

CIESM Congress Session : Bioaccumulation and trophic transfer / benthic

Moderator : Alessia Rodriguez y Baena, IAEA

Moderator's Synthesis

The session was attended by about fifty multidisciplinary scientists from across the Mediterranean and Black Seas who engaged in lively discussions. While the potential of benthic organisms to provide insights into the environmental health status of our seas is evident, the discussion highlighted two main areas requiring further investigation and concerted efforts in order for the bio-indicator value of target species to be ascertained and optimised.

Combining field studies with experimental approaches, such as radio- and bio-assays, is a powerful tool to assess the effects of a given contaminant, or mixture of contaminants in the environment on bio-indicator species;. This remains, however, an uncommon practice in the region. Similarly, while the use of reliable bio-indicator data to monitor contamination trends and to assess the effectiveness of mitigation measures can much benefit sound, science-based decision making, established channels of communication between scientists and relevant governmental actors remain sparse.

By facilitating dialogue among field- and lab-specialists, and between the scientific community and policy makers, CIESM can play a key role for species such as the red mullet *Mullus barbatus* and the mussel *Mytilus galloprovincialis* to become stronger allies in our concerted efforts to preserve the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

