



WES PRESS RELEASE

WES concludes regional training on phasing out Single Use Plastics

Athens, 8 March 2021

In the Mediterranean region, plastic pollution is one of the major threats to the environment. In order to address the development of policy measures linked to phasing out Single-Use Plastics (SUPs), the EU supported WES project has just concluded a regional training, organised in the form of a series of four webinar sessions implemented from January to February 2021. The training was attended by participants working for Ministries of Environment, Ministries of Industries, private sector (plastic and beverage producers) and NGOs from the Southern Mediterranean countries. They came together with relevant experts in order to strengthen their skills and capacities to identify, prioritise and operationalise targeted measures to phase out Single-Use Plastics (SUPs).

The first webinar covered the problems of Single-Use Plastics, why they are a problem and what are the quantities of SUPs we are dealing with in the Mediterranean region. The second webinar presented a number of responses to SUPs, including alternatives to SUPs as well as the difference between bioplastics and biodegradable plastic.

During the third webinar the participants looked into the feasibility and impact of measures in the Mediterranean, the rating of policy objectives and selecting priorities. At the fourth and last webinar that was organised on 25th of February 2021, ways towards regional guidelines were discussed which can be used to address the problems in as well as the best approaches to address SUPs in the Mediterranean countries. All these interactions and contributions will be valuable in informing the Regional Guidelines on measures to phase out Single-Use Plastic items that are currently under development and then contribute to a strengthened implementation of the Barcelona Convention Regional Plan for Marine Litter Management.

According to Llorenç Milà i Canals, Head of Secretariat Life Cycle Initiative of UNEP and guest speaker at the last webinar, UNEP is currently in the process of consulting governments on what they are doing to tackle plastic pollution. "Life cycle assessment is a standardised way to address Single-Use Plastics in a life cycle approach which is helpful for designing such policies. Shifting away from SUPs and moving to reusable products is very important" Milà i Canals said at the webinar. "The issue isn't just plastic; it's how we use it! Therefore, when we design policies, we also need to take into account the context and culture of the different countries."





Water and Environment Support

in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region

According to Magali Outters, Team Leader of WES partner SCP/RAC, there are several options for phasing out SUPs. “This can either be done through voluntary agreements, through regulatory economic instruments or through command-and-control instruments. In Tunisia for example the phasing out of Single Use Plastic bags started with a voluntary agreement with the biggest supermarkets and a progressive implementation finally led to a complete ban on plastic bags.”

The regional training was concluded by Professor Michael Scoullas, WES Team Leader, who stated the participants that WES will continue to help in presenting the entire spectrum of solutions and approaches that are helpful for the Southern Mediterranean countries to speed up the process of phasing out SUPs. He emphasized that at the same time the EU is also doing its own part and WES will continue its support to promoting the discussion on phasing out SUPs in the Mediterranean.

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The Water and Environment Support project in the Southern Mediterranean Neighbourhood aims to protecting the environment and improving the management of scarce water resources in the Mediterranean region. It will tackle problems related to pollution prevention and water use efficiency. WES is a regional project with emphasis on the countries of North Africa and the Middle East (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia).

Disclaimer

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