

There are 29 macro areas, for a total of 36.823 km², to be investigated for oil and gas drilling in the Croatian Adriatic Sea, in addition to already existing 9 platforms for gas extraction. On the Italian side, the areas intended for hydrocarbons exploration amount to 12.000 km², with 6 oil platforms already active. In the Italian part of the Northern Adriatic Sea there are 39 authorizations for gas extraction, which supply 70% of Italian methane gas. The direction taken by Croatia, Italy and other Adriatic countries, justified as the national energy and economy needs, is shortsighted and anachronistic. The expected amount of hydrocarbons would, in fact, contribute very little to the countries' economy and energy independence. Most of the income and thus benefits, would go to private companies, while any damages would be borne by the affected communities.

With its characteristic of a “closed sea”, the Adriatic is a very fragile environment, whose rich ecosystems are already very stressed. The new exploration and exploitation activities must be considered in this context, with due attention paid to all their impacts not only on the marine ecosystem, but also on activities with important value for the Adriatic countries, such as fishing and tourism.

Furthermore, the topic of safety in extracting activities is regulated by the Directive on safety of offshore oil and gas operations (Directive 2013/30/EU), which requires the strengthening of environmental safety conditions during sea operations in the hydrocarbons field.

Equally important is the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC), which prescribes, among other, the objective of attaining good environmental status (GES) of the seas by the year 2020, and the evaluation of the cumulative impact of all activities in order to ensure an integrated approach to marine ecosystem.

Directive 2014/89/EU establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning (MSPD) calls for establishing cross-border cooperation. Furthermore, a large part of the Adriatic meets the Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) criteria of the Convention on Biological Diversity, namely Northern Adriatic, Jabuka/Pomo Pit and South Adriatic Ionian Strait.

In light of the above considerations, we agree on a large-scale safeguard program of the Adriatic Sea that goes beyond national borders and commits to the following specific objectives:

- » to stop oil extraction in order to choose a different economic, social and environmental development for the area;
- » to call for a transboundary Strategic Environmental Assessment involving all coastal countries and aiming at evaluating the cumulative impact of their planned and ongoing oil

and gas exploration and exploitation activities;

» to promote a fossil-free economy for an efficient, clean and renewable energy future in which new economic sectors, able to create jobs, will be sustainably developed. We encourage decisive action against climate change and will ask for a strong commitment of the international community during the upcoming 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (COP21) to be held in Paris in December 2015;

» to launch a wide environmental initiative aiming at uniting people from different countries that have shared history tied to the Adriatic Sea and for whom the natural and cultural heritage of the area is of the utmost importance and interest;

» to foster the protection of marine biodiversity by encouraging sustainable fishing practices and promoting the concept of marine tourism focused on environmental sustainability;

» to facilitate active engagement of all people in environmental issues of the Adriatic Sea.

Source; SOS za Jadran