

## **Sustainable Beach Management: Today's and Tomorrow's Necessity.**

Coastal areas, thanks to their unique morphological structure, which combines land, sea and air, have been and still are considered highly sensitive ecosystems as well as irresistible attractions for most people. Strong indicative of their particular significance constitutes the fact that, although the coastal zones around the world occupy a total 15% of the total surface of the planet, the 60% of the total world population was proven to reside in them.

One of the most famous tourist destinations in the world is the Mediterranean basin, which annually hosts, and especially during the last few years, about 200 million tourists and is very likely the number of tourists to be increased dramatically in the next ten years, reaching 355 million of tourists by 2025.

Although the beaches of the Mediterranean region constituted and still constitute a part of its significant natural heritage, nothing has been done to support the sustainable development of these areas, which would ensure both the protection of the environment and natural resources, and the general progress of the region.

The main purpose of this article is to illustrate the need to adopt a management model – a certification standard, which will enable the sustainable management and development of beaches, both in Greece and in the Mediterranean area.

**Costa Nostrum® (= our coast) – Sustainable Beach** is a pioneering and innovative tool, a private certification standard which can ensure the sustainable development and management of the Mediterranean beaches.

It is designed in such a way that all beaches, public or “private” whether organized or not, can potentially qualify and be characterized as sustainable.

The benefits of implementing the specific standard are diverse, important and cover all three aspects of sustainable development (economy, society and environment), thus greatly facilitating the general advancement and progress of the coastal area.