



PERSEUS Message from IZMIR

“MARINE LITTER and Unsustainable TOURISM as threats towards achieving CLEAN SEAS by 2020”

The Interactive Stakeholders Session “Blue Growth for Green Cities: Documenting Anthropogenic Impacts and suggesting Policy Options”, organized by the PERSEUS (FP7) Research Project within the “International Congress on Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Societies / Cities (GreInSus)” (Izmir, 8-10 May 2014), examined the relation of Marine Litter and Tourism as threats towards achieving PERSEUS's main objective: *Clean Seas by 2020*.

It has been recognized that:

- The Mediterranean basin is one of the most visited destinations in the world;
- Clean Seas are an important element for sustainable Tourism;
- Marine Litter is an explicit barrier to Tourism;
- Tourism is one priority area to deliver sustainable growth and jobs;
- Tourism is a significant coefficient of Marine Litter and can increase pressure on natural resources;
- Marine Litter and unregulated touristic activity pose a threat to the marine environment and human health;

Participants identified key barriers to achieving “Clean Seas by 2020”:

- Insufficient and unreliable data hinder accurate problem identification;
- Ineffective governance and inadequate reinforcement mechanisms;
- Lack of marine spatial planning magnifies the pressure exerted from Tourism on natural resources and the environment;
- Short-term benefit preferred over Long-term strategy in Tourism development
- Need of new policies for reducing Marine Litter and changing consumer habits;
- Lack of culture on recycling and waste prevention;

AND

Proposed the following initiatives and measures:

Marine Litter:

- ✓ Prevent waste; it is a key factor for reducing the amounts of waste at source
- ✓ Manage effectively the specific Marine Litter sources (i.e. rivers)
- ✓ Improve the collection of litter from sewage and rainfall systems
- ✓ Implement coordinated, transnational Environmental Education programs and campaigns across countries
- ✓ Increase public awareness, improve “recycling culture” and alter “consumer

behavior”

- ✓ Replace plastics by new, innovative, less resistant and rapidly degrading materials
- ✓ Create quality-controlled, homogenized and comparable data-series and databases
- ✓ Allocate funds (e.g. EU structural funds) for targeted actions to achieve long-term objectives

Tourism:

- ✓ Adopt a long-term planning strategy coupled with sustainable development
- ✓ Promote tools and awards focusing on quality of services for sustainable Tourism
- ✓ Support Sustainable Tourism and development with adequate and challenging funds and opportunities
- ✓ Couple the number of tourists and infrastructure to the carrying capacity of the destinations
- ✓ Adopt sustainability practices in Tourist industry to protect the use of natural resources
- ✓ Implement Marine Spatial Planning as an important tool to sustainable Tourism, involving all relevant stakeholders
- ✓ Develop thematic Tourism linking Tourism and marine environment, education and awareness
- ✓ Implement Environmental Education programs and campaigns
- ✓ Increase public awareness and improve “consumer behavior”

In general,

Science and society should be connected and engaged more effectively and broadly; the proposed initiatives and measures should involve close collaboration of all involved stakeholders engaging all parts of society economy, policy and science and can be successful and implemented through the participation of responsible and educated citizens.

A cultural shift towards to “Respect of our seas” is needed, where education should be the vector of change leading to enhanced public awareness and eco-friendly behaviors.