

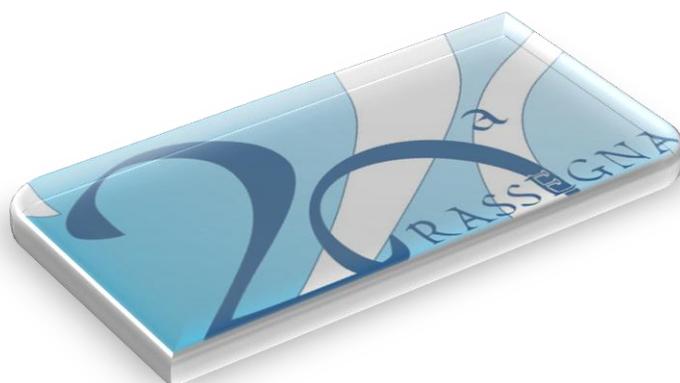
Mediterranean pollution

The Mediterranean sea is one of the most heavily polluted, semi-enclosed basins in the world covers 2,500,000km² with an average depth of 1,500 metres the deepest point being over 5,000 metres in the part known as the Ionian sea, between Greece and the "foot" of Italy. The coastline extends 46,000km running through 22 countries. The region is known for its particularly mild climate with uniform and moderate temperatures. Rainfall patterns are however, more unpredictable with a high of 1,200mm per year in Genoa (Italy) to a low of 100mm per year in Djerba (Tunisia).

Around its coasts are lands rich in endemic species. The variety of flora is estimated at over 25,000 species, over half of which are endemic. Turkey and Greece alone contain a large proportion of endemic plants, which represent a wealth not only of natural beauty but also of potential medicinal and culinary properties. The major rivers of the region have generated invaluable wetlands such as the deltas of the Nile, the Ebro, or the Rhone. These nutrient-rich wetlands attract an estimated two to five billion migratory birds each year. Yet, only approximately six per cent of wetlands previously known to have existed in Roman times remain. Today, 82 million people live in coastal cities; by 2025 there will be an estimated 150-170 million. The southern countries account for 32 per cent of the region's population; by 2025 that is expected to have reached 60 per cent.

Seasonal population pressures are also expected. Over 100 million tourists flock to Mediterranean beaches every year and this number is expected to double by 2025. In order to cater for this booming business. The 18 countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea have a population of around 350 million people, of whom 135 million live in the coastal zone; in addition, approximately 100 million tourists visit the Mediterranean region annually. Tourism normally peaks between May and September and is concentrated in the coastal areas. The United Nations Environment Programme has estimated that 650 million tons of sewage, 129,000 tons of mineral oil, 60,000 tons of mercury, 3,800 tons of lead and 36,000 tons of phosphates are dumped into the Mediterranean each year. Meanwhile, 70 per cent of the wastewater dumped into the Mediterranean is untreated. The sea is also a major oil transportation route and up to one million tons of crude oil are discharged annually from accidental spills, illegal bunkering and tank cleaning practices, as well as inadequate harbour facilities. Its waters have a very low renewal rate (80 to 90 years) making them excessively sensitive to pollution. 80-85% of the total amount of pollutants entering the Mediterranean comes from land-based sources. Municipal wastes from coastal population centres, including tourist complexes, are discharged directly into the sea, very largely without having been treated. Industrial wastes. It is estimated that approximately 220,000 vessels of more than 100 tonnes cross the Mediterranean each year – about one third of the world's total merchant shipping. Many ships are carrying hazardous cargo, which if lost would result in severe damage to the marine environment. It is estimated that every year between 100,000 and 150,000 tonnes of crude oil are deliberately released into the sea from shipping activities. Approximately 370 million tonnes of oil are transported annually in the Mediterranean (more than 20% of the world total), with around 250 to 300 oil tankers crossing the Sea every day. Accidental oil spills happen frequently with an average of 10 spills/year. A major oil spill could occur at any time in any part of the Mediterranean.

Athens 23rd October 2006 --- Millions of tons of pollutants are being discharged into the Mediterranean Sea every year from industrial activities in the countries bordering the Mediterranean region. This was revealed by the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP),



which has been monitoring the discharge of pollutants into the Mediterranean Sea for the last three decades, during a Press Conference held to launch an exhibition to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Barcelona Convention. The major sources of pollution are metal industries, oil refineries and industry, tanneries, organic and inorganic chemical industry and food processing industry”. This brief account of contaminated material in the Mediterranean basin and it is necessary to unite the efforts of countries around the Mediterranean and cooperation for the elimination or reduction of pollution as possible, and exchange of experience , technical and study.

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