



CO2 PACMAN

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The new Law on Islands is being drafted, Croatian islands should work together to reduce CO2 levels

On the first day of the three-day workshops CO2 PACMAN Rooting Lab: COoperation and CO-designing PArtnership for CliMAtE Neutrality, the round table "Split-Dalmatia County - Blue-green community engagement" was held. The meeting, which brought together about a hundred participants from the field of climate change and national policy makers, as well as representatives of local and regional authorities, is part of the international project CO2 PACMAN.

Three-day workshops in Split and in Supetar on Brač are being 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 the Economy, EU Funds and Agriculture of the Split-Dalmatia County (SDŽ) as one of the ten project partners.

Martin Bučan, moderator of the meeting and head of the SDŽ CO2 PACMAN project, reminded that of Croatia's 78 islands (1244 in natural formation), 52 are permanently inhabited. All of them are located relatively close to the mainland and are inhabited by about 3.3% of the total population of the Republic of Croatia or approximately 130 thousand inhabitants in the winter period.

- Problems and challenges occur in the summer, so as part of the Clean Energy for EU Islands initiative, the document "Regulatory barriers in Croatia - findings and recommendations" was created on the basis of which future actions will be created, so it remains to be decided whether to go for each the island unit of local self-government is preparing its strategic plan with regard to its specificities, or will it go for a supra-provincial inter-island approach because, for example, some of the measures may be good for Lastovo, but not for Cres, warned Bučan.

Tibor Bešenić from the International Center for Sustainable Development of Energy, Water and Environmental Systems (SDEWES Center) pointed out the need for close cooperation between researchers from the non-governmental sector and the academic community with representatives of local politics in terms of the energy independence of the Adriatic islands and the CO2 reduction mission. The existing cooperation should be expanded with the aim of a comprehensive approach so that all that has been achieved on individual projects does not remain isolated, but to ensure the continuation of the work in the future.

- Through projects on three of our islands, we are conducting scientific analyzes and will look at the similarities and differences between them. Although each island has its own particularity, when creating a strategy of action, all their differences and similarities that could work in one, two and a third area will be taken into account. Our view is that some kind of joint matrix or joint approach would be much more beneficial than individual local ones, but it is necessary to strike a good balance, said Bešenić.

Ante Guć from the Public Institution RERA S.D. also believes that one action strategy should be made for all islands, and that in the second phase, each island unit of local self-government deals with its specificities and further develops this basic, common strategy.

Marija Mioč, from the head of the Islands Administration of the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, pointed out that the new Law on Islands is currently being prepared, regardless of the fact that it was passed in 2018.

- The government has decided to draft a new law by 2028, which will focus on modern programs, that is, on sectoral programming and the unification of similar sectors as the best model for bringing politics from the national level to the local level. Some of the topics will be climate adaptation and the specifics of the island, as well as clean energy and renewable sources. The working group for the drafting of the law has almost been formed, and we believe that this new law on islands will really solve the most important problems for the islands and make use of those that have the greatest potential, announced Mioč.

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.

The three-day workshops will continue tomorrow and the day after tomorrow in the hall of the Fire Station in Supetar on Brač.