

EMSO Conference: Preparing for the UN Decade of Ocean Science

February 12 - 14, 2020

STATEMENT

Over 50 leaders of the international ocean science community - scientists, research infrastructure (RI) managers, funding agency representatives, data service providers and industry leaders - gathered in Athens in a conference organized by EMSO ERIC, to discuss innovative ways by which the science community can coordinate activities to address the United Nations ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and support the Horizon Europe mission on “Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters”.

Said participant Sheila Heymans, Executive Director, European Marine Board, *“The Ocean Decade will be the most important contribution that ocean science can make to humanity. Without making our research relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals we will be unable to defend the public funds attributed to research infrastructures. Conversely, without the data these research infrastructures provide the SDGs will not be achieved. We therefore need to streamline the observations we make and ensure that ocean observations become a public utility.”*

During the 2-day event, participants critically evaluated the key role of ocean observing plays in providing vital information to understand the impacts of global changes and in finding solutions to environmental threats and the economic challenges that jeopardize the future of our planet. Main themes discussed included:

- integrating knowledge and expertise in order to understand the ocean’s complexity and anthropogenic impacts;
- strengthening coherent and continuous cooperation between environmental research infrastructures to be more effective and efficient in developing common strategies contributing to the Global Ocean Observation System (GOOS);
- creating robust interfaces to the Copernicus services (marine, land, atmosphere, emergency) in Europe to co-deliver services to users;
- engaging social science experts and practitioners as strong partners in marine research endeavours to help in the dialogue with decision makers;
- Enhancing engagement with businesses;
- Improving outreach and engaging the general public more directly in research initiatives to boost ocean literacy.

Attending the conference, Clair Jolly, Head of the OECD’s Innovation Policies for Space and Oceans Unit, noted, *“This conference demonstrated conclusively that the different facets of the European Ocean observing community are determined to work together in an integrated manner to address the societal challenges outlined in the UN statement of objectives. There is no doubt that the successes of the past will be used in a much more coherent manner over the coming decade than has ever been done before. This will provide significant and tangible benefits for the global environment and for mankind.”*

Research Infrastructure Consortia represented at the conference: [EMSO](#), [EMBRC](#), [EuroArgo](#), [ICOS-Marine](#), [LifeWatch](#) and [EPOS](#).



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