



23 September, 2025

MEDITERRANEAN COAST DAY 2025:

Coasts won't become resilient on their own

It takes all of us - institutions, businesses, and citizens - working together to plan, protect, and act

Organised by the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (**PAP/RAC**) under the **UNEP/MAP** — Barcelona Convention, **Mediterranean Coast Day** draws attention to the urgent challenges facing our coasts and returns this September 25 with a strong call to action.

This year's theme: **"Inspiring Impact: Mediterranean Institutions for Coastal Resilience"**, highlights the urgent need for institutions and citizens to work hand in hand to safeguard one of the planet's most vulnerable regions. With climate change hitting the Mediterranean 20% faster than the global average, building trust, sharing knowledge, and acting together are no longer optional: they are the key to safeguarding our coasts and the 150 million people who depend on them.

Lives and shores at risk

The Mediterranean coast is **facing unprecedented pressures that threaten livelihoods, lifestyles, and ecosystems.**

- Rapid urbanization and mass tourism are degrading fragile coastal environments.
- Pollution, overexploitation of resources, and habitat loss are undermining biodiversity.
- Climate change impacts - *occurring 20% faster here than the global average* - amplify all these threats.





The **Med 2050 report** from UNEP/MAP's Plan Bleu warns that, within just 25 years: "Barring any major changes, by 2050 the Mediterranean will be in a far more alarming situation than it is today, with a major transformation of the entire marine ecosystem and the general degradation of the ecological conditions for the liveability of all its territories", with:

- **+2.3°C** above pre-industrial averages
- **+40 cm** sea level rise
- **- 20%** decline in exploited marine species
- **- 17%** drop in crop yields
- Severe **water shortages** affecting nearly the entire basin

The regional population will **grow by 20-30%**, reaching up to **690 million inhabitants**, and the coastal population is expected to rise due to inland droughts and climate-driven migration towards coastal cities. From Beirut to Gibraltar, citizens are already feeling the impact. Over the last 12 months, extreme weather events have accelerated in the Mediterranean, ranging from the **DANA** (*Depresión Aislada en Niveles Altos / Isolated depression at high altitudes*) in **Valencia, Spain**, which killed over 220 people last November, **severe flooding in Venice** in February, **record-breaking heatwaves** that have taken place in the region throughout summer and accelerated erosion phenomena that are observed in Tunisia lately.

Without urgent action and reliable institutional support, citizens cannot effectively protect themselves, their homes, or their livelihoods.

How the Mediterranean is pioneering coastal resilience

Despite these challenges, the Mediterranean is also pioneering solutions. By applying Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), Mediterranean countries are showing how local action can address global challenges while ensuring sustainable development. The key lies in looking beyond isolated issues and embracing an ecosystem-based approach, one that connects land and sea, science and policy, institutions and citizens. Indeed, coasts are dynamic systems requiring coordinated, fair, and sustainable planning.

The region also benefits from a strong legal framework: in 2008, the 21 Mediterranean countries and the EU, under the Barcelona Convention, adopted **the world's first-ever ICZM Protocol**.

This landmark commitment ensures that economic, social, and cultural development goes hand-in-hand with the protection of landscapes, ecosystems, and people.

Citizens and institutions driving change together

This Mediterranean Coast Day shines a light on institutions, citizens and organisations turning policy into action - from restoring nature to empowering communities. Despite sometimes tough challenges, collaboration and determination are delivering real results across one of the world's most vulnerable regions.

Explore a selection of highlights below, and dive into the full collection of stories from Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, and Türkiye - as well as from regional institutions — through [our interactive storymap](#).





PAP/RAC — Inspiring impact across the Mediterranean

For nearly 50 years, PAP/RAC has led the way in protecting one of the world's most threatened yet vital coasts. From pioneering Coastal Area Management Programmes (CAMPs) to restoring wetlands and developing cutting-edge tools, the Split-based centre turns the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocol and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) into action, helping countries balance land and sea, people and policy's needs. With 21 CAMPs and a track record of uniting governments, scientists, and communities, PAP/RAC shows how strong institutions can transform shared challenges into resilient futures for the Mediterranean.

[Learn more about this story](#)

Slovenia — A tiny coast with a big impact

With just 46 km of shoreline, Slovenia is pioneering the ICZM Protocol and turning visionary planning into real-world action: they have restored wetlands, transformed the coastal road into a public park, and built blue-green corridors that reconnect people and nature. Slovenia proves that even the smallest coasts can lead the way.

[Learn more about this story](#)

North Africa — Small grants, big change

Across North Africa, IUCN Med's Mubadarat initiative is proving that grassroots solutions work. From protecting endangered sea turtles in Sinai to reviving traditional fishing in Tunisia and restoring wetlands in Libya, local organisations are leading bold climate action. With the right tools, community knowledge becomes coastal resilience.

[Learn more about this story](#)

Greece — Turning citizens into climate leaders

On Chios, Greece, HELMEPA flipped climate communication on its head: instead of talking at people, it listened first. The result? 5,500 Climate Ambassadors who weave sustainability into everyday life - from schools and markets to festivals and beaches. With half a million volunteers having participated in the cleanups they organised, HELMEPA shows how community-led action can transform coasts.

[Learn more about this story](#)

Italy — Reinventing the city-sea relationship

In Italy, Genoa is redesigning its future through Genova 2050, a flagship resilience strategy tackling rising seas, floods, and urban pressure head-on. Projects like RegenerAction are reconnecting the city with its coastline, while a carbon-free coastal corridor and new nature-based solutions are reshaping public spaces. Genoa is showing the Mediterranean how cities can thrive by working with the sea, not against it.

[Learn more about this story](#)





Contact

For interviews with storymakers, institution representatives, and Coast Day organisers and/or any further information:

Tea Marasovic / e. tea.marasovic@paprac.org / +385 21 340478 (landline) +385 91 7932261 (WhatsApp)

For real-time updates, visuals, comments and stories, check our posts on LinkedIn or Facebook using the hashtag: #MedCoastDay

Editorial notes

UNEP/MAP

Established in 1975, UNEP/MAP is celebrating 50 years and honoring a legacy this year.

By bringing together 21 countries and the EU, it has laid the foundation for coordinated environmental action across the Mediterranean.

[Learn more about UNEP/MAP](#)

PAP/RAC

For nearly five decades, the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC), operating under the UNEP/MAP — Barcelona Convention, has been a driving force in protecting Mediterranean coasts through integrated planning and regional cooperation. PAP/RAC is the lead organiser of Mediterranean Coast Day

[Learn more about PAP/RAC](#)

Useful links & additional material

Coast Day leaflet

- English version [here](#)
- French version [here](#)

Engagement toolkit including visuals and promotional materials [here](#)

ICZM

Here below is a list of links to explore further ICZM's principles and results as an integrated approach to engage governments, the private sector and civil society to manage coastal zones sustainably:

- [ICZM Protocol](#)
- ICZM in [Morocco](#)
- ICZM in [Montenegro](#), in the [Boka Kotorska bay](#). + [video](#)
- ICZM [Croatia](#), in the [Šibenik-Knin County](#).
- ICZM in [Lebanon](#)
- More case studies [in Mediterranean countries and beyond](#)





Photos

See our portfolio [at this link](#) and do not hesitate to ask if you have specific needs.

[MEDECC Special Report on Climate and Environmental Coastal Risks in the Mediterranean](#)

Established in 2015 and based at Plan Bleu in Marseille, MedECC is an open, independent network of scientists dedicated to understanding climate and environmental change across the Mediterranean Basin

[The Ocean Rise & Coastal Resilience Coalition](#)

A coalition for coastal cities and regions resilient to sea level rise and ocean change