



Towards an alliance of European research fleets

Kick-off meeting – Cité des Sciences PARIS

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Welcome by the Eurofleets Coordinator,

The main objective of the project is to contribute to high competitiveness for the European marine research. Jacques Binot reminded that Eurofleets is an ambitious project with a large partnership and thus emphasizes the need for an efficient management to be successful. The aim is to work together and provide benefits for all beneficiaries. The Eurofleets fundamental ideas are:

- Partnership spirit - all opinions are welcome
- Opened project - new associated partners are welcome
- Variable geometry - diverse partnership
- High quality of the project
- Complementing but not competing with existing initiatives
- Regional focus: decentralization

Networking Activity by Per Nieuwejar / IMR

The aim of this activity is to create a durable and more cost/efficient research structure, facilitating wide sharing of equipment, promoting green research vessel design and operations and providing access to high tech equipment and cruises. Per Nieuwejar summarised the 7 WPs of NA structure:

- Coordinating procurement and use of vessels, personnel and equipment, in order to meet scientific need at cost/effective way
- Developing and implementing the European Virtual Infrastructure in Ocean research and cruise planning system
- Promoting eco-responsible and sustainable RV
- Increasing utilisation of standardised exchangeable instrumentation and provide harmonisation of procedures
- Preparing cruise calls and their implementation as well as the evaluation of proposals and selection criteria (with TNA)
- Advanced training for European marine scientists and dissemination.



Trans National Access by Dimitris Georgopoulos / HCMR

The Eurofleets key element is the ability and opportunity to share important infrastructures in Europe among the whole oceanographic community. Eurofleets allows to integrate marine research fleets from the whole Europe, from UK to

Estonia and from Norway to Portugal. The project comprises two vessels types:

- 5 Ocean/Global vessels and their heavy equipment. Cruises open for 66 days. are a gift for the smaller oceanographic teams in Europe
- 13 Regional vessels and associated equipment. Cruises are open for 110 days.

The calls will be implemented very fast from the year 2010.

Joint Research Activity by Gerrit Meinecke / MARUM

Gerrit Meinecke presented the two Eurofleets Joint research Activities:

- Interoperability: up to date software to facilitate trans national access – development of 6 software tools
- Shared and flexible payloads for ROV, AUV and observatories and common mission planning tool.

AGENDA

General Assembly 2nd day (closed session)

Management of the Project :

- Consortium, Roles and Bodies
- Technical and financial key aspects
- Communication rules

Presentation of the management website to Activity Coordinator and Work Package Leaders

Activity meetings in parallel

- Networking Activity (P. Nieuwejar)
- TransNational Access Activity (D. Georgopoulos)
- Joint Research Activity (G. Meinecke)

Synthetic conclusions and proposals : Actions and associated schedule

Official lectures

Welcome by Cité des Sciences

Welcome to all participants of Eurofleets kick-off meeting. Eurofleets builds a project approach which has numerous common points with what was developed and made a success in space research with the European Space Agency. Oceanographic data as space observatory data are of great interest for the public. Cité des Sciences wishes to make also oceanographic scientific data accessible and intelligible to the citizen and by this way is very happy to host the first Eurofleets meeting.

Roland Schaer on behalf of Clémence Haigneré,
Chairperson of Cité des Sciences

Welcome by IFREMER

Jean-Yves Perrot underlines the open mind and the voluntarism of Ifremer, which for the 25th anniversary, will invite all its international partners to draw the future prospects of the oceanographic research for the next years in the frame of an Alliance in Marine Sciences.



This is the first step for constituting a future worldwide network. This ambition finds the opportunity to illustrate itself today in the launching of Eurofleets, the result of which will constitute the Alliance in marine sciences an important step forward towards a more determined European integration and will lead tomorrow to an Oceanographic European Research Area.

Jean-Yves Perrot, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Ifremer

European forward look

After the evocation of the maritime tradition and the importance of the marine environment for Estonia (3800 km coast, economy of the sea and its stakes), the new glance of one of the most recent members for the European Union has been presented by **Urmas Lips**. With a recent marine research vessel

(SALME) since 2008-2009, Tallinn University of Technology (TUT) is ready to enter in the new European Infrastructure that will be coordinated by Eurofleets and to share SALME and its equipment. New expectations are opened for better education in TUT, research for PhDs, new knowledge and best practices exchanges, and access to marine research cruises.



Urmas Lips, TUT

Karin Lochte presented the status of the German research fleets and pointed out the problem Germany is facing related to renew vessels. European vessels are also old and maintaining the research capacity in the future seems to be difficult.



Then she underlines the importance of a better knowledge of Oceans and European Seas to face marine research challenges (climate change, fish stock, mineral resources, marine hazards, biodiversity). Therefore it is important to keep at least the present quality level of research and vessel capacity. Some existing networks have shown promising previous collaboration. For example OFEG has significantly increased exchanges in the last years especially the number of cruise days. Then the solution is to go, towards a more integrated European view, common fleets and mechanisms to open the ship capacity to the EU researchers, common peer review, and promotion of training and education.

"Eurofleets sets this vision into actions. And if we achieve that, Europe will have a different face!"

Karin Lochte, Director of AWI

Conclusions

European Commission

Hervé Pero has noticed the political willingness to develop world class Research Infrastructures of pan-European interest with a critical mass and efficiency to raise

attractiveness of European Research Area.



These challenges are possible at European level only by reinforcing coordination. The European Strategy forum on research infrastructures (ESFRI) has been set-up to help developing a true EU coordination and recommended reduction of costs/overlaps for new vessels and joint investments. Europe proposes to go towards an "eco-system" of research infrastructures by financially facilitating new infrastructures, and financing integration of existing research infrastructures. Eurofleets pave the way towards an eco-system of research Infrastructures. It may initiate a test case for defining best practices towards better management of research fleets. Although Eurofleets is just starting let's not forget the new call for proposals FP7 Research Infrastructures with new opportunities for other original projects.

Hervé Pero, Head of Research Infrastructures Unit, European Commission

French Ministry of Research

The project starting today corresponds to objectives for high quality infrastructures requested also by French infrastructures. The expected benefits are enormous:



- Provide best instruments for research
- Develop compatibility of instrumentation
- Eco-design
- Develop R&D impact indicators.

This strategy will develop a vision shared by research fleet owners and users. *"I wish to Eurofleets to be successful and able to meet the high expectations fixed by the consortium".*

Bernard Commercé, French Ministry for Higher Education and Research