



Let's celebrate the next World Oceans Day together 8 June 2014

Invitation to schools and youth groups – under the auspices of
Mrs. Maria Damanaki, Member of the European Commission

What do we invite you to celebrate?

World Oceans Day 2014 – 8 June – it's the occasion to celebrate the beauty and awesomeness of the oceans and to engage with others around the world in protecting them more effectively from multiple threats.

Who is invited?

Schools and youth groups from around the world, who are interested and willing to engage with peers in another country to cooperate on protecting the oceans.

Participants need to have an identified teacher or coach who is the focal point for the cooperation.

Two age groups are distinguished: (a) < 12 years of age and (b) 12 years and above.

How to participate?

Through teaming up with another school or youth group in another country to produce a video or Pecha Kucha powerpoint presentation about ocean protection and an illustrated report describing the experience of cooperation.

NEW – simplified participation: For schools having difficulties entering an international partnership but committed to contribute to World Oceans Day celebrations can do so on their own through submitting a video or Pecha Kucha story and a short illustrated essay about their learning and experience during production. Suggestions for future international cooperation are welcome, but not mandatory.

Through registering the participation so as to be considered for support during the project and for the prizes for particularly good results. Registration can be done with a registration form by e-mail to partnerships@mundusmaris.org.

Why should you participate?

The initiative has two objectives: (a) learn more about the oceans o help protect them from overfishing, climate change with acidification and pollution, particularly ubiquitous plastic; and (b) to the extent possible, to practice international cooperation among young people in different countries and cultures.

This is useful not only for acquiring new knowledge and academic competence, but also social skills associated with any form of cooperation which help prepare for adult life in an interdependent world.

What are the deadlines?

The initiative has been launched on 15 September 2013. Schools and youth groups can register until the deadline, but are encouraged to do so earlier to facilitate planning.

The deadline for electronic submission of products is **30 April 2014 at 17h GMT** to partnerships@mundusmaris.org.

An international jury will examine all entries in May 2014 and determine the winners of many prizes to be announced on or close to 8 June 2014, World Oceans Day in a public ceremony to honour participants.

The decision of the jury can not be challenged in the courts.

If you are interested in celebrating World Oceans Day together, read on to get some more information!

Context:

Almost half of humanity lives no further than 200 km away from the sea and every second breath we take depends on the oceans and the tiny algae that produce oxygen. The sea is home to large marine ecosystems with hundreds of thousands of plants and animals, many of which have not yet been described by science.

The sea is a source of food and employment for many people. It is the link through which international commerce transports bulk products. It is a source of energy (petroleum, wind, ...) and a provider of wonderful recreational experiences.

Many scientists study the oceans. They provide us with lots of knowledge about the seas, the creatures living in the oceans and on the coast, the currents, the polar zones, the atmosphere and how the oceans affect our climate, and more. This is essential knowledge for our human civilisations in order to live peacefully on the one Earth we all share.

The sea and seafarers have inspired countless artists, painters, musicians, sculptors, film makers and many others. Art work has different ways of 'making sense' of the world around us than the sciences. Artists and art work open other ways of knowing to us. They can often be mediators between different approaches to understanding.

Sealore has been strong in traditional societies for long periods. Many traditional practices are still kept up to pay tribute to the beauty, but also the power of the sea, with its bounty and threats. Traditional knowledge about the sea, its seascapes and plants and animals is being progressively lost as such ways of life are being replaced by others. Moreover, the sciences have a much larger scope for studying and understanding the sea beyond local confines. Building bridges between traditional knowledge (local) and modernity (local and global) could be useful. As more and more people live in cities with less direct experience of the oceans and nature exchange between different ways of knowing through the sciences, the arts and traditional knowledge can help to reconnect.

The experiences with the seas and the oceans differ from one country or population to the next, and much still remains to be discovered and understood, despite the study and learning of the past.

In a world in ecological overshoot since several years, the next generations of citizens need to be familiarised not only with the principles of sustainable living, but also being offered the chance to practice such behaviours.

Humanity altogether consumes more of the resources (energy, food, shelter, fabrics, materials of all sorts ...) than the marine and land ecosystems on the planet can regenerate. At the same time, there is widespread waste: an estimated 40% of globally produced food is destroyed/wasted. Huge quantities of fish and other seafood caught with unselective gear are discarded at sea in dead or dying conditions. The waste many production processes generate, because they are not conceived as (re)cycling materials, end up wreaking havoc in marine and land environments. This waste can affect the functioning of ecosystems and create public health issues.

Natural resources are unevenly distributed across the planet. Human well-being does not automatically depend on whether a country is rich in such natural resources. Human well-being depends much more on whether governments and others in a country care for their own citizens and invest in well-functioning institutions. Well-functioning institutions can ensure good governance of how citizens relate to each other, their natural environment and the world.

Active citizenship is an asset for any society. Teaching and practicing active citizenship should be part and

parcel of teachings for sustainable societies in school settings and lifelong learning. People with too little money to buy what they need can not count on markets to meet their needs of food, shelter, education, health care and more. Poor people exist in all countries defying old stereotypes between rich and poor countries. Meeting their needs by restoring degraded natural resource systems and generally living within the boundaries of our Blue Planet is the challenge for our times.

In an increasingly interdependent world, the next generations of citizens must get exposure to how their peers live in other parts of the world and can practise meeting these peers and cooperating with them.

Learning about and respecting cultural diversity is best in combination with the opportunity to practice cooperation. It is an important antidote to conflict and violent solutions to such conflicts.

Even though the oceans cover 70% of the surface of our Blue Planet Earth, information and knowledge about them is underdeveloped. Three major threats exist to the oceans at global level: (a) overfishing, (b) (plastic) pollution, and (c) climate change, particularly its effect on acidification.

The biggest current threat to marine ecosystems is overfishing. The biomasses of large predatory fish, marine mammals, turtles and other large marine species at the top of the food web are depressed in most parts of the oceans. This affects the way, these ecosystems function and are able to produce food for humans, maintain the biological diversity of the sea and provide other essential functions. In many fisheries, scientific research has demonstrated high percentages of baby fish in the catches, thus aggravating the threats.

The second and third threat are also beginning to bite and will become even more important in the medium to longer term.

Fish rulers to indicate minimum length at which individuals of major fish populations have reproduced at least once have already been developed for several countries, and can be created on a solid scientific basis for practically all countries and regions of the ocean. A number of other means, teaching aids and web resources exist within reach of schools to learn about marine ecosystems and what can be done about overfishing, including some on the MM website at: <http://mundusmaris.org/index.php/en/projects/2011-projects-en/162-faen>.

Achieving goals in one direction, be they environmental, social or economical, will require trade-offs in others. For example, babies of many marine species are abundant in near-shore waters, be they fish, clams, shrimp or other species. These near-shore waters are also those most easily accessed by poorer people gleaning whatever they can harvest with minimal or no gear. So long as little gleaning is done, it may not affect the overall capacity of the species to have enough individuals growing up to reproduce. But massive activities may kill the 'hen that lays the golden eggs'.

Another example: massive investment into destructive fishing gear such as bottom trawls. The economic gains may initially seem to justify the development, however, the habitat destruction and subsequent reduction of ecosystem productivity will again backfire. In others words, the interdependence between the components of the ecological and socio-economic system requires trade-offs so as not to put the overall capacity at risk. We take away that these choices are difficult to make. Robust and viable choices require a lot of knowledge and study of on-going change. They are in the end not technical, but societal choices. One thing is certain: without a healthy ecosystem there is no room for meeting social needs in an economically viable manner. As overfishing is so wide-spread, ecosystem restoration is really of utmost priority.

Distributing the costs and benefits and striking a balance between the different objectives in equitable ways is a political choice.

Outline of the opportunities for participation:

New - simplified participation: Schools and youth groups are invited to produce a video or Pecha Kucha powerpoint presentation to address one or more of three invited themes:

Schools and youth groups are invited to start or reinforce twinning / partnerships with one or more schools or youth groups in another country, if they can, around the challenge of co-producing a short video or a powerpoint presentation on one or more of three invited themes:

- ³⁵/₁₇ Protect the baby fish (and babies of other species),
- ³⁵/₁₇ Restore marine ecosystems and coastal zones to their former health and productive state, including by promoting low impact fisheries, marine protected areas and sustainable use of coastal zones,
- ³⁵/₁₇ Sustainable seafood and cultural heritage.

The themes are formulated as positive objectives to counter current malpractice. The objective is to increase awareness and encourage positive action. The single or partnered schools or youth groups should produce a script for the video that contains some explanations about what they aim to convey. The video should have a title. Videos might contain theatre sketches or role plays or other scientific, artistic and cultural activities conducted by the participating schools.

Participants and contributors should be acknowledged. Alternatively, the Pecha Kucha format is requested for powerpoint presentations (telling a story in 20 slides each of which is shown for 20 seconds). Care should be taken not to infringe existing copyright, e.g. when using proprietary music in a sound track.

It is expected that schools or youth groups exchange some information to (better) get to know each other and their respective circumstances. That initial exchange should help identify respective strengths and weaknesses and identify what they want to work about and how to repartition tasks for implementation. Each school or youth group will have identified at least one responsible teacher or coach, who is the coordinator and contact point for activities concerning his/her school or youth group in the collaboration.

New: Those schools participating under the simplified conditions without international partnership with another school or youth group will still do many of the same things as those in a partnership, except the international interactive part. They may, of course, collaborate with others locally and thus still benefit from practising cooperation with one another and others.

Teachers / coaches wishing to pilot such twinning / collaboration can receive some support in terms of searching thematic information sources, working methods from the promoters of the twinning (*Mundus maris* and others) as well as accessing public internet resources, using resources of their existing networks and (local) administrations and sponsors.

Directors / lead teachers / coaches participating with the schools, individual classes or youth groups in the twinning may benefit from such partnerships in manifold ways for the quality and effectiveness of their own pedagogical work and for the learning horizons and outcomes of their pupils.

It is expected that schools / classes / groups engaged in the twinning carry out some research – such as literature research, internet resources, field trips, interviews of experts - about the theme objective they have chosen and compare the specific situations between their respective countries. In this context, schools or groups are invited to look at the following aspects during the investigative phase of their joint project study, digest and compile accessible information about the chosen theme. By way of example, questions may include all or some of the following from this non-comprehensive list:

* state of (over)fishing of major species?

- * do baby fish enter the market chain, a lot or little?
- * have fish sizes gotten smaller in the last 10 years?
- * have some fish disappeared from the spectrum of fish marketed in the last 10 years, new ones appeared?
- * do protected species get caught, e.g. turtles, marine mammals, some sea birds? Is there shark finning?
- * landed fish and fishery products are mostly for domestic consumption or international trade?
- * who is fishing (local artisanal fishers, local industrial vessels, fishing vessels from other countries...)?
- * have numbers of fishing boats changed in 10 years? Have they become more powerful (engines, GPS, nets)?
- * where are they fishing (just off the coast, further off-shore, in deep waters, in another country...)?
- * what type of gear are they using? Is it selective or not? Does the gear destroy marine habitat or not?
- * does the fishing and fishing gear comply with the law?
- * who is marketing the fish: local people (women, men, mixed; big local fish mongers ...), foreign companies?
- * do marine protected areas exist? How big are they? Are they well protected and effective?
- * who supports protected areas?
- * does the government pay subsidies to the fisheries or part of it?
- * is the coastal zone polluted?
- * is the beach clean and used in compatible ways for recreation, fish processing, nature protection?
- * what else has changed?
- * what type of fish and other seafood do we use in our best meals?
- * are these the same as those used by our grandparents?
- * are these local fish and seafood or from another region of the planet?
- * who introduced the recipes to us, migrants from elsewhere? What were their habits and preferences?
- * what does this tell us about their culture and any particular meaning of the seafood in that context?
- * is the fish and seafood safe to eat or are there risks of contamination with heavy metals, plastic or other pollutants?

Any co-produced video or powerpoint presentation should be the result of a collaboration on equal footing as a way to learn and practice international cooperation across political, cultural and other borders. This is important for practising sustainability principles and experience the exposure to 'otherness' as an opportunity to think in new ways about one's own ways. If the economic level of the schools or youth groups in a partnership is different, creative ways are encouraged to bring out other strengths of the economically less endowed partner through practice of solidarity. Non-monetary values and other aspects of active citizenship can thus be learnt and practiced as a contribution to the general mandate of schools not only to teach facts and encourage competitiveness, but also citizenship and social competences.

Expected results:

At the most basic, the participation in general, particularly in the form of international partnerships, should offer pedagogical results at different levels:

- ³⁵/₁₇ professional growth to directors, teachers and coaches involved to upgrade with working conditions;
- ³⁵/₁₇ new knowledge and insights of pupils in participating schools / classes / groups about the marine environment, marine ecosystems, overfishing, sustainable seafood and maritime culture;
- ³⁵/₁₇ new technical competences through preparatory study (field trips and their preparation using different media) and through using video camera, post-production and / or video animation techniques or powerpoint preparation.

³⁵₁₇ new intercultural and social skills of pupils.

At a more material level, the co-produced video of maximum 5 minutes or the powerpoint presentation in the Pecha Kucha format (20 slides shown 20 seconds each to tell the story, total 6 min. and 40 secs.) should have a clear take-home message raising awareness about the theme chosen and encourage citizen action. Submissions must not have violent, obscene or diffamatory content.

Videos or powerpoints and a 1-2 page written report plus some photos about key developments in the partnership - and/or **New** for simplified participation: about learning and experiences during the production and possible local cooperation - should be submitted to the organisers at partnerships@mundusmaris.org. The report should highlight major difficulties and achievements of the twinning / partnership, including what was considered an achievement and why. The report should also mention whether additional sponsors and supporters have been attracted to the collaboration and, if so, how.

Participating in the international competition:

Interested schools, classes and youth groups may contact the organisers at partnerships@mundusmaris.org, if they are still looking for partners. They may receive limited support to identify interested parties for such partnerships, but participation of single schools/classes/groups is welcome as well.

Schools, classes and groups are invited to register early by sending an e-mail with their registration details to partnerships@mundusmaris.org (see attached form). They should submit their video / powerpoint presentation and report in electronic format **by 30 April 2014 at 17h GMT** to partnerships@mundusmaris.org.

The promoters of the school twinning will form an international jury to review the videos and the reports about the development of the partnerships. The jury will meet in May 2014 and results of the competition will be announced publicly after 8 June 2014, World Oceans Day in a public ceremony to honour all participants.

All registered participants will receive a honorary diploma in recognition of their effort.

There will be 3 prize categories for each theme: Best video and report on the partnership, best powerpoint presentation and report on the partnership, most innovative collaboration.

New: There will also be prizes for participants selected by the jury under the simplified participation stream.

Prize categories will be further distinguished into age groups: Below 12 years of age and 12 years and above.

Prizes will include at least one ticket for an exchange visit for two persons from different schools, 2 computers, video cameras, digital cameras, aquarium visits, ... There will be numerous token prizes for highly rated entries. Legal challenge to the attribution of prizes is excluded.

The best entries will be posted on the *Mundus maris* website and publicly promoted.