



Protection and sustainable exploitation of genetic resources in the High Seas

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Deep-sea marine genetic resources: emergence of a new issue in the international debate on high seas management

- Recent discovery of wealth of deep sea ecosystems has put the issue of marine genetic resources in the foreground
- Lack of international legal regime governing those resources

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Deep sea marine genetic resources and the protection of marine environment beyond national jurisdiction

- The protection of the marine environment in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) is currently based on a scattered and sector-based approach
- The EC proposal for an integrated approach to the issue via an implementing agreement to UNCLOS



Which regime for the exploitation of marine genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction?

- Exploitation of marine genetic resources is not adequately covered by current international instruments (notably UNCLOS or CBD)
- Various positions on the international arena for a possible future regime (from assimilation to mineral resources to statu-quo)



The EC perspective on the debate

- Clarify the link between protection of marine environment in ABNJ and the question of marine genetic resources
- Develop a sound understanding of the issue at stake (notably current and expected development of exploitation of deep-sea genetic resources and associated risks) before entering on discussions on possible new regime

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What comes next?

- Consultation underway within the EC (including with research and industry) on the question as part of reflections on a future EC maritime policy
- International debate within the UN on both the protection of marine environment in ABNJ and the specific issue of genetic resources