

MEDITERRANEAN COAST DAY
Ayia Napa, Cyprus, 25 September 2019

REPORT



Split, October 2019

REPORT on the MEDITERRANEAN COAST DAY Ayia Napa, Cyprus, 25 September 2019

On September 25, the town of Ayia Napa, Cyprus, or more precisely the Thalassa Municipal Museum, hosted the central regional celebration of the Mediterranean Coast Day 2019 which was attended by 60-odd participants. This celebration was organised by PAP/RAC, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment and specifically the Department of Environment. This year's event was an opportunity to promote the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Cyprus 2018-2030 and to raise awareness of the necessity to be more strategic in the use of the precious national territories that are coastal zones. Thus, the topic of the event was "LET'S BE STRATEGIC".

The participants in the morning conference were greeted by Ms Natasa Pilides, the Shipping Deputy Minister to the President. Being an island state, Cyprus is called upon to move forward with the sustainable management of coastal resources, aware that coastal zones are considered the most productive areas of a state, offering a wide variety of habitats and ecosystems, and attracting significant economic activity which puts considerable pressures through increased population concentration and over-exploitation of natural resources. It leads to loss of biodiversity, destruction of natural habitats, degradation of water quality and marine environment, depletion of water resources, acceleration of erosion, accumulation of pollution from various sources, increased risk of climate change, as well as conflicts between different land uses. The welfare of the populations and the economic viability of the activities in coastal areas depend on their environmental status, so it is necessary to implement Integrated Coastal Zone Management. ICZM and the Maritime Spatial Planning are complementary tools of the Integrated Maritime Policy, the environmental pillar of which is the Framework Directive on Maritime Strategy. The National Strategy for Integrated Maritime Policy, implemented by the Deputy Ministry of Shipping, was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2014 and aims at the sustainable development of the Cypriot seas. The Strategy aims at coordination, cooperation and collegiality, developing common goals and appropriate cross-cutting tools. At the same time, an Action Plan with 160 actions based on the five thematic priorities of the Strategy has been prepared and takes into account the economic, social, cultural and environmental contexts of Cyprus and the Mediterranean. Ms Pilides concluded with the wish that the Coast Day will provide an opportunity to further the awareness that the Mediterranean coastal zones are a common natural and cultural heritage of its countries, which must be protected and used wisely for the benefit of today's and future generations.

Mr. Costas Hadjipanayiotou, Director of the Department of Environment, informed that, as part of a strategic planning of coastal zones, their natural and cultural heritage is promoted, the anthropogenic pressures are recognized and degraded, biodiversity loss is reduced, the risks posed by climate change are assessed, and particular geo-morphological features and measures are introduced to reduce their negative impacts by various pressures. As a Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention, Cyprus implements the resulting obligations. Although Cyprus has not signed and ratified the ICZM Protocol, it is implementing some of its provisions. To enable the ratification of the Protocol, a Commission was set up to examine its technical aspects in relation to the national laws in force. He reminded the audience that the first national strategy was developed with the CAMP-Cyprus, in cooperation with the PAP/RAC in the period 2006-2008. Following this Strategy, a second strategy, namely the National Strategy and Action Plan for Integrated Coastal Zone Management for the period 2018-2030 is being prepared. The two Strategies aim at adopting integrated coastal zone planning and management, in conjunction with achieving better coordination of all processes and competent bodies or policy-making mechanisms that have an impact on the coastal zone, to ensure their sustainable development through integration. The second strategy, presented at the current event, sets goals and reasoned priorities, identifies coastal ecosystems that need to be managed, lists the measures to be taken, analyzes the institutions as well as legal and available financial and other instruments, and identifies appropriate indicators of progress and effectiveness. With the approval of the Strategy by the Council of Ministers, the implementation of the

Action Plan will begin in 2020. Finally, he mentioned the start of Cyprus' cooperation with Israel, as a regional coordinated action, with a view to the establishment of a joint programme for integrated coastal zone management of the two Mediterranean states, the so-called Transboundary CAMP Programme. He concluded by inviting the relevant actors to enhance efforts to achieve cohesion in the integrated management of the coastal zones of Cyprus and other Mediterranean States, and to ensure that the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols are implemented.

Mr. Yiannis Karousos, Mayor of Ayia Napa, the host-city of the event, welcomed the participants stressing that in that municipality lies one of the 50 best beaches in the world, the Nissi Beach. Also, the Ayia Napa coastline is considered the finest in Cyprus with regard to sandy beaches. All along these beaches facilities for all sea sports and sun beds are provided. All the beaches of Ayia Napa have been awarded with the EU blue flag for their level of cleanliness and the brilliant facilities offered in line with the uniform standards set by the European Union. In the near future the municipality will designate "Green Beaches" under certain criteria that cover sand and water quality, green facilities, noise pollution, local food and drinks, sustainable transport, eco beach furnishings, vegetation and planting, public environmental information/education, and green signage, etc. He concluded by wishing that the event will aware the public on the importance of sustainable coastal management.

Mr. Gaetano Leone, the UNEP/MAP Coordinator, observed that the Coast Day has become a tradition for many years now around the Mediterranean. A tradition that helps us reflect on the state of the coastal areas of the Mediterranean and think together what measures can be taken to reduce pressures being exerted on them. Mr. Leone stressed the importance of the ICZM Protocol as an instrument for sustainable coastal development, and for the implementation of national integrated coastal and marine management policies. The ICZM Protocol of the Barcelona Convention constitutes the umbrella under which tools such as the Ecosystem-Approach, climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction and Marine Spatial Planning can be applied in harmony to protect the coastal and marine ecosystems at national level and across the entire Mediterranean basin. "What is good is that there is a real commitment on the part of governments, a commitment that resulted more than forty years ago in developing and signing the Barcelona Convention that brought us the ICZM Protocol. Some aspects of our work are not media-friendly. You probably will not read in the newspapers about the Common Regional Framework, about ICZM or about the ratification of the ICZM Protocol and yet these are real things that provide a framework for action and a legally binding commitment for governments that allow us to move forward. And we move forward with all of our partners, with all of you", remarked the UNEP/MAP Coordinator. On climate change adaptation, which is a key aspect of the ICZM Protocol, the UNEP/MAP Coordinator noted that Coast Day 2019 coincided with the release of the *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* by the IPCC. He recalled that the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report notes that the Mediterranean Region is "highly vulnerable to climate change" and that it will suffer multiple stresses and systemic failures due to climate change.

Željka Škaričić, PAP/RAC Director, reminded the audience that for the last twelve years the 25th of September has been a day when we meet to engage and to invigorate the dialogue on the theme of sustainability, to convey the message to decision-makers, professionals and civil society that our Mediterranean is unique and precious, and that it is time to radically change our modes of living, managing and consuming its resources. She was happy that this year's celebration was taking place in Cyprus, the country that is in the process of preparing a national strategy for a more coordinated and more efficient planning and management of the use of its coastal and marine resources. Large public deserves to learn about it, other countries too, to draw inspiration from it. She added that the responsibility for strategic thinking was on governments but in the Barcelona Convention it is strongly believed that the role of the civil society is crucial if negative trends are to be reversed. Strategies are done for people and therefore should be done in close cooperation and with active contribution of the people concerned. Strategies oblige governments, but also the civil society. The civil society has the obligation to demand action, but must also be responsible for its own acting and behaving, and this in everyday life too. The awareness-raising campaigns such as the Mediterranean Coast Day are important because a well-informed, highly

aware and ready-to-act society is the best guarantee that things can change for better. Ms Škaričić concluded by thanking the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment for hosting this year's edition of the Mediterranean Coast Day, and in particular the colleagues from the Department of Environment and all those who had worked on the organisation of this important communication event.

After the welcome addresses, the "Ambassador for the Coast" 2019 was nominated. This year it will be Ms Xenia I. Loizidou, civil/coastal engineer (PhD). For 30 years she has been a researcher, a European and international expert, a volunteer and an activist in the fields of coastal zone management, marine environment and dynamics, climate change, participatory decision-making for common natural resources and sustainable development strategies, policies and practices. She has worked in more than 50 countries, travelling the coasts and the seas of the world. She holds several offices and has received numerous international awards for her work on the protection of coastal and marine environment, such as the Iconic Woman Award by the Women Economic Forum in 2016. Her work is included in the U.S. State Department's '1000 Ocean Actions' initiative and she is highlighted in 20th anniversary report of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report GEM 2018/2019. She is the author/co-author of more than 200 published papers in Scientific Journals and International Conferences, of books (e.g. IPCC publication) and Technical Reports. Since 2015, she is the first Greek Cypriot coordinator of the Technical Committee for Gender Equality within the peace-building negotiations for Cyprus. Ms Loizidou said she was very honoured to accept the title of Ambassador for the Coast 2019 and would work hard to make the most of this honorary title, to advocate and spread the word: "Our coasts are our home. *Mare Nostrum* is in danger. Act!"

The key note speeches followed and the first one was given by Ms. Škaričić entitled "*ICZM and MSP within the Barcelona Convention*". She briefly introduced the legal framework of MAP with special focus on the ICZM Protocol and its principal provisions. Then she passed on to the Marine Spatial Planning as an important tool of ICZM. Ms Škaričić also informed the audience of the Common Regional Framework for ICZM, a policy document in preparation, intended, among others, to strengthen integration and cooperation, promote eco-system based management, introduce MSP for the marine part of the coastal zone, address natural risks including climate change. As means of implementing ICZM, she mentioned CAMP, MedOpen on-line training course on ICZM, and Coast Day as an awareness-raising campaign on the importance of the coastal zones and the risks they face. Her presentation is available [here](#).

Ms. Irene Constantinou presented *ICZM Policy in Cyprus*. She started by briefly presenting the situation of the Mediterranean coast regarding population density, ratio of natural and built-up areas and the relevant changes that occurred in the recent times. She then presented the situation in Cyprus and the pertaining planning system, focusing on the legislative framework for ICZM. With a brief reference to the ICZM Protocol that Cyprus has not yet signed but implements some of its provisions. One of those is the preparation of the National Strategy for ICZM that is expected to be adopted in the near future, as well as the signing of the ICZM Protocol. Her presentation is available [here](#).

Ms Athena Mourmouris presented in greater detail the National ICZM Strategy and Action Plan for Cyprus, prepared by the Consortium of ALA Planning Partnership and the Greek Biotope Wetland Centre for the Department of Environment. The work started in 2016 and the Strategy, covering the period 2018-2030, was completed and approved by the Department of Environment in 2018. Ms Mourmouris explained the current situation in Cyprus and the challenges facing the coast, and informed the participants on the process of the preparation of the document. She then introduced the main objectives of the whole work and the next steps to be taken in order to achieve the set objectives. Her presentation is available [here](#).

The next point of the agenda envisaged presentation of other countries' experience in preparing and implementing the National ICZM Strategies. First presentation was by the case of Croatia. Ms Snježana Dominković Alavanja of the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Croatia and Ms Vesna Marohnić Kuzmanović of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Building of Croatia made the presentation. They first presented briefly the situation and problems of the Croatian coast. Then they explained how Croatia

decided to combine the provisions of the ICZM Protocol and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in one document with the principal aim to achieve coordination and coherence of actions for sustainable marine and coastal protection and management. They then presented the document in greater detail. Their presentation is available [here](#).

The case of Lebanon was presented by Mr. Adel Yacoub of the Ministry of the Environment of Lebanon. After a brief introduction in which he presented the situation on the Lebanese coast including its values and pressures it faces, Mr. Yacoub presented the vision of his Ministry for the Lebanese coast and what they want to see there. One of the ways of achieving the desired goals was the preparation of the National ICZM Strategy, as required by the ICZM Protocol ratified by Lebanon in 2017. His presentation is available [here](#).

Promotion of ICZM is the main goal of MAP CAMP, and a new generation of transboundary projects is in preparation, two to be precise: between Israel and Cyprus, and between Albania and Italy. The first findings and proposals regarding the transboundary CAMP project for Cyprus and Israel were presented by Ms Ioanna Constantinidou of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of Cyprus and Ms Maayan Haim of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Israel. They first informed the audience of the CAMP projects implemented in their countries: in Israel in the period 1996-2000 and in Cyprus 2006-2008. They briefly described the projects, their results and follow-up. They also introduced the legal framework of their countries regarding the coastal zone planning and management. Finally, they explained how it came to the transboundary CAMP, what its goals were and what has been done so far. Their presentation is available [here](#).

The other transboundary CAMP in preparation is the one between Italy and Albania covering the area of Otranto Strait. The presentation was made by Ms Daniela Addis, consultant to the Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea Protection of Italy. She first presented the project area which includes the Puglia Region of Italy and the Vlora County of Albania. A feasibility study was prepared giving an overview of the main characteristics of the proposed CAMP area: geographical description, hydrography and geomorphology, history and cultural legacy, economic activities, and main environmental issues. She then focused on the relevant legal basis in the two countries, with special focus on ICZM. Finally Ms Addis presented the goals of the CAMP Otranto and the next steps to be taken. Her presentation is available [here](#).

The final presentation of the day was *SEAWatcher - The web and mobile geographical data application on Marine Litter* by Mr. Alessandro Lotti of INFO/RAC. INFO/RAC and the Department of Life Sciences of the University of Trieste undertake to implement the application that will be integrated in the InfoMAP system to collect mainly the geographical data on "MARINE LITTER" (IMAP Indicator EO10 and Descriptor 10 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive) through the development of a multilingual APP (English, French, Arabic and Italian) for the collection of geo-referenced information. Having presented the general concept of the APP, Mr. Lotti explained in detail how it is to be used. His presentation is available [here](#).

In the discussion that followed a number of questions were raised by the participants. Most of those regarded the experience of the countries that are implementing the ICZM Protocol and that have prepared the National Strategies, especially with regard to the national legislation and previous international agreements. An issue that was most prominent was the enforcement of the 100 m coastal setback. Additional explanations were also asked regarding the *SEAWatcher* presented by INFO/RAC.

In the afternoon a field trip was organised for the participants to the Environmental Information and Education Centre at Kavo-Gkreko natural forest park. After a very educational tour of the visitor centre, the participants could take a brief walk in the area. After that, the participants were taken for a boat trip from Ayia Napa harbour along the coastline where they were able to admire the beautiful coast from the sea, as well as a romantic sunset.