

# Ostend Declaration

The European marine and maritime research community stands ready to provide knowledge, services and support to the European Union and its Member and Associated States, recognising that

***“The Seas and Oceans are one of the Grand Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”.***

In doing so, we acknowledge:

- the critical role of the oceans in the earth and climate systems;
- the importance of coasts, seas and oceans and their ecosystems to our health and well-being;
- the increasing impacts of global environmental change on the marine environment and the significant socio-economic consequences of those impacts;
- the ongoing need for basic research to address major gaps in our fundamental knowledge of coasts, seas and oceans;
- the enormous opportunities for innovation, sustained wealth and job creation in new and existing maritime sectors such as aquaculture, renewable energy, marine biotechnology and maritime transport; and
- the need to translate these messages to all sectors of society.

Furthermore, we underline **the crucial role of marine and maritime science and technology** in providing knowledge and understanding of the seas and oceans and their biodiversity in creating new opportunities and technologies which will support and progress:

- job creation through smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (Europe 2020);
- implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union (2007), the European Research Area (EC Green Paper on ERA, 2007) and other policies such as the Common Fisheries Policy;
- Good Environmental Status in our marine waters by 2020 (Marine Strategy Framework Directive); *and*
- related grand challenges including food, energy and health, as identified in the Lund Declaration (2009).

The marine and maritime research community recognises that significant progress has been made in response to the Galway (2004) and Aberdeen (2007) Declarations, evidenced in the adoption of the Integrated Maritime Policy for Europe (2007), its environmental pillar the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008) and the European Strategy for Marine and Maritime Research (2008), and commits to building future progress within this comprehensive policy framework.

## ***Addressing the Seas and Oceans Grand Challenge***

The EuroOCEAN 2010 Conference identified priority marine and maritime research challenges and opportunities in areas such as food, global environmental change, energy, marine biotechnology, maritime transport and marine spatial planning, including seabed mapping. The Conference delivered an unequivocal message on the societal and economic benefits Europe derives from the seas and oceans and of the crucial role that research and technology must play in addressing the Seas and Oceans Grand Challenge.

**The European marine science and technology community, building on existing achievements and initiatives, is ready to address this challenge in partnership with industry and the public sector, and call upon the European Union and its Member and Associated States to facilitate this response by delivering the following proactive and integrating actions:**

### **1. Joint Programming**

Develop an integrating framework, combining the assets of European programmes with those of Member States, to address the Grand Challenge of the Seas and Oceans, including the identification and delivery of critical marine research infrastructures. The **Joint Programming Initiative on “Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans”** has the appropriate scale of integration and should be actively supported by the European Commission and Member States.

### **2. European Ocean Observing System**

Support the development of a truly integrated and sustainably funded “**European Ocean Observing System**” to (i) re-establish Europe’s global leading role in marine science and technology; (ii) respond to societal needs by supporting major policy initiatives such as the **Integrated Maritime Policy** and the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive**; and (iii) support European contributions to global observing systems. This could be achieved through better coordination of national capabilities with appropriate new investments, in coordination with relevant initiatives (e.g. ESFRI, EMODNET, GMES) and the engagement of end-users.

### **3. Research to Knowledge**

Establish appropriate mechanisms to keep under review current marine and maritime research programmes and projects with a view to enhancing their impact by (i) exploiting the results of this research; and (ii) identifying existing and emerging gaps. This should be supported by a **repository for the reports and findings of national and EU marine and maritime research projects, programmes and initiatives**, with capacity for archiving, translating, analysing, reporting and developing integrated knowledge products to facilitate policy development, decision making, management actions, innovation, education and public awareness.

**To address effectively the Seas and Oceans Grand Challenge it is essential to prioritise initiatives and programmes to enhance:**

- **Innovation**

Provide enhanced support for innovation and the commercialisation of new marine/maritime products, processes, services and concepts in support of the Innovation Union and the Europe 2020 Strategy;

Promote actions to raise awareness within the marine scientific community of the innovation potential of marine science, and opportunities to make use of it in cooperation with ocean industries.

- **Training and Career Development**

Establish appropriate training and mobility opportunities for marine researchers and technologists and provide stable and attractive career pathways to ensure the highly skilled workforce that will be needed to support expanding marine and maritime sectors;

- **International Cooperation**

Establish at EU level a mechanism to strategically enhance international cooperation (i.e. between European consortia and third country partners) in science and technology, with support for networking initiatives, preparatory phase projects and concrete actions;

Strengthen bilateral/multilateral cooperation with key funding organisations, intergovernmental bodies and marine/maritime science institutions outside Europe to overcome barriers to, and deliver workable solutions for, joint funding of relevant international research programmes and infrastructures.

**The European marine and maritime science community is committed to playing its role, in partnership with industry and the public sector, to bridge the gap between science and innovation to support sustainable development.**