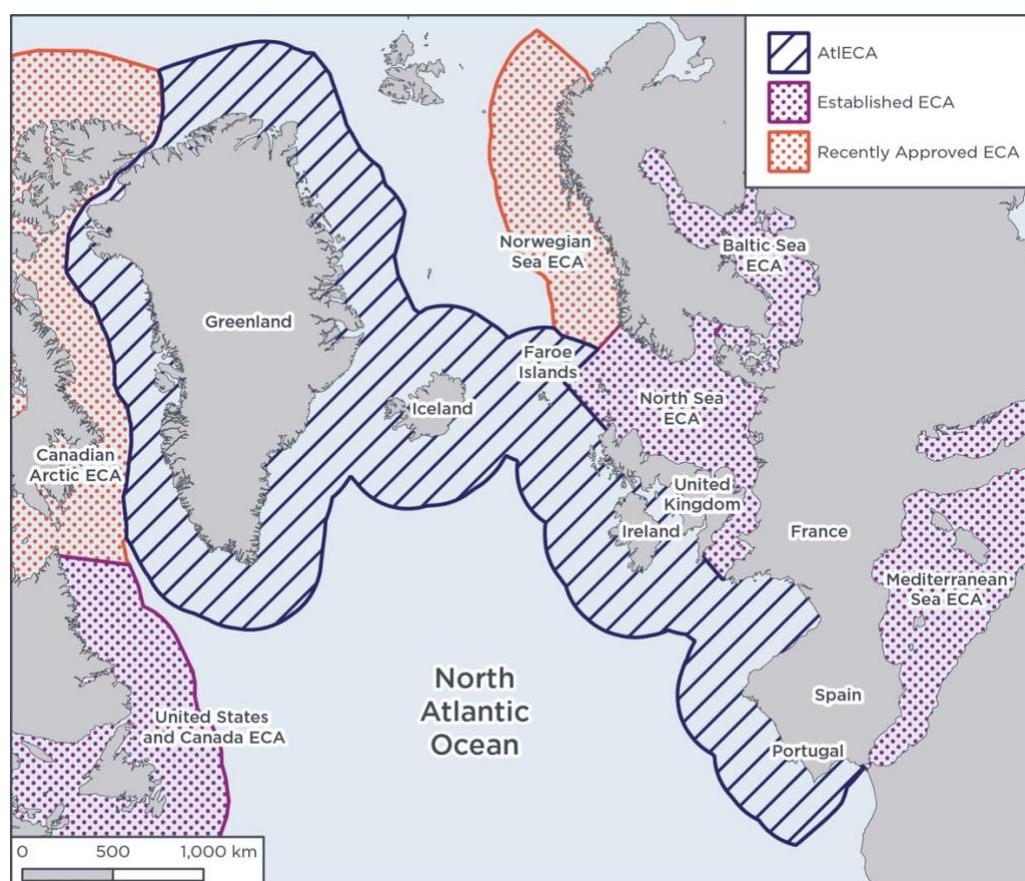


PRESS RELEASE

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Establishing an emission control area for ships in the North Atlantic Ocean could prevent several thousand premature deaths through 2050

Berlin, 12 November 2024 – A new study by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) finds that establishing an emission control area (ECA)—a designated maritime region where stricter regulations are enforced to prevent, reduce, and control air pollution from ships—in the North Atlantic would have significant environmental and public health benefits. The study follows our [previous assessment of the potential shipping emission reductions from establishing an ECA in the proposed area](#). The results of these two studies are intended to be a part of a submission, in collaboration with Porto University, to the International Maritime Organization’s Marine Environment Protection Committee on designating this new ECA.



The North Atlantic Emission Control Area and other established and recently approved emission control areas

Air pollution is a major global health hazard. Maritime shipping has traditionally relied on large diesel engines fuelled by heavy fuel oil, which emit harmful air pollutants like sulfur oxides (SO_x) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x). These pollutants adversely affect air quality, particularly in coastal areas, and significantly contribute to the formation of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). One way to mitigate this impact is to establish an ECA. A comprehensive analysis by the ICCT found that by enacting stricter requirements to reduce emissions of SO_x, PM_{2.5} and NO_x from ships, the proposed North Atlantic Emission Control Area (AtIECA) could prevent between 118 and 176 premature deaths in 2030 alone, and between 2,900 and 4,300 premature deaths between 2030 and 2050 under plausible compliance scenarios. The cumulative economic value of these health benefits could reach €19 to €29 billion between 2030 and 2050. These ranges for health and economic benefits depend on the fuels and technologies used to comply with the ECA: the benefits would be highest if ships switch to distillate fuels instead of opting for scrubbers or desulfurized fuel oil.

The AtIECA would include the territorial seas and exclusive economic zones of the Faroe Islands, France, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom—a region home to more than 190 million people. Many of them are especially vulnerable to air pollution, such as young children and older adults. Indigenous populations, particularly the Greenlandic Inuit who account for 90% of Greenland's population and predominantly reside in coastal regions, are also highly susceptible due to limited access to healthcare. While all of these jurisdictions have implemented land-based control measures to improve air quality, the contribution of shipping to air pollution remains largely unaddressed.

“Establishing this emission control area is an opportunity to significantly reduce harmful emissions and improve public health for those living in coastal communities. We have found that the North Atlantic Emission Control Area could prevent thousands of premature deaths, while also delivering long-term economic and environmental benefits,” says Liudmila Osipova, ICCT Senior Researcher and Project Lead of this work.

In addition to health benefits, the new ECA could play a critical role in protecting the region's marine biodiversity and cultural sites. The proposed AtIECA encompasses more than 1,500 marine protected areas, 17 important marine mammal habitats, and 148 UNESCO World Heritage sites. Reducing ship emissions, which contribute to pollution and ocean acidification, is essential for protecting these ecosystems.

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[Find the press kit here.](#)

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About the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT)

The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) is an independent nonprofit research organization founded to provide exceptional, objective, timely research and technical and scientific analysis to environmental regulators. Our work empowers policymakers and others worldwide to improve the environmental performance of road, marine, and air transportation to benefit public health and mitigate climate change. We began collaborating and working as a group of like-minded policymakers and technical experts, formalizing our status as a mission-driven non-governmental organization in 2005.

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