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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: AOB for the meeting of the Council (Environment) on 25 June 2026
Information on the MED9 Meeting of Environment Ministers (Šibenik, Croatia, 18–19 May 2026) - Water Supply Resilience and Marine Environment Protection
- Information from Croatia

The MED9 group, comprising Cyprus, France, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Slovenia, was established in 2013 to promote cooperation among EU Member States on common issues in the Mediterranean. Croatia's first MED9 presidency in 2026 is founded on three main pillars and courses of action under the motto "For a more secure, resilient and sustainable Mediterranean".

As part of Croatia's Presidency of the MED9 group and building on the above mentioned priorities, the meeting of the Environment Ministers of the MED9 Member States was held on 18 and 19 May 2026 in Šibenik, Croatia.

At the meeting, ministers or their representatives as well as European Commission representatives discussed approaches for strengthening resilience to increasing climate pressures in the Mediterranean, focusing on improving water supply systems and protecting coastal and marine ecosystems.

They highlighted the need to reduce water losses, strengthen critical water infrastructure and accelerate digital transformation to improve monitoring, prediction and response. The importance of integrated water management and innovative solutions, including nature-based approaches and non-conventional water resources, was also underlined.

Particular importance was placed on the integrated “source to sea” approach, addressing pressures from land-based activities on the marine environment, including wastewater treatment and improved monitoring and the need for improved monitoring and data exchange.

In their Joint Statement, ministers confirmed that water management was a matter of EU, national and regional security and a key prerequisite for stability, resilience and economic development in the Mediterranean. They recognised the increasing pressures from extreme droughts, uneven water cycles and seasonal demand, which pose significant risks to ecosystems, society and the economy.

Ministers agreed on strengthening resilience of critical water infrastructure, reducing water losses and advancing digitalisation and smart solutions, as well as scaling up ecosystem restoration and nature-based solutions.

They also stressed the importance of integrated and sustainable water resource management, including safe reuse of treated wastewater and sustainable desalination, while preserving natural water bodies.

With regard to marine protection, ministers reaffirmed the need for a coherent “source-to-sea” approach linking river basin management with marine protection policies, including the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. They highlighted the importance of harmonised monitoring systems, comparable methodologies and strengthened cooperation to address marine pollution, including microplastics.

Ministers further emphasised the need for reinforced regional cooperation, a common scientific basis and adequate EU financial support, including under the EU Water Resilience Strategy, to address the specific challenges of the Mediterranean region.

As part of the meeting, an integrated microplastic monitoring system was presented by the Josip Juraj Strossmayer Water Institute and Innovamare, showcasing interoperable and modern technological solutions in Croatia, with a focus on autonomous systems and advanced sampling methods with minimal environmental impact.

Croatia remains committed to fostering cooperation on these important issues.