



**Common Seas, Paros Municipality and WATT,
welcome pioneering agreement to support Paros in becoming
the first Plastic Waste-free island**

Tuesday May 21, 2019

Common Seas, the Municipality of Paros and WATT are launching a trailblazing initiative, Clean Blue Paros, to support Paros in becoming the first plastic-waste free Mediterranean island, as well as a global pioneer in the fight against plastics in our seas and oceans.

Common Seas initiative, 'Clean Blue Alliance,' supports islands in accelerating their source-to-sea solutions, with the aim of eliminating plastic. The project is evidence-based and solutions-oriented as it identifies and supports local enterprises that reduce and reuse plastics.

This innovative initiative is a collaboration between ground-breaking Paros local businesses, the World Wildlife Fund Greece and the Cyclades Preservation Fund. Clean Blue Paros is empowering and supporting Parians and visitors, in order to enhance their understanding of their plastic ecosystem, as well as identify and invest in the solutions that will have the biggest impact in reducing the plastic items most commonly found in their seas. Together they will all support and contribute to a lasting reduction of plastic waste on the island.

Paros Mayor, Mr. Markos Koveos, who has championed this dynamic initiative, commented: *"We warmly welcome this important and vital collaboration with Common Seas and WATT, that will make Paros the first, innovative Mediterranean island to become plastic waste-free. As a first step, amongst other initiatives, we are committed to phasing out plastic straws by next summer, ahead of the EU ban planned for 2022. We are encouraged by the businesses' who have already committed to support Clean Blue Paros. They are already acting to reduce plastic-use and better manage plastic waste; such as offering incentives for customers using refillable cups and providing alternatives to plastic straws. We will continue to support the growth of conservation and ecological awareness in Paros."*

The agreement reached, also constitutes a significant move towards the adoption of the EU's strategy for 'Plastics in a Circular Economy', that aims to 'protect the public and the environment from plastic pollution whilst fostering growth and innovation.' Clean Blue Paros will continue to collaborate closely with Paros Municipality and the island's locals and visitors to turn Paros into a more sustainable, circular economy that will make it a world leader in plastic-waste free living.

With their 'Investigate, Intervene, Influence' methodology, Clean Blue Paros is carrying out research to thoroughly understand Paros' plastic ecosystem, in order to identify the opportunities that could stop plastic entering into its waters. This summer they will support the local community with the development of anti-plastic initiatives that will have a long-term effect. Together with local experts, they have developed guidance and created a dynamic toolkit to support a plastic-waste free Paros, that will also attract environmentally-aware tourists and investors. These sustainable proposals and



measures can be adopted on both a national and international level and inspire replication and scaling in other islands and countries.

Common Seas Managing Director, Jo Royle, noted that: *"Tackling plastic pollution in our seas is a must for our environment, our economy and ultimately our health. We have found excellent partners in the leaders and citizens of Paros and know that the changes they will make, in eradicating plastic waste from their island, will contribute greatly to their transition towards a Circular Economy, inspire islands across the world, and contribute to Paros reaching the 'United Nations Sustainable Development Goals' and the EU's climate commitments."*

Clean Blue Paros in close collaboration with the local business owners, 40 of whom are already participating, will reduce plastic items most commonly found on its beaches and in its seas, by providing alternatives to the most common polluters: plastic coffee cups, straws, water bottles, food containers and bags. It will audit and measure the amount of plastic being recycled, while the Municipality will separate the collection and aggregation of plastic waste.

Chief Executive Officer of WATT, Mr. Athanasios Katris added that, *"We all share our love for the environment and experience nature's wonder, particularly when we are on the Greek islands. We welcome this important initiative that will invest in incubating and accelerating viable enterprises developed on the island, enable a higher volume of waste to be recycled, and preserve the beauty of Paros for generations to come."*

Common Seas mission is to reduce the amount of plastic waste produced and stop it polluting people, communities and our blue planet - the ocean. We provide the right people with the right tools to navigate the complexity of tackling plastic waste at source, deliver new ways to manage and re-use plastic and stop the leakage into our rivers, seas and ocean. Our research and work on-the-ground harnesses the collective expertise of people, governments and businesses to implement action in their own communities to halt the threats of Ocean plastic. Common Seas has teams in Greece and the UK.

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