

Marine Sustainability in an Age of Changing Oceans and Seas

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1. Marine Sustainability is a complex, broad subject to address, underpinned by the tridimensional nature of the marine environment and taking into account economic, social, environmental and institutional aspects. The Ocean is recognised by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as an integrated and dynamic space interacting with other ecosystems affected by human action, which is capable of altering natural processes in Planet Earth. COP 22 is now happening in Marrakech and clearly demonstrates this process of change and the huge role played by the Ocean.
2. European Union Integrated Maritime Policy aims for a sustainable development of maritime spaces and Portugal has played an active role in it as it was approved during the portuguese presidency of the European Council, adopted in Lisbon in 2007. European policies have been raising awareness of the crucial importance of healthy seas and oceans for our lives.
3. States around the world have been changing their institutional arrangements in order to adequate the capacity to better respond to the Ocean regime established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and Rio Conference, having in mind the concept of blue growth. In the European Commission an important phase took place with the active role played by with Comissioner Joe Borg, driving internal institutional adjustments, valuing maritime spaces and reinforcing cooperation.

The European Union plays a visible role at the international level, either in international cooperation in environmental matters, climate change policies, along with research, monitoring and management of maritime spaces. National governments can cope with European institutions for common goals in marine policies and could make a more intensive use of IOC established with autonomy inside UNESCO and acting as a joint specialized mechanism of the UN system for Ocean science.

4. In Portugal, the process of extension of the Continental Shelf represents an opportunity and quite a challenge in the long term. Now, more than ever, a national effort is required to enhance research, monitoring, capacity building. Initiatives like the Intersectoral Oceanographic Commission or the Programme for the enhancement of marine science and technologies could be used to burst an effective programme of national monitoring of the Ocean and data gathering. We must recognize the urgent need to take effective steps to consolidate and rationalize the national ocean data system integrated in IODE. However we need to maintain an operational arrangement among the participating bodies and institutions. This is indeed a priority in our strategy to consolidate national capacities, in order to provide the scientific basis for ocean governance driven by scientific knowledge. Different ways of approaching maritime affairs institutionally, within government, have been experimented, in a discontinuous path. We have been able to create a Ministry of the Sea (established in Portugal in 1983, in 1991 and now since 2015) and we are trying and hope to succeed in ensuring an integrated, articulated, horizontal management of the ocean. A more functional approach for the coordination of marine affairs would benefit from an Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, promoting stable conditions that would encourage long-term investment and projects, involving a vast array of stakeholders. An alternative solution found in Portugal was the establishment of the Interministerial Commission for Ocean Affairs (Comissão Interministerial para os Assuntos do Mar, CIAM) in 2007, which is devoted to coordinated action in ocean affairs and is presently under

the chairship of the Prime Minister. Notwithstanding, its functionality must be optimized to produce actual results.

5. It is encouraging that Horizon 2020, the EU framework programme for research and innovation, includes some themes in which, for instance, ocean observing systems can be developed with the continuity required. In fact, Scientific Knowledge and Technology are decisive for sustainable development. In recent years, this perspective has flourished, despite budgetary difficulties affecting Universities.

However, two decades have passed since 1998, the International Year of the Ocean and the 1998 Lisbon World Exposition, and we can pinpoint the need to enhance scientists role in society, the need to facilitate and promote building-up and sharing of required research platforms to study the sea, or the urgent priority to rationalize, consolidate and develop data and information as an essential basis for the comprehensive management systems.

In this context, it is worth to note the growing number of foreign research vessels (27 in 2016) undertaking research within portuguese waters, with increased participation of portuguese scientists or developed in partnership with portuguese specialists.

6. At the European level, it is worth to note, as a functional institutional arrangement, the European Marine Board which develops common positions on research priorities and strategies for European marine science. The European Marine Board facilitates the dialogue between the scientific community, the political sector, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders in marine sciences and technologies.

7. European Marine Board's statement to the European Commission consultation regarding International Ocean Governance (2015) represents a valuable contribution and I highlight the following: "*Knowledge derived from*

scientific research is one of the key pillars for evidence-based ocean stewardship and governance". The document emphasizes that "Ocean governance is inextricably linked to ocean science and an interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral holistic approach is vital. (...) A forward looking strategy to ocean governance with innovative governance models and coordinating mechanisms is much needed."

8. We welcome the recommendations forwarded by the European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in their report from January 2016, today at stake in this reunion, regarding marine science to support marine sustainability, and the statement that "To support integrated marine and maritime governance, a fundamental shift in marine science towards holistic and integrative research is needed".

9. I end this intervention by hoping that, despite the difficulties which we are confronted with, we succeeded to reinforce coesion inside the European Union not only because of our own goals but also as a platform to consolidate international cooperation, taking into account the vast array of opportunities presented by marine affairs.

In this context, I recall that in the same way that Oceans have contributed to the development and unification the United Nations system in conflictual times, also in Europe the sea can effectively contribute to promote cohesion and solidarity between Member States.