

ABSTRACT: Joint Audit on “Sudden pollution in the Adriatic Sea”

On November 12-13, 2019, the first meeting for the coordination of the parallel audit with focused on “Immediate marine pollution” was held in Rijeka, Croatia. It was attended by representatives of the Supreme Audit Institutions of Albania, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Rijeka meeting identified common problems in the management and protection of this natural asset, centering the Joint Audit on the assessment of the arrangements in place for an intervention in case of “*Sudden pollution in the Adriatic Sea*”.

The Adriatic Sea is part of the Mediterranean Sea and its great significance lies with its maritime traffic, touristic routes etc., which, in short, provide for a great its economic impact on all aspects of life for the surrounding countries. It is a small and substantially sealed sea, and any pollution on a large scale has a direct impact on all sea-related activities.

Such pollution is usually caused by natural disasters at sea, drowning of heavy tonnage vessels, lack of preventive measures or mismanagement of existing measures to avoid occurrences bearing a negative impact on the environment, etc. Although no events of such dimensions have occurred so far in the Adriatic Sea as to be classified as major environmental emergencies, increased commercial activity, development of coastal sites and environmental factors increasingly affecting the global and regional climate, may lead, in the future, to environmental catastrophes, the size of which can be multiplied by the closed character of the Adriatic Sea and by a failure to take precautionary measures on time.

At the beginning of 2020, the Corte dei conti included the Joint Audit on “Sudden Pollution in the Adriatic Sea” in its general Audit Plan, a document which covers audit policies, strategies, and criteria for Central Audit Chambers.

The Audit will be performed, according to a workplan for 2020 (thus, subject to changes related to the developments of the current COVID-19 pandemic), by both the Central Chamber for the Performance Audit on the Management of the State Administrations and the Central Audit Chamber for European and International Affairs.

The main audit objective would be to assess the efficiency of the organisational dispositions related to forecasting and preventing the occurrence of sudden pollution, while specific side objectives would refer to checking the regulatory framework for the intervention management in case of sudden sea pollution as well as the efficiency of the intervention schemes in case of sudden sea pollution.