



Strengthening institutional collaboration on surveillance and enforcement in coastal and marine Natura 2000 sites

Welcome to **the final newsletter of EFFICIENTN2K**, where we celebrate the **journey, achievements, and lasting impact** of our efforts to enhance the management of Natura 2000 marine and coastal sites.

LAST STEPS

The journey of EFFICIENTN2K, which began on August 1, 2023, is now nearing its conclusion. **Seventeen months** of dedicated efforts by **Sunce** and the **Municipality of Ugento** toward a shared goal have yielded tangible results, thanks to strong collaboration in technical activities, capacity building, and workshops. Our last update was in July, after which the partners carried out direct joint actions in Croatian and Italian Natura 2000 sites to practically demonstrate how collaboration can enhance surveillance and enforcement efficiency.

Direct joint actions in Croatia

Sunce organised two joint actions focused on raising awareness about the importance of *Posidonia oceanica*. The first took place on July 19 within the marine Natura 2000 site HR3000120 Zlatni rat na Braču - podmorje, and the second on August 21 within the marine Natura 2000 site HR3000119 Šćedro - podmorje. Both events emphasized the significance of this habitat type and the impact of free anchoring on the condition of Posidonia meadows.



Direct joint actions in Italy

With the aim of monitoring the areas of the Natural Regional Park 'Litorale di Ugento' most exposed to wildfire risks, the **Municipality of Ugento carried out a series of monitoring activities** through the use of a drone, starting on August 30 and continuing through September and October, to ensure monitoring during and beyond the period of greatest fire risk.



The joint actions demonstrated the **critical importance of:**

- intersectoral cooperation and coordination among local and regional actors;
- community involvement;
- awareness-raising efforts targeted local communities and tourists;
- the use of advanced technologies;
- investing training activities and equipping local authorities to increase the efficiency of surveillance and enforcement actions.

WEAKNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The partners conducted an **in-depth analysis** of the institutional and legal framework of existing capacities and challenges in protected areas, involving authorities and stakeholders at various levels. This analysis resulted in **recommendations** to enhance efficiency in surveillance and enforcement in both Italy and Croatia.

Identified obstacles

- Regulatory gaps in national legislation
- Coordination gaps among sectoral entities delay timely action
- Judicial inconsistencies in cases involving harmful human activities
- Low public awareness on the impact of environmental crimes and lack of regular specific education
- Resource constraints, including understaffing and the absence of clear protocols

Identified solutions

- Developing a national strategy with protocols and collaboration guidelines for environmental crime
- Creating consistent judicial practices
- Strengthening institutional capacities by increasing funding and staff for faster infraction detection
- Conducting regular training for key stakeholders
- Improving public awareness initiatives to foster community support in conservation efforts

FUTURE IMPACT



During the local workshop held in Ugento on May 21, the partners presented the **Declaration on Institutional Cooperation in Implementing Solutions**, a formal commitment by the institutions from Italy and Croatia to actively collaborate in the future in implementing the solutions identified during the project. **Open to endorsement** by additional institutions, the Declaration serves as both a roadmap for future actions and a reference point for evaluating progress event after the project's conclusion.

Sunce and the Municipality of Ugento have solidified their commitment to collaborating on future initiatives to enhance surveillance and enforcement in coastal and marine Natura 2000 sites. This commitment was formalized through a **Cooperation Agreement** signed by *Zrinka Jakl*, Executive Board Member of Sunce, and *Salvatore Chiga*, Mayor of Ugento, during the final conference of the EfficientN2K project, held in Ugento on November 26.



As the journey of EFFICIENTN2K comes to an end, **its legacy of collaboration, innovation, and sustainable practices will continue to inspire future efforts** to protect and preserve our invaluable natural heritage.

For more information on the project, please visit our website:
<https://www.italy-croatia.eu/web/efficientn2k>

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