

063 Strengthening the protection of *Posidonia* in the Mediterranean: legislation, monitoring and capacity building

CONSIDERING that seagrass meadows (*Posidonia oceanica*) are key marine ecosystems for biodiversity, providing habitats for many endemic species, and that they play a crucial role as carbon sinks, contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the mitigation of the effects of climate change;

NOTING that these seagrass beds allow carbon sequestration up to five times more than tropical forests of equal surface area, while preventing coastal erosion and purifying coastal waters;

RECALLING that *Posidonia* seagrass beds are recognised as a priority ecosystem by the Convention on Biological Diversity and that they contribute directly to the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 13 on climate and SDG 14 on life below water;

CONCERNED about their weakening on both sides of the Mediterranean, particularly in North Africa, due to multiple anthropogenic pressures: pollution, coastal urbanisation, destructive fishing, anchoring of ships and climate change;

RECOGNISING the lack of specific legislation to protect these habitats in several countries of the southern Mediterranean region, as well as the weakness in the application of laws in the countries of the northern shore of the Mediterranean, the absence of harmonised protocols for their monitoring and evaluation;

UNDERLINING the importance of strengthening the capacities of public administrations, policy makers, environmental associations and local communities to protect and restore these vital ecosystems; and

REFERRING to previously adopted IUCN Resolutions, such as Resolution 7.031 *The implementation of nature-based solutions in the Mediterranean Basin* (Marseille, 2020) and Resolution 5.076 *Accelerating the global pace of establishing marine protected areas and the certification of their effective management* (Jeju, 2012);

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

1. CALLS ON IUCN Mediterranean State Members to:

- a. adopt specific national legislation to protect *Posidonia* meadows, including by prohibiting the anchoring of ships in sensitive areas;
- b. integrate seagrasses into national climate strategies as nature-based solutions;
- c. strengthen law enforcement and establish effective monitoring to prevent their degradation; and
- d. promote the widespread use of ecological moorings;

2. ENCOURAGE the creation of a regional framework to:

- a. harmonise and unify the monitoring protocols of *Posidonia* meadows in collaboration with scientific institutions, administrations and local NGOs; and
- b. promote the sharing of good practices between countries in order to ensure coherent and effective management;

3. RECOMMENDS to:

- a. strengthen capacities and encourage exchange between public administrations and decision makers in order to integrate the protection of *Posidonia* into public policies; and

b. support NGOs and local communities through technical training and logistical support for conservation and restoration actions;

4. CALLS for awareness-raising campaigns for local populations and the promotion of sustainable economic activities compatible with their protection; and

5. INVITES national and international institutions to support and invest in research on *Posidonia* and its role in mitigating climate change.