

EU, U.S., Canada launch Atlantic Ocean research alliance in Galway



The European Union, The United States and Canada today agreed to join forces on Atlantic Ocean Research. The goal is to better understand the Atlantic Ocean and promote the sustainable management of its resources. The Agreement aims to connect the ocean observation efforts

Signing of the 'Galway Statement on Atlantic Ocean Cooperation' - 24th May 2013

of the three partners. The work will also study the interplay of the Atlantic Ocean with the Arctic Ocean, particularly in relation to climate change. The EU and its Member States alone invest nearly two billion euro on marine and maritime research each year. The **'Galway Statement on Atlantic Ocean Cooperation'** was signed today at a high level conference at the Irish Marine Institute in Galway.

European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, said: "The enormous economic potential of the Atlantic remains largely untapped. We probably know more about the surface of the Moon and Mars than we do about the deep sea floor. This alliance can make a big contribution to meeting challenges such as climate change and food security."

European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Maria Damanaki, said: "Today's agreement fully supports the Maritime Strategy for the Atlantic we put forward this month. While the initiative is of particular interest for the EU's five Atlantic states, it is open to researchers from all over Europe and beyond. The knowledge gained will be of benefit to all." The agreement recognises that Atlantic research will in many areas be more effective if coordinated on a transatlantic basis. Areas for potential collaboration under the agreement include: an Atlantic Ocean observation and forecasting system; mapping critical areas of the Atlantic seafloor; identifying and recommending future research and ocean literacy and awareness initiatives.

Taoiseach, Mr. Enda Kenny, T.D., said: "Today marks a new political and policy awareness of the

ocean's potential to create sustainable jobs and growth. Such awareness also provides broader societal benefits of understanding major environmental changes and associated risks. It was a major priority of the Irish Presidency to support the achievement of an Atlantic Ocean research alliance and I welcome the signing of the Galway Statement by the European Commission, the United States and Canada here at the Marine Institute today. The delivery of a Maritime Strategy for the Atlantic was also a priority of Ireland and I congratulate all those involved in the launch of the Action Plan to revitalise the marine and maritime economy in the Atlantic Ocean Area."

The Atlantic Action Plan aims to show how the EU's Atlantic Member States, their regions and the Commission can help create sustainable growth in coastal regions and drive forward the "blue economy", which has the potential to provide 7 million jobs in Europe by 2020.

Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D., Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine said: "Ireland has a significant role to play in the implementation of the Atlantic Area Action plan and will also derive many benefits from it. The Government's 'Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland – Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth' is rooted in the role the oceans can play in our economic recovery with a goal of significantly increasing the turnover of Ireland's "Blue Economy" to over €6.4Billion by 2020 and doubling the GDP contribution by 2030 (to 2.4%)."

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Event Updates:

Information about the event and copies of the presentations can be downloaded from [The Atlantic - A Shared Resource Event updates](#)

Background:

Since 2002, the European Union has invested over two billion euro in more than one thousand marine research projects. These include:

the €10 million, four year [ice2sea](#) project to forecast the impact that melting ice may have on sea levels along Europe's coastline,
the €62 million [MyOcean](#) monitoring and forecasting projects, and
the €7 million, four-year [Euro-Basin](#) project to better understand the basin-scale processes impacting upon North Atlantic ecosystems from natural climate change to man-made pressures.

Through the EuroFleets projects, the EU is also working towards an alliance of European research fleets.

The Atlantic Action Plan ([IP/13/420](#)) put forward by the Commission on 13 May 2013 aims to revitalise the marine and maritime economy in the Atlantic Ocean area. It shows how the EU's Atlantic Member States, their regions and the Commission can help create sustainable growth in coastal regions and drive forward the "blue economy", while preserving the environmental and ecological stability of the Atlantic Ocean.

The EU's current [Marine and Maritime Research strategy](#) was set out in 2008. It is built on the premise that science and technology provide one of the keys for reconciling promotion of sustainable economic growth in sea-based activities with environmental conservation.

The Irish Government published [An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland – Harnessing Our Ocean wealth](#) (July 2012). The plan aims to double the value of Ireland's ocean wealth to 2.4% of GDP by 2030 and increase the turnover from our ocean economy to exceed €6.4bn by 2020. The report, 'Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth - An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland' was launched at the Marine Institute, Galway 31st July 2012.

Taking our seabed area into account, Ireland is one of the largest EU states; with sovereign or exclusive rights over one of the largest sea to land ratios (over 10:1) of any EU State.

Our ocean is a national asset, supporting a diverse economy, with vast potential to tap into the global marine market for seafood, tourism, energy, and new applications for health, medicine and technology. In parallel, our marine resource gives us many non-commercial benefits; for example, amenity, biodiversity and our mild climate.

Links

[EU Maritime Strategy for the Atlantic](#)

[EU-funded marine and maritime research](#)

[EU International Research Cooperation](#)

[Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland – Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth](#)

[Signed Statement on Atlantic Ocean Cooperation 25th May 2013](#) (PDF 266KB)

