

Mediterranean Diet

Cultural Heritage and Tourism

Mediterranean Diet: When brand meets people

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MEDITERRANEAN DIET- CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TOURISM

ABSTRACT

In this module a non-exhaustive inventory of the richness of the Mediterranean is presented highlighting the most prominent features of the participating regions, according to the criteria of the recognition by International organizations as well as relevant to the Mediterranean Diet concept. Every region displays outstanding features, from the impressive volcanos, caves and marshes full of wildlife, to the magnificent monuments and breath-taking landscapes.

The list of notorious Natural Sites, Outstanding Geoparks, Cultural Landscapes and Intangible Heritage elements is enormous, and would be endless if not restricted to the above-mentioned criteria.

The conventions, treaties and organizations relevant to the tourism sector are herein listed, with corresponding links to allow retrieving more and customized information.

Finally, a condensed description of relevant features of each region, including touristic sites (e.g. natural parks, rural landscapes or monumental cities) and some festivities, local markets and celebrations. The traditional festivities, based on celebrating harvest seasons, may perhaps help connecting urban populations to the pace of nature, while some reinvented festivals revamp ancient culinary arts and crafts. Ancient peculiar customs are also registered across all the Mediterranean basin and may contribute to reinforce the pride in local culture by highlighting it.

1. INVENTORY, CLASSIFICATION AND SAFEGUARDING OF RESOURCES

1.1 NATURAL PARKS, GEOPARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS

The most prominent natural sites in the Mediterranean regions taking part in the project MD.net are herein listed, highlighting those with a Mediterranean character and recognized as Biosphere reserves, Geoparks or World Heritage sites by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization of the United Nations (UNESCO) and/or annotated in the Ramsar Convention as Wetlands of International Importance. In Natural parks the anthropogenic pressure is minimised, and sustainable tourism helps raising awareness and provides resources to preserve such areas.

The inventory will start by a multinational reserve, followed by World Heritage sites and other noteworthy examples of each region, many of which are inscribed in the UNESCO's World Heritage list.

Firstly, the Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe, stands in the world heritage list of UNESCO as a large transboundary biosphere reserve. The site includes ten separate massifs extending from Ukraine to Slovakia, including Albania, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, Spain, among 12 countries. Seventy per cent of such forest is in Ukraine, includes large "buffer" zones and only a small part of it is accessible to visitors. According to UNESCO "(...) Since the end of the last Ice Age, European Beech spread from a few isolated refuge areas in the Alps, Carpathians, Dinarides, Mediterranean and Pyrenees over a short period of a few thousand years in a process that is still ongoing. The successful expansion across a whole continent is related to the tree's adaptability and tolerance of different climatic, geographical and physical conditions".

Such forest types were in the origin of the Mediterranean landscapes, which have been heavily shaped by humans along millennia, as explained in module 1 of the current course.

In the spirit of the Project MD.net, of strengthening the exploration of the Mediterranean Diet (MD) in establishing transnational networks, the rich Mediterranean heritage is herein sampled by a rationale of prioritizing the world heritage legacy recognized by UNESCO, in relation to the MD, and then descending at lower levels. Similarly, the regions are herein presented from the higher to the lower regulatory levels, organized in the context of their countries, however stressing regional features.

In Albania, the *Butrint National Park*¹ stands out for its entangled relationship with the monuments classified in the UNESCO's World Heritage list. This cultural landscape is a notorious example of the close relationship between material and immaterial aspects of cultural heritage,

¹Butrint world heritage cultural landscape: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/570>

highlighting the interactions between mankind and nature along the times. Butrint National Park was inscribed on the National Heritage List of Protected Monuments in 1948. The natural values of the Butrint Wetlands were recognized by the Ramsar Convention in 2002. In 2005, based on the Law on Protected Areas, Butrint was declared a National Park covering 86 km². The National Park acts as a buffer zone for the World Heritage property.

As mentioned in 1.2.3 of module 1, the Divjakë-Karavasta National Park is also noteworthy, namely for the presence of Mediterranean elements in the country - olive orchards and vineyards (possibly of cultivars adapted to colder weather conditions).

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, region of Herzegovina has a National Park that is an important wetland, *Hutovo Blato*, Ramsar site n° 1105. Located near the estuary of the Neretva river, at 30 Km of Mostar, the site, comprising swamps, lakes, wet meadows, and riverine forest, provides favourable conditions for many wetland species, particularly of birds and fish, several of which are described as endangered.

In Croatia, region of Split-Dalmatia, the landscape of Hvar Island stands for The Stari Grad Plain inscribed in the UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites as a cultural landscape that has remained practically intact since it was first colonized by Ionian Greeks from Pharos in the 4th century BC and remains in use and is generally still in its original form. The ancient layout has been preserved by careful maintenance of the stone walls over 24 centuries, along with the stone shelters, and the water collection system. The same crops, mainly grapes and olives, are still grown in the fields, and the site is also a natural reserve. The site is a valuable example of the ancient Greek system of agriculture, with its geometrical system of land division, the "chora", which has remained virtually intact over 24 centuries. The site is of great importance for MD as it shows the functioning of initial agrarian civilizations. It was in 385 BC that Dionysius of Syracuse (Sicily) established Pharos (now Stari Grad) as a Greek colony which was intended to provide a base for further colonization, as Pharos was an agrarian economy. When the Romans conquered Pharos in 219BC, it remained important as a maritime and agricultural centre until the Middle Ages and the original crops were augmented with wheat, carob and figs. Only the name changed over the centuries. The Greeks called it chora Pharu, while to the Romans it became Ager Pharensis. In Medieval ages it became known as Campus Sancti Stephani (the Field of St. Stephen). This landscape is linked to 2 inscriptions in the UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage: one related to the craftship of lacemaking to which a festival is associated, and another one related to a religious celebration of the Christian Easter (at a variable date in Spring).

In the mainland, two wetlands areas are noteworthy, the Vransko Lake and Neretva River Delta. The *Vransko Lake* is the only brackish natural lake on the coast of Croatia and is inscribed in Ramsar list, under the Ramsar convention (see 3.2.1). It is situated in a shallow karst bed and separated from the Adriatic Sea by a narrow karst ridge. Significant seasonal variations in water level and salinity, due to the intrusion of sea water through the permeable karst, have created conditions for the development of very specific habitats, including seasonally flooded arable land, and typical Mediterranean scrubland in the hills. Some of these areas are included in the EU Natura 2000 list of protected habitats. The Site is a nesting, wintering and resting area for many threatened waterbirds and also provides habitat to the critically endangered European eel. Notable threats to the Site, such as reed burning, illegal fishing and hunting, have been

significantly mitigated since the establishment of the protected area, and continue to be addressed through local education and implementation of the management plan.

Neretva River Delta is Ramsar Site nº 585 and an important Bird Area, Protected Ornithological Reserve, Wilderness Area, and Protected Landscape. The Neretva is the largest river of the eastern Adriatic watershed, and its final section stretches through Croatian territory, forming an extensive delta with large reedbeds, lakes, wet meadows, lagoons, sandbanks, sandflats and saltmarshes. The area is important stopover place during migrations of birds and is exceptionally rich in fish species. The delta plays a very important role in flood control and sediment trapping. Besides the traditional agriculture landscape, there are large complexes of intensively managed agricultural land with plantations of tangerines and greenhouses with vegetables. The delta is also rich in cultural and historical heritage. The largest threats to the are connected to issues of water management and agriculture sectors (eutrophication, fertilizer pollution, land reclamation, and habitat fragmentation).

In Cyprus, the Troodos Geopark is of capital importance for many reasons, firstly because the formation of Cyprus is directly linked to the creation of the Troodos mountain range, as the result of a series of unique and complex geological processes. Troodos is the deepest layer of a section of oceanic crust and the Earth's upper mantle, in other words, an ophiolite complex that was formed 90 million years ago, 8,000 metres below sea level. The Troodos Geopark is located in the central part of Cyprus and it is a World heritage site².

In Greece, region of Crete harbours two main geoparks in the Global Geopark Network of UNESCO, already mentioned in module 1, *Psiloritis Natural Park*³, a cultural landscape comprising the Psiloritis mountains and its northern coastal zone in central Crete. In relation to the associated mythology the park encompasses the area where Zeus, the king of ancient Greek gods, grow up, the area where the Idaion Andro cave (in Nida plateau), the most important religious site in Minoan period in Crete occurs, and also the classical town of Eleytherna. The Park combines the unique Natural Environment (part of the area is participating to the Nature 2000 network), the long history, the individual customs and tradition, and the outstanding civilization with the fascinating geology. The Geopark itself is subdivided into sub-parks each one presenting a major geological feature of the area. In Psiloritis mountains mythology, folklore, tradition and natural environment meet in such an excellent combination to claim that it is the mountain of gods and humans, of nature and tradition and of the real Cretan spirit. The *Sitia Geopark* is also listed in Global Geoparks Network (GGN) of UNESCO. It is abundant in mammal fossils and in karstic structures on the limestone environment of the site which constitute its most salient characteristic. More than 170 caves and many gorges have been found in the area.

Italy is extremely rich MD related-heritage sites encompassing outstanding geoparks, biosphere reserves, natural parks, as well as a long list of extremely relevant cultural sites, recognised by UNESCO as World Heritage sites.

² Troodos Geopark: http://www.troodos-geo.org/cgi-bin/hweb?-V=index&_FAA=1&-dindex.html&_VLANGUAGE=en

³ Psiloritis Natural Park: <http://www.globalgeopark.org/aboutGGN/list/Greece/6437.htm>

In Italy, region of Campania, the *Parco Nazionale del Cilento e Vallo di Diano*⁴, is a geopark in the Global Geoparks Network (GGN, UNESCO), peculiar for the diverse geomorphology, encompassing carbonate massifs characterized by karst features including caves. The size and geodiversity of the its territory are matched by the variety of important ecosystems. A large part of the territory coincides with the Reserves of the Biosphere the National Park of the Cilento and Vallo di Diano which has been included in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites since 1998.

Other relevant Natural area is the *Oasi del Sele-Serre Persano*, a Ramsar site, also classified as a site of Community Importance, under EU Natura 2000, and National Nature Reserve. The Oasis of Persano contains the main portion of the wetlands and the surrounding landscape consists of inundated meadows, riparian woodland, flooded forest, fens and swamps. The dominant vegetation comprises magnopotamion and hydrocarition habitat types, typical of the Mediterranean Region. Another relevant area is the *Oasi di Castelvoturno o Variconi* which is a wetland part of the larger "*Voturno Costa Licola Delta*" Nature Reserve, which represents one of the areas endowed with the largest number of aquatic bird species within the whole Tyrrhenian coastal area. Hundreds of species and thousands of specimens transit and/or spend winter by the ponds situated within the delta.

In Italy, region of Emilia-Romagna has many natural protected areas, of which the Po river delta is particularly relevant. It is integrated in the cultural landscape of Ferrara, a World Heritage Site. The Po Delta of the Po River valley has been settled for millennia and covers an important part of the territory of Emilia-Romagna's region⁵. It includes dunes, wetlands, woodlands and pine woods like Bosco della Mesola and San Vitale pinewood, as well as many important monuments that include Abbeys, other historical town centres than Ferrara, and the "chiaviche" (monumental water locks). Other relevant wetlands in the Emilia-Romagna region are Punte Alberete, Sacca di Bellocchio, Ortazzo e Ortazzino and Piallassa della Baiona e Riseiga.

In Italy, region of Sicily, offers to the visitor the magnificence of the natural forces at *Isole Eolie*⁶ (Aeolian Islands) which is a site in the World Heritage list of UNESCO. These islands are a volcanic archipelago located at the north of Sicily (Fig. 1).



A



B

4 Parco Nazionale del Cilento e Vallo di Diano: <http://www.globalgeopark.org/aboutGGN/list/Italy/6487.htm>

5 Parco del Delta del Po: <http://www.parks.it/parco.delta.po.er/Eindex.php>

6 Isole Lipari, touristic information: <https://www.isolelipari.com>

Fig. 1. The Isola Eolie (Aeolian Islands) an outstanding volcanic archipelago which is a world heritage site recognize by UNESCO by its natural and cultural relevance; A. map and detail showing the location of the Aeolian Islands, named after the belief that they were home to Greek's divinity "Aeolus" (source: Norman Einstein for Wikipedia); B: photo of the Stromboli's island showing a pyroclastic flow down the volcano's flank (Photo by Shawn Appel on Unsplash)

According to UNESCO, "The Aeolian Islands⁷ provide an outstanding record of volcanic island-building and destruction, and ongoing volcanic phenomena, with examples of two types of eruption (Vulcanian and Strombolian) and thus have featured prominently in the education of geologists for more than 200 years.

Still in Sicily, another prominent volcanic landscape, the Mount Etna⁸, in the UNESCO's world heritage list, is an iconic site encompassing 19,237 uninhabited hectares on the eastern coast of Sicily. Mount Etna is the highest Mediterranean island mountain and the most active stratovolcano in the world. The volcano supports important terrestrial ecosystems including endemic flora and fauna and its activity makes it a natural laboratory for the study of ecological and biological processes.

Sicily's Natural Reserves⁹ encompass the National Park Isola di Pantelleria, the Regional Parks of Etna, Fiume Alcantara, Madonie, Nebrodi and Monti Sicani. The Marine protected areas of Sicily encompass Isole Egadi, Isole Pelagiar, Plemmirio, Capo Gallo – Isola delle Femmine, Capo Milazzo, Isola di Ustica and Isole Ciclopi. The long list of Regional Natural Reserves include some World Heritage sites and surrounding areas, such as Isola di Alicudi, Isola di Stromboli e Strombolicchio, Isola di Vulcano, Trapani and Paceco Salt Ponds, and Vendicari.

In Portugal, region of Algarve, several wetland ecosystems and habitats are noteworthy and protected by the Ramsar protocol, namely:

- *Ria de Alvor*, Ramsar site nº 827, is protected as a National Ecological Reserve. A coastal lagoon and estuarine wetland system separated from the sea by sand spits. The site includes stable and mobile dunes with characteristic vegetation, intertidal sand and mudflats, tidal saltmarshes, and salt pans. An important stopover site for many trans-saharan passerines, with nationally important numbers of several species of avifauna breeding at the site. The area is most valued for its aquatic life, which includes important commercial shellfish production. A field station and bird-ringing station are located at the site.

- *Ria Formosa* is protected under Special Protection Area EC Directive and as a National Natural Park and by Ramsar convention. It is a complex of coastal saltwater lagoons and barrier islands, with extensive mudflats, sand banks, dune systems, saltmarshes, and substantial *Zostera* beds. The area is important for numerous species of breeding, wintering and staging waterbirds, including egrets and ibis. The site is of botanical importance, supporting several endemic plants, and is a major nursery zone for fish.

- *Sapais de Castro Marim*. Ramsar site nº 829, is protected as a Nature Reserve under Special Protection Area EC Directive. It is a complex estuarine system of creeks, alluvial plains, saltmarshes and artificial "Salinas", subject to wide fluctuations in tidal range and salinity levels. The wetland is noteworthy for its halophytic saltmarsh communities and distinctive shrubby

7 Isole Eolie: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/908>

8 Mount Etna: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1427>

9 Natural Parks and Reserves of Sicily: <http://www.parks.it/regione.sicilia/Eindex.php>

vegetation adapted to the extremes of a hot, dry and saline environment. The site supports several species of breeding waterbirds and a small heronry and is crucial for large numbers of non-breeding flamingos *Phoenicopterus ruber* and spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia*. The wetland plays a crucial role in maintaining water tables, flood attenuation, and serves as a freshwater reservoir in one of the driest areas of Portugal. The area holds historic settlements of Roman and Arabic occupation.

In Slovenia, region Vzhodna harbours a relevant wetland near the seaside is *Secoveljske Soline*. This Natural park is an area of tidal mudflats, salt pans, and saltmarsh supporting reedbeds and salt-resistant vegetation at the mouth of a canalized river. The site is important for various species of breeding, wintering and large numbers of staging waterbirds. Numerous nationally rare invertebrates and halophytic plants occur within the site, and the area is important for conservation education, outdoor recreation, and scientific research. Salt pans have been operated in the delta for hundreds of years and 40% of the site consists of operational salt pans, which a common activity in the Mediterranean Basin.

Its karst area is an important feature of the country, magnificently represented by the Škocjan Caves, a World Heritage site¹⁰.

In Spain, region of Andalusia, the *Tabernas Desert*, is an outstanding biosphere reserve with various types of climates, situated between the Sierra de los Filabres and the Sierra de Alhamilla, in an area with little rainfall known as Levante. It is home to rare plants, as sea lavender (*Limonium insigne*), reptiles and amphibians, birds and some mammals. The Natural Park is located in the Almeria province.

Doñana National Park (Coto Doñana), near Huelva, in the Atlantic coast (south) is a biosphere reserve supported by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). World Heritage site, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve¹¹, Ramsar site nº 234, Special Protection Area EC Directive, Council of Europe Diploma, Doñana National Park occupies the right bank of the Guadalquivir river at its estuary on the Atlantic Ocean. It is notable for the great diversity of its biotopes, especially lagoons, marshlands, fixed and mobile dunes, scrub woodland and maquis. It is home to five threatened bird species. The vast coastal marshland complex is separated from the ocean by an extensive dune system and subject to seasonal variations in water level and salinity. Vegetation includes aquatic species, salt-tolerant plants, *Pinus pinea* forest, and grassland

*Cabo de Gata-Níjar*¹² Geopark is one of the few sub-desertic areas in continental Europe and was the first maritime and terrestrial Protected Area in Andalusia. The Park has garnered different international awards for its natural values.

Another relevant wetland, in the region, is *Bahía de Cádiz*, a Natural Park, Ramsar site nº 1265, Special Protection Area and proposed Site of Community Importance EC Directives. Bahía de Cádiz is an outstanding example of Atlantic tidal marshes on the Iberian Peninsula, much of the salt marshes have been transformed into salt pans, most of them have reverted to more natural habitats or been transformed for aquaculture. Natural habitats also include sandy beaches and

¹⁰ Škocjan Caves: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/390>

¹¹ Doñana Park: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/685>

¹² Cabo de Gata Níjar: <http://www.globalgeopark.org/aboutGGN/list/Spain/6447.htm>

rocky islets. The Bay of Cadiz is crucial for migrating and wintering waterbirds, also harbouring more than 1% of the breeding populations of 5 different shorebirds.

In Spain, region of Catalonia harbours the Central Catalonia Geopark¹³ an extensive geodiversity with outstanding examples from the fields of stratigraphy, sedimentology, tectonics, karst systems, palaeontology, and palaeoanthropology. The faunal content of its sedimentary rocks shows multiple examples of rich diverse life from past geological eras. The best known and most abundant fossils are of marine origin originating from organisms living in warm shallow seas which covered the region 55 million years ago. Geodynamics and mining are part of the Catalan Potassic Basin, one of the largest potassium salt mining areas in Europe. A noteworthy wetland in Catalonia is Delta del Ebro, Ramsar site nº 593. It is also a Special Protection Area EC Directive, Natural Park, Natural Reserve, and National Hunting Refuge. As a fluvial delta, it includes shallow coastal waters, beaches, dunes, saline lagoons, salinas, freshwater marshes, and freshwater pools fed by groundwater springs. The site supports internationally important numbers of numerous species of waterbirds. Up to 30,000 pairs of waterbirds nest, and 180,000 individuals winter at the site annually.

1.2. BUILT HERITAGE AND OTHER MD-RELATED INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

The most prominent monumental and archaeological sites in the Mediterranean regions taking part in the project MD.net are herein listed, highlighting those with a Mediterranean character and recognized as World Heritage by UNESCO, and thus the inventory is not exhaustive. At these sites the anthropogenic pressure is minimised, and tourism helps raising awareness and provides resources to preserve such areas. Additional information and contacts of the listed sites are provided in footnotes.

Albania. The cultural landscape of Butrint¹⁴ stands out by its recognition as World Heritage, integrating UNESCO's list, and further protected by Ramsar Convention (see 3.2.1). The present archaeological site is a repository of ruins representing each period in the city's development. Butrint National Park is a buffer zone to the monuments and represents itself an important marshland, protected by the Ramsar Convention. The World Heritage Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra¹⁵ are noteworthy for being remarkably well preserved, including their vernacular buildings, despite continuously inhabited from ancient times. Situated in the Balkans, in Southern Albania, and close to each other, these fortified city centres bear witness to the wealth and diversity of the urban and architectural heritage of this region. According to UNESCO's site Berat and Gjirokastra are inscribed as rare examples of an architectural character typical of the Ottoman period. Located in central Albania, Berat bears witness to the coexistence of various religious and cultural communities down the centuries. It features a castle, locally known as the

¹³ Central Catalonia Geopark: <http://www.globalgeopark.org/aboutGGN/list/Spain/6776.htm>

¹⁴ Butrint, world heritage site: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/570>

¹⁵ Berat and Gjirokastra, world heritage site: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/569>

Kala, most of which was built in the 13th century, although its origins date back to the 4th century BC. In the citadel area there are several Byzantine churches, mainly from the 13th century, as well as several mosques built under the Ottoman era.

Bosnia-Herzegovina. The city of Mostar¹⁶, classified as World Heritage, stands for its outstanding example of a multicultural urban settlement. The historic town of Mostar, spanning a deep valley of the Neretva River, developed in the 15th and 16th centuries as an Ottoman frontier town and during the Austro-Hungarian period in the 19th and 20th centuries. Mostar has long been known for its old Turkish houses and Old Bridge, Stari Most, after which it was named. In the 1990s conflict, however, most of the historic town and the Old Bridge, designed by the renowned architect Sinan, was destroyed. The Old Bridge was recently rebuilt and many of the edifices in the Old Town have been restored or rebuilt with the contribution of an international scientific committee established by UNESCO. The Old Bridge area, with its pre-Ottoman, eastern Ottoman, Mediterranean and western European architectural features is a symbol of reconciliation, international co-operation and of the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities.

Croatia, region of Split-Dalmatia has several inscriptions in the World Heritage UNESCO's list, relevant to the MD. The *Historical Complex of Split with the Palace of Diocletian*¹⁷ encompass the historical centre of Split with the ruins of Diocletian's Palace, built between the late 3rd and the early 4th centuries AD. The cathedral was built in the Middle Ages, reusing materials from the ancient mausoleum. Twelfth- and 13th-century Romanesque churches, medieval fortifications, 15th-century Gothic palaces and other palaces in Renaissance and Baroque style make up the rest of the protected area. The *old city of Dubrovnic*¹⁸, known as the "pearl of the Adriatic", located on the Dalmatian coast, became an important Mediterranean sea power from the 13th century onwards. Although severely damaged by an earthquake in 1667, Dubrovnik managed to preserve its beautiful Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque churches, monasteries, palaces and fountains. The *Historic City of Trogir*¹⁹ is a remarkable example of urban continuity. The orthogonal street plan of this island settlement dates to the Hellenistic period and it was embellished by successive rulers with many fine public and domestic buildings and fortifications. Its beautiful Romanesque churches are complemented by the outstanding Renaissance and Baroque buildings from the Venetian period.

Cyprus possess three sites integrating the UNESCO's list of world heritage, of three different epochs, and of outstanding universal value. Choirokoitia, a Neolithic settlement from the 7th to the 4th millennium BC, which is one of the most important prehistoric sites in the eastern Mediterranean. It represents the Aceramic Neolithic of Cyprus at its peak, that is the success of the first human occupation of the island by farmers coming from the Near East mainland around

¹⁶ Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/946>

¹⁷ Historical Complex of Split with the Palace of Diocletian: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/97>

¹⁸ Old city of Dubrovnic: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/95>

¹⁹ Historic City of Trogir: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/810>

the beginning of 9th millennium²⁰. Paphos²¹ was a centre of the cult of Aphrodite and of pre-Hellenic fertility deities. Aphrodite's legendary birthplace was on the island of Cyprus, where her temple was erected by the Mycenaeans in the 12th century BC and continued to be used until the Roman period. The site encompasses the remains of ancient Nea Paphos (Aphrodite's Sacred City), the remains of the Temple of Aphrodite (Aphrodite's Sanctuary) and Palaepaphos (Old Paphos). The Painted Churches in the Troodos Region²² give witness the period of the dominance of Byzantine empire on the Island, and where previously mentioned in section 1.2.3. of module 1.

Greece, region of Crete. Greece is undoubtedly important for the MD concept not only for its major historical and cultural imprint to western civilization and to the Mediterranean culture but also for having populations that surpass the world average longevity, with a high number of centenarians²³. The region of Crete, participating in the project MD.net, bears the archaeological site of Knossos, submitted to UNESCO as a World Heritage²⁴. Knossos is the largest Bronze Age archaeological site on Crete and it eventually became the ceremonial and political centre of the Minoan civilization and culture. In its peak, the palace of Knossos and surrounding city boasted a population of 100,000 people shortly after 1,700 BC and has been called Europe's oldest city. The palace is also notorious for its water management system, consisting of at least in three sub-systems: one for supply, one for drainage of runoff, and one for drainage of wastewater. Aqueducts brought fresh water to Kephala hill from springs at Archanes, about 10 km away, branching to the palace and to the town. Water was distributed at the palace by gravity feed through terracotta pipes to fountains and spigots.

Heraklion (Ηράκλειο) is the largest city in Crete and displays a vast and rich History, with influences of successive occupation by Arabs and Venetians, as well as from the Byzantine and Ottoman epochs. Heraklion has been an important Port since the antiquity, attested by their still imponent fortifications.

Italy is represented in the project MD.net by three regions Campania, Emilia-Romagna and Sicily.

Italy, region of Campania. In this region, the *city of Naples* stands as a prominent Mediterranean urban landscape, recognized as World Heritage because since the city of "Neapolis", was founded by the Greeks in 470 BC to the contemporary Naples²⁵, the city has retained the imprint of the successive cultures that emerged in Europe and the Mediterranean basin and encloses many outstanding monuments like the Royal Palace, the "Monte dei Poveri Vergognosi", the convent of "Sant'Agostino degli Scalzi", and the Jesuit College on Capodimonte.

Near the city of Naples another world heritage site can be found: the 18th-Century Royal Palace at Caserta with the Park, the Aqueduct of Vanvitelli, and the San Leucio Complex.*Costiera*

²⁰Neolithic settlement of Choirokoiitia: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/848>

²¹ Paphos: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/79>

²²Painted Churches in the Troodos Region: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/351>

²³Longevity at least partially attributed to MD lifestyle: <https://www.bluezones.com/exploration/ikaria-greece/>

²⁴Knossos world heritage, tentative list: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5860/>

²⁵ Historic centre of Naples: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/726>

*Amalfitana*²⁶, is a World Heritage site and an important cultural landscape of the MD, described by UNESCO as an outstanding example of a Mediterranean landscape, with exceptional cultural and natural scenic values resulting from its dramatic topography and historical evolution.

The world heritage site of the *Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata*, is of undoubted historical significance, by the geological interest of Mont Vesuvius, by the contrast between the commercial town of Pompei with the smaller but better-preserved remains of the holiday resort of Herculaneum, revealing the opulent lifestyle enjoyed by the wealthier citizens of the Early Roman Empire.

The Italian representative community in the Mediterranean Diet' UNESCO list is Pollica-Cilento, is located in the vicinity of the World Heritage site of *Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park*, which harbours the *Archaeological Sites of Paestum and Velia*, and the *Certosa di Padula*²⁷. The National Park is a mountainous region divided by several river valleys, and the dramatic groups of sanctuaries and settlements along its three east–west mountain ridges vividly portray the area's historical evolution. It was a major route not only for trade, but also for cultural and political interaction during the prehistoric and medieval periods.

Italy, region of Emilia-Romagna bears the city of *Ferrara*, city of the Renaissance, and its *Po Delta*²⁸, a world heritage site. The area comprises the urban centre of Ferrara and adjoining agricultural lands within the ancient and vast Po River Delta. Outside the encircling walls of the medieval urban centre, the city extended in a series of urban planning schemes that were implemented from the 14th to 16th centuries, which made Ferrara the first Renaissance city to be developed using a complex urban plan. The best known of these schemes, the *Addizione Ercolea* (by Biagio Rossetti) balanced humanist principles relating to form and volume in architecture with open space, the needs of the city, and local traditions.

*Ravenna*²⁹ was the seat of the Roman Empire in the 5th century and then of Byzantine Italy until the 8th century. The Early Christian buildings of Ravenna are unique testimonies of the artistic contacts and developments in a highly significant period of the cultural development in Europe. These religious monuments, decorated with precious marble, stuccos and mosaics, reflect the major historical, political and religious events that took place in Ravenna, which became the capital of the Western Roman Empire in 402 AD, and remained prominent first Ostrogothic and then Byzantine capital in Italy through the fifth and sixth centuries (see 1st section of module 1). Another world heritage site in the region is the Cathedral, Torre Civica and Piazza Grande of Modena.

Italy, region of Sicily is as notable for the historical and cultural heritage as for the richness of the geomorphology (geoparks described above in 1.1.). The *Archaeological Area of Agrigento*³⁰ respects to the city of Agrigento, founded as a Greek colony in the 6th century BC, which became one of the leading cities in the Mediterranean world. Its supremacy and pride are demonstrated by the remains of the magnificent Doric temples that dominate the ancient town, much of which still lies intact under today's fields and orchards. The site was planned to be

26 Costiera Amalfitana: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/830>

27 Cilento & Vallo di Diano National Park: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/842>

28 Ferrara and its Po delta: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/733>

29 Ravenna's religious monuments: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/788>

30 Agrigento ruins and surrounding park area: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/831>

included in the Archaeological and Landscape Park of the Valley of the Temples of Agrigento, aiming to protect the landscape and historical heritage of the site, but also to improve and promote it. The site Syracuse and the Rocky Necropolis of Pantalica³¹ consists of two separate elements, the Necropolis of Pantalica (dating from the 13th to 7th centuries BC) with vestiges of the Byzantine era and Ancient Syracuse, a city founded as Ortygia by Greeks from Corinth in the 8th century BC. Historic Syracuse offers a unique testimony to the development of Mediterranean civilization over three millennia. The World Heritage site of Arab-Norman Palermo and the Cathedral Churches of Cefalú and Monreale³² shows the many successive influences on the Island, and an example of a social-cultural syncretism between Western, Islamic and Byzantine cultures on the island which gave rise to new concepts of space, structure and decoration. They also bear testimony to the fruitful coexistence of people of different origins and religions (Muslim, Byzantine, Latin, Jewish, Lombard and French). Other World Heritage sites encompass Villa Romana del Casale, Late Baroque Towns of the Val di Noto.

Portugal, region of Algarve, encompassing the MD representative community of Tavira shares the blend of cultural influences (e.g. Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs) with other Mediterranean regions. There is an ongoing appliance of the Sites of Globalization route, as part of the UNESCO tentative list, that aims to enhance heritage associated with the Portuguese expansion of the XV century and the new commercial and cultural connections created during that period, between Portugal, Mauritania and Cape Verde. The Ummayyad, Almoravide and Al-Mutamid routes, connecting the Algarve with Andalusia, in Spain, and the Mediterranean are part of Algarve's Arab heritage, is other good example of the importance of cultural tourism and heritage on local development and on enhancing dialogue between cultures. Portuguese were in fact pioneers in the adventure of the long ocean travels and were the catalysts of a new era of continental exchanges and globalization, deeply contributing to the enrichment of the Mediterranean Diet. The first real global international trade, started in Lagos (at Algarve), continued in Lisbon, and was then continued by Castile and by the Spanish Monarchy in Seville.

Slovenia, region of Vzhodna, shares some historical background with neighbour countries, namely with Italy and the Slovenian Istria, facing the Mediterranean Sea shares a Cultural World Heritage with Spain, the Heritage of Mercury- Almadén and Idrija, already mentioned in 1.2.3 of module 1. (To be completed with relevant MD-related built heritage).

Spain is represented by the autonomous communities of **Andalusia** and **Catalonia**.

Spain, region of Andalusia has several World Heritage sites witness of the presence of Arabs in the Iberian Peninsula, with established califates as is the case of *Alhambra*, *Generalife* and *Albayzín*, *Granada*³³. The Alhambra and the Albaycín, situated on two adjacent hills, form the medieval part of Granada. To the east of the Alhambra fortress and residence are the magnificent

³¹ Syracuse: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1200>

³² Palermo's multiple cultural influences: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1487>

³³ Alhambra: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/314>

gardens of the Generalife, the former rural residence of the emirs who ruled this part of Spain in the 13th and 14th centuries. The residential district of the Albaycín is a rich repository of Moorish vernacular architecture, into which the traditional Andalusian architecture blends harmoniously.

Another World Heritage site related to the Islamic presence in Andalusia and its influence is the *Historic Centre of Cordoba*³⁴, which expresses the period of their greatest glory about the 8th century. In the 13th century, Cordoba's Great Mosque was turned into a cathedral and new defensive structures, particularly the *Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos* and the *Torre Fortaleza de la Calahorra*, were erected. An outstanding demonstration of the Al-Andalus domination period in southern Europe can be perceived by the *Madinat al-Zahra Archaeological Site*³⁵, a complete urban complex including infrastructure, buildings, decoration and objects of daily use.

In the centre of Seville, the *Cathedral (Giralda)*, the *Real Alcázar* and *Archivo de Indias*³⁶ form a World Heritage site showing the embodied changes from the Moorish influences to the Christian kings and the participation of Spain in the endeavours of Discoveries, rivalling with the Portuguese. The Real Alcazar and their gardens as well as the cathedral (a former mosque) evidence the integration of Moorish influence in the rebuild of constructions by Christian Kings. The *Giralda minaret* is the masterpiece of Almohad architecture, standing next to the cathedral, which is the largest Gothic building in Europe, and houses the tomb of Christopher Columbus.

Spain, region of Catalonia has several sites inscribed in the UNESCO's World Heritage list, notably the *Archaeological Ensemble of Tàrraco*³⁷ that was one of the first Roman settlements in the Iberia Peninsula, and a major administrative and mercantile city of the Roman Empire. Tàrraco is remarkable for its singular conception within Roman planning: the town plan was adapted to the configuration of the land by means of a series of artificial terraces, which can be seen around the provincial forum as well as in the residential area of the Roman city. The defensive system of walls is one of the earliest examples of Roman military engineering on the Iberian Peninsula and the most important symbols of the town. Another important World Heritage site is *Poblet Monastery*³⁸, a 12th-century majestic monastery, also a fortified royal residence (for the kings of Catalonia and Aragon, as referred in module 1 section 1.2.3). It is one of the largest and most complete Cistercian abbeys in the world and it is extraordinarily important in terms of art, culture, history and spirituality.

34 Córdoba: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/313>

35 Archaeological remains of the Califate of Cordoba: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1560>

36 Monuments in the centre of Seville: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/383>

37 Archaeological Ensemble of Tàrraco, UNESCO's world heritage site: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/875>

38 Poblet Monastery, UNESCO's world heritage site: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/518>

2. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF CULTURAL ASSETS AND TOURISM

In respect to **Natural Sites**, the conservation of nature is ensured at an international level by various organizations, conventions and programmes based on the cooperation between organizations and states. Besides the institutional bodies, a countless non-governmental organizations, associations, and activist groups, have been raising awareness and acting on important issues related to the safeguard of natural resources and the environment. Some of them have gained prominence.

The present list, although not exhaustive, includes the international organizations with more impact and visibility in the Mediterranean basin, concerning the protection of Nature. The International Conventions on the safeguard of natural resources are also herein listed and when appropriate further details are provided.

At the level of the United Nations, The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)³⁹ is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. The UNEP mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. It acts on multiple areas, including Ecosystems, Resource efficiency, Oceans and seas, Environmental rights and governance, sustainable development goals, among many others.

The Convention on Biological Diversity⁴⁰ is with the UNEP and encompasses convention protocols, convention bodies, a strategic plan for biodiversity, mechanisms for implementation, and cooperation and partnerships². All countries in the MD.net project are parties to the convention.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands⁴¹ is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It has 171 parties covering 2372 sites.

Other International conventions that apply to Natural Reserves are the Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, the Convention on Migratory Species and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Still at the level of the UN, UNESCO has several actions to raise awareness, value and take action in the conservation of natural sites. The World Heritage list of UNESCO encompasses Geoparks, Biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites. While Biosphere Reserves focus on the harmonised management of biological and cultural diversity and World Heritage Sites promote the conservation of natural and cultural sites of outstanding universal value, UNESCO Global

39 UN Environmental Programme UNEP: <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment>

40 Convention on Biological Diversity: <https://www.cbd.int/convention/text/>

41 RAMSAR: <https://www.ramsar.org>

Geoparks Network (GGN)⁴² give international recognition for sites that promote the importance and significance of protecting the Earth's geodiversity through actively engaging with the local communities.

Another important organization, which has been acting at the Mediterranean is the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)⁴³. IUCN works in the field of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in data gathering and analysis, research, field projects, advocacy, and education. IUCN's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is a not-for-profit International Organization which mission is to conserve nature and reduce the most pressing threats to the diversity of life on Earth. WWF partners with international and national organizations in helping preserving forests, parks, the oceans and other protected areas. WWF acts in the preservation of some protected natural areas in the Mediterranean.

At the European level, from which national laws derive, the protection of the environment has been gaining relevance, and is within the competencies of the Environment Directorate General of the European Commission⁴⁴, which concerns the Natural Capital, the Green Economy, Health, EU Law, Global Challenges and Knowledge. Nature Conservation includes action plans as Natura 2000⁴⁵, a network of protected natural sites by law enforcement and national supervision, which recognises that humans and nature work best in partnership, when economic activities are compatible with safeguarding valuable species and habitats.

Concerning **Cultural Sites and Intangible heritage**, Protection and safeguard of monuments, archaeological elements, relics and other elements of archaeological interest, as well as intangible elements, such as cultural manifestations in relation to the Mediterranean Diet, including the Mediterranean Diet concept itself (in the quality of Intangible Heritage) are regulated by the following International Conventions:

- Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict;
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property;
- World Heritage Convention;
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
- World Heritage Convention.

Some countries developed specific laws dedicated to cultural heritage safeguard and classification but not all included inheritance on that work or defined a specific management system to operationalize the inventory, classification and safeguard of cultural heritage based upon an online database that includes a «National Inventory of Cultural Heritage».

42 Global Geoparks Network: <http://www.globalgeopark.org/aboutGGN/list/>

43 International Union for Conservation of Nature: <https://www.iucn.org>

44 EC-Environment: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/basics/home_en.htm

45 Natura 2000 network: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/basics/natural-capital/natura2000/index_en.htm

3. CULTURAL HERITAGE ENHANCEMENT, INTERPRETATION AND PROMOTION

Tourist destinations are increasingly being called upon to tackle social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges. Anthropogenic pressure is not only negative for Nature has been noticed to seriously affect archaeological sites, monuments and other legacy. As explained in module 1, most often, in the Mediterranean the natural areas (e.g. geoparks, marine reserves, wetlands), build heritage and cultural elements (intangible heritage) are all interlinked.

Tourism is an important economic sector in the Mediterranean, a top world destination, and ensuring its sustainability will help preserving the territory and the culture, while fuelling local economies and act as a local driver to the development of other sectors

In respect to Natural parks, Geoparks and other protected areas, the provided inventory concerning the participant countries in MD.net is in accordance to the information provided in the sites of the Convention on Biological Diversity⁵, of Natura 2000 network, and others.

As emphasized in the text that describes the MD as intangible heritage of humankind (UNESCO), and as certainly confirmed by the contents of this course, the territories, the past influencing civilizations, and the balanced relationship between humans and nature, determine the food products, the crafts and the cultural manifestations that shape the MD concept. As can be realized below, each country is unique, and each region is unique within the same country, yet all share common features as the MD is rooted in the same key features. The uniqueness and diversity are enriching, instead of dividing therefore the regions are complementary instead of competitors, namely as touristic destinations.

The framework of each country/region is provided below, completing the information from modules 1 and 2, with a focus in natural and cultural assets of touristic interest.

Albania

The country is a party of the Convention on Biological Diversity since 1994, Cartagena protocol since 2005, Nagoya protocol since 2014, Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol since 2018, and of Ramsar Convention since 1996. Albania is not a member of Global Geopark Network (GGN). Concerning monuments, cultural sites, and intangible heritage the country has sites and intangible heritage elements recognized as World Heritage, by UNESCO. In what respects the territory, forests cover about 36% of the territory, which is comprised of maritime ecosystems, coastal zones, lakes, rivers, evergreen and broadleaf bushes, broadleaf forests, pine forests, alpine and sub-alpine pastures and meadows, and high mountain ecosystems. Two biogeographical regions are present in Albania (Mediterranean and Alpine). The major part of the country belongs to the Mediterranean biogeographical region which is a biodiversity hotspot. In Albania, 3,200 taxa of higher plants, 800 fungi, 1,200 diatoms, as well as 313 taxa of fish, 323 birds, 36 reptiles, 70 mammals and 520 molluscs have been identified so far. A total of 27 plant species, with 150 sub-species, are endemic to the country. A national action plan supports the

implementation of the convention. The management and safeguarding of natural areas are within the missions of the Albanian Agency of Environment and Forest (www.akm.gov.al). Reported activities are aquaculture and family farm at small and non-intensive scale. An important festivity celebrated by the Muslim community in the country is Eid Al Adha, it is of religious nature and involves a family meal where lamb is the main dish. Tourism and cultural assets, as well as information to visitors are available from the site of the Albanian National Tourism Agency <http://albania.al>.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

The country is a party of the Convention on Biological Diversity since 2002, Cartagena protocol since 2009, is non-party of Nagoya protocol, non-party of Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol, is a party of Ramsar Convention since 1992, and not member of GGN. Concerning monuments, cultural sites, and intangible heritage the country has sites and intangible heritage elements recognized as World Heritage by UNESCO. The territory is described as encompassing assorted landscapes. An inventory of baseline and updated information on species diversity does not exist in the country to assess the status and trends of biodiversity. Red Lists have been recently produced for each of the country's two autonomous entities (Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina). Regarding the former, 818 species of vascular plants, 304 bird species, 46 fish species, 57 mammal species, 20 amphibian species, 25 reptile species, 273 insect species are included in the Red List. As for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 658 plant species, 27 mammal species, 40 bird species, 6 reptile species, 4 amphibian species, 36 fish species, and a large number of invertebrate species are Red-Listed. It should be noted that these lists have not been harmonized and that no single list yet exists at state level. The implementation of the convention is supported by the Law on Environmental Protection for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (adopted in 2013) and the Law on Nature Protection for the Republika Srpska (2014), both of which are harmonized with the EU Directives on Habitats and Birds. There is a lack of an adequate biodiversity monitoring system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Olive oil production, greenhouse production of fruits and vegetables, animal husbandry (including an autochthonic sheep breed "Herzegovinian Pramenka"), and wine are reported agricultural products. Among the periodical events, the Mediterranean Day, at Neum, aims at promoting domestic agricultural products of the Mediterranean (Fig. 2).

Tourism and cultural assets, as well as information to visitors are available from the site of the **Tourism association of Federation of BH** available at:

<http://www.bhtourism.ba/eng/default.wbsp>.



Figure 2. Food exhibition showing traditional products from Bosnia-Herzegovina, including cheese, and ladies using typical costumes source: University of Mostar, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Technology.

Croatia is a party of the Convention on Biological Diversity since 1997, Cartagena protocol since 2003, Nagoya protocol since 2015, of Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol since 2019, of Ramsar Convention since 1991, and member of GGN. Concerning monuments, cultural sites, and intangible heritage the country has sites and intangible heritage elements recognized as World Heritage, by UNESCO. The Republic of Croatia has a great wealth of biological and landscape diversity, and a very high level of conservation, with forests covering 44% of the land surface, approximately 95% of which in a state of natural composition, which is rare and extremely valuable at both European and global levels. Croatia can be divided into 16 distinct landscape units, which include features such as karst fields and rivers, mountain chains and limestone plateaus. Wetlands have the highest level of biological and landscape diversity and are the most threatened of Croatia's ecosystems. Meadows of marine sea grass (*Posidona oceanica*) are common along the Croatian coast and are considered among the most representative and important Mediterranean coastal ecosystems. The number of known taxa is almost 40,000, although it is suspected that the total number of species is considerably higher (between 50,000 to more than 100,000). During the last five-year period, more than 200 new species of land invertebrates, around 220 species of freshwater invertebrates and around 20 species of marine invertebrates have been identified and more than 10 new species of freshwater fish have been described. About 3% of the total number of known taxa are endemic. The largest share of endemics (~70%) certainly is among Croatian cave fauna, one of the nation's greatest and most interesting natural peculiarities.

In the region of Split-Dalmatia, more specifically in Split, the traditional *Klapa multipart singing* was inscribed in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2012⁴⁶. Technically, klapa singers express their mood by means of open guttural, nasal sotto voce and falsetto singing, usually in high-pitched tessitura.

Another intangible cultural Heritage of Split-Dalmatia is the *lacemaking* of Hvar, a craft originally used to make ecclesiastical garments, tablecloths and ornaments for clothing. The process involves embellishing a spider web pattern with geometrical motifs and is transmitted today by older women who offer year-long courses. Rural women adapted the refined ecclesiastic techniques and each variety of lace has long been created by rural women as a source of additional income and has left a permanent mark on the culture of its region. The craft both produces an important component of traditional clothes and is itself testimony to a living cultural tradition (Fig. 3).

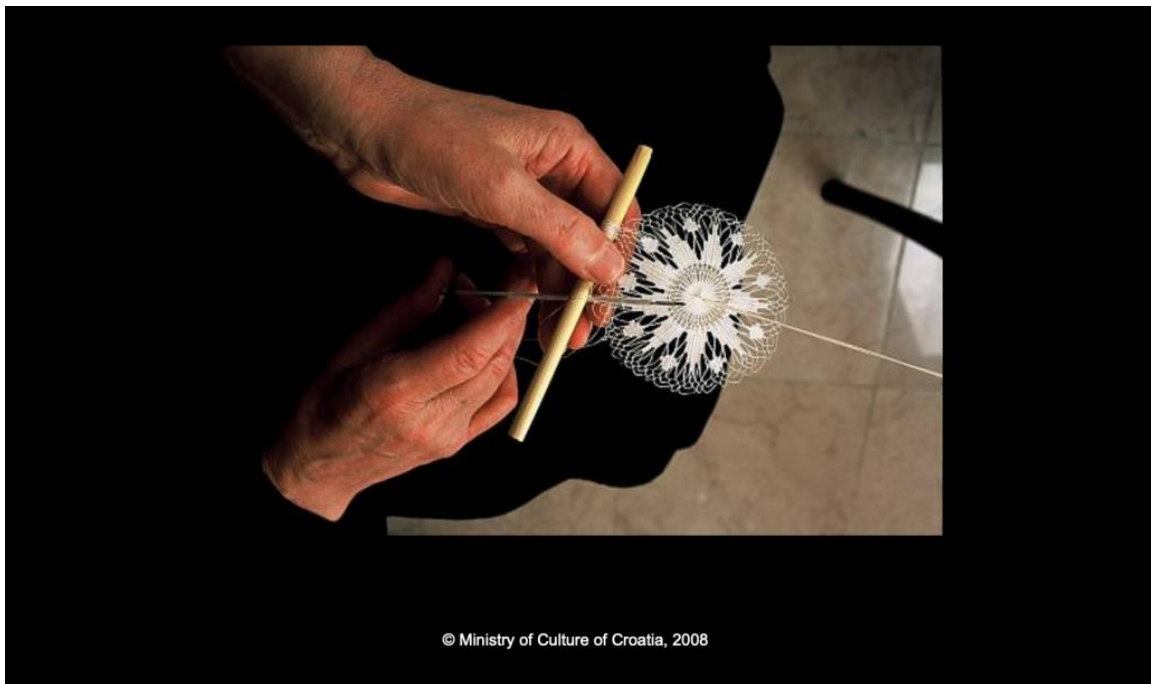


Figure 3. *Lacemaking in Croatia, a craft art recognized as intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO, Typical of the island of Hvar, in Split-Dalmatia region of Croatia. Source: Ministry of Culture of Croatia at UNESCO' site*

Finally, in Hvar, a religious celebration of the catholic Easter, *Procession Za Krizen*⁴⁷, which involves a communal organization of celebrations respecting old traditions and rituals is recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. A long-established and inalienable part of Hvar religious and cultural identity, the procession connects the communities of the island to each other and to the world Catholic community, namely within the Mediterranean basin where Easter rituals often take bold forms.

46 Klapa a capella multipart singing: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/klapa-multipart-singing-of-dalmatia-southern-croatia-00746>

47 Procession Za Krizen: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/procession-za-krizen-following-the-cross-on-the-island-of-hvar-00242>

The National Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity ensures the implementation of the protocol and inventorying and monitoring actions oversee the **State Institute for Nature Protection**. Information to visitors are available from the site of the **Split-Dalmatia County Tourist board** available at <https://www.dalmatia.hr/en>.

Cyprus is a party of the Convention on Biological Diversity since 1996, Cartagena protocol since 2004, is a non-party of Nagoya protocol, is a non-party of Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol, is a party of Ramsar Convention since 2001, and member of GGN. Concerning monuments, cultural sites, and intangible heritage the country has sites and intangible heritage elements recognized as World Heritage, by UNESCO. Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean. Its varied climate, diverse geology and insular character have resulted in a wide variety of natural, semi-natural and anthropogenic habitats. Of the 48 terrestrial habitats known to exist in Cyprus, 4 are endemic habitat types: Serpentinophilous Grasslands of Cyprus, Peat Grasslands of Troodos, Scrub Forest of *Quercus alnifolia*, and *Cedrus brevifolia* forests. Located near three continents, the island of Cyprus is situated on one of the major bird migration routes and is the only centre of bird endemism in Europe. According to the World Resources Institute (WRI), Cyprus possesses 1,738 species of flora, 143 of which are endemic (the centre of the highest level of plant endemism in Europe); 385 bird species, of which 2 are endemic; 22 reptiles, including 2 endemic species; 3 amphibian species; and over 80 species of marine fish. Out of its 11 wild mammals, 6 are endemic and sub-endemic. Cyprus is also considered a European centre of insect endemism. Nineteen percent of the country is included in the protected area system, but conflicting and competitive demands for space and pressure on scarce land resources are taking their toll on habitats and species. Cyprus has not yet prepared a comprehensive Biodiversity Action Plan, but has related national policies, such as the Sustainable Development Strategy, Forest Policy, Agriculture Policy, Water Policy, Fisheries Policy, which help to safeguard the island's biodiversity. However, the current trend of biodiversity is showing improvements, largely a result of coordinated efforts taken by government departments and non-governmental organizations, mainly regarding the establishment of the Natura 2000 network. Poultry, aquaculture and agriculture (olives, fruits, grapes) are reported activities. The Zivania Festival that takes place in the picturesque villages of Alona and Pelendri aims at offering the opportunity to taste zivania and other delicacies. Several other festivals are reported, related to typical harvests. The Rose festival (Fig. 4) is organized yearly at Agros and visitors have the chance to visit the local workshops and attend the distillation of roses. Folk dances, music performances and showcase of traditional products and crafts are other activities. An interesting festival is the "Tsiattista poetic dueling", where the lively, impromptu oral poetry, known as Tsiattista, is performed to the accompaniment of violin or lute in 'jousts' in which one poet-singer attempts to outdo another with clever verses made up of rhyming couplets.

Tourism and cultural assets, as well as information to visitors are available from the site of the **Deputy Ministry of Tourism** available at: <https://www.visitcyprus.com/index.php/en/>.



Figure 4. Harvesting Roses at Agros, Cyprus; source: Cyprus Tourism Organization Archive, Photographer Michalis Georgiades

Greece is a party of the Convention on Biological Diversity since 1994, Cartagena protocol since 2004, is a non-party of Nagoya protocol, a non-party of Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol, is a party of Ramsar Convention since 1975, and member of GGN. Concerning monuments, cultural sites, and intangible heritage the country has sites and intangible heritage elements recognized as World Heritage, by UNESCO. Land cover in Greece has been relatively stable since the last notable expansion of irrigated agricultural land and the establishment of animal farms in lowlands, which took place mostly during the 1980s. An increasing rate of urbanization in several coastal areas, and an extension of transport networks in the whole of the territory, peaked during the 1990s and continued up to 2000. Within 40 years (1925-1965), approximately 67% of the surface area of Greek wetlands was drained, due to demand for housing and agricultural land, resulting mainly in the loss of marshes and a few lakes and rivers. Greece is home to 85 habitat types of European importance and hosts many species of European importance. The conservation status of these species and habitat types was assessed in 2007 for the period 2000-2006, however a mixed picture was revealed, including several knowledge gaps, which prevented assessment of several habitat types and species. The Greece's red data book for plants (2009 edition) includes 258 species of plants as threatened and two as considered extinct and includes 468 species (171 vertebrates and 297 invertebrates) of animals as threatened. Important protected species, such as the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) and the Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), have been the focus of action plans and LIFE-Nature projects which have achieved good outcomes. Studies on genetic erosion during the last part of the 20th century have shown intense and rapid trends in cultivated cereals, vegetable crops, tree crops and grapevines. Domesticated animal breeds have also been lost at an alarming speed, with very few remaining in recent years. A National Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity do exist, but the Implementation of the new "Green Growth" Strategy requires close cooperation among all relevant ministry and government agencies as well

the engagement of the private sector and social stakeholders. The Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change ensures the implementation of the protocol and the revision of the action plan.

In Crete, the participant region in the MD.net project, several festivals are reported, all related to crops, from carob to bread (e.g. "Efazimo" Bread festival), e.g. Shepherd & Cheese festival, consisting on milking and cheese making presentation (Fig. 5), Thrapsano pottery festival, sardine festival and "Tsikoudia" - Raki Festival (or "Kazanemata"), consisting on the presentation of a typical Cretan spirit drink.



Figure 5. The sequential phases of cheese making in Crete, Greece. Source: Region of Crete

Information to visitors is available from the site of the **Region of Crete** available at: <https://www.incrediblecrete.gr/>.

Italy is a party of the Convention on Biological Diversity since 1994, of Cartagena protocol since 2004, is a non-party of Nagoya protocol, is a party of Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol since 2019, is a party of Ramsar Convention since 1977, and member of GGN. Concerning monuments, cultural sites, and intangible heritage the country has sites and intangible heritage elements recognized as World Heritage, by UNESCO. Italy is extremely rich in biodiversity; it has the highest number and density of both animal and plant species within the European Union, as well as a high rate of endemism. This rich biodiversity is in large part due to its range of biogeographic regions, which are the Alpine region, the Continental region and the Mediterranean region, providing differences in climate, topography and geology.

Italy is estimated to include over 58,000 faunal species, with 1,268 (2%) species of vertebrates, 1,812 (3%) species of protozoans, with the remaining 95% comprised of invertebrates. Recent studies on certain groups of insects suggest that the number of animal species, that are a part of the Italian fauna, should be increased by at least 15%, bringing the number of species reported in Italy to more than 65,000. There are over 6,700 vascular plant species, 1,156 recorded species of bryophytes, and around 20,000 known fungi species, including 2,328 taxa of lichen. Notably, at least 20 new species are published in Italy every year. The country has a high incidence of endemic species, with around 30% of animal species and 15% of vascular plants species being endemic. Sicily and Sardinia are particularly important in this respect (their indigenous flora accounts for 11% of all Italian flora, of which 15.26% are endemic).

An IUCN red list national program/initiative was launched in recent years on Italy's animal and plant species. A National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS) aims to merge and integrate biodiversity

conservation targets and sustainable use of natural resources within sectoral policies. The NBS is structured around 3 key issues (biodiversity and ecosystem services, biodiversity and climate change, biodiversity and economic policies). At a national level, the strategic management and conservation of Natural Reserves and Parks is under the dependence of the ministries in charge of the environment and agriculture. At the operational level, the coordination is from the Italian Federation of Parks and Nature Reserves accessed at parks.it, where links to regional organizations (at the level of provinces and regions) can be retrieved.

Campania region reports important productions in the wine chain, olive oil chain, pasta chain, and dairy chain, notably buffalo mozzarella DOP. As with other regions, many festivals celebrate the harvests, and may help urban peoples in synchronizing with the pace of nature. The “Palio of wheat” is an example of a traditional festival where the values of the peasant culture are celebrated. The many religious celebrations with associated communal festivals cannot be forgotten, as they are a constant common cultural element in Southern Europe. The feast of killing the pig is another common element to many southern European villages.

Emilia-Romagna region reports the production of fruit and vegetables, meat and seafood and dairy, notably Parmigiano Reggiano DOP cheese. The GUSTI.A.MO18 is a 3-day event dedicated to excellent tastes from Modena: Traditional Balsamic Vinegar from Modena PDO (Fig. 6). Parmigiano-Reggiano PDO, Prosciutto from Modena PDO and Modena Lambrusco PDO wines.



Figure 6. Assessing and tasting balsamic vinegar in Emilia Romagna region, Italy. Source: Museo del balsamico tradizionale Emilia_Romagna

In respect to festivals, the Grape and Lambrusco Grasparossa di Castelvetro Festival is noteworthy by the fact it involves all town that enhances and champions the farming vocation of the Castelvetro area, promoting its wine and food excellences, history and characteristics of its main product, with a rich variety of examples.

Similarly, in **Sicily**, the festivals are mainly of religious nature or celebrations of the harvests. The couscous fest is noteworthy for its ancient cultural roots. It is celebrated at San Vito lo Capo, a village of architecture and Arab traditions celebrates in September the week of its traditional dish: the cous cous. A unique opportunity to savour all specialties based on cous cous.

Tourism assets and Information to visitors are within the competences of the Agenzia Nazionale di Turismo. Information to visitors about Campania region is available at:

<http://www.italia.it/en/discover-italy/campania.html>; for Emilia-Romagna, information to visitors is available at:

http://www.italia.it/en/discover-italy/emilia-romagna.html?no_cache=1&h=Emilia-Romagna

and for Sicily information to visitors is available at:

http://www.italia.it/en/discover-italy/sicily.html?no_cache=1&h=Sicily

Portugal is a party of the Convention on Biological Diversity since 1994, Cartagena protocol since 2004, Nagoya protocol since 2017, is a non-party of Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol, is a party of Ramsar Convention since 1981, and member of GGN. Concerning monuments, cultural sites, and intangible heritage the country has sites and intangible heritage elements recognized as World Heritage, by UNESCO. Portugal possesses a very diverse natural heritage thanks to its geographical location and geophysical conditions. The islands are unique and of undeniable importance, but on the mainland, the dune habitats, the rocky cliffs, the marshes in estuary and lagoon systems are all very important as well, notably at **Algarve**, the participating region in the MD.net project. The importance of the estuaries can also be seen from the numerous bird populations, which shelter there and use them as migratory stations, wintering areas or breeding grounds. About 3,600 species of plants occur in Portugal. There are 69 taxa of terrestrial mammals, a total of 313 bird species, of which around 35% are threatened in some ways, and 17 amphibian and 34 reptile species that occur in Portugal. Some of the main threats to the biological diversity of Portugal include alteration or destruction of habitats; pollution; overexploitation; invasive alien species; urbanization and fires. Portugal has the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan based in 10 measures that form the basis of the action plan. The implementation of the protocol and inventorying and monitoring actions oversee the **Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas / Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests**. Turismo de Portugal is the competent authority in respect to tourism, and **Direção Regional de Cultura do Algarve** is responsible for the cultural assets of the Algarve region⁴⁸.

In respect to crops, and in addition to the common categories, Algarve has been revamped carob products, aromatic herbs and unrefined traditional salt, as well as its renowned arbutus berry brandy (PGI) and crafts (Fig. 7). In what concern festivities, they are dominated by the harvests and the catholic religious celebrations (namely Easter).

The Mediterranean Diet Fair is noteworthy for being a relatively recent yet successful event taking place yearly, early September at Tavira, encompassing showcase of MD foods and crafts, music, conferences, workshops etc. Also noteworthy is the habit of singing Fado (UNESCO's Intangible heritage) in the streets and restaurants, namely by amateur musicians. Information to visitors are available at: <https://www.visitalgarve.pt/pt/Default.aspx>.

48 Regional Directorate of Culture, Algarve: www.culturalg.pt



Figure 7. Traditional and contemporary artisanal crafts at Algarve, Portugal. Source: casamodesta photographer.

Under current legislation Cultural Intangible Heritage in Portugal covers the following areas:

- a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vector of intangible cultural heritage;
- b) Artistic expressions and performative manifestations;
- c) Social practices, rituals and festive events;
- d) Knowledge and practices related to nature and the universe;
- e) Competences in traditional processes and techniques.

The “National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage” implies that the initiative for the legal protection of an event immaterial cultural heritage must result from the active involvement of the communities, groups and individuals who constitute themselves as their “owners”.

Slovenia is a party of the Convention on Biological Diversity since 1996, Cartagena protocol since 2003, is a non-party of Nagoya protocol, is a party of Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol since 2018, is a party of Ramsar Convention since 1991, and member of GGN. Concerning monuments, cultural sites, and intangible heritage the country has sites and intangible heritage elements recognized as World Heritage, by UNESCO. Slovenia is situated in the southern part of central Europe where four biogeographic regions meet (the Alps, Pannonian Plain, Dinaric Mountains and the Mediterranean), forming a large variety of eco-regions and habitats. Forest cover about 60% of Slovenia’s surface. To date, around 15,000 animal species, 6,000 plant species and 5,000 species of fungi have been identified and documented. The degree of endemism is considerably high. Among vascular plants, there are 40 endemic taxa, including 22 narrow endemics with predominant distribution in Slovenia. There are 850 endemic taxa of fauna, including cave animals above all. Approximately 10% of ferns and higher plants and 56% of vertebrates are endangered, including 64% of the 81 species of indigenous freshwater fish. Threatened species of vertebrates comprise 36% of mammals, 49% of birds, 73% of amphibians and 48% of fish and hagfish. At least nine breeds of indigenous domestic animals have been classified as endangered. In situ conservation is restricted to small areas in Slovenia, with most biodiversity conservation goals achieved through sustainable land use, such as low-intensity farming. Besides agriculture, forestry is the principal land use activity affecting biodiversity that has significant economic importance. EU environmental legislation, such as the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, play a considerable part in supporting national implementation of the convention in Slovenia, as well as in providing monitoring mechanisms for species conservation.

Three ministries are involved in the development, protection and management of landscapes: **Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food.**

Meat, dairy and herbs are among the important agricultural products. An effort to revive events of the past is notorious and many festivals related to crops and traditional products have been reported. Saltpans Feast is particularly relevant for recreating the everyday life of the past. Visitors are able to learn many interesting and mysterious traditions of salt production, which is over 700 years old and has been a very important source of income for the whole town. The festival takes place on Tartini Square in Piran. Information to visitors can be found in the Portal of the Slovenian Tourist Board, available at: <https://www.slovenia.info/en>.

Spain is a party of the Convention on Biological Diversity since 1994, Cartagena protocol since 2003, Nagoya protocol since 2014, Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur supplementary protocol since 2018, Ramsar Convention since 1982, and member of GGN. Concerning monuments, cultural sites, and intangible heritage the country has sites and intangible heritage elements recognized as World Heritage, by UNESCO. Spain is one of the 25 biodiversity hotspots in the world and considered one of the most biodiverse countries in the European Union. Spanish coastal waters possess a high level of biological diversity, with the southern Iberian Peninsula being especially important in terms of biodiversity and endemic species. The country's geographical diversity is extremely varied, consisting of landscapes and ecosystems that include intertidal zones, beaches, cliffs, dune systems, salt marshes, saline steppes, etc. Spain also covers four biogeographical regions (Mediterranean, Atlantic, Alpine, Macaronesian) comprised of habitats that have favoured the development of a great assortment of vegetation types, to which a variety of fauna communities is associated. The country is also rich in freshwater habitats. Although generally small, wetlands are however very important centres of biological diversity. Forests and wooded zones cover 32% of the country's territory Spain has the highest number of vascular plants (8,000-9,000 species) among European and Mediterranean countries. Its rate of endemism is between 20-25%. In the last decades, Spanish biodiversity has suffered a significant decrease, with between 40-60% of assessed species included in some threatened category. However, not all taxonomic groups have the same threat level: for vascular plants, only 15% of the species are endangered; for vertebrates, the figure increases to 31%; continental fishes and amphibians have the highest percentage of endangered species (55% and 31% respectively). A Strategic Plan on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity is under implementation since 2011 and significant progress has been made about furthering legislative and administrative developments in response to the objectives set out by the Law on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity 42/2007. The State Council on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity is the public participatory body for nature conservation and biodiversity. The **Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment** is responsible for monitoring international initiatives on environment and biodiversity, as well as the adoption of basic legislation and environmental policies with a territorial dimension (e.g. water, coasts, biodiversity). A Spanish Biodiversity Monitoring System for assessing trends of biodiversity at the state level is being developed. The Environmental Sector Conference exists as the high-level political body which links, and promotes cooperation among, the environmental departments of the central and autonomous governments.

Andalusia reports the production of wine, olive and shepherding (Fig. 8) among main activities. In respect to the many existing and reported festivities and celebrations, the most prominent are,

perhaps, the Flamenco is UNESCO's Intangible Heritage, the Easter celebrations "Semana Santa", and Virgen de Rocio Pilgrimage.



Figure 8. Shepherding in Spain is common to the various regions. In this example the breed is "El Serradet de Barneres", which milk is used to produce a cheese with the same name in Catalonia; source: Prodeca, Catalonia, Spain.

In **Catalonia**, since in 1992, Traditional Gastronomic Meetings are supported by the Palafrugell Municipal Tourist Board, the Garoinada, attesting to the good gastronomic level of the. In addition to the many traditional and renewed celebrations related to harvests, one custom excel in originality: "Los "Castell", human towers erected generally for the celebration of annual festivals in cities and towns of Catalonia by amateur groups, the "castellers", which form human towers of six to ten floors. The performance is accompanied by a band that plays various popular melodies, with a dulzaina called "gralla", accompanying the rhythm of construction of the tower as it rises. Registered in the Representative List of the Intangible Heritage of UNESCO in 2010. Information to visitors can be found in Spain's Official Tourism website, available at: <https://www.spain.info/en/>, and respectively for each of the regions: <https://www.andalucia.org/en/> and <http://act.gencat.cat/?lang=en>.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Mediterranean Basin is a top touristic destination, for the landscapes, for the history and for the food, all highly appreciated by visitors from abroad. Tourism has been crucial to the regional economies but also blamed for many problems, from gentrification to the abandonment of traditional sustainable activities. The same way, dietary patterns, agriculture and food production must change following more sustainable paths, so does tourism.

It is noteworthy than in the European framework and because tourist destinations are increasingly called upon to measure their performance in relation to sustainability, the Commission has developed a European Tourism Indicators System as a simple method for measuring sustainability performance. Such 'European Tourism Indicators System' (ETIS) include: a management tool, a monitoring system, and an information tool, which can be downloaded from: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators_en

It has been realized that natural reserves can and should coexist with human activities, and certain tourism niches can be very beneficial in raising awareness to the environment, for example. Tourism can also be a catalyst to change and the fuel to develop other sectors of local activities in relation to Mediterranean Diet, as traditional foods, aromatic herbs, crafts or festivities and celebrations.

To conclude, the communities share common features but each one has peculiarities, and thus creating and strengthening the linkages between the Mediterranean Communities will enhance the showcasing the common Mediterranean Cultural Heritage, with the richness of the subtle differences.