



**Press Release**

**For Immediate Release**

**The European Union announces its accession to the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution resulting from exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf and the seabed and its subsoil**

**Athens – 17 January 2013.** The European Union has announced its accession to the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution resulting from exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf and the seabed and its subsoil.

With this new accession of the European Union, seven contracting parties would have approved the protocol, which entered into force on 24 March 2011. The Protocol had already been ratified by Albania, Cyprus, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia.

**Management and monitoring of the protection of the Mediterranean Sea**

The present protocol aims at establishing an effective management system to protect the Mediterranean Sea from pollution resulting from exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf, the seabed and its subsoil, and organizing a mutual assistance in cases of emergency. It also establishes a system of authorization, monitoring and strict liability in case of damage, with a view to limit impact on natural resources, biodiversity and population.

Praising the step forward taken by the European Union, Maria Luisa Silva Mejias, UNEP/MAP / Barcelona Convention Executive Secretary and Coordinator said: “major incidents experienced in some parts of the world, and linked to off-shore activities in ever deeper seas, have shown the necessity for common and higher regional standards to prevent the risk of acute pollution accidents. Through the implementation of this unique protocol, the parties to the Barcelona Convention are leading by example”.

**Commitment to universal sustainable development**

The need to further enhance the cooperation for the benefit of the Mediterranean environment and population continues to be critical. The process of ratification of the Protocol continues, revealing, once again the commitment of the parties towards sustainable development of the Mediterranean Sea and Coastal Region. “Today, the universal ratification of the Barcelona Convention and all its Protocols is our goal”, ended Silva.

\*\*\* Ends\*\*\*

**Background information:**

**UNEP/MAP- Barcelona Convention**

UNEP/MAP is the United Nations Environment Programme Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan. It aims to assist the Mediterranean countries to assess and control marine pollution, to formulate their national environment policies, to improve the ability of governments to identify better options for alternative patterns of development, and to optimize the choices for allocation of resources.

The Barcelona Convention is the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, done at Barcelona on 16 February 1976, and amended on 10 June 1995 to address sustainable development challenges. All the 21 countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea and the EU are Parties to the Convention. The Barcelona Convention and its Protocols are the legal basis of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), the first Regional Seas Programme developed in the framework of the United Nations Environment Programme.

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## **L'Union Européenne approuve le Protocole relatif à la protection de la mer Méditerranée contre la pollution résultant de l'exploration et de l'exploitation du plateau continental, du fond de la mer et de son sous-sol**

**Athènes – 17 Janvier 2013.** L'Union Européenne a approuvé le Protocole relatif à la protection de la mer Méditerranée contre la pollution résultant de l'exploration et de l'exploitation du plateau continental, du fond de la mer et de son sous-sol.

L'Union Européenne devient ainsi la septième partie contractante à approuver le protocole, entré en vigueur le 24 mars 2011. Le protocole avait déjà été ratifié par l'Albanie, Chypre, la Libye, le Maroc, la Syrie et la Tunisie.

### **La gestion et la protection de la Méditerranée.**

Ce protocole vise à établir un système efficace de gestion. The present protocol aims at establishing an effective management system to protect the Mediterranean Sea from pollution resulting from exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf, the seabed and its subsoil, and organizing a mutual assistance in cases of emergency. It also establishes a system of authorization, monitoring and strict liability in case of damage, with a view to limit impact on natural resources, biodiversity and population.

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