



SUMMARY REPORT

Sea for Society

Improving human-Ocean dynamics by building a “Blue Society”

18 November 2015

European Parliament, Brussels

Policy-makers, academics, youth and other stakeholders were brought together on 18 November by MEP Ricardo Serrão Santos to discuss the outcome of the project “*Sea for Society*”, which is a three year mobilisation and mutual learning action plan, funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme, engaging citizens and stakeholders across Europe on societal issues related to the Ocean.

Ricardo Serrão Santos MEP and Co-Chair of the “*Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*” working group of the European Parliament Intergroup on “*Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Development*” welcomed the participants by highlighting the importance of the Ocean as it provides a valuable source of food, materials, and energy, as well as routes for transport and commerce. It was stressed that blue growth has great potential to balance the need for economic growth and jobs while ensuring environmental protection. It was underlined that there is no clear definition of blue growth as it encompasses all economy activity at sea. It was pointed out that it is difficult to determine how large these sectors are and work is being conducted to uncover this potential. It has however been estimated by the European Commission that 14.5 million people are today employed in marine activities with an estimated increase of at least 1.5 million by 2020. It was underscored that scientific knowledge and information are fundamental components, along with new and more stringent concepts of ocean governance. The important role of citizens was stressed as they are key in monitoring rules and investments. It was also said that the Ocean is a great asset in itself and that there is a lack of understanding of the role that the Ocean plays for the safety of the planet.

Phillippe Vallette, General Manager, Nausicaá, underlined that the world is about to exhaust its land resources. It was stated that it is essential to learn from the past and not make the same mistakes with the world's blue resources. It was underlined that 70% of the planet is blue and these resources provide great opportunities for the future under the absolute condition that they are used in a sustainable manner. The need for a new vision was stressed in order to reverse our point of view. It was called upon all to stop viewing the Ocean as a universal being with endless resources.

Manuel Cira, Head of Cultural Service and International Cooperation, Nausicaá explained that the project officially started in 2012 with the mobilisation and mutual learning action plan. It was however pointed out that the process started much earlier at the Rio de Janeiro



Earth Summit in 1992 where the importance of the Ocean was acknowledged by discussing the idea for the World Ocean Day as well as making 1998 the International Year of the Ocean. It was pointed out that many events took place during this time and projects previous to “*Sea for Society*” have involved society and their interaction with marine related issues. It was explained that in 2010 DG RTD issued a call asking for mobilisation and mutual learning related to marine matters. The project started working with 28 organisations representing a diverse group of stakeholders. The blue society is based on premises that we should only use the interest and not the capital of what the Ocean provides while at the same time opening new ideas and opportunities for growth. It was explained that a series of consultations and workshops were organised across Europe involving over 500 stakeholders and young citizens identifying challenges and solutions. A main finding is the need for information and education on the Ocean calling for shared and co-constructed dialogue in order to improve governance. The need for multidisciplinary research was also stressed. It was said that along with the consultations the project worked with a Blue Society Expert Group and have throughout the mobilisation process engaged people at a large scale thus far reaching over 200 000.

A short movie was screened highlighting the Blue Society, which can be viewed [following this link](#).

Francois Simard, IUCN Global Marine and Polar Programme explained that the Blue Society Expert Group analysed the outcomes of the consultation and mobilisation phase, and developed a set of recommendations to improve ocean governance and research. It was explained that that the overarching principle of the project has been common responsibility, common heritage. It was underlined that everyone must understand the importance of the Ocean as it is a commonly shared resource requiring collective management by all. This thinking has provided the backdrop for the five interrelated Blue Society goals; i) *Knowledge-based & Innovative Approach*; ii) *Integrated Policies*; iii) *Effective Enforcement*; iv) *Partnerships and Collaboration*; and v) *Education and Outreach*. The need to take a knowledge-based and innovative approach is necessary in order to better understand the complexity of the Ocean, and the impacts on Ocean functions. It was also said that integrated policies are needed as many sectors are still fragmented. Effective enforcement and in particular innovative enforcement was stressed stating that new technology will be vital. The importance of partnership and collaboration, as well education and outreach were also stated as essential in order to reach a Blue Society.

Telmo Carvalho, Coordinator FCT Ocean Office, Portugal presented the concrete recommendations¹ put forward by the Expert Group. Firstly, in order to achieve global ocean governance it is recommended to ensure regular global reporting, promote the development of an Integrated World Ocean Strategy, improve coordination between marine conservation within and between regions, and boost international financing for

¹ <http://ebcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Telmo-Carvalho-FCT-Ocean-Office.pdf>



conservation and sustainable ocean use. Secondly, in order to improve education and outreach it is recommended to build up a transformative education and research programme aimed at promoting knowledge of ocean benefits, promote the integration of marine issues into education programmes, stimulate partnership between informal science educators, marine scientists and citizens, as well as promote information and awareness raising campaigns. Thirdly, to better work in partnership and collaboration it was recommended to assist in the development of multi-stakeholder regional facilitating bodies, to engage in dialogue to develop recommendations for decision-makers, and promote local initiatives and enhance best practice sharing. Fourthly, knowledge-based and innovative approaches are needed that promote interdisciplinary research, an innovative European marine-science policy platform, encourage strategic governmental appointments, and improve access to research outcomes and data to foster innovation. Fifthly, integrated policies are recommended calling for measures such as appointing at national level ocean advisers to champion ocean issues, set up adaptive regional sea management units, and promote multi-stakeholder partnerships. Sixthly, effective enforcement is recommended that entails using economic deterrents to ensure the effective enforcement of environmental policies and adopt the polluter pays principle, and encourage innovative initiatives through mandatory and non-mandatory instruments. Apart from the Expert Group recommendations complementary ones were also presented, which were established from the stakeholder consultations. Firstly, with regards to research and innovation it is recommended to promote research on marine and coastal ecosystems functioning and marine resources, effects of chemicals and blue energy technologies. The need for multidisciplinary teams in fostering research was stressed as well as the need to develop a new strategic innovation and research agenda. Secondly, with regards to the economy it is recommended that an accounting system be adopted on a national and EU level, incentivise companies to incorporate costs for restoration and management in their operations as well as reward and subsidies companies that respect the environment. Thirdly, with regards to management of marine space it is recommended to promote knowledge-exchange through public consultation and networks at all levels, and create a European Agency for the Ocean. Fourthly, In order to conserve natural and cultural capital it is recommended to promote sustainable tourism as well as extending and coordinating MPA networks. Fifthly, with regards to education and mobilisation it is recommended to incorporate marine topics into school curricula, create Universities for the Ocean to train and translate technicality to policy-makers and decisions, as well as integrate communication stressing the need to integrate social science content into science courses.

Philippe Galiay, Head of Sector “Mainstreaming Responsible research and Innovation in Horizon 2020 and the European Research Area”, DG RTD, European Commission outlined that the Commission has since 2000 worked on building the links between the organisations that drive innovation and research with the organisations that mediate science to society. It was mentioned that the Commission has funded various projects using participation as a vehicle to improve the understanding of various issues to stakeholders, scientists and policy-makers. It was outlined that a new framework programme “*Science with and for Society*” has been produced under Horizon 2020, which entails responsible research and innovation.



It was stated that this strategy recognises science and society as an ecosystem, which calls for a systemic approach involving responsible research and innovation (RRI). It was stressed that RRI is a cross-cutting issue in Horizon 2020, and a process where all societal actors work together during the whole research and innovation process in order to align outcomes to the values, needs and expectations of European society. It was stated that it is essential to engage society, integrate the gender and ethical dimensions, ensure access to research outcomes, and encourage formal and informal science education. It was highlighted that “*Sea for Society*” has proven to be a successful example of how this strategy can be translated into the domain of the sea. The Commission praised the project as it has included extensive stakeholder consultations also highlighting the importance of involving youth. The recommendations for “*Sea for Society*” with regards to research and innovation were highlighted underlining the importance of collaborative projects and the creation of multidisciplinary teams, as well as the need to enable and foster dialogue and collaboration between the research community, the private sector, policy-makers, and citizens. The stakeholder recommendations were also stressed further underlining that RRI takes into account the regional level also calling for the integration of all levels. It was also said that the work programme 2016-2017 under Horizon 2020 will be underpinned by RRI, aiming to align research and innovation with the values, needs and expectations of society. It was concluded by stating that some of the recommendations expressed can already be found in EU innovation policy and they will help serve for further inputs in upcoming programmes.

Tiago Pitta e Cunha, Cabinet of the President of Portugal stressed that there is a lack of understanding by civil society and decision-makers on what is going on in the Ocean. It was stressed that humans live in a different world disconnected from the Ocean not acting on the urgency which is needed. The world of the Ocean is invisible to human lives as we cannot see the oxygen it produces or the ecosystem services it provides. It was pointed out that the scientific community has since the 1970s stated that integrated maritime policies are needed but we have still not achieved this. It was underlined that society will unavoidable become a Blue Society due to the potential resources of the Ocean. It was stated that the EU should therefore be at the forefront acting to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation. In order to achieve a Blue Society the misperception of the Ocean must be acknowledged and engage in dialogue to generate behavioural change. It was pointed out that the climate change debate provides an opportunity to better connect the link between the Ocean and climate change. It was also stressed that due to climate change we will need to decarbonise the economy and the Ocean will be our ally in this. The need for more education and knowledge was stressed stating that the Ocean must be added to school curricula. Better governance by integrating cross-cutting policies as well as the need to account the value of blue natural capital was also stated as essential.

Puri Canals, MedPAN stressed the importance of networks in order to share experience and knowledge as well as the development of management tools. It was pointed out that the process of creating MedPAN can provide insights on how to further move towards a Blue Society. It was explained that the network received a great deal of doubt when it was created but it has been successful in supporting managers and improving capacity



development on the ground. It was explained that by identifying gaps, which keep managers and organisations from working together trust has been built. The importance of a systemic approach and working in a systemic manner was stressed in order to achieve a Blue Society. The need for information was raised pointing out that there are a lot of institutions working on marine issues and governance but there is no clear identification of gaps or common projects to work together as no trust exists. It was stated as essential to identify who the actors are, what is going well, and include society to understand the value of the Ocean itself and how it contributes to the overall well-being. It was underlined that the drivers of change for each sector and institution must be identified in order to build bridges and motivate change. The need to acknowledge the Ocean at COP21 was also stressed calling upon politicians to recognise its role and take action.

Niall McDonough, European Marine Board stressed that a Blue Society is one that puts the Ocean at the heart of decision-making. It was pointed out that we lack methodologies and tools to place an economic valuation framework on marine goods and services. A lack of appreciation of the Ocean was also mentioned as none of the INDCs submitted to COP21 refer to the Ocean. It was emphasised that the scientific community plays a crucial role promoting a Blue Society as it is at the forefront of knowledge providing the information that gives us more informed policies. The scientific community also produces effective Ocean advocates. It was highlighted that projects such as “*Sea for Society*” are making a difference in how dialogue is structured and foster behavioural change. It was underlined that there is a disconnection on how new professionals are trained in University and the role they will have. The need to develop a more system oriented interdisciplinary approach by complementing training in other spheres was stressed allowing graduates to immediately address real world challenges. It was also stated that there is a lack of incentives for scientist contributing to evidence-based science and policy proposing the need to better reward scientists.

Lara Barazi, Kefalonia Fisheries highlighted the importance of aquaculture and the need to change global consumption patterns. Aquaculture is in the EU an economic viable sector that produces high quality and nutritious products that will in the future have to produce the needs to meet a growing population. It was emphasised that aquaculture provides rural areas with an important livelihood. It was underlined that the majority of the sector consists of substance farmers and 90% are microbusinesses. It was pointed out that these are the people that will suffer first from the environment going out of balance. It was stressed that aquaculture provides an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of industrial agriculture and make sure they are not repeated in the Ocean. It was stated that there is a big difference between farming on land and farming at sea, as no one owns the Ocean emphasising the high level of trust that is given to those in aquaculture. The importance of governance, maritime spatial planning, and integrated coastal management was highlighted as they are essential when discussing common use. It was underlined that aquaculture is by far a more sustainable method of protein production than land-based protein sources. It was however said that there is a perception that aquaculture is harmful to the environment. The need for commonly agreed facts was stressed calling for a science-based dialogue in order to avoid



mismangement. The importance of ocean literacy was reiterated focusing on primary and secondary education.

Francis Vallat, European network of maritime clusters underlined that it is not just the politicians that are ignoring the Ocean but also scientists as it is not adequately included in the reports conducted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It was stressed that the Ocean is the world's most important climate regulator, which must be acknowledged by all stakeholders in order to impose a Blue Society. The importance of incorporating green and blue growth in Europe was underlined as pivotal. It was also pointed out that maritime activity is accelerating highlighting new opportunities for industries such as biotechnology, deep sea mining and research. It was however underscored that the Ocean is fragile calling on resources to be used sustainably. It was pointed out that the economic aspect could have been better incorporated in the project to attract stronger support (especially from the numerous high quality professionals who are strongly struggling, at their costs, against unfair and substandard competition). The need to move towards global ocean governance was stressed calling for the strengthening of the power of international organisations, as well as the search for stricter universal (rather than regional) measures. It was stated that the Blue Society should refer to the traditional values of the sea including truth, transparency, humility, solidarity, and courage. It was also emphasised that a Blue Society will only be achieved if it is built with the involvement of current generations, not against them. Lastly, the need to support some humanitarian maritime initiatives, such as SOS Mediterraena (salvage of boat people in distress) was mentioned as a necessary part of a Blue Society.

Joanne Casserly, Youth representative stressed that the European Youth Citizens wish to implement a society which cares about the planet and its global Ocean. With regards to a sustainable economy it was underlined that the local economy must be stimulated and the marine resources managed in a sustainable way. The importance of governance and financing were emphasised stressing the need to establish conscious limits in all maritime sectors, and improve waste management. Research and innovation was highlighted calling for innovative maritime practices and approaches, encompassing physical design, technologies and materials used, to legislative controls. It was underlined that this would increase the efficiency of current practices and overall consumption. The need to enhance the collaboration between research institutes and coordinate a multidisciplinary approach to all areas of maritime development was also stressed. The importance of education and awareness as well as preservation of natural resources was further reiterated. It was called upon the EU to take into account the views of the youth, and in return the youth commit to respecting the environment in daily choices and actions while also contributing to a sustainable economy and building of a Blue Society.

The discussion with the audience highlighted the concern of feeding knowledge into decision-making. The need for identifying the gaps with the status of the environment was stressed as well as the need to respond to these gaps with research that provide solutions and not just more data. The need for all stakeholders to communicate and to be provided



the space to do so was stressed calling for more dialogue. It was also pointed out that scientists and managers speak different languages and it was underlined that further examination is needed of scientists working with people that deal with everyday decisions and how they can better understand each other. It was stressed that collaborating more with seafarers is essential exchanging information as well as providing them with courses on the ecology of oceans as this is not include in curricula. The important link between oceans and climate change was reiterated calling upon all to mobilise and take action. The issue of aquaculture was raised and how to ensure the sustainability of this practice. It was reiterated as a complex issue where more scientific facts and technologies are needed in order to ensure that we understand the same thing and promote the best possible solutions. It was pointed out that Horizon 2020 should for the next generation of funds target the maritime sector and focus more on the Ocean. It was underlined by the Commission that responsible research and innovation must be translated into various fields. The importance of engaging with civil society was stressed as well as the need to go further on this matter and raise awareness of the population as well as policy-makers. It was stressed that the decisions taken in the Parliament and Council must be influenced by citizens and the need to express interest and concerns of constituencies. It was underlined that by establishing a network and working together a stronger voice is given to society. The first stage of the follow-up of the project was mentioned highlighting that the signing of the stakeholder commitment further supports stakeholders to continue to enrich, promote, and implement the concept of Blue Society in the various fields. It was underlined that the partners of the project aim ensure that work and collaboration continues in order to promote the Blue Society principles. Further, it was stated that as a legacy of the project a reward programme is being established which recognises the important work of scientists. With regards to the project it was said that there is a gap as it does not include EU Overseas and territories, which encompass the largest marine domain in the world. Moving forward it was stressed to involve these regions. The debate also underscored the important role of the youth and their engagement in this project calling on the EU to take their views into consideration.

Ricardo Serrão Santos MEP concluded the meeting by highlighting that a Blue Society is a global vision reminding participants that the Ocean must be put at the centre of the system. It was also pointed out that a Blue Society offers many new opportunities stressing the need to utilise the potential but also consider the risks. The need to communicate with people beyond this meeting was emphasised underlining the importance of engaging in dialogue with all stakeholders and reaching those that are still not aware of the pivotal role that the Ocean plays. The meeting was concluded by the signing of the Blue Society Stakeholder Commitment joining organisations from across Europe to continue to enrich, promote and strive for a Blue Society.

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