

**Protection and promotion of Gyaros the double goal of the third meeting of the Consortium of Stakeholders of Gyaros**

The third meeting of the Consortium of Stakeholders of Gyaros took place on Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> and Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2016. The goal of the meeting was for the members of the Consortium to develop ideas and to propose the necessary measures that will protect and promote this ecologically important island.

During the first day of the meeting, the results of the various scientific studies on the human environment of the wider Gyaros area, conducted for the purposes of CYCLADES LIFE, were presented. Experts from Harokopio University, one of the beneficiaries of the project, presented the results of the research they conducted in Syros and Andros, giving emphasis on some key socioeconomic data, but also on the views of the local populations of the two islands on several issues relating to the environment, fisheries, sustainable development etc. NCC, a specialized ecological consultancy company, presented two studies in relevance to the future management of Gyaros island, namely the Marine Spatial Plan of the wider area and the Ecosystem Based Management Plan for the new Marine Protected Area (MPA), while MOm presented the Special Ecological Study for Gyaros, the prerequisite baseline study for the establishment of the new MPA.

Moreover, and in view of the fact that Gyaros is both a historical site and also belongs to the Natura 2000 European network of important ecological areas, the members of the Consortium were informed on the legal framework that applies on the island. Experts from the Ministry of Culture, another member of the Consortium, presented the regulatory framework that is applicable at the historical site of Gyaros, whereas the representative of the Ministry of Environment and Energy explained the existing legal framework for the conservation of biodiversity and for the protected areas in our country. Lastly, WWF Greece staff presented a series of examples of protected areas throughout Greece.

Throughout the second day, the members of the Consortium, which are fishermen, members of the local government, the central government, research institutes, local development stakeholders, universities, and NGOs, were divided to working groups and worked on two key aspects of the future management of Gyaros. The first related to the necessary conservation measures that will ensure the protection of both the historical and natural elements of Gyaros, that is the historical site and the important species and habitats, both marine and terrestrial that have been recorded on the island. The other related to the human activities that could potentially be developed within the future MPA with respect to both environment and humans in order to promote and sustain the island's management, without compromising the protection of the above elements. At the plenary, the members of the Consortium exchanged ideas and discussed the results from each working group concluding in a specific list of potential conservation measures that will be discussed and agreed upon in the next meeting, which is scheduled for early next year.

“The Consortium is moving forward with a steady pace and in accordance to the vision for the future of Gyaros that all its members agreed upon just a few months ago” stated Dr. Spyros Kotomatas, Coordinator of the program from WWF Greece. “We want to create, together with the societies of Syros and Andros, an innovative and a model marine protected area in the area of Gyaros, which will be effective in conserving the environment and will respect the needs and aspirations of humans.”

The goal of the Consortium of Stakeholders of Gyaros is for all its members to jointly design and decide on the measures that will be designated and implemented in the area around Gyaros aiming at the protection of nature, especially its marine environment while in parallel promoting the sustainable development of the local societies.

**For journalists:**

You can find out more on the CYCLADES LIFE program [here](#).

Photos from the meeting [here](#).

More information on the Consortium [here](#).

**More information:**

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The CYCLADES LIFE is being implemented by WWF Greece together with the Ministry of the Environment and Energy, the Decentralized Administration Authority of the Aegean, the Development Corporation of Local Authorities of Cyclades S.A, Harokopeio University, the Italian Tethys Research Institute and the NGOs MOM/Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal. For more visit: [www.cycladeslife.gr](http://www.cycladeslife.gr)

The project Cyclades LIFE, “Integrated monk seal conservation of Northern Cyclades”, is being implemented with the contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Union and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation ([www.fpa2.com/](http://www.fpa2.com/)).

