



Report of Activities 2025

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



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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 2025 reflecting the changes of the 30th AGM that took place in October 2025:

Chair: Prof. Michael Scoullas (Elliniki Etairia)

Co-Chair: Prof. Mohammed Ftouhi (Morocco)

Members:

- Mr. Piotr Barczak (EEB)
- Ms Ghada Ahmadein (RAED) (with Dr. Emad Adly as alternate)
- Mr. Giannis Michail (Elliniki Etairia)
- Mr. Vjeran Pirsic (Croatia)
- Ms Antonia Theodosiou (Cyprus)
- Mr. Jean-Valère Geronimi (France) (with Ms Céline Labbé as alternate)
- Prof. Michael Scoullas and Mr. Giorgos Sampson (Greece)
- Ms Michela Presta and Ms Patrizia Bonelli (Italy)
- Mr. Ziyad Alawneh (Jordan)
- Ms Marie Therese Seif (Lebanon)
- Mr. Vincent Attard (Malta) / Treasurer
- Prof. Mohamed Ftouhi (Morocco)
- Mr. Imad Attrash (Palestine)
- Mr. Mario Alves (Portugal)
- Mr. Milan Vogrin (Slovenia)
- Mr. Jeremie Fosse (Spain)
- Ms Suheir Raies (Syria)
- Mr. Habib Ben Boubaker (Tunisia)
- Ms Yasemin Korkmaz (Türkiye)

1.2. Membership issues

One upgrade request to Full membership status was received by the Secretariat in 2025 from IndyACT, a new Corresponding member NGO from Lebanon, approved in 2024.

1.3. MIO-ECSDE Secretariat

During 2025 the status of the Secretariat's staff remained mostly unchanged. Ms Eirini Sakellaraki continues into 2025 as new Head of Finance and Administration, while her predecessor, Ms Bessie Mantzara, continues contributing as a part time Senior Advisor to the Chair.

1.4. Quality management, financial auditing, accountability standards

MIO-ECSDE maintains all the ISO procedures updated and prepares for 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 2025 annual review (20 June) was very successful, covered all relevant institutional and operational issues, and was done by *Swiss Approval Certification Services*. To support MIO-ECSDE staff, an external consultant was contracted again in 2025, to conduct internal audits, review the current procedures and suggest updates and adjustments, etc.

The [2024 Financial Report](#) was audited early in 2025 by *Compass Certified Auditors and Business Consultants*. The results were positive and the draft report was approved by the 84th Executive Bureau Meeting in February 2025.

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.

As [full member of “Accountable Now”](#), MIO-ECSDE continues to apply the principles of accountability and transparency across its work. In 2025, a key action under this framework took place in the context of the YOU(th)Care project. While completing the Organizational Gender & Intersectionality Self-Assessment Tool of the project, it became apparent that the MIO-ECSDE Gender Policy was due for an update, particularly to better reflect intersectionality. A revised version was prepared by the Secretariat. Once approved, it will replace the current version uploaded on the [“Our Accountability”](#) section of the MIO-ECSDE webpage. *(this happened in the Spring of 2026 and the updated version in on the Federation’s website).*

MIO-ECSDE continues hosting GWP-Med based on an agreement with GWP Headquarters. All involved parties agree to continue this important for the region institutional relationship.

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 (in English and French) were prepared and sent out to Member Organizations and the wider MIO-ECSDE database (see Issue #121, Issue 122 and Issue 123, <http://mio-ecsde.org/news/mio-ecsde-e-news>) in January 2025, July 2025 and December 2025, respectively.

(ii) The 'Sustainable Mediterranean' journal

During this period, no Sustainable Mediterranean Issue was published.

(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 YouTube media were updated. MIO-ECSDE is considering the discontinuation of its presence on X (formerly Twitter), as the platform no longer aligns with organisational principles (evidence-based communication, democratic dialogue, inclusion, etc.) and seems to be less effective in directing supporters to reports, campaigns, etc.

(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 (Facebook) page of MEDIES, was also regularly fed (on average 1 post per week), while the Instagram account launched in 2024, is still ongoing.

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

2.1.2. Showcasing actions of the Membership

The Secretariat informs its members of various regional developments, events (webinars and on-line meetings) and opportunities. The dedicated section of the MIO-ECSDE website with the news of the Membership was updated with information they have shared. There is also a dedicated section in the MIO-ECSDE e-News. The MEDIES website also communicates 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)

COMPSUD aims to maintain close relations with the UfM Parliamentary Assembly's Committee on Energy, Environment, and Water, as well as with the 2nd Standing Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM). Efforts to revitalise the COMPSUD advanced in 2024-2025. In December 2024, MIO-ECSDE board members were contacted and provided with all necessary documentation to initiate the nomination of new parliamentarians to the network—aiming for a minimum of two per country, with attention to gender balance and political diversity. As of December 2025, the COMPSUD Network is composed of 31 parliamentarians (28 new and 3 old members), 13 of which are women.

For the first time in several years, COMPSUD members convened in person (and on-line). A hybrid meeting took place in Cairo, within the framework of the Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action (21 to 23 October 2025), titled “Making the behavioural shift happen”. This event brought together NGOs/CSOs, parliamentarians, journalists, women and youth organisations, and other key actors, and was organised under the EU-funded WES-BCA project and the GEF-funded MedProgramme (see Section 3). COMPSUD was represented at the high-level opening by Ms. Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou, former COMPSUD Chairperson (2015–2017) and Vice-Chair (2020–2025), Greek Prime Minister's Special Envoy for the Ocean and Member of the Hellenic Parliament, and Ms. Noha Zaki, former Senator of the Egyptian Senate. Both stressed the key role of parliamentarians in addressing the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, and highlighted the importance of Mediterranean regional organisations—such as UNEP/MAP, MCSD, the Union for the Mediterranean, and the League of Arab States—as platforms for cooperation and sustainable development. On 22 October, a closed COMPSUD session took place during which elections took place. Ms. Avgerinopoulou was unanimously elected Chairperson for the period November 2025–November 2027. Just after this closed session, a plenary Forum session entitled “The Multifaceted Role of Parliamentarians and Local Authorities” was held, moderated by Ms. Noha Zaki and Prof. Michael Scoullou. The session included two panels with Members of Parliament, representatives of local authorities, and youth organisations, followed by discussion with participants.

COMPSUD was also represented by its Cairo-based member Ms Noha A. Zaki, in the 24th Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP24) to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (Barcelona Convention) which took place in Cairo from 1-5 December 2025. COP24 approved another 2-year term of COMPSUD on the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (See Section 3.1).

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 Hybrid University, etc. Since the Chairman has coordinated the drafting of the “Sustainability Charter of the Greek Universities” (2022), its approval by the Synod of Rectors of the Greek Universities and currently its promotion, an effort is in the pipeline to mobilize through this network similar charters/guidelines in other interested countries. Access the Charter in the Greek and English language: <https://medies.net/the-charter-of-greek-universities-for-sd/>

▶ **The network of Mediterranean Journalists and Communication Professionals working on Environmental issues / COMJESD:** Throughout 2025, members of COMJESD were regularly kept informed about major developments and opportunities. COMJESD members were invited to participate in the Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum in Cairo (October 2025) and will also be actively involved in national workshops of the WES-BCA project—particularly in Component II in 2026, which focuses on enhancing environmental awareness and fostering behavioural change (see Section 3).

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 MCSD*

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 (MCSD). The UNEP/MAP Coordinator and other UNEP/MAP representatives have contributed with opening remarks or key presentations to many meetings (co-)organised by MIO-ECSDE.

MIO-ECSDE is participating in the on-going update of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) and thus contributing to the working sessions of the Extended Steering Committee of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development and is also a member of the Working Group on Circular Economy for the Review of the MSSD (MIO-ECSDE participated in a dedicated meeting of the working group in Marseilles on 13 March 2025). Furthermore, the Secretariat updated existing, or created new, factsheets for the MSSD Flagship Initiatives it is promoting, i.e. on Encouraging the adoption and implementation of the Aarhus Convention in the whole of the Mediterranean (on-going), on the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (on-going), and on Regional assessments and knowledge exchanges on waste reduction (completed). At the 21st Meeting of the MCSD (Corinth, 24-26 June 2025) MIO-ECSDE was nominated to be a Member of the MCSD in the NGOs category. For a more proper North/South representation among the NGO category, MIO-ECSDE offered its place to RAED, that accepted with great appreciation.

MIO-ECSDE staff has also continued its very close collaboration with UNEP/MAP on matters relating to marine litter monitoring and mitigation in line with the updated Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management. MIO-ECSDE attended the meetings of the EcAp Correspondence Groups on Marine Litter and Pollution Monitoring, held online on 29–30 January 2025 and in person on the 15th of September)

The Federation was present at the Meeting of the MAP Focal Points (16–19 September) in Athens and in the 24th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (COP24), which took place in Cairo on 2–5 December 2025. The COP brought together representatives of

governments, international organisations, civil society and youth to advance cooperation for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea and coasts. During the Ministerial Session, the Chairman of MIO-ECSDE delivered a joint statement with Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED), highlighting the importance of strengthening good governance, transparency and the role of civil society in environmental decision-making. MIO-ECSDE also contributed to discussions, exchanges and side events on issues such as the Water–Energy–Food–Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus, maritime decarbonisation and sustainable blue economy approaches, youth engagement and inclusive marine and coastal governance. (Read more [here](#))

The Chairman of MIO-ECSDE participated in the Annual Stocktaking Meeting of the GEF-funded MedProgramme of UNEP/MAP in Istanbul (8-10 April 2025). Also, Prof. Scoullou was invited by the Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) Advisory Committee, comprising GEF, UNDP, UNEP, FAO, NOAA and IOC/UNESCO as its Secretariat, to the 24th LME Consultative Meeting (LME24) that took place on 14-16 May 2025 in Athens, Greece. Organized by the IW:LEARN project and co-hosted by UNEP/MAP, LME24 served as a key platform for the GEF LME portfolio.

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:

- ▶ Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- ▶ Biodiversity conservation (Natura 2000, MPAs, the LIFE Programme, etc.)
- ▶ Resource efficiency and circular economy (waste prevention, reuse, recycling)
- ▶ Pollution control (air/odour pollution, marine and riverine pollution, hazardous chemicals)
- ▶ Education for Sustainable Development and Ocean Literacy
- ▶ Sustainable development
- ▶ Access to environmental information, public participation, and access to justice

Particular attention was given to the following EU policy frameworks and instruments:

- ▶ EU Green Deal
- ▶ EU Zero Pollution Action Plan
- ▶ EU Restoration Law
- ▶ EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)
- ▶ European Neighbourhood Policy and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)
- ▶ 2030GreenerMed Agenda of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)
- ▶ LIFE Programme
- ▶ Farm to Fork strategy
- ▶ The New Pact for the Mediterranean

The Secretariat, on the occasion of the new College of Commissioners, the mandate of which started towards the end of 2024, reached out in January 2025 to the ones assigned with portfolios related to MIO-ECSDE’s policy areas of work, in order to establish direct contacts and introduce the Federation’s activities. In the following table the communications and meetings which took place, are summarised.

Commissioner	Portfolio	Communication Status
Mr. Wopke Hoekstra	Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth	Suggested that the MIO-ECSDE reaches out to the Cabinet of Commissioner Roswall, as responsible for managing the water resilience portfolio.
Mr. Glenn Micallef	Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport	A productive online call took place on 6/3/2025 with Ms Desislava Dimitrova, Member of the Commissioner's Cabinet working in the areas related to culture. See here .
Ms Teresa Ribera Rodríguez	Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition	The Executive Vice-President apologised due to her heavy schedule.
Ms Jessika Roswall	Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy	The Commissioner's Cabinet replied but without follow-up for a meeting.
Ms Dubravka Šuica	Commissioner for the Mediterranean	An in-person meeting of Prof. Scoullas and Ms Roniotes took place in Brussels, with Mr. Ivo Belet and Vesna Loncaric of Commissioner Šuica's Cabinet, on 27/5/2025 with considerable emphasis on the drafting progress of the new Pact for the Mediterranean.
Mr. Costas Kadis	Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans	A very productive online call took place with Commissioner Kadis himself, and staff members, on 21/2/2025.
Mr. Apostolos Tzizikostas	Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism	A very fruitful online call took place on 20/2/2025, with Mr. Filippo Terruso, Member of the Commissioner's Cabinet responsible for Tourism and the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. See here .

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

As in previous years, during 2025, 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, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the UNECE Aarhus Convention, are preparing for further support to Mediterranean countries that are not members to join the Aarhus Convention in a smooth and effective manner and come closer to the target set by the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development for five new countries to join the Convention in the coming years. The "Mediterranean Accession Agenda" is being promoted throughout the region and under the WES-BCA project, more specific tailored support will be implemented in 2026 and 2027 (e.g. national round tables).

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

The Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD) and its Action Plan towards 2030: Following its adoption in the special High-Level Event within the 9th Environment for Europe (9Efe) Ministerial Conference in Cyprus (October 2022), the Secretariat and the Chairman continue to promote it and keep informed the educational community of the Euro-Mediterranean region at various related occasions (conferences and events) and through its communication channels (newsletters, posts, website, etc.).

A Meeting of the Bureau of the MCESD was held on 21 October 2025 within the Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action – “Making the Behavioural Shift Happen” in Cairo. The meeting was organized through a hybrid format and was attended by representatives of the Ministries of Education of Cyprus and Greece and the Ministry of Environment of Morocco, of the regional organisations: UNEP MAP, UfM, and LAS as well as of NGOs and academia. The participants reviewed the activities achieved within the period: December 2022 - August 2025 presented by Prof Scoullos. They also discussed the proposed orientations for the MCESD activities for 2026-2027. Additionally, ESD had its dedicated session within the Cairo Forum on 22 October, entitled “Advancing Education for Sustainable Development to Drive Transformative Change at the Individual, Institutional, and Collective Level”, that provided stakeholders space to engage in reflecting on mainstreaming and promoting ESD in the region - at national and local levels- in relation to the implementation of the MSESD Action Plan towards 2030. Dr. Aravella Zachariou, Ministry of Education of Cyprus, Chair of the UNECE ESD Committee, Chair of MCESD, moderated the session, which featured two panels: the first dedicated to applying the MSESD in formal and non-formal educational settings, and the second on best practices of the Whole Institute Approach in tertiary education.

The 21st Meeting of the MCSD that was held in Corinth, Greece, on 24-26 June, focused mainly on the “Updated Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) 2025-2036”. The meeting and the updated Strategy reconfirmed the commitment to promote Education and Research for Sustainable Development under the strategic direction 6.5, and in particular through the implementation of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD). ESD is recognized once more as a “cross-cutting enabler that supports all MSSD objectives” and education is highlighted apart from 6.5 in many other Strategic directions of the MSSD 2025-2036.

UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development: MIO-ECSDE participates officially in the Bureau of the UNECE ESD Steering Committee having the status of Observer NGO Member (since October 2020) while the Chairman had a leading role in the Ad Hoc group on Strategic Planning 2030 of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD (adopted at the Efe9 Conference). Prof Michael Scoullos contributed to and participated in the 20th Meeting of the UNECE ESD SC in Geneva on 28-30 May 2025, celebrating the 20 years since the official adoption of the UNECE Strategy on ESD. The anniversary offered a great opportunity for Member States and organizations to reflect and exchange on this long-lasting collaborative process. Among other things, Prof Scoullos made a ceremonial presentation on “The story of the UNECE SC establishment”.

UNESCO’s ESD-Net 2030: MIO-ECSDE, through MEDIES, is part of the UNESCO Global Network “ESD-Net 2030”, that is the follow-up initiative of the Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP) (since 2022). The network acts as a diverse and inclusive platform comprised of competent Strategic Partners - from countries, IGOs, NGOs/CSOs, Academia, Youth, etc. in order to advance ESD Policy, boost knowledge sharing and collaboration schemes, enhance advocacy, monitoring and evaluation on ESD. Currently, it organises a series of webinars on ESD pedagogies in consultation with its members.

UNESCO’s Greening Education Partnership (GEP): Since its launching in 2022 MEDIES is pleased to have joined this global initiative of UNESCO in a common goal of “getting every learner climate-ready”.

Together with the ‘ESD-Net 2030,’ GEP provides a platform to exchange experiences and showcase good practices, structured around 4 key pillars of transformative education: Greening schools; Greening curricula; Greening teacher training and education systems’ capacities; and, Greening communities. MEDIES participates in its working group meetings on Youth Actions and Greening Curricula

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, MENA (Directorate-General for Middle East, North Africa, Gulf which replaced DG NEAR in February 2025) 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 played a high-level advocacy and policy advisory role in the development of the **New Pact for the Mediterranean** by presenting detailed recommendations during the region-wide consultation process, which included a stakeholder survey and meetings in the Mediterranean.

MIO-ECSDE requested a meeting that was eventually held in Brussels on 27 May 2025, to directly exchange with the Cabinet of the new DG MENA Commissioner Dubravka Šuica. In terms of the New Pact for the Mediterranean, the discussion emphasised the importance of climate resilience, integrated resource governance (WEFE Nexus), science-based water diplomacy, and strong civil society participation, with clear alignment to broader EU policy instruments such as the Ocean Pact and Water Resilience Strategy. According to the Commissioner’s Cabinet, a first draft of the Pact is expected by autumn 2025, followed by a Ministerial-level launching.

Through the WES-BCA and the Innovative Sustainable Economy Mission of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, MIO-ECSDE directly supports the UfM Secretariat in the implementation of the 2030GreenerMed Agenda and its monitoring process. MIO-ECSDE has engaged in multiple exchanges with the UfM within the framework of the UfM labelled Plastic Busters Initiative and the Interreg Euro MED MIRAMAR project -launched in April 2025- focusing on multiple stressors’ effects on marine ecosystems as a follow-up to the Plastic Busters CAP and Plastic Busters MPAs child projects.

MIO-ECSDE actively participated in the 2nd Mediterranean Green Week, held from 24 to 26 June 2025 in Brussels. Co-organised by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the event brought together policymakers, experts, youth leaders, and stakeholders from across the Euro-Mediterranean region to address key challenges such as climate action, biodiversity loss, pollution prevention, gender mainstreaming, and the green transition. Also, as a key partner of the WES-BCA project and coordinator of its Outreach component on environment and climate action, MIO-ECSDE was active throughout the week, including at an off-site session on the 26th of June, dedicated to the External Evaluation of the implementation of the UfM’s Greener Med Agenda and a Capacity Building Workshop on gender-sensitive climate policies, promoting gender-responsive approaches and inclusive green growth within the UfM community.

Prof. Michael Scoullas, Chairman of MIO-ECSDE and Team Leader of the WES-BCA project, participated in the 15th Meeting of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Regional Platform on Water, held on 5–6 November 2025 in Barcelona. During the meeting, he presented, together with the UfM, an overview of WEFE-related activities and the Strategy for the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus in the Mediterranean Source-to-Sea continuum.

3.1.2.1. *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, apart from the WEFE Nexus advocacy work, MIO-ECSDE promoted during 2025 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 (“ZERO DROP MORNOS and RESILIENT THESSALY Programmes);
- 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

3.2.1 *MIO-ECSDE at the UN Ocean Conference 2025 in Nice*

The 2025 UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3 - Nice, France), on 10 June provided an important platform for Mediterranean stakeholders to showcase their commitment to ocean sustainability. Mediterranean countries were strongly represented across political, scientific, and civil society levels, with MIO-ECSDE and several of its members actively contributing to the region’s unified voice.

Co-hosted by France and Costa Rica under the theme “Scaling Up Ocean Action Based on Science and Innovation for the Implementation of Goal 14,” the summit gathered more than 60 Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and over 10,000 global actors committed to safeguarding the ocean, making the event “the largest ocean summit ever”.

Mediterranean Day & Ministers’ Declaration: At the Mediterranean Day event, co-organized by UNEP/MAP, the “Declaration of the Ministers of the Mediterranean” was adopted. The event was organised to commemorate 50 years of the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan and 30 years since the post-Rio amendment of the Barcelona Convention. The declaration reaffirmed regional determination to: promote the WEFE Nexus approach as a cross-sectoral planning tool; accelerate actions to tackle marine litter and plastic pollution, advance nature-based solutions and science-informed marine governance.

Side Event - Scaling Up Solutions for a Plastic-Free Mediterranean: Prof. Scoullos coordinated the high-level side event “Scaling Up Solutions for a Plastic-Free Mediterranean” with key note addresses from H.E. Ms Agnès Pannier-Runacher, Minister for Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, Forests, Sea and Fisheries of France and H.E. Ms Yasmine Fouad, Minister of the Environment for Egypt. The panel featured distinguished regional and international speakers. Co-organized by France, Greece, the European Commission, and leading scientific bodies, the session showcased best practices—including sustainable production models, improved waste tracking and source-to-sea approaches. MIO-ECSDE echoed these messages, drawing on its long-standing work to prevent marine litter pollution, improve monitoring, mobilize local communities and push for stronger policies to align Mediterranean efforts with the upcoming global plastics treaty.

Media Engagement and Policy Advocacy for Global, Regional and Domestic Dimensions: On the occasion of the conference, Prof. Michael Scoullou, participated the week following UNOC3, in a televised panel on the Hellenic Parliament TV, offering a comprehensive analysis of water and ocean policy challenges.

Read more [here](#)

3.2.2 Asterousia Hybrid University

Since the designation of Asterousia region in Crete as a Biosphere Reserve (BR), the Asterousia Hybrid University has evolved into an "institutionalized" event. With the strong support of the local authorities and citizens, as well as UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, the Asterousia University offers a unique opportunity for young managers and researchers of BRs and other designated sites of the Mediterranean to meet annually or biannually and exchange practices and methodologies on a topic of specific concern. Achievements within 2025 were:

- Phase B (online) of the 2024-2025 edition, took place between 27 January and 16 February 2025 as a three-week long event providing learning opportunities to a wider international audience including asynchronous and synchronous sessions. The focus was "Water Management" and the course had 79 active learners from 39 countries.

- The 2025-2026 edition of Phase A (live): The event took place once again in the Asterousia Biosphere Reserve between 28 October and 1 November 2025, with 38 individuals from 11 countries. This year the event focused on "Integrated Natural and Cultural Heritage-based approaches for Biosphere Reserves and other Designated Sites in the Mediterranean".

- Phase B (online), is planned to take place in January – February 2026.

Read more on the recent and all previous Summer/Hybrid Universities <https://medies.net/project/summer-universities/>

The Asterousia University is held every year with the kind contribution and co-organisation of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Venice Office), the Region of Crete, the Heraklion Development Agency, and the Local Committee of the Asterousia BR.

3.2.3 SOS-ZEROPOL 2030 2nd Living Lab on "Tyre Wear Particles: A Source-to-Sea Approach for Prevention and Mitigation Scenarios"

The 2nd edition of the SOS-ZEROPOL2030 Mediterranean Living Lab took place in Athens on 6-7 May 2025, bringing together key stakeholders to explore effective strategies for reducing car tyre particle emissions across the entire product chain. Organized by MIO-ECSDE in partnership with SOS-ZEROPOL2030 project partners, the event advanced regional efforts to address one of the most pervasive and overlooked sources of microplastic pollution: tyre wear particles (TWPs). This second edition of the Living Lab focused on evaluating scenarios for the prevention and reduction of TWPs, with particular attention to eco-design approaches for car tyres and the removal of TWPs in wastewater treatment plants. Building on the key findings from the first Mediterranean Living Lab in November 2024, participants explored, through a collaborative SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, the feasibility and impact of four future scenarios for preventing and mitigating tyre wear particle emissions. These scenarios were structured around two critical axes: responsibility—ranging from private-sector-led to public-sector-driven solutions—and approach, spanning from reactive measures to proactive interventions.

The Living Lab gathered a diverse group of policy- and decision-makers, industry representatives, researchers and academics, civil society representatives, and service providers from 13 Mediterranean and other EU Member States. The event facilitated cross-sector dialogue and fostered a shared understanding of how to drive forward effective and sustainable solutions to tyre-related microplastic pollution. The outcomes of both Living Labs will inform a set of policy recommendations to the European Commission, contributing to the EU's broader agenda to combat microplastic pollution and protect European marine ecosystems. Read more [here](#) and in section 5.

3.2.4 MIO-ECSDE and SOS-ZEROPOL2030 at the Maritime Day in Cork City

The European Maritime Day 2025 (EMD2025), held in Cork City, convened over 1,300 stakeholders from across Europe and beyond, representing a diverse spectrum of maritime sectors, policy domains, and civil society. This year's edition served as a dynamic platform for advancing dialogue and cooperation on sustainable maritime development. The event featured a rich array of activities, including exhibitions on the blue economy and marine environmental innovation, keynote addresses by prominent ocean leaders and structured networking sessions via B2Match. As part of EMD2025, University College Cork, MIO-ECSDE and GRID-Arendal, organized a SOS-ZEROPOL2030 workshop on 23 May, on science communication and stakeholder engagement in the context of marine pollution. The workshop showcased the project's creative, evidence-based strategies for making information on marine pollutants more accessible and engaging for diverse audiences. Central to the discussion was the project's Living Lab approach, which engages stakeholders in three regional seas to address under-researched and poorly regulated pollutants like Tyre Wear Particles (TWPs) and PFAS, which are increasingly present in our marine environments. Read more [here](#).

3.2.5 the Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action - "Making the behavioural shift happen" (Cairo, 21-23 October 2025).

The Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action - "Making the behavioural shift happen: NGOs/CSOs, Parliamentarians, Journalists, Women and Youth organisations and other actors meet in Cairo", took place in Cairo from 21–23 October 2025 at the Triumph Plaza Hotel. The Forum was organised by MIO-ECSDE within the framework of the EU-funded WES-BCA and GEF-funded MedProgramme projects. More than 170 stakeholders from 21 Mediterranean and other countries participated, representing NGOs/CSOs, parliamentarians, journalists, women and youth organisations, academia and research institutions, the private sector, and public authorities. The regional event was the culmination of preparations that began in April 2025.

Taking note of the many challenges of today, the Forum aimed to support Mediterranean society (bottom-up and top-down) through the enhancement of the skills of civil society groups in advocating and better navigating through the increasingly complex landscape. Discussions highlighted that while the current geopolitical and socio-economic context may hinder progress in areas such as environment, water, biodiversity and climate action, it also creates opportunities for innovation, cooperation and transformative behavioural change. Participants explored ways to break down siloed governance approaches and further consolidate active Mediterranean Communities of Practice, bringing together diverse voices and expertise in support of climate preparedness across the region.

The discussions reaffirmed that the Mediterranean continues to be a front-runner region the world over in climate adaptation solutions—where state-of-the art policies, integrated approaches, science-based shared knowledge, strong regional and sub-regional cooperation, awareness raising campaigns and educational programmes at all levels are driving meaningful change through an increasingly enhanced gender and youth lens. Particular emphasis was placed on strengthening the gender and

youth dimensions of environmental governance, as well as enhancing collaboration among civil society, policymakers and other stakeholders to accelerate behavioural change.

A set of recommendations/messages was formulated and agreed so that a common Mediterranean vision and narrative on climate action informs key policy processes, such as: COP24 of the Barcelona Convention (December 2025) (confirmed with UNEP/MAP), UNEA-7 (December 2025), European Union/Union for the Mediterranean and League of Arab States High-Level Events, e.g., the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Water, Arab Committee for Sustainable Development, the Ministerial Meeting for the New Pact for the Mediterranean (date tbd), the UfM Ministerial on Water Security (tbd in 2026) etc., the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MCESD), the MedProgramme final Stocktaking Meeting (2026), etc.

The Forum recommendations were indeed presented to COP24 of the Barcelona Convention on the 4th of December 2025. They will be circulated to the Forum participants for comments during the first quarter of 2026, in order to be finalised in a consultative manner. Read more [here](#).

3.2.6 30th AGM of MIO-ECSDE

Preparations for the 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of MIO-ECSDE began in July combined with the Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action - “Making the behavioural shift happen” (Cairo, 21-23 October 2025). The 30th AGM, which took place on 22 October 2025 embedded within the Forum, combined in-person and online participation of the Federation’s member organisations, enabling broad engagement despite funding limitations supporting only participants from the MENA region, the Western Balkans and Türkiye. During the AGM, members reviewed the Federation’s progress and unanimously approved key documents concerning the 2025 activities and the planning of activities and finances for 2026. The meeting concluded with elections for members of the Executive Bureau whose two-year term had ended, establishing the Bureau that will serve until the next AGM.

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 be part of and monitor 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.
- ▶ Continued to promote, in cooperation with GWP-Med various older and newer educational 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 resources are available [here](#)).
- ▶ Initiated comprehensive work on riverine litter monitoring and mitigation in relation to the Water Framework Directive (WFD), through the IPA-Adriatic TETHYS4ADRION project (see Section 5). This work addresses a current limitation of the WFD, which does not yet consider litter pollution as part of its ecological assessment criteria. Within the framework of the TETHYS4ADRION project, in May 2025, MIO-ECSDE participated as a panellist in an international conference held in the City

of Čapljina (Bosnia and Herzegovina), which brought together over 120 diverse participants to exchange views and perspectives on the threat of riverine litter and strategies for addressing it effectively. The conference featured distinguished speakers and panelists, including the Ministers of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry, and the Ministry of Tourism of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. This joint event fostered valuable dialogue among project partners, policymakers, and other stakeholders, reinforcing a shared commitment to reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable river management.

- ▶ Throughout 2025 the targeted education and awareness activities organised for students and teachers in Greece within the “Zero Drop-Athens” and “Resilient Thessaly” campaigns of GWP-Med, engaged a total of 760 students and 79 teachers. MEdIES is looking into the possibility of translating and producing the popular [educational \(floor game\) available in Greek and English](#), into more languages (French and Arabic).
- ▶ 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. From January to April MIO-ECSDE/MEdIES collaborated closely with the Museums Network to organize and promote the 6th edition (2025) of the successful School Contest entitled: “The Water We Want - from heritage to future”. The annual contest invites students from all around the world aged 6 to 25 years old to express their ideas about the links between water heritage and the SDG challenges through artworks (drawings, photos, soundscapes, videos). MEdIES disseminated widely the call and contest’s toolkit to its members and channels and assisted schools and NGOs to submit their works. In addition, MEdIES participates in the ‘Water and Education Working group’ of WAMUNET, currently working on co-creating the “Water Cloud”, an online multilingual global repository of water educational resources developed by and for the water museums around the world. Last but not least, within the Credit (Creative Digital Waters) Project HYDRIA obtained a brand-new section dedicated to Mediterranean traditional water jars! Read more about it in 4.6

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

In 2025 the following actions were undertaken:

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Within the MIRAMAR project—which aims to develop a joint approach to enhance our understanding of and response to the combined effects of multiple environmental pressures (including climate change) on three vital ecosystems in the Euro-Mediterranean region: seagrass meadows, wetlands, and habitats of endangered species—MIO-ECSDE is leading the work on identifying suitable nature-based mitigation and restoration solutions to address multiple stressors. It is also actively involved in one of the pilot sites located in the Amvrakikos Wetlands National Park. Read more in section 5.
- ▶ Within the SHARED GREEN DEAL context, MIO-ECSDE is the practice lead for the implementation of 4 social experiments aiming to explore the different values that people place

upon biodiversity, in EU rural and urban areas, from a transitions perspective. An insightful resource presenting findings on how community-led learning can reconnect people with local biodiversity and inspire positive behavioral change, was produced with contributions from MIO-ECSDE in June 2025 (see 6. Publications & Resources). As the project proceeds to its final year of implementation, MIO-ECSDE has been supporting the secondary analysis of the project results that draws out the implications of the social experiments for ‘zero pollution’ and has produced a report on this in November 2025 (more information [here](#)). Reflections are provided on how different governance approaches may be needed for this Green Deal priority.

- ▶ Within the context of Component II of the EU-funded WES-BCA project, MIO-ECSDE contributed to the launch of the climate action campaign’s social media presence under the slogan “Our Climate – Our Community.” The official launch took place during the Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action – Making the behavioural shift happen (Cairo, 21–23 October 2025). The campaign established its presence across major social media platforms, [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#), and recorded very promising and impressive engagement results in its first phase of dissemination. Through this initiative, the campaign aims to raise awareness and encourage community-driven climate action across the Mediterranean region, while strengthening outreach and stakeholder engagement through targeted digital communication channels.

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 February 2025, MIO-ECSDE participated in the online meeting of the MSFD Technical Group on Marine Litter and made several interventions related to setting threshold values for seafloor macrolitter. Throughout 2025, MIO-ECSDE has continued to engage in several online meetings of the group on this issue.
- ▶ In May 2025, the in-person meeting of the MSFD Technical Group on Marine Litter was held in Brussels. MIO-ECSDE was unable to attend due to conflicting commitments but contributed to the event with a presentation jointly prepared with ISPRA. The presentation highlighted the progress to-date and the next steps related to a key task that MIO-ECSDE has been co-leading, namely the update of the Joint List of Macrolitter Categories.
- ▶ Since September 2024, MIO-ECSDE has participated in 9 ‘formal’ e-meetings (as well as several working meetings) focused on the update of the Joint List of Macrolitter Categories. The process was led by the TGML co-chair (Spain) and co-led by MIO-ECSDE, Italy (ISPRA), and Denmark (Aarhus University), with the involvement of 23 TGML members. In the last quarter of 2025, Spain stepped down as co-chair of the TGML, and Italy took over. The Joint List update process continued within 2025.

In 2025, 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:

- ▶ In February 2025, MIO-ECSDE, participated in the 7th edition of the Halieutis Fair organized in Agadir, Morocco. With extensive experience in marine litter actions at the science-policy-society interface, MIO-ECSDE was invited by the EU Delegation to Morocco to share insights from its involvement in numerous EU-funded marine litter projects, such as the ENI CBC Plastic

Busters CAP, the Interreg Med Plastic Busters MPAs, the WES project, the SWIM-H2020 SM, and many others. These critical issues were addressed by Thomais Vlachogianni, Head of Science, Research & Policy, in two sessions at the EU exhibition booth. Read more [here](#).

- ▶ In February 2025, MIO-ECSDE, participated in the OSPAR workshop on how fishing gear marking systems can prevent marine litter. The workshop was organized by Sweden within the framework of OSPAR's second Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter, specifically focusing on Action B.4.1: to "Prevent, locate, retrieve, and handle abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG). MIO-ECSDE's continued involvement in OSPAR activities—including being a speaker at the March 2024 in-person EU-OSPAR joint workshop on measures to reduce marine litter from fishing gear and attending a June 2025 in-person OSPAR workshop on riverine litter (Temse, Belgium) – reflects international recognition beyond the Mediterranean of MIO-ECSDE's critical expertise in marine litter pollution.
- ▶ In February 2025, on the occasion of the International Day for Women and Girls in Science, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe hosted a webinar that brought together scientists, educators, and youth to discuss women's participation in STEM. The event invited panellists to reflect on the challenges limiting girls' interest in STEM fields and to highlight potential career pathways and opportunities. Thomais Vlachogianni was among the four invited female scientists from South-East Europe who shared their inspiring professional journeys, using their voices to promote a more inclusive and equitable future in science. Read more [here](#).
- ▶ In May 2025, MIO-ECSDE together with some 65 NGOs co-signed a joint open letter to President von der Leyen and the College of Commissioners urging the European Commission to present an ambitious Ocean Pact at UNOC3. The letter warns that the current draft Pact falls far short of what is needed to confront the scale and urgency of ocean degradation, and calls on the EU to demonstrate credible leadership in global ocean governance. The signatories of the letter are all supporters of the "[Blue Manifesto](#)" (co-signed by MIO-ECSDE in August 2024) led by Seas At Risk, Oceana, Birdlife, WWF, Surfrider Europe and ClientEarth.
- ▶ In May 2025, MIO-ECSDE together with 210 civil society organisations co-signed a joint statement, to call upon all EU Member States, Members of the European Parliament and the European Commission to urgently adopt a strong Nature Restoration Law. Read more [here](#).

3.3.4. Culture and Sustainability in the Mediterranean

Within this overall framework, during 2025 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 founding member of the Global Network of Water Museums-WAMUNET (see 3.3.1). The technical and aesthetical updating of the HYDRIA webpage was completed in 2022, while HYDRIA was further enriched with the new section/e-exhibition through the Credit Project (see 4).
- ▶ The e-learning course about Mediterranean Food ([here](#)), largely based on the MIO-ECSDE educational package "Mediterranean Food: Historical, Environmental, Health & Cultural dimensions" (produced in five Mediterranean languages [here](#)) remains active.
- ▶ The Innovative Sustainable Economy Community (ISEC) Hub of the Mediterranean was officially launched under the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, marking a major milestone in the project's efforts to accelerate the region's transition to a sustainable, circular, and inclusive economy. About

a year since its launch, the Hub serves as a dynamic platform bringing together public authorities, research institutions, civil society, the private sector, and local actors from across the Mediterranean to collaborate on green and blue economy solutions. The Hub is built around four strategic pillars—CONNECT, LEARN, SHARE, and COLLABORATE—enabling actors to exchange knowledge, align strategies, replicate successful practices, and jointly scale up innovative economic models. MIO-ECSDE is among the founding partners of the ISEC Hub and plays a leading role in its LEARN pillar, coordinating activities that build knowledge and capacity across the region. These include the development of an open-access e-Library, the organisation of thematic webinars, mentoring opportunities, and the facilitation of inter-project learning. The Hub already includes over 340 members from 36 countries, representing a diverse and growing community committed to advancing sustainable economic transformation in the Mediterranean. Visit the ISEC Hub [here](#).

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.

MEDIES was acknowledged as an example of regional (Mediterranean) capacity building from NGOs in the 2023 report “Teacher education for the green transition”. The report was linked to the EU Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development, and reviewed documented research and good practices in relation to effective teacher education for sustainability, with the purpose of informing decision-making and related policy frameworks.

An overview of the activities in 2025 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, UNEP-MAP, MCSD, 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, water, ESD pedagogy, etc.
- ▶ 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 in the host country (Greece) in order to replicate them throughout the Mediterranean Region.

4.1. Educational material on Recycling, Single-Use Plastics and Marine Litter

MEDIES continued with the promotion of its related educational material that was included in the "Platform 21+: Skills Workshops" by the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP of the Ministry of Education and Culture) for Primary and Secondary Education, also during the 2024-2025 school year. Read more about the Programme [here](#), download the educational material [here](#) or view the [flipbook](#).

4.2. Partnership between MIO-ECSDE / MEDIES and the Swedish school Futuraskolan

The partnership between MIO-ECSDE / MEDIES and the International Futuraskolan School continued in 2025. Between 2024 and 2027 the school's K9 classes are expected to do study visits to Athens four times per year, as part of their horizontal agenda ‘green and entrepreneurship upskilling around the Sustainable Development Goals’. As part of their week-long curriculum while in Athens, MEDIES facilitates educational workshops and activities centered around:

1. The coastal environment: Beach clean-up and marine litter monitoring
2. Creative upcycling of waste through Tinkering

In 2025, four batches of ~30 students each, with their teachers were successfully accommodated through field visits and workshops, in February, March, October and November. [Read more](#)

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

The online web application on water developed by MIO-ECSDE which is available in [English](#) and [Greek](#) are fully functional and promoted through MEDIES related activities and events. Learners are invited through the application 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. Be2aty / My Environment project

[Be2aty / My Environment](#) project aims to empower Egyptian youth, through non-formal education activities (such as bootcamps, exhibitions, clean-ups and mentoring schemes) to become innovators for environmental protection and sustainability. Led by the Goethe-Institute, the three-year project, that was launched in April 2023, brings together a consortium of Egyptian and EU-based partners, among them MIO-ECSDE/MEDIES, to join forces and build the skills of Egyptian youth to tackle urgent local environmental problems, while at the same time enhancing support for them. The 2024 Bootcamps and youth initiatives and prototypes were celebrated during the very successful Exhibition (Nov 2024, Cairo). The 2025 activities included a series of mentoring sessions, youth internships in Cairo-based businesses, two parallel clean-ups in Athens (25 September 2025) and Cairo, plus a podcast to document the youth initiatives and the stories of change generated via the project. The end of the project will be celebrated in its final Exhibition, to take place in January 2026 [Read more](#)

4.5. Creative Digital Waters

The [Creative Digital waTers” \(CreDiT\)](#) project reached its end early this year (on 31 January 2025). CreDiT aimed to promote the outreach and awareness raising activities of European museums dealing with the natural and cultural, tangible and intangible water heritage and to improve people’s access to and interpretation of water heritages inside and outside museums. Throughout the two-year life-span of the project, the partners - MIO-ECSDE/HYDRIA, Aquatika (Croatia), Opificio delle Acque WAMUNET and DocServizi (Italy) - were trained in practises and tools for the digitalization of water culture and they, in turn, shared this know-how in workshops engaging youth and educators. Through the CreDiT Project, HYDRIA co-created a new digital collection dedicated to traditional water jars from the Mediterranean. This section includes an interactive map with texts and high-quality images of the jars, *arting* and *coloring* sections to boost inspiration and creativity of younger and older visitors and a unique section featuring 3D models of selected jars.

On January 30, the CreDiT’s final events were hosted in Athens, including a morning workshop for about 60 high school students, and an afternoon Closing Event where the partners and invited guests (a total of 25 participants) discussed about the experiences, results and outcomes of CreDiT. **Read more [here](#)**

4.6. Physical and Augmented Reality for Climate Change Education (PARCCE)

The three-year Erasmus+ KA2 project, launched in November 2023 and coordinated by MIO-ECSDE, has now reached its halfway point. Together with partners and schools from Cyprus, Italy, France, and Greece—including MIO-ECSDE member organizations Legambiente and U Marinu, the Cyprus

Pedagogical Institute (Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development Unit – EPEAA), and the University of Crete (Laboratory of Advanced Learning Technologies in Lifelong and Distance Education – EDIVEA)—the project aims to enhance Climate Change Education through both innovative and traditional educational material, grounded in the principles of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Whole School Approach (WSA), Inclusive Education (IE), and digital transformation (Augmented Reality & ICT).

By the end of 2024, the so-called “Traditional Educational Material (TEM)” was completed in English and translated into Greek, French, and Italian (see [here](#)). A dedicated Teacher Toolkit was also developed to accompany the material. During the first semester of 2025, efforts focused on teacher trainings through the [MIO-ECSDE e-learning platform](#), the pilot implementation of the TEM in schools, and the design and administration of pre- and post-questionnaires for both students and parents. Initial evaluation results showed a statistically significant increase in students’ climate awareness not only in partner schools but also in others involved. By the end of 2025 partners started implementing the National webinars for TEM, starting from Greece (16/12/2025, with more than 180 participants).

The project’s mid-term report, submitted to the Greek Erasmus+ National Agency, received very positive feedback, with only minor comments, while the mid-term Partners Meeting, held successfully in Cyprus on 7–8 July, provided an opportunity to assess progress, reaffirm partner commitment, and align on future steps. All project actions, tools, and deliverables are freely accessible through the official PARCCE website.

Within 2025, the development of the “Innovative Educational Material (IEM)” has also been completed. IEM builds on TEM, while incorporating enhanced digital and augmented learning components. Its classroom implementation is scheduled for the first semester of 2026, following the finalization of the Toolkit for Augmented Reality and ICT, and a series of national webinars/Learning Events for educators.

The project’s implementation is followed by an independent external evaluator, who provides structured feedback and recommendations. Interest for engagement is expressed by more and more schools, particularly in Greece, and MEDIES is seeking additional funding so as to make this possible. [Read more.](#)

4.7. *YOU(th) CARE FOR CHANGE*

In December 2023 the 40-month European project (funded by the DEAR Programme) entitled “YOU(th) CARE FOR CHANGE” was launched. The project seeks to reinforce active citizenship and engagement of youth through empowering youth organizations and groups in Italy, Spain, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece and in Albania, Serbia, Tunisia, Morocco, through multiple targeted activities (capacity building, campus, learning platform, youth assemblies and fora) so that they are engaged in co-designing and applying their own actions on SDGs in their local communities. The project has a strong cross-cutting priority on gender equity.

From January to March 2025, MEDIES organized in Greece a series of in-person and online meetings (8 meetings in total) that have brought together schools and volunteers, youth-focused organizations and stakeholders engaged in the SDGs and interested in the intersectional and participatory approaches of “care”. About 50 participants have shared experiences, and priorities related to the YOU(th) CARE topics, as well as preferred ways of action. The “**CARE Agenda**” that emerged from these dialogues essentially mapped out the challenges that youth initiatives encounter, mostly at the local level, as well as recommended ways to address them and potential allies/partners. You can find the CARE Agendas from all countries of the Programme [here](#).

In April, the ‘Call for Sub-granting’ of youth pilot projects on sustainability, social/solidarity economy and inclusion launched, inviting youth organizations to submit their proposals. Throughout the three months that the call was open, the youth initiatives were offered capacity building sessions, both via the YOU(th) CARE platform, and onsite in all countries. MEDIES organized a seminar on 29 May in Athens that provided technical support on how to structure a proposal for a pilot project (30 Greek Youth Initiatives were trained). In total, 112 youth proposals were submitted from 12 EU and Mediterranean countries, while 28 Youth-led initiatives were granted. “Mobility ambassadors” (by ECOCITY), “Roots of Care” (by COB), and the “Voices of Tomorrow” (a Youth Festival by the Beehive Community) were the **three CARE pilot projects** awarded from Greece (more [here](#)). The pilot projects kicked-off end of September, and since then, MIO-ECSDE is technically coaching them and monitoring their implementation. On 24 September a dedicated meeting was organized in Athens for the sub-granted pilot actions in Athens. The meeting provided the opportunity to 11 participants to: reflect on their overall participation in the YOU(th) CARE for Change; to present and discuss on their pilot projects and identifying possible synergies; to explore how they can boost intersectionality aspects of their actions; and, to be informed about technical management aspects as well as financial management issues in the context of YOU(th) CARE Programme.

In October the online [Youth Assembly Space](#) was launched, as a virtual platform where youth initiatives and groups can exchange through meetings, discussion forums and direct messages while they can also post their activities and news. MIO-ECSDE as Coordinator of WP3 on Networking (“CARE Voice”) facilitated the whole co-design process of creating the assembly space, ensuring to be custom-made for reflecting the young participants’ ideas and needs.

Between October to December 2025, MIO-ECSDE in cooperation with its member organisation, MEDASSET, co-organized a series of **intergenerational dialogue sessions** entitled *“Sustainability wisdom & caring for our territory from generation to generation”*. The events aimed to foster joint understanding between the youth and seniors on the global and local challenges related to SDGs, inequalities, climate crisis, etc. (identified also in the CARE Agenda) and create a safe space for exchange through individual and collective stories. The three sessions that were organized were: 1st session on “Getting to know each other & the challenges” (Athens, 8 October); 2nd session on “Caring for the marine environment” (Glyfada coastal area, 8 November); 3rd session on “Caring for the urban parks” (Tritsis Park, 6 December) engaging a group of 50 people.

4.8. *YouthCARE4Planet*

The YOU(th)CARE4Planet project, launched in September 2025 and is led by COSPE (Italy) in partnership with IDebate and ENACTUS (Tunisia), GIOSEF (Italy), Greenish (Egypt), and MIO-ECSDE (Greece) aims to engage young people from Tunisia, Italy, Egypt, and Greece in co-learning, co-creating, and running local green actions that support sustainability and green transition in their territories. The project has a duration of two years and is co-funded by the EU Project through the INTERREG NEXT MED PROGRAMME 2021-2027. MIO-ECSDE is bringing into the project its experience working in the Euro-Mediterranean region on awareness raising, capacity building and ESD pedagogy and tools, as well as leveraging networking and capitalization. Through innovative activities, training, and community engagement, the project will bring together youth initiatives and stakeholders to create a positive impact on local communities and the environment. Read more about the project [here](#).

4.9. *New Materials and school interventions for Candidate BRs in Greece*

Responding to three successive calls of Greek Authorities who are responsible for the candidature of areas that have applied, or are interested in applying to become Biosphere Reserves (MaB/UNESCO), within 2025, MIO-ECSDE/MEDIES has achieved the following:

- Authored a new pedagogical material in the Greek language and tested it with teachers and students of Methana and Galatas on 28-29 April 2025. The material is tailor-made to the specific region, and is ready to be used by teachers of the Attica Islands Network, a region that is interested in becoming a Biosphere Reserve. [Read more \(in Greek\)](#)
- Authored a new pedagogical material in the Greek language and tested it with teachers and students of Leonidio on 22 May 2025. The material is tailor-made to the specific region and is ready to be used by teachers of Parnon, a region that at the time had applied to become a Biosphere Reserve. [Read more \(in Greek\)](#)
- Authored a new pedagogical material in Greek, tailor-made for the region of Evros, Dadia and Samothraki Island. On 18 & 19 September, school pilots took place for 180 High School students in Soufli & Alexandroupolis. [Read more \(in Greek\)](#)

4.10. Celebrating the World Environment Day

In collaboration with Hellenic Energy, MEdIES reached out to the community level on the occasion of the World Environment Day, with engaging activities and games for students in Aspropyrgos (5-6 June, [LINK](#)) and Thessaloniki (16 June, [LINK](#)).

4.11. MEdIES networking

In 2025 MEdIES has continued to engage with several education networks of mutual interest, such as UNESCO's [Global Education Monitoring \(GEM\)](#), the [Futures of Education](#) initiative, the [#ESDfor2030](#) framework and the [Greening Education Partnership](#) and also the [Action for Climate \(ACE\)](#) (UNFCC), the [Teaching for Climate Action Initiative](#) (OECD & UNESCO) the [EU4Ocean Initiative](#), the [Education for Climate Community](#) (European Commission), the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building ([PCCB Network](#)), the [Climate ECOS Community](#), and others.

5. Running international projects

5.1. The Water and Environment Support – Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA) project

The EU-funded WES-BCA project is the extension of the WES project till November 2027. The goal of WES-BCA is to enhance the capacity of various stakeholders in the MENA countries involved in pollution prevention and reduction, protection of biodiversity and water resources management, in order to support them in formulating and/or implementing the corresponding policies. It also aims to raise awareness, increase knowledge and improve public understanding, stimulating thus behavioural changes needed for appropriate climate action and environmental protection.

To this end, the project's work plan will be implemented through two complementary, closely related and mutually supportive Components: Component I – focusing on Water, Biodiversity and Environment and Component II – focusing on Communication and Outreach with emphasis on Climate Action.

Component I will focus on Prevention & Reduction of Pollution; Curbing Plastic Pollution & Marine Litter; Promoting the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus approach; Promotion of water efficiency at all steps and levels of water management and use; Climate Change mitigation and adaptation actions, including Water Scarcity and Biodiversity protection as priorities. 16 national activities across the 8 Partner Countries will take place, while at the regional level some 11 study tours, regional trainings and on-line capacity building actions will be organized.

Under Component II, an Outreach Strategy and Implementation Plan will be developed and outreach and communication campaigns will be rolled out in all 8 PCs, targeting specific target groups. Regional networks of climate change/environmental champions will be activated and supported, promoting people-to-people outreach, and local CSOs/NGOs will also be mobilised.

MIO-ECSDE, one of the key WES-BCA consortium members, will be in charge of Component II of the project, with the support of ACR+, RAED and MedWaves. The project is led by LDK Consultants SA. Read more at www.wes-bca.eu and <https://mio-ecsde.org/project/wes-bca/>

On the 26th of May 2025 the 1st Steering Committee Meeting of the project took place in a hybrid format in Brussels, Belgium. The proposed work plan till 2027 was presented and discussed, with its endorsement taking place as the conclusion of the day by the project Focal Points from the Environment and Water Ministries of the 8 MENA Partner Countries (PCs), the EU Delegations to these PCs, the Union for the Mediterranean, the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, and project partners.

Since the Steering Committee Meeting, a WES-BCA Outreach Strategy on Environment and Climate Action and Implementation Plan has been prepared. The Strategy aims to guide WES-BCA and its partners in the eight Partner Countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia) in effectively designing and delivering outreach and communication actions and campaigns that inspire practical and inclusive climate action across the region. The Strategy complements the work plan of Component I by fostering broader societal support for the successful implementation of

related policies and initiatives, including the promotion of the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus approach, climate adaptation and resilience, tackling plastic pollution and single-use plastics, biodiversity protection and management (including Biosphere Reserves and other designated areas), and strengthening environmental governance, including through the promotion of the Aarhus Convention. To achieve these objectives, lessons learned from previous relevant initiatives in the region, including those implemented by the consortium partners, were reviewed and incorporated. The Strategy was shared with the WES-BCA Focal Points in the Partner Countries to gather their feedback and comments, and served as the basis for the co-creation of national outreach and communication campaigns to be implemented during 2026 and 2027.

At the same time, a comprehensive database of stakeholders, including NGOs, media organisations, journalists, parliamentarians and other relevant actors, was compiled to support the implementation of the outreach activities. These stakeholders were engaged in the Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action – “Making the Behavioural Shift Happen” (Cairo, 21–23 October 2025), organised by MIO-ECSDE with the support of the EU-funded WES-BCA and the GEF-funded MedProgramme projects.

During the Forum, the climate action campaign’s social media presence was launched under the slogan “Our Climate – Our Community.” A dedicated campaign website is expected to be launched during the first half of 2026 (www.ourclimateourcommunity.org).

5.2. The H2020 SHARED GREEN DEAL project

Since its kick-off in February 2022, MIO-ECSDE has been actively engaged as a partner in the Horizon 2020 project ‘Social Sciences & Humanities for Achieving a Responsible, Equitable and Desirable GREEN DEAL’, involving over 20 partners across Europe. The project features 24 social experiments across six Green Deal thematic priorities—including biodiversity preservation, clean energy, circular economy, sustainable mobility, food, and efficient renovations—designed to uncover the social and behavioural dynamics essential for the effective delivery of Green Deal goals.

MIO-ECSDE’s specific focus is on leading the social experiment stream on Preserving Biodiversity, working closely with four local partners in Slovenia, Ireland, Sweden, and Greece. This includes deploying Study Circle methodologies to engage communities in cultural and value-oriented discussions about biodiversity, and drawing out the implications for broader Green Deal implementation. Building on early phases of experimentation, MIO-ECSDE also supports the secondary analysis of results, aiming to translate insights into actionable governance and policy guidance—particularly regarding the Zero Pollution priority of the Green Deal.

In March 2024, MIO-ECSDE led a webinar in the “Local actions for a SHARED GREEN DEAL” series, attended by over 80 participants. The [session](#) highlighted the link between cultural heritage and biodiversity across European communities, and introduced the SHARED GREEN DEAL network as a platform for stakeholder engagement and knowledge sharing. The Network will be officially launched in January 2026. A milestone for its preparation has been a Brussels workshop alongside numerous European networks to explore how SHARED GREEN DEAL can support organisations working to empower local communities in driving forward sustainability transitions.

In June 2025, a report MIO-ECSDE contributed to, titled [“Exploring the Study Circle approach in fostering change in biodiversity values among adults”](#), was published, which sheds light on how to reconnect Europeans with the biodiversity in their local environments. The report presents the main findings of the biodiversity experiments and offers practical recommendations for policy-makers and community leaders to strengthen biodiversity protection through education, citizen engagement, and

local action. In parallel, MIO-ECSDE also produced a [report](#) highlighting how community action can advance climate and Zero Pollution goals, further reinforcing the role of citizen engagement in achieving Green Deal objectives.

Furthermore, the organisation contributed to the [launch of the SHARED GREEN Societies Forum](#) (held in Brussels on January 2026), marking an important step forward for inclusive green transitions and strengthening collaboration among stakeholders committed to sustainability across Europe.

5.3. The H2020 SOS-ZEROPOL2030 project

MIO-ECSDE is part of a € 3 million European research project entitled Source to Seas – Zero Pollution 2030 (SOS-ZEROPOL2030) aiming to develop a holistic, stakeholder led zero pollution framework, ultimately reflecting the EU’s very ambitious policy and legislative framework governing the environmental protection of our seas with focus on the zero environmental pollution agenda. The four-year SOS-ZEROPOL2030 project, funded by the EU’s Horizon2020 scheme, kicked-off on 27 September 2022 and will run till September 2026. Led by MaREI, the SFI Centre for Energy Climate and Marine Research at University College Cork, the project brings together a consortium of 10 European institutions and organizations that form a unique interdisciplinary partnership with expertise in fundamental and applied natural sciences and associated governance concerning marine pollution, in social sciences concerning stakeholder engagement and in human behaviour.

MIO-ECSDE is leading the ‘Zero Pollution Accelerator’ related work package of the project that seeks to:

- ▶ pave the way for multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and multi-level actions that can deliver a successful blue green transition towards clean European Seas by 2030, through a truly ambitious, transformational and pragmatic framework and roadmap;
- ▶ foster an effective, swift and wide uptake and replication of novel solutions and best practices by user communities, via fit-for-purpose and user-friendly guidelines that will enable the operationalization of the framework and roadmap towards clean European Seas by 2030;
- ▶ strengthen the science-policy-society interface and ensure a seamless environmental management continuum, where robust knowledge on pollution related issues can be effectively streamlined into a refined policy vision that can deliver an informed societal response that deploys targeted and effective pollution prevention and mitigation approaches.

Within the project's scientific component, MIO-ECSDE plays a pivotal role and is actively engaged in the development of an integrated analysis and scenario framework. This framework encompasses various facets, including the identification of primary emission sources along the value chain, the assessment of environmental risks, an evaluation of existing value chain and technological initiatives, and an examination of prevailing governance strategies, efforts, and arrangements. This work primarily focuses on two case study pollutants: per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs) and car tire wear particles.

The main project highlights for 2025 have been:

- The organization of three regional Living Labs (2nd edition): one held in March 2025 in Utrecht (the Netherlands) targeting stakeholders from the North-East Atlantic and focused on the use of PFAS in medical applications & exploring transition scenarios; one held in April 2025 in Varna (Bulgaria) targeting stakeholders in the Black Sea focused on designing strategies for better governance of persistent chemicals in the Black Sea basin; and a third Mediterranean Living Lab organized in Athens, Greece on 6-7 May by MIO-ECSDE, focused on tyre wear particles.

This second edition of the Mediterranean Living Lab focused on evaluating scenarios for the prevention and reduction of TWPs, with particular attention to eco-design approaches for car tyres and the removal of TWPs in wastewater treatment plants. Building on the key findings from the first Mediterranean Living Lab in November 2024, participants explored, through a collaborative SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, the feasibility and impact of four future scenarios for preventing and mitigating tyre wear particle emissions. The outcomes of both Living Labs will inform a set of policy recommendations to the European Commission, contributing to the EU's broader agenda to combat microplastic pollution and protect European marine ecosystems. Read more [here](#).

- The publication of a scientific article in Frontiers in Marine Science entitled 'Setting the course: Aligning European Union marine pollution policy ambitions with environmental realities' (<https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2025.1586918>).
- The publication of a scientific article in Cambridge Prisms: Plastics entitled 'Bridging currents: An interdisciplinary source-to-sea approach is essential to align regional and national priorities with the future Global Plastics Treaty ambitions' (<https://doi.org/10.1017/plc.2025.10018>)
- The development of scenarios for achieving zero pollution in European Regional Seas.
- The completion of a study on how the public perceives the risks associated with various environmental pollutants, providing valuable insights to inform the design of more effective pollution mitigation strategies. The study assessed and compared public perceptions of the risks posed by four specific pollutants — microplastics, PFAS, excess nutrients, and underwater noise — across five semi-standardized European samples (N = 5,206) from Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, and the Netherlands. The research examined how socio-demographic, psychological, and pollutant-specific factors influence risk perception, identifying both common and distinct patterns across pollutants and countries.
- The development of a Risk Assessment Framework for Tyre Wear Particles in European Seas.
- The organization of the Zero Pollution Parliament in Brussels. During the two-day Living Lab on 17–18 November, participants focused on the SOS-ZEROPOL2030 priority pollutants: nutrients, hazardous substances, microplastics, and underwater noise. The objective was to translate the ambitions of the EU Zero Pollution Action Plan into actionable outcomes, in line with the European Green Deal and the European Ocean Pact. Read more [here](#).

5.4. The Horizon Europe FOLOU project

In January 2023, a HORIZON Research and Innovation Actions project entitled “Bringing Knowledge and consensus to prevent and reduce FOod LOss at the primary production stage. Understanding, measuring, training and adopting” (FOLOU), kicked off. The 4-year long project brings together 16 multidisciplinary partners from 10 countries (Spain, Italy, Belgium, Norway, Austria, Greece, Ireland, France, UK) with the aim to set up all the necessary mechanisms to (i) measure and estimate (robust and harmonized methodology), (ii) monitor and report (national and EU Food Loss registries), and (iii) assess the magnitude and impact of Food Losses. Additionally, FOLOU will also work to assure the appropriate knowledge transfer and adoption of the project outcomes by the key targeted stakeholders: primary producers, retailers, consumers, policymakers and researchers.

As a network of networks, MIO-ECSDE will support the exploitation, communication and dissemination of the project's outcomes and will:

- ▶ Support the twinning programme activities of the project by identifying regions and actors interested in replicating the experience of FOLOU beyond the partners' territorial coverage;

- ▶ Support in synthesizing the project’s findings and the policy analysis of regulations impacting food loss in the EU into a set of recommendations on food loss reduction along the value chains of primary production on EU level;
- ▶ Organise at least one national stakeholder workshop to disseminate preliminary project results to as many stakeholders as possible and to collect feedback which will be integrated in the final formulation of policy recommendations and guidelines.

Updates for 2025 are:

- ▶ Ongoing mapping policies on food loss and waste in Greece to better understand current policy and regulatory barriers and to develop well-informed and effective policy strategies. MIO-ECSDE will serve as the main reviewer for the relevant deliverable.
- ▶ From 1–2 July 2025, the FOLOU consortium convened at the University of Bologna for its 5th project meeting, accelerating joint efforts to harmonise food loss quantification across Europe as the project reaches its halfway mark in its four-year journey.
- ▶ The running of the FOLOU Twinning Regions Program, officially launched in October 29, 2024, to which MIO-ECSDE is contributing.
- ▶ In November 2025, MIO-ECSDE participated in the first in-person workshop of the Twinning Regions Programme in Barcelona, uniting six European regions to exchange knowledge and test tools and methodologies for preventing food loss in primary production.
- ▶ Launching the second FOLOU online training course “Measuring Food Loss: Implementing the FOLOU Methodology,” providing practical guidance for farmers, researchers, advisors, and policymakers on measuring and reporting food loss across agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries, with MIO-ECSDE contributing as one of the course reviewers.

5.5. Interreg Euro-MED Mission Innovative Sustainable Economy

The Innovative Sustainable Economy (ISE) Mission is a flagship 7-year Interreg Euro-MED initiative (2023–2029) aimed at promoting a just transition to a circular economy across the Mediterranean. It is implemented through two governance projects—Community4Innovation (Thematic Community Project) and the Institutional Dialogue Project—that jointly foster knowledge development, stakeholder dialogue, and the uptake of innovative solutions into public policy. As the lead of the TRANSFER work package within the Community4Innovation project, MIO-ECSDE plays a central role in mentoring, twinning, and transferring results from Interreg thematic projects to broader regional stakeholders across the Mediterranean. In this context, MIO ECSDE is leading the Mission’s Mentoring & Twinning Programme, supporting an initial cohort of four stakeholder organisations from Greece, Italy, Lebanon, and Palestine in benefiting from and capitalising on the outputs of thematic projects. MIO ECSDE analyses social innovation case studies and leverages its network to disseminate best practices effectively. Alongside mentoring activities, MIO-ECSDE coordinates the LEARN pillar of the ISEC Hub, a Mediterranean-wide stakeholder platform launched in October 2024, contributing to knowledge-sharing and capacity-building across the region.

At the 3rd Community of Practice (CoP) event held in Sarajevo (April 2025), MIO-ECSDE showcased the newly launched Mentoring & Twinning Programme, guiding the first cohort of four beneficiary organisations (from Greece, Italy, Lebanon, and Palestine) to initiate knowledge exchange with thematic project “givers.” This pilot phase underlined MIO-ECSDE’s leadership in operationalising stakeholder-to-stakeholder transfer and building cross-border capacities. In September 2025 a new

round of identifying new givers was launched following the Mentoring & Twinning methodology. During this period three more organisations from Tunisia, Egypt and Greece have been identified and their participation to the Programme will be formalized in the upcoming months with the development of their respective Action Plans.

MIO-ECSDE also participated in key transnational events including the MED Innovation Days (Marseille, June 2024) and UfM MED Talks, presenting the Mission's transferring-based activities and refining the methodology for its Mentoring & Twinning Programme, which will guide implementation through to 2029 and support multi-stakeholder uptake and policy alignment.

MIO-ECSDE represented the ISE Mission at COP24, co-organising the side event *"Pathways to a Thriving Mediterranean Blue Economy: Resilience, Innovation, and Sustainability"* on 4 December 2025. The session brought together over 50 policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to discuss governance, nature-based solutions, sustainable tourism, blue jobs, and inclusive growth. The event showcased tangible results from ISE Thematic Projects, including 2B-BLUE, demonstrating collaborative innovation in blue biotechnology, and AZA4ICE, highlighting advances in circular and regenerative aquaculture. ([More information here](#)).

During this period, MIO ECSDE has also been actively engaged in the organisation of the 5th ISE Community of Practice (CoP) and the MED Innovation Summit, to be held in Athens on 19–21 May, in collaboration with Circle the Med Forum. These events aim to advance dialogue on a new pact for a sustainable Mediterranean future, bringing together key regional actors to strengthen cooperation, showcase innovation, and accelerate the circular economy transition across the region.

5.6. METAVASEA “People-Centered Transition for Maritime Decarbonization in the East Mediterranean”

MIO-ECSDE is a partner in this project that is led by the Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (HELMEPA), based in Greece, and supported by Lloyd's Register Foundation. The project aims to:

- ▶ Provide a region-specific overview of the state of play with regard to maritime decarbonization,
- ▶ Identify necessary skills and competencies to support the green digital transition,
- ▶ Develop flexible training/upskilling/reskilling tools for seafarers, port workers and administrators.

MIO-ECSDE brings into the project its experience working in the Mediterranean region, on:

- ▶ the science-policy-society interface
- ▶ networking and synergy-building
- ▶ awareness-raising and Education for Sustainable Development
- ▶ capacity building of wide-ranging stakeholders
- ▶ capitalization and transferring

MIO-ECDE has supported the development and circulation of a stakeholder survey, that was circulated to various relevant stakeholders in coastal communities of South East Mediterranean: port authorities, civil society, etc. A report with the survey results from wave 1 (2025) has been published, while a second wave is expected in 2026. In wave 2 MIO-ECSDE will support also its Arabic translation and dissemination.

MIO-ECSDE/MEDIES supported the development of the scenario of a short awareness video on the

topic of climate change. The video is planned to be finalized by the end of 2025, along with guidelines for teachers to use this and other materials and methods in the classroom.

In 2025 MIO-ECSDE, developed the content and co-organised teacher trainings on climate education, in cooperation with local educational authorities:

1st ToT, Chalkida city, 12/11/2025, 21 participants

2nd ToT, Pireus city, 15/11/2025, 40 participants

3rd ToT, Patras city, 19/11/2025, 10 participants.

This series of courses, that will be concluded in 2026, aims to empower educators with accurate knowledge, data, and ready-to-use pedagogical tools to teach climate change with confidence and optimism. [Read more.](#)

As part of its engagement in advancing maritime decarbonization and youth empowerment in the Mediterranean region, MIO-ECSDE co-organised a dedicated side event during the 24th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP24) on 4 December 2025. Together with the Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (HELMEPA), the Mediterranean Youth Group (MYG), the Be2aty project and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), MIO-ECSDE helped organise the session entitled *“Navigating a Sustainable Mediterranean: Cultivating New Skills, Empowering Youth and Building Partnerships for Maritime Decarbonization”*. The event served as the main Youth side event of COP24 and was largely devoted to presenting the first Wave results of the METAVASEA survey, mapping the readiness, challenges and perspectives on maritime decarbonization from a broad cross-section of stakeholders. Read more [here](#).

5.7. New INTERREG IPA Adrion project: TETHYS4ADRION

In late 2024, a new project launched in which MIO-ECSDE is a partner: “Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation for Riverine Plastic Litter Reduction in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas” and its acronym is TETHYS4ADRION. The overall aim of the project is to investigate the role and contribution of rivers to marine plastic pollution in the Adriatic-Ionian region and to develop and implement strategies to mitigate the discharge of riverine litter into the sea. Specifically, the project will focus on:

- ▶ introducing new and state-of-the-art methods and implementing coordinated and concerted monitoring of riverine litter on selected rivers
- ▶ testing solutions to prevent and mitigate pollution of the sea by riverine litter
- ▶ laying the foundation for the development of a sustainable and effective plan for the management and reduction of river waste in the Adriatic-Ionian region
- ▶ reduce the harmful impact of riverine litter on the marine environment and biodiversity of the region by promoting transboundary cooperation, fostering dialogue with stakeholders, and implementing multi-level actions.

The duration of the project is 36 months. The initial meeting of the project, attended by representatives of all project partners, was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 16 and 17 October 2024. A follow-up meeting was held in Čapljina on 13–14 May 2025, where partners reviewed the progress made to date and collaboratively planned the next steps. In March 2025, MIO-ECSDE, together with HCMR, marked a significant milestone in the project’s efforts to tackle riverine plastic pollution and protect freshwater and marine ecosystems across the Adriatic-Ionian region. Spanning from the Arcadian highlands to the Ionian Sea, the team conducted an extensive field survey using drones and

on-the-ground inspections to map the river's environmental, ecological, and socio-economic features and identify plastic pollution hotspots. Early findings suggest the main sources of riverine litter are illegal dumping of construction, demolition and renovation waste, mismanaged urban and agricultural waste, and hunting-related activities. Read more [here](#).

In October 2025, MIO-ECSDE together with the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, ISPRA, IWRS, and the City of Metković, organized in Metkovic (Croatia) a capacity building event held back-to-back with the biannual partners' meeting. The two-day workshop equipped project partners with the knowledge and practical skills needed to begin monitoring litter along riverbanks and at the water surface at the project's five pilot rivers. The workshop combined theoretical sessions with applied field training. Participants were introduced to the key concepts and harmonised protocols for assessing macrolitter, mesolitter and microlitter in different matrices of the river system. MIO-ECCSDE was one of the main trainers of the event. Read more [here](#).

5.8. New Interreg Euro-Med project: MIRAMAR

Launched in April 2025 (read more [here](#)), the 33-month MIRAMAR project will design, test, and validate a new holistic monitoring method to identify suitable nature-based mitigation and restoration solutions. The aim of the project is to develop a joint approach to improve our understanding of, and response to, the combined effects of different environmental pressures on three vital ecosystems in the Euro-Mediterranean region: seagrass meadows, wetlands and habitats of endangered species.

Working across nine pilot areas in six Mediterranean countries — Albania, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy and Spain — MIRAMAR will:

- monitor how multiple stressors affect vulnerable ecosystems;
- test harmonised, innovative methods for data collection and analysis;
- co-develop nature-based solutions for mitigation and restoration;
- engage local actors through Living Labs and co-creation approaches.

MIO-ECSDE plays a pivotal role in the project by leading the work package dedicated to identifying solutions to multiple stressors and catalyzing change through the establishment of living labs. Drawing on its extensive capacity-building experience, it will also develop training materials and tools, and carry out pollutant and stressor testing in the Amvrakikos Gulf (Greece).

MIRAMAR builds on over a decade of regional collaboration to tackle marine litter and environmental degradation in the Mediterranean. The project traces its origins to the Plastic Busters Initiative, launched in 2013 under the endorsement of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Key milestones in this journey include the Interreg Plastic Busters MPAs, ENI CBC Plastic Busters CAP and ENI CBC COMMON. Building on this legacy, MIRAMAR represents a natural evolution of the Plastic Busters Initiative — expanding its focus from marine litter to the cumulative impact of multiple environmental stressors, including chemical and biological pollution, noise and light pollution, and habitat degradation.

On 30 October, the MIRAMAR consortium held a dedicated project meeting, strategically organised back-to-back with the regional Plastic Busters Initiative gathering hosted at the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) headquarters in Barcelona. This timing ensured strong alignment between MIRAMAR's ongoing work and the broader regional momentum to confront the escalating environmental challenges facing the Mediterranean basin. The Barcelona event marked a new milestone for the Plastic Busters Initiative, bringing together two sister Interreg projects, MIRAMAR (Interreg Euro-MED) and MedPROACT (Interreg NEXT MED). Combined, they reinforce a decade-long regional effort to curb marine pollution and ecosystem degradation under a climate change scenario.

Building on this milestone, the MIRAMAR meeting on 30 October focused on consolidating progress across work packages, deepening collaboration among project partners, and aligning technical tasks with regional policy developments. The meeting highlighted the project's strategic contribution within the overall Plastic Busters Initiative by expanding the scope from marine litter to a holistic assessment of cumulative impacts on key Mediterranean ecosystems. Read more [here](#).

5.9. MIO-ECSDE joins the GEF-funded MedProgramme

The Mediterranean Sea Programme (MedProgramme): “Enhancing Environmental Security” is a six (6) year (2020–2026) Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded multi-focal area and cross-sectoral initiative implemented in Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia, and Türkiye. UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) is the leading executing Agency; the GEF Implementing Agencies are UNEP and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the executing partners are UNESCO/IHP, European Investment Bank (EIB), IUCN Med, GWP-Med, WWF Med, University of Geneva-GRID Geneva, Plan Bleu, PAP/RAC, SCP/RAC, SPA/RAC and INFO/RAC. The MedProgramme operationalizes priority actions to reduce major transboundary environmental stresses in coastal areas while strengthening climate resilience and water security and improving the health and livelihoods of coastal populations. It also aims to promote sound environmental management that benefits women and men equally, through effective mainstreaming. MIO-ECSDE was invited to join the partnership and strengthen the project's Knowledge Management Component (CP 4.1) by ensuring that:

- Synergies and partnerships with other key regional projects, processes and actors are fostered
- MedProgramme outreach and visibility is strengthened
- Civil society, youth, parliamentarians, and media are engaged

The MedProgramme and WES-BCA are partnering for the organization of the Mediterranean Stakeholder Forum on Environment and Climate Action - Making the behavioural shift happen that will take place in Cairo in October 2025.

5.10. New LIFE project: LIFE SIP GR BLUE

In June 2025 MIO-ECSDE was notified that a LIFE project proposal entitled ‘Integrated approach for the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in Greece’ (LIFE SIP GR BLUE) was approved. The 8-year long project, launched in December 2025, aims to overcome the barriers hindering the successful implementation of the MSFD, initiate the effective and successful implementation of the Greek Programme of Measures, and thus achieve and/or maintain the GES of Greek seas. MIO-ECSDE is one of the 16 project partners coordinated by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy. MIO-ECSDE plays a leading role in the project's participatory science and awareness-raising activities on marine litter and will develop e-learning modules, organize workshops, conduct demonstration actions, and run public awareness campaigns.

6. Publications & other resources

- ▶ [Devriese, L. I., Verleye, T. J., Vlachogianni, T., Maes, T., Boteler, B., Del Savio, L., Booth, A. M., Kopke, K., 2025. Setting the course: Aligning European Union marine pollution policy ambitions with environmental realities. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2025.1586918>](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2025.1586918)
- ▶ [van Leeuwen, J., Kopke, K., Devriese, L., Del Savio, L., Booth, A. M., Boteler, B., Berglihn, E., Cowan, E., Maes, T., Vlachogianni, T., 2025. Bridging currents: An interdisciplinary source-to-sea approach is essential to align regional and national priorities with the future Global Plastics Treaty ambitions. *Cambridge Prisms: Plastics*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/plc.2025.10018>](https://doi.org/10.1017/plc.2025.10018)
- ▶ Traditional Educational Material (TEM) on climate change, with theory and 25 learning activities, prepared in English, French, Greek and Italian languages, within the Erasmus+ PARCCE project, Available here <https://medies.net/parcce-traditional-educational-material/>
- ▶ An online self-paced course on the Traditional Education Material (TEM) on climate change, prepared within the Erasmus+ PARCCE project, available here (needs sign in): <https://parcce.envirolearning.net/>
- ▶ A new interactive section for HYDRIA, devoted to ceramic jars from the Mediterranean. <https://hydriaproject.info/en/water-jars>
- ▶ First and second free e-courses of FOLOU: “Understanding Food Loss” (<https://mio-ecsde.org/folou-launches-its-series-of-online-courses-on-food-loss/>) and “Measuring Food Loss: Implementing the FOLOU Methodology” (<https://mio-ecsde.org/folou-releases-its-second-online-course-on-measuring-food-loss/>)
- ▶ MIO-ECSDE developed the Biodiversity Preservation case study guide within the SHARED GREEN DEAL project, providing practical tools and insights to support community-led actions and policies aimed at protecting and restoring local biodiversity across Europe (<https://mio-ecsde.org/project/case-study-guides-on-shared-actions-for-the-green-deal/>).
- ▶ MIO-ECSDE's report, “Exploring the Study Circle Approach in Fostering Change in Biodiversity Values Among Adults”, examines how community-led learning through Study Circles in Greece, Ireland, Slovenia, and Sweden effectively reconnects adults with local biodiversity, fostering positive behavioral change and offering practical recommendations for policy-makers and community leaders to enhance biodiversity protection through education, citizen engagement, and local action (<https://mio-ecsde.org/project/exploring-the-study-circle-approach-in-fostering-change-in-biodiversity-values-among-adults/>).
- ▶ MIO-ECSDE report on community action as a key driver in advancing zero-pollution goals, highlighting practical examples of citizen-led initiatives contributing to sustainable environmental outcomes. <https://mio-ecsde.org/community-action-proves-key-in-advancing-climate-and-zero-pollution-goals-new-reports-show/>



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