

# Internationalizing the EU Maritime Policy in the Euro-Med region and building upon Marine Research and Operational Oceanography to write the policy in practice

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## MedGOOS and MOON joint response to the Green Paper on a Future European Maritime Policy

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MedGOOS is the GOOS Regional Alliance in the Mediterranean with a partnership of 19 members from 16 riparian countries. It is established under the auspices of UNESCO-IOC to provide a regional framework for partnerships, synergies and capacity building for operational oceanography to the benefit of all coastal states in the region. The MedGOOS Secretariat is established in Malta at the IOI-Malta Operational Centre (University of Malta); the current Chair is from the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (Greece).



The Mediterranean Operational Oceanography Network (MOON) is the EuroGOOS regional Task Team for the Mediterranean with a membership of 26 institutes from the riparian countries. It brings together marine research and operational agencies to implement and further develop the ocean observing and forecasting system in the Mediterranean Sea. It promotes the development and optimization of the scientific base, the technology and the information system for operational oceanography, and connects the concerted monitoring and forecasting systems to Sustainable Development, Marine State Assessment and Risks Management. MOON is co-led by the Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (Italy) and MERCATOR-OCEAN (France).

*The two associations work closely together to develop the Mediterranean component of GOOS and promote Operational Oceanography in the region.*

The quest for environmental security, based on the concepts of sound ocean governance, sharing of knowledge and the controlled use of resources, is the precursor for prosperity, sustainability and peace. The importance of marine resources to our well being calls for the sustainable use of the sea in both open and coastal domains. The Green Paper on the EU Maritime Policy pronounces the need for a holistic approach to optimise the economic opportunities offered by the sea in line with the Lisbon Strategy, and in a manner appropriate to the maritime vocation of Europe. In his address at the inauguration of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual EC Maritime Law Course of the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI) in Malta, the EU Commissioner Joe Borg points very clearly to excellence in marine research, sound governance and international cooperation as the main pillars of the Maritime Policy:

*"Firstly, we need to develop our scientific knowledge of the state of the oceans.....*

*..... Secondly, we must address the question of governance for a policy that involves so many different interests and such a wide range of stakeholders.....*

*.....And finally, we need to recognise the importance of the international dimension of ocean management....."*

Indeed there is an ever increasing responsibility on the scientific community to provide accurate and routinely updated data and information for decision-making and planning. This must be supported by increased marine research and technological developments, as well as by the sharing of scientific knowledge among stakeholders. In so doing, Europe must pursue leadership on this front within international fora, with global institutions and third countries. It is recognized that opportunities and advantages transpire from regional cooperation on marine research and environmental monitoring. This is especially relevant in regions like the Mediterranean where the multitude of jurisdictions, the far-reaching impacts of marine practices beyond national domains, and the multiple usage of marine space, including extra-Mediterranean influences on the open seas, calls for the simultaneous respect of the very specific characteristics of this sea.

MedGOOS & MOON welcome the proposed development of a holistic European Maritime Policy. This policy demands our engagement in a new sustainable relationship with the environment while at the same time promoting competitiveness and the strengthening of economic activities. 21<sup>st</sup> century science and technology is called to meet these demands. Further research and developments in methodology, equipment and analysis of observations, as well as additional, improved and cost-effective long-term monitoring systems for reliable systematic multi-purpose observations are required to improve the ability to detect, attribute and understand the various processes - including climate change - in order to reduce uncertainties, improve impact assessments, and predict change down to local and coastal scales. Indeed the role of operational oceanography is of essence here, and its evolution towards the provision of integrated service-oriented applications will be an essential step towards implementing the EU maritime policy into practice. This future is pointing towards multiple-purpose observing systems, linking observations across economical, environmental and social domains, and targeting a wide range of applications that cater not only for monitoring, but also for the provision of services in key marine realms and industries as well as for security, safety and enforcement. The advent of multi-disciplinary, spatially widespread, long-term data sets is expected to trigger an unprecedented leap in the economic value of ocean data. This will bring about a radical transformation in our perception of managing marine resources, and will be critical to competitiveness, product development and enhancement of services.

MedGOOS & MOON support the Commission's statement that a Maritime Policy "... should be supported by excellence in marine scientific research... ". They also welcome the recognition of the importance of systematic ocean observations to support multiple activities. They offer to promote the development of operational oceanography in the Mediterranean, underpinning the needs for achieving the pertinent goals set by the EU Maritime Policy. In particular, MedGOOS & MOON offer their experience to develop the Mediterranean Component of the proposed European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODN), based on the capacity of their members that, over the past 10 years, have jointly developed essential components of the Mediterranean Monitoring and Forecasting System.

In summary, MedGOOS & MOON wish to primarily put the focus on the following points:

- The need for a sustained operational oceanographic system in favour of Marine State Assessments and the sustainable exploitation of marine resources in the Mediterranean region in combination with the use of innovative science and technology, taking into account the more demanding needs of an evolving knowledge-driven society, and the greater reliance of future regional economic growth on the marine sector;
- The need for marine technology developments linked to operational oceanography, to address the needs for improved observations, forecasts and assessments (such as in marine instrumentation, ocean sensor development, ocean modelling), information systems and data management, adaptive observations and modeling, sustainable development applications in the framework of ecological economics as well as to promote solutions in support of novel services, benefits and added-value products in the marine sector;
- the support of regional partnerships, arrangements and mechanisms for capacity building, co-management, sharing of efforts and co-exploitation of benefits, possibly within the framework of a stronger EU-Mediterranean Cooperation in the marine sector and a Euro-Med Research Area.

The more detailed views of MedGOOS & MOON on specific points raised by the Maritime Policy Green Paper are developed in the following paragraphs.

### **Marine Research Strategy**

A long term (about 20 years) marine research strategy going beyond the 7 years horizon of the European Union's Research Framework Programs is necessary. The strategy should be developed through consultation with the research community, taking into account international trends and stakeholder needs (industry, policy makers) and should be periodically reviewed. Such a review should be facilitated by regular conferences/workshops ("European Marine Forums"), and supported by appropriate communication tools such as newsletters, internet portal etc. The strategy should be based on the principles of scientific excellence, European and International collaboration, and the generation of a

knowledge-based society. Its development and updates should use the experience of existing scientific networks and organizations (MOON, MedGOOS, CIESM, MedGLOSS, EFARO, ICES, ESF Marine Board, etc.), and possibly be jointly coordinated by them and the European Commission. Furthermore, it should involve national research programs and priorities using the experience of the relevant EraNETs (MARINERA, MARIFISH, BONUS, AMPERA etc). Its implementation will require strong coordination of European Marine Research funding mechanisms (EU Framework Programs, National Programs, COST, EUROCORES, EUREKA etc) including thematic and cross-sectoral coordination (fisheries, navigation, environment, energy, security).

### **European Marine Research Network.**

Various thematic and regional organizations operating research networks already exist in Europe (EuroGOOS with its regional components, MedGOOS, Black Sea GOOS, Arctic GOOS, ICES, CIESM, ESF/MB etc) and have developed important expertise in their domain over the past years. The development of a European Marine Research Network should be based on and use the experience of these existing associations. Instead of developing a new structure, the Maritime Policy should support a more efficient coordination of these networks that can jointly develop and implement a Marine Research Strategy and provide the necessary scientific advice when necessary.

### **European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODN).**

Such a network should be developed and maintained in the long term to serve the needs of the Maritime Policy. It is suggested that:

- The experience of MOON and MedGOOS, and the capacity of their members can be used as starting points for further development and integration of oceanographic - fisheries – navigation and other relevant data networks.
- Member States should take the responsibility to maintain these systems in the long term, but the EU should support their upgrade to meet the needs of the Maritime Policy, filling gaps and providing coordination mechanisms.
- The successful example of the Meteorological community should be followed: each country should appoint a national Marine Agency corresponding to a marine organization or a national network active in operational oceanography, to be responsible for the operation of EMODN, and be obliged to coordinate its international activities with the other local marine organizations (including in situ and R/S observations, modeling and forecasting and information management).
- The operation of the network and of the respective national agencies should be based on long term funding outside the research budget(s), but should consider research for the continuous upgrade and quality control of the system.
- A European coordinating unit should be established to oversee the development of the network and its long term operation. The example of EUMETNET can be followed.
- The GMES initiative is already developing elements of such a system, and its experience should be used for the implementation of EMODN. Any initiative for EMODN should be taken in strict collaboration with the development of the Marine Core Service element of GMES.

### **International dimension**

A Maritime Policy can be successfully implemented only in partnership with the non-European countries bordering the European Seas. This is especially relevant for the regional enclosed European Seas: Baltic – Mediterranean – Black Sea. The Commission is encouraged to involve these countries as early as possible in the development of the European Maritime Policy in order to have their consensus, support and active participation during the implementation phase.

A major similarity between these seas is that they are geographically enclosed or semi-enclosed, and potentially subject to national maritime zones in their entirety. These seas have fragile ecosystems and biodiversity that are put under individual and cumulative pressure by their coastal states. As a result the activities and maritime policies of one state are bound to affect the quality of the marine environment and use enjoyed by neighbouring states. In this relationship, the EU maritime policy and the coherence of

policies of neighbouring states with it, should be set as a priority for regional cooperation in the interests of all states.

In the specific case of the Mediterranean basin, stronger regional developments need to be sought to significantly strengthen the cohesion of the countries on south and eastern shores of the Mediterranean, as well as to develop a greater sense of pan-Mediterranean solidarity within the ambit of more effective Euro-Mediterranean common structures and shared initiatives. The enlargement of the EU, the Barcelona Process and the EU's Wider Europe/New Neighbourhood concept are three complementary exercises that will together gradually provide the Mediterranean with the chance to achieve the stability that has eluded it in the past. The EU's Wider Neighbourhood policy includes several incentives to be offered to partner countries, including the extension of the internal market and regulatory structure and preferential trading relations. These developments need to evolve to build stronger engagements in the governance of this regional sea.

A top priority for the European Union should be to enforce its efforts for capacity building in the non-EU Mediterranean and Black Sea Countries, especially for the needs of a European Marine Observing and Data Network. The effectiveness and sustainability of such regional networks can only be achieved by building frameworks for partnerships between countries, to combine and integrate resources and infrastructures, by empowering indigenous capacities, and by promoting a harmonious implementation based on the principles of co-development, co-ownership and sharing of benefits. The full benefits can be harvested by addressing the needs of all coastal states in their quest for the sound management of the marine resources to further economic growth. MedGOOS and MOON have prepared the basis for this process in the Mediterranean.

Dated 13<sup>th</sup> June 2007

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