

For the attention of: Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General for Research & Innovation, European Commission

Subject: Mission Ocean: Placing integrated marine science at the core of Europe's Research and Innovation Agenda

18 December 2017

Dear Robert-Jan Smits,

EMB calls for a Mission Ocean, embedded in a broader agenda for marine science and innovation in Europe. Placing marine science at the core of Europe's Research and Innovation Agenda has never been more timely, relevant, or of higher value to society. On 6 December 2017, the United Nations officially designated the years 2021 to 2030 as the 'Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development'. This is a huge opportunity for Europe to show leadership to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **There is an urgent need for more data and knowledge about our seas and Ocean to address all 17 SDGs,** as highlighted by a recent Eurostat monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context.

The latest European Marine Board (EMB) flagship initiative, *Navigating the Future V (NFV)*, **will provide scientific advice on future seas and Ocean research to 2030 and beyond.** The experts of the EMB identified 5 key areas of marine science, during the NFV foresight planning in November 2017:

- Improve knowledge of the 4-Dimensional Ocean (a volume that changes in the time dimension) and its role in the earth and climate system, including the human component;
- Assess impacts of multiple and cumulative human stressors to the dynamic, non-linear and rapidly changing Ocean system;
- Improve understanding and predictability of extreme events through an integrated approach, including natural hazards and climate induced impacts affecting the Ocean;
- Advance capabilities in ocean technologies leading to wider developments in Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence;
- Foster sustainability science as an integrated field with marine science as a core component of natural and social sciences.

The EMB recognizes the significant investment in marine science and technology research in EU's programmes. **The EMB calls for post-2020 EU programming to consider these recommendations and promote holistic and integrated approaches to European Research and Innovation funding. The marine science community stands ready to take this quantum leap on a scale that is needed to understand, protect, manage and sustainably exploit our Ocean and wider natural environment.**

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Dr. Jan Mees
Chair, European Marine Board