

# BARCELONA WAS THE DIRTIEST CRUISE PORT IN EUROPE LAST YEAR



A recent Transport & Environment (T&E) study found that air pollution caused by cruise ships visiting European cruise ports has surpassed pre-pandemic levels. The emissions of toxic air pollutants, specifically sulfur oxides (SOx), from 218 European cruise ships in the past year are equal to the amount emitted by 1 billion cars, despite the new limit for sulphur in marine fuel set by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which will go into effect in 2020.

According to the organization, this data shows that it is possible to combat air pollution by calling for greater electrification of ports to save lives. In the port of Venice, however, air pollution from cruise ships fell by 80% after the city banned large cruise ships.

According to E&T's data, the number of cruise ships, the time they spent in ports, and the fuel they consumed increased by nearly 25% compared to 2019. This resulted in a 9% increase in SOx emissions, an 18% increase in NOx emissions, and a 25% increase in PM2.5 emissions. These are three of the most toxic air pollutants.

## **Barcelona was the most polluted cruise port**

Barcelona was the most polluted port in Europe last year, followed by Civitavecchia, a coastal port northwest of Rome, and the Athens port of Piraeus.

It was found that cruise ships produced nearly three times more SOx in Barcelona than all the cars in the city. It's worth noting that European cars have SOx limits 100 times stricter than ships. However, at the same time, Venice has made significant progress. Since banning large cruise ships from entering its port in 2021, Venice has gone from being the most polluted port by cruise ships in 2019 to ranking 41st in 2022.

Despite efforts to reduce pollution, Italy exceeds Spain as Europe's most polluted country by cruise ships. While the Mediterranean is most affected, Norway ranks fourth in cruise traffic and has the highest traffic of any country, although with smaller vessels.

T&E reports that many cruise lines are turning to liquefied natural gas (LNG) as a cleaner fuel source for their ships. However, it is essential to note that natural gas primarily comprises methane (CH<sub>4</sub>).

LNG-powered propulsion systems account for over 40% of new cruise ship orders this year. Although these ships emit less air pollution than those using traditional fuels like heavy fuel oil, they significantly negatively impact the environment due to the leakage of unburned methane into the atmosphere.

T&E emphasizes that methane is not only a fossil fuel but also a potent greenhouse gas, with 80 times the potency of CO<sub>2</sub>. We must consider the impact of these emissions on our climate.

Date: 2023-06-16

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/barcelona-cruise-port-the-most-polluted-in-eu-news13306>