



The mission of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) is to ensure that research contributes to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

Recommendations of the meeting of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy

held under the Spanish presidency of the EU

Almeria, Spain 11th-13th May 2002

concerning

“EUROPEAN HERITAGE UNDER THREAT: BIODIVERSITY IN MEDITERRANEAN ECOSYSTEMS”

“Everything has been figured out, except how to live.”

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

To gain knowledge necessary to halt biodiversity loss by 2010, the participants of this meeting agreed that the following research action points have high priority:

1. better understanding of processes of biodiversity change and their effect on marine and terrestrial ecosystem function in the Mediterranean;
2. better understanding of the large-scale dynamics of biodiversity including its relation to the functioning of ecosystems across succession stages;
3. further knowledge about the connectedness, ecological context and the critical size of habitat fragments and the process and history of fragmentation;
4. development and testing of scientific management and policy tools to control invasive species;
5. development of an integrated strategy incorporating climate change scenarios and socio-economic aspects for the management, restoration and the conservation of both terrestrial and marine Mediterranean ecosystems;
6. strengthening and expanding taxonomic competence particularly in relation to conservation and use of biodiversity;
7. providing online services and tools for the protection, conservation, sustainable use and management of marine and terrestrial biodiversity;
8. developing appropriate methods for ecosystem restoration including both science communication and environmental education;
9. better understanding on how policies are established and implemented.

To develop high quality and policy relevant research on these priority areas, particular attention should be paid to:

- guidelines and methods to optimise the design of networks of nature reserves, to manage conflicts over land and water use, and to preserve species, ecosystems and landscapes;
- close co-operation of natural and social scientists, policymakers and stakeholders to conserve, restore and sustainably manage biodiversity in the Mediterranean;
- valuation of ecological goods and services is one important means to translate ecological data into useful information for decision makers;

- the interaction between research and society, in particular science communication needs to be improved;

The above research priorities stemmed in particular from the following considerations:

- the Mediterranean Basin is one of 25 biodiversity hotspots of the Earth with exceptional concentrations of endemic species;
- the Mediterranean ecosystems show large spatial and temporal variability and interdependence whose sustainable management requires large-scale planning;
- the biodiversity of Mediterranean coastal habitats depends on the features and management of the coastal terrestrial belt and vice versa;
- biodiversity in the Mediterranean is closely linked to human, social and cultural diversity;
- Mediterranean biodiversity faces pressure from anthropogenic sources, for example through tourism, agriculture, urbanisation, fire, overharvesting, pollution, habitat loss or fragmentation and the introduction and spread of non-indigenous species;