

## Draft Resolution on Conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands

*Submitted by Greece*

**Action requested:**

- The Standing Committee is invited to review and approve the attached draft resolution for consideration by the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

### Draft resolution XII.xx

#### Conservation of Mediterranean Basin island wetlands

1. AWARE that the Mediterranean Basin is a global biodiversity hotspot and hosts one of the largest groups of islands in the world with a rich history and varied cultural values;
2. ALSO AWARE that the Mediterranean Basin is one of the leading tourist destinations in the world and that its coastal and island ecosystems are facing intense and multiple pressures from this sector;
3. ACKNOWLEDGING the crucial role of Mediterranean island wetlands in protecting these islands against the impacts of climate change and desertification, and their critical significance for a variety of threatened and endemic species of flora and fauna and an important number of migratory birds;
4. CONCERNED that Mediterranean island wetlands increasingly face serious pressures, such as the spread of urban and coastal developments that threaten to undermine their conservation status and lead to the increased degradation of wetland areas and, subsequently, to ecosystem fragmentation;
5. AWARE of the fact that small island wetlands are extremely vulnerable and could be easily destroyed, including by non-intentional actions and/or lack of awareness of their significance;
6. ALSO CONCERNED that several Mediterranean island wetlands have already been partly or fully dried out, or are increasingly water-stressed, and AWARE that the demand for fresh water for human use on these islands continues to grow;
7. RECALLING the commitments made by the Contracting Parties to achieving the wise use, as far as possible, of all wetlands in their territories;
8. ALSO RECALLING Recommendation 6.11, which encouraged continuing collaboration for Mediterranean wetlands and urged all government and non-government organizations and

individuals concerned with wetlands in the Mediterranean to commit their best efforts for the preparation and implementation of a concerted Mediterranean Wetlands Strategy;

9. NOTING that the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet) has successfully contributed to the protection of Mediterranean wetlands for more than 20 years and will continue to do so;
10. ALSO NOTING the efforts made by organisations and initiatives directly focusing on the Mediterranean, such as the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution (the Barcelona Convention) and its Mediterranean Action Plan, the Union for the Mediterranean and others;
11. FURTHER RECALLING that the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (as adopted through Resolution VII.11 (1999) and amended through Resolution XI.8 *Streamlining procedures for describing Ramsar Sites at the time of designation and subsequent updates* (2012) indicates that smaller wetlands should not be overlooked for designation as Wetlands of International Importance and that such wetlands may be especially important in maintaining habitat or ecological community-level biological diversity;
12. ALSO RECALLING Recommendation 5.3 (1993), which called for the establishment of strict protection measures for Ramsar sites and wetland reserves of small size or particular sensitivity;

#### THE CONFERENCE OF CONTRACTING PARTIES

13. CALLS UPON Contracting Parties in and around the Mediterranean to address urgently the significant human-induced pressures threatening island wetlands through effective and decisive legislative or executive measures and other actions which apply a precautionary approach that would prevent the destruction of island wetlands, while developing more long-term and integrated strategies or plans;
14. ALSO CALLS UPON Mediterranean Contracting Parties to grant clear and effective legal protection to Mediterranean island wetlands, so as to ensure the conservation of their biodiversity, and the maintenance of their hydrological, cultural and social values;
15. REQUESTS that Mediterranean Parties continue to designate under-represented types of wetlands as additional Wetlands of International Importance;
16. URGES Mediterranean Contracting Parties in the framework of the MedWet Initiative, to produce or update as a matter of high priority a complete, science-based inventory of their island wetlands, based on appropriate methodologies, such as the one developed for Greek island wetlands, and to share it through a MedWet database;
17. REQUESTS Mediterranean Contracting Parties to ensure effective and long term conservation and whenever applicable the restoration of their island wetlands, including by incorporating them in territorial planning and/or land use and development plans, as well as in their integrated water resources plans and water efficiency plans, and by considering designating key small island wetlands for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance;
18. ALSO REQUESTS that Mediterranean Contracting Parties provide the Ramsar Secretariat with regular updates on all Mediterranean island wetlands, whether or not they have been designated as Ramsar Sites, through the triennial National Reports, including information on

their number, extent, biodiversity, current conditions and protection status, and where possible on the ecosystem services which they perform;

19. INVITES the Contracting Parties in and around the Mediterranean, with the support of the Ramsar Secretariat, to:
  - a) further promote the high priority given by the Ramsar Convention in communicating the conservation and restoration needs of Mediterranean island wetlands to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and to global trade, tourism and transport organisations and other relevant international institutions, organisations and initiatives, so as to ensure that the degradation of these fragile aquatic ecosystems is stopped and reversed;
  - b) share this Resolution with Conventions, organisations and initiatives directly focusing on the Mediterranean, such as the Barcelona Convention and its Mediterranean Action Plan, the Union for the Mediterranean and others, to ensure cooperation with existing programmes and to initiate new partnerships;
  - c) develop, share and disseminate case studies, with the help of the MedWet Initiative and other partners, where Mediterranean island wetlands have been:
    - i) negatively affected by human interventions, including through the spread of invasive species; and
    - ii) effectively protected or restored, through particular measures and through their designation as Ramsar Sites and/or other forms of protection;
20. INVITES non-Mediterranean Contracting Parties to give also special attention to their own island wetlands, taking into account their regional specificities, in recognition of their fragility and special conservation and management needs; and
21. INVITES all Contracting Parties to report on their island wetlands conservation results in their National Reports.