

## MEDITERRANEAN COAST DAY 2019 LET'S BE STRATEGIC!

THALASSA Ayia Napa Municipal Museum, 25 September 2019

*Ms Natasa Pilides, The Shipping Deputy Minister to the President*, welcomed the participants at the celebration of the Mediterranean Coast Day, organized by the Department of Environment of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment in cooperation with the PAP/RAC.

Cyprus, as an island state, 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. Today, over 200 million European citizens live near shores, stretching from the North Atlantic and Baltic to the Mediterranean and Black Sea. In Cyprus, the population in coastal areas reaches 50%.

Increased population concentration and over-exploitation of natural resources put enormous pressure on coastal ecosystems. It also 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. This tool, together with 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. The integrated approach will enable Cyprus to make sustainable use of the resources and opportunities of the sea, and will contribute to the sustainable development of maritime activities, the creation of new blue jobs and the improvement of the quality of the marine environment. A Ministerial Committee and a Steering Committee were set up to formulate and implement the Strategy. 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.

To implement the two tools of Integrated Maritime Policy, (IZCM and MSP) the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment and therefore the Department of Environment work closely with the Deputy Ministry of Shipping. This cooperation aims to coordinate policy implementation processes that have an impact on the maritime area and coastal zone of Cyprus, with a view to ensuring their sustainable development. Examples of co-ordinated cooperation between the Ministry and the Deputy Ministry are the setting up of a Joint Working Group in 2013, the integrated response to land-

sea interactions, actions for effective governance, and policy-making at local, regional and European level.

She concluded with the wish that the event will provide an opportunity to further our 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 and future generations.

*Mr Costas Hadjipanayiotou, Director of the Department of Environment, welcomed the participants at the event which focuses on the slogan "Let's be Strategic" in our planning and decisions, and in our governance of the Mediterranean coastal zones.*

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, particular geomorphological features and measures are introduced to reduce their negative impacts by various pressures.

Cyprus, at international level, as a party to the Barcelona Convention and Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol, implements its obligations. Accordingly, at European level, it implements the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe.

Although Cyprus has not signed and ratified the ICZM Protocol, it is implementing some of its provisions. To enable ratification of the Protocol, a Commission was set up to examine its technical aspects in relation to the national laws in force.

Historically, I report that in the period 2006-2008, the first national strategy was developed with the CAMP-Cyprus, in cooperation with the PAP/RAC of the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Program. Following this Strategy, a second strategy, namely the National Strategy and Action Plan for Integrated Coastal Zone Management for the period 2018-2030, was prepared and co-financed by the Operational Program for Fisheries and Sea 2014-2020.

The two Strategies aim at adopting integrated coastal zone design 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, which was presented at the event, sets goals, sets out reasoned priorities, identifies coastal ecosystems that need to be managed, lists the measures to be taken, analyzes the institutions and 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.

Throughout the preparation of the Second Strategy, consultation with stakeholders and the public has been ongoing and transparent. Specifically, workshops were held in Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, Paphos

and Famagusta in 2017 and 2018. At the same time, newsletters were prepared and relevant information was posted on the website of the Department of Environment. The MSP-ICZM Working Group, as well as other Ministries and Departments, provided expertise to approve the Strategy's deliverables.

Finally, he noted the start of Cyprus' cooperation with Israel, as a regional coordinated action, with a view to the establishment of a joint program for integrated coastal zone management of the two Mediterranean states, the so-called CAMP Transboundary Programme.

He concluded by mentioning the importance of enhancing our efforts to achieve cohesion in the integrated management of the coastal zones of Cyprus and the other Mediterranean States, and of ensuring that the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols are implemented.

*Mr Yiannis Karousos, Mayor of Ayia Napa host city*, he welcomed the participants at its municipality in which lies one of the 50 best beaches in the world, namely Nissi Beach. Specifically, the Ayia Napa coastline is considered the finest with regard to sandy beaches in Cyprus. All along these beaches facilities for all sea sports and sunbeds are provided. All beaches in 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 drink, 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.

#### ***Awarding the title "Ambassador for the Coast" for 2019***

During the event the Deputy Minister of Shipping awarded Ms Xenia Loizidou as the Ambassador for the Coast for 2019. He is a civil and coastal engineer. 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 our 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 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 and Technical Reports. Since 2015, she is the first Greek Cypriot coordinator of the Technical Committee for Gender Equality within the peacebuilding negotiations for Cyprus.

### ***Field Trip to the Environmental Information and Education Centre at Kavo-Gkreko***

During the event a field trip to the Environmental Information and Education Centre at Cape Gkreko were organised in order to provide participants with information on the landscape, the unique nature and the marine ecosystems of the area which is part of the protected areas network, the Natura 2000. It is a specialized exhibition and education centre aiming at formulating public awareness. The participants explored the multitude of intriguing nature trails lined with pine trees and a diverse botanical splendour and took spectacular views from the sea cliffs looking down to the beautiful Mediterranean Sea.

### ***Boat Trip from Ayia Napa harbour along the coastline***

The event ended with a boat trip along the east coast of Cyprus to sightseeing the famous sea caves, the dramatic peak of Cape Greco and the gorgeous Blue Lagoon at Konnos Bay.