



PRESS RELEASE

15 May 2018

HEALTHY SEAS JOINS FORCES WITH COUSTEAU DIVERS AND CARVICO SPA, FOR THE CREATION OF THE FIRST MARINE PROTECTED AREA IN SANTORINI

The **Healthy Seas Initiative**, supported by the Italian fabric manufacturer **Carvico SpA**, has joined **Cousteau Divers**, the organisation founded by **Pierre-Yves Cousteau**, in supporting the creation of the first marine protected area (MPA) of **Santorini**.

The **Santorini Marine Reserve** was first envisioned in 2010 by Pierre-Yves Cousteau and Apostolos Stylianopoulos (Atlantis Dive Centre). In 2017 the MPA Association was created, establishing good synergies between authorities, locals and fishermen who understand firsthand the importance of more sustainable fishing practices, from the perspective of protecting both nature and their livelihood.

A well-managed, well-sized, well-protected marine sanctuary will have a positive impact on the marine environment while also generating substantial economic benefits by extending the touristic season beyond the summer months and creating jobs, in addition to helping fish stocks replenish. The MPA project was presented in October 2017 to the Hellenic Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food.

On **World Oceans Day** (June 8th, 2018), Healthy Seas, the circular economy initiative that removes fishing nets from the seas which are subsequently regenerated into **ECONYL®** yarn by Aquafil and then used by **Carvico** for the production of swimwear, will join forces with **Cousteau Divers** and **Ghost Fishing** to carry out the **first ever lost or abandoned fishing gear clean up action** at the location which will become the MPA.

The highly demanding diving mission will be executed by diving partner **Ghost Fishing** and supported by **Atlantis Dive Center**. The organisers have created an event on Facebook where the mission will be livestreamed (www.facebook.com/events/169288210455119). The public and especially schools, are invited to tune in to the live streaming which promises to be highly educational. The event is being held under the auspices of the **Municipality of Thira** (Santorini) and the **Goulandris Natural History Museum**, and exclusively sponsored by **Carvico**.

According to a survey that was conducted during 2007-2008, Santorini was found to be the island with the greatest amount of fish in the Cyclades. However, these findings also point out that the amount of fish of the Cyclades region is very low compared to other areas of the Mediterranean Sea, and historical overfishing is partly responsible for it.ⁱ



More recently, researchers of the “Marisca” programme, after analysing human activities in the Aegean and their effect to important habitats, concluded that in order for the Aegean’s unique biodiversity to be protected, 19% of the Aegean Sea needs to become a protected zone.

Cousteau Divers initiated and supervises the Santorini MPA project since 2011, working with the HCMR (Hellenic Center for Marine Research) to baseline the ecosystems of Santorini and with Submon to create a management plan for the area, with a grant from the **Stavros Niarchos Foundation**.

Invitation to the Press: The Press is invited to join the team in Santorini to capture images as well as interview the participants.

Healthy Seas and Cousteau Divers would like to thank the sponsor and supporters of the Santorini event: Carvico S.p.A., Aquafil S.p.A., Seascope Subsea Technology B.V., Oia Sunset Cruise, Fishermen Association of Santorini, Santorini Marine Protected Area Association, Primary School of Oia, Port Authority of Santorini, Boatmen of Santorini, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

Photos and Press kit available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/60dht7src4xzo66/AAA-jMeuNnFEq319twDX8bcTa?dl=0>

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Notes to Editors:

Healthy Seas

The mission of 'Healthy Seas, a Journey from Waste to Wear' initiative is to remove waste, in particular, fishing nets from the seas for the purpose of creating healthier seas and recycling marine litter into textile products. The recovered fishing nets will be transformed and regenerated by Aquafil into ECONYL® yarn, a high-quality raw material used to create new products, such as socks, swimwear or carpets.

The discarded, lost, or abandoned fishing nets are sometimes called “ghost nets”, since they continue to catch fish and other marine animals without human involvement. Millions of marine animals, including sharks, dolphins, seals and turtles suffer because of entanglement in these nets which leads to serious injuries and death eventually. Every year, some 640,000 tonnes of fishing gear is left in our seas and oceans. It’s plastic waste which remains in the seas for hundreds of years and doesn’t biodegrade.



Cousteau Divers

Founded in 2009, Cousteau Divers is a non-profit worldwide community of divers and dive centers united to study and protect marine life. By making each diver an agent of the study and conservation of the aquatic realm, Cousteau Divers brings the legacy of Jacques-Yves Cousteau to life.

Carvico

Carvico SpA is an Italian textile company established in 1962, specialized in the production of performance fabrics for beachwear, sportswear and outerwear. Carvico mission is to offer the market a collection of innovative, high end, high performance products which are also eco-friendly. The environmental policies implemented focus on the health and wellbeing of the company staff, of the local communities and of the global ecosystem and have translated into several, concrete sustainability projects.

Ghost Fishing

Ghost Fishing Foundation is an international non-profit organization, executed by volunteer technical divers, which initiates, supports and promotes lost fishing gear removal initiatives in oceans, seas and local waters. Since 2012 they have run lost fishing gear survey and removal projects in the North Sea, Adriatic Sea, Aegean Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Pacific Ocean in cooperation with various environmental organizations and with the support of a continuously growing group of volunteer technical divers.

Atlantis Dive Center

Atlantis is member of PADI, SSI and ANDI, the most trusted diving organisations worldwide. Its founder, Apostolos Stylianopoulos, is member of Cousteau Divers and Atlantis is one of the few Cousteau Dive Centres in the world. Their commitment to protecting the environment is proven not only by their accreditation but also from their unyielding support of the Santorini MPA project.

For more information visit:

www.healthyseas.org/save-your-breath-santorini

www.cousteaudivers.org

www.ghostfishing.org

www.atlantisoiia.com

www.carvico.com

www.econyl.com

www.aquafil.com

ⁱ Giakoumi et al. 2012.