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MARITIME POLICY BALTIC AND NORTH SEA

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22ND MEETING OF THE MEMBER STATES EXPERTS GROUP ON MARITIME POLICY

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Meeting report

Please note that supporting documents are available at:
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/node/3823>

Ocean governance

MARE reported on the consultation on international Ocean governance which was launched on 4 June 2015 and closed on 15 October, with about 150 contributions. The consultation will be published on 25 January 2016. The initiative is led by the three-pronged following reasoning. The oceans have a key role as climate regulators and in the economy. However, oceans are under severe pressure due to overexploitation, pollution and climate change. This undermines the vital role of oceans in the world's economies and societies and risks destroying life-sustaining ecosystems. Improved international ocean governance can help to reverse this trend. MARE communicated on its vision of finding and adopting the best approaches to make the EU added value fit into the overall pattern and be optimally used to overcome the problems of fragmentation of the system and lack of implementation and enforcement. The Blue Growth initiative, the groundbreaking Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), as well as the 2014 Common Fisheries Policy are the instruments at the disposal of the EU. The European Commission (EC) wants to link up all the various initiatives and further cooperate with the Member States on improving the EU's contribution to Ocean governance.

IRL thanked MARE for its presentation and asked what was the format of the consultation and if all the submissions had been processed. MARE answered the EC might make a communication out of the consultation. All the contributions have been taken into account.

FR thanked MARE and Commissioner Vella's initiative and made three observations: first the French contribution to the consultation was reminded, then the recommendation was made that the various foreseen objectives for Ocean governance should be visibly staggered on a timeframe for the stakeholders – with distinguished short-term, mid-term

and long-term objectives – finally the importance of including NGOs and industries to the discussion on Ocean governance was uttered, along with the need to join EU actions to the international developments, especially for issues like marine protected areas. MARE replied that the EU considers the existing international mechanisms and look very much at how it could make them work better. The issue of marine protected areas is a great concern of the EC. The role of the civil society is not overlooked at all in this exercise.

UK agreed with France on the imperfection of the system and of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and urged that it is better to focus on what is realistically feasible.

NL agrees with COM that improved ocean governance is about the ocean, seas and relations with humans on land. NL pointed out that, in addition to UNCLOS, other ways (and perhaps more effective ways) may be used to working towards the objective. The new UN SDGs could be a point of reference and focus. The Blue Growth conference of the Union for the Mediterranean on 17 November 2015 supports NL in this line of thinking. During the coming Dutch Presidency, NL will seek to carry the discussion further, without stumbling on matters of competency. It aims at building an agenda that advocates for multilateral partnerships and incorporates timely staggered objectives.

PT thanked MARE for its presentation and mentioned that the Portuguese contribution to the consultation recognised gaps that need to be overcome with a harmonisation of the system and actions led less by the legal basis than the principles, as it has been the case for the successful Galway statement and the bilateral agreement between the EU and Brazil. Moreover, it urged that a cross-sectoral support is needed to directly buttress the intervention of the Commission.

To UK, NL and PT MARE answered that the EU has no appetite for building new frameworks but rather to make what is already there work and foster cooperation with international partners and coherence between the UN, the EU and the Member States.

Arctic policy

MARE presented the EU engagement in the Arctic and the EC's work for further development of an Arctic policy before end 2015. So far on average 20 million euros under the 7th Framework Initiative Programme (FP7) and 1.14 billion euros in ERDF (2007 – 2013) have been dedicated to the Arctic. Due to the thawing sea ice resulting from climate change, the North East and North West Passages are opening up for commercial shipping. This makes a polar code for maritime safety in Polar regions ever more needed. Meanwhile, to gather a better data on the climactic changes in the Arctic, local and traditional knowledge will need to be incorporated into research projects. It will be important to ensure Arctic region remains a region of peaceful cooperation. 78 replies were received on the 2014 public consultation on the streamlining funding in the European Arctic, issued by the EC. Following the public consultation, the three technical workshops were organised in 2015 as well as a seminar in Brussels by the EEAS. The consultation efforts by the EC and the EEAS echoed challenges regarding the lack of infrastructure to connect regions in the European Arctic, to tackle climate change as well as the need to handle environmental protection goals and to stimulate opportunities for job and growth.

FR thanked MARE and echoed its concerns regarding the lack of attention given to the degradation of the Arctic since the EU published its first communication in 2008. FR asked whether the EC's next communication would take this crucial point into account.

SW asked for a communication from the EC to Member States listing which areas are precisely looking into and what corresponding actions are contemplated.

GER remarked that the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Polar Code should come with cogent enforcement measures. An agreement should also be put in place to cover fisheries in the high sea. More research and cooperation are needed to tackle efficiently the challenges that have been identified in the past.

UK said a discussion should be triggered on the meaning of Arctic challenges to European waters.

Maritime aspects of the Energy Union

MARE presented the five Energy Union priorities (energy security, decarbonisation, market integration, energy efficiency and research and innovation) and reported on their progress. MARE informed about recent developments in the industrial development of the ocean energy sector and briefly outlined the structure of the Ocean Energy Forum. The Forum was tasked with the development of a Strategic Roadmap, which defines the main barriers for the development of the sector and presents ideas for overcoming them. A draft for the roadmap is already available. A number of parallel activities also took place, notably a workshop organised to familiarise the industry with the offerings of the EIB. The next OEF meeting will take place on 23 – 24 February 2016 in Edinburgh, alongside the International Conference on Ocean Energy (ICOE).

NL mentioned the emergence of new technologies and actors and highlighted the need to address barriers on a national level. NL asked for more clarity on objectives of DG MARE's work in this field and expressed concern about high costs of ocean energy. MARE answered that accelerating the commercialisation of the sector, is the key objective of the OEF. This implies a focus on cost reductions, however, setting a cost target is premature before full-scale demonstration projects are implemented.

UK highlighted the 2030 target for renewable energy of 27%. UK launched a call for a workshop on co-funding for marine energy and announced that a meeting that will be held in Brussels in January 2016 on ocean energy.

PT stated that the roadmap should also focus on international outreach. PT targets the global market and provides assistance for the development of projects in Africa and South America. MARE answered that the OEF stakeholders are fully aware of the international dimension, even though stakeholders from outside Europe were not involved in the process due to practical constraints.

Work Programme (WP) 2016

MARE reported that the Work Programme 2016, which provides information on the scheduled activities for MARE for 2016, has been approved by the EMFF Committee. Some cases contained in the WP 2016 will only be launched late 2016 or in 2017. The emphasis is laid on blue growth and the three cross-cutting following actions: MSP, maritime surveillance and EMODNET. Part of the budget is devoted to the environmental

portfolio carried out by DG ENV. Three calls for proposals – on Blue labs for 1.7 million euros, Blue careers for 3.5 million euros and Blue technologies for 2.5 million euros – will be launched in February 2016. The budget for the development of cooperative approaches on MSP is 6 million euros. Part of the budget will be devoted to the discussion on Coast Guards in Europe. The Maritime Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) will be allocated 1.8 million euros for the development of the connection between IT systems. EMODNET instrument has been allocated 14 million euros for the strengthening of its capacity, especially regarding seabed mapping and for the support of its Secretariat. The contract on Assistance mechanisms for MSP is about to be signed for 1.2 million euros. 700 000 are for the financing of the EMD.

NL remarked that the MSEG on marine knowledge is not meeting to which MARE answered that this issue needs to be seriously followed up.

SW uttered that the Swedish agencies that do mapping lack information from the EC on what is needed. Better communication is required.

European Maritime Day (EMD)

MARE presented its work on the organisation of the ninth edition of the EMD which will be held in Turku, Finland, on 18 – 19 May 2016. This year, the emphasis is put on showcasing actionable conclusions in an interactive format. The stakeholder conference will provide a strong input to shape future policies and the practical steps needed to drive transformational change in the blue economy and the wider integrated maritime policy agenda.

It will focus on smart and sustainable solutions for blue growth, ocean governance, clean energy and skills development and it will look at tools such as strategic cluster partnerships and common roadmaps to facilitate joint action. Throughout, there will be a particular focus on specific regional challenges and opportunities. 15 stakeholder workshops exploring the five thematic sessions of the conference as well as exhibitions and business-to-business meetings will be part of this two-day event, echoed all over Europe with EMD 2016 theme-related events in Europe during May 2016. Around 1000 participants are expected from all maritime sectors.

FR asked how speakers were selected. MARE answered that it wants inspirational and dynamic speakers who master the theme of their session. MARE is open for suggestions from the Member States.

Blue thread initiative

Mr. Lodewijk Abspoel, Senior Policy Advisor North Sea for IMP and MSP, Directorate-General for Spatial Development and Water Affairs, Dutch Ministry for Infrastructure and the Environment, communicated on the IMP agenda of the 2016 Dutch Presidency of the EU. The communicated scheduled items are the followings:

- NL, LV and MLT launched the Blue Thread Initiative, a project that aims at improving the methods regarding policy-making on water.
- The ongoing discussion on port regulation will be pursued

- The Friend of the Presidency (FoP) IMP council on Arctic strategy, Ocean energy roadmap & Ocean Governance will be held on 1 February 2016 (TBC).
- FoP IMP council working group EU Maritime Security and Surveillance (MSS) will do a field trip NL Coast Guard Den Helder on 31 March 2016 and meet in Brussels on 13 June 2016
- FoP IMP council working group on ocean governance will meet on 6 June 2016
- Director General High level Meeting in Amsterdam on energy regarding cooperation on the offshore challenge will happen on 4 February 2016
- Directors meeting short sea shipping (including MSP and blue growth) will occur on 15 February 2016
- High level focal point and workshop will be held at the EMD 2016
- Directors meeting on marine/water will happen on 9 – 10 June 2016
- CPMR event on the role of regions to boost Blue Growth will be held in Feb (TBC)

European Funds for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – State of play

MARE gave an update on the implementation of EFSI. The EFSI regulation has been approved by EU Institutions. The three pillars of the EU Investment Plan for 2016 have been presented as follows:

- Mobilise finance for investment
- Make finance reach the real economy
- Create an improved investment environment

The EU budget guarantee and the European Investment Bank (EIB) provide respectively to EFSI 16 billion and 5 billion euros, which results over three years in 315 billion euros of investment value combining both the infrastructure and innovation window and the small and medium enterprise (SME) window. One of the key features of EFSI, namely enabling investment in the real economy, was stressed, as well as the needed combination of both European structural investment fund (ESFI) and EFSI for doing so. There is no minimum size for loans granted by the EIB though they usually are superior to 25 million euros. The geographic scope of investment is EU 28 but can be extended to EU Neighbourhood, European Economic Area (EEA), European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) countries. MARE communicated on the establishment by the EC of a Scoreboard with criteria used to assess the use of the EU budget guarantee. Some projects have already been approved by EIB and the European Investment Fund (EIF). EFSI Steering Board Members and the EFSI Managing Director and Deputy have been appointed while the EFSI Investment Committee should be operational from 1 January 2016. The European Investment Advisory Hub (EIAH) is operational.

PT drew attention on the need for coherent policies at the regional level and at the basin level. PT hailed the announced combination of EFSI and ESFI for financing projects and

waits for the regulation on SMEs to move forward. MARE responded that as clarified in the EFSI "Investment Guidelines", which complement the regulation, EFSI is demand driven but aims to support eligible projects across the Union, as well as certain cross-border projects, without any sectoral or geographical pre-allocation. Best efforts shall however be made to ensure that at the end of the initial investment period a wide range of sectors and regions will be covered and excessive sectoral and/or geographical concentration should be avoided. EFSI mechanisms are incepted to avoid that the projects are too concentrated geographically and thus cogent tools to buttress regional and basin-based projects. MARE stressed that banks, in particular the so called "National Promotional Banks" are key actors to achieve finance the projects as they act as intermediaries between the EIB and the final beneficiaries.

Blue Economy Data

MARE summarised the results of an analysis presented to an ad hoc expert group on 29 September 2015 and the feedback received during and after the meeting. There had been broad agreement that inland shipping and freshwater aquaculture were indeed part of the blue economy and that income from activities outside EU territory also counted. Consultation with industry associations is ongoing and a study to be completed at the end of 2016 will fill gaps and add detail. Anomalies between structural business statistics and the Labour Force Survey will be investigated and cross-checking with analyses made by Member States will continue. A further meeting of the ad-hoc group will take place in the first half of 2016 to assess progress.

LU reiterated that activities outside the EU were indeed part of the blue economy.

EMODnet

In answer to a question from France about the sub-group on marine knowledge which had not met for two years, MARE replied that the independent Marine Observation and Data Expert Group had held its final meeting at the end of October, and as envisaged in the Roadmap, a User Group would be set up. NL and SE agreed with FR that MSEG needed more information on progress. MARE has set up a dedicated meeting on the collection of marine data on 4 February.

PT emphasised the need to standardise across all marine data activities, particularly CISE. MARE said that EMODnet follows general INSPIRE principles and a workshop earlier in the week had established that the marine data community is already on the road to achieve full convergence between EMODnet and INSPIRE, ahead of their terrestrial counterparts. EMODnet and the Copernicus marine service already share effort, particularly on observations of physical parameters, and this arrangement may be formalised in the coming year.

PT thought that information on human activity was particularly useful. MARE said that work on this had started later than other EMODnet activities but was catching up. The international oil and gas association aim to use EMODnet to create their maps of offshore oil and gas installations.

Blue Economy Business and Science Forum

MARE informed that the Blue Economy Business and Science Forum that was announced in the Commission's Communication on Innovation in the Blue Economy of May 2014 has been endorsed by the European Parliament resolution in September 2015. MARE announced that the first open meeting of the Blue Economy Business & Science Forum dedicated to marine technology and innovation will take place in September 2016 in Hamburg, alongside the Shipbuilding, Machinery & Marine Technology trade fair which runs from 6 to 9 September 2016. The aim of the Summit is to propose concrete recommendations on how to benefit more from research and technology achievements, on how to bring closer science and business and on what the Commission could do to encourage investments in blue economy.

NL asked whether a list of the businesses and research institutes participating to the Forum was available. MARE answered that a save the date notice would go out in January for this event and that there was no list yet gathering scientists and businesses. MARE mentioned for information that a list of various institutes had been elaborated by the Eurocean Marine Infrastructure Database - <http://rid.eurocean.org/>.

The UK noted that converting scientific progress into commercial products was also being done by other sectors than the maritime one and that consequently we should avoid duplicating initiatives. The UK asked about the link to the Joint Programming Initiative Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI Oceans). MARE replied that there is a cross-sectoral linkage with various research and innovation driven initiatives where the business community actively participates - JIP Oceans is a Member States led initiative while - the Forum will also include a much wider range of stakeholders from the private sector including from finance.

Maritime security and surveillance

MARE informed that the MSEG on maritime security and surveillance met on a number of occasions in 2015, most lately in November 2015, to discuss the process of implementation of the European Maritime Security Strategy (EMSS). Among other things, work has been ongoing between the JRC, EDA and DG Home to set up a joint maritime security agenda for civil and military research. A workshop will be organised during the first half of 2016 and the MSE on IMP will shortly receive an invitation. The discussion on the European coast guard's capacity is part of the IMP. Another matter highlighted was ongoing work to prepare legislative proposals for a European border and coastguard capacity, which is planned for adoption by the Commission on 15 December.

FR informed that the French PM signed the National Strategy for the safety of maritime spaces on 22 October 2015 which is not aligned with the Community strategy. In the present context of European developments on maritime security, FR needs to be kept posted as to the potential revision of the national corpus it adopted in October.

IMP in the Mediterranean (UfM, West MED, BLUEMED)

MARE reported on the main deliverables of the UfM Ministerial Conference on the Blue Economy that occurred on 17 November 2015 and to which 33 countries participated. Among those are the need for national and regional coordination, for the establishment of networks between maritime clusters and maritime institutes, for a UfM Forum on the Blue Economy (that should be launched in 2016), for the inclusion of partner countries in BLUEMED and for the reinvigoration of the 5+5 dialogue in the context of the Western

Mediterranean Strategy. The West MED is kicking off soon and could potentially be adopted under Maltese Presidency in 2017. It will focus on coordination and cooperation, identifying gaps and avoiding the duplication of actions. 63 million euros are allocated to the implementation of these deliverables. The next UfM ministerial conference on Blue Economy is scheduled for 2018. Other sea basin-based approaches in the MED concerned the implementation phase of EUSAIR and the 1st Annual Forum in Croatia in May 2016. The potential extension of the IMP Mediterranean model to the Black sea was discussed in the meeting of IMP contact points and representatives of the Black sea States on 4 December 2015 and will be followed up in the next meeting of this group scheduled in February 2016.

In response to NL and MLT, MARE indicated that the most obvious interlocutor regarding IMP in the Mediterranean is MARE and as well as the UfM Secretariat.

PR said it is already discussing with North Africa coastal States and is looking for the development of the dialogue put in place from the West to the East. MARE clarified that the idea is to eventually formulate a strategy covering the entire Mediterranean sea, as soon as the timing is right.