



A "LOW EMISSIONS" MEDITERRANEAN SEA – ITALY AT THE FOREFRONT

The results of the air quality measurements in Mediterranean ports carried out as part of the **Life4MedECA** project will be illustrated on 7 October in Rome, at the CNR headquarters.

The project concerns the ongoing MED ECA negotiation between the 22 Sovereign States of the Mediterranean (the "Barcelona Convention") and is aimed to assess the effects of more stringent legislation for maritime fuels. It is the so-called ECA (Emission Control Area) in which fuels with low sulfur content must be used to reduce the particulate and other of maritime transport's emissions.

Promoted in 2019 by Italy as host Country of the COP21 of the Barcelona Convention, the final decision on the MED ECA will be taken on December 7 during COP22 in Turkey. Since 2015, North Europe and North America are ECA. What will be the effects on the Mediterranean transport system and on the health of citizens and the environment? To answer this question, the European Commission and the Italian, Spanish, Dutch and French Ministries of the Environment have tasked the **Life4MedECA** team with a series of in-depth studies and with air quality measurements in Mediterranean ports: these have been carried out from 1 to 6 October in Italy, will continue on 25 October in Malta and, during 2022, in seven other Mediterranean Countries.

The ECA in the North Sea reduced sulfur emissions of 50% to 60% thus achieving a strong reduction in lung diseases. In addition to the health benefits of citizens and the protection of the environment, this resulted in lower costs to the national health systems of twice the increased cost of low-sulfur fuel.

"We had an average saving of about €7 for every kg of sulphur oxide emitted, or rather not emitted by ships since 2015," says Kare Press-Kristensen, the Danish Green Transition Denmark expert who is carrying out the air quality measurements.

The Baltic experience is promising: according to the Swedish Transport Agency, no low sulphur fuel supply problems were experienced nor the much feared shift from sea to road of freight transport due to increased ferry fares. But the Mediterranean is not the Baltic, as it is a much larger area: 3 continents and 22 countries involved, 13% of world maritime traffic (about one hundred thousand ships a year).

"In order to effectively treat the patient - commented Emilio Campana, Director of CNR - it is necessary to assess its health status, using the same methods used with those who already recovered".

*"This is the reason why **Life4MedECA** - underlines Antonella Querci Innovation and Development Director at the Livorno Port and coordinator of the project - was tasked to estimate the MED ECA impact, to establish how to help those who will bear the financial burden of this transition and to identify the technologies on which to invest to minimise costs of implementation".*

Some results are already available and will be presented at COP22 in December: it is the case of the impact of higher cost of fuel on consumers, less than 0.1% of the value of the goods. A negligible fraction of the increase due to the recent increase in the price of buyers' rents due to COVID.

Already some sectors are already compliant. This is the case of fishermen in Italy: they use agricultural diesel (with a very low sulfur content, much less than the ECA limit) and they hope to focus on their old and not efficient engines. A common problem throughout the Mediterranean.

MED ECA is synergistic with Ports' shore side electrical supply to ships (the financing of which was already secured by the Italian Ministry of Transport within the Recovery Fund) and with the use of renewable energy in ports (included in the Italian Ministry of Environment's Recovery Fund".

"A synergy - warns Luciano Guerrieri, President of the Port System Authority of the North Tyrrhenian Sea - which it is our duty to exploit at local level and as soon as possible. The MED ECA if approved, will not come into force before 2, 3 years: we have the time and resources to prepare ourselves but, you know, those who have time do not wait for time. We started."





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Insights:

"Life4Medeca"

It is coordinated by the Port System Authority of Livorno and co-financed, as well as by the Commission, also by Italian, Spanish, French and Dutch Ministries of Environment. Started on 1.01.2021, will end on 31.12.2023. Among the ongoing activities, the air quality measures in the ports of 9 Mediterranean nations. Those in Italy (carried out from 1 to 6 October) are the first ever.

The Italian project partners in addition to the Port Authority are CNR, Unimar and 3D4EU; foreign partners are Green Transition Denmark (the organisation in charge of air measurements), CIMNE (Spain), MD International (Israel) and the German Institute of Shipping Economics and Logistics.

Life4MedEca must (and is) evaluating the impact of the MED ECA (and of the new Mediterranean action plan that the Barcelona Convention will approve at COP22) with particular attention to the impacts, besides on maritime transport (already well known), on the entire fishing chain and on maritime / coastal tourism as well as on marine biodiversity (so important in the Mediterranean) in view of the recently approved new biodiversity policy (which significantly focus on the Mediterranean marine protected areas).

What happens next?

If MED ECA is approved, it will then be the IMO (International Maritime Organization, the UN Agency that regulates worldwide the maritime transport) that will have to agree the related legislation. In such a case, the Life4MedEca project will develop assistance tools (for example through training) for the administrations that request it, in particular the non-European ones in the Mediterranean.

