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15TH MEETING OF THE MEMBER STATE EXPERT GROUP ON MARITIME POLICY

Tuesday 11 December 2012

MINUTES

On Tuesday 11/12, the 15th meeting of the MS Expert Group on Integrated Maritime Policy took place. 15 MS were represented, as well as Norway. There were also representatives from other services of the Commission: RTD, ENT and ENV.

The CY Presidency announced the adoption of the Council conclusions on IMP by the General Affairs Council.

Opening

Haitze Siemers started the meeting with some key information on the latest news for IMP at EU level and relevant dates of expert meetings - *to be communicated in the December edition of the MSEG Bulletin*.

In the same spirit of achieving better coordination and communication of the various MARE expert meetings, MSEG should have an overview of what is going on in its subgroups and related groups. Debriefings were made for the 5th meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Maritime Policy in the Mediterranean held on 14-15 November 2012 and for the meeting of the MSEG subgroup on Maritime Spatial Planning held on 28 November 2012. Minutes have been circulated to the group.

Regarding the outcome of the 5th Working Group meeting on IMP in the Mediterranean as supported by the IMP-MED project for technical assistance to Mediterranean partner countries (ENPI).

Anita Vella informed MS that the group has been re-confirmed as a key dialogue platform with all Mediterranean Coastal States, regional conventions and organisations on IMP issues. All countries share the fact that this group is an important driver for maritime policy development in the region. All, with the exception of Egypt, agreed on the adoption of conclusions, which will pave the way for the future work of the group.

Participants included: Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Albania, United Kingdom, Italy, France, Spain, Malta, Cyprus, Greece, Monaco, Mauritania, Barcelona Convention, GFCM, REMPEC and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

Key conclusions drawn:

- Acknowledgement of progress made by IMP-Med project and general commitment for extension over 2013-2014 (ENPI South)
- Acknowledgement of the progress made at EU level on IMP and Blue Growth
- general interest expressed on the cooperation initiative being developed with EIB and IMO and ideas presented, notably the virtual knowledge centre and clustering
- better understanding acquired on the role of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean
- Strong support on the Adriatic and Ionian Maritime Strategy
- Welcoming of the Mediterranean Coast Guard functions Forum and the second edition hosted by France in September 2012. A third edition of the Forum will be hosted by Spain in the first half of 2013.

Next steps to be undertaken include the finalisation of draft conclusions and meeting report. All countries will be invited to the 12th FEMIP Conference to be held early 2013 (indicatively March) and to EMD 2013. The IMP-Med project will be organising back-to-back workshops on both occasions.

FR acknowledged the importance of the work being taken forward through this process.

Regarding maritime spatial planning, MS made the following comments.

DE expressed its reservation to the forthcoming legislative proposal on MSP, referring to the principle of proportionality and stressing that a binding legislative measure did not seem to be proportionate compared to the current need. Up to now, IMP has been governed by guidelines and indicative measures and this should also be the case in the future. It also disagreed with including ICZM in the same legislative proposal together with IMP.

MT queried about the minutes of the MSEG subgroup on Maritime Spatial Planning and the reference to a suggestion by some MS that work for the next meetings should focus on the legislative proposal of the Commission, in order to facilitate and avoid too technical discussions in Council. MT believes that any discussion should take place at council level. The FoP group should be the arena for it. MT considers that the legislative proposal has to be discussed at council level rather than at expert level. Furthermore MT pointed out that discussions outside the FoP group should be mandated by the FoP group or COREPER. MT concluded that it is not the first time that technical dossiers have been discussed at Council level.

FR agreed with DE and MT on the points raised by them. It stated their extreme reservation to the initiative of the Commission to adopt a binding legislative instrument on MSP.

In response, the Commission indicated that:

- It was not in a position to discuss a forthcoming legislative proposal on MSP at this juncture. This can be done when the legislative proposal has been finalised.
- It was aware and aimed at respecting proportionality.
- It was clear that the legislative proposal will be discussed both in the European Parliament and the Council. No deviation of the formal co-decision legislative procedure had been foreseen. The Presidency of the Council is to decide how it will organise the discussion on a forthcoming legislative proposal. The minutes of the WG merely reflected a comment made by some MS that some technical discussions in Council could be delegated to the MSEG in order to facilitate that task, but it was understood that this is up to the Council to decide how it wants to organise itself.

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

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. This IMP budget will be spent mainly to support tools that facilitate synergies among sectoral policies, including a knowledge base for growth and innovation in ocean economy, integrated maritime surveillance, maritime spatial planning as well as actions to support blue growth in the maritime sectors across Europe, in line with Europe 2020 Strategy. Other main actions under the Work Programme are the supporting measures to develop dedicated strategies for different European sea basins and to implement the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Haitze recalled that MARE 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, MARE's work was focused on the procedural aspects of launching the activities but from now on the key focus shifts to the implementation of projects and we will continuously keep the group updated on the progress. MARE will also inform MS on the results of the preparatory actions and pilot projects which preceded the IMP Work Programme (MSP projects in the Baltic and in the North Sea; EMODnet actions, Blue Growth study, BlueMassMed).

Haitze stressed that MARE maintains a horizontal approach towards implementing the Work Programme by managing it jointly together with colleagues in other Commission departments. Thus, apart from DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, DG Environment and DG Mobility and Transport are both directly responsible for managing parts of the Work Programme and we are also ensuring that actions are complementary to the activities managed by other DGs, e.g. Research (7th Framework Programme for Research and the Joint Programming Initiative “Healthy and productive seas and oceans”) and Regional Policy (INTERREG programmes).

Common Strategic Framework, Country Position papers and the Integrated Maritime Policy: Haitze Siemers updated the group on the progress made on CPP. In the context of CSF, COM is building a link between IMP actions and what is effectively proposed in the partnership contracts and operational programmes. This requires new thinking and new approaches. In some Member States links have to be established between experts and managing authorities.

The Commission has prepared Country Position Papers identifying specific priorities for each country and organized launch events in most of the countries. Informal dialogue with MS on Partnership Agreements and Operational programmes will start very soon followed by official negotiations starting in the second half of 2013. The Commission will be very firm to ensure results orientated programmes: aiming at good coherence between the content of partnership agreements and national/regional programmes with maritime priorities and regional strategies, linking them with clear targets and indicators.

However, it is also very important that the identified priorities by the Commission and MS match. We are striving to find a way to get IMP and Blue Growth in the dialogues with MS in view of operational programme. We would therefore encourage you to contact the relevant ministries responsible for drafting partnership contracts and operational programmes to persuade them to take into account maritime priorities and sea-basin strategies.

IE and FI agreed with COM. IE pointed that DG REGIO was in Dublin today to meet on the position papers. COM will circulate the CPP to the group together with the presentations prepared. FI commented that it is important for the adoption of legislation to have a link between sea basin and macro regional sea basin strategies.

Presentation of Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas: Daniela Gritti presented the main pillars of the maritime strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas as adopted in the form of Communication by the European Commission on 3rd December 2012. This strategy and the work being done by the countries provide a good example of objective and priority setting in a shared sea area focusing, in this case on: maximizing the potential of the blue economy, a healthier marine environment, a safer and more secure maritime space and sustainable and responsible fishing activities.

Daniela recalled that the work started off in 2010 with Commissioner Damanaki's visit to Ancona (IT). The work continued within expert groups 'meetings and with stakeholders' consultation (Athens, Trieste, Slovenia).

A launching high level conference took place on 6th December 2012 in Zagreb hosted by Croatia. The Conference reaffirmed the political commitment of Adriatic and Ionian countries (Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) to work together for the sustainable exploitation of the maritime potential of the region. It also launched the work on a maritime Action Plan by which countries will identify – and subsequently implement – actions and projects meant to achieve the objectives defined by the Communication.

The Communication sets a framework towards a coherent action plan. The methodology followed is similar than that of macro regional strategies. The maritime strategy might constitute the first component of a wider macro-regional strategy, provided that the European Council entrusts the Commission to work on it.

GR thanked COM for the successful event in Zagreb and for the Communication itself. They expressed their strong support on the long term implementation of the action plan.

FI asked questions on the political cooperation with accession countries and candidate countries. It wanted also to know more about the participation of Serbia in this process. COM recalled that the different status vis-à-vis EU membership and the corresponding different funding possibilities constitute an additional challenge of the strategy. However, all countries, Member States, candidate and potential candidates, are involved on an equal footing. The process is at "géométrie variable" and landlocked countries such as Serbia can get involved. Serbia has been involved since the beginning as one of the eight member countries of the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative.

Regarding the action plan, the challenge will be to reach out to all ministries and to all stakeholders and to bring their input together in a coherent way. COM also noted that funding possibilities available also include non-EU ones.

Presentation of the outcome of the consultation on ocean energy: Elaine Miller presented the outcome of the consultation. Ocean renewable energy was highlighted as one of the five most promising growth areas in the Communication on "Blue Growth: opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth" adopted on 13 September 2012. The Commission plans to deliver a Communication on marine renewable energy in 2013 to help accelerate the development of this sector in the EU. In the course of its preparatory work, the Commission held a public consultation on ocean energy between June and September 2012. The consultation addressed issues such as technical barriers, research needs, employment issues, environmental impacts and administrative barriers. One of the issues that emerged from the consultation is the need for a more focused research strategy to support current developments. Funding at EU level has also been seen as a crucial issue.

FR thought that the consultation time was insufficient and that the number of replies received (128) was not really adequate. COM answered that another formal consultation was not envisaged but that it was in contact with stakeholders and suggested that there may be scope for further consultations depending on the policy options that were to be put on the table. FR also asked where more funding for research would come from. COM highlighted the importance for Member States to focus research needs in the Horizon 2020 programme.

MT raised a point on terminology: MT made reference to the recently adopted Council Conclusions on IMP and associated discussions regarding the term being used, ocean energy should be changed to marine energy since it puts aside a certain number of MS. COM explained that using the word "marine" would include offshore wind energy whereas the impact assessment was focused on ocean energy as this sector was much less developed than offshore wind and needed boosting. Furthermore, within "ocean" energy, tidal and wave energy are prevalent.

In addition MT asked whether ENER was involved in the process. COM underlined that it was working closely with DG ENV, ENER, and RTD.

UK said that despite the existence of a one-stop shop for planning purposes in Scotland which is quite effective, there were still administrative problems stemming from the application of certain environmental directives and asked whether there was any plan to streamline them to help MS. COM replied that any revision of these directives is quite a

sensitive matter but that something that could be explored was the issuance of guidelines to assist MS and it was working with DG ENV to see what can possibly be done.

Update on the Atlantic Forum: Luis Cuervo presented the state of play of the Atlantic Forum. The Atlantic Forum was set up to gather support and exchange ideas amongst interested parties (EU institutions, Member States, regions, the research community, maritime industry and other interested parties) on proposals for an Action Plan for the Atlantic. This process was set out in the Commission's Communication on a strategy for the Atlantic Ocean area.

The future Atlantic Action Plan is due for adoption under the Irish Presidency. The aim of the Action Plan is to earmark the main investment and research priorities for the Atlantic area, spurring Blue Growth by tackling the challenges set out in the Atlantic strategy Communication. The priorities set out in the Action Plan could result in projects being devised to respond to these research and investment priorities. It is possible that projects could be financed by EU funds, the private sector, or the EIB.

Three Atlantic Forum workshops have already taken place (Azores, Brest and Bilbao), on the some of the challenges set out in the Atlantic strategy: deep-sea exploration, the reduction of carbon emissions and the ecosystem approach. Two more workshops are foreseen in 2013 (Cardiff -24 January- and Cork -4 March) on 'Blue Growth' and research and innovation.

The next priorities are the adoption of the Action Plan in March 2013, the adoption of Council conclusions under the Irish presidency in 2013 and putting in place a performance framework monitoring mechanism to ensure the successful implementation of any Action Plan taking into account the priorities set in the latter.

The three workshops that have taken place show that there is demand and support for the Atlantic strategy. Prioritising research and investment will be one of the main objectives of the future Action Plan. Funding may be possible through public/private funding sources or European Investment Bank funding, on top of EU structural funds and 'Horizon 2020'.

UK admitted that its level of engagement on the Atlantic Strategy has not been high up to now but that there is growing interest and support shown. UK asked how the Commission could take into consideration all suggestions considering the very tight timing. The Commission acknowledged the time constraints but signalled that the Atlantic Forum process (complemented by the stakeholder consultation launched until 15.02.2013) has created an effective framework to consider all relevant suggestions. The Action Plan will be adopted in a form of a Communication together with a Staff Working Document in annex listing the main priorities for research and investment (following consultation with Member States and in consideration to the results of the public consultation and the forum's workshops).

FR questioned COM on the traceability of the proposals and on the control of the operational phase. The list of proposals annexed to the consultation document is considered comprehensive but too long. FR had queries on how would the Action Plan lead to an operational phase and who would be in charge of implementing it. FR considers Member States should be in charge of implementing the Action Plan whilst the Commission should steer the process and ensure direction and coordination with general IMP objectives. FR also raised the time constraints on the adoption of the Action Plan and requested clarification on the legal value of the Communication and the Staff Working Document. The Commission explained that both instruments have the same

legal value, but that the Staff Working Document is better suited to allow for a mid-term review of the Action's Plan implementation. On time constraints, The Commission noted that there will be approximately one month between the closure of the public consultation and the adoption of the Action Plan, enough time to take new suggestions into consideration.

Progress on Integrated Maritime Policy in Member States

NL gave a presentation on the advisory report of the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure "*A sea of opportunity - strengthening the North Sea's significance to society*". NL highlighted the reactions from the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment. The presentation is available on the forum.

DE: Dietrich Seele announced his retirement from next year. He thanked the COM and the group for all the fantastic work which has been done over the years. MARE thanked Mr. Seele for his constructive attitude and full support during these 5 years of intensive discussions on IMP and wished him good luck in his future initiatives.

European Maritime Day Conference 2013 in Malta: Haitze Siemers highlighted the European Maritime Day Conference to be held in Malta in May 2013. It is organised by the European Commission (DG for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) in partnership with the Maltese Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport, and Communication, and the Maltese Ministry for Tourism, Culture and Environment.

The Conference will focus on sustainable coastal and maritime tourism in the wider context of Blue Growth. It will be an occasion to reflect, at high level, on how to make Blue Growth happen through sustainable tourism, connectivity and coastal development.

This event is a unique opportunity to gather the whole maritime community into one forum to discuss best practices and new ideas. There will be high-level political debates as well as more practical exchanges between maritime stakeholders. Stakeholders can get actively involved via workshops and exhibitions. All the information is on our website.

MT thanked MARE for the very good cooperation and urges MS to push their stakeholders to get actively involved. Stakeholders must express their views. MT also stresses that the Limassol Declaration, the Blue Growth Communication, and the recent Council Conclusions will be the basis for EMD 2013.

The afternoon of the MSEG meeting was dedicated to Marine Knowledge 2020.

During the last MSEG meeting Member States indicated that they did not want a specific sub group or steering group on marine knowledge. Instead they wanted to dedicate a special meeting of their integrated maritime policy expert group to the issue. They also wanted to hear an overview of all marine knowledge activities – not just those proposed for funding under the integrated maritime policy.

This afternoon session was set up to give a bigger picture on Marine Knowledge by providing MS with an overview of the different activities, projects, programmes at EU level (EMODnet, Copernicus/GMES, the Data Collection Framework, Horizon 2020m, large infrastructure projects such as EuroARGO and the monitoring and reporting requirements of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Member States were grateful for this initiative.

MT expressed concern on how to use project-based results (temporary) in a general Marine Knowledge strategy (long term). COM replied that this was one of the primary reasons for the Marine Knowledge 2020 initiative. Methods for routine monitoring can be developed under research funding but cannot be sustained once the concept has been proved. The Copernicus (GMES) initiative aims to replace satellites funded under a research budget with follow-ups funded from operational budget lines.

MT asked if the alignment of Member State databases would be expensive. COM assured that there would be one-off costs that could be supported by the EMODnet budget. Afterwards the cost of maintaining data in an agreed format should be less than the heterogeneous formats used previously. Member States can share experience

NO emphasized the importance of having clear conditions for data access and data quality as well as use of data. COM replied that INSPIRE sets the basic standards but there are no plans at the moment to introduce legal obligations. It is to Member States' advantage to conform. Financial incentives can help them to bear start-up costs.

DE stressed that EMODNET should evolve into a central data base (data hub for marine and coastline data) and be technologically further enhanced (avoid overlaps and maintain up to date). It should be straightforward for users to find and access data. COM agreed.

DE also asked for a legal basis for the ownership and traceability of data. COM agrees that free access to data is crucial. No further legal obligations are planned at this point. It will be on a voluntary basis with financial incentives.

DE asked for a common platform for GMES AND EMODNET. COM replied that behind the scenes this is already happening. Some technology is shared. There are ongoing moves to strengthen the linkages. Early indications from the public consultation indicate that this is a common wish of stakeholders.

DE emphasizes that MS experience large difficulties to fulfil their reporting obligations under MSFD and asked DG-ENV to put further work into that. COM replied that this is indeed a priority.

IE asked for detailed information on scale of data. COM informed that this is a complex question. The seabed mapping to be delivered in 2014 will be at a scale of 1/8' of longitude and latitude. Afterwards the resolution will be refined in areas where the surveying merits it and the data are available.

NL expressed confusion on the large spectrum of activities which appear all to concentrate on producing, collecting and managing data while there are lots of questions to be answered first on the real needs of users. They emphasized the need for translation of this available data for policy-making needs.

COM agreed that for now the exercise has been mostly orientated towards data management and ensuring that the data we have already collected is readily available. However, once we move from a paradigm of collecting data for a special purpose such as safe navigation towards one where we collect once and use the data for many purposes, we do indeed break an important link between those who produce the data and those who use them. It is for this reason that two pilot projects will start in early 2013 – one for the

North Sea and one for the Mediterranean, to investigate this very issue. The Member States Expert Group is invited to follow these projects very closely.

Closing and any other business

The Chair informed MS that the next Coastguard forum will be hosted by Spain.