

MedCruise attended the 1st official meeting of the Sub-Group Ports as hubs for a Sustainable Blue Economy, June 2021

The Sub-group is part of the activities of the European Ports Forum (EPF) and it has been established to discuss, in particular, issues surrounding the evolving role of ports in a changing industrial landscape and in how ports can become dynamic nodes for blue economy clusters and blue innovation ecosystems.

The 1st official meeting of the Sub-Group Ports as hubs for a Sustainable Blue Economy took place on 28 June 2021. The meeting was chaired by Mr Felix Leinemann, Head of Unit A.2, Blue Economy Sectors of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE).

The meeting started with a welcome from the Chairman and the adoption of the agenda.

Presentation of the group

The Commission informed that the group will be managed in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) due to the fact that this Group is a Sub-Group of the European Ports Forum.

A new approach to a Sustainable Blue Economy

The Commission gave a presentation on the Commission Communication COM(2021) 240 final adopted on 17 March 2021 by the Commission (DG MARE) on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future.

The concept "Blue Economy" refers to all economic activities relating to the oceans, seas and coast; and covers a wide range of interlinked established and emerging sectors.

In the latest report published in May 2021, "[The Blue Economy Report 2021](#)" states that Europe's blue economy provided 4.5 million direct jobs with a turnover of €650 billion in 2018.

The shift to creating a sustainable blue economy will rely on even closer engagement with stakeholders, from businesses large and small to local groups, to young people passionate about the health of our ocean and the general public. It must unite all groups and sectors around a common vision.

Complementing other current Commission initiatives, this communication presents the agenda for the blue economy on decarbonisation, conservation of our natural capital, the circular economy and responsible food production. It announces some new initiatives and describes some of the tools and enablers to achieve the transition.

Objectives of the Sub-Group

The Commission commented that the purpose of the Sub-Group is to bring people from different sectors together to see what are the problems on their day-to-day business, when implementing the EU law and the conflicts about how this will be combined with the national law. MedCruise SVP and Director of Sustainability and Environmental Issues took the floor and highlighted the importance of working on a common approach between the EU and the national law.

The Chairman suggested mapping the best practices, looking at different projects that involve ports and trying to make them more sustainable. For this, he asked the members to collect information and share it with the Sub-Group. An open discussion among the members on potential objectives and deliverables of the Sub-Group followed.

The Chairman noted that there are some sectors that are already sustainable by definition and others, like the cruise industry, that are keen to become more sustainable. In this line, the Chairman commented that the cruise industry and the cruise ports have an important role to play. •