

Press Release – LIFE Programme

The Cypriot LIFE National Contact Point and the team of the LIFE Cyclamen Project organised a press event on Thursday December 6th 2018 at the University of Cyprus. The purpose of the event was to introduce local journalists to the LIFE Programme - EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action.

The general objective of the LIFE Programme is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental and climate policy and legislation by co-financing projects with European added value. Those who can benefit from this Programme are public bodies, research centres, non-governmental organisations, local authorities, universities and private companies.

During this event participants had the opportunity to hear more about a Cypriot LIFE Project that is currently running, namely RELIONMED-LIFE. This project aims to protect the Mediterranean from the lionfish (*Pterois miles*) - an Invasive Alien Species – through an early warning system and targeted removal with the aim of preventing the ecological and socioeconomic effects of this invasion.

The poisonous and potentially deadly lionfish spreads really fast in the Mediterranean Sea. Besides the obvious dangers to humans, this fish is a huge predator that can bring immense reductions to the other species in the Mediterranean, thus causing great ecological and socioeconomic effects.

Part of this project is to investigate the possibilities of the local market to use lionfish profitably, so that future removals can be financially sustainable. For example including lionfish in the menu of local restaurants, or using the fin rays of the fish as raw material for the production of jewelry.

The beneficiaries of this Project are: The University of Cyprus, The University of Plymouth, Marine & Environmental Research (MER) Lab Ltd, Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre and the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research of Cyprus.

The Cypriot National Contact Point (The Department of Environment) through the LIFE Cyclamen Project aims to support and assist Cypriot applicants and help increase the success rate of Cypriot proposals while making use of these EU funds to improve our environment. To find out more about the LIFE Cyclamen Project and the LIFE Programme visit www.lifecyclamen.com.cy

December 6th, 2018