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Press release

The CO2 PACMAN project will result in the development of joint management plans on the islands to reduce the carbon footprint

The three-day workshops CO2 PACMAN Rooting Lab: COoperation and CO-designing PPartnership for CLiMAte Neutrality, which ended today on Brač within the framework of the international CO2 PACMAN project, achieved excellent results in the direction of engagement of local stakeholders from the island Brač and the presentation is another step closer to creating joint management plans on the islands to reduce the carbon footprint. The meeting brought together participants from the field of climate change and national policy makers, representatives of regional authorities and the local community of the island of Brač.

Three-day workshops in Split and Supetar on Brač were held from September 17 to 19, 2024, with the aim of cooperation between project partners and local stakeholders in the field of field research, data collection, knowledge exchange, as well as finding potential solutions for decarbonization, i.e. reducing greenhouse gas emissions. gases, primarily carbon dioxide on Mediterranean islands. The organizer of the meeting is the Administrative Department for Economy, EU Funds and Agriculture of the Split-Dalmatia County (SDŽ) as one of ten project partners.

Moderator of the meeting and head of the SDŽ CO2 PACMAN project, Martin Bučan, expressed his satisfaction with the response and results of the workshops, saying that they achieved excellent results, especially in the direction of the engagement of local stakeholders, representatives of local self-government units from the island of Brač, and the establishment of mutual dialogue. On the other hand, there was a great turnout of 3rd-grade students from Supetar and Bol High Schools, as well as representatives of the small and medium-sized business sector, who presented their island and presented certain problems, but how and in what way they plan to reduce the carbon footprint from all of their activities (water supply, waste management, production, public transport, etc.).

- This is just one in a series of workshops. After this, workshops will also be held on the islands of Crete in Greece and Elba in Italy, and the main conclusion of all these workshops will be the joint progress of the islands in adapting to climate change and reducing the island's carbon footprint, and the possibility of replicating their examples of good practices for other islands in the area Mediterranean. The challenges that we have had in cooperation with foreign partners are due to climate changes on the islands, the organization of life before and after the tourist season where one of the problems is human capacity, urgent intervention services, the organization of local transport and pressure on the consumption of electricity and water, as well as collection and disposal waste. Those two parts of the year, in season and out of season, is a common problem of all island communities, regardless of whether they are in Italy, Greece or Croatia, explained Bučan.

At the end of all these workshops, as he announced, joint management plans on the islands to reduce the carbon footprint will be drawn up in which all these stakeholders will participate, and the specialty of this process is a bottom-up approach in the search for long-term solutions.

- Often local administration and self-government units, that is politics, look at how and in what way to carry out a certain activity within one budget year. However, certain solutions that provide good



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opportunities for adapting to climate change and reducing CO2 missions are long-term both in terms of planning and finding financing models, and ultimately implementation. Therefore, politics is decided on them less often because it is something that lasts for several years. For example, to design and build a park, you need to spatially plan it, obtain the necessary permits, find a financing model, etc. On the other hand, we want to receive feedback from the civil sector on all proposals that will be presented by each of the stakeholders. We want greater emphasis to be placed on something that is more financially challenging and long-lasting, and that has a better impact on the quality of life of the community, Bućan announced.

Brač Waterworks Director Petar Anibalović rated the exchange of experiences with colleagues from Crete, Elba and Valencia as significant.

- At the workshops, we exchanged top experiences in order to, together with all relevant stakeholders on Brač, try to find joint solutions. We need as many events and gatherings of people from all sectors as possible, because this is the only way we can progress, especially in my water supply sector, in order to reduce the loss of drinking water and use it in the best possible way, to find a solution for the irrigation of agricultural areas and to build a hydrant network of the entire island of Brač to help extinguish the fire. We welcome this way of cooperation in order to tackle the challenges and solve our problems, said Anibalović.

The commander of the Brač Fire Department's operational area, Nikola Martinić Dragan, also welcomed such educational workshops.

- Such panel discussions definitely shorten the time to learn something because it is always cheaper to learn from other people's mistakes than from your own mistakes, so in these exchanges of experiences you always hear something new because someone has already encountered the problem you are struggling with and found a solution. We often have these kinds of discussions in our fire station, we participate in them and definitely learn from each one that leads us to some new idea or a new plan for solving the problem, Dragan Martinić concluded.

The CO2 PACMAN project funded by the Interreg Euro-MED program brings together ten partners from Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Greece (Elláda), Bulgaria, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of providing knowledge and tools to encourage the implementation of integrated strategies and policies for the challenge of mitigating climate change and adjustments.

The CO2 PACMAN project encourages transnational cooperation in order to create a favorable environment for the increase and exchange of knowledge, strengthen the innovation capacity of protected areas and raise citizens' awareness of the possibilities of transition to a low-carbon economy.