

“Ride the Wave”: Nautical Institutes collaborate to introduce Ocean and Climate Literacy in European school programs

After the successful series of webinars on the subject of Ocean and Climate Literacy, the project **“Ride the Wave”** - funded by the Erasmus + EU's program (2021-2027) to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe - has entered its next phase.

Together with the environmental associations **Marevivo** and **HELMÉPA**, the Nautical Institutes **“G. Da Verrazzano”** in Porto Santo Stefano, Tuscany, and the **“1st Vocational High School of Konistres”**, in Evia, Greece, have implemented their school programs with environmental education activities related to the topics of Ocean and Climate Literacy.

The aim is to improve students' understanding on **the important role that the Ocean plays in our life and on the challenges it is facing because of uncontrolled human activities**. Both Italian and Greek students explored topics such as the conservation of biodiversity in the Mediterranean Sea, the functions of the Global Oceans and the ecological importance of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows and the crucial issue of marine plastic pollution, including its origin, composition and impact on marine organisms.

In line with the **UN Agenda 2030** goals related to education, responsible and sustainable management of environmental resources and climate change, students also emphasized cause-effect relationship between human activities and the ocean, discussed national and European laws and conventions related to climate, biodiversity and marine protected areas, and discovered many European youth opportunities related to the **Blue Economy sector**, since the core of their future careers will be the Sea.

Practical outdoor activities were also organized to put into practice the knowledge gained from the lessons in class. In **Italy**, students were actively engaged in the preservation of coastal ecosystems, both with the **observation of the environment** of the Santa Liberata Marina and the **beach clean-up** of Giannella Beach. Furthermore, they took part in a clean-up and a visit of Porto Santo Stefano beaches – passing through the old train galleries – guided by an expert who explained the history regarding the tunnels connecting some of the most important beaches of Monte Argentario.

On the other hand, in **Greece**, the program of the 1st Vocational High School of Konistres Nautical Institute was focused on exploring techniques related to **underwater cleaning and the preservation of marine ecosystems**. After an informative session, the students had the opportunity to witness a practical demonstration of underwater cleaning in the nearby harbor of Kymi. This exciting experience allowed them to apply the knowledge acquired during the training session and understand the practical implications of their studies.

In addition, they had the opportunity to visit **Environmental Protection Engineering S.A.'s fleet** of different types of anti-pollution vessels equipped with pollution prevention and recovery equipment. This visit provided them with firsthand exposure of the advanced technologies and equipment used for **environmental protection and pollution control in marine environments**. It allowed the students to gain practical insights into the efforts and measures taken to safeguard marine ecosystems and combat pollution.

By integrating Ocean and Climate Literacy into their curriculum, the Nautical Institutes, along with Marevivo, HELMEPA, and expert organizations, are nurturing environmentally conscious individuals, which is the main goal of the “**Ride the Wave**” project . This initiative exemplifies the power of education and practical experiences to inspire positive change for our oceans' health and preservation.