

Maria Damanaki

Member of the European Commission

Responsible for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

**The marine dimension of climate
change Investment opportunities for
coastal areas**

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

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Κυρίες και κύριοι, αγαπητοί φίλοι,

Θα ήθελα να σας ευχαριστήσω για την ιδιαίτερη τιμή να μιλήσω στο Φόρουμ εκ μέρους της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής. Θα αναφερθώ στη θαλάσσια διάσταση της κλιματικής αλλαγής και τις ευκαιρίες για ανάπτυξη και απασχόληση που μπορεί να δημιουργήσει.

Για την πρόκληση της κλιματικής αλλαγής στη Μεσόγειο έχουν ήδη αναφερθεί πολλά. Άλλωστε και οι πολίτες γνωρίζουν πλέον πως τα ακραία φαινόμενα είναι εδώ: Η άνοδος της στάθμης του νερού, η διάβρωση, οι παρατεταμένες περίοδοι ξηρασίας, η αλλοίωση της περιεκτικότητας του νερού σε αλάτι, ασκούν τεράστια πίεση πάνω στο οικοσύστημα της Μεσογείου, στις κοινωνίες και τις οικονομίες μας. Ωστόσο, υπάρχει τρόπος για να μετατρέψουμε αυτές τις προκλήσεις σε ευκαιρίες – ευκαιρίες για καινοτομική ανάπτυξη και απασχόληση. Αρκεί να πειστούμε όλοι μας ότι πρέπει να αναλάβουμε δράση.

Μία μελέτη της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής σχετικά με τις οικονομικές συνέπειες της κλιματικής αλλαγής στις παράκτιες περιοχές έφερε στην επιφάνεια κάποια στοιχεία που αναιρούν κάθε δυσπιστία για την ανάγκη ανάληψης αυτής της δράσης.

Η μη ανάληψη δράσης υπολογίζουμε ότι θα κοστίσει συνολικά στην ΕΕ περίπου 6 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ μέχρι το 2020. Το ποσό αυτό θα ανέλθει σε 11 με 17 δις το 2080. Προς το παρόν οι αμιγείς δημόσιες δαπάνες για την αντιμετώπιση σχετικών φαινομένων είναι πολύ μικρότερες – μόλις 1 δις ετησίως – και αφορούν κυρίως την άνοδο της στάθμης του νερού και τις καταστροφές από ακραία καιρικά φαινόμενα. Έχουμε υπολογίσει ότι κατά την περίοδο 1998 έως 2015 οι χώρες της Μεσογείου θα έχουν δαπανήσει περίπου 5.8 δις για την προστασία των παράκτιων περιοχών τους από υπερχειλίσσεις, πλημμύρες και διαβρώσεις.

Κι όμως, είναι στο χέρι μας να μετατρέψουμε αυτές τις απειλές σε ευκαιρίες. Εμείς οι πολιτικοί οφείλουμε να θέσουμε τις ανάλογες προτεραιότητες και να λάβουμε αποφάσεις βασισμένες σε επιστημονικά δεδομένα και ουσιαστική γνώση για το θαλάσσιο περιβάλλον της Μεσογείου.

Η πρώτη σκέψη που έρχεται στο νου όταν μιλούμε για την κλιματική αλλαγή είναι οι ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας. Οι θάλασσές μας αποτελούν πια το πιο πρόσφορο πεδίο για την ανάπτυξη του κλάδου αυτού. Η χωροθέτηση των σχετικών έργων μέσα στη θάλασσα απελευθερώνει τη χρήση της γης και ήδη κερδίζει έδαφος σ' όλη την Ευρώπη.

Για να αναφερθώ σε πιο συγκεκριμένα στοιχεία θα συνεχίσω στα Αγγλικά.

Marine renewable energies overall have the potential to meet 10 to 15% of the EU's electricity demand. Up to now, efforts have been rightly focusing on the deployment of offshore wind energy capacity. They should be pursued. However, we should not reduce the discussion to wind power only.

There is high potential to explore in other forms of marine energies, which have not yet received adequate political encouragement or financial acknowledgement. To mention just a few: marine current, wave and tidal energy; salinity and thermal gradient energy; algae for carbon capture and biofuels – all these nascent forms of energy should receive our attention.

Over the years there has been some doubt about whether the industry could invest on this new potential. However, the marine energy sector has recently demonstrated that it can deliver power onto the electricity grid from this new era. A few examples: A tidal device installed in Scotland in May 2008 is generating 250 kw by harnessing the power of waves and tidal streams. Marine current turbines were installed in Northern Ireland in July 2008; they generate 1.2 MW of energy. The Pelamis wave power project was installed off the Portuguese coast in July 2008 and for the time being, it is the world's first wave farm and also the first commercial investment of the

case. Statkraft, a world leader in renewable energy, opened the first world salinity gradient plant in November 2009 in Norway.

Marine renewable energy is a generous job creator. The Road Map for the Development of Ocean Energy published by the European Ocean Energy Association predicts that by 2020, the ocean energy sector could generate in the EU over 26,000 direct and 13,000 indirect jobs. By 2050 these numbers would be multiplied by ten. There is no doubt, therefore, that we need to drive forward this emerging industry not only in the North Sea and the Atlantic, but in the Mediterranean as well. I insist on the Mediterranean, because so far, apparently its true potential has been ignored.

Marine Knowledge

And this brings me to a big problem that we need to address as a pre-condition for any further action: the lack of complete knowledge.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is a lot we don't know about the sea. Today we definitely know more about the surface of the moon, than the bottom of the Mediterranean. Yet, our ignorance leads to uncertainty. Uncertainty leads to rising costs. And rising costs leads to inactivity.

To break this vicious circle, the Commission adopted last month the "Marine Knowledge 2020" initiative. This initiative aims to establish a network of marine data from various sources and facilitate their use for purposes, other than those, for which they were originally intended. Better marine data will help the decision makers to reduce uncertainty.

Let me give you an example. We are currently conducting a study on the effects of rising sea levels in London, the Netherlands and Venice, three places which have to invest a lot to combat this phenomenon. So far, we can demonstrate that the savings are:

- € 100 Millions if we reduce uncertainty by 25 %
- € 183 Millions if we reduce uncertainty by 50 %
- € 366 Millions with a complete elimination of uncertainty

I would like to recall, in that context, that at the beginning of September the Commissioner for Research and Innovation and myself, we launched together a new research programme for seas of 45 million euro for 2011. The first priority of this program is Mediterranean. I would welcome of course any proposals after this Forum.

I also have the pleasure to let you know that three days ago, the Commission adopted a new Communication on the "Integrated Maritime Surveillance". This is a tool to bring together the Member States across all maritime sectors, to allow for the exchange of maritime surveillance data, held by all of the concerned authorities.

We have launched recently a pilot project to promote the integration of surveillance by national authorities in the Mediterranean called "Blue Mass Med". Greece also cooperates here. We granted 4 million euro to finance this pilot project. It aims to define the architecture of the future European wide Maritime Surveillance Network that will allow the interoperability among all Maritime Surveillance Systems. This tool will be absolutely useful to decision makers and investors. It will also help us to cope more efficiently with real time events at sea, in order to improve our crisis prevention and response capabilities. The aim here is to protect and to reduce the

cost of accidents and our maritime interests against all types of threats : safety and security of shipping, oil spills, trafficking, smuggling or illegal immigration.

Maritime Spatial Planning

Let me now briefly raise another issue of relevance to today's discussion. The maritime sectors, looking for prosperity in the Mediterranean Sea (Energy, shipping, tourism, fisheries) are engaged today under our eyes in an increasingly tough competition for marine space.

This is why I plan to come forward next year with a proposal for action on Maritime Spatial Planning in order to promote rational and sustainable use of the sea, to balance different interests including the environmental aspects, and improve the quality of decisions.

This tool could lead to significant economic results. To take an example, let me refer to two maritime sectors with conflict of interests at sea: Wind farm and aquaculture.

Accelerating investment in these two activities with Maritime Spatial Planning by 1, 2 or 3 years is likely to generate between € 60 Million and over € 600 Million in 2020. At the same time, we can highly reduce the costs of running the economic system, the so-called "transaction costs". A recent Commission's study demonstrated that a reduction of 1% in transaction costs led to positive economic effects ranging from € 170 Million to €1.3 Billion.

These figures are impressive. They are based on assumptions and should be interpreted with care, but they offer promising perspectives. I have already discussed them with Mrs Birbili and I hope we will have some real increase of investment for aquaculture and offshore energy next year.

Cross border co-operation

Of course, to reach all these objectives we should work together with our partners in the Mediterranean. There should be no dividing lines between North and South, East and West. An integrated maritime policy, by definition works not only across sectors of the economy but also across borders. Maritime countries, both EU and non-EU, are key in that respect.

I visited Turkey recently where I had very constructive talks about their future active engagement in our working groups and advisory bodies. I plan to visit other Mediterranean partners and continue along this path of co-operation and engagement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In these testing times the temptation is often for countries and sectors to become inward-looking and hesitant. But my call to you today is for us to do exactly the opposite. The global nature of the recession means that we are all in the same boat. If we all start pulling in different directions, we will end up going around in circles. But if we chart the same course, we will arrive at our destination more quickly.

I wish you every success in your work today.

Thank you.