

ADRIAPAN: A NETWORK OF ADRIATIC'S COASTAL AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

ADRIAPAN: OMREŽJE JADRANSKIH OBREŽNIH IN MORSKIH ZAVAROVANIH OBMOČIJ

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Key words: Marine Protected Areas; Adriatic Environment; Nature Tourism; ICZM; Ecological Network

Ključne besede: morska zavarovana območja; jadransko okolje; turizem v naravi; ICZM; ekološke omrežje

ABSTRACT

Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of resources are the topics in which hundreds of MPAs have already been involved along all the Adriatic coasts, in Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece.

During the 4th IUCN World Conservation Conference held on October 6th 2008 in Barcelona, the AdriaPAN, an Adriatic Protected Areas Network, which had been constituted on September 26th 2008 during the meeting organized for this purpose in Delta Po Veneto Regional Park, was recognized in the international events promoted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Often, everywhere, special local administrations are created to take care of the delicate environment of a protected area. Protected Areas could become valuable places, where new local sustainable development forms could be implemented. In fact, Protected Areas authorities are the only official public bodies by which both missions can be carried out: the conservation of natural resources and the local economic development. They could become primary laboratories, where ordinary people, researchers, academic bodies and public administrators could be trained for sustainable form of tourism.

IZVLEČEK

Ohranjanje biotske pestrosti in trajnostna raba virov sta temi, s katerimi se ukvarja že na stotine morskih zavarovanih območij vzdolž celotne jadranske obale, se pravi v Italiji, Sloveniji, na Hrvaškem, v Bosni in Hercegovini, Črni gori, Albaniji in Grčiji.

Na 4. konferenci organizacije IUCN (Mednarodne unije za varstvo narave), ki je potekala 6. oktobra 2008 v Barceloni, je bila AdriaPAN (omrežje jadranskih zavarovanih območij), ki je bila ustanovljena 26. septembra 2008 med sestankom, organiziranim v ta namen v Regionalnem parku delte Pad, sprejeta kot organizacija, sodelujoča v mednarodnih dogodkih pod promocijo IUCN.

Pogosto se marsikje ustanavljajo lokalna administrativna telesa, da bi poskrbela za izredno občutljivo okolje zavarovanega območja. Zavarovana območja bi lahko postala dragoceni kraji, kjer bi lahko bile uresničene nove lokalne trajnostne oblike razvoja. Pravzaprav so vodstva zavarovanih območij edina uradna javna telesa, ki lahko uresničujejo obe poslanstvi: ohranitev naravnih virov in razvoj lokalnega gospodarstva. Zavarovana območja bi lahko postala primarni laboratoriji, v katerih bi se lahko na področju trajnostne oblike turizma lahko urili navadni ljudje, raziskovalci, akademiki in javni administratorji.

1. EU CROSSBORDER COOPERATION WITHIN THE ADRIATIC REGION

The entire Adriatic area comprehends a population of about 96million inhabitants and it is a very important economic area for Europe with a total GDP of about 1.8 million Euros.

The need of creating a unique strategy is felt by all stakeholders in the region for the promotion of a more homogeneous and sustainable development, for the reduction of economic and social differences that exist in the area and for fostering a progressive approach to the EU by the countries that are not its members as yet.

Notwithstanding its internal differences, the improved cooperation in many sectors is already making the area more homogeneous and fostering economic growth of the less developed areas. Comprehensive strategies that should establish instruments and objectives to be reached in the medium and long term would accelerate the development process of all countries involved.

The Adriatic Countries are associated in various form within a semi-closed sea basin as a relevant “policy area”.

The first Intergovernmental Cooperation was established in May 2000 by the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII)¹, which included all the Adriatic coastal countries plus Serbia. The aim of AII is to link the coastal countries of the two seas for the purpose of cooperating in the development and safety of the whole area.

A second formal association of governmental authorities was launched on February 2006 as Adriatic Euroregion (AE), for a continuous trans-border cooperation. It represents a model of co-operation that includes trans-national and inter-regional co-operation between regions of the Adriatic coastline. The AE is the institutional framework for jointly defining and solving important issues in the Adriatic area. It consists of 23 members - regional and local governments from Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania (Coletti 2009).

The issue of environmental protection, which is central for socio-economic development in the region, is the high sensibility of t maritime and coastal areas of the Adriatic Sea.

One of the most interesting places and topics of convergence for the countries of the entire Adriatic region are exactly those that are associated with marine and coastal environment, with resource protection, and with the enhancement of locations.

The European Community and its Member States are contracting parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, and EU Heads of State and Government undertook in 2001 to halt the decline of biodiversity in the EU by 2010 and to restore habitats and natural systems. In 2006, the EU Commission unveiled an Action Plan to halt biodiversity loss by 2010. In the EU, the policy framework is already largely in place, as “Natura 2000” - the EU-wide network of protected area - now covering some 18% of the territory of the EU-15 and is being extended to the EU-10 and seas. A significant number of Natura 2000 sites are designated in the marine environment, and nearly all of them are concentrated in coastal areas.

¹ The Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) was formally established as a political initiative at a conference held in Ancona, Italy, in May 2000. Eight Countries cooperate within the framework of AII: Albania, Bosnia&Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro.

For the Special Protection Areas (SPA):

- ca. 5,000 sites, ca. 10% in which a marine part is included
- ca. 500,000 km², some 15% of which is in marine area

For the Sites of Community Importance (SCI):

- ca. 20,000 sites, 10% in which a marine part is included
- ca. 600,000 km², some 15% of which is in marine area

More than 1,500 sites having a marine component are concentrated in the first 12 miles from the shore (Paixao 2007).

These facts brought the European Commission to publish, in 2007, the “Guidelines for the establishment of the Natura 2000 network in the marine environment - Application of the Habitats and Birds Directives”. The establishment of a marine network of conservation areas under Natura 2000 should significantly contribute to the target of halting the loss of biodiversity in the EU and also to broader marine conservation and sustainable use objectives.

Concerning the need of merging the protected areas into a network, we notice that:

- the Action Plan (2006) identifies four priority areas, one of which, “Biodiversity in the EU”, requires member states to propose, designate, protect and effectively manage sites protected under the Natura 2000 network;
- the approach developed for the “marine” network will lead to the implementation of a single, integrated and coherent set of measures for the conservation and protection of marine environment.

EU policy launched in 2007 seeks to enhance the compatibility between Natura 2000 and other marine networks established under regional agreements/conventions: OSPAR, HELCOM, Barcelona.

2. COASTAL REGION AND PROTECTED AREAS

To give a definition of “coastal region” we should have in mind the areas included in the maritime mid-level administrative units of the Mediterranean and Adriatic countries. Concepts of “coastal areas” or “coastal zones” are defined by current literature with analysis centred on the following points:

- human pressure
- tourist pressure
- settlement system change
- industrial growth
- traffic growth
- land use and cover change
- spatial planning

Several studies are involved in the analysis of the economic development in the Mediterranean and Adriatic environment (Cori & Lemmi 2002).

During the last IUCN World Conservation Conference held in October 2008 in Barcelona, Spain, the last definition of a Protected Area was adopted, i.e.: “A clearly defined geographical

space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”.

Marine protected areas (MPAs) have gained world recognition as effective tools to protect the marine environment, and are much in favour in the Mediterranean, where about a hundred of them have been declared during the recent decades to grant special protection to sites perceived to contain the most valuable marine habitats and species. Embattled by the complexities of saving their sea as a whole, the Mediterranean nations have resolved to carve out their remaining crown's jewels from the marine wasteland, and struggle to conserve them through MPA designations (Notarbartolo Di Sciara 2008).

Protected Areas are special local administrative bodies created to take care of this delicate environment. Protected Areas could become valuable places, where new local sustainable development forms could be implemented. In fact, Protected Areas authorities are the only official public bodies by which both missions are carried out: the conservation of natural resources and the local economic development. And, further, they are the only forms of public administration that extends its own action, planning and programming in both different geographic areas: at sea and on land.

Coastal and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) could thus become primary laboratories, where ordinary people, researchers, academic bodies and public administrators could be trained in sustainable form of development.

On the subject of environment protection and sustainable use of sea resources, all the Mediterranean countries have already worked together since they signed, in 1995, the Barcelona Protocol concerning the biological diversity and specially protected areas in the Mediterranean Sea (SPAMI-Special Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance).

The introduction, with the same protocol, of the ICZM (Integrated Coastal Zone Management), will be an important expedient to the integration of administrative and political forms of territorial planning in all Mediterranean countries. It could help integration within different cultures. And thanks to their similarity and capacity to govern the deep sea as well as coastal territories, protected areas became the best laboratories where this new planning and programming could be practiced.

Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of resources are the topics in which have already been involved more than hundreds of MPAs along all the Adriatic coasts, in Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece.

3. A NETWORK OF ADRIATIC PROTECTED AREAS

In early June 2008, during a training workshop organized by the Italian Association of Protected Area managers (AIDAP), the idea of establishing a network of marine and coastal protected areas in the Adriatic was launched and its feasibility and relevance first discussed. Other meetings were organized shortly after, in order to define the objectives and content of such an initiative. A chart with ideas and objectives was created and named “Carta di Cerrano” in honour of the place where everything started.

On July 8th, 2008, the Carta di Cerrano (Cerrano Charter) was drafted and circulated to all Italian parties interested in commenting upon it: "AdriaPAN" (Adriatic Protected Areas Network) was selected as the official title of the newly born network. Almost all Italian Marine and Coastal Protected Areas along the Adriatic coast responded positively to this initiative and the Charter was finally signed on September 26th, 2008, during the meeting organized for this purpose in Delta Po Veneto Regional Park.

During the 4th International Union for Conservation of Nature World Conservation Conference held on October 6th 2008 in Barcelona, the AdriaPAN was recognized in international events promoted by IUCN and conducted by MedPAN, the existing network of Mediterranean Protected Areas Managers.

The AdriaPAN aims at initiating a technical process in support of all MPAs managers in the region that will speed up the achievement of the goal set during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002 of halting marine and coastal biodiversity loss through the establishment of networks of marine protected areas by 2012. This initiative responds also to the main international provisions related to the conservation of marine environment, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the European Commission's Directives.

The number of MPAs who have signed the Cerrano Charter is rising very quickly. AdriaPAN numbers 21 MPAs members from all Adriatic countries and has received request of collaboration from more than 25 organizations, such as universities, research institutes, NGO, associations, local agencies, etc.

On March 26, 2010, during a session by the Senior Committee of IAI & Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (a direct offshoot of the foreign ministries of countries bordering the Adriatic Sea²), the AdriaPAN network was officially recognized as a working body.

4. PROJECT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NETWORK

Several projects are being developed with the AdriaPAN's coordination. Some of them have already been created with strong partnership and detailed structure to apply for EU grants.

The first project, PAEIAS (Protected Areas Efficiency In Adriatic Sea), considers the ensemble of the historical, cultural and natural heritage of the Adriatic basin. As the Adriatic Sea needs urgent conservation and management measures to be set up that take into account local communities and stakeholders in the decision/management process, PAEIAS is exploring the use of innovative collaborative frameworks involving scientists, protected area's managers and stakeholders (i.e. fishermen). The project's objectives are : 1) preserving the natural heritage and biodiversity of marine systems (from single species to ecosystem functions), 2) preserving the economy related to small scale artisanal fisheries (enhancing or stabilizing yields, promoting local products), and 3) the cultural heritage and diversity connected to local traditions and knowledge of fishing communities. PAEIAS involves partners and associates

² See note n.4.

from 6 Adriatic countries (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania and Greece). Scientific institutions are called to strictly collaborate with PAs' authorities and fishermen to collect data/information and set up proper measures to manage fisheries in a sustainability perspective and promote local products.

Another project called **BiSEAcle** (Bicycle Intermobility System Ensuring Adriatic Coast's Leisure and Environment) aims to promote sustainable modes of transport and to develop a system of compatible and integrated fruition of Central Adriatic protected areas, focusing on bicycle use, supporting stable cooperation between economic operators and public administrations, to improve the economic sustainability of protected areas and competitiveness in eco-tourism.

Therefore the project aims at:

- Encouraging networking between the different areas involved in the project,
- Encouraging the emergence of tourist demand for the fruition of protected areas

The project **ChaMon** (*Charadrius Monachus*) has been created to study and support the ecological networks, between protected areas, for biodiversity conservation. The creation of a real ecological network is the first step towards biodiversity conservation and protection of endangered species. On the Adriatic coasts, the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) and Kentish plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) have a potentially wide range of distribution by occupying the two more typical habitats of the Adriatic Sea: rocky and sand littoral.

Chamon has engaged in preparing a protection plan for these two species, through the creation of ecological network between marine protected areas (MPA) in the Adriatic. The project aims to achieve the creation of ecological network through a set of concerted actions, which will include plans for sustainable development and efforts to raise the awareness of the local communities.

The creation of ecological network is not simple and it needs a set of studies on the ecological characteristics of the species. The main objectives are:

- consolidating existing data on the status of these species and implementing a census where necessary,
- studying the dispersal of the species,
- conducting a study of habitat suitability models and a census of main suitable breeding habitats in the area,
- creating a map of distribution of the species and a map of their potential distribution,
- studying foraging area and the diet,
- establishing the MPA involved and the ecological corridor necessary,
- establishing a plan for sustainable development of the region, which takes into consideration and renders compatible habitat conservation, tourism and fishing activities.

In order to implement this project, participation by many MPAs would be necessary to sufficiently enlarge the ecological network to allow the areas to be used by these two endangered species.

5. CONCLUSION

Marine and coastal, the natural protected areas in the Adriatic may constitute a working basis to embark on an interesting experiment of directing cross-border and international cooperation.

The spontaneous initiative to build a network between the management bodies of marine and coastal protected areas, started by operators within the said bodies, bodes well.

The involvement of local authorities belonging to the administrative organisation of protected areas and of any stakeholders related to these authorities as a result may take place in a direct manner in any State of the 'crown' of Countries along the Adriatic Sea. The theme of the preservation of natural and cultural resources and their enhancement concerns any forms of local administration irrespective of their ethnic, religious, and social foundation of origin.

Both marine-environment protection programmes as defined in the new strategy put in place by the European Union with Directive No. 2008/56/EC, and the policies of cross-border Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and the wide open-sea protected areas (SPAMI) call for the execution of a network action through coordination between the local situations of different countries and between various levels of administration and interests.

These are interesting governance forms, which in the Adriatic area would already find the organisations managing marine and coastal, natural protected areas.

6. LITERATURE

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