

Roundtable - Engaging the MPAs community and setting the AdrionPAN & AdrionPAN – recommendations & next steps in building a network - Executive summary

Background

The event was organized as a side event in the framework of the Interreg Med project MPA Networks. The main aim of the event was to check the readiness and willingness of the partners of the project to engage in the setting up of a network of MPAs managers in the Adriatic – Ionian region, the AdrionPAN. The whole exercise is seen as the evolution/transition of the existing Adriatic protected areas network, the AdriaPAN to AdrionPAN. As per the contract, the present executive summary focuses on the two panels discussing the engagement of the MPAs community in setting up the AdrionPAN and the next steps to be taken in the process.

According to the studies carried out by the University of Chieti – Pescara on behalf of the Marine Protected Area »Torre del Cerrano« the AdrionPAN aims at becoming a structure that coordinates, guides and promotes the integrated system of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas in the Adriatic and in the Ionian Sea, in the wake of the positive experiences of AdriaPAN (Cerrano Charter) and MedPAN, as well as of the experiences related to the synergies between AdriaPAN and MedPAN. The AdrionPAN network is supposed to be the response to some specific needs that emerged in the context of AdriaPAN. They include the need to expand the network geographically by involving MPAs from the Ionian Sea, besides the MPAs from the Adriatic Sea; the need to develop projects for funding through national, EU and international instruments; the need to evaluate its transition towards an entity with a defined legal form; the need to keep elaborating projects focused on different topics; the need for the AdrionPAN network to be appealing and engaging with MedPAN and other related organisations; the need for the network structure to have the capacity to carry out best practices for the conservation of MPAs assets; the need to consider the role of individual MPAs within the structure, also bearing in mind the aspect of the complexity of the structure and its management.

Roundtable - Engaging the MPAs community and setting the AdrionPAN

In introducing the discussion, Robert Turk recalled some of the facts concerning MPAs in the Adriatic-Ionian basin that was pointed out earlier in the morning by Andrej Sovinc in his presentations Analysis of the protected and conserved areas in the Adriatic Ionian Region as well as MPAs in the Adriatic-Ionian Region through the EUSAIR strategic objectives. While discussing the new network the following points should be taken into account:

- the low number of MPAs & low percentage of the Adriatic-Ionian basin covered
- consequently, the first task would be to improve the situation
 - o it has to be done by countries
 - o identifying hotspots within EBSAs could be the starting point
 - o set up a pool of marine biodiversity experts from the riverine countries nested within the EUSAIR framework?

Most of the MPAs are members of MedPAN, which means that they can already access technical

support, management tools, exchange of experience etc ...

One important common MPAs feature is the lack of resources in terms of personnel, funds and most probably also technical equipment

- would the additional engagement in AdrionPAN additionally disperse the existing MPAs' resources?

The eight panellists of the roundtable representing MPAs from Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, Albania, Montenegro and Greece as well as the AdriaPAN Secretariat and the Adriatic Ionian Initiative stated their position concerning the new network. The main points that came out of the discussion and that would support the creation of the foreseen regional network were mainly the following:

The regional network of MPAs managers could and should

- bring the voice of Adriatic-Ionian MPAs in the EUSAIR and through that into national & sectoral development strategies
- influence the EUSAIR programming
- with the above promoting the establishment of new MPAs as well as new areas with strict protection
- enhance collaboration between MPAs in the basin
- address common challenges specific to the MPAs in the Adriatic-Ionian basin (i.e. tourism, large yachts)
- act as info point on funding possibilities, challenges, sectoral developments etc. in the basin
- take advantage of the recommendations from Roadmap 2030 on supporting subregional networks

AdrionPAN – recommendations & next steps in building a network

Within the discussion on the recommendations and next steps to be taken in the possible setting up of AdrionPAN the following points were brought up:

- human networks of MPAs managers as well as other organizations and networks are crucial to bringing out the voice of marine conservation
- the goals of the network should be clearly defined
- MedPAN is available to support the network
- the possible synergies between the network and EUSAIR have to be investigated
- all MPAs managers in the basin should be approached
- the ultimate goal is an ecologically representative network of MPAs

Following the discussion on the next steps to be taken the participants agreed on the following:

- the partners of the MPA Networks project will consult the MPAs managers in the respective countries on their possible engagement in AdrionPAN and draft a background document on the goals of the network; the deadline was set for mid-september
- the partners should take advantage of the Palma meeting to further discuss the issue
- the draft document should be discussed in a side event organized within the annual MedPAN workshop in Montenegro in October 2022;
- the representative of EUSAIR / Facility Point should participate in the above event and nest the discussion on the regional network and its relation with EUSAIR to the annual EUSAIR Forum that is foreseen also in October 2022.

Executive summary drafted by Robert Turk, the 7th of June 2022