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Workshop: Safeguarding Biodiversity Strengthening Marine Protected Area Networks, policy coherence and community involvement.

Date: Wednesday, November 15th, 2023

Theme: Marine Protection

organised by:



The workshop convened a diverse group of experts, including policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders, to comprehensively address the current state, challenges, and opportunities in the protection and restoration of marine biodiversity, aligning with the 2030 targets. Through four insightful sessions, the discussions provided a nuanced understanding of the complex landscape. Key themes emerged, emphasizing the need to shift from quantity to quality in marine protection efforts. Challenges, such as the limited percentage of MPAs with management plans and the impact of commercial trawling in northern EU waters, were highlighted. The workshop stressed the importance of directing funds toward developing management plans, monitoring, and enforcement actions. Additional priorities included the establishment of ecologically coherent MPAs and a functional biodiversity focus. The discussions also underscored the necessity of considering temporal dynamics and projecting conservation efforts into the future based on climate-changing scenarios, prioritizing the protection of areas where biodiversity is expected to thrive. Regional cooperation was encouraged as nature doesn't know borders, and the integration of Marine Protected Areas and Marine Spatial Planning emerged as a key discussion point recognising the limitations of MSP as a do-it-all. The need for policy coherence breaking down policy silos and the opportunities for MPA co-management engaging local communities through co-creation processes was seen as pivotal. Flexibility, adaptive management, and securing adequate resources were identified as key elements to sustain engagement processes and avoid a top-down approach.

Overall, the insights generated during the discussions underscored the importance of embracing change, collaborating across levels, and empowering local communities for the effective protection and restoration of marine biodiversity by 2030.