



**JOINT PRESS RELEASE**  
HEALTHY SEAS, DIOPAS, ENALEIA, NOFIR

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## **NEW EFFORTS IN GREECE AIMING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FISHING AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

Last week, over 17 tons of waste fishing nets were transported to recycling from Greece, thanks to DIOPAS, a partner of Healthy Seas. Since last year, over 32 tons of old fishing nets from Greek fishermen and fish farmers have gone into the recycling process thus ensuring that less waste nets might end up in the Greek seas.

Ioakim Diamantidis of DIOPAS S.A. has taken over the family business of building and importing fishing nets: *“Until the early 1960s the nets used in Greece were made of cotton yarn which the fishermen had to hand dry every day to prevent from rotting. Since their invention, nylon nets provide a convenient alternative solution for them. Today, through this cooperation, the useless nets become a part of the circular economy. It’s a step in the right direction.”*

Recently, the Healthy Seas initiative welcomed **Enaleia** among its growing list of partners; the first School for Professional Fishing in Greece. In the framework of this cooperation, a collection point for old fishing nets was set up together with the Professional Fishermen Association of Microlimano. **Lefteris Arapakis, Founder of Enaleia** describes: *“Old-school fishermen were hesitant to give up their useless nets at first. They didn’t want to go to the trouble since we are not offering a financial incentive. As soon as we showed them what can be created out of their old and useless nets they became excited and joked that they were going to create new fashion trends!”*

The waste nets collected by DIOPAS and Enaleia will be cleaned, sorted and prepared for recycling by **Nofir AS**, a company established in 2008 in Norway, aiming to reduce marine pollution caused by discarded equipment from the fishing and farming industries. In the next step, the nylon nets will be delivered to **Aquafil** to be transformed and regenerated into **ECONYL® yarn**, a high-quality raw material used to create new products, such as socks, swimwear, underwear and carpets.

*“Our partnership with Healthy Seas aims at exemplifying sustainable solutions so that Greek fishermen will choose to join us”,* says Arapakis. *“Sustainable fishing practices are taught within the curriculum of Enaleia and emphasise on solutions that not only promote sustainable fishing but at the same time strengthen the fishermen’s income. Fish less is not a solution. We say, fish smart so that with less fish you have a higher income. Export, processing and fishing on days of higher demand are some of the solutions taught by Enaleia.”*

*“We are very pleased with the cooperation with DIOPAS, Enaleia and the Greek fishing & fish farming community”,* said Veronika Mikos, project coordinator of Healthy Seas. *“Together, we offer a sustainable*



*solution to the useless nets, which would have otherwise been sent to landfills, incinerators, or dumped in the sea. Now, they will be turned into beautiful textile products.”*

Healthy Seas began working in Greece in 2015. Since then, over 100 tons of fishing nets have been collected by divers and fishermen in order to create healthier seas.

**Images available:** <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ml9ixjloq0cck08/AACqgREqtjUOpzwGP3VciWQSa?dl=0>

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### About 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 together with other nylon waste 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.

### For more information visit:

[www.healthyseas.org](http://www.healthyseas.org)

[www.enaleia.com](http://www.enaleia.com)

[www.diopas.com](http://www.diopas.com)

[www.nofir.no](http://www.nofir.no)

[www.econyl.com](http://www.econyl.com)