

Knowledge of the seas network

Activity Report 2017 (24 January 2018)

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1. Set-up of the network

The Knowledge of the seas network was established in 2007 as a network of CBC maritime Interreg programmes. In 2015, the network's set-up and aim was changed from a network of programmes into a thematic network. That's why since 2015 the network is composed of four different groups bringing together representatives from maritime Interreg programmes with strategic actors (EU, macro-regional/sea basin strategies, other strategic frameworks), thematic experts and stakeholders as well as maritime cooperation projects financed by Interreg and other funding sources. This change and hence the opportunity for the different groups to meet each other, to get to know and exchange is very much appreciated by the network members as it provides them an opportunity to look beyond their "own box". Despite this opening, maritime Interreg cooperation and programmes are in the focus as the core 'customers' of Interact. For promotional purposes, a [short video](#) on the Knowledge of the seas network was produced and premiered at the Interact Capitalisation Conference in June 2017 in Rome.



2. Knowledge transfer – identification and clustering of results

In addition, back in 2015, the network also set itself the aim to both gain (see *points 2 to 4*) and to promote knowledge of the seas (see *below points 5-6*), hence the network's name. In 2017, identification and clustering of results happened in a "light version", e.g. by presenting two cooperation projects at the thematic event on maritime safety and security in November in Porto. Although only two projects, they have to be seen in the overall context of the thematic event and in correlation to the strategic perspective, thematic expertise and support by funding programmes presented at the event.

For 2018, it is planned to look more intensively into results of maritime Interreg cooperation by matching obstacles, challenges and potentials for maritime cooperation with concrete maritime Interreg projects, which could be seen as an answer to these obstacles, challenges and potentials. This exercise will take into account those obstacles, challenges and potentials as well as those best practice maritime Interreg projects identified by the network when compiling the input paper to the post 2020 discussion (see *point 5*) – with references to the EC Final Report "Collecting solid evidence to assess the needs to be addressed by Interreg cross-border cooperation programmes".

3. Knowledge transfer – sharing expertise and knowledge

In this network, sharing expertise and knowledge is the main focus of the network's annual thematic events. This year's thematic event on maritime safety and security (21-22 November, Porto/Portugal) continued the series of events on Blue Growth and Coastal and Maritime Tourism (both 2015) and Blue Skills (2016). *For more details on this event and plans for 2018 please see point 4.*

Another tool for sharing expertise and knowledge, besides the thematic events, could have been also the network's online platform (Basecamp until Q4/2017, Interact's new IT tool since Q4/2017). However, the Basecamp online platform was less of a sharing platform, but rather a repository and communication channel from the network leader to the network members. The new online platform now offers a wide range of opportunities for exchange, however also demands a more proactive approach by its users.

4. Knowledge transfer – thematic events and trainings

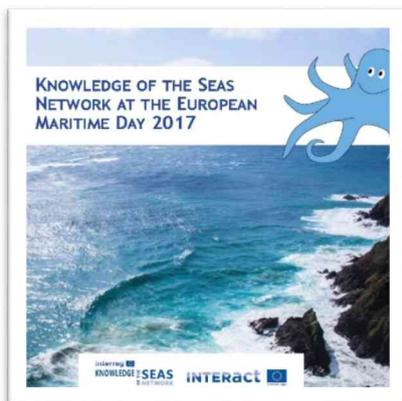
As mentioned above, one of the two objectives of the network is to promote knowledge of the seas. For this reason, one of the two network activities per year is a thematic learning event. In 2017, the topic 'maritime safety and security' was approached (by speakers) from four different perspectives. The event ([report available here](#)) was opened by a representative from EC DG Mare providing an overall picture and framework for the further presentations. Various thematic experts then provided an insight into the topic. In the third session, two maritime Interreg programmes (Atlantic Area and Italy-France 'Maritime') as well as National Unit of the Support Team to the Atlantic Action Plan presented their (financial) support to

cooperation in the field of maritime safety and security. The thematic event was concluded by presentations of two maritime cooperation projects, one co-financed by Interreg (2 Seas) and one FP7 (Technology Transfer) project.



The topic for 2018 is not yet decided. One option would be to organize this year's thematic event together with Interact's thematic network on transport (T07) with a focus on maritime transport (e.g. automated shipping).

5. Knowledge consolidation – studies and documentation



In 2017, the network produced two publications. The [brochure 'Knowledge of the seas network at the European Maritime Day 2017'](#) is a presentation of the programmes (and some of their projects) participating at the joint stand at the 2017 European Maritime Day.

The other documentation is an input paper by the network to the post 2020 discussion titled '[The added value of maritime cooperation](#)'. The input paper is the result of an extensive consultation process (informal interviews with representatives from the programmes' operational level, commenting via e-mail and group work at the November network meeting). It was published on 8

December 2017 on Interact's website ([link](#)), on the network's online platform and widely distributed and promoted by e-mail and Twitter (by 11 January 2018 5.677 Twitter impressions and 21 likes, 16 retweets and 11 clicks on the document link). First findings of

the interview process had already been presented/tested in a panel discussion organized by the Interreg Europe project PASSAGE at the European Weeks of Regions and Cities 2017.

It is important to underline, that this paper is not a position paper by the network, neither jointly agreed nor endorsed by all network members resp. maritime Interreg programmes. It is rather a collection of different, partly controversial thoughts, ideas, opinions and suggestions by the different network members on maritime cooperation now and in the future with the aim to stimulate the discussion. In 2018, the network will work on a matrix matching the obstacles, challenges and potentials for maritime cooperation identified during the drafting process of this input paper with concrete best practice projects, which could serve as an answer to these (see point 2).

Besides being featured in the [EU MSP Platform newsletter](#), the input paper has resulted in an invitation by the CPMR to present the paper at the 'Brainstorming on international maritime governance, regions and the preparation of EU maritime policies post-2020' (Brussels, 10 January 2018) as well as at the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission's Working Group "Territorial Cooperation & Macro-regional strategies" (Cartagena/Spain, 14 February 2018).

6. Knowledge consolidation – editing (packaging) and promotion

Promoting the added value of maritime cooperation, promoting knowledge of the seas is the second cornerstone of the network besides getting knowledge. As in 2016, the network had its own stand at the European Maritime Day in Poole/UK with DG Mare Commissioner Karmenu Vella stopping for a short chat. To ensure visibility in the real meaning of the word the network members wore as in 2016 the yellow network t-shirt with the network logo on the front and the individual programme logos on the back.





In addition to the joint stand, the network co-organised together with DG Mare one of the two parallel sessions on the second Day of the EMD on '*Strategic support for Blue Growth at sea-basin/macro-regional level*'. As one of the panelists, the network leader presented maritime Interreg cooperation in figures (data taken from keep.eu) and exemplary results of maritime Interreg projects with regard to Blue Growth (based on the projects in the brochure mentioned above at point 5).

As a spin-off activity of this joint stand, some of the network members and EMD participants organized on their own initiative a joint stand at the 4th Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference (8 November 2017, Glasgow). For 2018, the network plans to participate again in the European Maritime Day in Burgas/Bulgaria with both a stand and a workshop on '*Maritime Interreg cooperation and strategic frameworks*'.