

Clean Beaches Campaign 2016

Marking the 20th Anniversary of International Black Sea Action Day October 31st

In 2016 the coastal communities in the six Black Sea countries will celebrate for the twentieth time International Black Sea Day, October 31. It commemorates the signature in 1996 of the Strategic Action Plan for the Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea between Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. The day is already firmly established in the calendar of events related to environmental awareness raising and public involvement on Black Sea issues.

The initiative was sustained through the years by means of the dedicated efforts of many concerned citizens and activists of environmental NGOs in the region. It is now an important occasion for educators, journalists, scientists, public figures and government officials to honour their commitments to the future of the Black Sea.

The traditional Clean Beaches events, focusing on removing litter from the beaches after the holiday season, have become an emblem of International Black Sea Day. They carry a straight forward message to the public and have big potential for keeping environmental issues high on the agenda of local governments and politicians on all levels.

For over two years now the Black Sea NGO Network has been very active in the campaign for the reduction of litter in the marine environment and on the coast as part of its activities for raising public awareness on water management issues and promoting the ecosystem approach and public advocacy for pollution control and prevention.

The Network has been consistent in its efforts to introduce citizen science activities to the regional public and involve young people and environmental NGOs in collecting and filing data about the types and distribution of marine litter on the Bulgarian coast. This has been done by means of an application for smartphones called Marine LitterWatch.

Litter, plastics in particular, is accumulating in our seas and coasts. Information and data on marine and riverine litter is essential for tackling it. The European Environment Agency has developed Marine LitterWatch mobile app to strengthen Europe's knowledge base and thus provide support to European policy making and also support the work of the Black Sea Commission.

We now invite partners and associates to join us in using this novel and challenging way to provide information about the marine and riverine coastal areas in the Black Sea basin. How to use Marine LitterWatch, a model checklist and link to the Bulgarian language website at www.mlwatch.bsnn.org with some materials in English will help you to get started. We shall be very glad to help any partner to join the communities monitoring marine and also of riverine litter. At the beginning of the summer season it is just the right time to involve the public in keeping our rivers and our Black Sea clean.

BSNN team



Black Sea NGO Network