



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES
MARITIME POLICY AND BLUE ECONOMY

Brussels,

**25TH MEETING OF THE MEMBER STATES EXPERTS GROUP ON MARITIME POLICY -
16 FEBRUARY 2017**

MEETING REPORT

List of participants/countries in attendance: HR-BG-IT-ES-DK-AU-PL-EE-PT-FR-UK-NL-MLT-IE (Annex 1)

1. EMFF – DELEGATED ACT

The draft delegated act was circulated to the EMFF Committee of 28/02.

The delegated act will mean that the total EMFF direct management funds are broken down as follows:

1. Collection, management and dissemination of scientific advice under the CFP: 11 %
2. Specific control and enforcement measures under the CFP: 11 %
3. Voluntary contributions to international organisations: 13 %
4. Advisory Councils and communication activities under the CFP and the IMP: 7 %
5. Market intelligence, including the establishment of electronic markets: 6 %
6. IMP: 52% This percentage subdivides as follows in the new Annex III:
 - Development and implementation of an integrated governance of maritime and coastal affairs: 6 %
 - Development of cross-sectorial initiatives: 24 %
 - Support for sustainable economic growth, employment, innovation and new technologies: 17 %
 - Promotion of the protection of the marine environment: 5 %

This means that blue growth (Support for sustainable economic growth, employment, innovation and new technologies) represents 17% of total EMFF, and 32.7% of the IMP budget (up from 4% before the Delegated Act)

As a result, "over the period 2017-2020, Maritime Policy will focus on fostering innovation and demonstration in the blue economy and thereby contributing to jobs and growth in Europe's coastal areas. The actions will target cross-cutting themes such as blue careers or business innovation projects, or target specific sectors (such as ocean energy, blue biotechnology, etc.) as well as overcoming bottlenecks and challenges to their growth."

This will already lead to a revision of WP2017 later this year, by means of which over 6 million will be moved from procurement contracts in the marine knowledge field and from support to MSP actions, to increase grants for demonstration projects in the blue economy, to award grants to actions to diversify the economic activities of fisheries community groups in the western Mediterranean, for actions to clean up marine litter and to set up an assistance mechanism for the Atlantic Strategy and Action Plan. The blue economy grants will define a number of thematic priorities, combining these with a sea-basin focus where this could be relevant.

2. MARE REORGANISATION

Chair presented the new organization of DG MARE in place since 1st January. A copy of the new organigram is in annex.

The mission statements of new Directorate A and its units are the following:

Directorate A: Maritime Policy and Blue Economy

Directorate A drives forward maritime policy. It aims to support and stimulate the creation of jobs, growth and investment to unlock the economic potential of the sea. The Directorate also provides DG MARE with analyses focusing on economic and social aspects of maritime affairs and fisheries management and has a leading role in the work on the Better Regulation Agenda, including on public consultations and Impact Assessments.

Unit A1: Maritime Innovation, Marine Knowledge and Investment

Unit A1 promotes the blue economy. It aims to create a better understanding of the ocean resources and advocate their sustainable use. The Unit leads on promoting innovative and emerging technologies and ensuring broad dissemination of marine knowledge and research. The Unit fosters innovation and provides policy input to Horizon 2020 and to smart specialisation strategies. It is also in the lead for providing policy input to the European Fund for Strategic Investments and promotes use of EFSI in the maritime economy.

Unit A2: Blue Economy Sectors, Aquaculture and Maritime Spatial Planning

Unit A2 supports the Commission's jobs and growth agenda by focusing on the economic potential of key sectors of the maritime economy by contributing to the sustainable competitiveness of their industry. The Unit develops and supports projects and initiatives that contribute to building a strong and resilient maritime industry and unlock new sources of growth. In addition, the Unit leads on Maritime Spatial Planning and the transposition and implementation of the MSP Directive by all Member States by 2021.

Unit A3: Sea basin strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security

Unit A3 drives forward the maritime policy of the EU by fostering dialogue and cooperation on maritime issues and by developing initiatives in the European sea basins to help coastal communities and regions diversify and expand their economies. It also coordinates the implementation of the EU Maritime Security Strategy, including by further integrating maritime surveillance activities in the EU and by promoting cooperation between authorities carrying out coastguard functions

Unit A4: Economic Analysis, Markets and Impact Assessment

Unit A4 provides DG MARE with analyses and advice focusing on economic and social aspects of the maritime economy, including fisheries. The unit coordinates the Better Regulation Agenda and provides support to the lead units responsible for the preparation of Impact Assessments and stakeholder consultations for new legislative initiatives. The unit implements and manages the Common Market Organisation to support the competitiveness and sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and to foster market intelligence.

3. STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT ON BLUE GROWTH

A Staff Working Document on Blue Growth (BG) is in inter-service consultation and will be published before the Informal Ministerial meeting on 20 April in Malta. It will be used to feed into a Ministerial Declaration to be endorsed on this occasion and into the Council Conclusions to be adopted at the end of the Maltese Presidency.

The document builds on the work done since the 2012 BG Communication with the five focus areas and the work from EU Presidencies to stimulating the maritime economy. The document questions how we make BG fit for future challenges.

It aims to trigger reactions from MS and stakeholders directly involved in maritime economy, and to have their views on how to move forward for the future.

For example, how the partnering between regions or industries can be improved? Is it still relevant to push 5 sectors in particular? Should we look at other sectors? How should we link investment better to have results on the ground? Sustainability is a huge challenge, what are the best models and best practices?

NL – supported by PT - insisted on the importance of figures / material explaining the trends to feed a narrative in order to prepare the ministerial discussion in Malta.

COM answered that economic data available on maritime economy notably data from BG studies have been aggregated to produce a state of play of maritime economy. It also asked MS to provide additional data.

FR expressed its interest for the BG document and underlined the on-going work on the potential and future of nautical tourism and notably the development of marinas, the challenges of the circular economy and the recycling of crafts.

4. MT PRESIDENCY, INFORMAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON BLUE GROWTH

MT presented the main lines of the conference, which will be held in Malta on 20 April. Debates will be structured around 4 topics: Blue Growth, Ocean governance, Innovation and nautical tourism.

NL is looking forward to interesting talks in Malta, notably for international and sustainable aspects of the maritime economy, and called for contributions, ideas, success stories.

5. MARINE RESEARCH

DG RTD (S.Gruber from the marine resources Unit) provided a short update on the current drafting process for proposing topics for calls in the Work Programme of Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 2 [food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine and maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy].

She explained that the process is first of all based on a large public consultation, assisted by advisory groups, the SCAR Committee as well as the Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 2 Programme Committee.

The focus in this last H2020 Programming Cycle will be on the development of resilient and sustainable value chains for food and other bio-based systems, mitigating and adapting to the risks of climate change, demonstrating and sustainably exploiting the potentials of the seas, and fostering innovation in rural, coastal and urban areas, linking territories with a broad societal engagement.

These investments should pave the way to the creation of new markets and jobs in rural, urban, coastal and offshore areas. They should create innovation opportunities for a new revolution in the food and bio-based industries, driven by the merging and advancement of digital, physical, and biological technologies. They should allow a shift towards circular economies, making the best use of natural and biological resources and they should develop innovative, sustainable, environment- and climate-friendly flagship solutions on land and at sea, which will help the EU maintain its global leadership to enable new discoveries and inventions that benefit society.

The Leitmotiv for the part dedicated to the Bioeconomy on land and sea will be:

Harvesting the oceans opportunities, which continues what was initiated in previous H2020 Societal Challenge 2 work Programmes, with the slogans respectively for 2014-15: *unlocking the oceans opportunities*, and for 2016-17 *demonstrating the oceans opportunities*.

Calls are intended to contribute to the blue Bioeconomy by:

1. Improving our integrated knowledge about the impact of climate change on marine ecosystems and biological resources to better manage their response capacities and resilience.
2. Preserving and sustainably exploiting marine and coastal ecosystems and biological resources to deliver improved nutrition and health.
3. De-risking major investments and boosting innovations on land and at sea to produce new bio-based value chains and open up new markets.
4. Developing smart and connected territories between land and sea.
5. Strengthening the international research and innovation cooperation around seas and oceans to promote a globally sustainable blue economy.

S.Gruber also invited experts to liaise as much as possible with their colleagues working in the Ministries following specifically Horizon 2020, so as to ensure flow of information and complementarity of actions and available funding streams.

6. INVESTMENT IN BLUE ECONOMY SECTORS

Linked with the priority at EU level on investment funds, MARE is looking how to translate efforts into the blue economy with reference to the calls launched last year to promote innovation and encouraging sustainable development. MARE performs a stocktaking exercise and needs assessment. To this end, MS will be asked to inform the Commission of their experience, to identify business opportunities as well as bottlenecks. Questions to be looked at

include funding under EFSI or funding for sectors such as aquaculture or ocean energy; they will relate to relations with banks, evaluation of financial risks, confidence in technology, technologies related to marine litter, shipping, grids for renewable energies and will look for experience at MS level. In particular, the mix of investment platforms and how the different type of investments should be interlinked (private and public funds, funds at regional level sea basin) will be investigated.

The UK supported the Commission's stocktaking exercise.

NL underlined the bottleneck linked to technology proven investments.

PT underlined the need for official information to give confidence to investors.

7. OCEAN ENERGY

Following the 2014 Commission Communication on Blue Energy, which recognised the immense potential of harnessing the power of our seas and oceans, the Commission created the Ocean Energy Forum that gathered European industry, research communities, financiers and public authorities to explore ways to accelerate the development of this sector.

In November 2016 this Forum delivered the Ocean Energy strategic roadmap: “Building Ocean Energy for Europe”. Among its recommendations are adopting EU-wide standards for testing devices and components, the need to establish investment support schemes and an insurance fund to address uncertainties inherent in demonstration and pre-commercial phases of development. The roadmap also calls for guidance and cooperation to de-risk environmental consenting. It invites the Commission, Member States and industry to take these recommendations on board.

The Commission is committed to exploring the recommendations made in this roadmap together with Member States, to seek cooperation and to continue to support the ocean energy sector as the sector is moving from research and development stage into the deployment of pilot projects and pilot farms.

In that context, Commissioners CAÑETE and VELLA will present and discuss the strategic roadmap and the way forward with EU Energy Ministers during the Energy Council on 27 February. Member States are encouraged to actively contribute to the debate by referring to their own initiatives to promote ocean energy.

DG MARE is working with other Commission services to help channeling support to Ocean energy development from various EU funding instruments.

During the discussion, UK, PT and NL intervened in support of the Commission's activities and of the Ocean Energy Roadmap. UK underlined the importance of interconnected energy networks. NL wondered whether there was an overview of all ocean energy projects in the EU. Such an overview is currently under preparation by the Commission's Joint Research Center (JRC - Ocean Energy Status Report 2016 Edition: Technology, market and economic aspects of ocean energy in Europe). DG MARE will share the report once it is published. Member States are encouraged to share with the Commission information on existing or ongoing national or regional strategies and projects in this field.

8. OCEAN GOVERNANCE

The joint ocean governance communication was adopted in November last year. This is a landmark initiative for the Commission and the EEAS.

The objective of this joint communication is to build on the EU and Member States' expertise in dealing with the seas; such as the EU maritime policy, the reformed common fisheries policies, the fight against IUU fishing, environmental policies; regional strategies, the EU maritime security strategy, amongst others - to promote healthy, clean, secure, safe and the sustainable development of the oceans at the international level.

The EU and its Member States have sound experience and well-deserved good reputation in leading international process aiming at positive change towards reducing pressures to our planet. Three priority areas have been identified in the joint communication: first, improving the international ocean governance framework; second, reducing pressures on the oceans and creating the conditions for a sustainable blue economy; and third strengthening international ocean research and data.

Member States are currently discussing Council Conclusions on ocean governance in the Friends of the Presidency Group in the Council. Member States are advanced on the draft text.

On the European Parliament front, the responsible Committee for the own-initiative report is the Committee for Environment (ENVI). The appointed rapporteur is Mr Jose Faria (Portuguese/EPP group). The Committee for Transport (TRAN) is also requesting a shared-competence for this report. As for the committees for opinion, the Committees for Development (DEVE), International Trade (INTA) and Fisheries (PECH) will be part of the process.

Our Ocean conference 2017, which will take place in Valletta, Malta on 5 and 6 October, will solicit tangible and measurable commitments and actions to protect our oceans.

9. MARITIME SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE

■ EU inter agency cooperation

The EU Border and Coastguard package adopted in September 2016 includes among others a Joint mandate for three EU agencies to cooperate on coastguard functions tasks. A pilot project is running since last summer. The first results are good and show a Good collaboration between Frontex, AMSA, EFCA and national authorities.

The conclusions of the Pilot project will be presented at the conference on 2 June in Lisboa.

■ EUMSS action plan

This multi-sectorial strategy was adopted by the Council in December 2014 and is now in implementation process. A comprehensive second implementation report will be presented to the FOP in June. The national reports were due by 15 February and included a new format to frame the answers. The rolling action plan will be subject of a review in the June FOP meeting.

██████████ CISE stakeholders' survey

A dedicated survey put in place to identify and prioritise - together with MS authorities - a number of information services that could be enabled by CISE indicated the following provisional results:

- Continuous support of MS authorities concerning CISE initiative
- A number of 12 information services have been identified and prioritised for the future development of CISE
- Obvious interest in services implementation - MS authorities are interested to participate in future projects to implement these services
- Necessity and willingness to involve the EU agencies in the CISE services and overall implementation

██████████ EUCISE 2020 General state of play

The FP7 project, comprising 30 authorities from 16 countries, has entered the phase 2 as from January 2016. This phase seeks to develop, together with an industry consortium, the EUCISE2020 testing and validation platform.

Phase 1 - specifications development

Phase 3 - integration test and validation is planned to start in November 2017

██████████ National IT interoperability Projects

General objective of the MARE calls for proposals: Enhance the information exchange across sectors and borders by supporting the improvement of IT interoperability between national authorities.

10 ongoing national projects initiated on 2014 and 2015 calls. Next call for proposals, built to further develop the results of the survey (CISE information services), would be issued soon.

Authorities are encouraged to apply as a consortium (grouping more than 3 sectors) and to cooperate with the EU maritime agencies. MS are encouraged to apply with projects demonstrating operational added value of the interoperability.

A dedicated MSEGs meeting is envisaged to be organized until the end of the first semester 2017 in order to further detail and discuss the ongoing maritime security and surveillance developments.

10. SEA-BASIN STRATEGIES AND COOPERATION

██████████ Western Mediterranean Initiative

The preparatory works with the concerned countries for an initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean have progressed significantly and included the following:

1) assessment of feasibility and added value (mapping of existing initiatives, identification of gaps and areas of added value) and

2) identification of main goals/priorities and actions/projects;

3) main findings have been discussed and validated at the Stakeholders conference on 2 February 2017 in Barcelona.

A light governance structure is under discussion, with an assistance mechanism which could be build up on the experience of the Atlantic.

COM aims to adopt a communication on this initiative in April accompanied by a staff working document describing more in detail actions and priorities, and which is conceived as a rolling document deemed for prioritization and updating by the countries.

A Ministerial meeting (with concerned countries) could be hold back to back to the UfM stakeholder conference on the BE.

Black Sea - IMP facility

To achieve coherence and better coordination among key sectors of the blue economies of the Black Sea countries, the European Commission seeks dialogue with the stakeholder community (public and private), builds up stakeholders' capacities and supports cooperation actions on marine and maritime issues. To engage the stakeholder community and raise awareness about the benefit of integration in the maritime domain, high-level stakeholder conferences are organized annually. In addition, the Commission maintains bilateral dialogue with countries, notably Turkey, in order to better understand their needs and aspirations, and devise tailor-made actions. The ultimate objective is to foster a common vision for the blue economy development (incl. on marine research) and to support a vibrant stakeholder community with concrete actions, as well as make best use of the existing funding instruments.

To advance the above objectives, the Commission will launch a dedicated cooperation project (via public tender), called Facility for blue economy development in the Black Sea. The Facility, worth 1 million euro, will be launched by September 2017 and will stimulate maritime integration at national level and help formulate, together with the business, joint cross-border projects, incl. the identification of maritime development priorities by mid-2018 (incl. for the marine research domain), which will lay the foundation of the common maritime agenda. The Facility will run over 2 years.

The next high-level Stakeholder conference will be held in Batumi, Georgia, on 14-15 September.

Projects: From 6 calls for proposals (Blue calls) launched in 2016 by DG MARE, 3 projects from the Black Sea were awarded in the domains of underwater maritime heritage, innovative maritime partnerships and maritime clusters.

NL: Inquired about the preparations of the 2018 EMD to be held in Burgas, Bulgaria.

COM: The agenda is under discussion. The mayor of Burgas will be in Poole in May.

EUSAIR

The meeting of the governing board (taking place twice a year) of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (8 countries: 4 MS + 4 non-MS) follows up on the

implementation of the strategy. The Second Annual Forum, gathering ministers, stakeholders and local and national authorities, will take place on 11 and 12 May in Ioannina, Greece. The main focus will be on Blue Growth.

There is a general consensus amongst Member States that macro regional strategies (including the Alpine, Baltic, Atlantic and Danube strategies) are a powerful tool in implementing the EU's Cohesion Policy, giving a voice to EU citizens and communities on a macro-regional level. For DG MARE there is a strong interest and added value particularly in the EUSAIR and Baltic Sea Strategy, in terms of promoting maritime policy and developing the Blue Economy.

The Commission will, as of 1 June 2017, step back from co-presiding the EUSAIR, giving full responsibility to the countries holding the rotating presidency on an annual basis.

Atlantic strategy – Action plan, mid-term review

The Commission recalled that the Atlantic strategy has been adopted in 2011, while the Atlantic Action Plan agreed in 2013. The governance structure of the Strategy is currently chaired by the UK (until the end of 2017).

The Atlantic Action Plan envisaged a Mid-term review of its implementation to be prepared by the Commission by the end of 2017, drawing lessons learned (e.g. best practices and challenges) and assessing the progress made. The Commission informed that it plans to prepare a Staff Working Document, which will have a factual nature and step on an independent evaluation of a sample of completed projects (since 2014), which will be carried out by an external contractor. The Review will offer the evidence and the base for further discussion on the possible revamp of the Atlantic Action Plan. In parallel a survey/ public consultation is planned to be launched at the EMD 2017 and the group will be informed in a next meeting.

The Commission informed that the ongoing Atlantic Assistance Mechanism is mapping projects in the Atlantic in line with the priorities of the Atlantic Action Plan, underlining the fact that so far a database with over 300 projects has been created.

Projects: The Commission informed about the results of the 3 calls for proposals ("blue careers", "blue labs", "blue technologies") launched in 2016 and worth EUR 7,5 million, highlighting the fact that 7 out of 13 awarded projects include partners from the Atlantic region.

FR: Stressed the need to critically assess the projects identified by the Atlantic Assistance Mechanism in order to have a clear and objective picture of the effectiveness of the Atlantic Action Plan to date.

COM: Ensured France that such assessment has started and further discussion within the governance structure of the Atlantic strategy will be sought.

EUSBSR - Update on the Baltic initiative

DG MARE is organizing a series of four workshops in the context of the implementation of the Blue Growth Agenda for the Baltic Sea Region mobilising stakeholders around a shared understanding of industry challenges and opportunities and related joint investment pipelines.

Focus will initially be on mix of four high-potential and emerging areas (Environmental & monitoring technology, Shipping, Blue bio economy, Tourism & maritime experience industry). Their selection does not mean that others are considered less important.

Scoping papers identifying industry opportunities and challenges are being developed based on desk research, a survey and targeted interviews, and will be discussed in the four participatory workshops. The outcomes of these workshops will feed into four transformation maps which will outline possible actions, commitments, possible investments streams, indicate the ownership of the respective action fields and the implementation strategy for the Baltic Blue Growth Agenda. This will also help DG MARE to shape its policy actions and future support actions and programmes to meet the needs and opportunities identified by stakeholders.

■ Outmost regions

The Commission informed about the ongoing study to assess the blue growth potential of the Outermost regions. The results are expected by the end of March and could be discussed at the [Fourth annual Outermost Regions Forum](#)¹ to be held in Brussels on 30-31 March 2017.

NL questioned the methodology and expressed criticism about the lack of transparency when it comes to this study, stressing that the MSEG was not informed about the launching of the study at the first place.

FR asked that it should be clearly mentioned that the conclusions of the study do not bind COM nor MS.

COM took note of these remarks and answered that the objectives of the study (8-month duration) is to gather information about the current state of play of the blue economies in the Outermost regions, to facilitate the exchange of good practices, while the conclusions are material for discussion and do not bind COM nor the MS.

Note: After verifying the Minutes from previous MSEG meetings, the Commission recalls that the MSEG was informed about the study at the last meeting, 13.10.2016. Moreover, the Member States were informed about the study and its evolutions in the context of the dedicated Working group for the Outermost regions ("Groupe de Travail Régions Ultrapériphériques – RUP") on 24.11.2016 organised by the Commission (DG REGIO) and which brings together representatives from the Member States concerned (ES, FR, PT) and from the Outermost Regions.

Next meeting of the MSEG to take place in the second half of 2017.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/conferences/rup2017/