



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES  
BALTIC SEA, NORTH SEA AND LANDLOCKED MEMBER STATES  
MARITIME POLICY BALTIC AND NORTH SEA

Brussels, 29/06/2015

## **21TH MEETING OF THE MEMBER STATES EXPERTS GROUP ON MARITIME POLICY**

*25 June 2015*

### **Meeting report**

Please note that supporting documents are available at:  
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/node/3740>

Chair announced that the next MSEG meetings will be organized in the premises of DG MARE and without interpretation as actual use of interpretation (12 interpreters) is fairly limited.

#### **Blue Week in Portugal**

Mr. João Fonseca Ribeiro, Director General for Maritime Policy Portugal presented the Blue Week which took place in June in Lisboa from 3 to 6 June. During the World Ocean Summit more than 350 Government Ministers, leaders, environmentalists and multilaterals from across the globe convened to discuss how to make the transition from a conventional ocean economy to a new blue economy. 20 short conferences and 26 side events were organized during the Blue Business Forum which gathered 110 participants from the institutional area and 65 exhibitors from the private sector. PT invited ministers of the sea from all over the world in a Ministerial Meeting.

#### **Union for Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy**

MARE presented a state of play of the union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy planned to be held on 17 November in Brussels. A revised version of the draft declaration has been circulated to the UfM Seniors Officials (through the European External Action Services) on 09 June 2015 for comments by 30 June 2015. This written consultation round is needed notably to clarify a reference to UNCLOS and the possible role to be played by the UfM Secretariat in the development of the Blue economy in the Mediterranean.

The official invitations for the UfM Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy will be circulated by mid-July 2015. Having in mind that the aim of the Ministerial is to boost blue jobs and investments in the Mediterranean region, and without prejudice to the countries' administrative organisation, the cross-sectorial feature of the Blue Economy needs to be reflected in the Ministerial set up of the UfM

Conference for instance it is advisable to involve Ministers responsible for Maritime Affairs and/or for Economy (Planning or Finance may be equivalent).

The Commission asked experts to liaise with their national co-ordinators in relation to the Union for the Mediterranean process (namely the Union for the Mediterranean Senior Officials) for more details, in particular for information concerning the drafting process of the draft Declaration and the national participation at the up-coming Ministerial Conference.

### **Annual Forum of the EUSBSR and status of Blue Growth in Baltic Sea**

O. Godal from DG REGIO reported on the revision of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) which has been endorsed in the annual forum in Latvia in June. EUSBSR was the first macro-regional strategy in the EU (set up in 2009). Eight member states participate with a population of 85 million people. The aim was and is better and more effective use of existing policies, funding, institutions and legislation. It had – and still has three objectives: "Save the Sea", "Connect the Region" and "Increase Prosperity. To each set of objectives there is tied a set of sub-objectives.

The overall aim of "Save the Sea" is to achieve good environmental status by 2020. The sub-objectives of the "Save the Sea" are:

- Clear water in the sea – address the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea (and its lakes)
- Rich and healthy wildlife – preserving the eco system of the Baltic Sea
- Clean and safe shipping – clean and safe shipping is becoming essential for the region

With the review COM wished to concentrate and focus better on the three objectives of the strategy - an extensive consultation with Member States concerned and stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region was carried out in 2014 and early 2015. It is – now – more streamlined and focused. It also includes a chapter on the role of regional organisations/networks

Result of the revision:

- More focus on a reduced number of areas (from 22 to 17)
- Updated work programme of all policy/horizontal area
- Clarification on the role and added-value of regional organisations
- Simplifications of procedure and clearer scrutiny of Flagship

The EU strategy has a very strong maritime dimension – one of the objectives is called "Save the Sea". Many of the policy areas and horizontal actions have a strong maritime focus like for example policy area Ship and Safe or Horizontal Action Spatial Planning with its focus on maritime spatial planning.

EUSBSR has a strong focus on environmental issues, but is laying the foundation or help establish a good framework for economic development based on maritime industry. The work under (launched) EUSBSR offers a good basis for further development of initiatives in areas such as shipping, surveillance and fisheries management.

PT underlined that this process should be applicable to other basins.

FR questioned whether the financing have been facilitated with this basin strategy. COM indicated that financial perspectives were already programmed when the EUSBSR was set up. Assistance mechanisms were defined to make the link between the two.

UK underlined the coincidence between the Baltic and the Atlantic strategies and is happy to share information on the implementation in the future.

## **Conclusions of EMD Piraeus**

MARE thanked GR for hosting the 2015 event and reported on the outcomes of the 2015 edition of EMD which was the most attended ever with more than 1300 participants coming to participate in the conference sessions and workshops and meet in the exhibition and networking areas.

This year's conference focused on the place of ports and coasts in the Blue economy.

In order to seize the potential of the Blue economy, Commissioner Karmenu Vella said, Europe needs to "protect, innovate, invest, train and reach out". Those aspects were discussed in various parts of the event. On 28 May, the Commission, representatives of the industry and the research community celebrated the launch of the Blue economy Business and Science Forum, which will seek to bridge the gap between theoretical research and applied innovation. In the conference's thematic session, panellists discussed the importance of providing the right skillset required by the innovative industry, the potential of working with nature and the various diversification and specialisation strategies for European ports.

In her concluding remarks, MARE Director General Lowri Evans described ports as "agents of change" which should take leadership in the transition to a sustainable oceans-based economy. With their potential to aggregate the different interests, funding and skills needs of various sectors, ports can be the link between policy, investment, innovation and training.

In particular, they should help define new concepts to solve the paradox of ever-growing levels of youth unemployment coinciding with a shortage of qualified technicians in maritime professions. The Commission will work on an enhanced dialogue between the industry, research and training institutions to find short-term solutions to this skills issue and unlock the jobs creation potential of the blue economy.

21 workshops were organized and the matchmaking event organized by EEN was highly successful linking up people and notably SMEs (300 sessions organized).

A delegation of China participated with the objective of developing contacts between SMEs and the Chinese economy.

GR thanked MARE for the good cooperation during the organization of the EMD.

AT requested that presentations could be made available on the site.

NL underlined the importance of defining new skills for the energy transition domain. PT underlined also the need to specifically address the sea economy and to keep qualification aligned on the basis of national structures. PT also stressed the need to link more closely educational capabilities to research centers.

FR expressed concerns about the invitation of a Chinese delegation in a European event and asked clarification on the positioning of the EMD versus other international events. MARE answered that an international perspective does bring an added value to this European event.

SP stressed that qualifications are regulated and should be updated in a formal context and was reassured that transparency will be ensured within the European Qualifications Framework.

### **Norwegian new maritime strategy**

G.Pettersen, Deputy Director Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries reported on the 1st Norwegian maritime strategy launched in May. She presented i) the challenges: decrease of number of vessels registered with a Norwegian flag, drop of oil prices, how to get to a greener shipping; ii) the seven areas defined for a sustainable and valuable growth. She insisted on the need to strengthen cooperation, because we grow more by learning from each other. Notably there is a need for cooperation to ensure the transition from an oil to a wind technology.

CY, MT, HR, SP and PL reminded that they also have a maritime policy.

PT expressed concerns about the competitiveness of the European fleet and reminded that there is a EU requirement that 60% of the fleet should be under European flags ; PT stressed that there is a need to implement or revigorate this requirement by creating attractiveness.

The theme of the flag and shipping industry issues raised many comments and MARE will consider having a dedicated point on a next agenda.

### **Analysis of the maritime dimension of the Investment Plan for Europe – the blue economy in the future implementation of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)**

MARE reported on an analysis of the maritime dimension of the Investment Plan for Europe, whose objective is to boost jobs and growth, in close partnership with the European Investment Bank (EIB). The European Fund for Strategic Investments should unlock additional investment of at least EUR 315bn over the next three years. This will especially support strategic investments, such as in broadband and energy networks, as well as smaller companies with fewer than 3000 employees. The proposal also sets up a European Investment Advisory Hub to help with project identification, preparation and development across the Union. Finally, a European Investment Project Pipeline will improve investors' knowledge of existing and future projects. Investment Plan for Europe aims to revive investment in strategic projects around Europe to ensure that money reaches the real economy.

The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) aims to overcome the current market failure. EFSI will i) Address market gaps by taking on some of the risk, we can help increase promoters' appetite to invest. The EIB will provide loans and will in turn be covered by the EU budget guarantee; ii) Mobilise private investment and other relevant public funding. As there is abundant liquidity in the market, sound projects will be able to attract funding from private investors.

19% of the projects, out of 2500, and a 22% of the total investment of €1.300bn in the lists submitted end 2014 to "Investment Task Force", were identified as having a direct or indirect impact on the blue economy. FR inquired how sea basin strategies, and in particular the maritime strategy for the Atlantic are linked with the Investment Plan for Europe. MARE reassured that this plan to boost jobs and growth is integrated at all levels in COM and indicated that MS could also link, at the corresponding levels (national and regional administrations) the implementation of EFSI with the programming and implementation of EU funds.

PT asked how EFSI supported financing will work with existing funds (e.g. structural funds) and financial instruments: are they compatible? Could a project be financed with EFSI that did not receive funding from structural funds? MARE acknowledged that this was a very relevant issue, which is being discussed internally within the Commission. MARE informed participants that DG REGIO is preparing a guidance document that will address the issue of compatibility of structural funds and of EFSI.

MARE insisted on the importance of creating synergies and conditions for involvement of both public and private sectors. Thematics by basins will be taken into account, as it has been done for the structural programming.

### **Ocean governance – State of play**

MARE reported on the consultation on international Ocean governance. MARE reminded the process of the open consultation with no predetermined issues which has been launched 4 June with an online survey, and will conclude 15 September. MARE announced a listening tour from Commissioner Vella with high level events and bilateral contacts. Experts are kindly requested to contribute to the consultation, to provide information and to pass the information on to stakeholders.

CY, NL and PT asked for clarification and inquired about the next steps, the kind of policy envisaged and the link with the international fora in order for Europe to be an active player on the international Scene. MARE answered that the aim of the consultation and the listening tour are to gather information and foster the political objectives, there is no fixed timeline yet nor fixed political objectives. MARE reassured that its services work in cooperation with international stakeholders such as the Global Ocean Commission and internally with all commission relevant services, in order to ensure a coherent process.

### **Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI Oceans)**

K. Angel-Hansen, director of JPI Oceans presented the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) and detailed how JPI can add value in the European Research Area (ERA) landscape and gave interesting examples: deep sea mining, infrastructure in the North Sea, plastic waste in the marine environment, scientific water inter calibration exercise.

Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI Oceans) is a coordinating and integrating platform, open to all EU Member States and Associated Countries. Joint programming is a concept introduced by the European Commission in July 2008 and is one of the initiatives aimed at implementing the European Research Area (ERA). The concept intends to tackle the challenges that cannot be solved solely at national level and allows Member States and Associated Countries to participate in those joint programming initiatives where it seems useful for them.

The main objective is to increase the value of relevant national and EU R&D and infrastructure investments through a combined effort of jointly planning, implementing and evaluating national research programmes. Member States and Associated Countries are expected to coordinate national research activities in the broadest sense. The pooling of resources and the development of common research and innovation agendas serve as a basis for long-term cooperation through which complementarities and synergies are exploited in order to tackle grand societal challenges.

### **Interim results for the size of the blue economy – Call for participation in a follow-up meeting in September**

MARE has developed a method for calculating the size of the maritime economy based on numbers that are available at an EU level. An update of results for EU Members States was presented. A meeting of specialists will be held in autumn to start a process for enriching and improving the method. A note will be sent to the Permanent Representatives and MSEG asking for the nomination of experts.

PT and IR expressed interest to contribute to the process. NL raised the difficulty of identifying indirect costs, MARE reassured that this will be one of the major themes for discussion.

These can be compared with national estimates. NO pointed out the difficulty linked to double counting.

UK asked clarifications on the process and the participants; whether it will be primarily those knowledgeable about maritime policy or representatives from statistical offices. MARE said that it will be up to member states to decide who to send. An agenda with details of the process will be sent to the group beforehand. Eurostat will participate.

NL pointed out the need to include some indications of the importance of the sea – not only the bare numbers. MARE said, again, suggestions would be welcome.

### **Report from the MSEsG on Maritime Security and Surveillance**

MARE reported on the state of play of the integration of maritime surveillance and actions planned during the LUX presidency. The minutes of the 15th meeting of the Commission's Member State Expert Sub-Group on the integration of maritime surveillance are available for download on the Maritime Forum.

### **Study on skills requirements for the marine economy to 2020 published in Ireland in April 2015**

Mrs Marcella Smith, PR Ireland, reported on a Maritime skills study published in April 2015. It provides an analysis of skills in different sectors:

- See food sector: aquaculture is main potential growth area to 2020 , main skill issue is an aging workforce
- Maritime transport: lack of awareness among school leavers of options for “maritime” careers
- Energy: Offshore Oil & Gas require 3rd / 4th level degrees, while there are also employment opportunities in Marine Renewables mostly for graduates
- Maritime Tourism: Ireland has had a 200% increase of cruise liners in the last decade
- Maritime Security and Surveillance: emerging sector where new technology companies with high tech products & software solutions have the capacity to grow rapidly.

Recommendations of the report:

- Establish a national Marine Discover Programme modelled on the SFI Discover Programme and building on existing marine programmes to raise awareness of careers in the Marine Economy.
- Ongoing Monitoring of Skills Needs as Trigger Points for growth are reached, e.g. aquaculture licensing, ISSC, exploration drilling
- Marine Economy Data collection update
- Develop a mentoring programme for the seafood sector to pass on experience to next generation:
- Develop a data-collection and sampling course for fishermen:
- Provide IT training for those living in coastal community working in the Marine economy