



STATEMENT

from the Black Sea Commission' Permanent Secretariat

**regarding the cooperation in fisheries
between the UNEP/MAP (Barcelona Convention), the Commission on the
Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (the Black Sea Commission or BSC)
and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean of the FAO (GFCM)**

There is no doubt that further development of cooperation between UNEP/MAP, GFCM and BSC in relation with the imperative need to promote sustainable fisheries in the region as well as that of sharing the same objective towards ensuring the preservation of the marine environment and ecosystems of the Mediterranean and the Black Seas is on the agenda today.

In the past bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) have been entered into by these organizations, as follows:

- ✓ Memorandum of Understanding between UNEP/MAP and GFCM signed on 14th May, 2012 in Marrakech, Morocco, during the 36th Session of the GFCM;
- ✓ Memorandum of Understanding between Black Sea Commission and GFCM signed on 14th May, 2012 in Marrakech, Morocco, during the 36th Session of the GFCM;
- ✓ Memorandum of Understanding between UNEP/MAP and Black Sea Commission signed on 11th February, 2016 in Athens, Greece during the 16th MoP to the Barcelona Convention.

Recognizing the importance of implementing of the provisions in the abovementioned MoUs and addressing the current environmental challenges, given the need of carrying out joint activities in areas of common interest, enhancing the information exchange, sharing expertise and best practices, joining efforts and developing synergies, the three organizations wish to work together on joint initiatives/projects supporting the implementation of the MoUs concluded between them.

The Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (also referred to as the Black Sea Commission) is established in implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (also referred to as the Bucharest Convention). The Bucharest Convention was signed in 1992 and ratified by the six Black Sea riparian states, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine shortly thereafter. The six riparian countries also implement the Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection of the Black Sea (signed in 1996 and significantly updated in 2009).

The Black Sea Commission is responsible for promoting the implementation of Convention and its Protocols, it was established to, *inter alia*, monitor and assess pollution, control pollution from land-based sources, ensure conservation of biological diversity, address environmental safety aspects of shipping, address environmental aspects of management of fisheries and other marine living resources and promote integrated coastal zone management and maritime policy.

The Black Sea Commission also aims at enhancing cooperation with international organizations and has granted a mutual observer status to the European Union; GEF/UNDP; UNEP; ICPDR - International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River; BSEC - Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation; ACCOBAMS - Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area; BSC-Port State Control Memorandum of Understanding; the Black Sea NGO Network; IMO. The BSC also concluded various MoUs with its partners: UNEP/MAP, ACCOBAMS, IMO, GFCM and ICPDR. It currently develops deeper cooperation with Tehran Convention Secretariat (Caspian Sea), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA, Monaco) and University of Geneva (UNIGE).

The MoU between the Black Sea Commission and the GFCM was signed on 14th May, 2012 in Marrakech, Morocco, during the 36th Session of the GFCM. The Joint GFCM-BSC Workshop on IUU fishing was a first activity in the framework of this MoU. The extent and the nature of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing were carefully assessed by the workshop participants. The main outcome of the workshop was development of a Roadmap identifying actions, objectives, means and actors of relevance for the Black Sea in order to fight IUU fishing. Another important forum for cooperation is work of the GFCM Working Group on Black Sea and joint efforts of secretariats to develop common indicators to assess fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea region.

The MoU between the UNEP/MAP (Barcelona Convention) and the Black Sea Commission was signed on 11th February, 2016 in Athens, Greece, during the 16th MoP to the Barcelona Convention. The joint activities in sphere of Marine Litter management are planned to be a first activity in the framework of this MoU. At the same time, BSC plans to exchange the experience with Barcelona Convention in ecosystem-based approach, fisheries, ICZM issues, invasive species, MPAs and marine noise.

The joint activities in the Mediterranean and Black Sea basin between BSC, UNEP/MAP and GFCM could cover the following topics:

- Promotion of ecosystem based approach in fisheries management and aquaculture;
- Mitigation of the impacts of fisheries and aquaculture on the marine habitats and species;
- Data quality, data collection and analysis, stock assessment;
- Research and training.
