
PRESS RELEASE

Bellona Europa intensifies collaboration with ports promoting their potential as decarbonisation hubs for Europe

Thursday, October 12, 2023

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM – Bellona Europa is launching a new project, called Ports2Decarb, to help define and amplify the role of ports in delivering industrial decarbonisation solutions, primarily CO₂ capture, transport, and storage (CCS). The project aims to support a faster transition to net zero by building on the potential of ports, well-placed geographically to act as physical hubs for CCS in Europe.

The project will focus on selected ports in the Baltics and North Sea, which have potential to be developed as industrial hubs for CCS solution deployments for so-called 'harder-to-abate' sectors. To achieve the EU net-zero target, all industries must significantly reduce their emissions. Chemicals, steel and cement, for example, all face technical and economic challenges to deeply cut their emissions. When effective means of reducing emissions are not possible or accessible, capturing CO₂ and storing it permanently in geological formations can prove to be an effective emissions reduction pathway.

The CCS value chain comprises several technically intensive stages, from on-site CO₂ capture to transportation and storage in a safe geological formation, either onshore or offshore. Geological reservoirs for secure CO₂ storage are primarily located offshore, deep underground at depleted oil and gas reservoirs and saline aquifers.

Ships are therefore set to play an important role, by reducing the need for upfront costs associated with pipeline infrastructure and overcoming geographical challenges and ensuring equitable access to storage sites. The ports in the Baltic region, as well as around the North Sea, have great potential to become critical elements in maritime CO₂ transport infrastructure, serving as hubs for decarbonisation in Europe.

“Bellona believes that developing a cross-border and openly accessible CO₂ transport and storage network is an effective way to reduce the barrier to entry for industrial facilities to capture and store CO₂ emissions, preventing them from reaching the atmosphere. As logistical, industrial and infrastructure hubs, ports are a perfectly placed intermediary for the transport of captured CO₂ to offshore permanent storage locations. Providing access through ports to offshore CO₂ storage sites

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will be key to kick-starting an at-scale market,” said Janis Volberts, Climate Technology and Policy Manager for Baltic Region, Bellona Europa.

Funding for the project has been provided by the Charities Aid Foundation, using a grant from global transportation provider, FedEx.

Wouter Roels, SVP Marketing Operations and Customer Experience, FedEx Express Europe said: “Alongside focused efforts to reduce emissions in our ground, road and air operations, charitable collaborations allow FedEx to support organisations like Bellona Europa in their efforts to advance the solutions needed to achieve decarbonisation ambitions. As a company that pioneered express transportation fifty years ago, it’s exciting to be able to get behind such forward-thinking projects and see environmental non-profits laying the foundations for what’s next – in particular, what the future European carbon capture storage and transport network might look like.”

When implementing the Ports2Decarb project, Bellona Europa will build on its previous experience, such as active contributions to developing the Northern Lights, Athos, and Porthos projects, as well as the ECO2CEE project.

- In the project’s first year relevant stakeholders will be identified to engage and build a critical mass of ports taking up their role as key decarbonisation hubs. Bellona will establish the narrative and political-economic case for enabling the role of ports as hubs for decarbonisation.
- In the second year, joint actions with ports and relevant authorities at regional and national level will follow, calling for EU-level policy and funding support. Bellona will share policy recommendations for changes in EU legislation and funding schemes to help recognise the role of ports and facilitate their transition.
- In the third year Bellona aims to facilitate access to the funding mechanisms established by the EU (e.g. Innovation Fund, Connecting Europe Facility/Projects of Common Interest) and national governments.

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Contact

Michał Wendołowski

Senior Climate Technology and Policy Manager (CEE)

michal@bellona.org

+32 (0) 474 801 339

Janis Volberts

Climate Technology and Policy Manager for Baltic Region

janis@bellona.org

+371 29647759

Rebecka Larsson

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Senior Communications Specialist
press@bellona.org
+32 (0) 488 760 518

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