



Translation of the original article @: <https://irpimedia.irpi.eu/bazar-certificazioni-mascherine-cina-ecm/>

The great bazaar of certifications for masks from China

In the midst of an emergency, a market for certifications for protective equipment exploded. Ecm, a Bolognese certification body, has been distrusted by various European monitoring agencies. "It's a misunderstanding," he says

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Matteo Civillini

Lorenzo Bodrero

Since the beginning of the coronavirus emergency, Ffp2 masks with their "compliance certification" have arrived in half of Europe. Thousands have bought Italian hospitals, prisons and prison police forces. The document comes with the Ffp2 product sheet on different ecommerce sites. The masks in question come from China and their compliance license is guaranteed by the Ente Certificazione Macchine (Ecm), a Bolognese company recognized by the Ministry of Economic Development as a notified body. You might think that this piece of paper is a quality badge or a certificate that approves the sale in the European Union. But that's not the case.

Ecm does not have a license to certify this type of personal protective equipment (PPE). It is licensed for industrial machines, radio equipment, elevators and other medical devices, but not Ffp2 masks. That piece of paper mistaken for a pass is just a pre-certification, a voluntary certificate of review of the technical specifications of the product. That is, a statement that for Ecm the device in question could be admitted to the real certification process. In short, what you get is an Ecm badge, invented by the Bolognese company.

In the chaos of the coronavirus emergency and in the rush to supply, the complexities of European bureaucracy and its certification market have allowed someone to pass off this document as an EC certification, the real document required to be marketed in Europe. Those who induce customers to think that the "Ecm bubble" is worth as a CE brand are distributors, defends the company: "We do a document preverification business at the request of the consultants of the manufacturers -

explains Luca Bedonni, director of services of Ecm -. The certificate is issued on a voluntary basis and is not an EC certificate, as it is clearly written on it.'

The mistrust of European monitoring agencies

"As we do, this type of certification is done by other notified bodies in Italy and Europe," Bedonni defends. However, a number of market supervisors in Europe have distrusted their consumers from buying products with these certifications. Sikkerhedsstyrelsen, a government body that deals with product safety in Denmark, on 30 April named 'two notified bodies that issue certificates for Dpi without being eligible': one is Ecm, the other is Icr Polska, a Polish certifier. The European Safety Federation (Esf), the Danish agency's European counterpart, said on 1 May that it was aware of the existence of 'certificates' or other documents used as a basis for EC certification of personal protection devices (including Ffp2/Ffp3 masks and eye protectors), although these 'certificates' have no legal value and cannot be used for compliance validation'. The note reads a list of 13 companies including, of Italian, appear Ecm and Celab.

"It has been 15 years," replies Luca Bedonni of Ecm, "that we, like other notified bodies, issue these certificates in China. Manufacturers accept the terms of our contract when they receive them from us. If importers have sold everything and more using Ecm certificates, and not complying with the regulations, it is certainly not our responsibility."

In the first weeks of the emergency, however, the Bolognese institution explained on its website that it was ready to 'provide an efficient and targeted certification service', which would include 'masks, gloves, automatic respirators'.

A few days later, the "il Resto del Carlino" dedicated an article to their efforts: "You work at full speed at Ecm, struggling these days with a barrage of requests from Italy and abroad for the certification of security guards", wrote the newspaper.

Form QAT_10-M04, version 00, effective since March 6th, 2020

شهادة – 증명서 – Certificat – 證明書 – Сертификат

Certificate of Compliance

No. 1P200318.ZRMUS34



Certificate's Holder:	Zhengzhou RuiPu Medical Technology Co., Ltd. 13th Floor, Building A, Dianshang Building, Huanan 2 Road, Longhu Town, Xinzheng City, Zhengzhou City, Henan Province.
Certification ECM Mark:	
Product: Model(s):	Disposable protective mask Disposable Protective mask, Disposable kn95 mask
Verification to:	Standard: EN 149:2001+A1:2009 related to CE Directive(s): R 2016/425 (Personal Protective Equipment)

Remark: This document has been issued on a voluntary basis and upon request of the manufacturer. It is our opinion that the technical documentation received from the manufacturer is satisfactory for the requirements of the ECM Certification Mark. The conformity mark above can be affixed on the products accordingly to the ECM regulation about its release and its use.

Additional information and clarification about the Marking:

CE

The manufacturer is responsible for the CE Marking process. This document has been issued on the basis of the regulation on ECM Voluntary Mark for the certification of products. RG01_ECM rev.3 available at: www.entecerma.it

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Reviewer
Technical expert
Amanda Payne



Approver
ECM Service Director
Luca Bedanni



Ente Certificazione Macchine Srl
 Via Ca' Bella, 243 – Loc. Castello di Serravalle – 40053 Valsamoggia (BO) - ITALY
 ☎ +39 051 6705141 📠 +39 051 6705156 ✉ info@entecerma.it 🌐 www.entecerma.it

A copy of the certifications issued by Ecm

Ecm certified masks in Italian hospitals

In Italy, masks with Ecm compliance have been donated to the hospitals of Viterbo and Sestri Levante. The Cotugno, a major hospital in Naples, was in the process of buying 50,000 euros for 3.40 euros a day in April. The Civil Protection admitted that it had bought Dpi with that certificate, which it then had the technical and scientific committee analyze. The spread of Ecm "marked" products has become so prevalent that at a meeting of the committee at the beginning of May all the masks under consideration presented the document of the Bolognese company. These include the masks imported by Only Italia, the company of Irene Pivetti, now investigated for fraud and receipt following a maxi-order of the Civil Protection.

"Certifying personal protection devices is a serious matter," told to us Claudio Delaini, an engineer and consultant specialising in CE certifications. That certificate is unclear and can mislead, it's as if

they've dressed up as a Dpi certification body when they're not legitimate to do so. From what I could see this "certificate" has invaded the market."

The Ffp2 with Ecm badge ended up in half of Europe: from Lithuania to Spain, from Poland to Slovenia, from the Czech Republic to Finland. Romania, judicial sources say, has alerted Interpol, which has already launched investigations. (see picture below)

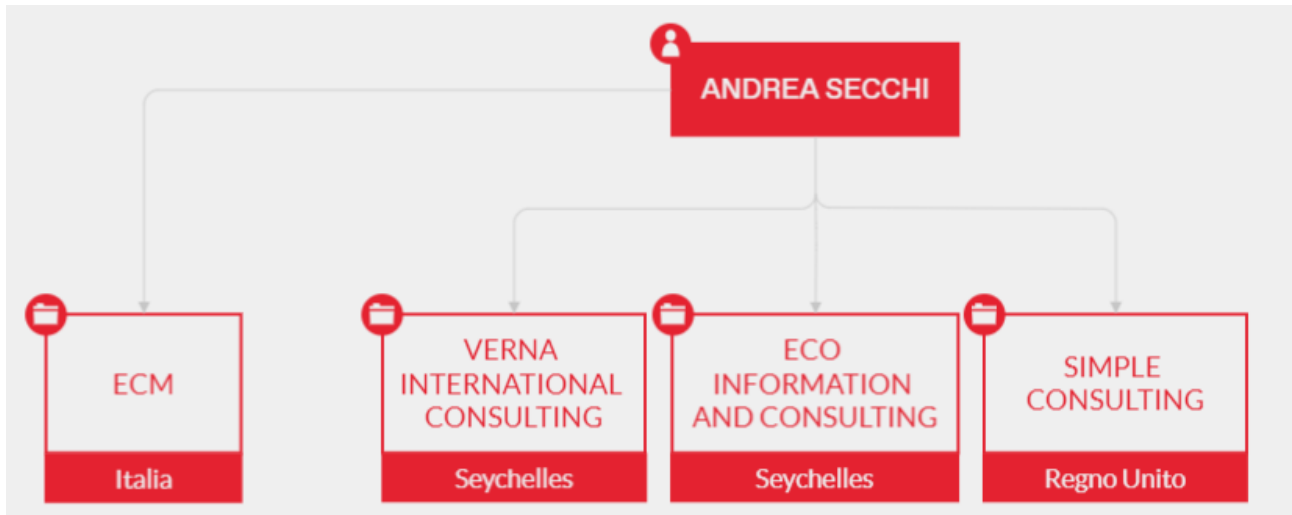


On April 7, however, the race for Ecm certifications stopped. That day Accredia – the body responsible for supervising the certification bodies – sent a circular to censor the behavior of some of its subordinates committed to issuing voluntary claims. Ecm is at the top of the list, as Accredia's press office explained to *IrpiMedia*: 'In view of the fact that the issuance of such documents could bring discredit to the whole system of Accredited Certifications we have taken sanctions against Ecm, consisting of blocking the extensions of accreditations for a period of six months and in intensified surveillance.' Ecm, in essence, cannot be credited for certifying new products.

In the past, the Bolognese company has been at the centre of disputes relating to certifications for Dpi. In 2008, the UK blocked the import of protective clothing for fencers, which were the subject of a compliance statement issued by Ecm but did not meet safety requirements. A case then passed to the European Commission which [called](#) it 'misleading' that the Machine Certification Authority had affixed the identification number assigned by the Commission to the certificate. Ecm was then ordered to cease releasing other similar documents.

Beijing-Seychelles one-way

The United Kingdom returns to another story that featured one of the two owners of the Bolognese certification body, Andrea Secchi. The entrepreneur appears to have opened three companies, one in London, the other two based in the Seychelles, relying on Formations House, a British agency that also opens companies in tax havens on behalf of third parties. The elegant building at 29 Harley Street, home until 2017 of the British company, was at the centre of the [investigation #29Leaks](#), which *IrpiMedia* and *La Stampa* attended last year. As the *leak* that initiated the investigation shows, Formations House was often chosen by its clients because it did little due *diligence*, even when those who wanted to open companies in Britain or in *offshore* jurisdictions were intended to commit tax offences.



Among the Documents of the Formations House *leak* consulted by *IrpiMedia* and *La Stampa* are two invoices issued by a Shanghai company, Verma International Certification to the British Simple Consulting, the company opened by Secchi in London. Verma International looks like a ghost company. However, the same addresses as Ecm's Chinese headquarters appear in the invoice header and the company's legal headquarters.

So a Chinese company linked to Ecm has turnover to a company in Secchi: for what purpose? According to Luca Bedonni, Ecm has never had branches in China. The person directly concerned, Andrea Secchi, contacted by email, did not respond.