

Response to the EC Consultation on International Ocean Governance

14 October 2015

Dear Commissioner Karmenu Vella,

The European Marine Board welcomes the opportunity to input to the EC Consultation on International Ocean Governance. As a pan-European marine science network of 36 member organizations from 19 countries, EMB proposes the following three key action areas to develop a forward-looking strategy for international ocean governance.

1. **Fundamental scientific knowledge is crucial to achieve effective and holistic governance of our seas and global ocean.** However, despite the considerable support by European and national funders for marine science, there remains a chronic deficit of knowledge about the oceans, particularly in the deep sea, much of which is found in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). This can only be met through integrated, interdisciplinary research to address knowledge gaps. In addition, a greater value and recognition should be placed on marine scientific knowledge as a crucial part of the evidence base to support international ocean governance frameworks, e.g. development of an implementing agreement to UNCLOS on biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (BBNJ). This will also require strengthening of the science advisory process and building more effective science-policy interfaces.
2. **The current institutional framework for ocean governance is highly complex and fragmented and would benefit from coordination both within Europe and at an international level.** In particular, Europe could benefit from further formalizing the EU coordinating mechanisms to UN organizations and support the role of UN-Oceans as an overarching coordinator of all UN activities with respect to ocean issues.
3. **Europe can play a leadership role in the World Ocean Assessment**, supporting a review of the process so far with a view to establishing a truly integrated, long-term and science-driven effort to understand the current and future state of the ocean.

Please find attached the full EMB response to the Consultation for further information.

We commend the European Commission in this initiative to consult stakeholders on how to improve international governance frameworks. As a strategic network and science-policy interface, the European Marine Board is ready to play its role in supporting the European Commission to ensure that the EU has a leading role in determining the future governance of our global ocean.

Yours sincerely



Niall McDonough
Executive Secretary, European Marine Board