

PRESS RELEASE

“UNPLASTIC THE SEA”: JOINING FORCES FOR A CLEANER GULF OF TRIESTE

Trieste, 10 October 2019 – Hera Group and EstEnergy – Barcolana’s traditional partners - stand by the **WWF Miramare Marine Protected Area** this year, to support and promote beach and seabed clean-ups. The project relies on the collaboration of **Friuli Venezia Giulia Region** and **Arpa FVG (Regional Environment Agency)** and aims to involve Trieste’s community Trieste in real actions to protect the sea.

The initiative “Unplastic the sea” (“Splastichiamo il mare”) kicks off with the 51st edition of Barcolana, and it is promoted by the **WWF Miramare Marine Protected Area** together with Hera Group and EstEnergy, thanks to the collaboration of **Friuli Venezia Giulia Region** and **Arpa FVG**.

Until the end of the event, all visitors can test themselves in an engaging competition on a large screen, located at the Hera-EstEnergy stand at Barcolana Village: participants (two at a time) will have to pedal as fast as they can in a 30-second time limit, riding on special fish-submarines, to catch as much plastic waste as possible in the virtual sea.

Everybody can help thanks to this charity competition: the more people will participate in “Unplastic the sea”, the greater will be the amount of money donated by Hera Group and EstEnergy to the **WWF Miramare Marine Protected Area** project. Raising €10,000 is the final target of this initiative.

At the end of each challenge, participants can download a short video and share it on their own social media with the hashtag #splastichiamoilmare, to recommend their friends that they do this simple, real and entertaining action to protect Trieste’s sea.

From Barcolana Village...to the beach!

“Unplastic the sea” doesn’t end at the multi-utility stand but continues with two further initiatives. First, by the beginning of summer 2020, special boards with information on the most dangerous “sea species” will be placed on the beaches of Trieste, namely macro and microplastics that are found in the sea and along the coast everyday, since their decomposition process can even last hundreds of years. The aim of these boards is to share practices that can help the community reduce waste production and limit waste dispersion in the sea, and to raise social awareness on the issues related to plastic in the environment. Second, the project wants to involve the community and scuba-diving clubs in beach and seabed clean-ups.

Beach and seabed clean-ups kick off on Sunday 27 October

Beach and seabed clean-ups are scheduled according to a detailed calendar of events: the first clean-up will take place on Sunday 27 October within the Miramare Marine Protected Area, where much waste brought from the

wind and currents is found, despite the many cleaning and safeguarding activities. Other initiatives will begin in spring 2020: Filtri di Aurisina beach clean-up (22 March); Topolini and Barcola beach clean-up (19 April); lastly, on 5 June the La Lanterna (Pedocin) beach clean-up along the Rive seafront in the city centre. These initiatives will be flanked by

entertainment and popular science activities “on land” with games and fairy tales for children and interactive activities on microplastics for their families.

FVG Region’s partnership in the “aMare FVG” protocol

This initiative is part of a series of activities promoted by the FVG Region thanks to the “aMare FVG” protocol that has been recently signed by public and private sector representatives. The aim of this agreement is to develop a series of activities, promoted by different organizations, aiming at safeguarding the sea.

*“Environmental awareness has significantly changed in the last year, also thanks to such initiatives” said **Fabio Scoccimarro, President of the Regional Department for Environmental Protection, Energy and Sustainable Development**. “The FVG Region I represent for the environment and sustainable development is strongly committed to providing organizations and associations with necessary tools for the development of actions that tackle one of the world’s emergencies, namely plastic in the sea. We pursued this aim with the “aMare FVG” protocol and we will continue to do it by approving rules that fully implement the EU directive against single-use plastics.”*

*“Triestinis love their sea and their city – said **Albino Belli, EstEnergy General Manager** – and they have a strong, intimate relation with it. In order to defend this common heritage, we enthusiastically decided to promote the WWF Miramare Marine Protected Area project #splastichiamoilmare (Unplastic the sea). Thanks to this initiative we want to raise awareness among the community of the danger of plastics in the sea and I’m sure that many people will get involved for a cleaner Gulf of Trieste.” He concluded: “It’s a great pleasure to support an event like Barcolana again, which is a magical moment sportwise but also an opportunity to trigger a general mobilization, to channel the community’s energy towards the environment and future generations.”*

*“This project – commented **Maurizio Spoto, director of the Miramare Marine Protected Area** - aims to remove plastic waste from the Gulf of Trieste, but also to make citizens aware that it is urgent to reduce plastic production and use. This is the only way that will enable us to save our seas, and everybody can play its part. The awareness activities and the boards placed along the coast of Trieste will fulfil this aim: sharing real solutions, practices and habits as well as simple daily actions to help “unplastic” the sea and, in a certain sense, our lives.”*

*“Barcolana51 is the edition of environmental responsibility – said **Mitja Gialuz, the chairman of the sailing club Società Velica di Barcola e Grignano** – through our symbol Alice and our testimonial Dee Caffari, we want to share our message to safeguard our sea. This beautiful project supports one of the prides of local and Italian environmentalism, embracing the true spirit of Barcolana, and we are ready to share it with the public of our event. It’s the small actions that can safeguard the environment and the future, what seems extraordinary must become normal, what seems impossible must be turned into reality, with projects involving organizations and institutions , inspiring the entire community.”*