

Report of activities

2021

January-December

Protecting our Natural Environment and
Cultural Heritage and promoting Sustainable
Development for a peaceful Mediterranean.

www.mio-ecsde.org

**Mediterranean Information Office for Environment,
Culture and Sustainable Development**



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1. Institutional Developments of MIO-ECSDE

1.1. Executive Bureau

The MIO-ECSDE Executive Bureau (EB) was structured as follows in 2021 up till the 26th AGM in December:

Chair:	Prof. Michael Scoullos (Elliniki Etairia)
Co-Chair:	Prof. Mohammed Ftouhi (Morocco)
Members:	Ms Anna Heslop (EEB)
	Dr. Emad Adly (RAED)
	Mr. Giorgos Sampson (Greece)
	Mr. Vjieran Pircic (Croatia)
	Ms Antonia Theodosiou (Cyprus)
	Mr. Jean-Valère Jeronimi (France) with Celine Labbe as alternate
	Ms Patrizia Bonelli and Ms. Romina Biccocchi (Italy)
	Mr. Ziyad Alawneh (Jordan)
	Mr. Fadi Hussein (Lebanon)
	Mr. Vincent Attard (Malta)
	Mr. Imad Attrash (Palestine)
	Mr. Mario Alves (Portugal)
	Mr. Milan Vogrin (Slovenia)
	Mr. Angel Huarez and Mr. Jeremie Fosse (Spain)
	Ms Suheir Raies (Syria)
	Mr. Habib Ben Boubaker (Tunisia)
	Ms Ayşegül Ilker (Turkey)

1.2. Membership issues

Two applications were received by the Secretariat requesting full membership:

- New Life Association (Turkey)
- Ecology Africa Foundation (South Africa)

Due to their very few years of operation and geographical location (not near the Mediterranean coast), they are both ineligible for full membership. During the Executive Bureau Meeting that took place on the 30th of September 2021, it was proposed that they are invited to resubmit in a couple of years as corresponding members.

1.3. MIO-ECSDE Secretariat

During 2021 the status of the Secretariat was as follows:

Ms Anastasia Roniotes continued working, full-time, with main fields of responsibility: administrative matters relevant to the Annual Work Programme and MIO-ECSDE governance (Executive Bureau and AGM), quality assurance, policy formulation and monitoring, representation, running of specific

projects, submission of project proposals, co-ordination of the edition of the Bulletin and newsletter Sustainable Mediterranean, etc.

Ms Bessie Mantzara worked full time at the MIO-ECSDE Secretariat, mainly responsible for financial/administrative matters and ad hoc contributions in projects, submissions, etc.

Ms Thomais Vlachogianni is handling many thematic and horizontal tasks in the Secretariat mainly on policy areas and project basis. She also oversees ICT issues, including the MIO-ECSDE web-sites, workshop and conference support, etc.

Ms Iro Alampei continued as full-time member of the staff supporting also the educational projects of MIO-ECSDE through the MEdIES Secretariat.

Ms Vicky Malotidi continued as full-time member of the staff supporting also the educational projects of MIO-ECSDE through the MEdIES Secretariat.

Ms Sevasti Vamvakopoulou also supported the MEdIES Secretariat.

Mr. Vassilis Psallidas continued as ESD advisor supporting mainly the educational projects of MIO-ECSDE through the MEdIES Secretariat.

Ms Eftychia Korkidi, as a new Junior Education Officer, supported mainly the educational projects of MIO-ECSDE through the MEdIES Secretariat.

Ms Danai Amplianiti assisted in specific projects and tasks as did Ms Alaa Abou Daher who also assists in Membership issues.

Ms Olga Papathanasopoulou provided the overall secretarial support.

Mr. George Paneris works as the in-house accountant while Mr. Kostas Drakopoulos continued as part-time Official Accountant of MIO-ECSDE.

Three new junior Officers were part of the Secretariat in 2021: Haris Paliogiannis (policy), Iosif Scoullos (policy) and Margaux Vlachou (project-based) while Ms Angela Klauschen was a part-time recruit on Gender and Youth mainstreaming.

Another new recruit was Alexandros Makrygiannis who was hired in June as Communications Officer. After a three-month trial period the collaboration was discontinued.

With the new recruits, the need for additional working space arose and MIO-ECSDE now rents an additional space very close to the Kyrristou 12 premises.

The Chairperson, Prof. M. Scoullos, is responsible for the supervision of the work and the management, the development, direction of policies and projects and a large part of the representations of the MIO-ECSDE organisation. The Secretariat is supported by various experts on an *ad hoc* basis (Ms Vanya Walker-Leigh for climate change issues was guest editor for the dedicated issue of the *Sustainable Development* journal). During 2021 a number of initiatives and representations of the organisation were carried out also by the Co-Chair Prof. Ftouhi, Executive Bureau Member Dr. Adly, as well as by other members of the Executive Bureau.

1.4. Quality management, financial auditing, accountability standards

A1. MIO-ECSDE underwent the annual audit for complying with the **ISO 9001:2015** standards in the design, development, management and implementation of international and European projects on environment and sustainable development. The review, which covers all relevant institutional and

operational issues, took place remotely on 29 June 2020 with positive results and no “remarks” or suggestions for further improvement of the MIO-ECSDE procedures in place were made.

The 2020 work programme covered by the LIFE Programme Operating Grant was also audited (positive) and was submitted with the final report to CINEA at the end of March. The overall audited financial report of MIO-ECSDE for 2020 was completed in August 2021 by PKF Euroauditing SA and approved by the MIO-ECSDE Treasurer (Vincent Attard) and the Executive Bureau.

The softone financial management software (including accounting component) is constantly adapted and updated to better address the daily functioning of the MIO-ECSDE Secretariat as well as for its hosted institute GWP-Med.

A2. As full member of “Accountable Now”, the MIO-ECSDE Secretariat submitted an interim report in March 2021 and in July received feedback from the independent review panel. Overall the findings were positive and encouraging with some constructive suggestions that the Secretariat will explore and address. A feedback call took place on the 2nd of September where some clarifications were provided. The final revised reactions of the independent review panel are available on-line (see <https://accountablenow.org/members/mio-ecsde/>). They are also available, along with MIO-ECSDE’s Code of Conduct, all of its Policies, annual Reports of Activities and Financial Statements, on the “[Our Accountability](#)” section of the webpage.

A3. MIO-ECSDE continued hosting GWP-MED based on an agreement with GWP (Stockholm) that ended in December 2020 and which was renewed. All involved parties agreed to continue this important for the region institutional relationship.

1.5. Reacting to COVID-19 impacts

The MIO-ECSDE Secretariat worked remotely at a staff presence percentage of 50% at its offices. All staff has been vaccinated, while hygiene protocols, 2-meter distancing of work stations and other provisions as dictated by the health authorities remain in place. Travel abroad or big meetings were not encouraged. Only a few missions of low risk took place. The MIO-ECSDE travel procedure was adapted by which any staff member who wishes to travel (either for work or for personal reasons) would have to take a direct flight even if more expensive (to minimize exposure to risk) and preferably work remotely for a week upon return.

All of the running projects adapted to accommodate alternatives to replace physical meetings requiring air travel, or activities that did not align with social distancing, while the Secretariat constantly assesses the global, regional and national state of play.

2. Continuation and enhancement of activities related to networking

2.1. Networking with the MIO-ECSDE Members and its wider NGO Network

2.1.1. Exchange and dissemination of information

The dissemination of information was facilitated by:

(i) The 'MIO-ECSDE e-News'

Three issues of the MIO-ECSDE e-News were prepared and sent out covering the highlights (English and French) to Member Organisations and the wider MIO-ECSDE network of contacts (see <http://mio-ecsde.org/news/mio-ecsde-e-news/>).

(ii) The 'Sustainable Mediterranean' journal

Issue No 78, dedicated to climate change, was a special issue in view of the UNFCCC COP 26 Conference that took place in November 2021 and the UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Action that took place in October 2021. The issue became available in July 2021 both online and in 1000 printed copies. It addresses the main challenges of a Mediterranean regional approach to climate change from the perspectives of more than 30 Mediterranean actors from key bodies (EU, UfM, UNEP/MAP, LAS, FAO, EIB, UNESCO, UN-ESCWA), civil society, youth networks, the energy, food systems, irrigation and agricultural sectors, as well as national authorities.

Issue No 79 was dedicated to the 2021 Mediterranean Action Day of MIO-ECSDE entitled 'Ocean Literacy for All Mediterranean People: The Ocean We Need for the Future We Want', highlighting the work of the 21 Mediterranean NGOs that carried out ocean literacy related activities aiming to reach out to Mediterranean citizens and individuals, inviting them to take effective actions to address ocean-related challenges.

(ii) The MIO-ECSDE webpage and social media

The MIO-ECSDE website (<http://www.mio-ecsde.org>) was regularly updated and populated. In addition, MIO-ECSDE Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter media were updated. The MIO-ECSDE social media statistics have been reporting a stable annual increase in total percentage of engagement and reach across all three platforms (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn). The MIO-ECSDE YouTube channel also plays an important communication role.

(iii) The MEDIES' webpage and e-bulletin

The MEDIES website www.medies.net was regularly updated with ESD news, publications, announcements, etc. of Euro-Mediterranean interest (on average 2-3 posts per week). The social media (fb) page of MEDIES was also regularly updated (on average 2 posts per week).

The information bulletin of MEDIES was also circulated on a quarterly basis to its members (<https://medies.net/category/resources/e-bulletins/>).

2.1.2. Surveying the Membership

In September 2021, the Secretariat sent a short questionnaire to its member organizations and COMPSUD members to see what experience linked to migration and its impacts on environment and sustainable development exists within the membership so as to propose joint actions (e.g. capacity building webinars).

2.1.3. Showcasing actions of the Membership

The dedicated section of the MIO-ECSDE website with the news of the Membership was updated with materials sent by the members. There is also a dedicated section in the MIO-ECSDE e-News. The MEDIES website also communicated relevant Membership initiatives.

2.2. MIO-ECSDE as facilitator of Mediterranean Networks

The MIO-ECSDE Secretariat facilitates the following networks:

The network of Parliamentarians and other Politicians for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean (COMPSUD)

In early 2021, the Chairman of the UfM Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Energy, Environment, and Water, contacted COMPSUD requesting a meeting to discuss opportunities for cooperation, particularly on climate related issues. COMPSUD invited him to contribute to the Issue No 78 of the MIO-ECSDE Journal Sustainable Mediterranean, dedicated to climate change and also participate in the on-line high-level panel discussion on Climate Change in the Mediterranean (21 September) (he participated in both). Advice on the UfM Parliamentary Assembly's work programme for 2022 was also requested and a dedicated meeting took place in October.

Since early 2021 COMPSUD is also working in partnership with INTER PARES (Parliaments in Partnership), which is an EU Global Project to Strengthen the Capacity of Parliaments. Funded by the EU and implemented by International IDEA, its purpose is to strengthen the capacity of parliaments in partner countries, by enhancing their legislative, oversight, representative, budgetary and administrative functions. It focuses both on elected Members of Parliament, particularly in their capacity as members of parliamentary committees and on the staff of parliaments' secretariats. In fact, COMPSUD was invited by INTERPARES to participate in the Global Virtual Conference 'Catalysing Parliamentary Action to Fight Climate Change', 11-12 May 2021.

In October 2021, the Senior Advisor/Manager of the 2nd Standing Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), paid a courtesy visit to the premises of MIO-ECSDE to explore opportunities of cooperation between the respective organizations. The discussions led to drafting a Memorandum of Understanding between PAM and MIO-ECSDE, including its circles, with particular focus on COMPSUD, to signal the cooperation between the parties, and in so doing to develop each organisation's ability to achieve its purpose and functions regarding environmental protection and sustainable development.

The two COMPSUD/MIO-ECSDE efforts in support of two MSSD Flagship Initiatives advanced well during the year:

- An on-line repository of best practices on reducing and properly managing solid waste in the Mediterranean was completed (in English and French) implemented under the ENI Southern Neighbourhood Region (WES) project (bestpractices-waste-med.net). This work has been done to address the MSSD flagship: "Undertake regional assessments, as well as knowledge exchanges, of high- and low-tech solutions, that have been successfully implemented to achieve waste reduction"

- In the second half of 2019, the COMPSUD Secretariat, through the MIO-ECSDE Operating Grant (EU LIFE Programme), launched a Desk Study for the development of a Foundation Discussion Document (FDD) for the "Mediterranean Accession Agenda" to the Aarhus Convention. In early 2021, under the WES project, the regional activity "HE-4-REG/P2P: overall environmental governance – promotion of the Aarhus Convention in the whole Mediterranean" was launched, which foresees that after the draft "Mediterranean Accession Agenda" is developed, a regional experts meeting will be organized to validate it followed by a regional training on how Mediterranean countries that are non-Members of the Aarhus Convention can effectively prepare and put in motion the mechanisms needed to accede to the Aarhus Convention. NGOs (including MIO-ECSDE members) will contribute to the finalisation of the "Agenda" and advocacy for its implementation in the Mediterranean countries that are not yet signatories to the Aarhus Convention. This work has been done to address the MSSD flagship on improved environmental governance in the region including promoting Public Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice on Environmental Matters (accession to the Aarhus Convention). The activity continues in 2022.

In terms of Climate Change Education, COMPSUD, together with MIO-ECSDE/MEdIES contributed to the Cyprus Climate Change Initiative that aims at the development of a Regional Action Plan to address the specific needs and challenges countries are facing in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME) region, to address and ameliorate the impact of climate change and advance mitigation actions in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

The members of the Board of COMPSUD (MPs from Egypt, Greece, Jordan, Montenegro, Morocco) met on line on December 21st and discussed the Circle's next programmatic steps within a global pandemic setting. Efforts had been made by the Secretariat for a face-to-face meeting but imposed travel restrictions did not make it possible.

- ▶ **The network of Mediterranean Educators working on Environment and Sustainability / MEdIES:** See section 4
- ▶ **Mediterranean Universities Network for Education for Sustainable Development (MedUnNet):** The MEdIES Secretariat continued to keep up-to-date its members about ESD developments in the higher education sector, and especially regarding SDG4.7, while the members were involved in the dissemination of calls for participation in major ESD trainings/events, the "Mediterranean Preparatory Webinar for #ESDfor2030" on 20 April 2021, etc.
- ▶ **The network of Mediterranean Journalists and Communication Professionals working on Environmental issues / COMJESD:** Members of the network were regularly informed about major developments. More specific work on strengthening the network did not materialised. The new Communications Officer was expected to undertake this task.
- ▶ **Other networks:** MIO-ECSDE kept the **Act4Drin Alliance** informed on developments related to the Drin Corda process. The **DeFishGear Network, a network for a litter free Adriatic and Ionian coast and sea**, was also facilitated by MIO-ECSDE throughout 2021

3. MIO-ECSDE as a promoter of common NGO policies and the collective voice of Mediterranean environmental NGOs

3.1. Monitoring of and contribution to the formulation of policies relevant to the Mediterranean region and involvement in important Mediterranean processes

3.1.1. Collaboration and representation in the work of UNEP/MAP and MCS D

MIO-ECSDE has kept close contacts with the Athens-based coordinating unit of UNEP/MAP. The Federation has been invited to attend and contribute in meetings of UNEP/MAP, its RACs (Regional Activity Centres) and of the Mediterranean Commission of Sustainable Development (MCS D).

MIO-ECSDE participated in the 19th Meeting of the MCS D virtually hosted by Slovenia from 7-9 June 2021 and presented updates on how it will be supporting (together with COMPSUD and other regional actors) the implementation of two "flagship initiatives" of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD 2016-2025) through the EU LIFE Programme and two regional WES activities (HE-4-REG/P2P: Overall environmental governance - promotion of the Aarhus Convention in the whole of the Mediterranean and RE-7-REG: Best practices in achieving waste reduction in the Mediterranean).

On the 23rd of March 2021, MIO-ECSDE contributed to the UNEP/MAP and UNEP-WCMC (World Conservation Monitoring Centre) consultation on Developing a Decision Support Framework for a Sustainable Blue Economy.

On the 30th of March 2021, MIO-ECSDE actively participated in the Meeting of the Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group on Marine Litter Monitoring (CORMON Marine Litter). The meeting deliberations focused on a number of issues including the interrelation of pressures, impacts of marine litter and the status of marine ecosystem components; the comparative analysis between IMAP and the European Commission's new GES Decision 2017/848/EU for marine litter; the regional operational strategy for monitoring IMAP Candidate Indicator 24; the addendum to the MED POL list for beach marine litter items and their data standards and data dictionaries; and the updated guidelines for monitoring floating microplastics.

On the 1st of April 2021, MIO-ECSDE participated in the First Meeting of the Working Group of Experts on Upgrading the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. During the meeting MIO-ECSDE made a large number of contributions that were taken onboard by the Contracting Parties. On the 25th and 26th of May 2021, MIO-ECSDE also participated in the 2nd Meeting of the Working Groups of Experts on Regional Plans on Urban Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Management. The Secretariat submitted in writing recommendations after the Meeting, regarding the draft Regional Plans. The Secretariat also participated in the Meeting of the Ecosystem

Approach Correspondence Group on Pollution Monitoring (CorMon on Pollution Monitoring), which was held online from the 26th to the-27th of April 2021. On 27-28 May 2021 and on 9 July 2021, MIO-ECSDE actively participated in sessions of the Meeting of the MED POL Focal Points. The Meeting reviewed the progress on the implementation of the Programme of Work activities carried out during the 2020-2021 biennium, and the status of implementation of the pollution-related Protocols of the Barcelona Convention including its monitoring and assessment aspects which are under MED POL Programme's responsibility. In addition, on the 6th and 7th of October 2021 MIO-ECSDE participated in the sessions of a second meeting of the MED POL Focal Points. The meeting agreed on a number of issues including on the Monitoring Guidelines/Protocols for Floating Microplastics, methodologies and techniques for the assessment and monitoring of adverse impacts of dumping activities, etc.

From the 23rd to the 25th of June 2021, MIO-ECSDE participated at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) Focal Points. The Meeting deliberations focused on a number of issues including the status of implementation of the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity (SPA/BD) in the Mediterranean; the updating of the Action Plan for the conservation of cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea, the Criteria for inclusion of Specially Protected Areas (SPAs) in the Directory of Mediterranean SPAs.

On the 2nd of September 2021, MIO-ECSDE participated in the online consultation regarding the delivery of the 2023 Mediterranean Quality Status Report. For the 2023 edition of the Report, a new approach is proposed by integrating Common Indicators within specific Ecological Objectives, at the level of IMAP Clusters. Each section of the Report corresponds to one of the 11 IMAP Ecological Objectives; and sections are grouped by clusters (Pollution and Litter; Biodiversity and NIS; Coast and Hydrography). The online consultation was held in order to identify and map available complementary data sources to address the identified data and knowledge gaps. The only NGO present at the meeting was MIO-ECSDE and it expressed its willingness to contribute with data to the chapter on Ecological Objective 10 – Marine Litter.

On the 9th of September 2021, MIO-ECSDE participated in the 8th EcAp Coordination Group Meeting held online.

On the 23rd of November 2021, MIO-ECSDE actively participated in the 4th Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Platform on Marine Litter in the Mediterranean held online. MIO-ECSDE presented an overview of its wide-ranging marine litter related activities addressing the entire management cycle of marine litter and provided input to the 2022-2023 joint work plan of the Platform. The work plan consists of measures clustered around five themes aiming to contribute to the implementation of measures in the Updated Marine Litter Regional Plan (submitted for adoption to COP22 in December 2021).

MIO-ECSDE submitted three proposals for side events at COP22. Two addressed marine litter issues: one proposal was focused on tackling marine litter in Mediterranean MPAs, and the second was focused on NGO-driven marine litter activities. Both proposals were approved however they were merged into one event, which was held on the 9th of December 2021. The third was on Environmental Governance and Education for Sustainable Development. It too was merged with other side events submitted by the EEA and Slovenia. MIO-ECSDE was kindly represented in both events by RAED/AOYE that physically attended the COP.

RAED (Dr. Emad Adly) also delivered on behalf of MIO-ECSDE, eco-union and other member organisations, a formal Statement during the Ministerial Segment of COP22 on the 9th of December.

The Secretariat also participated in other meetings and took an InforMEA learning course about the legal, institutional and implementation framework of the Barcelona Convention.

3.1.2. Securing the Mediterranean dimension in international policies and processes

3.1.2.1. EU Policy

Some specific EU policy areas in focus were:

- ▶ The EU Green Deal
- ▶ European Neighbourhood Policy and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)
- ▶ 2030 GreenerMed Agenda of the UfM (the EU is Co-President along with Jordan)
- ▶ European Marine Framework Strategy Directive (MSFD) and Ocean Literacy
- ▶ Climate Change
- ▶ Biodiversity (Natura 2000, MPAs, the LIFE Programme, etc.)
- ▶ Resource efficiency
- ▶ Sustainable Development
- ▶ Education for Sustainable Development
- ▶ Access to environmental information, participation, justice
- ▶ Air/Odour pollution and Chemicals

Some of the EU consultations that MIO-ECSDE contributed to were:

- ▶ **Consultation - Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda; the Horizon Europe candidate Partnership on Biodiversity:** In January 2021, MIO-ECSDE participated in the open consultation on the Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda (SRIA) of the Horizon Europe candidate Partnership on Biodiversity, developed by BiodivERsA and the European Commission's DG R&I and DG ENV. The consultation aimed at retrieving feedback from a wider spectrum of academic and non-academic stakeholder organisations in the field, and thus to give the opportunity to contribute to the co-development of the Partnership.
- ▶ **Consultation - EU Action Plan "Towards a Zero Pollution Ambition for air, water and soil"**. In February 2021, also on behalf of the D-NOSES project, MIO-ECSDE contributed to this consultation placing emphasis on odour pollution gaps and the integration of the participatory science approach in the efforts towards zero pollution.
- ▶ **Consultation - EU Ocean Observation:** Dealing with ocean related changes (i.e. in changes in heat, acidity, ice-cover and sea-level), associated threats and opportunities requires knowledge which can only be through careful observation. In February 2021, the EC launched a consultation aiming to gather opinions of the effectiveness, efficiency and fitness for purpose of ocean observation by the EU and its Member States and how it can be improved. MIO-ECSDE contributed to the consultation and stressed the key role of citizen/participatory science and more standardisation of observation methods towards improved ocean observations.
- ▶ **Consultation - Revision of the Industrial Emissions Directive** (integrated pollution prevention and control): In March 2021, also on behalf of the D-NOSES project, MIO-ECSDE contributed to this consultation placing emphasis on odour pollution gaps and the integration of the participatory science approach.
- ▶ **Consultation - EU biodiversity policy initiatives:** In April 2021, MIO-ECSDE contributed to an EC consultation aiming to inform several key biodiversity initiatives, such as the evaluation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (2011-2020); the review of the application of the EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species; the development of legally binding EU nature restoration targets: a key commitment of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

- ▶ **Consultation - Roadmap for the review of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive:** In the 2nd quarter of 2021 the EC launched a process to review the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), examine its achievements and shortcomings, explore options for improvement and propose possible amendments. MIO-ECSDE, in May 2021, contributed to the consultation and expressed its agreement with the overall context of the roadmap and the emphasis on assessing the relevance of the MSFD to the European Green Deal, and particularly to the new Biodiversity Strategy, the forthcoming Zero Pollution Action Plan and the Climate Adaptation Strategy. However, when it comes to the section of the roadmap focusing on objectives and policy options, MIO-ECSDE found it premature to list at this stage policy options to address the MSFD related issues. MIO-ECSDE expressed the view that the first two policy options put forth in the roadmap, the option for a baseline scenario (business as usual) and the option for the repeal of the MSFD are not compatible with the findings of the MSFD implementation report. In particular, when it comes to the latter this would be a rather devastating path to take, considering that now more than ever we should be accelerating our efforts to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health by reducing marine pressures, increasing ocean resilience and promoting ocean prosperity for generations to come.
- ▶ **Consultation - Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive:** The EU adopted the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD) in 1991 to help improve the management of urban waste water from households and specific industries. In 2019, the European Commission evaluated the Directive. It confirmed that the Directive had helped reduce the release of pollutants, e.g. organic matter, nitrogen and phosphorus, into the environment, improving the quality of EU water bodies, and that further implementation of the Directive is needed. Among other things the evaluation found that UWWTPs could potentially become more integrated into the circular economy and more aligned with EU climate neutrality ambitions in line with the ambitions set out in the Green Deal, the Zero Pollution Action Plan and the Circular Economy Action Plan. With a view to revise the Directive and make it fit for the future, the Commission launched an impact assessment and the consultation aimed at collecting views that will be considered in the impact assessment, especially when designing potential (regulatory and non-regulatory) measures to better collect and treat urban waste water and reduce the related environmental impact.
- ▶ **Consultation - MSFD Review:** The European Commission is evaluating the Directive 2008/56/EC establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive, MSFD). A study supporting the evaluation is currently ongoing and an important part of this study is via a stakeholder consultation. To this end the EC is running targeted surveys with CIS groups involved in the implementation of the MSFD. The survey will constitute an important piece of evidence for the study and cover the main aspects of the evaluation. In October 2021, MIO-ECSDE responded to the survey (https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/MSFD_Review) as a member of the Common Implementing Strategy (CIS) working groups and the MSFD related technical groups.
- ▶ **EU Council Recommendation on Education for Environmental Sustainability:** Early in 2021 the European Commission proposed a Council Recommendation aiming to help Member States strengthen policy development, cooperation, teaching and learning. The communication on the European Education Area highlighted the importance of education and training in supporting the move towards a more sustainable and resource efficient society and economy. Evidence from Member States indicate that policies mainstreaming sustainable development, education and training remain scattered and uneven. Integrating environmental sustainability into curricula, educational practice and teachers' professional development is not systematic and is

dealt with differently across the EU. For this reason, a public consultation has run in the second quarter of 2021, to identify key issues and priority areas from Member States. MIO-ECSDE supported this initiative, by contributing to the consultation and promoting it through the MEDIES network. The EC Recommendation is expected to be announced in early 2022.

MIO-ECSDE also elaborated and/or co-signed the following:

- ▶ **MIO-ECSDE'S position on the revision of the EU Waste Water Treatment Directive:** When the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 91/271/EEC (UWWTD) was introduced twenty years ago, the majority of the European Mediterranean cities, even of economically advanced countries, had totally inadequate waste water treatment plants, polluting through their sewage the Mediterranean Sea. The implementation and enforcement of the UWWTD, as evaluated recently, demonstrated effectiveness in reducing pollution, protecting the environment and health, and contributing to achieve the good status objectives of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EEC (WFD), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC (MSFD) and the Bathing Water Directive 2006/7/EC. It inspired improvements at national and regional Mediterranean level beyond the EU Member States, including through the Barcelona Convention. MIO-ECSDE welcomed the European Commission's recent Inception Impact Assessment on the UWWTD, and encourages the Commission to come with a flexible but legislative action that also ensures balance between the most cost-effective solutions to protect human health and the environment and innovative alternatives. In this spirit, MIO-ECSDE expects to find in a proposed new legislation not only the expansion of waste water treatment to capture the remaining, not considered in the UWWTD pollution sources, but also in making sure that new waste water treatment should obtain cleaner treated effluents, suitable to be reused in many vital uses in the water-scarce Mediterranean area and encourage innovation, extending from energy efficiency to energy production and nutrient recovery. Read more at: <https://bit.ly/3yJY21>
- ▶ **Open letter calling for the EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment to be delivered:** In March 2021 MIO-ECSDE co-signed together with 31 other civil society organizations a letter -an initiative led by the EEB- calling for the EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment to be delivered. The letters which was addressed to the Executive Vice-President Timmermans, and the Commissioners Breton and Sinkevičius urged the European Commission to deliver the EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment in 2021 as a priority, to bring the pieces of this puzzle together, and coordinate a transition to sustainable buildings in the EU, ultimately in support of EU climate law and the Paris Agreement.
- ▶ **European Manifesto for Healthy Waters:** In April 2021, bearing in mind the upcoming revision of the EU Directive on Bathing Water Quality, MIO-ECSDE co-signed the European Manifesto for Healthy Waters, an initiative led by Surfrider Foundation Europe. The 45-page manifesto calls for: the extension of Water Quality control to recreational areas; the monitoring of the quality of water throughout the year; the addition of new parameters to be monitored; obligations regarding identifying, assessing, and preventing pollution; standardised, more accessible, and better relayed public information on water quality; strengthening and encouraging public participation; aligning all policies with an impact on water and the protection of the marine environment. The Manifesto was handed over to the European Commissioner for the Environment and Oceans Virginijus Sinkevičius on the occasion of Green Week in June 2021.
- ▶ **Position paper entitled "The road to an effective EU restriction of intentionally-added microplastics":** It is estimated that between 75,000 and 300,000 tonnes of microplastics are

released into the environment each year in the EU, according to the EC report entitled “A European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy”. Bearing this in mind, in 2019, upon request from the European Commission, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) submitted a proposal for restricting the use of intentionally added microplastic particles to consumer or professional products of any kind. This restriction has the potential to significantly reduce the quantity of microplastics emitted into the environment, with subsequent positive effects on ecosystems and human health. Furthermore, it may stand as a crucial precedent in the fight against microplastic pollution, and other toxic chemicals. A truly ambitious EU restriction of intentionally added microplastics is within reach, but critical concerns remain to be addressed. Too many derogations, some of them unsubstantiated, unclear wording or lengthy transitional periods risk jeopardising the overall effectiveness of the restriction. Only an ambitious restriction -without unjustified derogations and delays -could ever be considered to be in line with the Plastics Strategy, the European Green Deal commitments and the recently adopted Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, which many EU Member States have pushed for. Within this context, the EEB together with Client Earth and the Rethink Plastic alliance developed a position paper (the final version was released in March 2021) that invites decision-makers to defend an ambitious restriction and recommends the actions that the Commission and the Member States must take to secure this outcome. With this position paper, the signatories – MIO-ECSDE and 22 other European NGOs- wished to alert the European Commission and the Member States to the crucial remaining concerns undermining ECHA’s proposal, and help identifying a better way forward.

New European Bauhaus: In November 2021, MIO-ECSDE participated in the three-day high-level conference organised by the EU LIFE Programme ‘Beautiful, sustainable, together: LIFE in the New European Bauhaus’ which took place in Brussels and showed how the EU LIFE programme can contribute to the New European Bauhaus initiative. MIO-ECSDE was among the invited speakers of Day 1, in the session focusing on ‘Incentivising a behavioural change towards more sustainable practices’ and radiated some of the main take-home messages of the discussion around the concept of incentives and the vital role of education to enhance purposeful behavioural change for a sustainable future. You can watch MIO-ECSDE’s intervention here: <https://bit.ly/3pgnDpQ>.

The Secretariat contributed to other consultations, surveys, questionnaires throughout the year.

3.1.2.2. Following up progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Principle 10 of the Rio Convention and the Aarhus Convention), etc.

As in previous years, during 2021, MIO-ECSDE took into consideration in all its thematic priorities and activities the outcomes and recommendations of major global fora that are follow-up actions of the Rio process or linked with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

More specifically for Principle 10 of the Rio Convention and the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), MIO-ECSDE and COMPSUD, with the expertise of MEPIELAN Center, through the MIO-ECSDE Operating Grant (EU LIFE Programme), completed the Desk Study for the development of a Foundation Discussion Document (FDD) for the "Mediterranean Accession Agenda" to the Aarhus Convention. The aim is to promote Environmental Governance in the region by launching the MSSD Flagship Initiative on Environmental Governance to encourage the accession to and implementation of the Aarhus Convention in the Mediterranean countries and promote stakeholder engagement. It will enable non-Members of the Aarhus Convention in the Mediterranean to effectively prepare and put in motion the mechanisms needed to accede to the Aarhus Convention.

3.1.2.3. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the various political frameworks

Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD) and its Action Plan:

MIO-ECSDE provides the Technical Secretariat to the Mediterranean Committee on ESD, through MEdIES, with the support of the Cypriot Government. The process for updating the Action Plan has begun in 2021 in order to reflect and properly integrate the regional and global developments on ESD such as: EC Recommendation on ESD; #ESDfor2030; UNECE 2030 Strategic Planning, etc. To this end, a series of actions to collect the necessary evidence for updating the Action Plan took place: the Mediterranean Preparatory Webinar on ESD on April 2021 (see below); the online survey within the WES Webinar on “Distilling priorities & updating the ESD Action Plan for 2030 in the Mediterranean” on 14 June 2022 (see 5.2); targeted communication with competent stakeholders, etc.

The Ministry of Environment of Jordan that is actively participating in the Mediterranean Committee on ESD since 2016, launched in 2021 its new national strategy entitled: “Environmental Education for Sustainability Strategy (EEFS)”, where the Mediterranean Strategy on ESD (MSESD) is clearly referenced.

Early in 2021 the European Commission proposed a Council Recommendation on Education for Environmental Sustainability aiming to help Member States strengthen policy development, cooperation, teaching and learning. Among others, the proposal collected evidence from a public consultation that ran in the second quarter of 2021, to identify key issues and priority areas. MIO-ECSDE contributed to the consultation and also promoted it through the MEdIES networks. The Recommendation is expected in early 2022 (see also 3.1.2.1).

The World Conference on ESD: The Secretariat was heavily engaged in the context of the World Conference on ESD of UNESCO that took place virtually on 17-19 May and launched the #ESDfor2030 framework. More particularly, the Secretariat:

a) facilitated the [Mediterranean Preparatory Webinar for #ESDfor2030](#) organized by the Mediterranean Committee on ESD (MCESD) on 20 April. The 60 participants - officers of Ministries, International Organizations and educators shared their ESD ‘strong points’ and their plans for the implementation of #ESDfor2030 and drafted a Mediterranean ESD Statement for the World Conference (read more in 3.2);

b) [took part officially in the Conference](#). The Berlin Declaration calls for ESD to be a core component of all education systems at all levels by 2025. The Chairman and the Secretariat participated in the drafting and consultation process of the Berlin Declaration. The #ESDfor2030 framework builds on the previous GAP (2015-2019) initiative keeping its five Priority Areas for action, namely, Advancing Policy, Learning Institutions, Educators Training, Youth Enhancement, and Local Actions.

c) facilitated the UNESCO Chair & Network on Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean (University of Athens) to co-organize a Special Session of the Conference entitled [“UNESCO Chairs for Sustainable Futures”](#) on 17 May. The Chairman contributed in the section related to the Priority Area of “Advancing Policy”.

d) participated in the [Europe & North America Regional Technical Meeting on #ESDfor2030](#), on 25 May. During the meeting the Chairman presented the “Mediterranean ESD Statement” and the MCESD, as an exemplary regional scheme that puts #ESDfor2030 into practice in the vital North-South interface that the Mediterranean is.

UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development: The Chairman participates with a leading role in the Ad Hoc group on Strategic Planning 2030 of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD, that is currently developing the context and roadmap of ESD in the UNECE region towards 2030, in line with the global framework #ESDfor2030. The latest version of the Strategic Planning was

presented by Prof. Scoullos and Mr. Roel V. Raaij during the virtual UNECE ESD Steering Committee Meeting (10 -11 May 2021).

Prof Michael Scoullos actively participated on 10 March 2021 in a Side Event of the UNECE 2021 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on "How to empower the Youth with ESD for confronting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic". Prof Scoullos made a presentation on youth engagement initiatives and activities in the context of the Mediterranean Strategy on ESD and its Action Plan.

MIO-ECSDE participates officially in the Bureau of the UNECE ESD Steering Committee having the status of Observer NGO Member (since October 2020)

The Chairman participates in the Task Force on Education and Outreach of the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME) Climate Change Initiative of the Presidency of the Republic of Cyprus and coordinated by the Cyprus Institute (since October 2020). The Chairman provides key technical support to the Task Force, that is expected to produce the respective Thematic Report on Education and Outreach in the region.

MIO-ECSDE assisted the UNEP/MAP Secretariat in updating the factsheet on the Mediterranean Strategy for Education Sustainable Development (available [here](#)) as one of the flagship initiatives of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development.

3.1.2.4.Active participation in the Euro-Mediterranean policy area: Union for the Mediterranean and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) processes

The MIO-ECSDE Secretariat has continued its close relationship with the relevant to the Mediterranean Unit(s) of DG ENV, CLIMA, MARE, NEAR while following up on the European Neighbourhood Policy and its financial instrument (ENI). The Secretariat has also continued to closely monitor the developments of the UfM and maintained its close relationship with its Secretariat.

MIO-ECSDE actively participated in various on-line meetings of the UfM on Water, Blue Economy, Climate Change and Environment in the run-up to the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Action that took place in Cairo, on the 4th of October. On the 27th of May 2021, MIO-ECSDE within the frameworks of the WES project and the Interreg Med Plastic Busters MPAs project participated in the 5th UfM Environment Task Force Meeting. The Meeting aimed at discussing with countries the priorities for action under the 2030GreenerMed Agenda, also in light of the COVID-19 developments and plans for recovery; exploring the opportunities for partnership and funding; defining the operational modalities of the 2030GreenerMedAgenda; showcasing and linking regional key actions, developments and outcomes on plastic within a green and circular economy approach, and nature based solutions, with a focus on wetlands and Marine Protected Areas. MIO-ECSDE made two interventions, one featuring the WES plastic pollution related actions, and one featuring the marine plastic pollution prevention and mitigation actions of Plastic Busters MPAs. On the same topic of marine plastic pollution, MIO-ECSDE collaborated closely with the UfM Secretariat and developed a policy brief entitled "Litter-free is the way to be: actions for a healthy Mediterranean", released in December 2021.

MIO-ECSDE was also invited to participate in an official side-event of the Ministerial meeting on the 4th of October entitled High Level Side Event Biological Diversity, Ecosystem Restoration and Food Systems - Protecting and Restoring at the core of the shift towards Green, Blue, Circular Economy. Prof. Scoullos spoke on how civil society is engaged at regional level and how MIO-ECSDE and its member NGOs contribute to addressing the issue of Biodiversity, Ecosystem Restoration and Food Systems as one of utmost importance and among the key priorities of their agendas of work.

Initiated by CAN Europe and CAN Arab World, in June 2021 MIO-ECSDE co-signed together with 16 other civil society organizations a letter calling for the UfM Ministers to accelerate the Mediterranean energy transition and rapidly move away from fossil fuels and incorporate a "Just Transition" concept to support countries, regions and local communities through - inter alia - financial support to deploy renewable technologies, capacity building and technical know-how sharing. Ahead of the Third Ministerial Conference on Energy in Lisbon on 14 June 2021, the letter urged the Ministers to approve a joint Ministerial Declaration on Energy that is in line with science and the Paris Agreement objectives and ensure that all fossil fuels, including natural gas are on the phaseout.

3.1.3. MIO-ECSDE activities as partner of GWP-Med

MIO-ECSDE acts as Host Institute of the GWP-Med Secretariat and continues its fruitful collaboration with it. As a member of the GWP-Med network, MIO-ECSDE promoted during 2021 the following which are integral to both the GWP-Med and MIO-ECSDE agendas:

- ▶ Submissions of joint/coordinated project proposals;
- ▶ Facilitation of the Circle of the Parliamentarians (COMPSUD), facilitation of the Circle of Media/Journalists (COMJESD);
- ▶ Collaboration with MEDIES for its water education activities;
- ▶ The ongoing HYDRIA virtual museum of water management techniques of the past;
- ▶ The Drin Corda (Coordinated Action for a Sustainable Future).

3.2. (Co-) Organisation of meetings at Mediterranean or sub-regional level (non-project specific)

Mediterranean Preparatory Webinar for #ESDfor2030

Just a few weeks before the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (17-19 May 2021) the Mediterranean Committee on ESD organised the [“Mediterranean Preparatory Webinar for #ESDfor2030”](#) on 20 April 2021 (14.00-15.30 EEST) to assist the Mediterranean ESD community in their preparations ahead of the Conference. More than 60 participants from Ministries of Education and Environment, International/Regional Organizations, NGOs, schools and academia joined the discussion on how to plan and contribute to the implementation of the ESD 2030 Roadmap in the region. Selected panellists from international/regional organizations - namely, UNESCO, UNESCO Venice, UNEP/MAP, UNECE, UfM, LAS- and country representatives shared their ESD good practices and plans for the way forward, while they re-confirmed commitment in advancing ESD. This commitment came hand-in-hand with participants’ recognition that ESD needs further advancement in their countries. Based on the interventions made and the participants’ feedback, the Secretariat prepared a [Mediterranean ESD Message](#) for the World Conference. Read more [here](#).

Webinar “Towards the Recognition of the Right to Environment & SD”

At the invitation of the MIO-ECSDE Co-Chair Prof. Mohammed Ftouhi, CMED, RAED and MIO-ECSDE co-organised a regional webinar on the theme: What are the links between Environmental Protection, Sustainable Development and Human Rights? Towards the Recognition of the Right to Environment & SD, on 25 May 2021.

18+1 ideas for activities on Plastic waste: How to use the material

The 90-min webinar, organised by the MEdIES Secretariat on 2 September 2021, aimed to present the new educational resource "[Plastic Waste? Into the blue bin, away from the blue sea](#)". The 50 attendants took part in an interactive discussion on how this resource can support them in engaging their learners in the fight against plastic pollution and in enhancing the 3Rs "reduce-reuse-recycle" related knowledge, skills and habits. The Webinar was organised in English and French. It is available on the YouTube channel of MIO-ECSDE (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m52azSeDL0w>), for future use by ESD practitioners.

Online high-level panel discussion dedicated to "Climate Change: the rapidly increasing challenge for the Mediterranean"

On September 21st (10:00-11:30 CET), MIO-ECSDE organised an online panel discussion, on how the Mediterranean leadership, knowledge, and practice communities are prepared to better address the looming challenge in the region, to limit human-induced global warming, and prepare appropriately to adapt to climate change in practical terms under the Paris Agreement. Most of the panelists of the event were contributors to the [special issue](#) of its *Sustainable Mediterranean* journal on Climate Change which was launched in July 2021 and served as a cornerstone for this discussion.

During the 90-minute online session, moderated by the Chairperson, Prof. Michael Scoullou, more than 150 attendees had the opportunity to follow a series of 14 interventions from the high-level panelists. Professor Michael Scoullou facilitated the dialogue by posing questions centered on the Mediterranean climate change agenda. Panelists, who were grouped by thematic sub-themes, were invited to provide 3-minute responses, creating an engaging and informative discussion. Members from the audience also had the opportunity to pose questions at the end of each sub-session, thereby contributing to an inclusive dialogue around climate change.

Among the panelists were:

Dr. Metka Gotisek, State Secretary, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, representing the Slovenian Presidency of the EU (Slovenia was hosting at that moment the informal meeting of the Energy Council); Dr. Nabil Masarweh, Minister of Environment, Jordan; Kostas Skrekas, Minister of Environment & Energy, Greece; Prof. Konstantinos Aravossis, Secretary General for Natural Environment and Water, Ministry of Environment & Energy, Greece; Prof. Kostas Cadis, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment, Cyprus; Mr. Bouzekri Razi, Director of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Green Economy, Ministry of Energy, Mining and Environment, Morocco; Isidro González Afonso, Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean in charge of Water, Environment and Blue Economy; Ms. Silvia Crescimbeni, Climate Action - European Commission, DG CLIMA; Mr. Julien Le Tellier from the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP) - Barcelona Convention Secretariat; Dr. Mahmoud Fath-Allah, Director of the Department of Environmental & Meteorological Affairs at the economic sector of League of Arab States and Head of the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for Environment (CAMRE); Bruno Coimbra, Member of the Assembleia Da Republica (Portuguese Parliament), Chair of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM); Prof. Moh Rejdali, Chairman of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD), Member of the House of Representatives of Morocco, Mayor of Temara, Professor at L'institut Agronomique Et Vétérinaire Hassan II of Rabat; Prof. Wolfgang Cramer, Research Director (CNRS) at the Mediterranean Institute for Biodiversity and Ecology (IMBE) and MedECC Coordinator; and finally Dr. Emad Adly, General Coordinator of the Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED).

The report of the online event containing the main outputs of the discussion can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3loTvHs>

2021 Asterousia Hybrid University – Phase A (live), 20-24 October

MIO-ECSDE/ MEDIES and the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Venice Office) have a long-standing commitment and cooperation in organising Summer Universities on the Sustainable Management of Biosphere Reserves and other protected areas. The main goal of these Universities is to strengthen, improve and capitalize on different aspects of the function of Biosphere Reserves of the MAB/UNESCO Programme and other Protected Areas (Natura 2000, MPAs, etc.) and enhance the competences of managers, post-graduates and other stakeholders involved.

The 2021 Hybrid University focuses on one hand on the role of young professionals in management, and on the other on the ‘hot topic’ of marine litter, and especially single-use plastics. Due to the travel restrictions set by the pandemic, the 2021 University was decided to take place once again in a hybrid format with two phases:

Phase A: the face-to-face part, that ran from the 19th to the 24th of October 2021, in Crete, in the Asterousia BR and nearby areas (Heraklion, Mylopotamos). The event included lectures, field visits and group work, with the physical presence of 16 participants, some from abroad and others from Crete, Greek BRs and designated sites. Read more about Phase A: <https://medies.net/2021-asterousia-hybrid-university-phase-a>

Phase B: the four-week long online course will take place in January-February 2022 and will target a wider international audience. Some video-recorded and edited parts of Phase A will be integrated in its learning content. The first call for registrations was circulated on the 14th of December, 2021.

3.3. Mediterranean Actions/Campaigns

3.3.1. Water in the Mediterranean

Regarding the ongoing MIO-ECSDE water agenda, the Secretariat did the following this year:

- ▶ Continued to provide expertise in the Core and Expert Working Groups of the framework of the Drin Dialogue Process and the implementation of the Shared Vision for the Management of the “Extended” Drin River Basin. MIO-ECSDE actively participated in two meetings of the Drin Core Group (organized online) during 2021.
- ▶ Continued to promote, in cooperation with GWP-Med various older and newer materials such as “Water in the Mediterranean” (available in seven languages); the “Alter Aqua” material for Malta, the “Other water” for Cyprus, the online app on non-conventional water resources (www.ncwr-edu.net), the various editions of the “Gift of Rain” (all water resources are available [here](#)).
- ▶ The HYDRIA virtual museum is a founding member of the World Network of Water Museums (WAMU-NET) (www.watermuseums.net). The MIO-ECSDE Chairperson is on the Board of the WAMU-NET. On the occasion of the World Water Day, Prof. Scoullos participated in the Scientific Panel of the Webinar “When Waters Speak - Valuing Water Through Art and Science” (22 March 2021) that brought together artists and scientists from across the globe who discussed the impacts of climate change on water and rivers in mountainous environments – and in turn how people are being affected. From January to May 2021 MIO-ECSDE/MEDIES collaborated closely with the Museums Network to design, organize and promote the second edition (2021) of the successful Youth Contest entitled: “The Water We Want - from heritage to future”. The contest invited

students from all around the world aged 6 to 18 years old to express their ideas about the links between water heritage and the SDG challenges through drawings & collages, photos, soundscapes and videos. MEDIES disseminated widely the announcement and contest toolkit to its members and channels and assisted schools and NGOs to submit their works. Some thousands of students participated in the contest and the winners were announced on 18 June 2021. We were happy to see that our nominee from Malta (Cospicua Girls Learning Support Centre) got the 1st prize in the “Video Category, age 13-18”! All winners, special mentions and shortlisted works are presented at: <http://thewaterwewant.watermuseums.net>

- ▶ MIO-ECSDE was on the Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Water Forum that feeds into the World Water Forum. The kick-off meeting of the 4th Mediterranean Water Forum took place on October 1st, 2021 in Marseille (also with remote participation) while the Forum itself took place in Malta from 6-8 December. MIO-ECSDE participated remotely with Prof. Scoullos being keynote speaker of one of the sessions on behalf of both MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med.

3.3.2. Biodiversity, Protected Areas, Climate Change, etc. in the Mediterranean

In 2021 the following actions were undertaken:

- ▶ MIO-ECSDE led a Group of Experts conducting a Feasibility Study to examine to what extent the area of Kafireas/South Evia Island is suitable and could meet the criteria to be designated as a Biosphere Reserve of the MAB/UNESCO Programme. The Study takes into account the natural and cultural characteristics of the area as well as its potential for sustainable development, while it also examines the complex interlinked and partly conflicting economic, social, environmental and cultural priorities and interests of the different stakeholders active in the area. Among them the wind energy industry is playing a crucial role. Under these circumstances the Feasibility Study assesses if and under what conditions the designation of the area as a Biosphere Reserve is feasible and if such designation could stimulate and promote a “consensus” among visions and activities that traditionally are considered as incompatible.
- ▶ Within the Plastic Busters MPAs project MIO-ECSDE is leading actions related to defining and testing harmonized methodologies to assess the presence and impact of marine litter in Mediterranean MPAs (Marine Protected Areas); designing and implementing marine litter prevention and mitigation measures; and setting up a joint governance scheme for managing marine litter in pelagic and coastal MPAs (see 5.4).
- ▶ Within the MPA-Engage project - aiming to support and promote the role of Mediterranean MPAs as central tools for the implementation of the ecosystem approach for the adaptation and mitigation to climate change- MIO-ECSDE is leading actions related to capitalization, participatory approaches and the elaboration of climate change mitigation and adaptation plans for 7 MPAs and of a joint action plan (see 5.5).
- ▶ Within the service contract “Increasing public awareness about EU nature protection policy – utilising EU nature data”, MIO-ECSDE contributed to the development of a European Nature Policy Toolkit aiming to increase understanding of: nature and biodiversity, including concepts such as species, habitat and ecosystems; where key species and habitats can be found in the EU Member States; why Europe’s nature and biodiversity are important, and why they are under threat; what the EU is doing to protect its nature and how the youth themselves can get involved. (see 5.6).
- ▶ MIO-ECSDE, the UNESCO Chair & Network on Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean of the University of Athens, and the Greek National Committee of

MAB/UNESCO together with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice (Italy) have a long-standing fruitful collaboration in projects and initiatives on topics relating to management as well as education within designated areas and especially Biosphere Reserves in the Mediterranean (see 3.2.1).

- ▶ MIO-ECSDE participated in climate change related events of the membership.
- ▶ In November 2021, MIO-ECSDE was an invited speaker of the EBSOMED Sector Alliance Committee during the Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders – MedaWeek 2021. The aim of the specific session was to contribute to the establishment of a Strategic Paper on “The Euro-Mediterranean green transition”, in order to create a strategy and determine future lines of action for the decarbonization of the region. MIO-ECSDE shared its insights on how the energy transition should be inclusive and participatory and fully in line with nature conservation.
- ▶ In view of the 2nd Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Action of the Union for the Mediterranean and the UNFCCC COP 26 Conference, MIO-ECSDE dedicated one of its issues of Sustainable Mediterranean on climate change advocating for mobilisation of all sides. Hard and soft copies of the issue were widely disseminated to key regional organisations and institutes, journalists, the UNFCCC Mediterranean focal points, the European Climate Pact Ambassadors, and religious formations in the Mediterranean that are active in the environmental field. The Chairperson of MIO-ECSDE, Prof. Michael Scoullos, was granted an audience with His Holiness Pope Francis during his visit to Athens in December 2021. The Pontiff was presented with the Sustainable Mediterranean issue and Prof. Scoullos informed the Pope on MIO-ECSDE’s initiatives vis-à-vis the climate emergency in the Mediterranean, one of its main focal areas of work and advocacy and proposed future joint action.
- ▶ MIO-ECSDE advanced its Policy Paper on the Mediterranean’s Wind Energy Transition and the opportunities and risks it may entail for the region’s protected environment. Through this policy document, MIO-ECSDE aims to stimulate discussion on how transition to wind energy and nature conservation can be addressed in a participatory manner in pursuit of finding common sustainable grounds and assist its members in their advocacy and policy formulation efforts at regional, national and local level.

3.3.3. Marine and coastal issues

MIO-ECSDE closely followed the progress of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and continued to be a member of the Working Group on Good Environmental Status (WG GES) and the Marine Strategic Coordination Group (MSCG). Furthermore, MIO-ECSDE has been actively contributing to the work of the EU/MSFD Good Environmental Status (GES) Technical Subgroup on Marine Litter. More specifically:

- ▶ In June 2021, MIO-ECSDE participated in the on-line meeting of the MSFD Technical Group on Marine Litter and made several interventions related to a series of tasks that it is co-leading, namely: the elaboration of a manual for the use of the Joint List of Marine Litter Items to facilitate the unambiguous identification of the litter items in order to assess macrolitter in the marine environment for the MSFD and pinpoint tailor-made management responses; the elaboration of the Online Photo Catalogue of the Joint List of Litter Categories; the elaboration of the updated guidance document on how to carry out beach macrolitter surveys; the updating of a comprehensive list of some 100 marine litter related projects that was published by the JRC/MSFD TGML. For all these tasks MIO-ECSDE has been working closely with the German delegate of the group, from the Regional Agency of Coastal Protection, National Park, and Marine Protection of Schleswig-Holstein (Germany) and JRC which is co-chairing the MSFD

TGML. Within 2021, MIO-ECSDE has participated in more than 40 e-meetings organized by the TGML chairs and co-chairs in order to pave the way towards harmonized marine litter monitoring at all European Regional Seas. The most recent e-meetings are related to mainstreaming the use of the Joint List of Litter Categories and to ensure the comparability of datasets collected via different litter items lists via the elaboration of conversion lists. Considering its exhaustive know-how on the issue, MIO-ECSDE is member of the core group of experts in charge of this task.

- ▶ In April 2021, MIO-ECSDE participated in the 24th Meeting of the Working Group on Good Environmental Status (WG GES). The main issues discussed were the: review of Member States' 2018 reports (Article 8, 9 and 10 updates); the implementation of the Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848; descriptor specific issues.
- ▶ In May 2021, MIO-ECSDE participated in the 28th Meeting of the Marine Strategy Coordination Group (MSCG). The main issues discussed were the: the developments related to the Common Implementation Strategy; the Action Plan to conserve fisheries and protect marine ecosystems; the ongoing work on the MPAs and restoration targets initiatives; the roadmap for the review of the MSFD.

In 2021, MIO-ECSDE actively participated in a large number of high visibility European and Mediterranean events and also launched and/or joined key related initiatives and campaigns:

- ▶ MIO-ECSDE launched the Mediterranean Action Day 2021 dedicated to the topic of Ocean Literacy for All Mediterranean People: The Ocean We Need for the Future We Want (see 3.5).
- ▶ MIO-ECSDE is part of “The Science We Need for the Mediterranean Sea We Want (SciNMeet)” Programme” linked to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030. The Mediterranean Sea we want is the title of a collective paper that presents major gaps and challenges for implementing the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) in the Mediterranean region (<https://doi.org/10.1590/2675-2824069.21019mc>).
- ▶ On the 4th of June within the framework of the EU Green Week 2021: Zero pollution for healthier people and the planet, MIO-ECSDE was an invited speaker and the facilitator of a session focused on Marine Litter Prevention & Mitigation Actions. MIO-ECSDE made an intervention on “Establishing a network of SUPs-free coastal HORECAs in the Mediterranean”. The event was organized by the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community.
- ▶ In June 2021, MIO-ECSDE was one of the invited speakers at a capacity building webinar on marine litter and Marine Protected Areas organized by the Mediterranean Biodiversity Protection Community. MIO-ECSDE contributed to two sessions: in the first session dedicated to monitoring and assessment of marine litter with a presentation entitled “Advancing marine litter monitoring in the Mediterranean: the Plastic Busters MPAs monitoring approach to assess the presence and effects of marine litter”; the second session entitled “Combating marine litter in MPAs: from observations and knowledge to concrete action” was facilitated by MIO-ECSDE and also a presentation was made entitled “Putting the pieces of the puzzle together: from the ACT4LITTER MPA-specific marine litter action plans to the Plastic Busters MPAs marine litter prevention and mitigation demos”.
- ▶ In June 2021, MIO-ECSDE was an invited speaker at the Black Sea Crossborder Cooperation MARLITER regional training entitled “Knowledge-Sharing Tools for Black Sea Cross-Border

Cooperation". MIO-ECSDE's contribution focused on the interactions between science, politics and society for addressing marine litter.

- ▶ In July 2021, MIO-ECSDE was an invited speaker at the Mission Starfish 2030 workshop organized by HCMR and made an intervention entitled "Tackling marine litter in the Mediterranean: from science and policy to best practices for prevention and mitigation". A similar intervention was made at a Campus Session held within the framework of the IUCN Congress, where MIO-ECSDE was an invited speaker. Special emphasis in the intervention was placed on the SUPs-free HORECAs scheme that has been piloted and coordinated by MIO-ECSDE in several Mediterranean countries.
- ▶ In September 2021, MIO-ECSDE actively participated in the IUCN Campus and the workshop entitled "Streamlining biodiversity in sectoral development: a sustainable touristic model in the Mediterranean that ensures resilient coastal and marine ecosystems Innovative tools & practices to ensure a healthy Mediterranean biodiversity and sustainable tourism". MIO-ECSDE was an invited speaker in the session related to practical solutions to reduce pressure from tourism in sensitive biodiversity hotspots through fostering a participative circular economy and presented its insights from turning science into policy & actions via its actions related to slashing plastic pollution in Mediterranean MPAs.
- ▶ In November 2021, MIO-ECSDE was the key-note speaker of the pan-European H2020 MAELSTROM project event entitled "Inspiring Science and Society to tackle Marine Litter". MIO-ECSDE also was the moderator of the roundtable discussion of the event and wrapped up the event, outlining key recommendations for transformative changes in the next decade.
- ▶ In November 2021, MIO-ECSDE actively participated in the 2021 Forum of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean. In fact, MIO-ECSDE joined two sessions: one addressing the issue of marine litter that was co-organized by UfM, MIO-ECSDE and UNISI; and another one address the topic of climate change.
- ▶ Within 2021, MIO-ECSDE carried out activities focusing on marine litter mainly within the framework of the Interreg Med Plastic Busters MPAs project, the WES project and the framework of its collaboration with the UfM and UNEP/MAP.
- ▶ Throughout 2021, MIO-ECSDE continued a study it had launched in late 2020 on the "Quantitative determination of the consumption of Single-Use Plastic products (SUPs) in coastal tourism-related businesses" (primarily in Greece but also using data from other Mediterranean countries). The aim of this research is to address the evidence gap and try and quantify the consumption of SUPs in coastal tourism-related enterprises (2019 and 2020). Ultimately the goal is to support enterprises to implement as soon as possible the Single-Use Plastics Directive and contribute to minimizing marine plastic pollution from SUPs. Via a survey, data has been gathered on the consumption of specific SUPs, banned by the Single-Use Plastics Directive that entered into force on July 2nd 2019 (plastic straws, plastic cups, plastic cutlery, stirrers, food containers and expanded polystyrene or polyurethane cups and ear swabs), as well as for lightweight plastic carrier bags and bottles of water: small (≤ 0.5 L) and large (> 0.5 L). The level of readiness to implement the phasing-out of SUPs and the perceived importance of four specific barriers (infrastructure, price of the alternatives, client's habits and everyday management) were also gauged. Based on the responses of the participating enterprises but also on the overall contacts made, MIO-ECSDE developed a set of guidelines to facilitate the phasing-out of SUPs, which is given in the Annex of the study. The study has not been made public yet as it is being enriched with additional data of 2021.

3.3.4. Culture and Sustainability in the Mediterranean

Within this overall framework, during 2021 MIO-ECSDE did the following:

- ▶ Maintained and further promoted the HYDRIA virtual museum (www.hydraproject.info) – acknowledged as a good example bridging ESD and Cultural practices (see [here](#)). It is a member of the Board of the Global Network of Water Museums-WAMUNET (see 3.3.1). In an effort to update HYDRIA’s outreach, MIO-ECSDE cooperated with the WAMUNET Communication Team for the creation of a promotional video. The video, entitled “*Mediterranean Water Heritage: Educating & Inspiring a Sustainability Culture*” invites us to revisit and get inspired from the past in order to solve current urgent problems. It lasts approx. 6 minutes and is available on the [MIO-ECSDE YouTube Channel](#). The dissemination of the video started at the 4th Mediterranean Water Forum in Malta (6-8 December 2021) where it was screened.

The design and technical updating of the Hydria webpage was initiated in the last quarter of 2021 in order for the website to be compatible with current systems of content management (CMS) (Front-end development, Back-end development for Search Engine Optimization, Social Media Optimization, Google Analytics, etc.) The new website will be fully dynamic and responsive for PC, laptop, tablet, smartphone, while its eight animation clips will be re-designed in mp4 format.

- ▶ As regards the Mediterranean Food agenda, the e-learning course about Mediterranean Food ([here](#)), has successfully run four times in 2021. The e-course is largely based on the educational package “Mediterranean Food: Historical, Environmental, Health & Cultural dimensions” (produced in five Mediterranean languages [here](#)). Since its launching 54 users have followed the course.
- ▶ The project granted by the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) involving member organisations and capitalizing on the Mediterranean food agenda entitled: “[“Sustaining Intercultural Dialogue through deeper understanding of the Mediterranean Food” \(SIDUMEF\)](#)” is presented under 4.5.

3.3.5. Med Action Day 2021: ocean literacy for all Mediterranean people

The MAD 2021 call was launched on 10 June 2021 targeting MIO-ECSDE member organizations and other organizations from EU and non-EU countries. This year’s MAD was dedicated to the topic of ocean literacy for all Mediterranean people, considering that the year 2021 marked the launch of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) aiming to advance ocean science and sustainable use of the ocean and reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health.

Following the completion of the proposals’ evaluation, MIO-ECSDE selected 21 NGOs; 12 NGOs from Mediterranean EU countries and 9 NGOs from non-EU Mediterranean countries to set up and implement their ocean literacy related activities by the end of November 2021. The successful applicants are listed below. A video promoting the efforts of the participating NGOs and an issue of the MIO-ECSDE journal Sustainable Development were developed.

- ▶ Croatia: EKO KVARNER
- ▶ Cyprus: AKTI
- ▶ Egypt: Arab Office for Youth and Environment (AOYE)
- ▶ Greece: Greek Eco Project, iSea, OIKOTOPIA
- ▶ Italy: Circolo Festambiente, Posidonia Project Carloforte, DelTa
- ▶ Jordan: Jordanian Society of Friends of Heritage (JSFH), Land and Human to Advocate Progress (LHAP)
- ▶ Lebanon: Makhzoumi Foundation, HEAD

- ▶ Morocco: CMED
- ▶ Spain: Hippocampus, Eco Union, Posidonia Green Project
- ▶ Syria: Syrian Coast Society for Environmental Protection (SCSEP)
- ▶ Tunisia: AEKelibia Tunisia, ASMP Kelibia
- ▶ EMSEA will be implementing their activity in Croatia, Greece and Italy

4. Implementing Education for Sustainable Development through the MEDIES secretariat

Through the MEDIES Initiative, MIO-ECSDE plays a leading role in promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the Mediterranean, with activities ranging from drafting and following ESD policies, authoring of books and materials, trainings-of-trainers, to grass-root activities at school level. ESD is an “umbrella” type of education that ultimately equips learners with sustainability knowledge, values, skills, and motivation to act for a more just and meaningful life.

In autumn 2020, MEDIES was included as a Good Practice in the Med Dialogue’s “Networks Mapping Publication”. The Med Dialogue for Rights and Equality Programme, is an EU-funded Programme aiming to strengthen the role of the regional Civil Society Organisations in building sustainable development, regional cohesion and resilience. The publication was launched in March 2021 and is available [here](#).

An overview of the activities in 2021 can be summarised as follows:

- ▶ Facilitating the e-network of educators (www.medies.net).
- ▶ Following ESD political processes at many levels (European, UfM, UNECE, UNESCO, etc). Various processes have progressed as explained in 3.1.2.3.
- ▶ Authoring and producing new teaching and learning materials (in printed or e-form).
- ▶ Continuing projects on marine litter/plastics and water
- ▶ Facilitating the Mediterranean Universities Network for ESD (MedUnNET).
- ▶ Preparing and disseminating on a quarterly basis the e-bulletin to its members (see MEDIES bulletins).
- ▶ Piloting projects with authorities of the host country (Greece) in order to replicate them throughout the Mediterranean Region.

4.1. HERRCO project on Recycling, Single-Use Plastics and Marine Litter

In the context of MIO-ECSDE collaboration with the Hellenic Recovery Recycling Corporation (HERRCO), for 2021, MEDIES continued with the planned task of finalising a new educational material addressed to students and teachers, to accompany the relevant interventions at schools. The new material was published in both English and Greek. This educational material emphasizes on the need to reduce the use of single-use plastics in everyday life and at the same time promotes the correct way to recycle.

The material titled “Plastic Waste? Into the recycling bin! Far away from the blue sea -18+1 ideas for activities -Student Material” is designed to be used mainly by students in primary and secondary schools, it is forty-eight (48) pages long and aims to raise awareness on the impact of marine litter and especially single-use plastics, to educate on proper recycling methods and to motivate behavioural shift at a household, school and community level.

A student poster/ leaflet has been translated and is available in English, Greek and French. Also, a set of four (4) bookmarks has been translated and produced in English, Greek and French.

Read more about the Programme [here](#), download the educational material [here](#) or view the [flipbook](#) (suggested form of viewing). A Teacher’s Manual also advanced considerably in 2021.

In 2021 (April – June) the MEdIES team did nine (9) online interventions in the schools of Tinos, Naxos, Ios and Thassos, reaching in total 169 students and 18 teachers. More online events were organized that were also livestreamed in social media. It is noteworthy that two (2) online interventions were carried out in schools with students with special needs.

Between November 2020 – April 2021, the MEdIES team also organized five (5) teachers’ training webinars that were attended by 123 teachers and 42 education executives. Furthermore, the team, in collaboration with the Directories of primary and secondary education and the Municipalities of Piraeus implemented 2 teachers’ training webinars titled “Waste Management in our school, in our house and in our Municipality”, that were also livestreamed in social media, making them accessible to the general public as well.

The evaluation of these pilot interventions was possible through qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative research was possible through content analysis done by the teachers and ESD officers both orally and in written reports. The quantitative research was through a pre- and post-questionnaire filled in by all the participants and their families. The results of the combined qualitative and quantitative research were positive and encouraging.

A regional training (in EN and FR) on how to use the educational material also took place on September the 2nd 2021 which was well attended and highly interactive. Watch the 90-min webinar here: <https://bit.ly/3rWmVRI>.

4.2. Erasmus+ Mobility Courses for European teachers (Key Action 1)

Due to the pandemic, the announcement for the Erasmus+ KA1 funded learning mobility courses was circulated later than usual (April instead of February). This year, MEdIES offered three different week-long courses, and the successful applicants that confirmed receiving a grant were:

- ▶ 18 applicants for the course on marine litter education (together with last years’ applicants)
- ▶ 5 applicants for the course on water education
- ▶ 2 applicants for the course on animation

The uncertainty caused by the pandemic led the MEdIES secretariat to consult with the confirmed applicants and the Erasmus+ National Authorities and the courses were postponed for May 2022.

4.3. Web-based education applications on water and climate change

The online web application on water developed by MIO-ECSDE and which is available in [English](#) and [Greek](#) was promoted throughout the year. Learners are invited to discover in an interactive manner the various aspects of non conventional water resources, urban water vulnerability, climate change challenges, etc. Though the materials have been developed for learners of 10-13 years old, several sections can be used either by younger or older students.

4.4. Marine litter education agenda (in Greece)

Responding to the invitation of the Zakynthos-based Civil Society Organisation “Platyforos”, this year the MARLISCO exhibition travelled to Zakynthos Island (Greece) to be displayed at the port. From 18 to 28 July 2021, the exhibition welcomed around 400 visitors, families and tourists informing them on the status and threats of marine litter. Due to its success and as per the request of the local organisers, the exhibition remained in Zakynthos and was hosted by the Ionian University. It was combined with a ‘train the trainer’ event that took place on the 13th of December 2021. School visits are expected to start in 2022. Read more: <https://medies.net/exhibition-on-marine-litter-travels-to-zakynthos/>

Responding to the invitation of the Municipality of Piraeus that organised the “Sea Days” 2021 Festival, for the 7th year, MEDIES/ MIO-ECSDE participated in the Festival, together with 10 more Greek NGOs. The Sea Days are a panorama of events focusing on the Sea, Culture, Shipping, Sports and Education. MEDIES’ participation was organised on the 26th of September and focused on experiential activities around marine litter (designed in a COVID-safe manner) Read more (in Greek). https://medies.net/medies_in_sea_days_gr/

4.5. *Sustaining Intercultural Dialogue through deeper Understanding of Mediterranean Food (SIDUMEF)*

“Sustaining Intercultural Dialogue through deeper understanding of Mediterranean Food” (SIDUMEF) is an ALF (Anna Lindh Foundation) funded project that ran from November 2020 until October 2021. MIO-ECSDE member organisations and experts from 7 Mediterranean countries discussed and participated in a series of actions around “*how Mediterranean Food can contribute in intercultural dialogue and enhance awareness about sustainability*”. The partners were: AOYE, CMED, LEGAMBIENTE and PWL (associated: ETNIA, LHAP, and the University of Athens/UNESCO Chair on ESD). The key output of the project is the co-created handbook resource, entitled: “*Mediterranean Food: Our legacy, our future*” (also accompanied by a MOOC developed in beta-version) addressed to the general public, educators, youth trainers, and everyone interested in the subject. It is developed in 4 languages: Arabic, English, French and Italian, in PDF format (with a few copies to be printed for promotional purposes). The project included also multiplier events to promote the handbook organised by the partners engaging some 350 citizens in total. Read more about the SIDUMEF actions, handbook and multiplier events [here](#)

4.6. *PLASTEAM: STEAM education for Plastic-free Primary Schools*

A 30-month long Erasmus+ Project was launched in November 2020, with MIO-ECSDE/MEDIES as one of its partners. [PLASTEAM](#) aims to educate pupils and teachers from primary schools of five European countries in responsibly using, consuming and recycling plastic items. In 2021 a Collection of Good Practices (plastic footprints) was completed, as well as two online surveys on students' and teachers' attitudes/behaviours towards the use and management of plastic waste (particularly SUPs) in the project's countries: Greece, Italy, Malta, Romania and the Netherlands.

The project is currently developing a Plastic Footprint APP/website for the partner schools. On 2-3 December 2021, the partners met in person for the first time in Malta. During the meeting, participants discussed, elaborated and planned for the three main intellectual outputs of the project: i) the schools' plastic footprint, ii) the plastic free schools' contest and iii) the STEAM box of learning activities (STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics). Read more: <https://plasteam.eu/>

4.7. *WASTE ASHORE, WASTE IN THE NET! - Three projects for marine litter on selected coastal regions of Crete (Greece)*

Three projects were launched in Crete (Greece) in late 2020 and early 2021 in close cooperation with the local authorities on the crucial issue of marine litter with emphasis on Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) reduction. The projects will continue in 2022 by engaging diverse target-groups: fishermen, owners and staff of tourism and leisure businesses, tourists as well as the educational community. Read more [here](#).

4.8. *Project in Messara-Crete*

This is a small-scale pilot project aiming to promote the essential dialogue between the protection of

natural and cultural monuments and Sustainable Development. It is taking place in Messara-Crete of the Asterousia Biosphere Reserve targeting the local population.

4.9. MEdIES national and international networking

The “21st century skills” nation-wide curriculum was organised for a 2nd year by the Greek Ministry of Education, aspiring to integrate innovative educational materials and practices in the mandatory, weekly curricula in all grades of primary and secondary level. In this context, and responding to an invitation by the Ministry, the MEdIES Secretariat re-submitted seven educational materials and programmes that had been approved in 2020.

During 2021 MEdIES engaged with several education networks of mutual interest, such as the [Climate ECOS Community](#), [Action for Climate \(ACE\) by UNFCC](#), the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building ([PCCB Network](#)), the [Bridge 47 Network](#), the [Global Education Monitoring \(GEM\)](#) the [Futures of Education](#) (UNESCO), the [#ESDfor2030](#) framework, the [Teaching for Climate Action Initiative](#) and the [EU4Ocean Initiative](#).

5. Running, drafting, completion and/or follow-up of international projects

5.1. LIFE Programme Operating Grant for NGOs

MIO-ECSDE is one of the EU non-profit environmental NGOs active in many countries that was awarded support for part of its operational and administrative costs relating to the development, implementation and enforcement of Union policy and legislation for the 2020-2021 biennium. The contract with EASME for the 2021 Life Programme Operating Grant (covering approx. 60% of the year's Work Programme) was digitally signed early in 2021. In addition, the final report for 2020 was submitted at the end of March. A few minor clarifications were requested by EASME (now renamed CINEA) which were fully addressed.

As soon as the Life Programme Operating Grant contract for 2021 was signed, the Secretariat sent a formal request to the Green Fund of the Greek Ministry of Environment to support the 2021 Work Programme by contributing as much as possible to the remaining percentage. In June MIO-ECSDE was notified that the Green Fund of Greece would support with the amount of 40.000 EUR.

On September 27th, MIO-ECSDE submitted to the LIFE Programme its proposals for a Framework Partnership Agreement for the period 2022-2024, as well as a proposal for a Specific Grant Agreement for 2022. Results are expected to be announced to the applicants in January 2022.

5.2. The Water and Environment Support (WES) project

MIO-ECSDE and RAED are members in the consortium that was awarded the regional EU-funded project Water and Environment Support mechanism (2019-2023). The overall aim is to assist the implementation of an integrated approach to pollution reduction and prevention in line with the UfM Agendas and Barcelona Convention and to contribute to a more efficient management of scarce water resources in the Neighbourhood South region.

Due to COVID-19 there were delays in the activities that were designed as physical trainings and study visits. However, a first regional activity on Single-Use Plastics, co-organised by MIO-ECSDE and SCP/RAC as WES consortium members, took place as a series of four webinars that started in January 2021 and concluded in February 2021. Read more about the training here: <https://bit.ly/3MM3aDc>

MEdIES Secretariat was engaged in the WES Regional Training on Awareness Raising and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The training included a sequence of 3 webinars and the first one entitled: "Distilling the priorities and updating the ESD Action Plan for 2030 in the Mediterranean" took place on July 14th, 2021, gathering more than 70 participants from ministries, international organisations, academic institutions and educators, CSOs and NGOs. Read more about the first Webinar [here](#). The second Webinar was about "Designing & coordinating campaigns and ESD actions on Sustainable Consumption related to Food" and took place on 14 September, while the third one (delivered with SCP/RAC) focused on "Designing and coordinating campaigns and ESD actions on Sustainable Consumption and Packaging" and was held on 25 October. [Read more on all webinars here](#).

5.3. The Horizon 2020 D-NOSES project

From March 2018 till September 2021, MIO-ECSDE was the main advocacy partner of the EU funded Distributed Network for Odour Sensing, Empowerment and Sustainability (D-NOSES) project, a Horizon 2020 specific programme with and for society (SwafS). The project consortium comprised 15 partners (combining experts in Responsible research and innovation (RRI), citizen science and co-creation, international associations, odour scientists, local administration and public bodies) from 9 countries. With this project, MIO-ECSDE tackled odour pollution for the first time with the aim to introduce it in the policy agenda.

An Advocacy Action Plan (an internal living document) guided the advocacy work of MIO-ECSDE throughout the project. The plan specified the D-NOSES advocacy goals, target groups (at international, European and Mediterranean levels), planned actions, tools and timelines and included a roadmap until the end of the project. More than 800 policy makers from the identified target groups were mapped and approached via the various advocacy tools. The advocacy actions culminated with a very successful online event at the European Parliament on “Revisiting Odour Pollution in Europe” hosted by MEP Maria Spyraiki, Co-chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on ‘Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development’, on the 28th of October. It was co-organised with the European Bureau for Conversation and Development which supports the Intergroup (read more at <https://bit.ly/33dUnbK>).

MIO-ECSDE developed in English two Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on Odour Pollution for two distinctive target groups, namely the public and educators. The MOOCs have been translated into Spanish, Greek and Portuguese by the partners and can be found on MIO-ECSDE’s e-learning platform in a dedicated branch (<https://dnoses.envirolearning.net>). During autumn 2021, MIO-ECSDE disseminated the MOOCs to targeted audiences and groups, through MEDIES: Science and ESD educators networks, Pedagogical/STEAM Centres, [Science Festivals](#), etc.

Overall, the D-NOSES project is considered a Best Practice and MIO-ECSDE’s contribution has been frequently commended.

5.4. The Interreg Med Plastic Busters MPAs project

PlasticBusters MPAs aims to shed light on the impacts of marine litter in coastal and pelagic protected areas and consolidate Mediterranean efforts against marine litter. The project entails actions that address the whole management cycle of marine litter, from monitoring and surveillance to prevention and mitigation.

PlasticBusters MPAs will deliver a quantitative and qualitative diagnosis of the impacts of marine litter in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPAs); strengthen networking of MPAs in improving the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems in pelagic and coastal MPAs; accelerate knowledge transfer to Mediterranean MPA managers and other key actors towards scaling up effective solutions to curb marine litter.

MIO-ECSDE is the operational leader of the communication, the studying and the capitalization components of the project. In addition, MIO-ECSDE together with the Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) are the co-chairs of the Steering Committee of the project, which is chaired by the University of Siena (UNISI). MIO-ECSDE, who is currently leading the studying and testing activities of the project with regard to marine litter measures, has recently completed 5 pilot and replication actions; three of them taking place at the Strunjan Landscape Park (Slovenia), one taking place at the Thermaikos Gulf Protected Areas (Greece), one taking place at the

newly established MPA of Platamuni (Montenegro), and one taking place at the Debeli Rtic Landscape Park (Slovenia). The measures that were showcased were:

- ▶ “Single Use Plastics (SUPs)-free beach bars” piloted in the Strunjan Landscape Park (Slovenia) and replicated in the Debeli Rtic Landscape Park.
- ▶ “Setting up a reusable cup scheme for beach bars and festivals” replicated in the Strunjan Landscape Park (Slovenia).
- ▶ “Adopt-a-beach” piloted in the Strunjan Landscape Park (Slovenia).
- ▶ “Establishing a derelict fishing gear management scheme and promoting co-responsibility to tackle fisheries & aquaculture-related litter” piloted in the Thermaikos Gulf Protected Areas (Greece) and replicated in the newly established MPA of Platamuni (Montenegro).

The upcoming deliverables of MIO-ECSDE include operational guidelines on the implementation of different marine litter measures as well as an e-learning module on the issue.

Some of the highlights of 2021 were:

- ▶ The organization of the Plastic Busters MPAs capitalization event held online on the 17th of June 2021, which served as a stepping stone in consolidating marine litter management efforts in Mediterranean MPAs. The event, organized by MIO-ECSDE, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, SCP/RAC and UNISI, offered the opportunity for the latest policy and scientific advances with regards to marine litter in the region to be presented and for creating synergies and fostering exchanges among stakeholders active on the science-policy-society interface. The event brought together more than 90 Mediterranean MPA managers and featured the achievements of the project after four years of project implementation: the first comprehensive diagnosis of marine litter pollution in Mediterranean MPAs is almost ready to be published; 3 marine litter prevention and mitigation demos have been completed, 9 demos are in full-swing and 4 more are about to kick-off within the scope of the knowledge transferring activities of the project; a core set of Mediterranean MPA managers have been successfully trained to monitor and assess the presence and effects of marine litter in their MPAs. Read more at <https://bit.ly/3DR2cSu>
- ▶ The livestreaming of the Plastic Busters MPAs research exhibition at sea in Capo Milazzo (Sicily). The 3-day-long knowledge transferring activities aimed at enhancing the capacities and skills of Mediterranean MPA managers and other conservationists on how to monitor marine litter. The 3 live streaming events and the associated activities, on the one hand provided the opportunity to a broader audience to get familiar with different marine litter monitoring techniques and methods and on the other hand they paved the way for conducting the first comprehensive assessment of the marine litter problem in the Capo Milazzo MPA, thus addressing knowledge gaps in terms of the amounts, types, sources, impacts and distribution patterns of marine litter. MIO-ECSDE was the main instructor for the macrolitter monitoring surveys carried out on the coastline, the sea surface and the seafloor. Read more at <https://bit.ly/3rJ6qYT>
- ▶ The hybrid capitalization conference featuring the Plastic Busters MPAs results and achievements. The half-day hybrid conference held in Dubrovnik (Croatia) on the 12th of October 2021, brought together some 70 participants (40 attended physically, 30 attended virtually) to review and discuss the project advances and achievements addressing the entire management cycle of marine litter, from monitoring and assessment to prevention and mitigation. The event brought forward the recent policy and scientific advances with regards

to marine litter in the region, provided a synthesis of the Plastic Busters MPAs marine litter outputs and results, highlighted local experiences and lessons learned, and created the enabling conditions for building synergies and fostering exchanges among stakeholders active on the science-policy-society interface. The event was organised by MIO-ECSDE, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, and UNISI. Read more at <https://bit.ly/307wxgQ>

- ▶ The hands-on regional training featuring the Plastic Busters MPAs marine litter monitoring protocols. The two-day event (12-14 October 2021) immersed some 40 participants in field and laboratory activities to showcase the project's harmonized approaches on how to monitor and assess the presence and effects of marine litter. Trainees got acquainted and familiarized with state-of-play methodologies and approaches to monitor and assess marine litter on beaches, the sea surface, the sea floor and in biota. When it comes to the latter, special emphasis was placed on featuring protocols that can be used for studying and assessing the impact of marine litter on living organisms. The trainees participated in marine litter surveys at sea and on the coastline of the captivating archipelagos of the Elaphiti Islands, while they also had the opportunity to analyse microplastics and biota samples at the labs of the University of Dubrovnik. The event was organised by UNISI, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, and MIO-ECSDE. Read more at <https://bit.ly/307wxgQ>
- ▶ The mutual learning workshop held in person at Ebro Delta Natural Park (Spain). The workshop, which took place at Deltebre from the 24th to the 25th of November 2021, featured and fully exploited the knowledge, know-how, experience and lessons learned from the implementation of the Plastic Busters MPAs demos aiming to prevent and mitigate marine litter. The demos operationalized a set of different marine litter solutions, including the establishment of a derelict fishing gear management scheme, the creation of a SUPs-free HORECAs network, the promotion of best practices for the sustainable management of mussel farming nets, the setup of a reusable cup delivery system for beach bars, the development of a network of collection points for beverage containers, the adopt-a-beach scheme, etc. The workshop was organized by SCP/RAC, MIO-ECSDE and ISPRA, in close cooperation with the Management Body of the Ebro Delta Natural Park and partook in the celebrations of the 1st 'Day of the Mediterranean' of the Union for the Mediterranean.

PlasticBusters MPAs is a 48-month-long project funded by Interreg Mediterranean (EU) and implemented by MIO-ECSDE and several other partners (<https://plasticbustersmpas.interreg-med.eu>).

5.5. The Interreg Med MPA-Engage

The Interreg Med MPA-Engage project aims to support and promote the role of Mediterranean MPAs as central tools for the implementation of the ecosystem approach for the adaptation and mitigation to climate change (CC). The 3-year-long project kicked-off in January 2020 in Barcelona. By strengthening the management and the networking of MPAs, and by promoting a Mediterranean policy dialogue among the stakeholders, the project contributes to maintaining marine ecosystems in the region. The main lines of action of the project include: an assessment of the CC vulnerability (ecological and socio-economic) of MPAs; monitoring the CC effects on MPAs; engagement of citizen scientists (in particular recreational divers and small-scale/recreational fishermen) in monitoring actions; introducing CC aspects within the MPAs management plans; transferring actions; etc. The project is led by the Institute of Marine Sciences (CSIC) and is implemented by 15 partners from the following 8 countries: Albania, Belgium, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain. MIO-ECSDE is leading actions related to capitalization, participatory science and the elaboration of climate change

mitigation and adaptation plans for 7 MPAs and of a joint action plan. Find more info the project here: <https://mpa-engage.interreg-med.eu>

On the 18th of June 2021, MIO-ECSDE organized the 1st MPA Engage capitalization event providing an opportunity for stakeholders to connect and share experiences towards a collective and consolidated response to climate change in Mediterranean MPAs. The online event, organized by MIO-ECSDE and facilitated by Jeremy Wilks, climate correspondent at Euronews, brought together prominent speakers and more than 120 participants, to discuss the recent policy and scientific advances with regards to climate change and its impacts in the region. At the heart of the capitalization event was the MPA Engage featured actions aiming to support MPA managers to adapt to and mitigate the ongoing climate change effects. Read more at <https://bit.ly/3A37fNH>

5.6. The ENI CBC MED MED4WASTE

The ENI CBC MED project entitled “Mediterranean Dialogue for Waste Management Governance (MED4WASTE) kicked off in October 2021. The two-year long project aims at facilitating new governance models for integrated and efficient urban waste management policies across the Mediterranean. Its main lines of action are: (1) building on and improving existing knowledge to foster capitalisation of socially innovative, integrated and efficient practices from public, private and social sectors in waste management, with special focus on waste prevention and circular economy approaches; (2) offering guidance and training for public administrations and relevant private and social stakeholders, to apply transferring actions and exploitation measures and to support planning, adapting and re-addressing of waste management plans, policies and other management actions and normative drivers; (3) supporting dissemination of key results and increase awareness among key stakeholders, promote cross-border and cross-sectorial networking, and foster long-term commitment of decision and policy makers to promote an environmental, socio-economic and institutional transition towards green growth. The project actions will be implemented in Spain, Greece, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, and Italy. It is led by Fundació Universitària Balmaes (Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya) , while MIO-ECSDE is co-leading the policy dialogue and mainstreaming, and cross fertilization activities of the project.

5.7. The ENI CBC MED Plastic Busters CAP

In July 2021, MIO-ECSDE was informed that the ENI CBC MED project proposal entitled “Fostering knowledge transfer to tackle marine litter in the Med by integrating EbA into ICZM (Plastic Busters CAP) was approved. The project will focus on facilitating decision-makers and stakeholders in effectively tackling marine litter by integrating Ecosystem-based Management (EbM) into ICZM planning towards supporting concrete mitigation actions on the science-policy-society interface. The backbone of the project is shaped by a set of 5 selected projects for capitalization, namely the UfM PLASTIC BUSTERS, the ENI CBC COMMON, the MPA-ADAPT, the ENI CBC CO-EVOLVE4BG and the ENI CBC MED4EBM. The project, will implement marine litter related actions in the following countries: Italy, Greece, Italy, Spain, Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan. MIO-ECSDE is leading the work package on “Marine Litter Monitoring & Assessment”. The kick-off meeting of the project will be held in Siena, in January 2022.

5.8. The H2020 SHARED GREEN DEAL project

In February 2022 a new H2020 5-year project will kick-off, in which MIO-ECSDE is a partner. It is entitled Social sciences & Humanities for Achieving a Responsible, Equitable and Desirable GREEN DEAL (SHARED GREEN DEAL), brings together 20+ partners and aims to undertake innovative experiments in behaviour and practice, through the use of comparative (across country) case studies spanning all topic areas of the European Green Deal. This will generate a better understanding of social practices and

behavioural change processes, including enabling as well as inhibiting factors. From these interdisciplinary foundations, a new 'Shared Green Deal' network will be launched, and clear policy and governance recommendations will be provided, based on the lessons learnt from the project's experiments.

5.9. Framework & Service Contracts

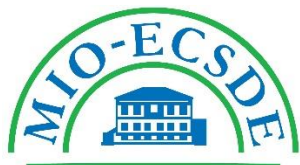
MIO-ECSDE was participating in the following framework and service contracts:

- ▶ **Framework Contract entitled "Green Growth and Circular Economy - Supporting activities for stakeholder engagement, exchange of information and best practices. Ad hoc stakeholder engagement activities and stakeholder engagement toolkit (LOT 2)".** Within this framework contract MIO-ECSDE is collaborating with INTRASOFT, AEIDL, TEAMWORK, INSPIIRO and COFFEY. During 2021, MIO-ECSDE did not contribute to any service contract.
- ▶ **Service Contract entitled Increasing public awareness about EU nature protection policy – utilising EU nature data.** Within the contract MIO-ECSDE is collaborating with ADELPHI, INTRASOFT and ATECMA. The contract entails several activities that focus on improving access to biodiversity data and its use in awareness raising via the development of communication and awareness raising materials. MIO-ECSDE provides expertise on environmental science communication and advocacy, and on Environmental Education/Education for Sustainable Development. In February-March 2021 a series of interviews were carried out by MIO-ECSDE to a targeted group of ESD professionals (educators, practitioner's, administrators) who gave input for the new learning resource that the project is developing, the "European Nature Policy Toolkit". The toolkit is addressed to formal and non-formal educators, working with 10-16 years old students and includes four modules: (a) How do we relate to nature? (b) Explore Europe's nature (c) How do we protect nature? (d) Engaging in nature protection, plus presentation of key concepts and lists of references/resources. During 2021 MIO-ECSDE provided input, feedback and advice to the toolkit's development, while in October – November MIO-ECSDE organised three (3) focus group discussions to pilot test it, engaging some 30 educators and experts. The finalised toolkit will be translated into all European languages in early 2022.

6. Publications & other resources

- ▶ A publication co-authored within the framework of the MSFD Technical Group on Marine Litter: “Fleet, D.M., Vlachogianni, Th., Hanke, G., 2021. A Joint List of Litter Categories for Marine Macrolitter Monitoring. Manual for the application of the classification system. Publications Office of the European Union.”
- ▶ A MIO-ECSDE position paper on the Revision of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, July 2021, <https://bit.ly/3zT15j4>
- ▶ Sustainable Mediterranean: Issue No 78, Climate Change: The rapidly increasing challenge for the Mediterranean. <https://bit.ly/3l351rd> and Issue No 79, Ocean Literacy for All Mediterranean People: The Ocean We Need for the Future We Want. <https://bit.ly/3w1DQJR>
- ▶ A research paper on marine litter: “Fortibuoni, T., Amadesi, B., Vlachogianni, Th., 2021. Composition and abundance of macrolitter along the Italian coastline: the first baseline assessment within the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Environmental Pollution, 115886, ISSN 0269-7491, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2020.115886>”.
- ▶ Guidelines produced within the Interreg Med MPA Engage on how to develop a local Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Plan, January 2021.
- ▶ Guidelines produced within the Interreg Med MPA Engage on how to apply a Quintuple Helix Participatory Approach, January, 2021.
- ▶ Guidelines produced within the Interreg Med Plastic Busters MPAs project on how to setup and implement marine litter prevention and mitigation demos. Plastic Busters MPAs, September 2021.
- ▶ An educational material in English and Greek entitled “Plastic waste? Into the recycling bin! Far away from the blue sea. 18+1 ideas for activities” ([Student Material](#)). It is accompanied by a poster and a set of bookmarks (<https://medies.net/project/240569/>). A Teacher’s manual is near its completion.
- ▶ A statement created by the Mediterranean Committee on ESD & the Secretariat: “[Mediterranean ESD Message](#)” in May that was conveyed to the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (17-19 May) and presented by Prof Scoullos to the Regional Day for Europe (in the context of the World Conference) on 25 May 2021.
- ▶ The article “The Path to Sustainability is Through Education” in the Publication “[BRIDGING THE SEA - A Review of Mediterranean Civil Society](#)”, Lisa Ariemma (ed.) and the “Med Dialogue Programme” team, Particip GmbH, 2021.
- ▶ Two Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on Odour Pollution for the Public and Educators, in English, Greek, Portuguese and Spanish, available at <https://dnoses.envirolearning.net>
- ▶ An educational material (in Greek) entitled “[Waste Ashore – Mylopotamos](#)” to be applied in the Mylopotamos touristic area of Crete (Greece). It can be used by the local teachers to sensitize their students. Similarly, an educational material (in Greek) entitled “[Waste Ashore – Malevisi](#)” to be applied in the Malevisi area of Crete (Greece). It can be used by the local teachers to sensitize their students.

- ▶ [A Resource Handbook to Promote Intercultural Dialogue and Sustainability through Mediterranean Food & Diet “Mediterranean food: our legacy, our future” \(ISBN 978-960-6793-31-8 MIO-ECSDE, 2021\).](#)



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