

Accord Pelagos
relatif à la création en Méditerranée
dun Sanctuaire pour les mammifères marins

15^{ème} Comité scientifique et technique
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Report of the Activities for the development of the cooperation of the Pelagos Agreement

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The activities for the development of the cooperation of the Pelagos Agreement were conducted by the Permanent Secretariat with the support of Dr. Emanuele Bigagli, consultant for the development of the cooperation of the Pelagos Agreement (Call for Consultancy n° Pelagos/AC/2023-02).

The following report covers the activities performed during the period from March 21st 2023 to July 14th 2023 in the framework of the Programme of Work 2022-2023.

Activity 1: Finalise agreements for the formalisation of collaborations with approximately 4 Universities in the Pelagos Sanctuary (Action A-2 of the Programme of Work 2022-2023)

This activity was developed focusing on universities located within the area of the Pelagos Agreement, with the objective to engage at least 1 university for each country (i.e., France, Italy and Monaco). The activities performed and the results obtained are detailed for each country as follows:

a) FRANCE

The following professors/researchers from French Universities inside the area of the Pelagos Agreement were contacted:

- Dr Jean-Pierre Darnis, Professor of International Relations and Chair of the MA “*Langues et Affaires Internationales, Relations franco-italiennes*” at the University of Cote d’Azur;
- Dr Delphine Thibault, Associate Professor, and Dr Sandrine Ruitton, *Maitre de Conferences* at the Mediterranean Oceanography Institute of the University of Aix-Marseille;
- Dr Hervé Glotin, Chair Artificial Intelligence “Bioacoustics & Subsea Listening” at the University of Toulon;
- Dr Cécile Sabourault, Director of the ECOSEAS Laboratory at the University of Cote d’Azur;
- Dr Philippe Weckel, Associate Professor of Public Law at University Côte d’Azur and Chairman of the INDEMER Scientific Council.

A first expression of interest was received from Dr Darnis and Dr Glotin. However, after some email exchanges, it was concluded that there were no margins for cooperation in the context of the MA “*Langues et Affaires Internationales, Relations franco-italiennes*”, as MA students are not requested to prepare a research thesis but only to perform an internship in a host organization, which the Pelagos Secretariat is not in the position to offer at the moment.

The discussions with Dr Glotin and the University of Toulon proceeded positively, and during a video call earlier in June 2023 it was agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would be prepared by the Pelagos Secretariat. The MoU aimed at identifying lines of research and technical-scientific analyses, in line with the objectives and actions of the Management Plan and related Action Plan (2022-2027) of the Pelagos Agreement, to be proposed as a subject for first-level and second-level university dissertations, M.A./M.Sc. or Doctorate-level research theses, and which will contribute to the realization of specific activities of the biannual Programme of Work of the Pelagos Agreement. In particular, this will include, *inter alia*, the following lines of research:

- the seasonal distribution of noise pollution sources and intensities, in line with the methodologies already developed in the context of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) of the UNEP-MAP (Action D-18e of the Pelagos Programme of Work 2022-2023)
- the assessment of underwater noise and potential impacts on mammals, through the creation of risk maps (Action E-22i of the Pelagos Programme of Work 2022-2023).

b) ITALY

Building on preliminary contacts and discussions between the Pelagos Secretariat and CoNISMa (Italian Consortium of Universities for Marine Sciences), in June 2023 a remote meeting was

organised in presence of Dr Annibale Cutrona, Director of CoNISMa, Dr Antonio Mazzola, President of CoNISMa, Mrs Maddalena Laggini, Responsible for international and European projects for CoNISMa. This meeting remarked the willingness of both parties to strengthen their collaboration through a MoU focusing on the following priority axes of cooperation identified and agreed:

- identification of lines of research and technical-scientific analyses, in line with the objectives and actions of the Management Plan and related Action Plan (2022-2027) of the Pelagos Agreement, to be proposed to the Universities of the CoNISMa consortium as a subject for the preparation of first-level and second-level university dissertations, M.A./M.Sc. or Doctorate-level research theses, which will contribute to the realization of specific activities of the biannual Programme of Work of the Pelagos Agreement;
- The presentation of joint European and international project proposals on topics of common interest;
- the possibility to involve the other Party in scientific publications and communication, education and awareness raising material, and in the activities included in the Pelagos Management Plan and Action Plan (2022-2027);
- the collection and/or sharing of data of interest to the Pelagos Sanctuary by the universities of the CoNISMa consortium;
- the dissemination of relevant information to the other Party (tenders, recruitment, implementation of activities, projects, etc.).

Moreover, the Permanent Secretariat of the Pelagos Agreement undertakes to invite CoNISMa as an observer to the institutional meetings of the Agreement.

In June 2023, the MoU was drafted. It is currently being reviewed by CoNISMa.

c) MONACO

In May 2023 first contacts with the International University of Monaco (IUM) were established, and two remote meetings were held with Dr Patrice Sargenti (Director of Undergraduate Program and Operations and Professor of Information Technology) and Dr Elena Tavella (Associate Professor of Strategy, and Director of the MSc Program in Sustainability and Innovation Management). IUM confirmed the interest to be engaged in a collaboration with the Pelagos Agreement, discussing practical opportunities and agreeing on a MoU.

The MoU is currently being drafted by the Pelagos Secretariat; it is aimed at collaborating to identify lines of research and technical-scientific analyses, in line with the objectives and actions of the Management Plan and related Action Plan (2022-2027) of the Pelagos Agreement. These issues will be proposed as a subject for the first-level and second-level university dissertations, M.A./M.Sc. or Doctorate-level research theses, which will contribute to the realization of specific activities of the biannual Programme of Work of the Pelagos Agreement. In particular, at least for the first year of cooperation, the following activities were identified:

- MSc in Sustainability and Innovation Management: it was agreed that representatives of the Pelagos Secretariat will hold a “guest lecture” informing students on the impact of marine mammals from maritime sectors and on the perspectives of improving sustainability of maritime sectors by reducing such impacts, with a view to propose potential subjects for student’s thesis or sustainable business plans for the yearly “Monaco Ocean Protection Challenge”.
- IUM-Engage: it was agreed that the Pelagos Secretariat will participate in the program “IUM-Engage”, involving bachelor students in supporting the practical work of the Pelagos Secretariat, especially (but not limited to) the organization and realization of specific events such as conferences, meetings, day-to-day help, communication and social network management.

Activity 2: Update the MoU with the ACCOBAMS Agreement (Action A-6a of the Programme of Work 2022-2023)

In order to frame the issue and identify the possible areas of update of the MoU with ACCOBAMS, in May 2023, a preliminary document mapping the activities included in the Programmes of Work of both the ACCOBAMS and Pelagos Secretariats was drafted, including a non-exhaustive list of possible joint activities along three axes of cooperation (scientific activities; communication, education and training; governance).

These first elements were shared with a pool of internal experts of the Pelagos Agreement, engaging them into a preliminary, informal consultation (internal to Pelagos) with the aim to verify the coherence and feasibility of the existing content, propose new ideas, and highlight new opportunities to strengthen the cooperation with ACCOBAMS.

In July 2023, the following elements were received from the experts and consolidated as first elements for discussion:

- the opportunity to establish a short-term MoU until 2025, which will be renewed regularly. This will allow to keep cooperation in practical terms, and in line with our respective Action plans or Programmes of Work.
- structuring cooperation along 3 axes: Scientific activities; Communication, education and training; and Governance. For each axis, 1 activity could be jointly identified. This could include, for example, work to align monitoring efforts using the same methodologies and protocols or pilot the implementation of specific ACCOBAMS activities in the Pelagos area; organize joint education/training events; or joint/coordinated working groups of the two Secretariats, to maximize synergies and avoid duplications of efforts.
- for each activity, it will be agreed upfront who will take the lead and who will act as supporting organisation, ensuring balance between the 2 Secretariats.
- scheduling periodic meetings between the two Secretariats (e.g., 3 meetings per year), aiming to develop and review the joint activities, and keep the other party informed on the activities of common interest.

In July 2023, the ACCOBAMS Agreement has been contacted in order to start the discussions and explore the possibility to create synergies between the two Secretariats under the new MoU.

Activity 3: Submit the application to become an official partner of the Barcelona Convention (Action A-6b of the Programme of Work 2022-2023)

In March 2023, the application form for the Pelagos Agreement to become an official partner of the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention was sent to the UNEP/MAP Secretariat and it is now under examination of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention.

Activity 4: Establish a cooperation with UNESCO in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) (Action A-6f of the Programme of Work 2022-2023)

In order to develop the Activity A-6f on the Pelagos Programme of Work 2022-2023, it was decided to contact the UNESCO-IOC Office in Venice, with the aim to propose ideas for common activities contributing to existing programmes in Mediterranean, including the “*Mediterranean Sea we want*”, and focusing on addressing knowledge gaps, improving education, awareness, and international collaboration.

This meeting is planned to be held in July 2023.

Activity 5: Develop a MoU on specific activities of common interest with the Spanish "Cetacean Corridor" (Action A-9a1 of the Plan of Work 2022-2023)

In July 2023, a first contact with Mr. Alonso Rodriguez Jorge, responsible of the Spanish Cetacean Corridor, was established and a first meeting will be held on September 2023. The aim is to engage the counterpart into an initial discussion and start working on a draft MoU.

Activity 6: Contribute to the development of the web pages of the new tripartite website on the cooperation between the Pelagos Agreement and its partners

In the framework of the creation of the new tripartite website, the page dedicated to Pelagos partners is intended to highlight and give visibility to the strong collaboration between the Pelagos Secretariat and a wide array of partners over the course of the last decades, and emphasize their contribution to the protection of marine mammals in the Pelagos Sanctuary. This webpage will present, along with a general text underlining the importance of the collaboration with the Partners, a specific text for each Partner describing how collaboration is being developed (including, e.g., the activities jointly performed with/within the Pelagos Sanctuary), and its added value for the Pelagos Agreement, including a logo and the link to the partner's webpage.

This page will be online in September 2023.