



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

ATLANTIC, OUTERMOST REGIONS AND ARCTIC

Brussels,

**14TH MEETING OF THE
MEMBER STATE EXPERTS GROUP ON INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY,
25TH SEPTEMBER 2012, BRUSSELS**

MINUTES

On Tuesday 25/9, the 14th meeting of the MS Expert Group on the Integrated Maritime Policy took place. 16 MS were represented, as well as Norway and Croatia. There were also representatives from ENV and ECHO.

Haitze Siemers started the meeting by announcing the creation of a dedicated newsletter for the group.

NL thanked COM for the initiative and asked for the information to be extended to other sectors linked to maritime affaires such as CFP, MSFD, SSS etc.

The morning was dedicated to the latest developments of the Integrated Maritime Policy at EU level.

Blue Growth Communication: Roderick Sant presented the Communication to the group. He stressed that it is not an exclusive exercise, and that opportunities for sustainable growth and jobs exist in practically all marine and maritime economic activities. It is therefore important that members of the MSEG 'sensitise' their respective ministries and authorities responsible for drafting and negotiating Partnership Contracts that coastal, marine and maritime projects should be given due importance.

MS (PL,NL,MT) expressed their strong support for Blue Growth stressing that it is of crucial importance within the next financial framework. MT considers it should become the flagship project of the IMP, but asked to have this priority reflected further in the EMFF proposal.

NL and MT ask for immediate follow-up initiatives/actions to this political document.

Marine Knowledge Green paper: Matthew King presented the Green Paper and the on-going consultation.

PT supported the objectives and budget for Marine Knowledge.

NL, FR stressed that Marine knowledge should be considered in a broad way; the Limassol declaration is not only on mapping.

MT asked what would be the administrative burden of the development of Marine knowledge and stressed that the Commission had not yet build a convincing case for its added-value.

FR expressed doubts on the goodwill of the private sector to give its data. Private public partnerships are the way forward but this is missing in the Communication.

On the proposal for a steering group for Marine Knowledge, MS (FR,ES,NL,PT) asked the Commission not to multiply group for specific issues, and in general to bring coherence to IMP meetings. The MSEG should be used as much as possible. This comment was repeated at the Friends of Presidency meeting on Thursday.

A follow-up action is to have some MODEG experts join the MSEG on wider Marine Knowledge process.

Progress Report: Haitze Siemers gave a short update on the second Progress Report for the IMP adopted in parallel to the adoption of the Blue Growth Communication. The Progress report will also contribute to the preparation of the conclusions of the General Affairs Council in December 2012.

Implementation of the work programme 2011-2012: Haitze Siemers updated the group on the on-going work to launch the execution of the 40 million euro budget under the IMP Work Programme for 2011 and 2012. He recalled that COM has launched the lion's share of all the actions under the IMP Work Programme (only 2 more Calls for Proposals to be launched before the end of this year (*MSP project in Mediterranean/Black Sea and project on maritime employment and education*). So far, COM's work is focused on the procedural aspects of launching the activities (publishing Calls for Tenders/for Proposals, evaluating offers/applications, preparing contracts/agreements, ensuring sufficient payment credits).

MS will be kept up to date on the progress.

To end the morning session, several MS made short presentations on the progress of IMP in their country.

IE presented its newly published Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland: "*Harvesting Our Ocean Wealth*".

HR, as a newcomer to the group, gave a brief state of play of the IMP in Croatia. There is no institutionalized institution for coordination of sectoral policies but the importance of having an integrated policy is recognized. A working group to develop a national policy for IMP has been created.

GR gave a short update on the Greek national situation and announced the re-establishment of the Ministry of Shipping and Maritime Affairs as a separate department since 21 June 2012.

The afternoon of the MSEG was dedicated to the EMFF.

PT presented their non-paper on IMP funding. They stressed the added value of cross-border and cross-sectoral funding dedicated to sharing data and information and as a complement to sectoral funds. PT also stressed that the nature of IMP actions necessitates a centralised approach, with strong involvement of MS, to take "better informed decisions in supporting the EU's Blue Growth". They highlighted the consequence of

cutting funding for IMP: actions would be dealt through sectoral policies, incl. fisheries, with duplication of efforts between funds. They asked MS to consider this consequence compared to the limited benefit of adding little money to the fisheries chapters of the EMFF.

COM then made a presentation on the EMFF and actions that we are planning to develop from 2014.

All MS who took the floor welcomed the PT papers and the chance given by COM to continue the debate on the EMFF.

NL questioned the amounts allocated to marine knowledge and surveillance, stating that they need more information to make sense of the budget proposed. They stressed that it is currently difficult 1) to see how EMODNet will benefit business in NL – all the more so if EMODNet remains only in English – 2) to convince governments with the little information they have. NL also asked why Blue growth does not get more support as the new IMP priority.

FR made a formal statement stressing that the budget for MSFD would be better spent through shared management and asked COM to explain what would be the overall funding for MSFD. They also asked more details on MSP actions to be financed and what is the place for fisheries in the IMP. Privately, they conceded later that their main concern was implementation of the MSFD and the resources available for this to Member States – there was a good discussion on this with the DG ENV representative who participated in the meeting.

PL said they support the use of shared management for the IMP, without giving further details.

BE expressed their surprise at the increase in budget asking COM to give more details, especially on what MS would get back.

IE thanks COM to have lunched the discussion on IMP/EMFF in the past 2 weeks, stressing that a momentum was being built and the attention of capitals had been grabbed. They asked COM to give more details on how the fund would be used.

FI said that for little money the IMP has the potential to bring a lot of added-value.

MARE clarified the concern of MS on the use of direct management, the benefit of the EMFF for fisheries, the type of cross-border project financed for MSP and the flexibility and opportunity for participation of Member States provided by the adoption of annual work programmes. ENV explained how the MSFD would be financed in the next period and clarified that MS will get support through shared management in the CSF and through direct management in LIFE +. Funding for MSFD in the EMFF will be focused on cross-border and sea basin actions, following the nature of the IMP. MARE clarified that the proposals of the Commission were overall Blue Growth related, and that related actions could and should be funded also through the far bigger budgets available under the CSF and Horizon 2020.

Although MS did not express new positions vis-à-vis the EMFF, they welcomed further discussion, building on last week's presentation in the fisheries working group. In this process, the MSEG allowed some clarifications especially on the overall funding for the MSFD between 2014 and 2020, the use of direct management and the flexibility of the

examination committee to adapt priorities annually. In the IMP context, FR position on shared management seems to be now confined to the MSFD.