



## WES PRESS RELEASE

### Tunisia and the European Union united in the fight against plastic pollution as part of the WES Project workshop

Athens, 6 October 2023

On Friday, September 22, 2023 in Tunisia, the Ministry of the Environment organized a consultative workshop to discuss measures aimed at reducing plastic pollution in Tunisia, within the framework of the EU funded “Water and Environment Support (WES) in the ENI Neighbourhood South Region” project.

The WES project aims to protect the Mediterranean environment and manage the region's limited water resources more efficiently, focusing on pollution prevention and rational water management.

The workshop, which brought together more than 50 participants from key stakeholders and stakeholders, was an opportunity to present the results of the WES project in Tunisia regarding the fight against plastic pollution. Proposed measures to remove barriers to enforcement of legislation on single-use plastic bags were at the core of the discussions, as well as a draft roadmap for the gradual reduction of some single-use plastic products.

Representatives of ministries, public sector institutions, local groups, private sector actors, associations, research institutions, donors and financial institutions participated in this workshop.

During her opening speech, Ms Leila CHIKHAOUI MAHDAOUI, Minister of the Environment, stressed the importance of combating plastic pollution within the framework of the National Strategy for Ecological Transition, and emphasized the importance of dialogue and partnership with all relevant stakeholders, especially plastic manufacturers, who are called upon to comply with current legislation and engage in the dynamic of the ecological transition.

Mr Anis ISMAIL WES Environment Key Expert, highlighted the fact that this project also contributes to the implementation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea of the United Nations Environment Program “Mediterranean Action Plan” and the GreenerMed 2030 plan of the Union for the Mediterranean, which works to support the economy and reduce of marine litter, also referring to the European Strategy for Plastics within the Circular Economy (2018) and the European Regulations on Single-Use Plastics (2019).

Ms Awatef LARBI MESSAI, Director of Quality of Life at the Ministry of Environment, and Ms Nour MANSOUR from the Tunisia office of WWF, presented the national and international context of the fight against plastic pollution. Discussions then focused on the necessary measures to support the implementation of current legislation related to single-use plastic bags in Tunisia, as well as developing a road map to gradually reduce some single-use plastic products that are harmful to the environment.

Representatives of the Chamber of Commerce Syndicates and the Syndicate of Pharmacists also exchanged their experiences regarding reducing the quantities of plastic bags placed on customers’ hands, thanks to the concluded voluntary agreements that demonstrate their will to contribute to national efforts to reduce pollution through developing consumption patterns and behaviors.

Constructive discussions took place on technical, financial and social aspects, as well as on supporting the ecological transformation of plastics industries in Tunisia, in particular by encouraging the adoption of alternatives to single-use materials and promoting the circular economy.

This workshop represents an important step in Tunisia's efforts to combat plastic pollution and demonstrates its commitment to a more sustainable environment.



## **Water and Environment Support**

in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region

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WES

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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