

Technical-Level Meeting on *Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation* , 3 May 2017, Malta.

Summary of the session on the BLUEMED initiative for Blue Jobs and Growth in the Mediterranean

The high-level technical BLUEMED session of 3 May 2017 preceding the 4 May Ministerial conference on strengthening *Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation* followed the BLUEMED technical event which took place on the 18th and 19th April. This latter event was also feeding into the Presidency *Informal Ministerial Meeting on Blue Growth and Ocean Governance in the EU and the Mediterranean*. Both Ministerial events saw the endorsement of Declarations which are annexed to this summary report, with specific references to the BLUEMED Initiative.

Key questions that have been addressed during the technical discussions were about how to:

- increase cooperation between industry, research and local communities in the Mediterranean region to stimulate innovation and create jobs and growth and,
- promote joint pilot actions including the coordination, planning and programming of relevant research and innovation policies and instruments.

A background document with detailed questions was also sent to all participants to structure their input; see annex.

The following panellists provided input to this session:

- Dr. Ian Guaci Borda, The Malta Council for Science and Technology, Malta (*he provided a summary of the BLUEMED session that took place during the informal ministerial of 20 April*)
- Prof. Fabio Fava, University of Bologna, BLUEMED Initiative coordinator for Italy
- Prof. Dr. Maria Snoussi, University “Mohammed V” of Rabat, Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), Marocco
- Prof. Barak Herut, Director General, Israel Oceanographic & Limnological Research, Israel
- Dr. Vangelis Papathanassiou, Research Director at the Greek Marine Institute, Greece
- Dr. Eduardo Balguerías, Instituto Español de Oceanografía, Spain

- Prof. Dr. Sukru Turan Besiktepe (*a he*), Dokuz Eylul University, Turkey
- Prof. Dr. Allbert Palanques , Director ICM-CMIMA (CSIC), Spain
- Dr. Vincent Rigaud, Vice President research & training, Pôle MER Méditerranée, France

Summary of the main recommendations:

Discussions during the technical session showed that there is scope for, and interest in closer North-South cooperation partnerships.

This is because BLUEMED is a shared research and innovation initiative **by the Mediterranean, in the Mediterranean and for the Mediterranean.**

Some concrete actions were proposed to create co-ownership:

The existing BLUEMED Strategic R&I agenda needs to be updated regularly with an active participation of all countries in a wide range of marine and maritime sectors, from fisheries to tourism.

Organise a series of targeted follow up meetings to continue the discussions with speakers/partners and share experience, information and tools and interconnect all the different parallel ongoing initiative to:

- better align and go beyond national priorities/jurisdiction,
- learn from each other, e.g. create better interfaces between sectors and actors so as to drive local innovation;
- connect existing initiatives and projects, look at interrelations between sea-land-air; identify a wide range of existing tools not only from the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020.
- attract talents and focus on competence and skills development to make a younger generation fit for new emerging blue sectors/jobs;
- promote lobbying on sectorial dialogues with government and anchor research and societal/policy driven 'blue' science in for example Barcelona convention so as to

ensure long term funding and national interest/obligations for Mediterranean co-ownership;

- co-create joint pilot activities to strengthen common partnerships to address for example youth unemployment as well as train new researchers and new entrepreneurs to develop the skills and competencies needed for blue jobs;
- invest in large scale transversal activities , go from data collection to information and services; include developing new digital monitoring applications, take holistic approach by combining all data and measurements (smart sampling technologies, also include fisheries stock assessments and monitoring);
- push that all data is made publicly available and protocols for data sharing agreed;
- develop rapid response actions that society needs (major storms, environmental and geological hazards, pollutions) which need long term funding and properly training and skilled workforce;
- create BLUEMED hubs/or satellites (for research and innovation activities) across all countries of the Mediterranean to support the building of a new BLUEMED community comprising public-private partnerships, local and regional authorities and civil society;
- organise a yearly BLUEMED event back-to-back with events already planned by existing frameworks (for example the newly launched EU-Western Mediterranean Strategy);
- work with the Union for the Mediterranean for the development of their Virtual Knowledge Centre, which will further support the networking and enhance connectivity between the Med Sea as a whole. This will also be linked to the BLUEMED Coordination and Support Action funded under H2020;
- connect and network the diaspora of researchers from Southern Mediterranean countries as a potential for enhancing cooperation and foster knowledge transfer.

More details about all recommendations can be found in the PowerPoint Presentations

In a nutshell:

What does the Mediterranean Sea need from us? Let's put the Mediterranean Sea at the centre of our discussions:

- The Mediterranean where a third of the world's seaborne trade passes, where 150 million people depend on tourism-centred economy, the cradle of European civilisation with 400 UNESCO sites, a global biodiversity hotspot in the most polluted European sea.
- Where our ability to generate a common future with new jobs and growth supported by a clean common sea, can support peace, prosperity and stability along its shores and beyond.
- The BLUEMED Initiative will diffuse great ideas to co-create a new blue economy. It is an innovation mission with an economic purpose – to harness ideas and technologies spurring new jobs and economic activity and clusters across the Mediterranean's marine and maritime sectors; blue jobs need new researchers, entrepreneurs; blue jobs need a digitally rewired and engaged workforce and long term funding:
 - Blue tourism needs clear blue waters - algae and litter free.
 - Blue energy needs to turn oil and gas into offshore wind energy platforms combined with other purposes such as aquaculture.
 - A blue Mediterranean diet needs sustainable fisheries and hi-tech aquaculture;
 - Blue shipping needs clean quiet engines.
 - A safe blue Mediterranean Sea needs fit for purpose blue observation – an observation system for climate impact on the food web, forecasting, natural hazards, and underwater volcanic threats to coastal cities, and were data are open accessible and turned into services for citizens.

*Sigi Gruber, chair of the session
Head of the Marine Resources Unit
European Commission – DG RTD*