

SUMMARY INFORMATION ON THE MEDSALT-2 PROJECT

1.- Administrative situation. Background.

The Directorate General of International Economic Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAEC) published in the Official State Gazette (BOE) of April 21st, 2018 an announcement by which **begins the process of public information of the project of acoustic soundings (seismic acquisition) with the dangerous technique of high pressure compressed air guns**, called "Uncovering the Mediterranean Salt Giant (MEDSALT-2)", of which the National Institute of Oceanography and Geophysics Sperimentale (INOGS) of Trieste (Italy) is a promoter. **This project affects the Balearic sea area between the islands of Ibiza and Mallorca and the southeast of Ibiza and Formentera.** The scientific ship OGS Explora equipped with a system of compressed air guns and a hydrophone system would be used for the development of the oceanographic campaign.

This project had already been processed in 2016 and did not get authorization from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAGRAMA, today MAPAMA). In fact, after the allegations received against its realization, the [MAGRAMA already recognized in its Resolution of July 29th, 2016 that the MEDSALT-2 project could produce significant adverse impacts on the environment](#), for this reason it decided not to grant INOGS the simplified environmental impact statement that the latter had requested in March of that year. It was also indicated in that Resolution that, in order for INOGS to reactivate the project, it had to go through the ordinary environmental evaluation procedure which is what finally happened with the announcement of the MAEC of last April 21st.

In that Resolution of July 2016, the MAGRAMA highlighted some arguments made by the Alianza Mar Blava in its response to previous environmental consultations, among which the level of noise generated by airguns would have fatal consequences for wildlife marine, including whales and dolphins, as well as fish of commercial interest. The marine area that would be affected is of great importance to many species, specifically sperm whales.

2.- Linkage of the project with the oil industry

In addition to the negative environmental impact of the project, it is also irrefutable that [the MedSalt-2 project is linked to the interests of oil companies](#), as evidenced by the information available to the Alianza Mar Blava which has been spread out through their social networks and website.

In fact, although in the BOE announcement of April 21st, 2018 only refers to the scientific nature of the MEDSALT-2 project, **the documentation available to Alianza Mar Blava clearly shows the express interest of various companies in the oil sector in this project.**

The Mar Blava Alliance located the document ["Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the COST Action" Uncovering the Mediterranean salt giant "\(MEDSALT\) CA15103"](#), which is the basis of the [COST / MEDSALT project](#) (COST Action CA15103).

Thus, among many other references in that document, in clause 2.1.1 (page 8 of the document) you can read: **"In the short term, the Action [COST / MEDSALT] will promote the industrial exploration of hydrocarbon resources in the sensitive environment of the Mediterranean Sea."**

Also, there is a key phrase in the clause 2.2.1 (page 9 of the document):

«2.2.1. Plan to involve the most relevant partners

"(...) Seven companies in the oil and gas sector and oil service companies active in the Mediterranean have expressed their interest in the Action [COST / MEDSALT]. (...)"

3.- Conclusions.

Apart from its clear link to the interests of the oil sector, **the MEDSALT-2 project should not be authorized, whatever its purpose, since its environmental impact is unacceptable given that it involves the use of compressed air guns**, a very impressive technique for living beings due to the enormous level of underwater noise pollution that it generates, and which, as has been scientifically proven, would produce very negative effects for marine fauna, including sperm whales, beaked whales, dolphins and other cetaceans, turtles, birds, invertebrates, as well as fish species of commercial interest.

The marine area that would be affected is of great importance for many species that are specially protected and at risk of extinction. **The environmental impact of this project would be critical.**