



MEDITERRANEAN SOS Network

3^A Mamai str., 10440, Athens

Tel./Fax: 210-8228795

E-mail: info@medsos.gr

Website: www.medsos.gr

The MEDITERRANEAN SOS Network is a non profitable-non governmental environmental organisation based in Greece. Since November, our organisation has taken initiative to promote a **Euro-Mediterranean petition campaign, in order to empower the voice of the Civil Society for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against offshore oil and gas drilling**. So far the petition, which is hosted in the online [eMPower platform](#) has been signed by **more than 1.300** people and organisations. Instead of using the response form on 'Improving offshore safety, health and environment in Europe', we have chosen to send you the common view of thousands of citizens. We hope that you will seriously consider our request.

It is widely known, that current onshore and coastal fossil fuel reserves can no longer meet the growing energy demands of the modern world, who insists on depending on conventional energy sources, and mainly on oil. This is the reason why there has been a shift in the oil industry towards the exploitation of more 'complex' environments, such as deepwater environments, where nevertheless drilling activities pose serious risks. The special characteristics of the deep sea pose the need for more adequate, than the existing (as proven by the recent oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico), technologies in order to ensure the safety of drilling operations. **There is a clear trend towards turning the Mediterranean Sea into the new 'black gold' hunting paradise, which portends a bleak future for the area, thus making the need for brave decisions and effective measures more urgent than ever.**

The exploitation of offshore oil and natural gas resources is not something new for the Mediterranean basin. Nonetheless, there is a recent rise in the investors' interest; new states express their desire to proceed with the exploration and exploitation of their natural resources, while those who are already active in this field are willing to continue/expand their drilling activities. The plans concerning deepwater drilling can only intensify our concerns.

The Mediterranean is a semi-enclosed sea with a limited rate of water renewal, thus particularly susceptible to pollution. **Moreover, the intense anthropogenic pressures** (i.e. habitat fragmentation/degradation, overexploitation of natural resources, pollution, introduction of alien invasive species, climate change) **have resulted to serious environmental problems that require an immediate response**. Unfortunately, instead of giving priority to these critical and widely known matters, which have a significant impact in the Mediterranean life, the choices made can only have disastrous effects on the marine environment and human well-being.

The environmental risks that go hand in hand with oil and natural gas production do not only come as a result of an accident in the well area. Pollution incidents can occur during the whole supply chain (exploration, extraction, processing, transportation, storage, distribution) and can be caused either due to illegal dumping and accidents or due to normal operations. As a consequence, the marine environment receives a wide range of pollutants, such as marine debris, oil products, methane, heavy metals, radioactive substances etc, which lead to its degradation and pose threats for human health and social-economic prosperity; two parameters closely related to marine and coastal activities.

The various adverse impacts of exploration and drilling activities, the finite character of fossil fuels and the need for integrated planning for a gradual decommission of offshore platforms, as well as the benefits that rise from renewable energy sources (security of energy supply, combat climate change, job opportunities), **can no longer be neglected in the name of easy profit and domination aspirations.**



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For all these reasons, we hereby demand the following:

We call on the Mediterranean national governments and the European Union not to undermine the future of the Mediterranean region and its people and to proceed with a moratorium on new offshore drilling operations and an integrated planning for the gradual decommission of the existing offshore oil platforms, while at the same time maintaining the safeguards that will ensure their safe operation, and for the promotion of transnational cooperation and the enhancement of the emergency response in case of an accident.

We call on the United Nations Environmental Programme/ Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) to take initiative regarding the proper implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols.