

**Side-event Proposal by European Commission, UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan-
Barcelona Convention and General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean:**

**Implementation of the ecosystem approach at the regional level for the coordinated achievement of
the targets of SDG14**

The protection of our oceans, seas and coasts is not only important to preserve the environment but also to support livelihoods and responsible development.

The application of the ecosystem approach at regional level through specific legal and management tools is key for the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources.

Moreover, regional arrangements and solutions are regarded as an efficient way to implement global initiatives, as the benefits from taking measures are mutually shared by the coastal States in the region, and relevant stakeholders can be involved more directly and more effectively. Lastly, cooperative action is often easier at the regional level than at the global level, where diverse States with conflicting interests make collaboration challenging.

In the Mediterranean, cooperation between key regional players such as the European Union (EU), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), and UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan-Barcelona Convention Secretariat (UN Environment/MAP) has been instrumental to ensure regional implementation of the ecosystem approach, with the common aim of achieving Aichi targets, and provide support towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. Another good example is the Baltic Sea, where contracting parties of HELCOM, currently chaired by the European Union, agreed to coordinate the regional implementation of ocean-related SDGs in the Baltic Sea using it as a platform.

The proposed joint side-event aims to share the best practices and lessons learnt during the past decade to implement the ecosystem approach at the regional level in a coordinated manner. The event will focus on the following issues:

- (1) Regional Ocean Governance, key for the achievements of SDG14;
- (2) EU, UN Environment/MAP and GFCM cooperation in support of sustainable management of marine and coastal environment, with a focus on spatial-based management measures;
- (3) Relevance of this cooperation and its outcome on spatial-based management and sustainable development in the Mediterranean to the achievement of SDG14 targets 14.1, 14.2, 14.4, 14.5 and 14.a;
- (4) Importance of science based measures: Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Ecosystem Approach process of the UN Environment/MAP-Barcelona Convention, Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, the GFCM mid-term strategy towards the sustainability of Mediterranean and Black Sea fisheries and the cooperation for its implementation by key partners, as called for by Med Fish 4Ever Ministerial Declaration.
- (5) Further work ahead: conclusions and recommendations.

Lead Organizer: European Commission

Co-Organizers: UN Environment Mediterranean Action Plan and General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

Proposed Speakers:

Karmenu Vella, European Commission; Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries;

Abdellah Srour, Executive Director of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean;

Gaetano Leone, Coordinator of UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan-Barcelona Convention Secretariat;

Food and Agriculture Organization High Level Speaker;

UN Environment High Level Speaker;

One Contracting Party/Member to all the above Organizations, on Ministerial level.