Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!
Sperrfrist: Redebeginn

Statement
der Europaabgeordneten

U l r i k e R o d u s t

Maritime Stakeholder Platform in the Baltic Sea Region - Kick-off conference

Rede zu Konferenzbeginn

Datum:	Donnerstag, 26. März 2015
Uhrzeit:	14 Uhr
Ort:	GEOMAR Wischhofstr. 1-3 Kiel

Dear Commissioner Vella, dear Minister Meyer, dear Mister Briškens, dear guests,

First of all, I would like to extent a special thanks to the Commission and the state government of Schleswig-Holstein for making this event possible. Without their efforts, we - maritime stakeholders from research, industry, NGOs and politics - would not be gathered here in Kiel for the next two days.

Moreover, I would like to give Commissioner Vella a special welcome. Thank you for being here today! I think in your position making

Schleswig-Holstein the destination of your first official journey to Germany is much more interesting than going to Berlin!

To the GEOMAR institute and Mr Hertzig, I would like to extend special thanks for providing this very fitting venue. The next two days we will have in-depth discussions about research, innovation and technology in the Baltic Sea region. What better place could there be than a marine research institute with a view of the Baltic?

To make the most of the two days ahead of us, the conference has a clear focus on Blue Growth in the Baltic Sea region. As you all know, the region has a long tradition of cooperation.

Already hundreds of years ago, the Baltic Sea region prospered thanks to the Hanseatic League. After the division we endured during the World Wars and the Cold War, great efforts have been undertaken to make it once again a role model for regional cooperation.

Today, we have the BSSSC as a network of Baltic Sea regions, we have HELCOM to protect the environment of the Baltic Sea, we have parliamentary cooperation of Baltic Sea countries through the BSPC and we have several programmes, such as BONUS, SUBMARINER

and the EU's INTERREG Programme to help the region realise its great potential.

In the past, like today cooperation and integration was the key to success.

Of course, today's reality is much more complex! Unlike in the days of the Hanseatic League, we do not just need safe routes to ship our goods. We need to cope with pollution, threats to the maritime environment, but also with a greater need for resources from the sea.

This is why the sea basin strategies of the EU help the implementation of the integrated maritime policy with their regional focus.

Also the Parliament has played an important role since the very beginning of maritime policy at EU level in 2007.

It was my late predecessor, Willi Piecyk, who took the role as the Parliament's rapporteur for the Parliament's first two reports on the EU's integrated maritime policy. With the Erika and Prestige oil spills still in mind, particular emphasis was put on the safety of cargo ships and the reduction of pollution.

Due to policies implemented since the Erika disaster, shipping has become safer and the crisis has shifted the focus of maritime policy to the possibilities for Blue Growth.

However, for me, the environmental aspect is nevertheless still relevant today. Since what is true for the land-based economy is all the more true for maritime activities: We need to respect the ecological limits, if we want to reap the benefits of the Blue Economy!

As the Commissioner just mentioned, we need to make sure that this does not only apply to Europe. We need to do our best to have a

level playing field and equally high standards for environmental protection for all oceans around the world. For this, we need strong global ocean governance.

On maritime policy more generally, we can observe a great interest by the Parliament in this term:

A group of MEPs and me set up the Intergroup on Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas. Intergroups bring together MEPs of different countries and political groups to focus on a specific policy or topic.

Our intergroup intends to push for a visible and strong European Maritime policy. As many committees often deal with aspects of maritime policy - for example research and innovation topics are often covered by the ITRE, macro-regional strategies by the REGI committee - the intergroup aims at linking the expertise on all maritime topics.

The Commission has been very keen to support our efforts. There will be a launch conference mid-May on the potential of the EU's maritime policy for the next four years - hopefully with the participation of Commissioner Vella! There will also be further events this year - for example one on maritime industries.

I was elected Vice-Chair of the intergroup and am in charge of the Baltic Sea region. As such, I will promote the success of our macro-regional cooperation and ensure that issues that concern the Baltic Sea receive enough attention in the intergroup as well as the Parliament.

Beyond the Baltic Sea, the European Parliament is currently working on two own-initiative reports related to maritime policy and Blue Growth. The first report focuses on opportunities for economic and job growth in the blue economy.

The rapporteur of the opinion in the Fisheries Committee, Isabelle Thomas, put great emphasise on sustainable growth. She is in favour of a more inclusive definition of Blue Growth, asks the Commission to provide a clearer picture of the financing needs and would like data collected on the seas to be public and accessible.

The second report currently in Parliament will be giving the perspective of the Parliament on the Adriatic-Ionian Sea Strategy. Here, the Parliament largely agrees with the Commission's focus on waste issues, the close cooperation with non-EU states in the region and the improvement of connections of the Adriatic-Ionian Sea with the inland regions surrounding it.

With these reports and the ones that are still to come as well as with the intergroup, we hope for a close and fruitful cooperation with the other EU institutions, member state and regional governments as well as stakeholders.

One close coordination and cooperation of all levels will help us create added value in the many coastal and maritime regions of Europe.

This brings me last, but not least, to my home region, Schleswig-Holstein - where the initiative "Sea - Our Future" has been in place since 2004.

Therefore, it is no coincidence that it was my predecessor Willi Piecyk who took the lead in Parliament on the two important reports on the integrated maritime policy mentioned before.

In Schleswig-Holstein, these first steps in the direction of an integrated maritime policy were soon extended with a maritime master plan and action plans to implement it. Meanwhile, also the federal level has taken up the idea and created a "National Master Plan for Maritime Technologies".

This national master plan is designed to ensure coordinated and streamlined policies for German maritime technologies. With the actions identified in the master plan, Germany seeks to stay competitive as a business location for maritime technology and use its technology to profit from the blue economy in a sustainable way.

I would like to thank Mr Vella for complementing Schleswig-Holstein to be the "birthplace of Europe's maritime policy" and I believe there is some truth to his statement!

With this I would like to come back to the Baltic Sea - the focus of this conference. As anywhere in European policy, national action has its

limits. This is all the more true for a Sea basin that concerns and connects all of us. Therefore, I believe the experiences made here should be taken onto the regional level and reinforce the cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, which has already served as a pioneer region in maritime affairs in the past.

The many stakeholders present in this room - from industry, research and policy - should put their heads together and think of ways to make maritime technologies more profitable for the environment and the economy of the Baltic Sea region.

Thank for your attention. I wish you fruitful discussions and interesting insights during the next two days.