

PRESS RELEASE

Trieste, 31st March 2022

Transnational Cooperation for environmental protection in the North Adriatic: the NAMIRS project, coordinated by the Central European Initiative

During today's press conference organised at the Central European Initiative- Executive Secretariat (CEI-ES) in Trieste, the NAMIRS partners expressed great satisfaction with the launch of an initiative of this kind, unanimously considered strategical for reinforcing environmental protection in the North Adriatic Sea. The **NAMIRS - North Adriatic Maritime Incident Response System** – is a CEI-led international project co-financed by the European Commission (DG ECHO) in the framework of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

As stated by CEI-ES Secretary General, **Roberto Antonione**, NAMIRS is perfectly aligned with the CEI political mission and with the priorities expressed by its 17 Member States, considering environmental protection a top priority for sustainable development, and also in line with the development goals of the UN Agenda 2030.

Not only does transnational and cross-border cooperation represent an effective instrument for facing threats which know no borders, but it is also essential: the marine environment is a common resource, and its protection is a goal to be reached through its joint and sustainable management by the three neighbouring countries, i.e. Croatia, Italy and Slovenia.

The North Adriatic Sea is a semi-closed basin where the volume of commercial exchange and the rate of maritime traffic is constantly increasing, also in consideration of the changed European and global geo-political scenarios. Therefore, accidental marine pollution, in particular deriving from oil-spills, is a dangerous threat in this area, with potentially devastating environmental and economic consequences.

Whereas existing national Contingency Plans are not sufficient to tackle such a **transboundary threat**, better preparedness, and more coordinated response at transnational level, will contribute to enhancing prevention of, and protection from, the effects of maritime disasters in the target area.

Integrating the knowledge, tools and resources available within NAMIRS multi-stakeholder partnership, and establishing a ready-for-operations sub-regional mechanism at prompt disposal of North Adriatic countries, in the field of prevention of, protection from, and response to the effects of maritime disasters, will contribute to reducing the vulnerability of such a sensitive area as the North Adriatic is, with the final aim to extend the results achieved to the whole Adriatic-Ionian Macro-Region, and to other territories facing similar challenges within the CEI constituency.

Acknowledging marine environmental protection as a common and crucial goal, it is worth mentioning the significant collaboration which emerged in this context, during the Barcolana Sea Summit 2021, to be successfully continued in the next editions.

The newly elected vice-President of the Società Velica di Barcola e Grignano, **Alessandro Mulas**, who spoke at the presentation of the NAMIRS project, to which the Barcolana Sea Summit will be closely connected in 2022 and 2023 – declared that *the second edition of the Barcolana Sea Summit wants to highlight the need of a coordinated approach to the management of the Mediterranean. In 2021, we focused on the analysis of the state of health and the risks for our sea, this year we look at the **protection from, and at the mitigation of existing and potential damages**. This path focuses on methods: technology, science, artificial intelligence and international cooperation are the elements on which we will reflect together with representatives of government, companies, NGOs, institutions. In this general framework, the NAMIRS project developed by the CEI will play a central role.*