



## Italian Students Become "Guardians Of The Coast" With Costa Crociere Foundation

September 22, 2017

*A citizen science project promoted by Costa Crociere Foundation, in collaboration with MIUR, OLPA and the School of Robotics in Genoa, involving more than 200 Italian high schools. Its aim is to make students and citizens in general aware about preserving the natural beauty of Italy's coastline, as well as raising awareness about the problems deriving from the increase in waste, in particular plastic, along the coasts, on the beaches and at sea.*

Genoa, 22 September 2017 – Making young people more aware about protecting the sea and the Italian coastline is the idea behind the "Guardians of the Coast", the *citizen science* project promoted by **Costa Crociere Foundation**, which aims to create a long-term environmental snapshot of Italy's coastline, from Liguria to Friuli Venezia Giulia, as well as Sardinia and Sicily, with the active participation of teachers and students from over **200 Italian high schools**.

"Guardians of the Coast" is supported by the Italian **Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR)**, which signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Costa Crociere Foundation and the **School of Robotics** in Genoa (available on [http://www.istruzione.it/ProtocolliInRete/Protocolli\\_Accordi.html](http://www.istruzione.it/ProtocolliInRete/Protocolli_Accordi.html)), as part of the National Plan to Digitalize Schools (Piano Nazionale per la Scuola Digitale - PNSD). The MoU is aimed at developing an innovative didactic project, focused on environmental sustainability and social use of new technologies, in order to fight school abandonment, support inclusion, integration and promote conscious and ethical use of new technologies.

In the school year that has just begun, the high schools that take part in the project, on a voluntary basis and totally free, will "adopt" a stretch of Italian coastline where they will record observations and take measurements. The project is aimed at students and teachers of the final three years of high schools throughout Italy. The pre-registration form is now available on the website [www.guardianidellacosta.it](http://www.guardianidellacosta.it).

Teachers and students will have access to a dedicated online platform offering teaching materials such as webcasts, information files and video tutorials specifically designed for the project in collaboration with **OLPA- Osservatorio Ligure Pesca e Ambiente** (Liguria cooperative consortium of marine scientists, science communicators, scuba operators and environmental technicians) and the School of Robotics Association in Genoa, with the support of a scientific committee. In keeping with the concept of "citizen science", the content will be scientifically precise but designed to be easily accessible and understandable by a non-expert general public. The teaching units involve three areas of interest: Mediterranean marine environment, biodiversity and protection of the coast and sea; climate change, alien species, the impact of climate on the marine environment; pollution and waste in the sea, the use of the coastal marine environment by humans, and technological initiatives to reduce waste.

The online and classroom training course will be complemented by field activities, during which the relevant portion of the coastline will be monitored, by examining indicators of environmental quality, the main features of the coastal environment, and certain socio-economic aspects relating to the management of coastline and its resources. Scientific observation and monitoring activities will be supported by a specially created **free app** for Android and iOS devices. The data and photos taken by participants using the app will be validated by experts and fed into an easily accessible database that can be used to compare long-term results. This key resource will then form the basis of **theme-based maps describing the state of Italy's coastline**, from the perspective of the very people on the pollution frontline: students and citizens, in other words the real Guardians of the Coast.

Teachers who participate in the initial workshop and make use of the online teaching units will receive a certificate from the School of Robotics training institute accredited by the MIUR and this will count towards their hours of professional retraining. Students who participate in "Guardians of the Coast" can count it as an alternating school-work project.

The project will end with a national event, during which the results of the schoolchildren's activities will be presented and the most deserving class will win a group cruise in the Mediterranean on board a Costa Cruises ship.

For further information and to pre-enrol your school in the project, please visit the website [www.guardianidellacosta.it](http://www.guardianidellacosta.it)

For additional information:

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