



## **Mediterranean consultation between IUCN Councillors, Chairpersons of IUCN National Committees and IUCN Secretariat**

### **Tour du Valat, Camargue, France**

30 June – 2 July 2005

#### **Overview**

This meeting was convened with a view to discussing the progress of the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation and to sharing the views of the Chairmen of IUCN National Committees in the region. The meeting was opened by Jean Paul Taris, Vice President of the French National Committee, and Jean Jalbert, Director General of Tour du Valat, who hosted the meeting.

The themes outlined for the meeting agenda included

- implementation of the Bangkok resolutions and recent decisions of Council
- discussion of the results of the independent review of the Mediterranean centre (2004)
- outlining a Mediterranean contribution to assessing the experience and potential role of IUCN National Committees
- building on regional cooperation between members and commissions
- linkages to Mediterranean regional processes

IUCN staff presented a brief overview of progress achieved since 2002, and outlined the global Secretariat focus on giving ecosystem and biodiversity issues a clear profile in the Millennium Development Goals debate (MDG+5 planned for September 2005), the ongoing restructuring of the Global IUCN Secretariat and the plans for an extension to the IUCN building in Switzerland.

From the Mediterranean perspective, the Secretariat outlined the largely successful positioning of the IUCN Mediterranean programme in the complex regional dynamic, and noted that not only were countries requesting technical support from the Secretariat, but regional processes, such as the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, the Mediterranean Sustainable Development Strategy, ACCOBAMS and the Barcelona process were all recognising the role that IUCN can play in the region. The most important aspect has been the recognition that this can be of added value, and IUCN is not competing either with its membership or with other established regional actors.

## **1. Implementation of Bangkok resolutions**

*RESWCC3.034, Strengthening the action of the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, and RESWCC3.052, Protected Areas in the Mediterranean,*

A discussion was held concerning potential transboundary protected areas, and the potential of the whole Rift Valley, the northern part of Lebanon/Syria (including a marine component), and the significance of the experience of the transboundary Ligurian cetacean sanctuary (Italy/Monaco/France) were raised. The possibility of a transboundary area between Libya/Tunisia/Algeria was also noted.

*RESWCC3.039, The Mediterranean Mountain Partnership*

There are a range of good initiatives identified by participants to which explicit linkage could and should be made: the Dinaric arc collaboration in the Balkans, driven by the wish to join the EU; the Italian experience of APE (Appennino Parco d'Europa – perhaps more straightforward as all in one country); strong experience of community based management in mountains of Dana, Jordan; CBD Mountain biodiversity report (decision VII/27 COP7).

*RESWCC3.070, Environmental protection of the Mediterranean Sea from the risk of maritime traffic.*

The participants recognised the need for concerted action on this issue, recalling recent EU Directives requiring tankers to move in future to an exclusive double hull design. Linkage with REMPEC was seen as desirable. Participants recalled transport bottlenecks in the Mediterranean such as Suez Canal in Egypt, straights of Messina in Italy, and the Bosphorous in Turkey. One potential linkage may be with the Baltic where efficient aerial monitoring has been put in place.

## **2. Discussion of the results of the independent review of the Mediterranean centre (2004)**

The Director of IUCN-Med introduced the results of the review and presented the data from the questionnaires, the recommendations of the review and the management response.

The completed questionnaires indicate that overall the work of the Centre is appreciated; it is seen as of good technical quality and is used and referred to by many members in their daily work. This provides a good foundation for moving forward into the next five year agreement with IUCN-Med's core donors (2005-2009). The report is available publicly at [http://www.iucn.org/themes/eval/jan/database/region/europe/2004/cmc\\_synthesis\\_en.pdf](http://www.iucn.org/themes/eval/jan/database/region/europe/2004/cmc_synthesis_en.pdf) and the appendices at [http://www.iucn.org/themes/eval/jan/database/region/europe/2004/cmc\\_appendices\\_en.pdf](http://www.iucn.org/themes/eval/jan/database/region/europe/2004/cmc_appendices_en.pdf)

During the discussion that followed, the Directors of the different IUCN offices clarified the respective roles as the external review had noted the potential for confusion.

As far as RofE and IUCN-Med are concerned, working relations have been established for European EU countries, as well as for the Balkans through the SE Europe office in Belgrade. In principle Belgrade leads on terrestrial issues while IUCN-Med can provide support on marine issues. IUCN-Med leads on issues related to Mediterranean cooperation and Barcelona, while RofE leads on all themes related to EU policies and programmes.

For WESCANA, the Director explained that IUCN-Med will deal with day to day project management issues in North Africa as well as with membership issues, WESCANA will continue to work directly with Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. The strategy is to build a strong IUCN Secretariat capacity for the whole region, with IUCN-Med playing a key role in mobilising Mediterranean cooperation.

The status of the WESCANA Regional Office in Amman was also raised. While this office is clearly an IUCN Regional Office established by the Director General, some members continue to dispute its status.

The importance of communications was stressed and the significant increase in visits to the IUCN-Med website was noted. Participants stressed the need to continue to communicate with the membership, where necessary, through the Chairs of national committees and also to continue a stream of paper publications, not relying solely on digital communications through the internet/world wide web.

### **3. Outlining a Mediterranean contribution to assessing the experience and potential role of IUCN National Committees**

National committees shared their current structure and programme with the meeting with a view to informing the discussion about the role of IUCN National Committees, currently being planned by the Governance task force of Council through a planned meeting in February 2006.

The *Israel National Committee* was established in 2003/2004; it does not have independent legal status. It has worked to review proposals for World Heritage Site designation; on sand dune preservation along the coasts; moving aquaculture away from sensitive areas around Eilat and seeks to promote open space preservation. The Committee is well connected to WCPA, and is promoting the designation of the Rift Valley as a World Heritage site. It does not have a web site.

The *Jordan National Committee* has been active in hosting a regional Forum with the WESCANA programme, and is committed to peace, prosperity and partnership at national and regional level. It is currently promoting exchange on renewable energy and conservation through the Trans-Mediterranean renewable Energy Cooperation project with partners in Europe and in the region.

The *Spanish National Committee* has both members and individual members, and holds an open annual Forum – the Foro para la Biodiversidad, the third of which was held in May 2005 on the Countdown 2010 initiative. It has legal status as an NGO and holds elections every three years. The Ministry of Environment provides the permanent secretariat for the Committee. The committee has a sub-committee for fauna and flora, communication, protected areas and for the Mediterranean and maintains an expert data-base. Members pay one fee to IUCN (global) and a second

fee to the National Committee in Spain. IUCN Global secretariat provides logistical support, and the committee has strong links with RoFE and IUCN-Med. Its activities concern a red list of flora and fauna; study of national park networks; support to autonomous regions on World Heritage issues; specialist publications (eg Plant conservation); inputs to revision of laws. The Committee would like to link up with other IUCN committees and develop joint actions, either with other EU countries, or with non EU countries.

The ***Moroccan National Committee*** is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and has a coordinator who represents the NGO community. It holds 6 monthly meetings and is currently working on a study of the economic value of resource use (funded by IUCN-Med); important plant areas; migratory species and hunting; and maintains relations with the Tunisian National Committee.

The ***Tunisian National Committee*** organises elections after each congress and holds three monthly meetings, either in the Ministry or in the offices of the chairman (ATPNE). The role of the committee is recognised by the Ministry and many new members wish to join, although the closing of the IUCN project office has not helped this process. The Committee is currently undertaking the study of economic value of resource use (funded by IUCN-Med). It would welcome further input from Commissions, and increased partnership with other IUCN members, as is the case with the BirdLife partner network. The Committee has an emerging interest in the “Arc Latin” initiatives of Mediterranean regions.

The ***Italian National Committee*** was created in 1999 and has 19 members. Some of these are also member organisations, such as Federparchi that has 717 managers of protected areas. The Committee has actively participated in the Bangkok Congress through resolution proposals on the Mediterranean, and on organising regional side events. The Committee has recently heard presentations from IUCN on impacts of Tsunami and has an active ongoing interest in European initiatives such as Countdown 2010 and PEBLS. Further Italy hosted the meeting of IUCN Mediterranean members in Naples in June 2004, proposed and offered to support the implementation of Mediterranean resolutions from Bangkok.

In ***Croatia*** there is no formal national committee, and there are currently three members, including the State since February 2005. The IUCN members have worked on the Nature Protection Act and collaborated on a national Red List. There is no concerted approach to seeking new members, but constitution of a committee may be desirable when there are enough members.

***Serbia*** also does not yet have a national committee. Members work on implementing Ramsar and Carpathian Conventions, as well as on the management of the Sava and Danube rivers and floodplains. Participation of NGOs from Montenegro would be desirable.

The ***French National Committee*** has been established since 1992. It includes 35 NGOs, 200 experts, 5 Agencies and 2 Ministries. It holds an annual congress; contributes to development of public policies and has thematic groups on sensitive habitats. The structure mirrors that of IUCN global commissions and seeks to relay IUCN positions within France. The committee has 3 full time employees and encourages francophonie within the Union. It has international projects such as on

rhino conservation and turtles, on invasive species on islands and has undertaken studies on protection of the coastline in France as a contribution to the Barcelona Convention.

At Mediterranean scale the Committee supports the work of IUCN-Med and organised a meeting on training and Mediterranean protected areas in the run up to Durban World Parks Congress. The Committee has a signed agreement with the Spanish National Committee and would like to strengthen working links both with other Committees and with IUCN-Med.

The *Lebanese National Committee* was established in 1997 and recently has faced some organisational challenges. The chair has changed in 2003 but a new one has yet to be elected. There appears to be some lack of interest in the committee from the government side but two of the members really want to see it reconstituted and with changes of government imminent this may be possible. A consultant has helped to design a programme for Lebanon but these need updating. The committee has also encouraged the “bioplan” bulletin sent out weekly to WESCANA members and networks.

In response to these presentations the Secretariat has established a small overview table annexed here for information.

During the discussions that followed a range of issues were raised by participants, including:

- The need for a structured discussion concerning the role of Commissions, and commission members, at national level.
- The importance of strong government involvement and participation, considering the important role IUCN plays in the international landscape.
- The challenge that one participant had in dialoguing with Gland dominated much of the debate, with a clear dissatisfaction expressed about the rapidity and clarity of response.

## **Specific points raised and discussed during the meeting**

- 1. Communications**
- 2. Improving working links between the different IUCN regions (Mediterranean, Europe and WesCANA)**

# **IUCN Mediterranean National Committees meeting**

## **Camargue, France, 1-2 July 2005**

### **List of participants**

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**Jamie Skinner**

Director  
IUCN – CENTRE FOR MEDITERRANEAN  
COOPERATION  
SPAIN

**Rami Salman**

Programme Coordinator  
IUCN – CENTRE FOR MEDITERRANEAN  
COOPERATION  
SPAIN

**François Simard**

Marine Programme Coordinator  
IUCN – CENTRE FOR MEDITERRANEAN  
COOPERATION  
SPAIN

**Tamas Marghescu**

Director  
IUCN- ROFE  
BELGIUM

**Odeh Al-Jayyousi**

Director  
IUCN - WESCANA  
JORDAN

**Bill Jackson**

Director Global Programme  
IUCN - HQ  
SWITZERLAND

**Enrique Lahmann**

Senior Coordinator - Global Programme  
IUCN - HQ  
SWITZERLAND

**Ali Darwish**

IUCN Regional Councillor  
AL-KHAT AL AKHDAR  
LEBANON

**Purificació Canals**

Presidenta  
LLIGA PER A LA DEFENSA DEL PATRIMONI  
NATURAL (DEPANA)  
SPAIN

**Andrea Štefan**

Expert Associate  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, NATURE PROTECTION  
DIRECTORATE  
CROATIA

**Jean Jalbert**

Directeur Général  
FONDATION SANSOIRE  
FRANCE

**François Letourneux**

President  
COMITE NATIONAL FRANÇAIS  
FRANCE

**Jean-Paul Taris**

President  
FONDATION SANSOIRE  
FRANCE

**Yoav Sagi**

Head  
SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATURE IN  
ISRAEL  
ISRAEL

**Stefano Gomes**

Head Biodiversity Division  
MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE E DELLA TUTELA  
DEL TERRITORIO  
ITALY

**Federico Cinquepalmi**

Prof. Member of the National Tech. Board on  
Protected Areas  
MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE E DELLA TUTELA  
DEL TERRITORIO  
ITALY

**Mohammad Shahbaz**

Director  
BADIA RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME, HIGHER COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY  
JORDAN

**Brahim Haddane**

Coordinateur National Comité UICN  
PARC ZOOLOGIQUE NATIONAL DE RABAT -  
FOREST DEPARTMENT  
MOROCCO

**Jovan Angelus**

Executive Director  
ECOLIBRI-BIONET, AGENCY FOR  
BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
SERBIA

**Carlos Sánchez Martínez**

Director  
FUNDACIÓN NATURALEZA Y HOMBRE  
SPAIN

**Israel Marcos**

Responsable de prensa  
FUNDACIÓN NATURALEZA Y HOMBRE  
SPAIN

**Imad Hassoun Homsí**

Deputy Minister of Local Administration and  
Environment  
MINISTRY OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND  
ENVIRONMENT  
SYRIA

**Mohamed Ali Abrougui**

President  
ASSOCIATION TUNISIENNE POUR LA  
PROTECTION DE LA NATURE ET DE  
L'ENVIRONNEMENT  
TUNISIA