Listening Tour, June–December 2015

International Ocean Governance

The public consultation opens in June aimed at private and public stakeholders, maritime organisations and citizens at large. In parallel to this, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella, embarks on the listening tour with international, national and regional stakeholders.

The big question:
How can the EU improve international ocean governance for the benefit of sustainable blue growth?
COASTAL AND MARITIME TOURISM REPRESENTS ONE THIRD OF JOBS IN THE BLUE ECONOMY.

4/06/2015
WORLD OCEAN SUMMIT, PORTUGAL
Launch of the public consultation
Building the Blue Growth agenda: Commission asks public its views on EU’s role in shaping international ocean governance.

Click the infographic to find out more!

The results will help develop a more effective EU policy on improving the international ocean governance framework.

Commissioner Vella: “If our oceans are not healthy, our economy falls ill. Global maritime challenges require global solutions. I am committed to work intensively to define Europe’s role in international ocean governance, for a sustainable blue economy and blue growth”.

23/06/2015
COASTAL AND MARITIME TOURISM, GERMANY

3.2 million in 2012
largest single maritime economic activity in terms of jobs

Generating over €180 billion in gross added value

16/06/2015 · EVENT ON “INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE COASTAL AND ISLAND TOURISM”, BRUSSELS

For the “Innovative Strategies for Sustainable Coastal and Island Tourism” event, Brussels plays host to academia, local and regional authorities, international institutions and NGOs from all tourism sectors to foster dialogue on common challenges and encourage knowledge sharing.

At the German Bundestag, Commissioner Karmenu Vella listens to the tourism committee’s views on the EU’s efforts towards growth and job creation in coastal and maritime tourism. He stresses the need for Member States to collaborate across regions and borders.

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Maritime stakeholders share their views on how the maritime economy can be strengthened, whether by improving skills, fostering innovation or making the most of existing funding opportunities. Stakeholders also speak up on the Commission's Ocean Governance consultation.

Maritime industries account for about 5 million jobs and between 3.5 and 4.5% of the EU's GDP.

Commissioner Vella: “Thanks to the clusters that are now all over Europe, businesses are able to network on innovation, create economies of scale, and cooperate with each other nationally and internationally.”

The Irish maritime economy has a turnover of about €4.5 billion a year.

It is growing nearly twice as fast as the overall economy:

+ 9% 2010
+ 8% 2012
+ 8% 2014

Commissioner Vella: “The Atlantic Ocean does not belong to any one of us. It is a single ecological system that links the continent of Europe with the Americas and with Africa. Our responsibility is to help build an international system that helps us manage that asset.”

Ministers agree on the need for scientific cooperation and knowledge sharing and are determined to explore the scope for new partnerships in order to support blue growth in the North Atlantic. They identify the expanding and emerging maritime sectors that have strong potential to boost jobs and growth.
01/09/2015 · GLACIER CONFERENCE, ALASKA
The EU is strongly committed to ensuring the Arctic region's sustainable development while safeguarding its fragile environment. Commissioner Vella points out the need for a science-based management regime for the Arctic region involving the EU and all other key actors.

Read Commissioner Vella's [speech](#) on the importance of the Arctic region, as it becomes increasingly “ice-free” and accessible.

17/09/2015 · LISTENING TOUR, NORWAY
Norwegian Fisheries Minister Elisabeth Aspaker shares Norway's views on the perceived gaps in ocean governance and what the international community should do to fill them. Mr Vella takes the opportunity to discuss ongoing EU cooperation with Norway in areas of mutual interest, including fisheries, aquaculture, research, blue growth and Arctic policy, as well as ocean governance.

**Commissioner Vella:** “Both the EU and Norway can be justifiably proud of our positions as global leaders on ocean governance. We share a responsibility to encourage international action.”

21/09/2015
EUROPEAN UNION COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS
Commissioner Vella outlines his Ocean Governance plans, which focus on the need for sustainable blue growth and for concerted international action to ensure environmental standards are clear.

[Read his full speech here.](#)

22/09/2015 · BLUE INVEST CONFERENCE, BRUSSELS
An EU conference co-organised with the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions encourages Member States and coastal regions to make use of existing investment possibilities, including EU funds. Participants share examples of successful EU-funded projects, some of which are included in the brand-new [EU project repository](#).

**Commissioner Vella:** “Much will depend on the regions’ ability to convince private and public operators to bet on the blue growth economy and invest in it – particularly in the emerging sectors that we know are ‘this close’ to blossoming, but need a little push.”

28/09/2015
MEETINGS WITH US ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.
Ocean governance and the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing are on the agenda in Washington where Commissioner Vella meets with several senior figures from the U.S. administration, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard to discuss at-sea fisheries enforcement. Mr Vella takes the opportunity to welcome the [UN's new 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#).

The global value of IUU is estimated at around **10 BILLION EUROS A YEAR**.

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**International Ocean Governance**

Listening Tour, June–October 2015

**SEP**
The Commissioner announces a political initiative on international ocean governance in 2016, and highlights what the EU is doing to protect and better manage its ocean areas.

The European Fisheries Control Agency celebrates its 10th birthday and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries is 20 years old. Taking part in the celebrations in Vigo, Spain, Commissioner Vella congratulates the Agency’s staff for removing technical barriers between inspectors from different EU Member States, and praises the FAO Code as a source of “major inspiration” for two decades. Read his speech here.

In an important first visit to China, Commissioner Vella meets with key ministers to further EU cooperation with China in relation to environmental, maritime and fisheries policy. They discuss how global ocean governance can be improved and express strong interest in developing concrete actions.

Commissioner Vella: “Global environmental and maritime challenges cannot be tackled by Europe alone. As two of the world’s biggest economies, the EU and China’s role is fundamental to ensuring a greener future.”

Commissioner Vella: “Better managed oceans are healthier oceans – and healthy oceans are the basis for blue growth and a thriving ocean economy. I am convinced that the responses we have received will allow us to make solid proposals that further build on the existing cooperation and dialogue with our international partners.”

Commissioner Vella: “The work carried out by the Ocean Energy Forum shows that industry and governments can collaborate to identify common problems and barriers to the development of the sector. Now it is time to go one step further and flesh out the general recommendations so that we can start to take concrete actions to deliver this roadmap.”

Commissioner Vella: “The scene for implementing the EU’s Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic area is set; now it’s time for action. Helping Member States and regions to work together is where the Atlantic Action Plan can be most valuable.”
Commissioner Vella welcomes 43 Mediterranean countries for a ministerial meeting of the Union for the Mediterranean. The Union aims to promote growth, jobs and investments in the marine and maritime sectors. A joint declaration signed by the Ministers outlines an effective and result-oriented cooperation on blue economy and maritime governance in the Mediterranean. Read Commissioner Vella’s speech here.

The European Forum on Renewable Energy Sources (EUFORES) is a European parliamentary network that promotes the deployment of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency within Europe. Commissioner Vella attends an important roundtable meeting to discuss how EUFORES can help support the development of the ocean energy sector. Read his full speech here.

Commissioner Vella takes part in conducting an online seminar titled “The Transition to the post-2015 Development Goals”. The seminar places special focus on SDG 14 concerning the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Commissioner Vella meets with Sharon Dijksma, Dutch Minister for Fisheries and Agriculture at The Hague to discuss the Netherland’s marine-related priorities and Blue Growth.

Commissioner Vella meets with Mr Christides, Secretary General of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organisation.

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Wageningen University and Research Centre is committed to green and blue growth, and Commissioner Vella makes an important visit to discuss the circular economy in these areas. Read his speech here.

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At Oceans Day, within the setting of the COP21 international climate negotiations. Commissioner Vella argues that better ocean management is necessary to return them to good health and support their vital functions, including their crucial role as climate regulators.

Commissioner Vella: “Healthy oceans are fundamental for a healthy climate – which is why governments need to do more to protect them.”

“We are using our seas and coasts in more ways than ever before. This has often been presented as creating conflict: a) between competing economic interests, and b) between economic activities and safeguarding our marine environment. Let me assure you: it need not be so. Planning and managing our activities better allows us to reap environmental and economic benefits.”

Read Commissioner Vella’s speech here.