

Opening Session

Opening of the 2nd Mission Arena: Status Quo - Actions Suggested - Actors Involved

Date: Thursday, 25 April 2024

Theme: Mission Ocean & Waters

Opening Session Summary

EU Missions 2030: Enhancing Engagement and Impact

Speaker: Evangelia Tzika - European Commission

The session was kicked off by Evangelia Tzika who provided a comprehensive overview on how stakeholders can contribute to the success of EU Missions 2030. Key actions include adhering to the Mission Charter, participating in MISSION events, and submitting proposals to Horizon Europe and other mission calls. Tzika stressed the importance of involving "associated regions" in mission projects, allowing regional authorities to implement and benefit from solutions with financial support. Additional information and resources are available on the mission website portal.

Blueprint for a Healthy Baltic Sea: Current State and Ecological Solutions

Speaker: Jonne Kotta, University of Tartu

Jonne Kotta discussed the significant impact of human activities on the Baltic Sea's ecosystem. He proposed building digital twins and using AI to process the vast data collected to better understand and mitigate these impacts. Kotta also emphasized the need to redefine shipping practices within the next two decades to protect marine life.

Transforming the Blue Economy Towards Climate Neutrality

Speaker: Ulla Rosenström, John Nurminen Foundation

Ulla Rosenström outlined strategies for transitioning from a blue economy to a sustainable blue economy. Her discussion covered the development of solutions to reduce fertilizer loss from harbors, minimize discharges from tank washing, and increase the use of cyprinid fish. Further ecological improvements she suggested included reed harvesting, manure recycling, and restoring seagrass meadows.

Panel Discussion: Approaches and Innovations in Sustainable Marine Practices

Panelists:

- **Nerijus Nikas**, Klaipeda University
- **Sandis Dejus**, Latvian Water and Wastewater Works Association
- **Giedrius Janusauskas**, Klaipeda Science and Technology Park, Lithuania
- **Mari Granström**, Origin by Ocean, Finland
- **Helen Eric**, Saaremaa Municipality, Estonia
- **Maija Häggblom**, Government of Åland (TBD)

The panel discussion, featuring pitches and insights by Mission Ocean Signatories, focused on individual versus collective actions integral to the Regional Roadmap. Highlights included Klaipeda University's challenge of diversifying RAS in a market where currently just one species is cultivated, and Origin by Ocean's efforts in removing invasive species to cleanse nutrients from the ocean. Discussions also covered Lithuania's initiatives to electrify all possible onshore operations, transform cargo shipping, and promote regenerative ocean farming. Saaremaa Municipality emphasized the need to empower local communities through supportive coastal planning frameworks. The panel concluded with a call to transform the perception of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) from problems to essential elements of sustainable maritime strategies.