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Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA): An IMO status as an efficient management tool of Pelagos

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1. *Souffleurs d'Ecume* (www.souffleursdecume.com), 2. *GIS3M*

The PELAGOS Sanctuary is all but... a Sanctuary! The point never was to "sanctuarise" 87,500 km²-SPAMI, essentially covering open seas, hosting a maritime activity essential for the three signing countries (France, Italy and Monaco). PELAGOS rather attempts to federate the representatives of the human activities in order to find concerted solutions to reduce their impacts on marine mammals and their habitats.

Considering socio-economic realities this regional governance allows federating as many stakeholders as possible around voluntary commitments. In a second step, regulations can impose these measures to all the stakeholders in order to keep things efficient and fair.

Despite its advantages (co-responsibility and constant improvement), this type of governance finds a limit with maritime traffic: considering the offshore characteristic of PELAGOS, France can hardly vote a national regulation without creating a competitive distortion between French and foreign-flagged ships. For all ships sailing in these waters under international jurisdiction to be subject to the same rules, the IMO has a tool: the Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA). In this way, during the last Meeting of the Parties of Pelagos (2009), the three Parts recommended to set up an application file in order to get Pelagos recognised as a PSSA.

Then, the French Part of the Sanctuary ordered a study carried out by a Group of Scientific Interest dedicated to research on and conservation of the marine mammals of the Mediterranean Sea (GIS3M). This work resulted in proposed measures regarding mainly collisions between ships and whales. These measures were submitted to the representatives of the French shipowners (Armateurs de France) and discussed between the concerned French ministries. At this point, the project must be submitted to the Italian and Monegasque Parties. If adopted, the project could be submitted to the IMO in November 2013 for a submission to the MEPC on March 6th, 2014 and an implementation on May 1st, 2016.