

FRENCH MEDITERRANEAN SUSTAINABLE CRUISES CHARTER

Guidelines for auditee



1 Context

The Mediterranean coast is the continental coastline most affected by cruise activity. In 2023, the projected number of ports calls along the French Mediterranean coast is 1700, serviced by 149 ships associated with 44 cruise companies. 51 ships, associated with 26 companies, will make at least 10 port calls in 2023, accounting for 80% of the projected port calls.

Considering the importance of this activity and the increasing sensitivity of citizens and authorities, it was decided at the coastal level to create a commitment charter that goes beyond regulatory requirements, particularly regarding the environmental impact of maritime navigation. With the resumption of cruise activity at the end of the COVID epidemic, cruise activity has been subject to regular criticism regarding air quality and the preservation of the marine environment.

In 2022, the three regions of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Occitanie, and Corsica experienced periods of air pollution peaks, with durations of 33 days, 27 days, and 8 days, respectively, according to data provided by monitoring organizations.

The sustainable cruise charter builds upon existing local charters (such as Marseille's "Blue Charter," Cannes' charter, and Saint Raphaël's charter) while expanding its scope to encompass the entire French Mediterranean coastline and, for certain aspects, extending to waters under French jurisdiction. During negotiations with major cruise ship operators and their international association (CLIA), it became necessary to emphasize the French government's intention to promote this charter in order to prevent the proliferation of local charters and provide a reinforced common foundation of requirements.

On October 20, 2022, the Sustainable Cruise Charter was signed during the Blue Maritime Summit in Marseille by Mr. Hervé Berville, State Secretary to the Prime Minister, in charge of the Sea, and the main cruise operators operating in the Mediterranean Sea who are members of the CLIA.

- The geographical area of interest includes, as appropriate, waters under the French jurisdiction, French ports and harbors in the Mediterranean Sea.
- The charter is built around 13 strong and concrete commitments that go beyond current regulations or anticipate future developments.
- This charter is a dynamic tool requiring a periodic review of commitments every three years. The next review of commitments with the operators is scheduled for May 2025.

By signing this charter, each operator commits to:

- Ensure an annual monitoring and surveillance of the charter on board their vessels by conducting self-assessments and providing transparent information regarding the results of these self-assessments.
- Provide access to documentation and onboard access to third-party independent auditors and/or charter representatives (DIRM Mediterranean) of at least one ship per year.

This document aims to explain the entire certification process of the charter.

2 Stakeholders and roles

The charter was signed by the State Secretary in charge of the Sea, attached to the Prime Minister, who entrusted the management of the certification implementation to DIRM Méditerranée.

The commitments of the charter apply to all vessels of the signing cruise companies navigating in French waters. Companies that did not ratify the charter during the Blue Summit 2022 are invited to endorse the charter using the form in Appendix 1.

DIRM representatives, through exchanges with the steering committee members, and a certification body, have established the applicable certification framework and a self-assessment questionnaire.

An independent certification body, in coordination with DIRM, will conduct audits in a neutral, objective, and impartial manner. The external auditors will be directly appointed by the certification body. These auditors should have sufficient knowledge about ship operations and

organization to conduct the audits. Additionally, these external auditors are competent in audit methodology (qualified as IRCA auditors or equivalent) and trained in this audit framework.

3 Principle of evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness of the process, the charter relies on 3 steps:

- **Ratification of the charter by companies engaged in french waters trading.**
- **Self-assessment of the ship's performance by the company.**
- **External audit of the ships by a certification body.**

At the beginning of each year, the scheduled calls of cruise vessels along the French Mediterranean coastline, are aggregated by DIRM from the various points of contact (port authorities, agents, cruise clubs or the Chambers of Trade, and Industry) in order to assess and characterize the volume of calls, companies and vessels.

For the first year, **each charter-signing company will conduct a self-assessment for every cruise vessel ensuring a minimum of 10 calls. At the end of the year, non-signing companies will be identified in the annual report.**

For the identified ships, companies will be requested to fill out the self-assessment report using an online form.

After analyzing the self-assessment reports, DIRM will list the ships to be audited by the certification body. **The objective is to audit one ship per signing company that makes more than 10 port calls.**

For the year 2023, the DIRM will finance the implementation of certification and the conducting of audits by the certification body.

Upon completion of the onboard audit, the ship's compliance with the commitments will be confirmed by issuing a certificate.

A dedicated email address for the Sustainable Cruise Charter is set up and managed by the DIRM MED: dirm-med.cruise-charter@mer.gouv.fr

This email address is used as a point of contact for new signing companies, but also to receive messages related to potential port authorities reports regarding emissions or non-compliance report by pilots with the charter commitments, as well as monitoring action plans for non-compliance or observations from companies.

For each signing company a point of contact for the charter is required.

3.1 Self-assessment of companies and vessels

From June 2023, signing companies are required to perform a self-assessment **by completing an online form established by DIRM**. Companies will provide details of the measures already implemented or planned to meet the commitments of the charter. An additional questionnaire allows the DIRM to refine the technical details of the ships covered by the charter.

For the first year of implementation, the form will be sent to companies whose ships are scheduled to make more than 10 port calls in 2023. It must be completed no later than August 31, 2023.

The completed self-assessment form will be kept onboard, and its presence onboard, along with any associated action plan, will be verified by the external auditor.

Starting from 2024, this self-assessment will be required annually and must be provided to the DIRM no later than March 31 of the current year to facilitate the scheduling of audits.

3.2 Onboard audit

Based on the self-assessment reports, DIRM will establish the list of vessels, along with the scheduled date and port for conducting the audits. This information will be provided to companies and certification body with a one-month notice.

For this first year, external audits will start in September 2023. Audits will be conducted onboard during the ship's port call on the continental coast. The audit will focus on verifying the measures implemented to meet the commitments outlined in the requirements. To accomplish this, the auditor will rely on the self-assessment questionnaire and answers from the company.

The auditor will gather factual evidence through sampling to assess the ship's compliance or non-compliance with each requirement. The supporting documents mentioned in the evaluation checklist or any other relevant documents specified by the company must be made available to the auditor on the day of the audit.

- The audit questionnaire follows a binary rating system: compliant or non-compliant with the requirement.
- A weighting system has been implemented for questions, which influences the final result.
- An audit report will be prepared to assess the ship's compliance with the commitments. This audit report will be provided to the company and sent to the DIRM.

Three levels of compliance with the requirements of versions 1 and 2 are possible:

- At 100%, full compliance with all commitments is recognized.
- Between 80% and 100%, partial compliance with the commitments is acknowledged, and an action plan must be established without the need for an additional audit.
- Below 80%, compliance is not achieved, and an action plan must be established, with a new audit scheduled in 6 months. The action plan developed by the company following the external audit must be submitted to the DIRM MED within one month for compliance within 6 months.

4 Issuance of the conformity certificate

Upon completion of the onboard audit and the establishment of an audit report confirming compliance, and upon receipt of the action plan (for ships scoring above 80% but below 100%), a certificate of conformity to the commitments of the current "Sustainable Cruise Charter" will be issued and endorsed by the head of DIRM Méditerranée.

Only ships that have undergone an audit with a result above 80% will receive a certificate.

5 Management of non-conformities

In the case of established non-conformity during an onboard audit of a ship with a score <80%, and if additional verification on board is required to address the non-conformity, a new external audit must be conducted, and the cost of the certification body auditor will be borne by the company.

6 Governance

A charter monitoring committee is established to:

- Ensure the monitoring of the charter.
- Incorporate current elements.
- Analyze the results each year.

The monitoring committee consists of representatives from DIRM and representatives from CLIA, who will meet as opportunities arise and at least once a year.

The charter stipulates a **review of commitments every 3 years**. The next review of commitments is scheduled for 2025. Proposed changes to the commitments will be submitted for consultation to the signatories. Based on regulatory developments, the monitoring committee proposes a revision of commitments and the framework, as well as control measures.

An annual restitution meeting will be organized at the end of each year for all charter partners.


7 Communication of results

An annual report will be drafted by the DIRM, documenting cruise activity on the coastline and the results of charter implementation. This report will be published on the DIRM Mediterranean's website.


In addition to the annual report and the auditee's guide., the following information will be published on the DIRM Mediterranean's website:

- The list of companies/ships expected to call along the french Mediterranean coastline.
- The list of signing companies.
- The list of self-assessed ships by company.
- The list of ships from each company that have undergone an audit by the certifying organization.
- The detailed list of ships monitored by the DIRM services regarding the sulfur content of fuels.

8 Appendix: Application Form



**SECRETARIAT D'ÉTAT
CHARGÉ DE LA MER**
*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



**SUSTAINABLE
CRUISE
CHARTER**
FRENCH MEDITERRANEAN

Sustainable Cruise Charter Application form

The cruise company:

with main office located:

declare to be informed of the requirements of the Sustainable Mediterranean Cruise Charter.

By endorsing the charter, the company commits to complying with the obligations and principles of the Charter and to implementing the 13 commitments contained therein on its ships.

The representative of the company:

Name:

First name:

Date:

Stamp / Logo:

Application form to be sent to: dirm-med.cruise-charter@mer.gouv.fr