

Role of Marine Science in EU Policy



Recently held EurOcean 2007 Conference, organised by the European Commission, stressed pivotal role of marine science and research in EU maritime policy. The Green Paper on this Policy, published in June 2006, highlights the importance of research and science to ensuring the sustainable management of Europe's seas and oceans. The European Union is a major funder of marine research, in particular through the Research Framework Programmes.

The aim is to set the scene for a new European marine research strategy which could enable stronger cross-sector integration between marine scientific disciplines and with maritime technology developers, development of critical marine research and data infrastructure, and better coordination of Member States' research efforts.

EurOcean 2007 followed on from the highly successful EurOcean 2004 Conference in Ireland, whose Galway Declaration had a profound impact on European marine policies and contributed to the inclusion of marine science and technology as a priority cross-cutting theme in the EU's 7th Framework Research Programme (FP7, 2007 – 2013). Under FP6, which ran from 2002 to 2006, 250 marine-related research projects were funded for a total EU contribution of €612 million. The potential for funding marine research under the FP7 programme is clearly considerable. The challenge is to make optimal use of this potential and leverage maximise benefits from marine research funded by Member States.