



## The route to Blue Energy deployment in the Mediterranean area

- *Almost 200 people participated in the Final Conference of the BLUE DEAL Project in Ravenna*

After 31 months since its starts, the BLUE DEAL Project has reached to its end, working to exploit marine renewable energies in the minds of all the inhabitants of the Mediterranean.

In its aim to achieve this and to facilitate the creation of links and synergies between citizens, companies, researchers, entities and public bodies in order to promote research, innovation and investment in renewable energy, BLUE DEAL has managed to involve more than 200 people.

On 18 May, the 12 members of the project presented the numerous results obtained during its implementation in their **Final Conference held in Ravenna**, organized by the project leader, the University of Siena, with 140 attendees face-to-face and 70 virtually.

The importance of the BLUE DEAL Project in promote from its beginning the development of Blue Energy in the Mediterranean area, was stated by Simone Bastianoni, the coordinator of the project stated << *When we started BLUE DEAL there was not pandemic and not trace of a war for energy. The idea was to use something because we cannot think of leaving out 70% of the surface of the Earth, if we want to strive for renewable energy, we cannot forget the sea in our efforts to become energy self-sufficient and carbon neutral*>>.The conference addressed questions such as: What is the optimal way to promote the development of Blue Energy in the Mediterranean? How to involve different stakeholders in this process? What happens when you involve students and citizens in the decision-making process? All activities carried out by BLUE DEAL were guided by this single principle: participatory process.

On this basis, **more than 40 activities**, 5 BLUE DEAL Labs, 2 Business Forums, 1 Open Innovation Action, 1 International School Competition, 1 survey "ASK YOUR CITIZEN ON BE" to investigate citizens' perceptions on Blue Energy in which more than 3,000 people participated, and 9 Open Days involving politicians and public administrators, businesses, innovators, and citizens took place.

The Final Conference was opened by Elly Schlein (Vice-President of the Emilia-Romagna Region), Gianandrea Baroncini (Councillor of the Municipality of Ravenna) and Andrea Mengozzi (former



Councillor of the Province of Ravenna) who highlighted the importance of the Green Deal and the importance of renewable energies in achieving it.

We are facing a particular historical period that is requesting a more attention to the energy transition and to the importance of become energy independence.

*<<We have to find a renewable and clean energy in order to have our energy independence >>* stated Elly Schlein.

It was emphasized the importance of the participation of the communities, citizens, stakeholders, and territories; those elements were exploit during the Blue Deal Project and allows us to accept the renewable energy and use it for an energy transition.

*<<Ability to increase our knowledge for the public administration, for the citizens in order to guarantee our future, the feasibility to management of our energy choices in the long term and collaboration with research and innovation-based work>>* was one of the pillars presented by Gianandrea Baroncini.

*<<The planet resources are limited, the war is a consequence of the exploitation resources and to avoid war we need to shift to a new model of life based on renewable resource and preservation of the environment >>* was the extract read by Andrea Mengozzi, written by Enzo Tiezzi 40 years ago in the book "Tempi storici tempi biologici".

This was followed by a session **dedicated to assessing the key factors for the future development of marine energy in the Mediterranean area**, with the participation of George Kremlis (Honorary Director of DG ENV, Advisor to the Greek Prime Minister), Eleni Hatziyanni (DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission), Alessandra Sensi (Union for the Mediterranean), Maria Groueva (INTERREG MED), Caterina Praticò (CoNISMa, BlueGrowth Project).

To support the inclusion of Blue Energy in the energy plans, the methodology developed by BLUE DEAL during the Workshops, the experiences and results of the laboratories carried out in Albania, Greece, Cyprus and Croatia were presented.

The second part of the conference focused on some of the main results achieved by the Project, such as the "BLUE DEAL for Citizens" section that recounts the involvement of citizens through the use of a survey on Blue Energy that has been carried out to date in 12 Mediterranean cities



(<http://askyourcitizenonbe.unisi.it/> ). Citizens should be included in the property of the device that produced renewable energy and should be informed about the technologies and the process needed to develop it.

Replicability of this survey should be considered as a potential instrument for the Mediterranean Area.

Since the beginning of 2022, the project launched an international school contest, **BLUE DEAL for the Future**, to involve students and future generations in Blue Energy awareness. This competition involved **more than 1000 students** and during the conference, after listening to the proposals of the **13 finalists** from 5 countries, the 3 overall winners were chosen.

In the **Design** category, the Wave Pump project from CIPFP Vicente Blasco Ibañez in Valencia (Spain) was the winner. Spain also took the prize in the **Artistic Expression** category thanks to the musical and artistic interpretation of the Platero School in Malaga; and in the **Video** category, the 1<sup>st</sup> Primary School of Glyfada in Greece was the winner.

The members of the jury wanted to highlight the great quality of all the projects presented and the effort and dedication that all the finalists had put in during the event.

The commission and all the Partners wanted to recognize a special mention to the work done by the Istituto Roncalli Poggibonsi - Sezione Carceraria of Ranza (Italy) "Una struttura turistica alternativa". We believe that the meeting between the project and the prisoners is an important added value to highlight and underline.

As said by prof. Pietro Centorrino who presented the work of the detained of Ranza: *<<I hope that this project can show that when detained persons have the opportunity to participate in this kind of initiative, they work and plan for the common good, and this is our duty as a civil society. As the 2030 agenda says "no one is excluded", there is no social justice without environmental justice, every time, and place, and also in prison.>>*

To end the day and after the emotional presentation of the prizes to the students, the results of the **BLUE DEAL Open Innovation Challenge** were presented, an action in which **more than 30 companies** participated with **81 proposals**. In addition, the official website was presented where you can consult the challenges, solutions presented, interviews with the companies and contact details ([bluedealopeninnovation.com](http://bluedealopeninnovation.com)).



In addition, the **9 Regional Alliances** and a **large Transnational Alliance** were presented, representing a meeting space between administrations, companies, research centers, associations and citizens with the aim of laying the foundations for the realization of a BLUE future for the Mediterranean.

A very intense day which summarised the intense work carried out by the 12 project partners and which can be consulted on the project website and platform: <https://blue-deal.interreg-med.eu/> and [bluedealmed.eu](http://bluedealmed.eu)

*BLUE DEAL is a European project made up of 12 partners from 6 Mediterranean countries and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Instrument for the Pre-accession Assistance Fund, with a budget of 2.8 million euros.*

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**More information:**  
<https://blue-deal.interreg-med.eu/>  
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