



## NOTE TO EDITORS

### ITALIAN AND PORTUGUESE MARINE AND MARITIME CLUSTERS: GOOD PRACTICES AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES

On June 8th, as part of Seafuture 2023, the WestMed National Hub for Italy organized in collaboration with Cluster BIG, Federazione del Mare and the Portuguese cluster Forum Oceano the workshop “Italian and Portuguese marine and maritime clusters: good practices and exchange of experiences”.

Moderated by **Leonardo Manzari**, the event saw the participation of experts from the national clusters of the Blue Economy in Italy and Portugal, with the aim of optimizing the relevant Blue Economy ecosystems, taking inspiration from the good practices offered by both countries, sharing their models and experiences, highlighting differences, making valuable the complementarity between Atlantic and Mediterranean scopes.

**Daniele Bosio**, Coordinator of Maritime Affairs of the MAECI and National Coordinator of WestMED, in his introductory speech highlighted how the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the pandemic are forcing European industry today to shorten supply chains, bringing production centers back to a closer context and in particular in the Mediterranean, with an inevitable impact on the Blue Economy, regarding port and fleet logistics in particular. The investments for the modernization of Italian ports made possible by the EU's Next Generation programme will strengthen this development and the push towards decarbonisation is also encouraging long-term investment plans by switching from the use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to other solutions such as ammonia, methanol, and hydrogen to sustainably produced fuels. Unfortunately, in the Mediterranean, the capacity to sustainably exploit emerging resources that represent opportunities for blue growth and employment, such as biodiversity and marine biotechnology, sustainable coastal tourism, the production of renewable energy from the sea, is still inadequate. In this context, international and regional cooperation is essential. The European Union, the UfM and the WestMED Initiative are key to facilitating progress in these areas across the Mediterranean. There is no maximum level of cooperation between states. In this sense, the European Union represents the most effective supranational instrument to catalyze and multiply the forces of its members and to extend its reach and its ability to attract partners, especially in the Mediterranean.

**Ruben Eiras**, Secretary General of Forum Oceano, first pointed out the difference between marine and maritime: the first referred to aspects related to the biology of the seas and the second to industrial ones. Today the EU is innovating the concept of the blue economy with integrated policies that concern both the waters of lakes and rivers and those of the seas and oceans, especially from an environmental point of view given that often the pollution of the seas comes from inland waters. Moreover, given the complexity of the problem, we also need transversal activities among all the stakeholders of the blue economy also using the technologies available to preserve the health of the seas. To this end, it is very important to be able to count on a Ministry of the Sea able to interact in an integrated way with all the other ministries by bringing together the varied skills of each one. Another determining factor concerns the financial aspect: private and public investments are in fact indispensable to feed the ecosystem and launch new policies. The Portuguese maritime cluster looks with great attention to Italy which has a very important role for the blue economy: the synergy between the maritime clusters of these countries, which have many similar characteristics, is therefore very

important and with dialogue and cooperation it will certainly be possible to overcome even the differences that divide them with certain advantages for the blue economy.

The president **Mario Mattioli** recalled that the Federation of the Sea gathers within it various associations that deal with blue economy at 360 degrees: shipbuilding, transport, fishing, pleasure craft, terminal operators, agents and shippers and also port services and research institutions insurance, maritime law and training. The Federation, in addition to being a large cluster that covers all categories of the blue economy, is open to Italian institutions (MAECI, MIT, Ministry for Sea Policies, Coast Guard and Navy) with whom dialogue is constant in the full awareness that only the synergy of all parties can lead to results for the common good. Moreover, the contribution of the economy of the sea in Italy is remarkable: 220,000 companies employing almost 1 million people, with a turnover of about 150 billion euros a year equal to 9.9% of the national GDP. The recent establishment of the Ministry of Sea Policies responds to the need repeatedly expressed by the Federation and the recent meetings with all the categories of the blue economy organized within the CIPOM to ensure the coordination and definition of the strategic guidelines of the first "Plan of the Sea" are certainly a very important signal. The FdM is also very committed to expanding the diffusion of the maritime culture of the country and has been working for some time in synergy with Cluster BIG which, as is known, has a strong link with the world of research and universities. Starting with the decarbonization of the sector, there are many challenges to be faced and only by using all the available tools and innovations that are continuously introduced will it be possible to improve the blue economy more and more for the benefit of the clusters and therefore of the entire country.

The President **Giovanni Caprino**, recalled that Cluster BIG was born a few years ago and has grown exponentially, having as its mission to create constructive interactions between business, research, local and regional institutions. Cluster BIG represents a large group of universities and all the Public Research Bodies that in various capacities deal with the sea, while the industrial front sees the direct presence of many leading players (national and international), some of which are also members of the Federation of the Sea, and with a vast presence of SMEs and territorial aggregations, which also play an indispensable role in liaising with the regions. For this reason, the synergistic connections that the BIG Cluster has implemented with European clusters, especially in the Mediterranean, are fundamental, also in order to disseminate maritime culture and make known even more widely some sectors of Made in Italy often little known despite there are excellences worldwide, such as the construction of cruise ships, military ships and also pleasure boats, activities that create enormous benefits for the territory, particularly in terms of employment.

After the round table dedicated to the differences and mutual influence between Italian and Portuguese management models that saw the interventions of **Gonçalo Faria** (Hub Azul Portugal), **Rita Sousa** (FABER), **Fabio Fava** (EU MISSION "Restore our Ocean and Waters" - Lighthouse for the Mediterranean), **Alessandro Iafrazi** (CNR Institute of Marine Engineering, Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership), the event ended with speeches by **Rute Assis Pires**, Head of the Investment Division of the Portuguese Ministry of Economy and Sea, and **Luca Salamone**, Head of Mission Structure for Maritime Policies at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

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