



Press release

Luxembourg, October 29th 2012

On October 18th and 19th representatives from all over Europe and the European Commission converged on Schengen (Luxembourg) at the occasion of the 8th yearly meeting of the European Network of Maritime Clusters. The maritime clusters of Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and Ireland delegated their respective managements there.

It seems quite unusual to hold a maritime event in a landlocked country. However Luxembourg's blue economy is diverse and very active as stressed by H.E. Mr. Schneider, Luxembourg's Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade, in his welcome speech addressed to the participants. The French-Luxembourg presidium of the ENMC also chose Schengen because of the eponymous agreement signed there which turned the village into a symbol of European cooperation.

ENMC Chairman Francis Vallat said: "it was a successful meeting in all respects. We embraced the opportunity to take stock of last year's activities and, in addition to that, important decisions were taken, both to boost the internal life of the network, increase its visibility, encourage coordinated actions, and "externally" to initiate valuable initiatives towards the European Commission."

As a matter of fact the different clusters have agreed on a common road map for 2013. It includes above all a lobbying action towards the EC.

"The European Network of Maritime Clusters urges the European Commission to fund a large, reliable, and detailed survey of the European maritime sector. It is unsound to shape policies and speak about "Blue growth" - which is fully supported by the ENMC - without having reliable data and accurate figures. As millions of euros are wasted each year for useless studies, it is time to consider a new approach, possibly with the input and the advisory of the ENMC" Francis Vallat insisted.

The national clusters will start the groundwork for this survey by trying to collect homogeneous national data, gathered through a common matrix which was presented at the meeting, and forward them to the Secretary-General of the ENMC by the end of the year.

The next meeting, which should now be a half-day longer due to the numerous topics to be discussed and agreed upon, will take place on September 28th 2013 in Lisbon. All maritime clusters of the European Economic Area which have not taken part yet are invited to make themselves known to the European Network of Maritime Clusters by then.

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