

**THE NEW EUROPEAN MARITIME POLICY**  
*Challenges and Opportunities*  
17 November 2005, Brussels

**IUCN Maritime Policy**

Globally, IUCN maritime policy is in accordance with the millennium development goals, WSSD commitments, and the objectives of the CBD. IUCN aims at the accomplishment of a dynamic maritime policy that balances the need of human development with the need to use resources in a sustainable way.

IUCN maritime policy, based on the World Conservation Congress resolutions, and according IUCN mission and vision is overall aiming at biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of resources. Improvement of the governance is a priority. It includes the implementation of the ecosystem approach, the seascape approach to conservation, management of trans-boundary conservation areas, and the special requirements of marine protected areas, in particular in the high seas.

IUCN supports the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which aims at “promoting the peaceful uses of the seas and oceans, the equitable and efficient utilization of their resources, the conservation of their living resources, and the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment”.

IUCN encourages decision-makers to apply the precautionary principle in ways so as to enhance conservation and sustainable development.

IUCN recognizes the socio-economic importance of marine resources to the planet’s human population and emphasizes the need for increasing coherence between existing programmes and conventions related to fisheries management and the marine environment.

IUCN is concerned by environmental protection of the seas from the risk of maritime traffic, especially of the Mediterranean Sea.

IUCN recognizes that anthropogenic ocean noise, linked to maritime activities, is a form of pollution that may degrade habitats and have adverse effects on marine life, and is concerned that, over the last century, noise levels in the oceans have increased as a result of maritime activities.

IUCN recalls that the issue of the biodiversity impact of invasive alien species has been recognized in the context of the CBD and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

IUCN is concerned by the conservation and the sustainable management of marine biodiversity in the high-seas, including the water column and the seabed, particularly in the Mediterranean Sea where a major part is considered as high-sea due to the non-declaration of EEZ by the riparian countries.

IUCN is concerned by the conservation of the seamounts, deep-sea corals and other vulnerable habitats and recalls that recent scientific investigations are documenting previously undiscovered species, great species diversity and very high rates in deep-sea endemism.

IUCN emphasizes the necessity of a particular focus on risk assessment of future development plans and calls for better addressing of the integration of different sectors through the implementation of ecosystem approach to maritime activities.

*Born in 1948 IUCN, The World Conservation Union is a membership organisation which brings together 82 States, 111 government agencies, more than 800 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and some 10,000 scientists and experts from many countries in a unique worldwide partnership.*

*The Union's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.*

*Responding to the need to conserve our marine and coastal resources IUCN formed the Global Marine Programme (GMP) in 1985. Since its inception, the Global Marine Programme has been working across the globe. The programme has covered multiple areas such as integrated coastal and marine management, fisheries, marine protected areas, Maritime transport, larger marine ecosystems, as well as coral reef rehabilitation, and the effects of climate change on marine resources.*

*In Europe, IUCN is particularly active. It has a regional office in Brussels and the Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation in Malaga, Spain.*

*IUCN policy is defined by the Congress which is held every 4 years. Each Congress votes a number of resolutions which are the base for the development of the Union's activities. There have been 148 resolutions mentioning marine issues. They concern non-fish species conservation (marine mammals, seabirds, sea turtles, sharks); at-sea uses like fishing, marine pollution from ships, deep seabed mining, offshore oil & gas development, floating atomic power stations; regional conservation where marine issues are a substantial component; marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs); topics where the marine aspect is also an issue (e.g., sustainable use, invasive species, ecosystem management, genetic resources); Conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction.*

*At the last Congress, in Bangkok in November a number of new resolutions mentioning marine issues have been adopted: They concern species (West gray whales, Sturgeons), regions (Arctic, Antarctic, Mediterranean, Aral sea, Caribbean), specific maritime issues (Undersea noise pollution, Floating atomic power stations, Protection of the Mediterranean from the risk of maritime traffic, Protection of seamounts and other vulnerable deep-sea habitats in the high seas) and more general issues (Governance of natural resources, Strengthening stakeholder participation in fisheries management, landscape/seascape approach to conservation, Applying precautionary principle, Protected areas, Climate change, Conservation and sustainable development of high-seas biodiversity).*

*Most of these resolutions are relevant for Europe and European countries.*