ROMÂNIA
SENAT
Parlamentul României
Senat

Bucharest, 29th October 2012

Courtesy translation

OPINION

OF THE SENATE OF ROMANIA

on the Green Paper of the Commission
Marine Knowledge 2020 from seabed mapping to ocean forecasting

COM (2012) 473 final

Taking into account the joint report of the Committee for public administration, organization of the territory and protection of the environment and of the Committee for European Affairs, the plenum of the Senate, during its session of the 29th October 2012, has decided the following:

1. - At points 4–7 of the Commission's Green Paper, *Marine Knowledge 2020 from seabed mapping to ocean forecasting,* the point of view of the Senate is as follows:

I. At point 4 – *Availability and interoperability*, subpoint 4.3 - *Competitiveness and Innovation,* the answer to question 1 is:

1. Are there any reasons why there should be exceptions, other than those related to personal privacy, to the Commission's policy of making marine data freely available and interoperable?

The Senate considers that in principle not, except for reasons related to the national security of the riparian countries, to economic interests to be taken into account because of the confidentiality of some information and to the expansion of exploration and exploitation of natural resources on the continental slope which raises the question of delimitation of exclusive economic zones.

II. At point 5 - *Progress so far,* the answers to subpoints 5.1. – 5.8. are the following:

1. At subpoint 5.1. – *National efforts,* the answer to question 2 is:

2. How can Member States ensure that the data they hold are safely stored, available, and interoperable?

The Senate considers that the means by which Member States can ensure that the data they hold are safely stored, available, and interoperable are the following:

a) continue and complete implementation of the communication COM (2010) 584 final - "Roadmap towards establishing the Common Information Sharing Environment for the surveillance of the EU maritime domain (CISE)". Thus, through a common platform

(application) it will be possible to gain access to data used by the user communities at European level, on the principle "need to know & level of access";

b) implementation of control standards of raw data quality and of acquisition procedures thereof;

c) standardization of formats of raw and final data (eg adoption of technology and SeaDataNet norms), as well as of data processing procedures.

2. At subpoint 5.2. - *European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet),* the answers to questions 3-4 are:

3. Are the seven thematic groups of the European Marine Observation and Data Network the most appropriate? Should some be combined? (e.g. geology and hydrography) or should some be divided?

The Senate considers that the seven thematic groups of the European Marine Observation and Data Network are appropriate. Given the complexity and specificity of geology and hydrography thematic groups, merging them is not recommended. The continuous interaction of hydrosphere, atmosphere and lithosphere, particularly in the coastal zone, leads to the idea of global, interdisciplinary monitoring. In the context of current climate change, it is necessary to observe and provide information and forecasts for the oceans and seas in real time, this requiring an operational budget for GMES marine service and EMODnet. In conclusion, an interdisciplinary monitoring is indicated.

4. What should be the balance in EMODnet between providing access to raw data and developing digital map layers derived from the raw data across seabasins?

The Senate considers that the access to raw data and developing digital map layers derived from the raw data across seabasins should be approximately balanced, with respect for the intellectual property rights of authors of such data and maps. Nevertheless there are issues related to the level of access and to the progressive payment of the access to raw data according to the degree of detail of information that will require further debates.

3. At subpoint 5.3. - *GMES Marine Service,* the answers to questions 5-6 are:

5. Should a common platform be set up to deliver products from both GMES and EMODnet?

The Senate considers that yes, if this will determine a standardization of formats. The integrated approach of data would allow the knowledge of aquatic ecosystems evolution. This approach is carried out at national level by the implementing Program of the "Roadmap towards establishing the Common Information Sharing Environment for the surveillance of the EU maritime domain" and will have as result obtaining CISE first at national level.

6. Should the GMES marine products and service also be tailored for use by those studying climate change and environmental protection as well as those needing a near-real-time operational service?

The Senate considers that it is appropriate to tailor GMES marine products and service for use by those studying climate change and environmental protection as well as those needing a near-real-time operational service.

4. At subpoint 5.4. - *Data Collection Framework for fisheries,* the answers to questions7-9 are:

7. Should data that is assembled under the Data Collection Framework for a particular purpose such as a fish stock assessment be available for re-use without the requirement to obtain authorisation from the original providers of these data?

The Senate considers that yes, in certain situations, while respecting the intellectual property rights of data authors. The knowledge of fish stocks is necessary to achieve good environmental status of marine ecosystems by 2020. Based on them the ecosystem status can be estimated and the environmental objectives can be set. Reusing data must be made with reference to the origin of the source. If the data presented are the basis of a business plan, then it should be obtained the authorization from those who elaborated them, so far as the data are more recent than 3 years.

8. Should an internet portal similar to those for EMODnet be set up to provide access to data held by Member States, as well as data assembled for particular stocks, particular fleet segments or particular fishing areas? If so, how should it be linked to EMODnet?

The Senate considers that yes, for data exchange. This web portal should be compatible with the EMODnet portal. Nevertheless the data of this portal must be marked as such and treated with great caution (in several countries in Europe and not only, there are numerous data on fish stocks which are not considered displayable). It is also possible to extract data from EMODnet by CISE.

9. Should control data, such as that derived from the Vessel Monitoring System that tracks fishing vessels, be made more available? If so, how can confidentiality concerns be resolved?

The Senate supports the limited accessibility. These data should be accessible in special to the authorities and user communities that have tangency with the activity carried out and that should treat the data based on protocols in which confidentiality clauses are stipulated. As for resolving confidentiality concerns, we take into account also the answer to question no. 2. The aspects related to the accessibility of the entire marine community to these data, after a limited period of time, require further debates.

5. At subpoint 5.5. – *Research,* the answers to questions 10-11 are:

10. What should be the focus of EU support to new marine observation technologies? How can we extend ocean monitoring and its cost effectiveness? How can the EU strengthen its scientific and industrial position in this area?

The Senate considers as necessary:

a) The integration of marine observatories in the existing ESFRI networks (EMSO and EURO ARGO), identification of scientific areas not yet covered (eg marine biodiversity, microbiological processes, phenomena at the mouth of water) and preparation of ESFRI projects dedicated to monitoring these areas. These new ESFRI projects should be compatible with the existing ones;
b) The construction of pan-European observation network of marine, coastal and great deep environment and investment of funds in the operational oceanography, at national and European level. This assumes the installation of autonomous electronic sensors with real-time or near-real-time transmission and use of data in modeling and forecasting. At the same time, the rentability of these networks must be analyzed and constant investment in maintenance must be realized;
c) The oceanographic network is imperative, taking into account the large number of areas where its products can be used, from resources exploitation and climate change to accidental pollution, safety of navigation and search and rescue activities.

11. Should there be an obligation for research projects to include a provision ensuring the archiving and access to observations collected during the research project?

The Senate considers that yes, this is of particular importance, for the authorized institutions. The projects carry out a depth study and it is essential that the products and data can be

reused, with the mention of the source. The research projects from public funds should have the obligation of archiving and access to observations collected, while keeping intellectual property rights of data authors, and after a certain period of time after the project completion (eg 3 years).

6. At subpoint 5.6. - *Environmental Reporting,* the answer to question 12 is:

12. Should the 'push' process whereby marine environment reports are delivered be progressively replaced by a 'pull' process, whereby data are made available through the internet and harvested by the competent authority using technology developed through EMODnet?

The Senate considers that yes, provided that such replacement does not lead in time to the blockage of initiative of developing new measurement and analysis techniques and to the lack of competition and, therefore, to lower quality of information. Also, the data made available to the public should be disseminated according to those mentioned in answers 2 and 9.

7. At subpoint 5.7. - *Climate Change Adaptation,* the answer to question 13 is:

13. What information on the behaviour of our seas and coasts can best help business and public authorities adapt to climate change?

The Senate considers that the most useful information for business and public authorities to adapt to climate change are those related to the secular variation of sea medium level, currents, wind and waves regime and their seasonal variations, extreme storms parameters and their possible changes, forecast of coastal erosion not only on multiannual scale but also on short-term scale, transport of sediments in the coastal zone, direction and magnitude of crustal movements, early warning of authorities in case of marine natural hazards from extreme storms, floods, landslides and volcanic eruptions to massive gashydrates release, earthquakes and tsunami. To achieve these, it is necessary to install or, where appropriate, to extend networks of stations of marine environment complex monitoring in near-real time from meteorological, hydrological, chemical and biological, physical, sedimentological, seismological, etc., point of view. Also, in the coastal zone it is necessary to install or, where appropriate, to extend complex interdisciplinary networks of performant automatic stations for integrated monitoring.

8. At subpoint 5.8. - *International Initiatives*, the answer to question 14 is:

14. Are any additional measures required, over and above existing initiatives such as EMODnet and GMES, to enable Europe to support international initiatives on ocean data such as GOOS and GEOSS?

The Senate considers that additional measures are required:
a) enlargement of existing ESFRI projects for the marine domain (EMSO and EURO ARGO);
b) elaboration of new ESFRI projects to develop new marine research infrastructures in the subdomains still not fully covered.

III. At point 6- *Governance,* the answers to subpoints 6.1, 6.2 and 6.4 are the following:

1. At subpoint 6.1. - *Balance between efforts of EU and Member States,* the answer to question 15 is:

15. What criteria should be used to determine EU financial support of observation programmes other than those that it already supports? Can you provide examples? Could the Joint Programming Initiative for European Seas and Oceans play a role?

The Senate considers that for the creation of new observation programs there should be taken into account the novelty and scientific relevance for the marine domain, the social impact, the coverage degree of information gathered by other observation programs, as well as the degree of European integration of programs. Due to specific characteristics of each European marine basin, EU should provide financial support also to new observation programs of specific characteristics of these basins but with trans-European access to information. The JPI OCEANS initiative trying to structure and put in common efforts of research funding agencies from Member States for effective studying, by concentrating resources, plays a major role in creating and identifying new programs of research and observation of marine phenomena and processes, in new areas. EU financial support should be primarily directed to such successful results of JPI OCEANS as well as to new programs developed by the funding agencies of Member States in joint projects as ERA-NET type.

2. At subpoint 6.2. - *EU support to assembly and processing of marine data,* the answers to questions 16-17 are:

16. How could the governance of EMODnet and GMES evolve to better accommodate the need for long term sustainability?

The Senate considers that, creating EMODnet partnerships with legal status and with structure determined and unchangeable after could be seen as a method to simplify the procedures but would have a negative role in maintaining quality of existing information. In the marine research, as in any other field of research, the existence of market competition is a factor that maintains and increases quality in all areas related to data collection. Therefore, the Senate proposes to maintain the current system, of competitions at regular intervals and with variable consortia, so that market in this field sorts permanently the most viable of them.

17. What could be the role of the Joint Research Centre and the European Environment Agency?

The Senate considers that these could play an important role in coordinating specific activities of marine research and environmental monitoring as well as in elaborating specific objectives common both for sea understanding and for health preservation of marine environment, linking research with environmental protection.

3. At subpoint 6.4. - *Selecting priorities,* the answers to questions 18-19 are:

18. Is a regular process needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the observation and sampling strategy for each sea-basin?

The Senate considers that a regular process is needed. The evaluation must be made annually, both for environment status and for populations of fish and marine mammals. The very rapid scientific and technological progress makes as necessary the revaluation of monitored parameters and techniques. Emergence of new interest areas in studying marine environment requires, also, revaluation of observation and sampling strategy effectiveness. Regular evaluation is, in all areas, an engine to maintain quality and solve potential problems. Subtle phenomena with visible effects after prolonged observations are produced by causes requiring thorough studies. It is, for example, the case of deep geological structure. The interest of private or public companies in studying this structure is usually limited to the depth level corresponding to the window of generation and accumulation of hydrocarbons. The capacity of academic media and governments to finance such studies is very limited, despite the unanimously recognized scientific interest. For example, in the case of Black Sea basin, the last major international study on deep geological structure dates back to the late 80s and the need to resume it at the scale of the entire basin, with participation of all riparians and using much more advanced research methodologies, is obvious.

19. What mechanism could be envisaged to manage the evaluation and assessments needed to inform the Commission, Member States and Parliament on priorities for EU support?

The Senate considers that it should be initiated a study including Member States, regional Conventions and third countries. The study could be based on the information extracted by the Commission through CISE and on the objectives set by the EU Strategies for maritime basins.

The Senate supports the launch of a Strategy for the Black Sea region and, in this regard, expresses its full readiness for dialogue and cooperation with all decision makers involved.

IV. At point 7- *Private sector involvement,* the answers to questions 20-21 are:

20. Under what circumstances should data provided by private companies for licencing purposes be made publicly available?

The Senate considers that the large number and complexity of areas where licenses can be requested make that a general answer to a general question can give unwanted side effects. Therefore, the Senate proposes the sectoral analysis of each area, identification of critical points and finding of acceptable answers both for provision of a relevant volume of data and for protection of the private operator interest as against competition. It has to be established nevertheless, for each area, a time limit after which most of data could be accessible to the public.

21. Should licenced offshore private sector actors be obliged to contribute to wider monitoring of the sea where this is feasible?

The Senate considers that yes, private sector actors can contribute to evaluation of marine ecosystems environmental status as well as to establishment of environmental objectives to achieve good environmental status by 2020, with respect for the Strategy for the marine environment.

p. PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
DAN RADU RUȘANU