



2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

[Belgian-Portuguese Routes for the Blue Economy - Living Labs & Pilot Tests]

[27 June, 15:00-18:00, Morais Leitão - R. Castilho 165]

Organized by: [Belgian-Portuguese Chamber of Commerce, HAEDES, Fórum Oceano, Sciaena, Blauwe Cluster, Morais Leitão]

TWO PAGE MAXIMUM

Background on the event (one paragraph)

The “Belgian–Portuguese Routes for the Blue Economy” is an annual event organised by the Belgian-Portuguese Chamber of Commerce (CCBP) with the main goal of discussing themes related to the blue economy, with a perspective on the commercial relations between Portugal and Belgium. In 2019, the edition had as its subtheme “Offshore Wind Energy”. In 2020, the subtheme was “Marine Biodiversity”. And, in 2021, the event was focused on Smart infrastructure, Digitization, and Monitoring of the marine and ocean environment. This year, 2022, the subtheme was “Living Labs & Pilot Tests”.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

The event was organised with the subtheme “Living Labs & Pilot Tests” and had the following subtopics:

- Energy & Transportation
- Towards Resilient and Regenerative Solutions for Coastal Areas
- Biotechnology & production

Projects on energy from the sea, pollutant emissions in the maritime sector, environmental engineering instruments for coastal protection, biological production and biotechnology were presented.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- There is a need to keep investing in marine science and technological innovation, not only, but particularly oriented to the new knowledge frontiers;
- Programs that stimulate the transferring of cutting edge scientific ideas and new engineer tools to the market are particularly welcome. Artificial intelligence, natural engineer and biotechnology are some of the areas clearly identified during this event;
- Pilot projects are not just a low risk phase in the development of an idea. More economically high risk pilot-projects should be stimulated as they may contain the true revolutionary good ideas;
- Ecological approaches, defending the circular economy and the local production, were reinforced by the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Intelligent marine traffic strategies and logistics promoting short supply chains should be implemented;
- Old challenges, as coastal protection, can benefit from nature based solutions, but the costs and the risk of failure associated with this approach are so high that conventional financial instruments might not be enough;
- Environment respect is a red line, nowadays understood by all stakeholders, particularly entrepreneurs that comprehend that it is a mandatory pillar for the sustainable development and for the sustainability of their own investments. Despite blue-green certification programs may be implemented by private initiative, their regulation and certification should be a competence of formal authorities;
- Marine protected areas are a tool that unites all sensibilities and there is a growing movement towards the 30 x 30 target;
- The marine potential for clean energy production is enormous and might be instrumental to decrease carbon emissions. The marine area existing in the northwest Portugal should be the target for offshore wind initiatives that could also ignite new and reinforce old partnerships between Portugal and Belgium;
- The Belgium and the Portuguese blue economy industries are very much alive and several very valuable projects were shown during the “IV Belgian–Portuguese Routes for the Blue Economy”. Nevertheless, governments from both countries, the European Parliament and the European Commission have shown great interest in the new emerging ideas.

Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)

- The Belgian–Portuguese Chamber of Commerce commits to keep organising new yearly editions of the “Belgian–Portuguese Routes for the Blue Economy” to catalyse the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its targets.