



**Reduction of waste in the water area of Nessebar through cleaning actions and campaigns to raise awareness of the local population: protection of marine natural and cultural heritage as a public responsibility and resource for local traditional livelihoods**

Nesebar is one of the most significant cultural and historical sites in Bulgaria. It was included in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites in 1983 due to the numerous preserved cultural monuments, both on land and underwater, and its unique, authentic and well preserved historical and natural landscape. Part of this landscape –the seafloor around Nessebar peninsula is badly affected by the litter.

It has been accumulated over the last decades mostly as sequence of fishing activities in the area of the harbours: thousands of tires, old fishing nets and ropes, plastic bags and nylon sheets, cables, parts of old boats, metal objects used as anchors, bottles, cans, plastic boxes, etc. are lying on the seafloor and are partly or completely buried in the modern sediments. The litter is badly affecting the natural and cultural heritage value of Nessebar and has a negative impact on the biodiversity and the underwater cultural monuments. This litter is clearly visible on aerial images – hundreds of tires and other objects in the harbours area.

The Municipality of Nessebar plans to clean the water area of the city through several diving campaigns. They will be preceded by remote sensing survey aiming to record all visible litter objects on the seafloor, the distribution of litter object in Nessebar aquatory, the most affected areas. The chosen areas for cleaning will be divided in sectors that will be cleaned by divers and accompanying boats according to a schedule. In order to implement an integrated design solution, the Municipality of Nessebar also plans to conduct trenches excavation for assessment of the litter volume within the sediments, respectively all collected data from excavations, geophysical surveys and diving actions to be summarized in an analysis of the impact of waste on nature and cultural heritage and to conduct a public awareness campaign.