



Rome Declaration

Declaration to designate the Mediterranean Sea an Emission Control Area to limit air pollution from ships

Air pollution from ships is a significant threat to human health, environment and global climate. The European Commission estimates that every year 50,000 people in Europe die prematurely because of ship air pollution, notably from particulate matter, sulphur, nitrogen oxides and ground-level ozone. In order to tackle these emissions coastal states in Northern Europe have agreed to designate the North Sea, the Baltic Sea and the English Channel Emission Control Areas for sulphur (SECAs) and nitrogen (NECAs). The former has already delivered immediate air quality improvements by up to 60% from 2015 and respective socio-economic benefits worth billions of euros. Yet, a lot still needs to be done in order to also limit ship black carbon and particulate matter emissions, reduce nitrogen emissions from existing ships and to ensure strict enforcement of the agreed rules. States acting regionally through ECAs has turned out to be an effective way to reducing air pollution from ships.

This however raises the question as to why coastal populations and the environment around other EU seas are not accorded the same level of protection against ship emissions as in the North?

The signatories of this declaration urge policy makers to take action on shipping related air pollution and work in particular towards the establishment of a Mediterranean Emissions Control Area (ECA).

The ongoing success of the existing ECAs in Northern America and Northern European seas proves that a Mediterranean ECA would also deliver remarkable air quality benefits not only along the shipping routes and coastal areas but also in port cities and far in the hinterland. This will immediately improve public health, limit damage to ecosystems and cultural heritage and allow member states to reduce local air pollution and their impact on global warming.

Moreover, the establishment of a Mediterranean ECA will restore the level playing field in the single European market where ship owners/operators and ports in the South face the same regulatory requirements as in the North.

It would also enable the uptake of low-emission technologies and the transfer of necessary know-how within the European Union leading to leadership in technology and jobs creation in the maritime industry. Therefore, tighter emission standards in the Mediterranean are also a vital guarantor of ensuring the sustainability of the EU maritime sector and economic competitiveness.

Find more information on the Mediterranean ECA project on www.nabu.de/mediterranean-eca