



## **MariFuture Platform – A Grass Root Response to EU Integrated Marine Policy**

By Officer Ugurcan Acar

### **EU Integrated Marine Policy – Key Issues**

European Union as developed an Integrated Maritime Policy which seeks to provide a more coherent approach to maritime issues, with increased coordination between different policy areas. It focuses on Issues that do not fall under a single sector-based policy and issues that require the coordination of different sectors and actors. The former issues are tackled by EC's long-term strategy viz., 'Blue Growth', to support growth in the maritime sector as a whole. And the latter issues through initiatives such as Marine Knowledge 2020 which brings together marine data from different sources.

Blue Growth was developed to help industry, public authorities and researchers find the data the need and make more effective use of resources available to develop new products and services. The strategy while focuses on identify and tackle challenges affecting all sectors of maritime economy with the aim of highlighting the synergies among sectoral policies has and intends to identify activities with high growth potential in the long-term and support them by:

- removing the administrative barriers that hamper growth
- fostering investment in research and innovation
- promoting skills through education and training

### **MariFuture – Integrating Education, Research and Innovation**

MariFuture Platform ([www.marifuture.org](http://www.marifuture.org)) is primarily involved with identifying the education and training needs of the maritime industries and responding to these needs through pin pointing to where a solution can be found or initiating a new research and development to address a given identified need.

According to the founder of the MariFuture (Ziarati, 2010), identifying the education, research needs of the industry and responding to these needs in innovative manner is crucial if Europe is to continue to play a leading role in maritime affairs in the future. Ziarati (ibid), states that "*MariFuture will develop the future of the European maritime industry through innovation*". Innovation, he argues, is 'business not as usual'. He believes the grass root should also take responsibility for their own well-being and develop serious and workable plans and strategies which help them to remain competitive. It is, he stresses, a matter of common sense to seek resources including funds from the EU/EC and local, national and international bodies to form partnerships with worthy partners to identify or solve a problem or to transfer innovation from one location to another, or from one sector into another.

MariFuture is a partnership of maritime education, Industry and decision makers from across Europe. MariFuture's vision is to improve the standards and meet the industry needs through innovation in education and training as well as in research and development. With increasing



competition from eastern nations such as Japan and Korea, MariFuture believe it is important now more than ever to harmonise the efforts of the maritime industry and education sectors in Europe to safeguard the wellbeing our industry through a partnership of the three worlds of industry, education and governmental/non-governmental organisations together and at the same time to ensure all maritime industrial sectors such as ship operations, ship building and support industries are adequately represented. **MariFuture is an extensive network of maritime organisations that have a wealth of experience** in maritime education and training and Maritime research and development. Through this experience MariFuture aims to promote good practice(s) in MET which is underpinned by appropriate research and development activities and provide a platform from which concerns and interests regarding education and training in the European maritime industry can be realised and acted upon. MariFuture partnership has and is expected to share its knowledge and experience gained through research with the awarding, accrediting and licensing bodies as well as the policy decision makers in governments and in the European Union. The European Union has supported a number of MariFuture's initiatives and research and it is hoped that with their support MariFuture can continue to address the needs of the education and industry and in turn become a key contact point for the EU regarding maritime issues.

MariFuture is about more than academia within the maritime industry. MariFuture has good relationships not only with industry; shipyards, shipping companies, ports but also with the language schools and other smaller organisations whose voices are often left unheard. MariFuture is at the forefront of some very exciting research and developments in the field. As a collective group MariFuture hopes to provide a platform from which the smaller organisations and industry can be heard in academia and in the EU. By allowing these voices to be heard valuable ideas and contributions can be harnessed and transformed into strategies which would give Europe a new competitive edge in the global shipping market.

The MariFuture partnership has over fifty active member organisations currently involved in many European projects and European funded projects such as SOS, MarTEL, EGMDSS, SURPASS, MAIDER and so forth and actively involved in several European initiatives including small crafts design and construction through platforms such as EBDIG (European Boat Design Innovation Group). The MariFuture partnership has presented their projects and initiatives to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and other important government and industrial bodies.

There are several other new EU funded projects expected in the near future (MarTEL Plus, CAPTAINS, UniMET, SAIL AHEAD and so forth). More information about these projects will be available on this website.

**MariFuture is primarily involved with identifying the education and training needs of the maritime industries (what is termed water transportation by the EU) and responding to these needs through pin pointing to where a solution can be found or initiating a new research and development to address a given identified need, by taking advantage of the funding opportunities.**

### **MariFuture Objectives**

- Identifying education and training needs of the maritime industry



- Identifying the research and development needs
- Looking for solutions to problems faced by maritime education and training organisations
- Looking for R&D solutions or initiating new research and/or development work.
- Promoting good practice in maritime education and training.
- Seeking funds for Education and research projects
- Supporting projects involved in maritime education and training.
- Offering advice and guidance to the maritime education and training institutions.
- A Point of contact for national and EU bodies/organisations/institutions regarding maritime education and training.
- Representing the interests of its members i.e. the interests of maritime education and training organisations in Europe.
- Working with professional, industrial, commercial organisations to improve maritime education and training and maritime research and development

### **The areas of interest to respond to identified objectives of the MariFuture Platform:**

- The seafaring education and research needs
- Supporting the maritime industry in responding to identified needs
- Maritime education and development needs identification
- Responding to identified needs of the Maritime Education and Training (MET)
- Promote good practice(s) in maritime education and research
- Developing solution in response to identified needs
- Identifying and developing methods and methodology for implementation of solutions
- Encourage and help to form partnerships or be a partner on EU projects.
- Platform where interests and concerns regarding education and training in the maritime industry in the EU can be raised and realised.
- Information on the MariFuture's initiatives and research.
- Supporting programmes to make the shipping industry more competitive against serious competition from Japan, Korea etc.
- Promote harmonisation of standards in Europe.
- A contact point for issues concerning maritime education and research in Europe.

### **Recent Developments**

In recent months Professor Ziarati has been discussing the future of MariFuture with colleagues at the European commission (EC). The EC is of the view that MariFuture activities are interesting and relevant to the activities developed under Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP). It is also known that Professor Ziarati has always been very concerned about opportunities for small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) whether regarding their participation in various national and European Union (EU) education and research programmes or aspects relating to various policies and programmes initiated by the EC. The commissioner, Maria Damanaki, has drawn Professor Ziarati's attention to several initiatives that the Commission intends to develop which may be added to the future map of MariFuture. A summary of the future map of MariFuture is given in the November 2010 Development Paper. The letter to Professor Ziarati from the Commissioner clearly points out that SMEs have a strong potential for innovation in Europe. In this respect, the Commissioner suggested that MariFuture partners might be interested in the initiative "Marine Knowledge 2020" recently endorsed by the European Commission. This initiative supports further involvement of SMEs in innovation actions as it aims to improve knowledge infrastructure and overcome barriers to discovery, access and use of data, it will therefore



unlock and assemble marine data from different sources and facilitate their use for purposes other than those for which they were originally intended.

The Commissioner also informed Professor Ziarati of a new initiative “Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean”, which the European Commission has set as one of its key challenges viz., the facilitation of knowledge-based actions for the development of sustainable maritime economies and effective coastal management. She has stressed that, the success requires policies built on foundations of best available scientific knowledge.

In view of the letter from the Commissioner, regarding “Marine Knowledge 2020” and “Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better Governance in the Mediterranean” initiatives, Professor Ziarati is of the view that the MariFuture Future Map, as presented in the November 2011 Development Paper, needs to be reviewed so that partners in the MariFuture can take advantage of the European Commission actions and initiatives. These initiatives will be aiming to improve efficiency and quality by stimulating integrated research efforts particularly in Mediterranean and their intended actions which are designed at strengthening international and European scientific co-operations.

The Commissioner also informed Professor Ziarati that the Consortia of European bodies are already setting up a prototype European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) to facilitate access to data in a limited number of sea basins for those public and private bodies that need them. Users can download not only the data, but also information as to the reliability of the measurements.

### **Sea basin regional strategies**

The Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, North Sea, the Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean – each sea region is unique and merits a tailor-made strategy.

The maritime policy promotes growth and development strategies that exploit the strengths and address the weaknesses of each large sea region in the EU: from the Arctic's climate change to the Atlantic's renewable energy potential, to problems of sea and ocean pollution, to maritime safety.

MariFuture has targeted most of the seas neighboring the European continent. In a letter to Professor Ziarati, Mr Dominique Pariat, the DG of MARE, states that he is encouraged by the work of the MariFuture partners stating that he has "learned with great interest about the MariFuture platform integrating the maritime education, research and innovation in Europe, a project well in line with the objectives of the EU Integrated Maritime Policy, I would be glad to be informed of future developments of the MariFuture project, particularly with regard to the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins”.

In view of recent research interests by the EU and the presentation by Commissioner Damanaki for urgent attention to under sea mining, MariFuture has all the necessary tools (sophisticated sensors and neural network) for identifying the sources of ores and rare materials under the sea. In parallel two major proposals, projects IdealShip and CUSTOMADE has been developed to bring various appropriate sectors to make serious efforts to reduce emission of hazardous pollutants into atmosphere. The partners of MariFuture have proven record of saving the production of million if not billion tonnes of pollutants such as CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> and so forth through their revolutionary clean diesel. Their



Hybrid engine solutions won several prizes and the IdealShip is expected to reduce the production of seaborne pollutants significantly – see projects/proposals in [www.marifuture.org](http://www.marifuture.org).