

MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
COMMITTEE
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Agenda item 10

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Description, significance of the area and vulnerability

1 Further details of the proposal related to the description, significance of the area and vulnerability are provided in annex 1 in accordance with the Revised guidelines for the identification and designation of particularly sensitive sea areas (resolution A.982 (24), as amended by resolution MEPC.267 (68)):

Associated protective measures

2 Annex 2 provides details on existing and proposed associated protective measures in accordance with resolution A.982 (24), as well as prospective measures for the future.

Existing associated protective measures

3 The area identified already benefits from existing protective measures consisting in the following:

- .1 the designation as a Special Area (SA) of the entire Mediterranean sea under Annexes I and V of the MARPOL Convention; and
- .2 other national existing associated protective measures listed in annex 2.

However, these existing protective measures allow further protection only on specific threats, such as the discharge of oil or oily mixtures and the discharge of garbage, or only in some parts of the area. Therefore, in order to complement them, and to include ship strikes mitigation, the co-sponsors propose to consider and develop additional associated protective measures.

4 Other more general associated protective measures stemming from SOLAS such as navigational warnings, navigational charts and navigational publications are further elaborated in annex 2.

Proposed associated protective measures

5 The co-sponsors propose to consider the following set of possible associated protective measures within the NW Med PSSA. These measures could significantly enhance the protection of cetaceans in the NW Med PSSA, due to the complexity of environmental issues at stake and the diverse nature of the shipping traffic in the area.

6 The following possible associated protective measures are proposed for consideration:

- .1 Recommendation to seafarers/ship operators to navigate with particular caution within the NW Med PSSA, when and where large and medium cetaceans are present, and to limit their speed to between 10 and 13 knots as voluntary speed reduction, while seeking to avoid possible negative impacts of reduced speeds on manoeuvrability and underwater noise in absence of other design adaptations on the ship.
- .2 Recommendation to ships to avoid large and medium cetaceans and keep an appropriate safety distance or speed reduction measure from any large and medium cetaceans observed or detected in close quarter situation. A safety distance or speed reduction measure should be adapted to the circumstances and existing conditions.
- .3 Recommendation to ships to broadcast by VHF or other suitable means on the area the position of medium and large cetaceans observed or detected and to transmit the information and the position to a designed coastal Authority.
- .4 Ships should report any collision and near miss collision with cetaceans to a designated coastal Authority(ies). Designated coastal Authority(ies) should forward this information to the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which holds a global cetacean ship strikes database.
- .5 Recommendation to designated coastal Authority(ies) to broadcast information, when needed, to ships about the presence of large and medium cetaceans as navigational warning.
- .6 Recommendation to ship masters to determine the watchkeeping arrangements taking into account the presence of large and medium cetaceans, including the use of infrared binoculars to help the detection of large and medium cetaceans by night or fixed infrared camera detection system. These systems would help to detect not only large and medium cetaceans, but also any man-overboard or castaways by night.
- .7 The designated coastal Authority(ies) should prepare material and disseminate information in order to raise awareness on the crews (by means such as the publication of materials) and increase their knowledge on the protection of the marine environment on the PSSA with a particular emphasis on cetaceans.

7 To ensure their effectiveness, the measures adopted, in particular 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 would have to be clearly indicated on nautical charts, nautical publications and nautical information.

8 In accordance with the procedure set out in Assembly resolution A.982(24) on *Revised guidelines for the identification and designation of particularly sensitive sea areas*, if the Committee agrees to designate in principle the NW Med PSSA based on the consideration of the above protective measures, the co-sponsors suggest deferring to the appropriate body/ies the task to further develop and adopt the proposed associated protective measures. The co-sponsors also suggest that the Committee invites delegations to submit concrete proposals for further consideration of any other possible prospective associated protective measures with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the NW Med PSSA in protecting cetaceans from shipping traffic.

Prospective protective measures

9 Other associated protective measures could significantly enhance the protection of cetaceans in the NW Med PSSA:

- .1 the implementation by the riparian States France, Spain, Italy and Monaco of a Memorandum of Understanding to harmonize and facilitate the collection of data within the NW Med PSSA with the aim of better informing ships on the presence of cetaceans and implementing incentive measures to ships following the PSSA's recommendations to protect cetaceans;
- .2 to encourage the development of information for seafarers/ship operators through navigational warnings, in the future also in digital format through the NAVDAT system; and
- .3 to encourage the riparian states to review the adopted measures after a certain time to assess their effectiveness, and the opportunity to implement new operational measures at national and international level in order to limit the pressures generated by the maritime traffic on medium and large cetaceans.