ABSTRACT SUBMISSION FOR THE 27th International Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation

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7. Abstract describing the presentation (500 words maximum). FOLLOWS
8. The session to which you are submitting your presentation.
9. Prefer oral presentation
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ABSTRACT

It has been suggested by academic research that Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (ENGOs) can play four primary roles in environmental regimes: (a) mobilizing international public opinion, (b) transnational coalition building, (c) monitoring of states' environmental commitments and (d) advocating precaution and protection of the environment, acting independently of state interests and epistemic communities (Ringius 1997). Such had been the rationale behind the proposals to create two international networks focusing on the conservation, research and monitoring of sea turtles at the Mediterranean ENGO and inter-governmental level: ‘MEDSETCON’ –Mediterranean Sea Turtle Conservation Network- (proposed in 1999) and a ‘Clearing-House Mechanism for Marine turtle Populations in the Mediterranean’ (proposed in 2001).

Despite initial unanimous endorsement by Mediterranean ENGOs, neither of these proposals displays a foreseeable future, a fact that begs explanation. Based on extensive archival data (draft documents, resolutions passed, email communications, experts’ opinion, survey data etc.) we investigate to which extent these failures can be accounted for in terms of ENGOs’ differences in (a) available resources –to be committed to this endeavour-, (b) ideology –e.g. ‘ecology’ vs. ‘conservation’ positions, ‘environment’ vs. ‘economy’ positions and so on- or (c) a mix of both (Dalton, Recchia, and Rohrschneider, 2003; Rohrschneider and Dalton, 2002).

Although this is a work in progress, the initial information analysis suggests that the heretofore failure to establish an operational network could be attributed to the variety of capabilities and level of commitment of the actors involved: namely, some ENGOs, albeit willing to participate, lacked both material resources and technical know-how to spearhead these initiatives, while others more affluent and established, lacked the willingness to actively engage in setting up of the network. Issues of ideological differences do not seem to play a prominent role in the outcome, although one cannot dismiss the possibility that lack of previous experience in broad, transnational cooperation (i.e. at the Mediterranean level) is sustained, in a ‘loop’ fashion, by a culture of ENGO-‘particularism’, a situation where the actors are more interested or limited to the ‘particular’ (i.e. national) scope of their work and are unable to function within a broader context.
References


MINUTES: “First Consultation to Facilitate the Creation of a Mediterranean Sea Turtle Conservation Network”, Dalyan, Turkey, 3-4 June 1999.

MINUTES: “Second Consultation to Facilitate the Creation of a Mediterranean Sea Turtle Conservation Network”, Cairo, Egypt, 11-12 November 2000.
