

## **Abstract**

The seabed has long been an unexplored area and we still do not have all the information about its environment. In the second half of the 20th century, the development of technology allowed a better exploration of the seabed. There have been discovered seamounts, hydrothermal vents and other formations. Around these formations there are rich ecosystems that are currently threatened by mining, deep-sea fishing, bioprospecting and deep-sea tourism. Most of the seabed is beyond the area of national jurisdiction and currently there is no legal convention aimed at protecting this area.

This thesis explains the concept of biodiversity, its significance and threats. The main legal instruments for the protection of the seabed biodiversity are analysed. These include the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the so-called Constitution for the oceans. At the time of the adoption of this Convention, activities on the seabed were still being developed. The UNCLOS Convention therefore regulates only the activities of exploration for and exploitation of the resources on the seabed beyond national jurisdiction, in the Area. The importance of the UNCLOS Convention for the protection of the marine environment was therefore limited. Due to the activities of The International Seabed Authority and The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the protection of marine biodiversity has improved. The decisions and recommendations of The International Seabed Authority follow modern principles of environmental law, such as the precautionary principle and the ecosystem approach.

Another important international treaty is the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. This Convention does not deal with the protection of the seabed and its provisions are soft. Other conventions that may contribute to the conservation and preservation of seabed biodiversity are the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora or the Fish Stocks Agreement.

The regime of preservation and protection of seabed biodiversity is currently inadequate. Discussions are taking place on the future legal instrument. For this purpose, the United Nations Preparatory Committee was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. As the report of the Preparatory Commission shows, there is still no consensus on some fundamental issues. The conclusion of this thesis is an evaluation of the

current legal regime and of the proposal for a future legal instrument, which emerges from the report of the UN Preparatory Committee.