

BLUE PLANET FORUM
Acting together for the future of EU Maritime Policy

Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 27-28 November 2007

Summary declaration of
EUROPEAN YOUTH OCEANS FORUM
LET EUROPEAN YOUTH TAKE PART IN OCEAN GOVERNANCE

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INTRODUCTION

We, the participants of the 1st Blue Planet Forum, from all over Europe, have come together to express our thoughts, concerns and recommendations on the state of the ocean.

These thoughts are summarized and embodied in this final presentation.

It moreover details our ideas on creating links between populations, common European regulations, the support of research and training.

We agree that the ocean has gone well beyond its operating capacity and therefore ask the European community to step up to the commitments it has taken, to take action and protect the ocean, its resources and environment, for future generations.

ENFORCEMENT OF COMMON LAWS IN EUROPE

The ocean has no frontiers: well established regulations of EU member states should be also applied in neighbour states that share the same seas (concerning preservation of biodiversity, fish stocks, maritime safety and pollution). We recommend:

- Common European regulations to create protected coastlines areas;
- Creation of groups of volunteers to take care of these zones;
- Enforcement of common laws in Europe for the transportation of dangerous goods and improvement of punishment against outlaws;
- All vessels entering European area should meet European standards;
- Standardization of shore side electricity;
- Coordination of coast guards in Europe, control of position of the fishing boats;
- Education and re-education are necessary for the people who pollute, fish illegally, etc. to make them understand what they have done.

ENFORCE TRAINING

To improve training we recommend:

- That the EU should make stronger standards for nautical students and future captains / engineers, instead of following IMO regulations (STCW'95);
- To be better and environmental friendlier than the other parts of the world, have a higher level of European environmental training and give a positive image of maritime business to the world.

SUPPORT RESEARCH

We think that research can play an important role to discover new ways to contribute to the good state of the sea. We recommend:

- Network on maritime sectors (studies on fisheries, sailing for example);
- More long term research on changes caused by pollution in order to prevent pollution in early stage;
- Check if the new ideas about the protection of the environment are effective and have a positive impact.

CREATE LINKS BETWEEN SEA AND POPULATIONS

We think that it's very important to create links between:

- different categories of people: scientists, policy makers and citizens;
- inland and coastline people (make people aware that the pollution in the big cities has an impact on the ocean environment; it is not always the fishermen or the seamen who pollute);
- member states and countries living by the same seas (Black sea, Mediterranean sea) and we shouldn't forget the overseas territories.

We want to encourage

- Information by **Internet** with complete transparency; (e.g. website: www.cleanship.info, portal, forums for the general public, access to raw data)
- More media information on the sea, for example street interactive presentations, educational games, television sea programs;
- Celebration of the World Ocean Day on June 8 all over European Union countries;
- Eco café: easy going meeting places;
- Educational programme to include all people from the coast to inland
- Actions that allow direct contact with the ocean; excursions to aquariums and sea life centres;
- European contests involving young pupils;
- Commitment of volunteers (beach clean-up activities, nature camps);
- Involvement of celebrities in information campaign.



CONCLUSION

As youth living on a planet of which 71% is covered by water, we have come together to appeal to all stakeholders involved to protect this large part of our planet – to protect the use of the life and resources it gives, to recognize its importance and to enforce decisions taken, the decisions that will not only affect us, but that will have a long term effect on all future generations.

This is our commitment – is it yours?