

2015 Coastday and European and Mediterranean Coastal Agencies meeting summary

On the 24th and 25th of September the first European and Mediterranean coastal agencies meeting took place in Antibes Juan les Pins. 2015 actually marked several anniversaries: the Conservatoire du Littoral's 40th anniversary, the National Trust's NEPTUNE program's 50th, the Action Plan for the Mediterranean's 40th (Barcelona Convention - UNEP), the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas' 30th, the Protection and Coastal Planning Agency of Tunisia's 20th, the French Global Environment Facility's 20th and the PIM Initiative for Small Mediterranean Islands' 10th anniversary

With 170 participants from 15 European and Mediterranean countries, the event brought together many European and Mediterranean key players involved in the protection of coastal areas: governments, local authorities, coastal management organisations, specialised networks and NGOs.

The meetings were started at the Antibes Congress Centre by Jean LEONETTI (Deputy Mayor of Antibes), Mr. Gaetano Leone (Coordinator of the Barcelona Convention Secretariat), Xavier sticker (French Ambassador for the Environment) and Ms Odile GAUTHIER (Director of the Conservatoire du Littoral) who all stressed the importance of balanced coastal development and appropriate management, supported by international measures to facilitate the exchange of experience in regards to the issues of conserving coastlines which are rich and fragile areas subjected to significant pressures everywhere around the world.

Then, Mr. Lucien CHABASON (Chairman of the Blue Plan and Management Advisor for the IDDRI) an experienced contributor in French coastal protection and very qualified as a coordinator of the Mediterranean Action Plan, shared with the congregation his views on the recent evolution of coastlines around the world. He highlighted the "coastal" subject's loss of momentum on major global agendas which is inversely proportional to the pressures it faces. Next Ms. Zeljka Skaricic (Director of CAR PAP) and Cécile QUEFELEC (European Environmental Agency) intervened together to examine coastal protection in Europe and the Mediterranean, evoking issues and preservation strategies in place. Christophe Sanson (Member of the Bar of the Hauts de Seine), Ms. Constance CORBIER (FFEM) and Romain DISSAUX (French Ministry of Ecology) then discussed the practical and legal means for coastal protection as well as the financial systems to support these preservations strategies. The morning ended with questions on the future challenges for sustainable coastal management by addressing the four workshops themes of the afternoon: climate change, naturality, coastal planning and the Partnership issues in coastal area management.

The afternoon took place at the Battery of Graillon (a Conservatoire du Littoral Site, operated by the city of Antibes) with two series of parallel workshops organised around testimonial panels on the topic in question, followed by exchanges with the audience, guided by an expert witness.

Finally, all the participants celebrated decades of action at the Villa Eilenroc with personal testimonies from each represented organization celebrating their anniversary. Sami BENHAJ (PIM Initiative), François Xavier DUPORGE (French Global Environment Facility), Khalil Attia (CAR SPA),



Gaetano Leone (PAM), Odile GAUTHIER (Conservatoire du Littoral) and Dame Helen GOSH (National Trust) all discussed their "beloved coastline", a moment, a place, or a fact linked to the coast, that marked their careers dedicated to the protection of these areas.

Friday, September 25th was dedicated to Coastday 2015 (Coast Day in the Mediterranean, an initiative of CAR/PAP, Mediterranean Action Plan Centre of the United Nations' Environmental Program). The previous day's workshops and the parallel workshop on Mediterranean ICZM, organised by the French Development Agency and the Blue Plan were carried out again. Then a round table debate on the future of coastal conservation allowed to initially discuss the difficulties of management on various levels (intergovernmental, between local communities, involving civil society, with businesses, associations) and how to overcome them. Secondly, the issues of effective funding in complex contexts (inter-institutional and cross-funding, unequal treatment depending on the type of issues and geographical area, budget contractions). Subsequently, fifty children from the Fontonne primary school from the city of Antibes, presented the "I love my sea" program that teaches children about marine macro-waste problems with the production of an educational tool per year (a logo "stop waste, endangered sea", a video and the reconstitution of a beach with the foreshore and waste). The morning ended with the Mediterranean and European children's declaration for coastal protection.

On the afternoon of September 25th, at Villa Eilenroc, the measures taken by the Departmental Council of the Alpes Maritimes on Conservatoire sites were demonstrated by the work done under the Departmental Plan for Walking and Hiking Routes on the Cap d'Antibes coastal path. The participants were finally able to discover these exemplary management measures by visiting the site.

It was the first time that the organisations in charge of the preservation of coastlines in Europe and the Mediterranean met as a club in order to discuss the major technical issues of coastal management, to share the daily issues they face with their peers and to develop together a common vision regarding the future of the coast. Furthermore, the main conclusions of these meetings were formalised in an Antibes Declaration which reflects the commitment of the coastal agencies to safeguard the coasts in view of global change. It was presented by Ms. Vivianne LE DISSEZ (President of the Board of the Conservatoire du Littoral) to Mr. Xavier Sticker for him to deliver to the Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, so that it can be suggested on the Solutions Agenda of the COP 21 to be held in Paris next December.

This event has created and strengthened ties between coastline preservation contributors, brought up questions and thoughts, and even future partnerships between these organisations with the signing of several cooperation agreements:

- Between the Conservatoire du Littoral and the town of Antibes Juan-les-Pins on the integrated land-sea management of natural areas of the Cap d'Antibes regarding the maintenance and guarding of public marine areas, therefore enhancing its eco-tourism attractiveness.
- Between the Conservatoire du Littoral and the National Trust to strengthen collaboration over the next 5 years to promote best practices and expertise, including staff technical visits in France and England, and to continue developing joint projects on themes of common interest (climate change, islands, ICZM...)
- Between the Conservatoire du Littoral and the Algerian Barbarous association to provide a framework for the cooperation established for nearly 4 years as part of the PIM initiative to exchange expertise on the conservation of natural coastal, insular and marine areas.

