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**Member States Expert Group on Maritime Policy - 13/10/2016, Brussels**

**COM speakers, DG MARE:**

Haitze Siemers (Head of Unit E1 – Maritime Policy Baltic and North Sea),

Veronika Veits (Head of Unit B1 – International Affairs, Law of the sea and Regional Organisations), Juan Ronco (Policy Officer C1 – Maritime Policy, Atlantic, outermost regions and Artic),

Marco Nobile (Policy Officer D1 – Maritime Policy Mediterranean and Black Sea),

John Brincat (International Relations Officer B1),

Luca Marangoni (Policy Officer D1),

Xavier Guillou (Policy Officer C1),

Alessia Clocchiatti (Policy Officer C1)

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| **1.** | **Ocean Governance:**  COM (H. Siemers) opened the Member States Expert Group on Maritime Policy (MSEG) meeting. He referred to the latest updates on Ocean Governance and listed the main ideas and priorities. The initiative would be ready for discussion under the Slovak/Maltese  ***- High level UN Conference, Sustainable Development Goals - 14 (External speaker - Tomas Brolin, Ida Björklund )***  As introduction SE presented the Sustainable Development Goals agreed in the framework of Agenda 2030 last year, including a special focus on the Goal 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (Life below water)”.  SE recalled UNGA resolution 70/226 of December 2015 based on a joint proposal by SE and Fiji to convene a UN conference to support the implementation of SDG 14. This conference will take place from 5 to 9 June 2017 in New York. Modalities for the conference were recently adopted by UNGA Resolution 70/303. Accordingly, the Conference will comprise 8 plenary meetings and 7 partnership dialogues and a special event commemorating World Ocean Day on 8 June. The overall aim is to achieve a good overview on where the world stands with SDG 14 implementation. Broad participation from member states, business, civil society and the knowledge community is expected.  Moreover, the intention is to adopt a politically negotiated declaration to support the implementation of SDG 14.  For more information about the conference you can contact Daniel Pettersson, [daniel.pettersson@gov.se](mailto:daniel.pettersson@gov.se)  **Q&A**  NL asked whether there would be a common EU position on the political declaration.  SE was not sure whether such consultation was planned since the Foreign Affairs ministry was in charge of the preparation and forwarded the question to the Commission asking whether coordination was desirable.  COM replied that it would be important to ensure the coordination for the preparation of such a declaration amongst Member States and the Commission. COM stressed the importance of ensuring consistency of the content of this declaration with position taken by the EU and its Member States on Agenda 2030, and in particular the implementation of the SDG 14. In this context the Commission is currently preparing its policy response to Agenda 2030 from the angle of both, its internal and external implementation.  ***- Our Ocean Conference 2017***  COM (V. Veits) recalled the history of the Our Ocean Conference which was created under the aegis of US Secretary of State John Kerry, in 2014 and has seen up to now 3 editions. (US 2014, Chile 2015, US 2016).  The Objective of Our Ocean is raising awareness of the need to protect the oceans at the highest political level, triggering initiatives and commitments on four overarching themes with a focus on protection: Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), marine pollution, sustainable fisheries, Illegal, Unreported and Unregular Fishing, climate and ocean changes; this initiative is underpinned by marine research and capacity building for developing countries; and tracking earlier commitments on their delivery.  In 2016 an impressive amount of close to 130 commitments (40 new MPAs, 1 bn USD in financial pledges and plastic bag bans in five countries) could be secured. Moreover, 40 projects worth 82 mio USD were launched.  Representatives from European Commission were present at the last conferences. Commissioner Vella participated at the 2015 and 2016 conferences, and nine European Member States also were present at the 2016 edition of the event.  In Chile in 2015, Commissioner Karmenu Vella announced that the 2017 event would be hosted by the EU. This was confirmed at OOC2016: it will take place in Malta 5-6 October 2017, and will also see a strong involvement by EEAS.  The event will follow the model of high level participation, announcements and tracking; however with a different geographical focus, (Mediterranean Sea Basin, Indian and Atlantic Ocean), possibly widening themes to include food security and blue economy. Moreover, projects such as a school awareness raising campaign and beach clean-ups and social events will be organised.  Member States will have a chance to demonstrate that they can stand united keeping the oceans clean, healthy ad safe. The Commission hopes that high level participation will be ensured, as well commitments by governments, stakeholders from industry, NGO and academia will be provided.  The next steps include a hand over meeting with the US at the end of October 2016. Furthermore, the Commission services are preparing in more detail the concept and the roadmap for the event. The intention is to soon involve Member States (e.g. letter by Commissioner Vella) and to work bilaterally with them in the uprun to the event to identify involvement. It was also suggested to make the preparation of the OOC 2017 a regular point at the IMP expert meeting.  **Q&A**  IE asked how the MS can feed into this process and contribute to OOC 2017.  COM responded that DG MARE will prepare a concept, and involve the Member States, bilaterally and also via the MS expert group on Maritime Policy. COM announced the future HoU Andreas Papaconstantinou and Ramon van Barneveld as contacts. COM expressed also interest in commitments for OOC 2017 that could result eg from the Atlantic Strategy.  ***- Developing of International Legally Binding Instrument under the United Nations on the Law of the Sea – UNCLOS – on the Conservation and Sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of ABNJ***  COM (J. Brincat) reported on the state of play regarding the first two sessions of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) established by the UN General as assembly in 2015 to make recommendation of the elements of a draft text in an International legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine ABNJs took place from over two weeks in March/April and August/September earlier this year at the UN Headquarters in New York.  While it was not possible to agree on most issues in any great detail, discussions were constructive and consequently it was possible to delve deeper into the substance of the elements of "the package" from Resolution 69/292. However, it became clear that the traditional divide between the sceptics and non-sceptics, as regards the desirability of a new agreement, has become much more blurred with different groups of States supporting similar positions on different issues. The camp of the hard-core sceptics continues to consist of mainly two outspoken States, the Russian Federation and Iceland although Norway and to a lesser extent US expressed some serious concerns with different aspects of the package. With regard to the different parts of the package, on Marine Genetic Resources (MGRs), the previous polarisation continued with the developing countries stressing, albeit less stridently, that MGRs should be considered as Common Heritage of Mankind while the US and others stressing that their use should be considered as one of the High Seas freedoms. While possible convergence could be achieved with regard to some general concepts particularly with regard to other parts of the package i.e. area-based management tools, environmental impact assessments and capacity building, it was nearly impossible for delegations to reach agreement on the more specific details and consequently, many different issues remained open and will need to be tackled at the next session of the PrepCom.  The cross-cutting WG, held on the last days of the Preparatory Committee, dealt with a large number of horizontal issues including guiding principles and approaches, the scope of the new treaty, definitions, the relationship of this agreement with UNCLOS and other instruments, institutional agreements and final clauses.  As next steps, delegations were invited to make submissions on any issue which would be included on a rolling list of issues. By late January/early February 2017, the Chair would circulate a non-paper based on the delegations' positions at the Preparatory Committee as well as on submissions received by 5 December 2016. In order to prepare for the third session of the Preparatory Committee, a procedural preparatory meeting will be held at UN Headquarters in late January/early February 2017 to discuss its provisional agenda and work programme.  **Q&A**  NL suggested that the timeline of preparation and adoption of the new instrument should be related to that of the Agenda 2030 and the implementation of the SDGs.  COM responded that since the issues being discussed were very technical and contentious, it was expected that discussions would take long, similarly to those for UNCLOS which took about a decade to be negotiated. He also pointed out that the new instrument would need to be relevant much further beyond 2030, and consequently, 2030 might be a too ambitious goal. Nevertheless, the new agreement aims at implementing further part XII of UNCLOS based on new scientific knowledge and incorporating the ecosystem approach and precautionary principle.  Action Points:  - Ensure high level participation and announcements by the Member States at the  Our Ocean Conference 2017, Malta |

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| **2.** | **Sea Basins**  ***- Study on realising the Blue Growth potential of the Outermost Regions***  COM (R. Zapatero) informed the Group of the state of play on the study, which had also been presented to the "Groupe de Travail – Régions Ultrapériphériques".  The Study was launched in July 2016 with the aim of finding opportunities in terms of sustainable Blue Growth for ORs, taking into account the status of their blue economies and their specific assets and challenges.  The Study will, inter alia, produce a "state of play" of assets and potentialities, and look at the obstacles and drivers for Blue Growth of each region and at sea-basin level. Finally the study will propose, for consideration, measures and initiatives to help the regions to develop the aforementioned potential, also in the context of their neighbourhood links, for example with the so called Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs).  The administrative management of the Study is done by EASME. The contractor carrying the study is a consortium, led by COGEA, that was selected in the context of a DG MARE's framework contract for studies.  The contractor will provide the following key deliverables:  • Draft Interim Report: mid October 2016  • Final Report: late February 2017 / early March 2017.  As soon as these deliverables are available Member States will be informed.  **Q&A**  FR questioned whether the MSEG IMP could have access to the documents to be produced by the consultants. She also asked whether the study was carried out in the perspective of launching a fully-fledged "sea-basin" maritime strategy for Outermost Regions.  COM Replied:  - On access to reports produced by the consultant: concerning the "Interim Report" COM underlined that this is not an official report, nevertheless the contents of it could be presented to the Group. The MSEG IMP will be duly informed about the arrangements with the consultant to share the contents of this Interim Report.  - On the consideration and follow-up that DG MARE will give to the Study: currently DG MARE's management or Commissioner Vella have not given indications as to what the follow-up to study will be. COM added Study could be part of a broader exercise that would consist in revisiting the EU's "Blue Growth" agenda.  COM mentioned the Atlantic Strategy as a good opportunity to interact with the third countries, and an important point to Member States to consider.  Conclusions were made under the reflection on the priorities for the Outermost Regions. The European Commission will focus on the Outermost regions because is a topic that has a huge need to be studied, especially regarding to Maritime Spatial Planning.  ***- The Union for the Mediterranean UFM, Latest developments***  COM (L. Marangoni) presented the latest developments in the implementation of the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration on the blue economy (adopted on 17 November 2015) and based on identified main areas of cooperation:   * + Further development of Blue Economy   + Maritime governance.   + Blue research, technology, innovation, knowledge and skills   COM is developing the UfM blue economy agenda and portfolio in close cooperation with the Jordan Co-presidency the UfM Secretariat and the countries. In particular, direct and indirect financial support has been mobilised to strengthen the UfM Secretariat's capacity (EMFF support grant), to promote the regional dialogue amongst the countries (IMP/BE MED Facility) and by improving the financial and thematic coordination between institutions and programmes (notably European Territorial Cooperation programmes). Further efforts are needed  Inter-ministerial co-ordination is also being promoted through the application of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) approaches. A specific focus on land and sea interactions is being developed at the next UfM blue Economy Working Group meeting on 08 November 2016, in Brussels.  The involvement of stakeholders is also high in the UfM agenda for the blue economy and will be further pursued through the involvement of 8 Permanent Observers in the UfM BE WG, including CPMR, and by the full establishment of a UfM Forum on the blue economy (including a stakeholder conference and the full deployment of the Virtual Knowledge Centre for the Mediterranean).  The UfM Secretariat has also progressed in implementing specific initiatives/projects, such as SwitchMed Connect 2016 (Promoting sustainable production and consumption), Cleaner Mediterranean (UfM labelled initiative), Plastic Busters (UfM labelled project) and in promoting regional partnership (MoU UfMS with UNEP-MAP, CPMR).  COM informed also on latest developments on the following:   * Exploring the feasibility and added value of a Maritime Initiative in the Western Mediterranean (3 meetings in 2016; a Stakeholders Conference planned in early 2017): a very constructive dialogue with the 10 concerned countries has allowed to identify main needs, gaps and potential areas of added value. There are still potential areas of intervention to be clarified further. The countries will now proceed to identify concrete actions/projects. * BlueMED marine Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda Initiative: involvement of partner countries under way (including through a Coordinated Support Action, funded by H2020); * Networking of maritime clusters: Blue Net project (EMFF) kicked off in September 2016; * Networking of maritime training institutes: a study has been completed and published in September 2016); * EU Blue Call: inclusion of MED countries has been achieved for Blue Labs and Blue Techs. It is necessary to bear in mind that stakeholders from partner countries have a limited capacity to apply to EU wide competitive calls. Although the size of the projects may appear small, they are essential to develop cross-border and trans-national research and industrial relations between the different shores of the Mediterranean.   **Q&A**  FR questioned when the draft report on "Assessment of feasibility and added value of a possible initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean" will be circulated to the concerned countries.  COM replied that a new realise of the draft report is expected on 14 October 2014. If the quality will be assessed as satisfactory it will be then forwarded to the concerned countries for their consideration and comments (the above draft report has been actually circulated on 24 October 2016).  ***- North Sea Countries agreement on closer energy cooperation – Work Programme (External speaker - Lodewijk Abspoel)***  NL Representative, L. Abspoel, presented the current efforts and mentioned the 1st meeting held in Brussels where the development offshore wind was discussed as a way to achieve sustainable energy goals. As co – chair of the Support Group 1 on MSP, the Netherlands ensures its engagement to make the best improvements necessary on energy cooperation between the North Sea countries.  L. Abspoel remembered that the stakeholders involved have to come from different areas, not only from the energy sectors but from all sectors, particularly those losing their space with the energy activity, such as for example fisheries. More work will be necessary in this context.  COM ensured that the renewable sector can have the support of DG ENV, DG ENERGY and DG MARE. The future outputs could be developed targeting the generation of sustainable economic development and economic activity.  Action point: Ensure the participation of different stakeholders  ***- Priorities of the Presidency of the Council – Slovakia and Malta (External speaker, David Kerr Maltese representative)***  The Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) is a main priority of the Maltese Presidency with the aim to progress in the political agenda. There will be two more meetings under the Slovak Presidency, one in November and another one in December 2016.  The Maltese Presidency includes three main items; with regard to international ocean governance, Malta looks forward to:  - Commission Communication  - Our Ocean 2017 Conference.  - Council Conclusion at end of Presidency  Particular attention is going to be paid to nautical tourism, potential growth, future investment, sustainability, the qualification of skippers and small boats.  A second important point is the 2017 declaration, in this context D. Kerr highlighted the blue economy, maritime governance, levelling, sustainability, capacity building, cooperation with together with 3rd states and the launch of projects. Moreover, two important events will take place:  - Blue Growth Conference 20 April 2017 in Malta  - High-level Focal Point IMP - Maritime Day 2017  Like the Dutch Presidency, the Maltese Presidency will be committed to ensure implementation, to improve reporting as well as to develop new tools. Moreover, a workshop will be held on research and development and knowledge in conjunction with academic institutions. |

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| **3.** | ***- Ocean Energy Roadmap***  COM (X. Guillou) presented an update of the Ocean energy roadmap. The roadmap has been elaborated by the Ocean Energy Forum which was set in 2014 following the Commission "Blue Energy" Communication. This industry-driven strategic document is at the final drafting stage.  The roadmap will be officially handed over to Commissioner VELLA on 8th of November, during the annual seminar of the ocean energy industry (Ocean Energy Europe).  On the 7th November, a final workshop of the Ocean Energy Forum will gather stakeholders involved in this 18-months consultation process. It will present and discuss the main outcomes and recommendations in terms of technology development, investments and environmental consenting. This will end the first phase planned in the Blue Energy Communication.  The Commission will in the coming weeks and months actively raise awareness and promote the implementation of this roadmap with MS, research and business communities.  **Q&A**  FR: How this sector strategy matches with sea basin approach?  COM responded that marine energy is at early stages and now moving on testing phases. This roadmap will help us to improve understanding, to target support and to coordinate various instruments in the mid and long term. Development of marine energy is strong mainly in the Atlantic for the moment.  COM commented that in the context of the Maritime policy, strategies have to be developed by the Blue growth sectors, and research has to extend to all sectors. This will also feed into discussion at sea basin level and on the new framework for 2020. |

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| **4.** | **Blue Economy**  ***- Blue Economy Summit Hamburg – The first summit of the Blue Economy Business and Science Forum took place in Hamburg on 12-13 September 2016.***  COM (A. Clochiatti) briefed on the first summit of the Blue Economy Business and Science Forum which took place in Hamburg on 12-13-September 2016. It is a new initiative that was announced in the 2014 Communication on Innovation in the Blue Economy. The forum involves business, finance, science, policy makers, NGOs, etc. Moreover, it celebrates scientific and business achievements to promote new technology and the exchange of expertise in research and innovation project. In this regard, a specific part of the summit was dedicated to "Showcase the results of EU innovative Blue Economy projects, with particular focus on SMEs". In addition, the first edition of the Blue Economy Business awards was held in the evening, accompanied by a gala dinner. There were 3 categories of awards: blue economy business of the year, woman of the year in the economy and rising star of the year in the blue economy.  The 2016 summit was attended by about 200 stakeholders, discussing about three key issues:  • how to boost the European competitiveness in marine and maritime technologies;  • how to increase collaboration between science and industrial sectors; and  • how to fully demonstrate the value of innovative technologies, scale them up and bring them to the market.  The key conclusions encompass:  A more sustainable and holistic approach is needed to build a blue, carbon-free economy. This approach should be based on innovation that evolves from the bottom up. However, solving problems implicates moving from ideas to markets.  The ability to demonstrate the viability of new ideas in the Blue Economy is seen as hugely important. Science holds the key for the future growth of the Blue Economy. However, for scientific discoveries to benefit business they need to lead to cheaper products and technologies. In addition, there is a lack of common understanding between inventors and investors. These actors need to be mediated and clustered to overcome the lack of trust.  Knowledge intensive sectors and new technologies face a very high degree of risk; therefore financial facilitation is needed, especially providing the commercial risk guarantee facilitation. Matching the right funding mechanism for the right project/idea is crucial.  Furthermore, the lack of entrepreneurial culture in Europe and the usual dependency on grants hinders the full development of the blue economy. It is therefore essential to improve cross-sectorial skills by adapting education  Participants launched some ideas for next Summit, such as focusing more on identified sectors and facilitating the link between inventors and investors  Finally, three awards were granted: a blue economy award (in the European maritime energy sector), a woman of the year in the blue economy award, and a rising star of the year in the blue economy (small and medium sized enterprise).  **Q&A**  NL asked how the study on EU maritime clusters has been taken into account in the development of the forum discussion on cluster.  COM answered that the ENMC was invited to the forum and was moderating the session on clusters and cooperation. The commission is aware of the work done by this network and involves it at any possible time.  NL stated that ocean literacy is another important topic that was eg also covered by the Ocean Day in Bremen in 2015.  COM agreed and added that also RTD and the UN have already taken up this subject and some projects have been funded under Horizon 2020. In addition, DG MARE is including ocean literacy in all initiatives related to skills and education (i.e. blue careers in Europe call for proposals, blueprint on sectorial skills cooperation, etc.)  The chairsuggested that Blue Growth and Innovation could be put on the agenda for the next meeting of the group.  ***- Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills – Maritime Technology***  COM (A. Clochiatti) mentioned the different initiatives that the Commission is taking on skills: the call for proposals Blue careers in Europe, the expert group on skills and career development and the blueprint initiative.  The blueprint on sectorial skills cooperation is an industry-ledinitiative aims to deliver a clear strategic vision on how to tackle skills gap in a defined sector and on how to deliver more systematic and impactful results in the short and medium term. The maritime technology sector has been chosen with other 5 sectors to pilot this initiative. A call for proposal under Erasmus + will be published at the beginning of 2017 to set up the European platform in charge of developing the strategy. The strategy will design sector-specific skills solutions and will include as well an action plan that will be then rolled out at national/regional level. The rolling out will be funded through EU structural and national/regional funds. |

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| 5. | ***Coastguard cooperation: Outcomes of the European Coastguard Functions Forum (ECGFF) on 21-22 September in London***  COM (M. Nobile) briefed on the 8th Plenary Session of the ECGFF which took place on 21-22 September 2016 in London under UK chairmanship. It was attended by: delegations from all EU Member States and Norway, Commission's relevant services (HOME, MARE, MOVE) and EU Agencies (EFCA, EMSA, Frontex).  The Commission and the Agencies shared their view on Coast Guard cooperation after the entry into force of the new legislative framework in the aim of presenting the modalities for developing cooperation between the EU agencies one the one hand, and national coastguard authorities on the other. ECGFF members presented ongoing projects funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fond (EMFF).  ECGFA Net / Standard Qualification Framework Phase II (Finnish Border Guard)  Operational Manual – Work plan (UK Maritime and Coast Guard Agency) Presentations from national coastguard authorities fed the discussion mainly on migrants, Search and Rescue Operations, emergency response planning and information sharing.  In the closing session Portugal took over the Chair of the ECGFF for 2017. The new Chairman stressed his full availability to proceed as quickly as possible in establishing a good cooperation with the Agencies.  The Commission renewed its support to the Forum appreciating the useful work done. The entry into force of the EU Border and Coast Guard Regulation and of the amended mandates for EMSA and EFCA on cooperation on coastguard functions requires a closer collaboration among the Agencies and between Agencies and EU MS to ensure synergies and avoid duplication in supporting and carrying out Coast Guard functions.  In the new framework the Forum will be a key stakeholder, but it is necessary to align its activities with those of the competent EU Agencies to avoid duplications. The Commission will keep its political guidance and steering on Coast Guard functions and issues while the operational aspects will be managed by the Agencies within their mandate and work plans. The new setup entered into force in the beginning of October 2016 and is becoming effective from 1st January 2017.  In the coming months the three EU Agencies will develop swiftly the Working Arrangement and related service level agreements (SLA's) laying down the detailed provisions for cooperation between them. Working Arrangement and SLA should be approved by the respective administrative boards.  Once WA and SLA adopted, cooperation with EU MS and/or with ECGFF could be established and detailed. The pilot project already in operation will be an important test case to ensure that this collaboration will work smoothly from the outset. First outcomes are expected in mid-2017.  COM will continue to follow the ECGFF from a policy perspective; encourage contacts between the agencies and the ECGFF presidency in order to discuss arrangements for future collaboration; steer ongoing projects to make them consistent to new regulatory framework; and finance the annual meeting of the Forum until a functional stakeholders' platform has been set up by the Agencies in order to ensure continuity of activities.  **Q&A**  ES mentioned that the two Coast Guard projects seem interesting but would like to know how they would be financed. It also commented that the procedure to receive such funding was rather complex.  COM responded that Phase II of the projects has already been funded. Project duration has been fixed in 15 months in order to allow the possible Phase III to start in 2018. Regarding the Operational Manual project, the contract has been signed in June 2016 and is now ongoing. Moreover, as the new legislative framework has been adopted and within the Agencies' amended mandate there is also the development of a similar tool, at the end of November/ beginning of December 2016, there will be a meeting with the British MCA, the Portuguese ECGFF chair, the Commission and agencies to steer the project. |

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| **6.** | ***Reform of the STCW-F Convention***  COM (H. Siemers) stated that working conditions for fishermen are increasingly becoming an issue, including within the EU. Social partners in the Sea-Fisheries Sector are also increasingly vocal about the application of international rules regarding the working conditions, training and qualifications of fishermen. Press reports that brought to light alleged cases of illegal labour practices in the fisheries sector are worrisome. This issue could be related to trafficking of human beings and is a serious issue that the EC is treating carefully.  Commissioner Vella will participate in the Sectoral Social Dialogue for Sea Fisheries Committee meeting on 4th November. He will exchange with the social partners on several issues, including working conditions and training. One of the issues the Social Partners have been advocating for is the transposition of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F) into EU law, either through a Commission's own initiative, or through a Social Partners Agreement. The current situation is that EC has consulted the Legal Service on the feasibility of such Social Partners Agreement or a Commission's own initiative.  Discussions have kicked-off at IMO for a review of this Convention in order to update its provisions which date back from 1995 with no updates or amendments since. A list of principles and a provisional definition of the scope of the review have been agreed. The Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping Sub Committee will continue its review on this basis at its next meeting on 30 January - 3 February 2017. The EC would appreciate Member States' views on this issue.  On related issues, media reports brought to light alleged cases of illegal labour practices in the European fisheries sector. The Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries has also expressed the belief that exploitative practices towards migrant fishers exist in several Member States. This is why the Commission is trying to establish an EU wide picture of the situation. A letter was sent earlier this year addressed to the Ministers responsible for Fisheries in each Member State.  The Commission informed that political agreement was reached at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council on the Council Decision implementing the Social Partners Agreements on the ILO Work in Fishing Convention (C188).  Other important issue is the fight against IUU fishing, and EC is engaged in dialogues with third countries. MS need to be aware of it and EC is making progress on these discussions.  **Q&A**  FR raised a question, about what are the expectations of the EC from the Member States.  COM mentioned that was official information, in order to keep the MS updated and aware.  UK mentioned that is not so "motivating" to some MS to proceed with the process because the ratification was made by UK and entered on UK law in 2017, but only other 5 MS ratified.  COM: given that the ratification transposition for STCW-F took 27 years, waiting for the revision would not be helpful at all – ratification remained important |

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| 7. | **AOB**  *- Work Programme 2016*  COM (H. Siemers) reminded the experience with EMFF calls for proposals, developed jointly between DG MARE and EASME.  We can distinguish three types of calls for proposals, for which the experience so far has been as follows: Highly targeted calls These are calls targeted usually at public authorities competent for specific policy (implementation) areas. The calls are open but by their nature reach a limited potential target public. This concerns: MSP projects and CISE projects.  Experience so far: the number of applications is low and thus the competition tends to be limited. In some cases there is substantial budget left unspent due to low demand. Following our first monitoring visits, these projects tend to start and progress relatively slowly. There appear to be two possible reasons for that: the beneficiary national authorities do not necessarily have the experience and/or capacity to easily implement such projects; the project topic is not so easy to implement (due to regulatory, organisational or other constraints).  Past calls   * 2014 MSP and CISE: projects take time to get started; monitoring visits started * 2015 CISE: * selection finished; 4 proposals, 3 eligible and awarded, grant agreement preparation (GAP) underway; projects expected to start on 1/1/2017 * Budget: € 2.538.000; grants awarded for total of € 978.426 * 2015 MSP: * 4 proposals received, evaluation finishing, GAP to start and projects expected to start on 1/1/2017 * Budget: 6M€; expected take-up: € 5.687.988   Upcoming calls   * 2016 CISE: to be launched as a single call with 2017 CISE action: * to be launched after adoption of 2017 EMFF WP by EC: expected December 2016, deadline latest 31/3/2017 * Expected budget: € 2.490.000 (from 2016 EMFF WP: € 1.430.000 + budget 2017 EMFF WP: €1.060.000) * 2016 MSP: * to be launched in November 2016, deadline latest 31/3/2017 * Budget: € 5.960.000  Open calls with limited budget Under the 2015 EMFF WP, we have had two open calls for proposals addressing a potentially wide target public but with a (very) low budget. This concerns the actions "IMP projects in the Mediterranean and Black Sea" and "Thematic underwater cultural heritage routes".  Experience so far: these two calls have raised a very high demand compared to the available budget. The quality of proposals has been rather diverse. The success rate is low (around 10%). Generally, supported projects are small and likely to have a more limited/local impact.  Past calls   * IMP projects in the Mediterranean and Black Sea: * 26 proposals received, of which 12 with Italian coordinator, followed by GR and BG coordinators * Budget: €569.000 - total grant request: € 4.475.662 – average grant request: € 172.140 – average grant awarded: €176.519 * Only 7 proposals passed the award criteria; the rest was of too low quality and a few were ineligible. * 3 projects have been granted, very diverse, joint kick-off meeting held on 14 September * Thematic underwater cultural heritage routes: * 30 proposals received, of which 2/3 from Italian coordinators * Budget: €345.000 - total grant request: € 3.574.669,00; average grant request € 119.155; average grant awarded: € 111.013 * evaluation finalized and notification letters are sent out this week * projects expected to start begin 2017 latest  Open calls with more important budget This concerns the 3 Blue Growth calls for proposals under the 2016 EMFF WP as well as the future call for proposals Nautical routes.  Experience so far: demand tends to be very high compared to the available budget. The quality of proposals submitted under Blue Careers and Blue Labs is high and the selection very competitive. As evaluations are still ongoing, only limited information can be shared at this point in time.  Past calls   * Blue Careers: * Budget: 3,5 M€ * 76 proposals received * evaluation in final stage, notification due by end November, projects expected to start in Q1 2017 as soon as GAP is finalized * Blue Labs: * Budget: 1,7 M€ * 49 proposals received * evaluation in final stage, notification due by end November, projects expected to start in Q1 2017 as soon as GAP is finalized * Blue Technology: * Budget: 2,5 M€ * Deadline passed on 30/9 * 12 applications received until 11/10, but applications still arriving; as expected, less massive demand than for Blue Careers and Blue Labs, due to stricter requirements on consortia (at least 3 clusters/business organisations from at least 3 countries of which 2 MS) * selection should be shorter due to lower demand, results expected to be known in Q1 2017 and projects to start by begin Q2   Future call   * Nautical routes: * Call in preparation, to be launched in December 2016 * Application deadline will be latest 30/3/2017 for grant agreements to be signed by end 2017 latest   *- Procedure adoption Work Programme 2017*  COM mentioned the focus on continuing the work, and the importance on involving the fields of maritime technology, including biotechnology. There is a huge need to work on marine/maritime education and the involvement of third countries is necessary in this context. For the ocean energy field, is necessary to have a coherent approach on the planning steps and join the environmental and economic perspective, according the existing legislation.  **Q&A**    NL raised a question asking if is possible to export the existing European technology on Ocean Energy to other emerging markets world-wide.    COM mentioned that could be interesting but this need to be checked with C1 first.  IT mentioned the COPERNICUS and EMODNET projects, and the need to make a reunion to check future developments.  COM answered stating that COPERNICUS and EMODNET are projects that delivered lot of work, and mentioned that it will be discussed in future meetings.  °°°  Supporting documents are available on the maritime forum <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/node/3952>  The Next MSEG is planned to be organised in the 2nd half of January of next year |