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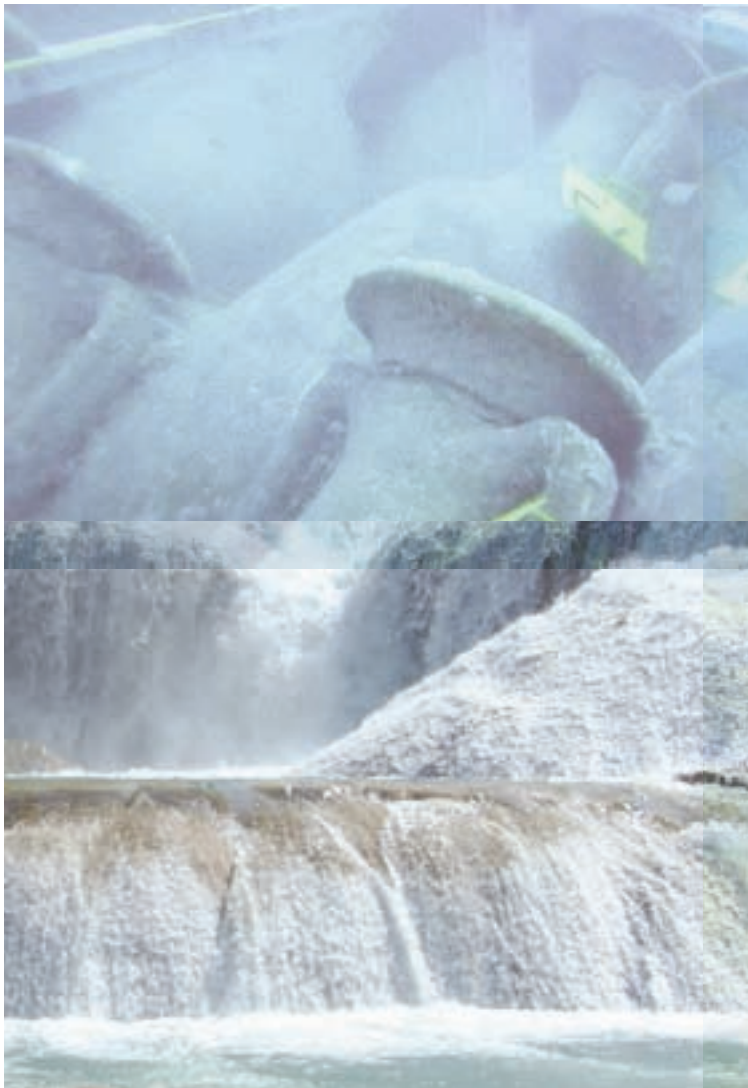
ABSTRACTS VOLUME

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AIOSS and the Italian Route for the Professional Scientific Diving Recognition within the EU Framework

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Abstract

Since 50's the scientific diving community has endeavoured to promote safe, effective diving through self-imposed diver training and education programs. In the last few decades in some countries the Government exempted scientific diving from commercial diving regulations, recognizing its peculiarity and specific requirements.

In Italy there is a long tradition concerning scientific diving and in May 1997 an European Scientific Diving Course was held at Elba Island (Italy) giving one of the first impulse to the strategy of the European Scientific Diving Committee (ESDC) and suggesting a draft standards for European Scientific Divers and Advanced European Scientific Divers formalized during the workshop of the ESDC held at *Banyules sur mer* (France) the 24th of October 2000.

The ESDC was set up as interim commission based on a meeting of experts in scientific diving and underwater sciences held in *Berlin* (Germany) at the 25th-26th June 2007. Thereafter, the official ESDC was established during the 1st International Symposium on Occupational Scientific Diving in *Bremerhaven* (Germany) 15th-16th October 2007. In the year 2009, ESDC was adopted as a panel to European Science Foundation Marine Board, and was named European Scientific Diving Panel (ESDP). The main objectives of the ESDP are:

- To encourage international mobility in the European scientific diving community through the implementation of a practical support framework
- To promote safety in scientific diving across Europe
- To advance underwater scientific excellence in Europe

Among the European countries, Belgium, U.K., Finland, France, Germany, and Sweden have specific national regulation concerning scientific dive and are full member of the ESDP. Italy has become a full member of the ESDP in 2010 by establishing a national scientific diving steering body. Although the lack of national regulation concerning scientific dive, AIOSS (formally Associazione Italiana Operatori Scientifici Subacquei, <http://www.aioiss.info/>) represents the scientific diving community through a number of major institutions of the country. AIOSS is a 'no profit' professional association. Among the individual members there are technicians, researchers and academics from universities, research institutes and public agencies, operators and managers of Marine Protected Areas, Nature Reserves, Marine Archaeological Sites and Aquariums, employees of private studies of environmental consulting, engineers and doctors. AIOSS liaise with the Working Committee of the Chamber of Deputies and other associations to promote legal recognition of scientific diving.

We define Scientific Diving as: "*diving performed solely as part of scientific research, conservation and protection as well as training, whose only goal is to achieve scientific, educational, informational, and safeguarding the environmental heritage and / or historical and archaeological through such sampling, measurements, surveys, experimentation, exploration, stratigraphic excavations, surveys and recoveries. Scientific Divers are those in possession of appropriate qualification stating the specific training required by the operating environment and perform Scientific Diving, including students in their scientific diver training.*"