

**PRESS RELEASE 12.16.2013**

**1st Stakeholder Workshop:**

***"New mosquito species in Greece: risks and management"***

in the framework of the EC Funded Project:

**LIFE CONOPS (LIFE12 ENV/GR/000466)**

**"Development and demonstration of management plans against - the climate change enhanced - invasive mosquitoes in Southern Europe"**

The 1st Stakeholder Workshop of the Project **LIFE CONOPS (LIFE12 ENV/GR/000466)** on the topic **"New mosquito species in Greece : risks and management"**, was held on December 12th, 2013, at the premises of the Institute of Nuclear & Radiological Sciences & Technology, Energy & Safety (I.N.R.A.S.T.E.S) of N.C.S.R "Demokritos".

The main purpose of the workshop was knowledge exchange and sharing experiences on issues concerning invasive mosquitoes, public health, risks and development of management plans.

Representatives of the LIFE CONOPS' project partners [*Benaki Phytopathological Institute, Institute of Nuclear & Radiological Sciences & Technology, Energy & Safety of N.C.S.R "Demokritos"* , *Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Public Health Department of Emilia-Romagna Region, PH-ER (Italy)*], and of relevant organizations [*European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control - ECDC), Ministry of Rural Development and Food, Hellenic Centre for Disease Control & Prevention (HCDCP)*], have attended the workshop as key-lectures and contributed with their experience to the purpose of the workshop.

Additionally, several agencies and stakeholders from both private and public sector were also invited, and participated with a great interest to support the project and its actions. Among others, the workshop was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the Ministry of Health, the Prefectures of Greece, the Municipalities of Attica, the private-sector mosquito control companies, the Hellenic Entomological Society, Experts of the External LIFE Monitoring team and various members of the Greek academic community.

The workshop opened by the Vice President of the Governing Board of N.C.S.R "Demokritos" and Director of the Institute of Biosciences and Applications, **Dr F. Tsilibary** and the Director of the Benaki Phytopathological Institute (BPI), **Dr K. Machera**, by giving a welcome speech and their greetings.

The first session, focusing on the topic **"The mosquito problem"**, opened by **Dr Wim van Bortel**, who represented the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). In his talk, Dr. Wim van Bortel presented the ECDC's actions concerning the presence of the invasive mosquito species (IMS) in Europe and the diseases they transmit. Thereafter, **Mrs Agoritsa Baka and Pervanidou Danai**, Doctors of the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control & Prevention (HCDCP), presented the epidemiological data of the mosquito-borne diseases in Greece and the corresponding actions, made by HCDCP, in order to address them. Finally, the first session concluded with the presentation of **Dr Sotiropoulou Rafaela**, from the Institute of Nuclear & Radiological Sciences & Technology, Energy & Safety (I.N.R.A.S.T.E.S) of

N.C.S.R "Demokritos" (associated beneficiary in the LIFE CONOPS), addressing the issue of the climate change with a special emphasis on its future potential impact on IMS entry and establishment.

The second session, entitled “*Management of the mosquito problem*”, started with the presentation of the **LIFE CONOPS (LIFE12 ENV/GR/000466)** Project’s aims and actions, by **Dr Antonios Michaelakis**, Coordinator of the project and Researcher in Benaki Phytopathological Institute. **Dr Christophe Lagneau**, from the EID Méditerranée (France), and Coordinator of the EU LIFE Project IMCM (LIFE08 ENV/F/000488) «Control of noxious or vector mosquitoes: implementation of integrated management consistent with sustainable development», referred to the actions, objectives and purposes of the IMCM Project. The session continued with a presentation by **Dr Paola Angelini**, representative of the Public Health Department of Emilia-Romagna Region (associated beneficiary in the LIFE CONOPS Project), about the 2007 epidemic outbreak of Chikungunya virus infection in the Emilia-Romagna region and the measures taken, step by step, in order to control the epidemic. The session concluded with the presentation by **Mr Athanasios Zounos**, from the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, who pointed out the general principles and the legislation for the registration of biocides.

Finally, in the third session, under the title: “*Discussion and stakeholders’ engagement*”, **Dr Konstantinos Bithas**, Professor of Environmental Economics at the Institute of Urban Environment & Human Resources of Panteion University (associated partner of LIFE CONOPS), emphasized both the economic and social impacts that may be caused by the establishment of IMS.

The workshop finished with an open discussion and dialogue among the various stakeholders and the project representatives regarding their opinions on the management of the mosquito problem and their commitment to support the project and its implementation.

The website of LIFE CONOPS Project, [www.conops.gr](http://www.conops.gr), will be the information gate for stakeholders and the general public. The minutes of the workshop (presentations, videos) will be also available online to all interested parties, who were unable to attend the workshop and for those who would like to review the presentations of the guest speakers and the questions/ points raised by the participating stakeholders, as well.