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2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Building a Bridge between Science and Sustainable Action in Managing Impacts of Non-Indigenous Species in the Mediterranean Sea

28 June, 17:00-19:00, Pavilion of Knowledge, Library, Lisbon

Organised by: Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TUDAV), Middle East Technical University (METU), the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas, Mediterranean Action Plan (SPA/RAC), International Ocean Institute (IOI), iSea

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Our side event aligned with the theme of the Conference "Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions", within the thematic focus of "Managing, Protecting, Conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems". Non-indigenous species (NIS) in the Mediterranean basin result in ecosystem degradation. The threat needs urgent action to prevent irreversible damage to the ecosystem. The panel was organised with a gender balance of marine scientists, international experts on legal issues, educators, activists, civil society and academicians who presented on issues ranging from the impacts on marine biodiversity and the coastal ecosystem of NIS; methods of protecting, conserving and managing the basin; understanding the effect of multiple stressors (e.g. warming, pollution, fisheries, invasive species) on the ecosystems and developing solutions to increasing the resilience of these ecosystems are the key towards effective management of marine ecosystems; citizen science on identification, stocktaking and reporting of NIS; socio-economic impacts and innovative adaptations techniques such as introducing alien species in the diet and supply chain of Mediterranean countries.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- The general overview of the NIS in the Mediterranean Basin (including the Black Sea) was presented, highlighting the negative impacts of NIS on the native ecosystem and human activities. (Bayram Öztürk/TUDAV)
- While we cannot stop the entrance of NIS into the Mediterranean Basin nor eliminate all the harmful NIS, it is important to protect the entire ecosystem to increase the resilience against the NIS. (Bayram Öztürk/TUDAV)

- In the Black Sea, projects such as CONNECT and BRIDGE will help policy making to act upon the science and innovation on various threats on marine environment and blue economy. (Baris Salihoglu/METU)
- Mediterranean Action Plan SPA/RAC has established the NIS monitoring scheme. Such international/regional initiatives should be encouraged to monitor NIS expansion. (Khalil Attila/SPARAC)
- Demonstration of the effectiveness of the Citizen Science project by IOI called “Spot the Alien” shown as a portable model with potential for scaling up globally. (Antonella Vassallo/IOI)
- Introducing NIS to cuisine with improved supply chains has been initiated in Greece, which can be one of the measures to manage NIS populations. (Ioannis Giovos/iSea)

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Monitoring NIS and sharing the information is crucial in the Mediterranean Basin where the NIS constitutes one of the most serious threats to the marine Environment.
- New approaches to the NIS related problems should be encouraged, such as citizen science and using them for human consumption.
- Regional and international cooperation is needed for tackling NIS problems.

Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)

IOI Ocean Academy - Ocean Knowledge for All (International Ocean Institute (NGO) **#OceanAction45943**; International Ocean Institute (IOI)- Ocean Governance training & capacity development (NGO)**#OceanAction41327**

