



The project launch event for a new bi-communal project on marine litter will take place on Saturday, 25 May 2019 in Famagusta. The project called ‘MarLitCy’ innovates, transforming marine litter into a powerful peacebuilding tool, developing synergies, building capacity and fostering partnerships on the island. MarLitCy brings together children and youth, fishermen, divers and coastal businesses from across the divide who want to fight marine litter, an environmental and social problem of common concern.

On Saturday, 25 May 2019, the project MarLitCy ‘Marine Litter for Synergies, Capacity-building and Peacebuilding’ will have its Launch Event in Famagusta. The day will begin early in the morning with a beach cleanup at Salamis Bay and Seabed Cleanups at Trikomo/Iskele Bogaz. The collected marine litter will be recorded and then displayed at the premises of the Famagusta Walled City Association (MASDER). The launch event, which will be attended by representatives of the EU Programme Support Office of the European Commission, will also include the premiere screening of five animation videos on marine litter, specifically developed by students for the MarLitCy project.

The project, with a duration of 36 months (December 2018 – November 2021), is funded by the European Union under the Cypriot Civil Society in Action VI grant scheme and implemented by four civil society organisations with significant experience in bi-communal activities and the blue sector: Famagusta Walled City Association (MASDER), AKTI Project and Research Centre, North Cyprus Diving Centers Association and Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre.

MarLitCy builds on the success of a previous EU-funded project titled “Marine Litter: Together for Clean Coasts!”, which was implemented 2 years ago by the same partnership and engaged over 30,000 people, mainly students and youth. MarLitCy will replicate and augment this success by bringing the island’s communities together to work. This will be achieved through the implementation of various novel activities such as the European best practice ‘Fishing for Litter’, which will be launched in four fishing harbours on the island, the expansion of the existing Responsible Coastal Business Network, interactive presentations at schools and universities, ‘meet the sea’ days with free diving lessons for youth, beach and seabed cleanups, and participatory decision-making workshops. The activities have been designed to reach out to specific target groups, including children and youth, educators, fishermen, divers, decision-makers and the general public.

Background information on marine litter:

Marine litter, any human-made material disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment, has emerged as a global environmental and social threat, with plastic items making the majority of marine litter. It is estimated that approximately **1455 tonnes of plastic (equivalent to the weight of approximately 50 humpback whales!)** are floating in the Mediterranean alone, and over **5 trillion plastic pieces** can be found around the world’s oceans.



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Large pieces of plastic, such as plastic bags and fishing-related items can be ingested by marine organisms causing suffocation and starvation. Marine wildlife can also become entangled in these items, causing animals to become incapacitated. Contrary to popular belief, plastic does not biodegrade, but rather breaks down into continuously smaller pieces. This leads to the formation of microplastics, plastic items smaller than 5mm and most of the time invisible to the human eye. In this smaller form, microplastic items can be ingested by marine wildlife transferring organic pollutants to their bodies. This can have important impacts on the food chain, as ingested microplastics have been identified in marine organisms destined for human consumption. In fact, an investigation of microplastic ingestion in the fish *Boops boops* (bogue) in the Mediterranean identified plastic items in the stomachs of nearly 70% of examined fish, at an average of **3.75 plastic items per fish**. The possible effects that microplastics making their way through the food chain can have on human health is still uncertain, but the certain thing is that it ends up on our plate: it is something we should seriously consider next time we use plastic, and especially single-use plastic items!

For more information about the project, visit www.marlitcy.eu or contact:

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Photographs that can be used together with the article:





You are cordially invited to the Project Launch Event of
Marine Litter for Synergies, Capacity-building and Peacebuilding

Date: Saturday, **25 May 2019**

Time: **16:30 – 18:30**

Venue: **MASDER, Bishop Chapel, 99450, Famagusta Walled City**



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Launch Event Agenda
Saturday, 25 May 2019

Beach and Seabed Cleanup Activities*

- 07:00 – 08:00 Beach Cleanup at Salamis Bay by Her Daim Dostlar (Forever Friends)
- 10:00 – 14:00 Seabed Cleanup at Trikomo/Iskele Bogaz by North Cyprus Diving Centers Association and Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre
- 13:30 – 15:00 Source Identification and Recording of Collected Marine Litter from the Beach and Seabed Cleanups

Launch Event at MASDER

- 16:30 – 16:45 Welcome Speech by Mr. Serdar Atai, Vice-President of MASDER
- 16:45 – 17:00 Welcome Speech by Ms. Xenia Loizidou, Chair of the Board of Directors of AKTI Project and Research Centre
- 17:00 – 17:15 Welcome Speech by Mr. Michael Docherty, Head of Section, EU Programme Support Office, European Commission
- 17:15 – 17:45 Screening of Animation Videos Developed by 5 Pilot Schools and Award of Certificates to Students
- 17:45 – 18:30 Exhibition on Marine Litter and Cocktail Reception

* If you wish to participate at either the beach cleanup or the seabed cleanup please contact Ms Cemile Kocareis at cemilekocareis@yahoo.com or on tel: 05338763118



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Photo Credits:

Yellow plastic bottle on beach: Demetra Orthodoxou, AKTI Project and Research Centre

Plastic bottles on beach: Demetra Orthodoxou, AKTI Project and Research Centre

Laysan albatross with debris in stomach: Claire Fackler, NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries, Marine Photobank



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