



MINUTES - PETROVAC MEETING, 1-2ND MAY

During the 1st and 2nd of May in organization of NGO MedCEM, the two day presentation on marine protection activities was held in Petrovac (Montenegro), as a part of the project "**Economic benefits of sustainable development and potential blue carbon value of Katič MPA**", funded by MedPAN Association, French World Environmental Fund (FFEM), the Swiss MAVA Foundation and the Prince Albert II of Monaco. This event in Petrovac was part of the practical implementation of the project activities, as well as promotion, education and raising awareness of the protection of seagrass meadows of *Posidonia oceanica*.

The event was attended by lecturers, international guests, MedPAN association representative and NGO MedCEM members, as well as collaborators on the project, students of Ecology, divers from Montenegro and Serbia, concerned local residents and members of the press. Article about the meeting was published in weekend edition one of the most popular Montenegrin newspaper "Dan" (The Day) (attached).

In the hall of the Memorial Centre "Red Commune" in Petrovac, on the 1st of May an opening presentation "Seagrass *Posidonia oceanica* as a bioindicator in marine ecosystem" was held by Ivana Radonjic, a final year student of master studies Ecology, followed by the presentation of the main project by project manager Dusan Varda, chairperson of MedCEM. Afterwards, the movies "Blue carbon value in protected areas", "Marine Reserve Medes", "*Posidonia* meadows, treasure trove of the Adriatic Sea" and the MedPAN's movie "MPA - Everyone's Business" have been screened.

On the 2nd of May, Dr Ivan Guala from International Marine Center in Sardinia, Italy, held a short course in using basic instruments for underwater measurement of *Posidonia*, followed by two dives in the bays of Lucica and Buljarica. Divers were organized into groups and practiced the measuring of conservation index (CI), working with a penetrometer, setting up monitoring stations and assessing the density of the grass following transects, as well as installing ecological anchors (moorings). While diving in the bay Lucice, one group came across recently killed sea turtle *Caretta caretta* – one of protected and extremely rare species in this area.

In the afternoon Dr Ivan Guala presented the topic "Building a monitoring approach of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows in Montenegro". Next participant was Thomas Binet from Center for the Economics and Management of Aquatic Resources (CEMAR), Great Britain, with a particularly interesting presentation on "Opportunities for seagrass blue carbon in Katic MPA" in which he pointed out that this project in Montenegro is the first of its kind in the world (presentation attached). The last presenter for the day was Zrinka Jakl, the chairwoman of the Croatian NGO Sunce, with a topic "Croatian MPAs – Past and Future" which has demonstrated the similarities with problems concerning the protection of the sea in Montenegro, where Croatia is making progress every year. The event ended with screening of the films: "Building capacities of MPA networks in Croatia", "Marine Reserves Restoring the Oceans" and "Pilot Protected Area in Montenegro-Katic" with a cocktail party afterwards.

Although on this occasion the support of the official representatives of local government and other authorities was lacking, the whole event is a step towards the establishment of the first marine protected area (MPA) in Montenegro. Also, a flyer about the protection of seagrass has been printed out and will be distributed in the coastal region during the summer period.