

## REPORT

Meeting: **European Maritime Days 2023**  
Parties: **Maritime sectors and stakeholders**  
Date: **24-26 May 2023**  
Location: **Brest, France**  
Rapporteur: **Tamara Talevska**

Tamara Talevska attended the European Maritime Days in Brest, France on behalf of the NSAC. Other fisheries representatives were Europeche, EAPO, Baltic AC and Market AC. 1200 participants attended 24 workshops, 13 pitching sessions, 3 high-level panels, and stands of 90 exhibitors. Several organisations with which the NSAC has engaged before were represented (i.e. Marine Board, eMSP-NBSR, EFCA, JPI Oceans, WWF) alongside with many of the DG MARE officials. Central topics and concepts relevant to the NSAC were decarbonisation and energy transition, marine spatial planning (MSP), ecosystem-based management (EBM), innovation and research, stakeholder engagement, cross-border cooperation.

General observation was that the event was not fisheries-centred, though the sector played an important role in a number of topics, projects and events. There were several mentions of the role of fisheries in food security, their historical and cultural heritage and the need to make all actors equal in policy-decisions and MSP. EAPO and Market AC held a workshop on sustainability along seafood value chain. Suggestion for future would be to think about teaming up with bigger stakeholders to propose a fisheries-themed event (workshop) and efforts in sustainability.

The opening session was marked by speeches of Commissioner Sinkevičius, Director-General of DG MARE Charlina Vitcheva, Eric Banel, French General Director for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries, and Aquaculture, Jacob Granit from Swedish Agency for Water Management (SWAM) and Pierre Karleskind, PECH committee chair.

Sinkevičius stressed that the priority is to decarbonise maritime sectors and keep developing sustainable economy in times of crisis. He noted that developing marine energy (offshore wind, tidal and wave energy) is important for EU's strategic autonomy. Critical infrastructure is placed in marine environment, not only energy-related but also data-flows (telecommunication cables).

He noted that fisheries are a noble profession, but energy intensive. Energy transition of fisheries is therefore crucial and needs backing by EU funds for scaling up tech and stakeholder engagement for ensuring legitimacy. Energy transition partnership event on 16 June is one step closer towards realization of this endeavour.

The EU is committed to biodiversity and to countering degradation of marine ecosystems. Blue Forum, launched after the EMD, will be bringing together stakeholders to develop synergies and reconcile competing sectors.

In terms of social sustainability, the Commissioner stressed the need for generational renewal of fisheries through innovation, modernisation, digitalisation etc. EU will be investing into closing the skills-gap through maritime technology partnerships and ocean literacy activities. Investments in innovation are boosted through BlueInvest activities. Cross-border coordination and level-playing field will remain crucial concepts to drive this.

Charlina Vitcheva stressed all three pillars of sustainability and the need for financial guidance for energy transition. She also reminded of the launching event for Energy Transition Partnership on 16 June. In view of proliferation of offshore wind and inclusion of other uses of the sea she noted that MSP will be crucial to drive sustainable activities and uses of the sea, in which the concept of multi-use of space must be further explored. She highlighted the importance of smart solutions to marine problems and the need for strengthened innovation and research.

It was further noted that stakeholder engagement and representation of citizens will be the corner stone of adoption of any new technologies, activities, transitions, policies. Exchange of best practices between MSP practitioners will be essential. Integrated, holistic approach to MSP and energy transition, taking into account local specificities and engaging local communities, is important. Multi-level governance and sea-basin approach are important aspects of policy-making.

Jacob Granit from Swedish Agency for Water Management (SWAM) highlighted Swedish multi-sectoral engagement to policy-making. He stressed the complexity and mixed results of some policies, like of marine activities increasing in value but not jobs (i.e. tourism), or environmental protection through MPAs increasing in extent but little success in curbing marine pollution. He highlighted the current problems of eutrophication, climate change, deoxygenation, pollution etc. He also stressed the issue of species by species approach to management rather than EBM, and the importance of MSFD to bring about Good Environmental Status and MSP for guiding blue economy with revised MSP plans to account for expanding offshore wind due in 2024. Cooperation and collective action are imperative. He reminded that MS-driven strategies are important for macro-region strategies and that the North Sea basin Strategy is on the way.

## **Decarbonisation**

Workshop on the Path to decarbonisation: cross-sea basin synergies, highlighted the sea-basin strategies (Atlantic, Western Mediterranean, Black sea). Bottom-up approach and inclusion of stakeholder was seen as paramount to bring about equitable and socially legitimate energy transition. Atlantic Strategy and Action Plan (2020) pillars:

1) Ports are gateways to decarbonisation

- 2) Blue skills for the future and ocean literacy
- 3) Marine renewable energy
- 4) Healthy ocean and resilient coast

Any new technology needs funding, skills and cooperation.

Some of the takeaways: cooperating with partners outside EU that are advanced in decarbonisation will help drive EU decarbonisation, there is a need to strengthen cross-basin synergies and dialogue, research and innovation has a strong seabasin approach - seabasin contact notes should be established.

#### Decarbonisation of French maritime sector

IMO 2018 GHG reduction strategy (energy intensity reduction by 40% and 50% energy efficiency improvement compared to 1990) through:

- Energy efficiency index (EEXI): in case of no compliance technical measures must be put in place.
- Carbon intensity indicator (CII): a rating given to vessels (A-E); operational measures. If bad rating persists, they only need to prepare corrective action plan, but no formal certificate to be used as incentive.

In international space, there are ongoing negotiations at IMO level: technical and market-based measures. In EU there is the Green Deal, Fit455, FuelEU Maritime, EU ETS. In France, the Strategy on Energy and Climate is planning for deep and systemic decarbonisation of society, working on the whole value chain.

#### **Common Fisheries Policy – today and tomorrow**

The Future of CFP will be comprised of the Fisheries Package, new policy initiatives, intended to rebuild the stocks, reduce environmental and climate impacts, include stakeholder in governance that involves stakeholders. Specific role of ACs regionalisation and producer organisations was highlighted.

Remaining challenges: overfishing still occurs in some areas, there is persisting impact of fishing on seabed and sensitive species, fleet overcapacity, implementation of LO, climate change, post-Brexit management of shared stocks

Fisheries & Oceans Pact is a dialogue to improve policy implementation and collaboration in fisheries management. Principles: Improved governance, recognition of fishers, level playing field, full compliance, forward-looking, transparency.

Communication on energy transition: induced by increased energy prices and the wish to break away from fossil fuel dependency, accelerate energy efficiency and energy transition. Barriers and actions: cooperation between stakeholders (improve governance framework and cooperation between stakeholders), knowledge and innovation (close technology gaps

through R&I), develop appropriate workforce skills, improve access to funding and financing opportunities (financing opportunities, improve business environment), facilitate transfer of tech and innovation to fisheries.

### **Shipping Decarbonisation – opportunities and challenges of new propulsion technologies and fuels**

[International Windship Association](#) was presented. The International Windship Association (IWSA) with its 150 members facilitates and promotes wind propulsion for commercial shipping worldwide and brings together all parties in the development of a wind-ship sector to shape industry and government attitudes and policies. This organisation also provided input for the NSAC advice on decarbonisation. IWSA is responding to the need for innovation for alternative propelling and improvements in EE of ships and ports. IWSA has a consultative status at IMO.

IWSA reports that there were 24 wind-powered vessels by 2022 and that 45% of the global fleet is expected to be wind-propelled by 2050. Existing barriers include the need for training, bringing seafarers in line with transition, onboard integration and performance evaluation.

Some of the solutions proposed were

- Inflatable wind sails, retractable;
- Wind propulsion monitoring systems, optimization of routes, digital twin of the vessel; performance evaluation of vessels, autopilot;
- Ammonia, hydrogen, green methanol, but infrastructure needs to be adapted.
- Kite-sails
- Anti-fouling paint
- Hybrid battery packs as backup or fully replacing other fuels

Challenges: costs of retrofitting, vessels built for 20-30-40 years, choices must be future-proof, big bets and risks.

Pilot projects for demonstration of viability are crucial. Shipping seems much more progressive and innovative than fisheries, they feel that regulations are one step behind and must catch up with the sector instead of the other way around (i.e. regulators driving transition). EU ETS system is efficient for shipping as carbon emissions are becoming costly.

There are incentives for carbon-capture and storage (CCS) projects and market – i.e. selling CO<sub>2</sub> to Coca-cola, but technology on board quite complex and challenging. In addition e-fuels (such as green methanol) rely on CCS.

There was a discussion on speed reduction: is it viable? Is it tackled at regulatory level? How high are emission savings and savings in fuel? However, savings are not linear: If you cut speed by 50% GHG are reduced 8 times and if you reduce by 70%, GHG are down even further (exponential).

## High-level panel on innovation in the blue economy

The EU mission Ocean and Waters was presented. Blue energy was one of the topics covered with an intention to achieve net zero maritime emissions by 2030. Innovation on low impact marine aquaculture, multi-use marine space, green small-scale fleets, reconciling ocean renewables and protection etc. Digital twin ocean is a flagship project and encompasses modelling of the ocean before taking policy decisions.

[Blue Economy Observatory](#) was launched at 2022 EMD and includes data, information and socio-economic analyses of blue sectors. It's a platform for monitoring the development of EU blue economy, supporting decision making, mitigating risks in sustainability transition plans and with timely information for decision-making. Some of the comprehensive sources of information include: the EU blue economy report, information systems of EUMOFA, Emodnet etc. French research institute Ifremer conducts research for critical for marine management with focus on ocean observation. Mission Ocean considered relevant but challenging with innovation at the heart of the mission. Collaboration with companies on research projects, co-developing solutions, sharing data, technology transfer and creating startups is crucial.

## Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership

Considered the Blue arm of the Green deal. It's a basis for 2023 joint co-funded call. Intervention areas:

- Development and validation of digital twin ocean
- Blue generation marine structures (multi-use)
- Planning and managing sea uses
- Healthy blue tide
- Enabling green transition of blue food production

In terms of finance there is a need to bring in private finance from capital markets. Leveraging different funding schemes will be important, e.g. EMFAF and other financing mechanisms/streams. Support and incentives for MS who struggling with using funds is needed.

Challenge ahead is to make the best use of AI, making AI for informed decisions. Dialogue, collaboration, partnerships are key.

## Achieving marine biodiversity protection targets in the EU - improving governance for planning & management

MSP should be designed to safeguard and restore biodiversity.

WWF presented their MSP plans assessment with an ecosystem based approach to MSP. 33 indicators on governance, climate change, inclusion of nature, and socio-economic considerations. In the North Sea the rating was 45% as NS MSP fails to address socio-

economic factors, while space for offshore wind is aligned with the Green Deal. In relation to MSP WWF recommends:

- Promote meaningful stakeholder consultation;
- Establish well-managed MPAs;
- Designate in a participatory way offshore renewables development;
- Engage, in a constructive manner, with the fishing sector.

Presentation of German EEZ conservation in MSP: dealing with North sea and Baltic sea. Its Vision is “using and preserving the sea in all its diversity.” Including space for biodiversity in MSP will contributing to climate protection. There are provisions for diverse current and future uses of marine space and its protection. German MSP plan is from 2021 and is legally binding. It includes Strategic Environmental Assessment of each sea over 400 pages. MPAs considered priority areas for nature conservation. On average 42% of all German sea is protected (28% EEZ in NS, 55% in Baltic). There are currently few wind installations in MPAs because they were there before or plans were approved before, otherwise placing offshore wind in MPAs is not allowed in Germany. Bird migration corridors are also advanced and high on the agenda, their protection built into MPAs. Some uses cannot be regulated with MSP i.e. fisheries (no mandate to do that). Exposed challenges were data collection, inclusion of latest science and effective implementation of effective mitigation measures due to pushback from industry.

Achieving marine biodiversity targets is possible with improving governance for planning and management. National and regional networks of MPA managers are instrumental for this. Marine natural parks with management boards responsible for design of management plans including protective measures and governance are best practice examples.

### **How to plan and deploy nature friendly offshore wind?**

It was noted that MSP can enable nature friendly offshore wind. Rapid learning is essential due to the accelerated proliferation of offshore wind. Stakeholder engagement was stressed as enabler and ensuring legitimacy. Some civil society organisation are sceptical about nature-friendly wind due to past harmful projects. Overall it was felt that it was possible and necessary to develop nature-friendly offshore wind. Public and private partners needed for a holistic approach, one example was Joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG in the Baltic. Emsp-NBSR project on Community of Practice and Maripark (nature-inclusive maritime business areas) was presented. Cross-basin collaboration is important.

#### *North Sea: the green power plant?*

Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union ([NABU](#)), environmental NGO, presented its joint project with BirdLife on ecosystem-based approach to planning of space (see [NABU traffic-light study](#)), with a caveat that it does not replace environmental impact assessment.

Promoted were cross-border exchange of ideas, mechanisms, tailored research, sea-basin approach.

Ørsted, global leader in offshore renewables, presented efforts in mitigating environmental damages (bird monitoring, noise mitigation etc):

- Biodiversity toolkit and commitments;
- Biodiversity net-positive projects commissioned after 2030;
- Pilot projects in restoration techniques (coral restoration, estuary projects, seagrass etc);
- Working with NGOs;
- Ecosystem Standards for tender criteria.

Remaining challenge is that offshore wind resides in own sectoral bubble - a holistic, cross-sectoral approach is needed. In the North Sea it is crucial to bring together all actors and ministers on MSP. Co-existence needs firm principles while taking into account local specificities.

It was said that wind is not considered the biggest pressure in the NS, instead fisheries, especially bottom fisheries, are. There is a need to bring them on board to mitigate their impact.

### **Workshop: Ecosystem-based management**

There is no unified definition to EBM and it was noted that stakeholder mobilisation is not necessarily EBM. It is important that all ecosystem services are identified. Assessing ecosystem services can help with building knowledge, including societal dimension of EBM. In a stakeholder survey ([EcoScope](#)) on what policy stakeholders want from EBM models it was revealed that most wish to use them for mitigating effects of climate change, better manage MPAs, mitigate bycatch, improve biodiversity indicators and establish better trade-offs of different users of the sea.

[WABESCO](#) project was presented. WABESCO is developing a universal, adaptable and relevant evaluation tool for all actors and projects working towards sustainable blue growth. The focus is on the development of a universal, adaptable and stakeholder-oriented framework and numerical model making the following possible:

- conduct an evaluation of all actors and projects active in the field of blue growth;
- map areas, projects and new corporate activities;
- grow with (the complexity of) a project cycle; and
- support participation and communication with the local environment.

It was noted that the biggest problem with EBM is that policy makers are not ready to implement it in their decision making, while science and stakeholders have been ready for a while.

For the North Sea it was noted that it is critical to engage in international cooperation on shared stocks to achieve EBM.

*The next EMD2024 will take place in Svendborg, Denmark, on 30-31 May 2024.*

*Personalised Programme EMD 2023 in ANNEX.*



## ANNEX: Personalised EMD programme 2023

### Wednesday 24.05.2023

#### **08:00 – 18:00 Pitches Day 1**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Pitch stage

#### **09:00 – 09:30 Welcome coffee**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Catering area

#### **09:30 – 10:15 Opening Session**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Plenary room

#### **10:15 – 11:45 High level panel on a new approach to a Sustainable Blue Economy : preparing the future**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Plenary room

#### **11:45 – 12:15 Coffee break - networking**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Catering area

#### **12:15 – 13:30 Workshop 4 - Path to decarbonisation: cross-sea basin synergies**

Brest Expo - Hall 2 (1st floor) - Room 1.1

#### **13:30 – 14:30 Lunch break - networking**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Catering area

#### **15:15 – 16:15 Pitch session 5 - Common Fisheries Policy – today and tomorrow**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Pitch stage

#### **15:45 – 16:15 Coffee break - networking**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Catering area

#### **16:15 – 17:30 Workshop 11 - Shipping Decarbonisation – opportunities and challenges of new propulsion technologies and fuels**

Brest Expo - Hall 2 (1st floor) - Room 1.2

#### **19:00 – 21:00 Networking cocktail**

Atelier des Capucins

### Thursday 25.05.2023

#### **07:00 – 16:00 Pitches Day 2**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Pitch stage

#### **08:30 – 09:00 Welcome coffee**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Catering area

#### **09:00 – 10:00 High level panel on innovation in the Blue Economy - preparing for future**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Plenary room

#### **10:00 – 10:30 Coffee break - networking**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Catering area

#### **10:30 – 11:45 Workshop 14 - Achieving marine biodiversity protection targets in the EU - improving governance for planning & management**

Brest Expo - Hall 2 (1st floor) - Room 1.2

#### **11:45 – 12:15 Coffee break - networking**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Catering area

#### **12:15 – 13:30 Workshop 19 - How to plan & deploy nature friendly offshore wind**

Brest Expo - Hall 2 (1st floor) - Room 1.2

#### **13:30 – 14:30 Lunch break - networking**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Catering area

#### **14:30 – 15:45 Workshop 22 - Predictable Green Energy out of the Blue**

Brest Expo - Hall 2 (1st floor) - Room 1.3

#### **16:00 – 17:15 Closing session**

Brest Expo - Hall 1 - Plenary room

#### **17:30 – 18:30 Bus shuttle to City Centre**