



EMSEA Med: birth and development of an initiative aimed at fostering Mediterranean Sea Literacy

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The “Sea in the middle of the Earth”, the Mediterranean Sea, is the largest and deepest enclosed sea on Earth, the cradle of civilization, a global diversity hot spot, home to over 480 million people and attraction to more than 320 million tourists - making it a threatened sea.

Its unique features (limited water exchange, high temperatures, different salinities, etc.), combined with globally well-known anthropogenically induced pressures, including climate change, overfishing and pollution, lead directly and/or indirectly to crucial alterations of the Mediterranean Sea ecosystem.

Stimulating people’s awareness on how the Mediterranean Sea influences their own lives and how people influence that of the Mediterranean Sea is the key to know and therefore protect and conserve its resources for the future, as well as to achieve a sustainable “blue economy”.

Grounding on this idea, in 2015, during the 3rd EMSEA-European Marine Science Educators Association Conference, a group of scientists and educators from different universities, research institutions, schools and NGOs (forming the EMSEA Med working group) voluntarily started to work on the development of Mediterranean Sea Literacy, based on the framework of Ocean Literacy (OL), but adapted to the specific features of this Sea.

The EMSEA Med work group has begun to meet through videoconference on a regular basis, deepening reciprocal knowledge and sharing ideas and proposals.

Since 2015 EMSEA Med activity produced a number of outcomes:

- The translation of OL principles and concepts into different languages (GR, ES, IT)
- A Mediterranean Sea Literacy (MSL) Guide, containing the Mediterranean Sea Literacy principles and concepts, still undergoing revision and progressive refinement
- The EMSEA Med regional group page on EMSEA website

Alongside with these activities, EMSEA Med members individually operated in their respective countries implementing educational activities for schools and general public, including teacher-training courses, promoting Mediterranean Sea Literacy diffusion through scientific papers and international conferences, organizing joint events as the World Oceans Day and the European Maritime Day.

EMSEA Med group activities are shared and promoted also through a Facebook page, with updates and news on MSL, OL and other related issues.

Future plans include the continuing of successful activities and the beginning of educational researches on MSL. For this aim EMSEA Med working group is developing, among others, a questionnaire for primary school students, to be tested and used in different countries from 2018.