



## WES PRESS RELEASE

### Regional training on Phasing out Single-Use Plastics

Athens, 25 January 2021

Plastic pollution is one of the major challenges of our times. In particular, the issue of marine plastic pollution has been characterized as the new millennium's tragedy of the commons, as it poses a complex and multi-dimensional challenge with significant implications for the marine and coastal environment and human livelihoods all over the world.

In response to this major challenge, the EU Single-Use Plastics Directive (Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment) entered into force on 2 July 2019. It urges a transition away from single-use plastics, towards reusable products and systems addressing single-use plastic items through a range of policy measures. The Union for the Mediterranean's 2030 GreenerMed Agenda (to be endorsed by the 2nd UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change, planned for 2021) includes circular economy, minimization of plastics and marine litter among its priority themes. Under the Barcelona Convention, during the last biennium, UNEP/MAP has focused on addressing the issue of single-use plastic bags, while the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work 2020-2021 includes support to the Contracting Parties for the implementation of circular economy measures in the packaging sector and the development of specific *Regional Guidelines on measures to phase out Single-Use Plastic items*, based on a baseline situation study, assessing the current status in the different countries.

Therefore, in support of all of the above, and to strengthen the skills and capacities of policy staff from the Ministries of Environment, representatives of the productive sector (plastics producers, relevant association) and CSO representatives, the Water and Environment Support project (WES) is currently organising four webinars over January and February 2021 to identify, prioritise and operationalise targeted measures to phase out SUPs. The webinars will focus on:

- The problematic of single-use plastics
- Responses to single-use plastics
- Feasibility and impact of measures in the Mediterranean
- Implementation of measures and co-development of regional guidelines

A parallel regional peer-to-peer (P2P) activity of WES on the same topic was launched in November 2020. The overall objective of the P2P activity is to reinforce capacity, support the sharing of experiences and expertise and stimulate cooperation among the peers for the implementation of measures to reduce consumption and leakage of Single Use Plastics (SUP) into the environment. Two P2P sessions have already taken place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2020 and 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, while the exchange will continue at least till March 2021.

The webinars and P2P process will contribute to the development of the *Regional Guidelines on measures to phase out Single-Use Plastic items*, that will eventually be adopted by the Barcelona Convention at the next Meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2021.





## **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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