



**MARINE STRATEGY COORDINATION GROUP (MSCG)
OF THE MARINE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE
COMMON IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

15 MAY 2009 FROM 09:00 TO 17:30

IN LEUVEN TOWN HALL, GOTHIC ROOM

DRAFT MINUTES

The Commission, DG Environment D.2. (hereafter referred to as COM) invited delegates for the Marine Strategy Coordination Group (MSCG) meeting of the Common Implementation Strategy for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) on 15 May 2009. The following Member States (MS) participated in the meeting: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia and the United Kingdom.

In addition, Norway was also represented at the Meeting by the Directorate for Nature Management, the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority and the Ministry of the Environment. The Regional Sea Conventions HELCOM and OSPAR were present as well as several organisations including Oceana, PIANC, Seas At Risk, CEDA, MATTM-DPN, UEPG, the Port of Rotterdam, IFAW, ISU OGP, EBCD, Eurelectric, WWF North-East Atlantic Programme, KIMO, Greenpeace, EU Oceans programme, EUCC Marine Team, BirdLife International, Eureau and ICOMIA/EURMIG Environment Executive. A full list of meeting participants is provided in **Annex 1**.

The main objective of the meeting was to finalise discussions on organisation arrangements of the MSFD Common Implementation Strategy and to prepare the upcoming first meeting of Marine Directors which would be held back-to-back with the Water Directors meeting in Czech Republic (Brno) in the morning of 29 May 2009.

The meeting documents and presentations are available on MSFD CIRCA under the meeting sub-folder of the folder “B- ... Marine Strategic Co-ordination Group” in the library using the following direct link (requires signing in with access rights):

http://circa.europa.eu/Members/irc/env/marine/library?l=/implementation_coordinat/2_-_meetings/meeting_15_2009&vm=detailed&sb=Title

A summary of the discussions and agreed actions are presented below.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chairman (Peter Gammeltoft, COM)¹ welcomed participants to the meeting. He recalled the entry into force of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in July 2008, with the obligations on MS to transpose the Directive by mid-2010 and then deliver on several key obligations from 2012 onwards (initial assessment, determination of GES in their waters, and targets/indicators on

¹ The second part of the meeting was chaired by Mr. Carlos Berrozpe.

progress). The main milestone was the delivery in 2015 of their programme of measures. In addition, COM must prepare immediately the decision, after MS committee and EP scrutiny, by July 2010 which will form the priority for action in the next months. COM must also prepare decisions on reporting and data, to set up an operational WISE-Marine.

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A draft agenda (see **Annex 2**) was distributed before the meeting, which the meeting agreed as a basis for its discussions.

2. ORGANISATION OF WORK AT EU LEVEL AND WORK PLAN

The meeting noted the overview of the working structure agreed in February 2009 (see Document MSCG May 09 2/1).

The meeting reviewed the draft working arrangements of the Marine Strategy Coordination Group (MSCG) itself (see Document MSCG May 09 2/2). The following issues were addressed:

- Clarification that stakeholder organisations can provide input to the meetings. It was confirmed that participating organisations could submit documents to the meetings, and that COM would ensure document organisation on the 'Marine Strategy' CIRCA Interest Group for this purpose. Each meeting would also be minuted with an opportunity for participants to comment before the next meeting finalised the minutes of the previous meeting. The MSCG confirmed that it was an aspirational target that all documents for its meetings should be made available at least two weeks before the actual meeting.
- COM indicated that there had been some late expressions of interest of stakeholder organisations and that it would update the content in the Annex. COM stressed that, when practical circumstances (e.g. number of seats in meeting room) constrained the possible representation of stakeholder organisations, it would address this ahead of the meeting with the organisations of those categories of stakeholders for which a relatively (too) large number (cf. indicative number of seats for the different types) had shown an interest. Organisations in those categories should be prepared to liaise among themselves to help addressing this issue. The representative from PIANC confirmed that the navigation sector would try to coordinate the input of the sector into the activities associated with the Marine Strategy Coordination Group in much the same way as they already do for the WFD.
- COM indicated that it wished to explore further how organisations representing fisheries interests could become more actively involved, given that environmental status relies in part on the health status of commercially exploited stocks and that environmental effects of fisheries are likely to feature prominently in the MS initial assessments. So far there had only been expressions of interest to participate from (sub-)national organisations which would not fulfil the criteria set out in the working arrangements. The EC Environment and Maritime Affairs and Fisheries DGs would consult on how to take this matter forward.
- To a question on the possible involvement of national stakeholder organisations, COM replied that, in view of the large number of Member States, it would become difficult to engage them in work at the EU level, for which EU level stakeholder (umbrella) organisations were more suitable. (see also Agenda Item 3).
- The classification of the observers was discussed. This was analogous to that set up for the Water Framework Directive Common Implementation Strategy. States which were bound

by the MSFD were to be full members, and those for which MSFD may represent a future legal commitment were welcome as observers. Greenpeace requested scrutiny whether all organisations present at the meeting fulfilled the criteria of the general interest organisations mentioned. COM expressed willingness to examine this in contact with the organisation(s) concerned.

The meeting agreed that a revised set of working arrangements should be forwarded to the Marine Directors for their endorsement.

The meeting reviewed the draft MSFD CIS work plan 2009-2010 (see Document MSCG May 09 2/5). The following issues were raised in the discussion:

- The issue of overall environmental status assessment should be included, probably on the part of the work plan for the Working Group on Good Environmental Status (but see discussion of document MSCG May 09 4/1 below).
- The relationship with work under the Water Framework Directive should not be restricted only to issues related to environmental status assessment, but also look into the relationship on the respective programmes of measures. The representative from PIANC stated that there was a need to be clear about the scope of MSFD in coastal and estuarine areas - for example, data are already collected for the WFD and river basin plans already include programmes of measures for coastal and estuarine waters. It will be vital to be clear about which Directive applies where, and to avoid confusion/duplication with the WFD. She also highlighted, for the attention of the Integrated Maritime Policy, that the Water Framework Directive is also critical to Maritime Policy in coastal and transitional water bodies.
- The development of methods for social and economic analysis of the use of marine waters (to be applied for the initial assessment) was of common interest to all MS; the German representation proposed that – with the aim of pan-European consistent results – a common European study should be undertaken to quantify the uses and especially the costs of non-action.. In view of the interest expressed in February 2009 to start work on social and economic analysis required for the MSFD initial assessment, COM presented a proposal for an initial scoping study that could identify which were the potentially useful avenues for further work (Document MSCG May 09 2/7). COM would be able to launch this study by mid-2009 with the results becoming available approx. nine months later. COM underlined that it was an obligation of the MS to conduct the economic and social analysis of the use of their waters and indicated that it welcomed more collective action by MS in this area and hoped that its scoping study would be a useful contribution.
- The UK representation questioned whether the proposed action 3.3 on convergence of marine environmental indicators was mandated under the requirements of the MSFD. It was explained that there is a need to supply environmental status information to the EEA and to the EC under Art. 19 for the purpose of Art. 20. EEA produces regular state of the environment assessment reports and uses in that process a set of indicators. At present, the scope of the marine environmental indicators is very limited and more needs to be done to have an adequate set of marine environmental indicators at EU level, especially for the types of issues for which data sources are driven by EU or international agreements. Rather than imposing for Art. 19 and 20 related indicator formulation a top-down unified approach on data submission for those indicators – which might then be different from the existing national and regional indicators – a process had already started under the European Marine Monitoring and Assessment (EMMA) working group to do this in a gradual convergence process which would be less disruptive for MS and more synergetic with work they undertook in the regional sea conventions. This process would not cover all the issues which MS were likely to need to address under MSFD Art. 10, but a limited subset of them.

- On the request to include an action 1.2 on 'identification and prioritisation of monitoring needs which may require work at EU-level', the UK representation requested a more precise definition of the ambitions. COM replied that this was a request received following the February meetings and that this was a typical example of an action which could only be undertaken when there was sufficient MS interest and active involvement.
- In the action 1.7 on synergies and linkages with other policy areas, the linkage with aspects of the Common Fisheries Policy should be enhanced.

COM (Maritime Affairs and Fisheries DG, Mr. Haitze Siemers and Mr. Iain Shepherd) gave a brief overview of the developments under the EU Integrated Maritime Policy, highlighting the importance of activities regarding maritime spatial planning (MSP) and the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODNET). The socio-economic side of the maritime policy would require better maritime activity statistics, and DG ESTAT was undertaking work to ensure more coherent coastal and maritime sectors economic and social data.

In response to this presentation, the meeting:

- concluded that the link with the Integrated Maritime Policy needed to be strengthened at EU level and at national level;
- requested further clarification from COM on the specific linkages between the processes under the MSFD and those constituting MSP;
- encouraged Regional Sea Conventions, which had already expressed their full interest as regards the EMODNET development, to be further associated with it;
- requested further clarification from COM on the relation between all the data & information initiatives (EMODNET, GMES Marine Service, INSPIRE, WISE-Marine, ...). This would be a subject for discussion at the 17 June meeting of the Working Group on Data, Information and Knowledge Exchange.

The meeting agreed that a revised draft work plan 2009-2010 should be forwarded to the Marine Directors for their endorsement, with a request to fill the main gaps in action resourcing (esp. with a view to have a more visible MS role, e.g. as leader or co-leader of some of the actions mentioned, especially those related to MS competences such as actions 1.2 and 1.3).

The meeting reviewed the draft Terms of Reference of the Working Groups.

Those of the Working Group on Good Environmental Status had been discussed the previous day by the first meeting of that WG; the amendments proposed there were endorsed.

The draft Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Data, Information and Knowledge Exchange raised the following issues:

- the requirements on MS of the INSPIRE Directive should take a more prominent role;
- the work and data & information systems of the regional sea conventions should be taken account of;
- there was an urgent need to define the scope of WISE-Marine more clearly; this should be done by the Working Group itself;
- Exchanging information should also involve stakeholder organisations, several of which indicated at the meeting that they had undertaken relevant studies and project, whose results may well be informative for the MSCG and for MS work on their marine strategies.

The meeting agreed that revised WG Terms of Reference should be forwarded to the Marine Directors for their endorsement.

3. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Further to the working arrangements involving stakeholder organisations at EU-level (cf. discussion of Document MSCG May 09 2/2) COM addressed the issue of transparency of the stakeholder involvement at other levels (Document MSCG May 09 3/1). It was explained that the Integrated Maritime Policy was likely to benefit in future from feedback organised through the Venice Platform under development; also, that stakeholder organisations were represented in Regional Sea Conventions but that there was probably a need to clarify which activities related to MSFD implementation that would involve stakeholder organisations were organised at which level and through which working arrangements. It was thus proposed to establish and maintain, under supervision of the MSCG, an overview of stakeholder involvement (and possibilities for stakeholder involvement) on the public part of the Marine Strategy CIRCA Interest Group.

In discussion of involvement of Fisheries Policy Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), it was noted that these are mentioned in MSFD Art. 19. The representative of Greenpeace stated that they were of the opinion that RACs didn't serve sufficiently to work towards an ecosystem approach of fisheries management and suggested 'regional ecosystem activity councils'.

The Spanish representative indicated that their national stakeholder organisations would liaise generally with their EU-level counterparts for their national work.

The representative from PIANC highlighted that, whilst stakeholder groups had been involved very successfully in WFD implementation, engaging the general public had proved very difficult in most Member States. For the Marine Directive, this will potentially be even more of a challenge because - for most members of the public - marine areas are geographically somewhat distant. (At least with the WFD, many people live within easy reach of a river or a lake).

The meeting endorsed the proposal in Document MSCG May 09 3/1.

4. GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

While work is ongoing for the criteria and methodological standards for the descriptors of good environmental status, work on a mechanism for an overall status expression is not yet planned. In Document MSCG May 09 4/1, COM raises the question whether action is necessary, and if so, proposes to start with a discussion in a small 'reflection group' before eventually sending it for further elaboration by the Working Group on Good Environmental Status. COM is of the opinion that such a mechanism will be required, although its function and purpose needs to be clearly specified.

In discussion:

- the OSPAR Executive Secretary indicated that the OSPAR Quality Status Report 2010, currently being drafted, will also include an overall assessment approach. An initial approach was applied for the first time during a workshop in Utrecht (NL) in February 2009 and would be further elaborated in OSPAR;
- the HELCOM Executive Secretary pointed to the holistic assessment that HELCOM will be undertaking, including the material from its more thematic assessments in one overall assessment. This assessment would also be finalised during 2010. Importantly this overall

assessment is making use of an overall assessment approach and including a chapter on costs and benefits of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. HELCOM member states being also EU member states have clearly indicated that the holistic assessment will facilitate their delivery of the initial assessment required by the MSFD;

- the representative from Spain indicated that they intended to organise an MSFD-related event during their EU Presidency in the first half of 2010; 'overall assessment' may well be the theme for this technical workshop;
- the representative from Finland expressed an interest in this work and stated that earlier developments under the Regional Sea Conventions, the Water Framework Directive and approached tested by the scientific community should all be taken into account for this difficult issue. She was encouraged by the fact that the MSCG had identified this as a key issue at this early stage.
- The UK representative supported the establishment of a reflection group on this matter and stressed the need clarify the precise purpose of such overall status expressions.

The meeting endorsed the proposal in Document MSCG May 09 4/1.

COM explained that it had commissioned a study from Wageningen IMARES (NL) to have a first development on methodological approaches linking 'pressures' and 'impacts' of maritime activities with the expression of 'status'. An understanding of the main causal linkages throughout the D-P-S-I-R chain was necessary for the application of an ecosystem-based approach and specifically for the application of Art. 9 which requires the determination of 'good environmental status' to be on the basis of the GES qualitative descriptors and taking into account pressures and impacts of human activities. The study will take 9 months to complete (around September 2009). Interested organisations should contact COM for more details. UK, ESPO and OGP expressed their interest during the meeting. HELCOM informed on a similar exercise undertaken under the HELCOM Biodiversity and Eutrophication thematic Assessments and partly to be covered under the HELCOM Holistic Assessment (pressure index) and that HELCOM would share its results and methodological approach to be also included in the Study, through already established direct contacts with Wageningen IMARES.

5. MEMBER STATES ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT MSFD TRANSPOSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THEIR REGIONAL CONTEXTS

COM issued an invitation to Member States to inform Marine Directors, on the basis of a paper of not more than two pages, of their activities to transpose and implement the MSFD. The following interventions indicated what MS were doing at present:

- **France** explained that an internal broad consultation dialogue on marine issues, the *Grenelle de la mer*, was currently ongoing, after the earlier *Grenelle de l'environnement*. This will run until the end of September. After this, a consultation on a specific law transposing the MSFD will be held.
- **Spain** indicated that it was starting the drafting of a specific law [see meanwhile Document MD May 09 4/2] where a number of issues still required clarification. These included demarcation issues with neighbouring countries. Spain was setting up internal consultation structures to involve all the competent authorities, and was also involving stakeholders.

- **Norway**, although not an EU MS, intervened to explain that, after the earlier plan for the Barents Sea and the sea areas off the Lofoten Islands which reflected a great many of the holistic and ecosystem-based management principles of the MSFD, the Norwegian Government launched on 8 May 2009 a *Report to the Storting: Integrated Management of the Marine Environment of the Norwegian Sea*. The Norwegian government is committed also to finalising an integrated management plan for the North Sea by 2015, in close co-operation with the North Sea neighbouring countries. In this respect, Norway greatly values the long-standing co-operation with neighbouring states surrounding the North-East Atlantic under the auspices of the OSPAR Commission. [See Document MD May 09 4/5]
- **Sweden** referred to the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy which was being prepared by the European Commission and which would be addressed during its EU Presidency later this year. Specifically on the MSFD, it pointed out that it was in discussion with Denmark on the possible identification of 'subdivisions' in regard the Kattegat. It had made a first analysis of the MSFD implications and its regional implementation. It pointed to the need for a close connection with work organisation for coastal waters under the WFD (e.g. the work of the Geographic Intercalibration Groups, GIGs).
- **Finland** stated that the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) under HELCOM would provide a basis for its marine strategy. On the legislative side a preparatory working group had been set up.
- **The United Kingdom** pointed to its coordination with authorities in the UK countries' (or regions) governments and to the strong national interest in the integrated assessment. At international level, regional coordination in the MSFD sense was already taking place under the OSPAR Convention, where consideration was being given to the subregional division of the marine waters. While parliamentary consideration of the Marine Bill would result in many of the tools and instruments required for a full application of the MSFD to the UK, the legal instrument transposing this Directive would be separate under the UK European Communities Act [meanwhile see Document MD May 09 4/1].
- **Germany** stated that a National Strategy on maritime issues had been approved by the Federal Cabinet on 8 October 2008. Its integrated approach was also a basis for work on the MSFD. A gap analysis of what was missing to implement the Directive was ongoing. Of particular interest was the launch of a significant R&D project specifically on marine data management.
- **Greece** had started internal preparations with a meeting in March 2009. The meeting had inventoried existing obligations of services concerned and the basis to cover also the MSFD was discussed. A Committee with the purpose of facilitating the procedures leading up to transposition was under final approval, including a working group under it to look specifically at the question of possible subdivisions of its marine waters.
- Italy is setting up a structure for the implementation of the MSFD that will be based on the existing network for control of ecological quality of marine coastal environment, according to the National Law 979/1982. A national monitoring program that involves all the 15 coastal Regions has been carried out since 2001 and it is presently being updated, according to new legislations' requirements. Data from this programme have already been used also to respond to WFD and Barcelona Convention (MEDPOL program) requirements. The new MSFD structure will gather the Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea, the Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA), coastal regions and stakeholders.
- **Romania** organises stakeholder involvement for setting up its internal arrangements. A first meeting had been held and a second one planned. It was also investigating how it would take forward undertaking the MSFD Art. 8 initial assessment.

- **Poland** was investigating whether it would require separate new legislation rather than the amendment of existing acts. The allocation of the new responsibilities was also being addressed. Poland pointed to HELCOM's HOLAS project in respect of the MSFD Art. 8 initial assessment.
- **The Netherlands** stated that its several pieces of water legislation were being brought together into one comprehensive text. This integration also provided an integrated start for the MSFD implementation. The existing national water plans were the basis of future MSFD marine strategies, and provided the authorities the platform for their cooperation. So far, two specific working groups were dealing with the MSFD, one on transposition and one on 'good environmental status'.
- In **Denmark**, the Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning was tasked with the MSFD follow-up. Preparations for transposition were such that it was now ready for the political process. Discussions on subdivisions were taking place with Sweden and Denmark also participated actively in the HELCOM and OSPAR processes. Denmark would derive useful specific information for the MSFD implementation from projects, including the BALANCE project which had provided habitat information in GIS formats.
- **Cyprus** has established a Transposition Group that involves all relevant services, e.g., Department of Merchant Shipping (responsible for the Integrated Maritime Policy), the Environment Service (responsible for the Natura 2000 network), the Water Development Department (responsible for the Water Framework Directive) and the Energy Authority (which oversees energy-related activities in the Cyprus EEZ). A model transposition law is being drafted.

A HELCOM representative presented briefly information on relevant activities ongoing through them in the Baltic Sea region, with a specific focus on the upcoming HELCOM Ministerial meeting to take place in Moscow in May 2010. The main issue for consideration by this meeting is the status of implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. For this purpose the countries will submit national implementation programmes, for assessment by the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting. Among other specific issues are the HELCOM holistic assessment, a HELCOM core set of indicators, the revised nutrient reduction targets and the forthcoming EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy. In this connection it was mentioned that a letter had been sent by HELCOM to the Commission, pointing out the linkages between the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, the forthcoming EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy and the MSFD and its concept of a pilot project. Especially as regards the Pilot Project HELCOM finds that the Baltic Sea Action Plan complies with an early programme of measures as required for the Pilot Project. .

An OSPAR representative gave a brief statement on their preparations in respect of the MSFD. OSPAR countries had expressed concern on the timing of delivery on criteria and standards regarding 'good environmental status', taking account of the time it had taken OSPAR to develop its pilot project on Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) for the North Sea. In the near future, OSPAR would be fully engaged in finalising the Quality Status Report 2010, one of the main deliverables that would underpin the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in Bergen (Norway) in September 2010. OSPAR would review its thematic strategies and where necessary align provisions with the MSFD. OSPAR and HELCOM would also continue their cooperation to address issues of common interest.

Concluding this round of information exchange, COM reiterated the interest in sharing information on MSFD transposition and implementation issues. ***It was agreed that MS would inform COM of their focal point in this respect (which may be the Marine Director, or someone close to the MD).*** Especially where early transboundary cooperation was necessary, such as for the delimitation of subregions or subdivisions, COM encouraged MS to cooperate intensively. COM also thanked the

representatives of the two regional sea conventions present for their interest in participation and allowing the MSFD requirements to be addressed in their frameworks.

6. SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MARINE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

COM (Research DG, Mr. Waddah Saab) presented the EU marine and maritime research strategy (see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0534:FIN:EN:PDF>) which had been followed by Council conclusions on 2 December 2008. Different needs drove the strategy: the need to understand man's impact on the seas, the competition for limited resources and limited space, the need to develop marine technologies that would give a continued edge to European companies on the world markets, the need for a comprehensive approach to marine science infrastructure needs, the need for a better science-policy interface and improved marine science related governance... The strategy would focus on better integration and joining of forces to overcome sectoral fragmentation of knowledge etc. This could be of significant benefit for the MSFD implementation. A coordination of research funding programming in the marine and maritime field (joint programming, joint calls, ...) would also allow addressing the new challenges ahead. As under the broader Integrated Maritime Policy, a move was also ongoing to establish a forum of the marine and maritime research communities which would enhance the governance system. One of the first specific activities to help MSFD implementation would be a process to identify all relevant research projects that had delivered results which could be relevant during MSFD implementation, especially for the initial assessment and the 'good environmental status' question.

In response to this presentation, several organisations present highlighted their involvement in scientific projects for the benefit of water policy in general and marine environmental policy in particular.

COM (Environment DG, Mr. Jose Rizo) gave a presentation on the funding opportunities provided earlier by the LIFE instrument (now LIFE+). The 2008 call for LIFE+ projects had been opened this same day (15 May, see <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/lifeplus.htm>) and the closing date was set on 15 September 2009. As demonstrated by some LIFE projects, this funding instrument could help with a number of aspects of MSFD implementation. Specific guidance on preparing project proposals would be given to interested applicants in a series of workshops in all MS (see http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/events/events2009/info_workshops09.htm).

COM indicated that it was considering the application of MSFD Article 5 ('pilot project' provision) and its modus operandi, taking account of criteria for eligibility and implications.

Representatives requested more information from COM on the relation with regional funding instruments (INTERREG ...).

7. CONCLUSIONS

In view of the preparation of the meeting of Marine Directors on 29 May in Brno (Czech Republic), the chairman summed up the results of the meeting as follows:

- There was an opportunity to address the national MSFD related activities at the Marine Directors meeting, preferably on the basis of short national documents, the agenda would be adjusted accordingly;
- The Marine Strategy Coordination Group had reviewed its draft work plan for 2009-2010 and made working arrangements for itself and terms of reference for its working groups; it

remained important to ensure that all work items would be sufficiently resourced, and in this respect Marine Directors will need to give additional consideration to resourcing some activities for which insufficient means were yet available;

- The organisation of additional MSFD related events by EU Presidencies (Sweden, Spain) was noted with gratitude, and it was hoped that this would set a good precedent for further presidencies to also attribute attention to the important 'policy development' requirements of the MSFD which required more reflection than what was commonly understood under the term 'implementation';
- On the socio-economic aspects of the initial assessment (see agenda point 2), COM would launch an initial scoping study and intensify involvement of DG MARE, MS were invited to engage actively in the activity planned with a view to establishing at EU level some common understanding of the possible approaches;
- On the question of overall environmental status assessment (see agenda point 4), the MSCG agreed to establish a small 'reflection group' that could discuss and chart a way forward; COM invited MS to consider taking an active part;
- It was agreed to draw the issue of the focal point (see last para. of agenda item 5) also to the attention of the Marine Directors.
- On research support for the MSFD implementation (see agenda point 6), the screening process of relevant R&D output would be a first step, this information should be actively disseminated; MS were invited to also involve national R&D funding authorities in discussions on how to take the MSFD information requirements further;
- MS agreed (see agenda point 3) to share information on stakeholder involvement (& opportunities)
- MSCG would keep 'support' (including funding) on its agenda for future meetings, including LIFE+ and also regional development funding.

Annex 1: list of participants

Belgium	Ministry of Environment
Bulgaria	Ministry of the Environment
Cyprus	Marine Environment Division, Department of Fisheries and Marine Research (DFMR), Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment
Germany	Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit
	Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Umwelt, und ländliche Räume des Landes Schleswig-Holstein
Denmark	Danish Ministry of the Environment, Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning
	Danish Ministry of the Environment, Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning
Spain	Spanish Environment Ministry
Finland	Ministry of Environment
France	DG de l'aménagement, du logement, et de la nature
	DG de l'aménagement, du logement, et de la nature
	DG de l'aménagement, du logement, et de la nature
Greece	Greek National Center for the Environment and Sustainable Development
Ireland	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Italy	MATTM – DPN (Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea – Department for Nature Protection)
	ISPRA (Institute for Environmental Protection and Research)
Lithuania	Water Division, Environmental Quality Department, Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania
Latvia	Ministry of the Environment
The Netherlands	Ministry of Transport, Public Works & Water Management
	Ministry of Transport, Public Works & Water Management
Poland	Polish Environmental Protection
Romania	Ministry of the Environment
Sweden	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
Slovenia	Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia
	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Environment Directorate
United Kingdom	Marine Scotland
	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
	Marine Scotland
EEA	EEA agency EU
European Commission	DG RTD
	DG RTD
	DG MARE
	DG RTD
	DG MARE
	DG MARE
	DG ENV
	DG ENV
DG ENV	

	DG ENV
	DG ENV
	DG ENV

Norway	Directorate for Nature Management
	Norwegian Pollution Control Authority
	Ministry of the Environment

Regional Sea Conventions	HELCOM
	HELCOM
	OSPAR

Organisations	Oceana
	PIANC
	Seas At Risk
	CEDA
	MATTM-DPN
	UEPG
	Port of Rotterdam
	IFAW
	ISU
	OGP
	EBCD
	Eurelectric
	WWF North-East Atlantic Programme
	KIMO
	Greenpeace, EU Oceans programme
	EUCC Marine Team
	BirdLife International
	Eureau
ICOMIA - EURMIG Environment Executive	

Opening of the meeting (09:00 am)

Welcome statement by the Commission.

Participants, in particular the stakeholders, will be invited to briefly present themselves and their particular interest in contributing to this group.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting will briefly review draft minutes & follow-up to the 5 February ad hoc meeting of Member States marine experts.

Participants will be invited to adopt this draft agenda.

2. Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) – Organisation of work at EU level and draft work plan

The meeting will be informed on the organisation of EU level work agreed on 5 February (Marine Directors, Marine Strategic Coordination Group, Working Groups) and discuss the relation between identified priorities and working arrangements to secure the desired results.

The meeting will be invited to finalise a draft work plan to be submitted to Marine Directors for the EU-level work items supporting the MSFD implementation, on the basis of an overview document prepared by the Commission.

The meeting will discuss how to take account of relevant work ongoing in respect of implementation of the Water Framework Directive and of Biodiversity / Nature protection legislation, as well as the EU Integrated Maritime Policy and main sector developments.

10:45 – 11:00 Coffee break

3. Stakeholder involvement

The meeting will be invited to discuss the organisation of the 'public consultation' requirements of the MSFD (Art. 19), including the involvement of stakeholder organisations at other levels.

The use of the CIRCA platform 'Marine Strategy' as a document library will be explained.

The meeting will be informed that the Commission will report on the implementation of the MSFD to the meeting of the High Level Focal Points on Maritime Policy, to be held on 18 May on the occasion of the stakeholders events organised in Rome around the European Maritime Day (20 May).

4. Good Environmental Status

The meeting will discuss the state of play on this subject & the outcome of the 14 May meeting of the Working Group on Good Environmental Status.

In addition, the meeting will discuss how to address the question of overall marine environmental status evaluation under the MSFD based on the different aspects of status covered by the MSFD Annex I qualitative descriptors and in the light of the overall definition of 'good environmental status' and whether any action relating to a comprehensive consideration of status should be tasked to the Working Group at a later stage.

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch break

5. Member States activities to support MSFD implementation in their regional contexts

Member States representatives and representatives of the regional sea conventions can take the opportunity of informing the meeting of relevant organisation developments related to the MSFD implementation in their Region, in particular:

- Activities to delimitate 'subregions' or 'subdivisions' in line with MSFD Art. 4
- Setting up of working arrangements at national, subregional or regional level in line with MSFD Art. 6 and 7.

- Identification of regional activities that can contribute specifically to the execution of the EU-level overall work plan (cf. Agenda Item 2).
- Proposals for modalities for interaction between the EU-level work and Member States work in their regional context.

15:00 – 15:15 Coffee break

6. Supporting the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive

The meeting will consider information on international scientific projects that may be of relevance for the MSFD implementation, including how interaction should be organised with them.

The meeting will also discuss how national, regional, European and international resources can be maximised to support the implementation of the MSFD.

7. Conclusions

The meeting will draw conclusions on the discussions ahead of the meeting of Marine Directors to be held on 29 May 2009 at Brno (Czech Republic).

8. Any other business

9. Meeting closes (17:30 pm)