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BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC MOVEMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Mediterranean Sea is the cradle of human civilisation and a vital resource for its coastal inhabitants. However, its health is seriously threatened by plastic pollution. By taking collective responsibility for the state of our sea, the Break Free From Plastic Movement in the Mediterranean aims to trigger the necessary systemic change to counter the overwhelming accumulation of plastics pollution in the region.

The Mediterranean presents today one of the highest concentrations of plastic pollution in the world. Plastic litter is found anywhere from the sea surface to the seafloor, on the shorelines of even the most remote islands, and in the deep sea. Plastics threaten and kill the diverse marine species, most of which exist only in the Mediterranean; they convey non-indigenous and potentially harmful organisms, and transfer toxic chemicals; they fragment into microplastics that can subsequently be ingested and may end up poisoning the food chain. Plastic pollution in the Mediterranean must be stopped before it's too late.

Most of the plastic pollution in the Mediterranean comes from land-based practices. Far from being a purely marine issue, it is rooted in our unsustainable production and consumption patterns, ranging from bad product design and consumption habits, to inappropriate solid waste management practices at all stages on land and at sea, to discharges of inappropriately treated or untreated municipal sewage and industrial waste. End-of-pipe measures such as marine litter cleanups are no solution to the problem: to prevent the Mediterranean sea from turning into a "plastic soup", we need to adopt an integrated and holistic approach which focuses primarily on prevention at source rather than cure. We need a systemic change along the whole plastics value-chain, and we need it now.

By launching the BFFP movement in the Mediterranean region, we join forces and align our campaigns to:
- Advocate for a reduction of the production and consumption of plastics, and especially of single-use plastic items;
- Promote green and circular economy best practices for the industry, and make producers accountable for the whole lifecycle of their products (including extended producer responsibility schemes such as deposit systems for beverage containers or fishing nets);
- Call for stronger enforcement of existing regulations and better policies to phase out problematic products, promote eco-design and resource efficiency, and improve waste management;
- Empower stakeholders to take up individual and/or collective actions against plastic litter;
- Raise public awareness and promote responsible behaviour;
- Promote participatory and citizen science initiatives to improve knowledge on sources, amounts, pathways, distribution and trends of plastic pollution;
- Provide a regional perspective to the global discussions on tackling plastic pollution towards healthy oceans and seas;

• Foster collaboration with global, regional and sub-regional organizations, to address the transboundary aspects of marine litter and enhance the effectiveness of multilateral initiatives aimed at preventing, reducing and managing the phenomenon.

We look forward to working constructively with governments, EU institutions, international organisations, non-governmental actors and other socio-economic partners and networks to ensure the protection that our sea requires and deserves.

SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS:

Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation (Greece)
Amigos de la Tierra (Spain)
Center for International Environmental Law
Ecological Recycling Society (Greece)
Friend of the Earth Cyprus
Greenpeace
IndyAct (Lebanon)
Legambiente (Italy)
Mediterranean SOS Network (Greece)
MIO-ECSDE
Retorna (Spain)

Rezero Waste Prevention Foundation (Spain)
Surfrider Foundation Europe
Surfrider España
Zelena akcija (Friend of the Earth Croatia)
ZERO (Portugal)
Zero Waste Europe
Zero Waste France
Zero Waste Italy
Zero Waste Montenegro
Zero Waste Tunisia
Zero Zbel (Morocco)