

Greeting of the Municipality of Rethymno, to the conference of
CASTWATER partners

Thursday, September 24th 2019

Dear partners from Emilia Romagna, Veneto, Lemessos, Patras, Murcia, Croatia, Valencia, Languedoc-Rousillon, Malta,

It is with great delight to be here today to this conference that highlights the finalisation of project CASTWATER: Coastal areas sustainable tourism water management in the Mediterranean.

All of us, partners, acknowledge and recognize the importance of this project, which belongs to the programme Interreg Mediterranean, also known as MED and is funded from the European Regional Development Fund. We all feel really accomplished and auspicious that we managed to actively participate in a European action with aims as high as the promotion of sustainable development in the Mediterranean region, through innovative ideas and practices that focus in fundamental developmental sectors such as tourism, technology, governance, services, the appropriate use of natural resources and others. Furthermore, through the mobilisation and cooperation of local institutions, we hope that we have achieved with our contributions to advance the social cohesion of the peoples of the Mediterranean and their integration in a unified, democratic and efficient field of action.

We agree after all, that it is the application of innovations in every sector, the factor that will allow the Mediterranean regions of the EU to achieve development that is sustainable, competitive and fair, and to become more prosper by respecting their environment and citizens, thereby claiming their position at the forefront of EU countries.

Naturally, the touristic sector could not be absent from the application of innovations, since it is one of the most crucial levers of economic and social development for Mediterranean economies. To disseminate innovations to the rest of the economy, it is entirely necessary to strengthen the most competitive sectors of local economies, such as tourism. Especially in the contemporary competitive international environment, it is not only useful, but absolutely essential to cooperate in order to promote and showcase the high quality touristic capabilities of our countries.

It is of equal importance to exchange know-how, innovative ideas and experiences, with regards to the appropriate and correct use of water, which constitutes the cornerstone of sustainable development for touristic firms in the regions of the Mediterranean.

The emerging climatic changes, that we all have experienced during the last years, who are characterised mostly by hot arid climates, combined with the lack of a common efficient policy with regards to managing rationally water resources and confronting climate changes that threaten the ecosystem with desertification, have left our regions and their citizens exposed to dangers that have to be confronted immediately.

After all, I think that this common source of anxiety is the one that renders meaningful the projects in which we take part, such as CASTWATER.

As a result, we expect that, within the context of this project, which has triggered this conference today, we exchanged valuable knowledge, ideas and proposals with expert scientists from the Universities taking part and with expert staff from regions with developed tourism, so that we have managed to plan together and integrate actions, that are commonly

approved and the efficiency of which can be tested. These actions are oriented not only towards sustainability in the generic use of the term, but also towards achieving real water savings: spending less water in everyday uses, controlling leaks and unnecessary losses and achieving the reuse of water resources in some cases.

It is today that we make the final minor yet substantial steps towards this direction.

Since local, regional authorities and institutions that are at the forefront of efforts to support and buttress innovative policies, I am sure that CASTWATER, will make a crucial contribution to achieving our common goals, by offering us the opportunity to have a harmonious, profitable and beneficial to all, collaboration.

With regards to the Municipality of Rethymno, allow me to thank our group of highly skilled, trained, and experienced employees taking care of European projects, as well as our extended network of external experts who have ensured the fruitful carrying out of all responsibilities within the framework of CASTWATER.

With regards to the touristic development of the Municipality of Rethymno, I will simply point to the fact that Rethymno is the 10th most important tourist destination in the competitive region of the Mediterranean.

To conclude, I would like to stress out that the significant benefits of CASTWATER, have added an important chapter to the sustainable development of our regions and to the prosperity of people living in the beautiful coasts of the Mediterranean, and express my gratitude to all of you for I am certain that our cooperation could constitute a model of creative partnership among institutions and regions from all over Europe.

I wish every success and looking forward to seeing you all very soon, and collaborate in the context of another important European project such as CASTWATER.

Thank you.