



## The Mediterranean Coast Day celebrations

### AT A GLANCE

The "*Integration of climatic variability and change into national strategies to implement the ICZM Protocol in the Mediterranean*" ("*ClimVar & ICZM*" project) is a collective effort to promote the use of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in countries sharing the Mediterranean as an effective tool to deal with the impacts of climate variability and change in coastal zones, by mainstreaming them into the ICZM process. The project was adopted in January 2012 and will be completed in late 2015.

It is led by UNEP/MAP, within the framework of the MedPartnership project. The project's executing partners are PAP/RAC, Plan Bleu/RAC and GWP-Med.

**Participating countries:** Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Montenegro, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia.

Total budget: USD 9.2 million.

USD 2.2 million: Global Environment

Facility; USD 7 million: Participating

countries, executing agencies, and donors.

### ABSTRACT

The [Mediterranean Coast Day](#) was launched in 2007 and has become a tradition in the Mediterranean. It is celebrated on 25 September, after the date when Slovenia ratified the ICZM Protocol as the first Mediterranean country to do so, i.e. on 25 September 2009.

This initiative was aimed at increasing environmental awareness among policy makers, academia, media, NGOs and the locals. Promoting and implementing activities that at the same time treasure fragile ecological, social and cultural contexts, should lead to a sustainable coastal development. Even though the Coast Day was celebrated in the Mediterranean and the EU, the idea was promoted internationally, throughout the network of institutions and organisations involved in ICZM.

Local and national events were organized in all countries annually. Throughout the years, PAP/RAC invited distinguished persons, eminently qualified to urge policy makers of all the countries to collaborate on raising awareness of the value of the coast and become Ambassadors of the Coast.

Today, the Coast Day continues to be celebrated annually in the Mediterranean. Each year, the central Mediterranean celebration is organised in a different country, while other countries organise their own events. Thus, in 2007 and 2008, the central celebration was organised in Sardinia, Italy. In 2009, the host to the central celebration was Turkey, in 2010 Slovenia, in 2011 Algeria, in 2012 Croatia, in 2013 Italy and in 2014 Tunisia.

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Under the theme "A good climate for change," high-level representatives of the Tunisian government, international organizations, Tunisian and international experts and civil society celebrated the Coast Day in the Mediterranean, in Gammarth, Tunisia, on 25 September 2014. The celebration focused on Climate Variability and Change (CV&C) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and was organized within the framework of the ClimVar & ICZM project under the MedPartnership.

The morning event was dedicated to the international conference on climate change. It was opened by the Director of the Tunisian Agency for Coastal Protection and Planning (APAL), which was co-organising this year's celebration with PAP/RAC. In the afternoon, in order to cope with a menacing weather, the celebration was transferred from a large tent in the hotel gardens to a large hall indoors. The main event was an association forum on ICZM.

## THE EXPERIENCE

The event highlighted the need and the importance of strengthening cooperation among Mediterranean countries on climate variability and change. To do so, all participants were encouraged to take action and act responsibly for their Mediterranean coasts. Special emphasis was put on the need to raise awareness and spread the word around, with closest friends and family.

The main risks the Mediterranean and Tunisia in particular are facing due to climate change were also stressed upon. These include: droughts, floods, rising sea levels, soil degradation, etc. The meeting pleaded for new policies to cope with those challenges, for policies in line with technological progresses, adapted to ecosystems and insisted on the need to strengthen international cooperation, and secure funds needed to invest in this critical area.

In 2014, Mr. Anil Markandya, as Scientific Director of the Basque Centre for Climate Change, received the shield of Ambassador of the Coast for 2014. Mr. Markandya holds a Ph.D. in economics, with focus on environmental issues and has done many studies in Croatia and Tunisia to introduce the concept of climate change in the ICZM. He is also one of the authors of the recent Climate Change assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In the second session of the conference, he presented the latest available information on Climate change at the global level.

To close the morning session experts from APAL presented their strategy to further implement ICZM in Tunisia, and the challenges related to climate change in the Kerkennah Islands (a pilot area to the ClimVar & ICZM project). At this stage, the discussion was opened with the participants, the exchanges reflecting a great concern of local Tunisian experts to build a more sustainable future of the Tunisian coasts, with focus on ICZM and climate variability and change integration.

In the afternoon, the main event was an association forum on ICZM. There were 17 environment associations from all over Tunisia. More than a hundred visitors joined the celebration to discover the active civil society actors dealing with coastal protection and development in Tunisia. The variety of NGOs coming from different domains, such as marine turtle rehabilitation, traditional fishing, gastronomic and cultural heritage protection, youth education programmes, and international cooperation projects, was very inspiring to the visitors.

In 2015, UNEP/MAP celebrates 40 years of its action. The year 2015 coincides with various anniversaries of organisations involved in coastal conservation, i.e. 50 years of the National Trust programme "Neptune", 40 years of the *Conservatoire du Littoral*, 30 years of the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA), 20 years of the French GEF and the Tunisian Coastal Protection Agency, 10 years of the PIM Initiative for Mediterranean Small Islands, and, finally, the launching of the Coastal Agency of Montenegro. To mark these symbolic anniversaries, alongside the Coast Day, the *Conservatoire du littoral* organized a Meeting of Coastal Agencies from Europe and the Mediterranean, on 24-25 September 2015 held in Antibes, France. This event was organized in partnership with the French Ministries of Ecology and of Foreign Affairs, MAP, PAP/RAC, the Blue Plan/RAC, the Cities of Antibes-Juan les Pins, the Department Council of *Maritim Alps*, the AFD, the French Water Agency RMC, and the *Fonds Francais pour l'Environnement Mondial* (FFEM).



## RESULTS

In 2014, in Tunisia, more than 150 persons were present during the morning session of the celebration including representatives from Italy, France, Montenegro, Greece, Morocco, Egypt, Croatia and Tunisia. The audience was very rich and diversified: foreign ministries, international organisations, national and local authorities, NGOs, research institutes. The forum was a great success, with around 250 visitors, including a wide range of actors involved on the field to protect the Tunisian coasts, their people, culture, economy and environment. The 2014 Coast Day was closed with a cocktail and ceremony during which the winner of the child coastal photo contest organised was awarded.

For the year 2014, PAP/RAC organised, jointly with the Šibenik-Knin County, a celebration in Šibenik, Croatia. Šibenik and its surroundings are particularly exposed to the consequences of climate variability and change. Also, within the MedPartnership initiative, PAP/RAC assisted the Šibenik-Knin County in preparing the Coastal Plan for the County.

The Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro and the Public Enterprise for the Maritime Domain joined efforts to mark the event. Educational workshops were organised at an elementary school in Podgorica and in Budva, while educational posters were distributed at elementary and high schools.

A movie was prepared by PAP/RAC, under the Framework of the ClimVar & ICZM project. During the various celebrations, and via UNEP/MAP online networks, we projected and widely shared the short animated movie [“A good climate for change”](#). The movie was selected in two major film festivals: (i) *Think forward* Film Festival in Venice, Italy, for the best animated movie, and (ii) *Animafest*, in Croatia, where it competed in the category for the best commissioned movie.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Every year, for the past nine years, the main celebration of the Mediterranean Coast Day has been organised in a different country, and many regional, local celebrations have taken place as well. With great enthusiasm, each year country representatives are proposing to host the main event. Many organisations and NGOs are very supportive in searching to organise a special event under the Coast Day flag.

During nine years, high-level representatives from all around the Mediterranean have participated to the events, thousands of people have been involved: scientists, decision makers, civil society, children, etc. Media coverage was always a key concern when organising the Coast Day, and today with Internet, social networks and online live sharing the number of people is only growing bigger.

A new theme is selected every year to be the central theme for the events. Thus, through the years, the Coast Day has successively highlighted key areas of concern for the protection, conservation and sustainable development of the coastal zones, e.g. the beaches, climate variability, voices of the coasts, coastal management agencies, etc. This year, the event was organised in Antibes Juan-les-Pins, France, in cooperation with the *Conservatoire du Littoral*. The main theme was coastal management agencies.



2014 Coast Day diploma for children participating to the activities in Šibenik, Croatia



Leaflet “Jellyfish of the Mediterranean” (Montenegro)



A footage from the short animated movie “A good climate for change”

## IMPACTS

Every year the event has a wider impact. In 2014, in Tunisia, more than a hundred visitors joined the participants of the morning conference to discover the active civil society actors of coastal protection and development in Tunisia. The variety of NGOs and their field of action were very inspiring to the visitors. Topics like marine turtle rehabilitation, traditional fishing, gastronomic and cultural heritage protection, youth education programmes, international cooperation projects, were part of the forum. Each NGO was given the opportunity to briefly present their actions, their team, and their future projects. A warm atmosphere allowed visitors and participants to exchange. The aim of this forum of associations was also to raise public awareness, and help strengthen knowledge of the active civil society actors, on key issues related to CV&C, such as erosion, sea-level rise, global warming, storm surges and to create synergies among NGOs to complement each other's work.

In 2015, Coast Day was organized in Antibes, France. The meeting was primarily intended for the Mediterranean and European stakeholders involved in the protection of coastal areas, namely: governments, local authorities, coastal management agencies, NGOs and specialised networks. Major issues were addressed, such as climate change, naturalness, coastal planning, and partnership issues dealing with management of coastal areas. More than 300 people took part to the events, and a large media campaign guaranteed great dissemination of results and visibility. A Declaration of Agencies active in environment in France and the Mediterranean was addressed by the participants to the UN Climate Change COP 21, scheduled for December 2015, in Paris.

## REFERENCES

Priority Actions Programme/Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC)  
<http://www.pap-thecoastcentre.org>  
[sylvain.petit@paprac.org](mailto:sylvain.petit@paprac.org)

## KEYWORDS

ICZM, awareness raising, public & civil society participation, coastal conservation, sustainable development

## EXECUTING PARTNER

PAP/RAC was established in 1977 in Split, Croatia, as part of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). PAP/RAC's mandate is to provide support to Mediterranean countries in the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, and in particular of the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management. PAP/RAC is oriented towards carrying out of the activities contributing to sustainable development of coastal zones and strengthening capacities for their implementation. Thereby, it cooperates with the national, regional and local authorities, as well as with a large number of international organisations and institutions.

### MedPartnership Project

UNEP/MAP Information Office  
48, Vas Konstantinou. Athens, 11635, Greece

*Together for the Mediterranean*



Antibes Juan-les-Pins



PIM Initiative

Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem

Together for the Mediterranean Sea

# MedPartnership



**Executing partners:** FAO, UNESCO/IHP, UNIDO, GWP-Med, MIO-ECSDE, WWF MedPO, UNEP/MAP's MEDPOL programme and Regional Activity Centres (SCP/RAC, SPA/RAC and PAP/RAC).

**Participating countries:** Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Montenegro, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia.

