



## Minimising the hidden costs of tourism in MED islands.

### Waste prevention actions and circular economy perspectives

**Hosted by MEP Maria Spyraiki,  
Co-chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on  
'Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development'**

29 April 2020, 10:30 – 12:30 CEST

The Mediterranean Sea is the world's leading tourist region. According to the World Tourism Organisation, in 2017 about one third of the world 1.326 billion arrivals was generated in the countries surrounding this semi-enclosed sea. Tourism has developed into a major industry and often represents the main source of income for the local economy. The annual massive tourist wave toward the Mediterranean, largely concentrated within a short period, places a great burden on local infrastructure, especially for waste management. This is particularly true for seas-locked areas, such as islands.

The growing attention to the potential of sustainable tourism as a lever to promote circular economy is at the basis of the [BLUEISLANDS project](#) (ERDF Co-funding under the Interreg MED program), which is slowly coming to an end and is now ready to share its results.

Loads of knowledge about the impact of tourism is out there and several small-scale pilot activities have been showing potential solutions to address it. It is now time to take a step further and join forces to come up with shared plans that can minimise the hidden costs of tourism and manage it in a way that is not burdensome for the environment and the local population.

This event will bring together EU policy-makers, representatives of public authorities from Mediterranean islands, researchers, circular economy practitioners and key stakeholders of the tourism sector will bring their expertise to the table to look at how to move towards sustainable tourism with a collaborative approach.



<b>AGENDA</b>	
10:30 – 10:45	<p><b>Foreword</b> – MEP Maria Spyraiki</p> <p><b>Introduction</b> – Athena Papanastasiou, Environment officer at Cyprus Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment</p>
10:45 – 11:45	<p><b>Panel discussion</b>, moderated by Francesco Lembo, ACR+ Managing Director</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Present and future of the Interreg MED program, fostering sustainable policies through cooperation</u> - Curzio Cervelli, Interreg MED Joint Secretariat Coordinator</li> <li>- <u>Towards sustainable use of natural resources within the Mediterranean insular context</u> - Gaetano Armao Vice-President and Regional Minister for economy of the Region of Sicily, Chair of the CoR Interregional group on insular regions</li> <li>- <u>Regional challenges and global solutions for ecosystems resiliency</u> - MEP Catherine Chabaud</li> <li>- <u>The invisible burden of tourism</u> - Jeremy Sampson, CEO at the Travel Foundation</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A session</p>
11:45 – 12:30	<p><b>Panel discussion</b>, moderated by MEP Petros Kokkalis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Regional perspectives:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Sebastià Sansó i Jaume, Director general Environmental Department, Balearic Islands Regional government</li> <li>o George Alexakis, Crete Vice Governor on European &amp; International Affairs and CPMR Vice President on Maritime Affairs</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <u>Calling the EU tourism sector for a behavioural change towards sustainability</u> - Cristina Nunez Cuesta, NECSTOUR Managing Director</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A session</p>
12:45	<p><b>Take-away messages and conclusions</b> – MEP Maria Spyraiki</p>