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# FIRST BASELINE LEVELS OF PO-210 IN MUSSELS FROM THE ADRIATIC SEA: EARLY RESULTS FROM THE CIESM MEDITERRANEAN MUSSEL WATCH PHASE II

Polonium-210 (Po-210) naturally occurs in the marine environment at low concentrations, but may become a health hazard because of its high degree of bioaccumulation and occurrence as by-product of fertilizers and phosphoric acid industries. The evaluation of changes in Po-210 levels cannot prescind from the knowledge of a zero reference. Baseline data on Po-210 concentrations in Mediterranean coastal areas are, however, sparse. This is why the newly launched Phase II of the CIESM Mediterranean Mussel Watch Programme includes this radionuclide among the key contaminants to be surveyed in the region. In this framework, CIESM joined forces with the IAEA. Following a joint international workshop (La Spezia, ENEA MERC, Autumn 2008), a common harmonised analytical approach for Po-210 measurements was selected and applied to the analysis of samples collected from some 15 Adriatic stations within the regional MYTIAD project (Summer 2008). Scientists from six Mediterranean countries are involved in this initiative which will result in the very first distribution map, to be presented in this meeting, of Po-210 levels in mussels at the scale of the Adriatic sub-region.