**Hellenic Republic**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**The Agricultural University of Athens and the Fishermen of the Island of** **Amorgos propose fisheries restriction measures.**

 On Monday, January 15 2024, a Conference was held in the framework of AMORGORAMA Initiative, entitled: “Amorgos Island Fisheries Study” - at Atraktos Camp (8 Marathonomachon Str., Plato’s Academy, GR 10441, Athens), wherein the scientific study of the Agricultural University of Athens has been presented to the public for the first time, in respect of the conversion of four (4) marine coastal areas of Amorgos into reproduction fields and fish “nurseries”, under specific restrictions. The Agricultural University of Athens has essentially and scientifically substantiated the necessity for the establishment of fisheries restriction areas towards the protection of fisheries resources and biodiversity, in collaboration with the fishermen of the island.

In particular, it has been proposed that areas, such as Katapola, Nikouria and Gramvousa in Amorgos should be protected, throughout the year, while protection has been suggested within 1,5 n.m. applied to the perimeter of the island, during April and May respectively. The specific research study was registered in December 2023 at the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, with the endorsement of Environmental Organizations, namely, Blue Marine Foundation and the Cyclades Preservation Fund, following the Conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding amongst all the Stakeholders involved (the Municipality of Amorgos MRDF, SGAIP, BMF, CPF, SAR, AUA, Professional Association of Fishermen of Amorgos).

The Vice Rector for European University, Internationalization and Student Affairs, Ms. Helen Miliou, Professor, has underlined her optimism in her speech that AMORGORAMA will set a standard for other regions within the territory of Greece. At the Conference, the greeting of the Secretary General of the Aegean and Island Policy, Mr. Manolis Koutoulakis, has been read out, while the former Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Food, Mr. Simos Kedikoglou, who has approved of this undertaking, has been present at that Workshop, too. Besides, the Chairwoman of the Special Permanent Committee of the Hellenic Parliament on Environmental Protection, who is also the Coordinator of “Our Oceans Conference 2024”, Dr. Dionysia- Theodora Avgerinopoulou, along with Ms. Angeliki Kallara, from the Directorate General of Fisheries, have attended that Conference. Subsequently, Mr. George Katis, a delegate from the Special Managing Authority of the Operational Program, under the title: “Fisheries, Aquaculture and the Sea”, has featured the significance of that AUA Research Study.

 Indeed, the research conducted by the Agricultural University of Athens emphasizes the importance of the coastal zone and its biotopes, addressed for a great number of fisheries target species. Throughout the Conference, the Head of the Scientific Team, Mr. Stefanos Kalogirou, Assistant Professor, has presented the results of the twelve-month research, including spatial and temporal variations towards the target species, inasmuch the selectivity of fisheries gear implemented in the coastal zone. In addition, Mr. Angelos Liontakis, Assistant Professor, has highlighted the social and economic consequences resulting from AMORGORAMA Project, stressing the crucial role of fisheries, not only for the preservation of the historic nature of the island and its cultural heritage, but also for food security in society and tourism. Moreover, Mr. Dimitris Poursanidis, Technical Scientist and Research Fellow of the Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas has elaborated on the ecological status of biotopes within the study areas, whilst raising at the same time, the topic of the presence of non-indigenous species.

On top of that, the speech extended by Mr. Michalis Krosman, being the President of the Association of Fishermen of the island of Amorgos, has been very emotionally charged, while both male and female fishers, of a young and older age, have been in attendance among the crowd participants, who, either young or older, have actually travelled from Amorgos to Athens, wishing to express their backing and contribution to the Initiative AMORGORAMA. Following the presentation of the scientific study, a fruitful discussion has been held between the representatives of the Scientific Community and Leadership of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food and the Ministry of Environment & Energy respectively, as well as Agencies with a long-standing experience on environmental issues like WWF, Greenpeace and the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR), in addition to delegates from the tourism industry.

It is worth mentioning that the Initiative [Amorgorama | Become a part of the swarm](https://amorgorama.com/) was launched a decade ago, when the fishermen of Amorgos noticed their nets getting empty, thus they decided that they should take immediate actions. They started to organize themselves towards the achievement of the vision of conserving clean seas, abounding in fish. This pioneering initiative has obtained the total support of the local society of the island of Amorgos, enabling the State to commit itself to doing that gradually, culminating in the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2022, amongst the directly involved Stakeholders, namely, the Professional Fishing Association of Amorgos, the Agricultural University of Athens, Environmental Organizations, such as the Cyclades Preservation Fund and Blue Marine Foundation, besides the competent Authorities and Bodies, like the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the Secretariat General of the Aegean and Island Policy, the Region of South Aegean and the Municipality of Amorgos.

 All the interested parties may find more information about AMORGORAMA and its actions on the link below [In Action! | Amorgorama](https://amorgorama.com/documentation/), whereas further material is available on the pertinent link [Amorgorama - Community led conservation in Greece (youtube.com)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f76V8kDyLH8&t=4s). For the photos captured, anyone interested, may enter into the following link:

[Conference Photos 15\_1\_2024](https://auagpa-my.sharepoint.com/%3Af%3A/g/personal/alikifotini_aua_gr/EjyU17xjjzlKgs0aJtb-8mYBF0yK50EN0mqqU7jiUFAqzw?e=sBk0Sa)