanicae)	IN MOD/CD
		Reefs	IN MOD
		Submarine structures made by leaking gases	IN MAJ
Slovenia	0		



	Number of species in need for further research/additional proposals of SCIs (SR/IN MOD/IN MAJ)	Species	Comments
Croatia	2	Caretta caretta*	SR
		Tursiops truncatus	SUF/SR
Italy	5	Petromyzon marinus	SR/CD
		Lampetra fluviatilis	SR
		Caretta caretta*	IN MOD/SR
		Tursiops truncatus	IN MOD/SR
		Monachus monachus	IN MOD/CD
Greece	5	Caretta caretta*	IN MOD
		Chelonia mydas*	IN MAJ
		Tursiops truncatus	IN MOD
		Phocoena phocoena	SR
		Monachus monachus	IN MOD
Slovenia	2	Caretta caretta*	SR
		Tursiops truncatus	IN MAJ



Italian initiative (Deep Sea NATURA- Marine Ecosystem Restoration Project)

Thanks to an investment of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan project, the creation of an impressive **network of deep-sea Natura 2000 sites is planned** for the protection of the habitat 1170 "rocky reef".

The aim of this initiative is to protect the majority of the more than 80 seamounts in Italian waters, with the enforcement of the prohibition of all forms of harvesting and with the goal of strengthening the Natura 2000 network and contributing significantly to the achievement of the 10% strictly protected marine area target.

In addition, the project includes actions to preserve and restore the integrity of benthic habitats that are biodiversity hot spots such as *Posidonia oceanica* meadows, as well as other carbon-rich ecosystems.



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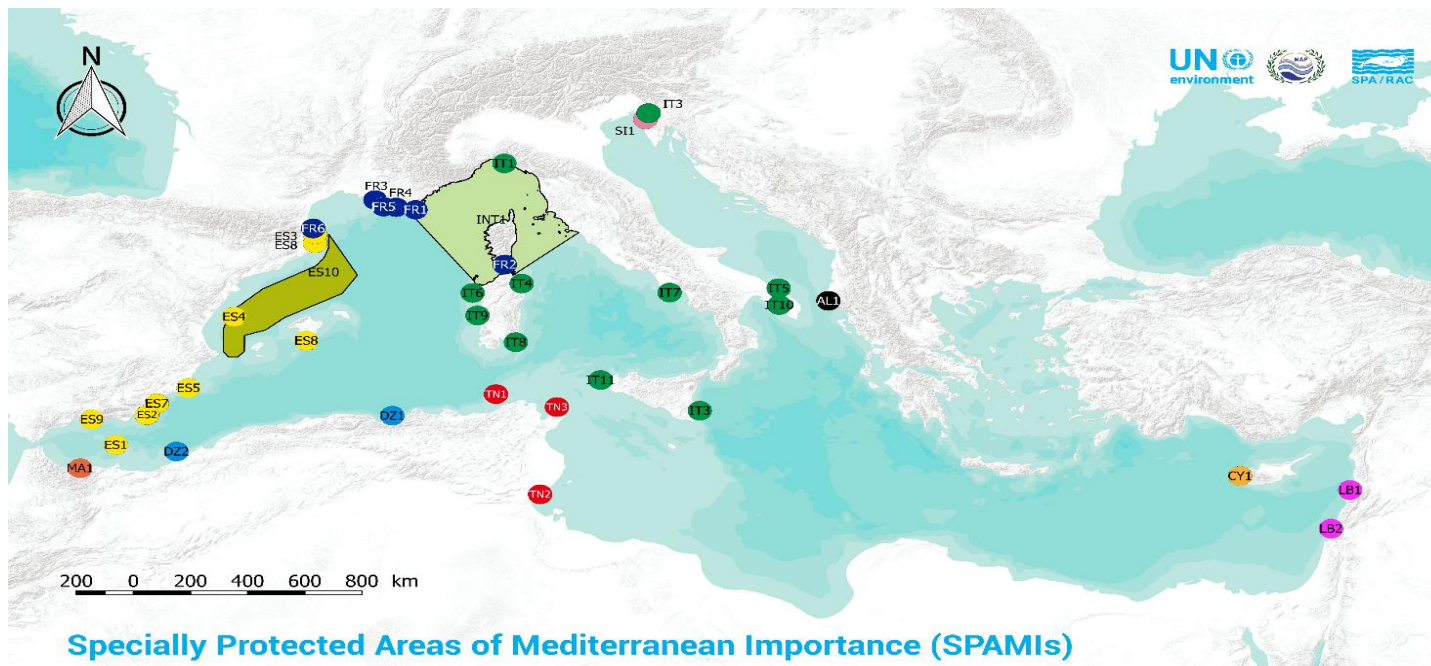
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Establishing marine protected areas, including transboundary, in accordance with the provisions of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols

- *Reference should be made in this regard to the possibility of establishing transboundary SPAMIs or one bigger SPAMI in the Northern and Central Adriatic* (including the Jabuka/Pomo Pit area) based upon a joint proposal by Croatia, Italy and Slovenia.
- The **scientific basis for such proposals** may be found, among other, in the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, which in 2014 ***identified the Northern, Central (including Jabuka/Pomo pit) and Southern Adriatic, including the Strait of Otranto area and nearby Ionian Sea, as EBSAs***, and also in the report presented in 2010 to the extraordinary meeting of the focal points for the Areas Protocol, which listed the ***Northern and Central Adriatic as “priority conservation areas” and, together with Santa Maria di Leuca and Northeastern Ionian, as potential SPAMIs.***
- Following the eventual ratification of the Areas protocol by Greece, a similar move could be envisaged in the Southern Adriatic (Channel of Otranto area) and the Ionian Sea.





Albania

- AL1 - Karaburun Sazan National Marine Park (2016)

Algeria

- DZ1 - Banc des Kabyles Marine Reserve (2005)
- DZ2 - Habibas Islands (2005)

Cyprus

- CY1 - Lara-Toxeftra Turtle Reserve (2013)

France

- FR1 - Port-Cros National Park (2001)
- FR2 - Bouches de Bonifacio Natural Reserve (2009)
- FR3 - The Blue Coast Marine Park (2012)
- FR4 - The Embiez Archipelago - Six Fours (2012)
- FR5 - Calanques National Park (2017)
- FR6 - Cerbère-Banyuls Marine Nature Reserve (2019)

France, Italy, Monaco

- INT1 - Pelagos Sanctuary for the Conservation of Marine Mammals (2001)

Italy

- IT1 - Portofino Marine Protected Area (2005)
- IT2 - Miramare Marine Protected Area (2008)
- IT3 - Plemmirio Marine Protected Area (2008)
- IT4 - Tavolara-Punta Coda Cavallo Marine Protected Area (2008)
- IT5 - Torre Guaceto Marine Protected Area and Natural Reserve (2008)
- IT6 - Capo Caccia-Isola Piana Marine Protected Area (2009)
- IT7 - Punta Campanella Marine Protected Area (2009)
- IT8 - Capo Carbonara Marine Protected Area (2012)
- IT9 - Penisola del Sinis - Isola di Mal di Ventre Marine Protected Area (2012)
- IT10 - Porto Cesareo Marine Protected Area (2012)
- IT11 - Egadi Islands Marine Protected Area (2019)

Lebanon

- LB1 - Palm Islands Nature Reserve (2012)
- LB2 - Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (2012)

Morocco

- MA1 - Al-Hoceima National Park (2009)

Slovenia

- SI1 - Landscape Park Strunjan (2019)

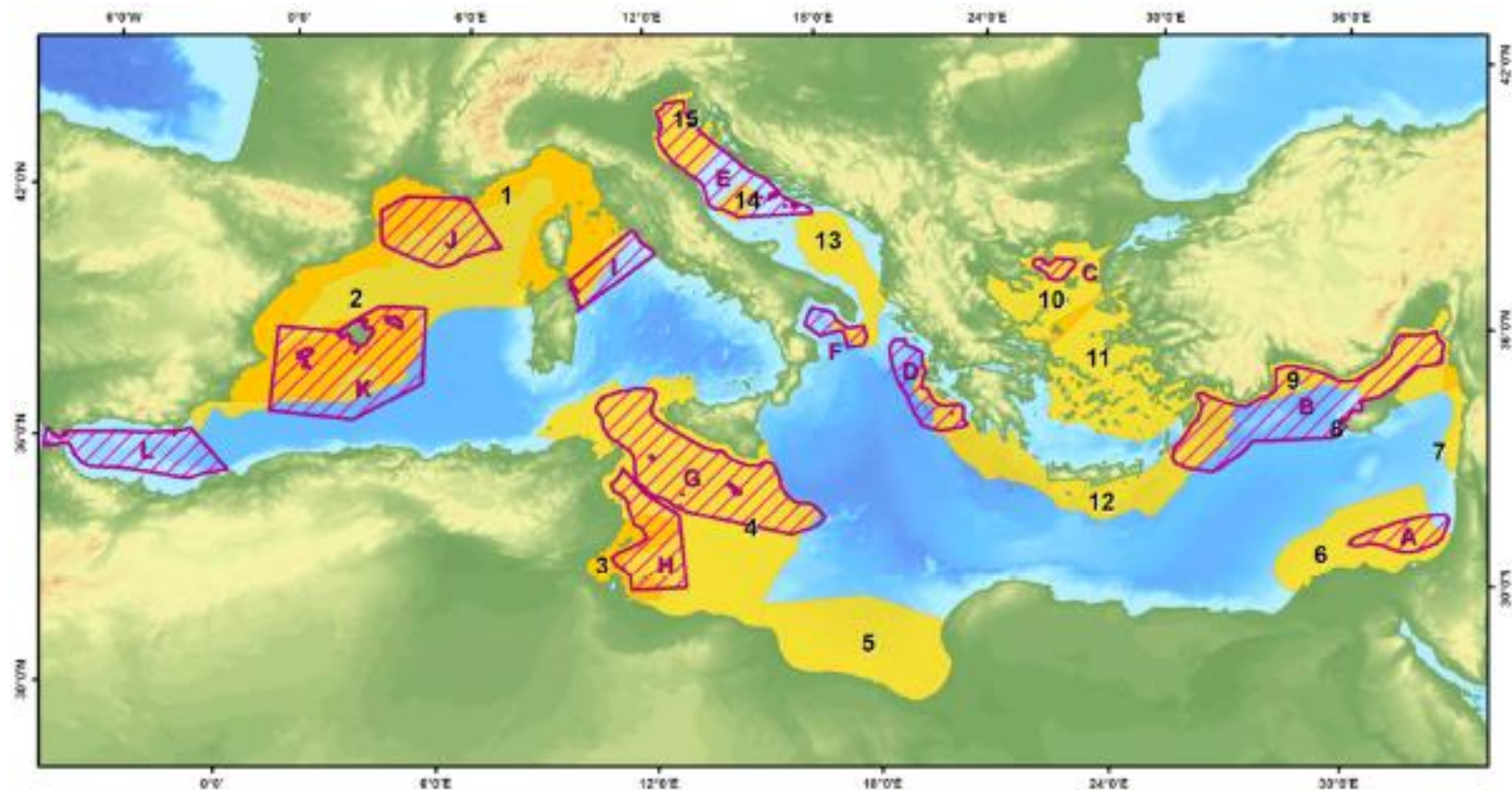
Spain

- ES1 - Alboran Island (2001)
- ES2 - Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Park (2001)
- ES3 - Cap de Creus Natural Park (2001)
- ES4 - Columbretes Islands (2001)
- ES5 - Mar Menor and Oriental Mediterranean zone of the Region of Murcia coast (2001)
- ES6 - Medes Islands (2001)
- ES7 - Sea Bottom of the Levante of Almeria (2001)
- ES8 - Archipelago of Cabrera National Park (2003)
- ES9 - Maro-Cerro Gordo Cliffs (2003)
- ES10 - Cetaceans Migration Corridor in the Mediterranean (2019)

Tunisia

- TN1 - La Galite Archipelago (2001)
- TN2 - Kneiss Islands (2001)
- TN3 - Zembra and Zembretta National Park (2001)





Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs)*

1 EBSAs

Overlapping area
between EBSAs

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. North-western Mediterranean Pelagic Ecosystems | 9. North-East Levantine Sea |
| 2. North-western Mediterranean Benthic Ecosystems | 10. North Aegean Sea |
| 3. Gulf of Gabès | 11. Central Aegean Sea |
| 4. Sicilian Channel | 12. Hellenic Trench |
| 5. Gulf of Sirte | 13. South Adriatic Ionian Strait |
| 6. Nile Delta Fan | 14. Jabuka / Pomo Pit |
| 7. East Levantine Canyons (ELCA) | 15. Northern Adriatic |
| 8. Akamas and Chrysochou Bay | |

* CBD's COP 2014 (Pyeongchang, Rep. Korea)

Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMIs)*

SPAMI potential areas

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. Nile Delta Region | G. Northern Strait of Sicily |
| B. Northeastern Levantine Sea | H. Southern Strait of Sicily |
| C. Thracian Sea | I. Central Tyrrhenian |
| D. Northeastern Ionian | J. Gulf of Lions Shelf and Slope |
| E. Northern and Central Adriatic | K. Southern Balearic |
| F. Santa Maria di Leuca | L. Alborán Seamounts |

* Extr. Meet of the F.P. for SPAs (Istanbul, Turkey, 2010)

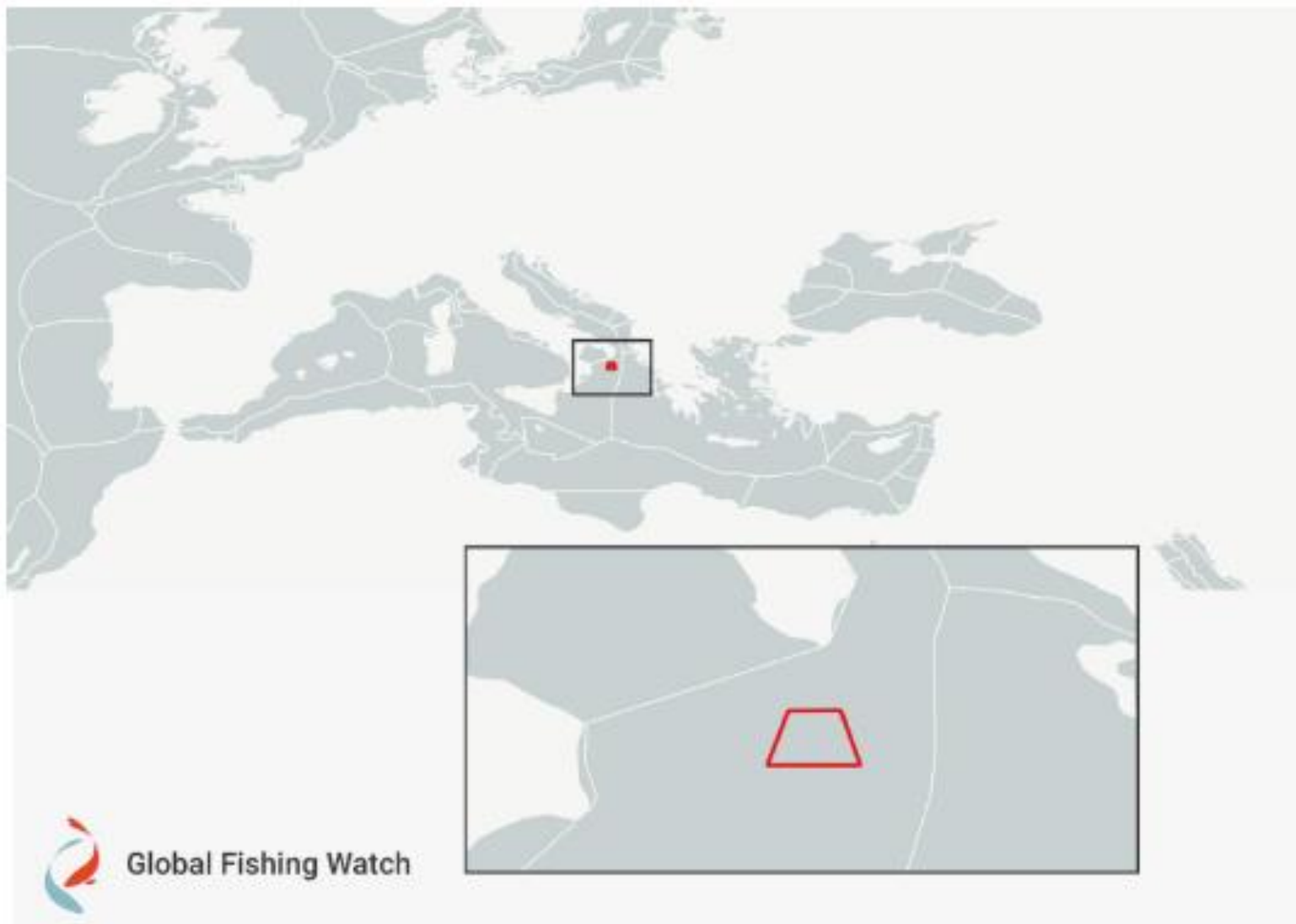
LAEA-ETRS-1989
GIS: RAC/SPA-S. Regional. Vers. April 2015.



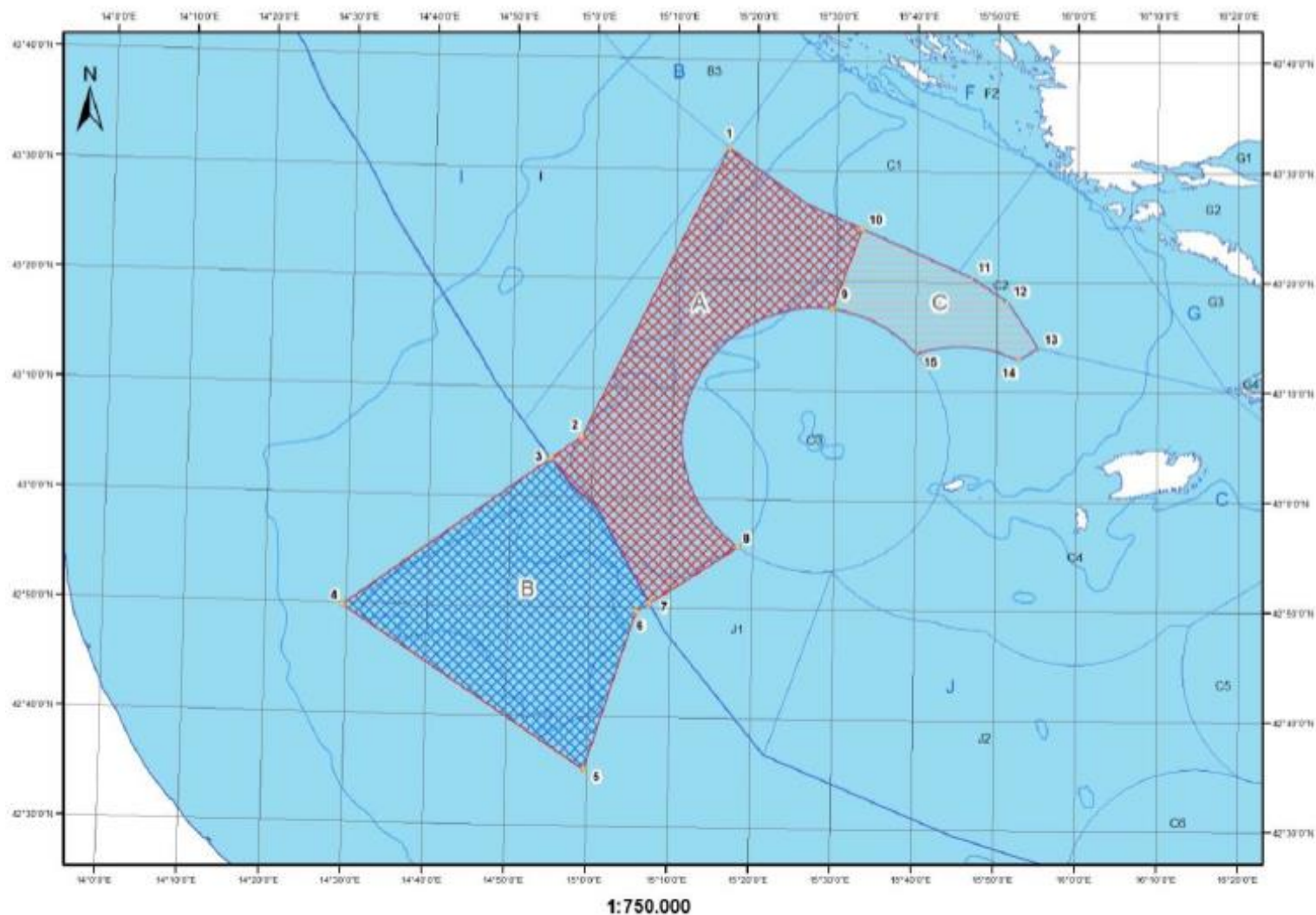
Establishing other sectoral other effective area-based conservation measures applicable to parts of Adriatic and Ionian Seas (FRAs, marine protected areas for cetaceans, underwater cultural heritage sites, etc.).

- Other effective area-based conservation measures of transboundary character may include ***FRAs established within the framework of the GFCM***, two of which lie in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, namely the ***Lophelia reef off Capo Santa Maria di Leuca*** and the ***Jabuka/Pomo Pit***. Worth of mention is the ***Bari Canyon***, which does not present a transboundary character, although it is located in the South Adriatic Sea off the territorial waters of Italy.
- It is of particular importance that the Jabuka/Pomo Pit has been recently confirmed as a 'permanent' FRA, together with all the associated management measures (44th session of the GFCM, held between the 2 and 6 November 2021) and that a proposed transboundary FRA within the region of concern (Albania, Italy) relating to ***Deepwater essential fish habitats and sensitive habitats in the South Adriatic*** seems close to its establishment under the GFCM.



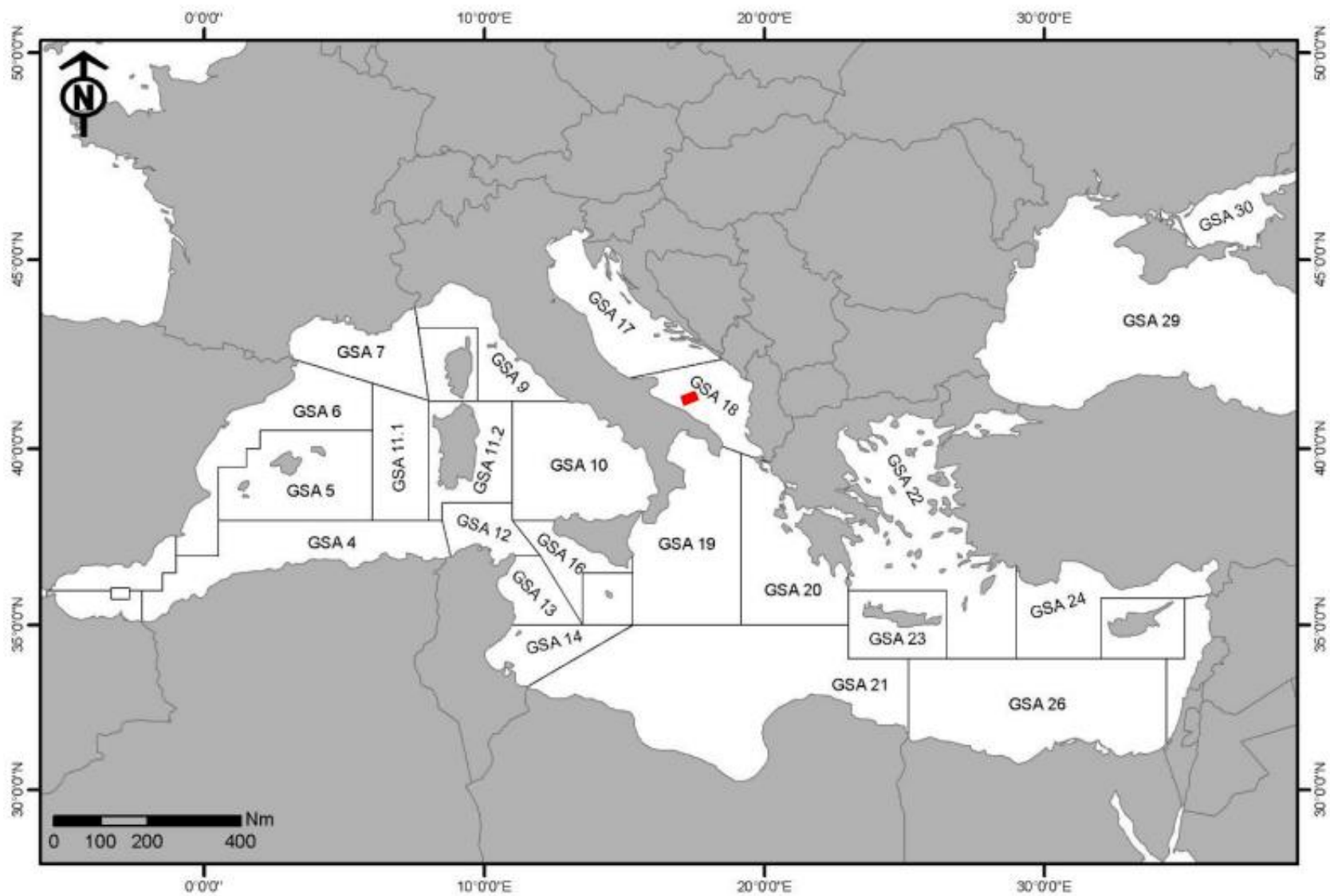


Geographical coordinates of the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA (Adriatic Sea)

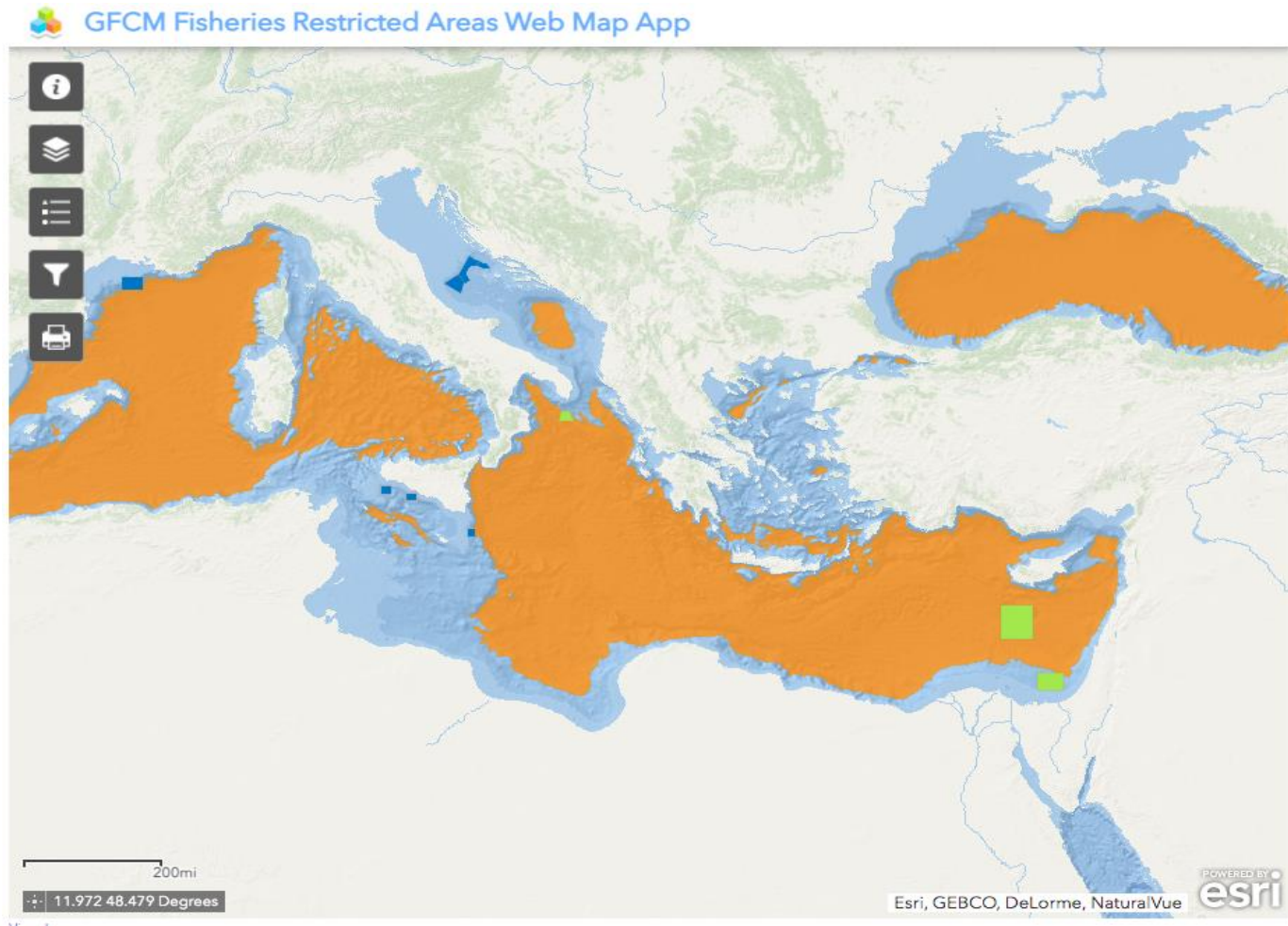


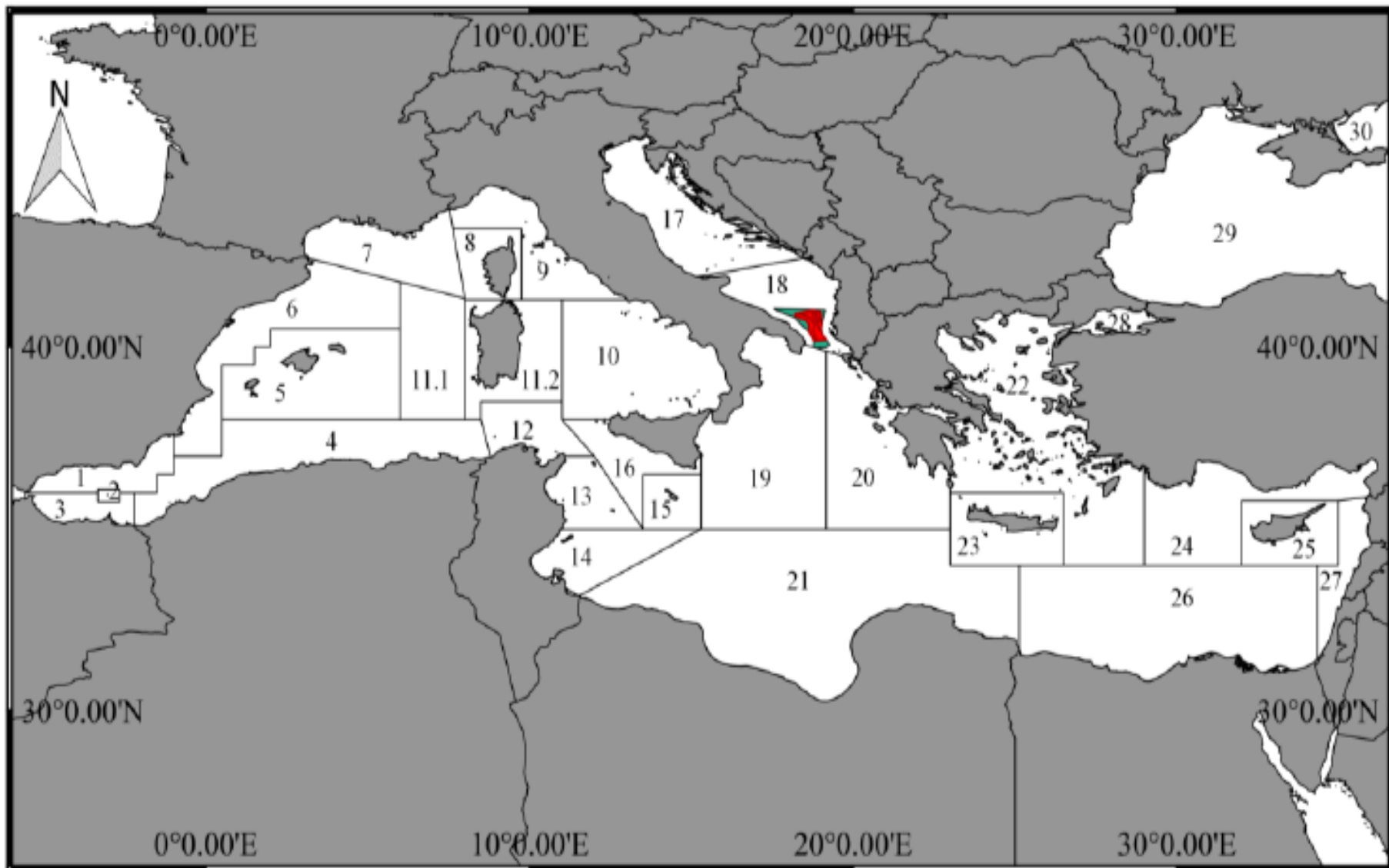
The FRA Jabuka/Pomo Pit and its zoning (A, B, C).
Source: Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/3.





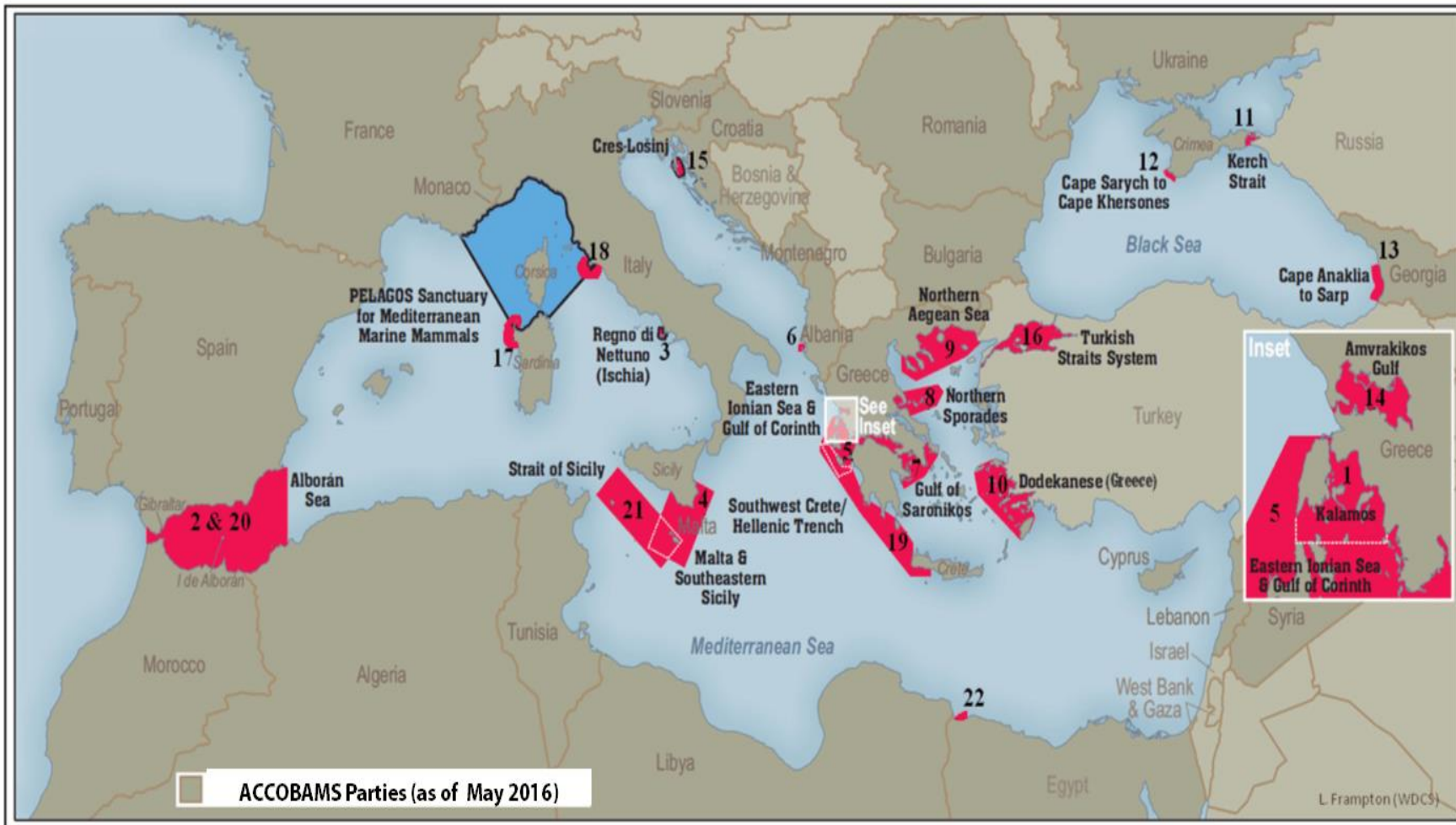
Since 2005, GFCM has prohibited the use of towed dredges and trawl nets at depths beyond 1000 m in the Mediterranean and Black Seas (inc. Adriatic & Ionian)





FRA proposal: Deep water essential fish habitats and sensitive habitats in the South Adriatic. Source: Proposal transmitted to the GFCM in March 2018.





- Additionally, as of today, 22 proposals for **marine protected areas for cetaceans have been identified within the framework of the ACCOBAMS**, four of which would be located in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, namely: the *Waters along east coast of the Cres-Lošinj archipelago*; the *Sazani Island – Karaburun Peninsula (Adriatic and Ionian Sea, Albania)*; the *Eastern Ionian Sea and the Gulf of Corinth (Greece)*; and the *Southwest Crete and the Hellenic Trench (Greece)*. **Bosnia and Herzegovina is NOT a State Party to ACCOBAMS.**
- Some States have established **marine protected areas also around underwater cultural properties** (for example, Italy by decrees of 7 August 2002 established the two underwater parks of *Gaiola*, in the Gulf of Naples, and of *Baia*, in the Gulf of Pozzuoli), based on the relevant provisions of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural heritage.
- **Staff Working Document of the EU Commission “Criteria and Guidance for Protected Area Designations” (2022)** provides that in order to count OECMs towards the targets (30%-10%) **tailored conservation objectives and measures would be necessary.**

