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## Press Release

### Evaluation of marine litter in Greece from 14 entities and experts

The evaluation of marine litter in Greece indicates that **89% of the Greek coasts** exceed the marine litter **Threshold Value** set by the European Union, based on the results of EVMAR project, which aims to evaluate marine litter in Greece through the harmonization and analysis of extensive data collected by the Environmental Organisation iSea and 13 other participating entities. According to the published report, **cigarette butts** are the major litter item on Greek beaches, while **plastic bottles** on the seafloor.

The results are based on over **1640 samplings** conducted across **676 different areas**, since 2016.

Key findings include:

- **plastics make up more than 80%** of recorded litter items,
- **78% of all litter items are Single Use Plastics**,
- plastics dominate both on Greek beaches and the seafloor,
- **tourism activities** significantly contribute to litter accumulation, with the highest levels recorded before and after peak tourist seasons, revealing the **temporal waste management** in highly visited areas.

Drawing on an extensive work based on the analysis of long-term data, iSea and the EVMAR project partners are raising alarms about Greece's ineffective waste management and mitigation of marine litter pollution.

On key recommendations provided is the **separate collection** of waste based on the material types and items, aligned with the European Union's proposed measures and strategies, with a special focus on items that primarily contribute to marine litter pollution. To ensure the effectiveness of the waste management systems, the incorporation of specific parameters into the development of the **Local Waste Management Plans** are also suggested, aimed at improving waste collection and management procedures, but also securing that

municipalities offer **adequate facilities** for the proper disposal of municipal waste by the citizens.

In addition, iSea and the project's participants call for stronger enforcement of the Greek existing legal framework to combat marine litter including the **controls** on the illegal trade of banned Single Use Plastics, such as plastic straws, and the enforcement of penalties for the improper disposal of cigarette butts and small-sized items. The government's and central authorities' role is also highlighted in ensuring waste reduction including the establishment and maintenance of public drinking fountains and the replacement of Single Use Plastic caps and cutlery at public events.

To effectively implement the proposed measures for combating marine litter, continuous **awareness raising and systematic monitoring** of marine litter are essential. Thus, the importance of educating the public, particularly targeted groups such as smokers, is emphasized. In addition, the promotion of Citizen Science tools, like the platform developed as part of the EVMAR project to allow citizens actively contribute to data collection and provide valuable insights into marine litter pollution, is proposed.

Find the layman's report here: [https://isea.com.gr/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/EVMAR-REPORT\\_ENG.pdf](https://isea.com.gr/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/EVMAR-REPORT_ENG.pdf)

EVMAR is a collaborative work led by the [Environmental Organisation iSea](#) with the participation of [WWF Greece](#), [Padi Aware Foundation](#), [Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association \(HELMEPA\)](#), [Hellenic ORNITHOLOGICAL Society](#), [Skopelos Dive Center](#), [Ikion Diving Alonissos](#), [Project Κα.Πα.](#), [North Aegean Slops](#), [ANTIGONE](#), [Π3= Plastic Pollution Prevention](#), [We4All](#), [The Cleaningans](#) and the [Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature](#).

The project is funded by [Thenamaris](#).

Find more about EVMAR project here: <https://isea.com.gr/evaluating-marine-litter-in-greece-evmar-project-eng/?lang=en>