



**Set up and elaboration of an assistance
mechanism for the Atlantic sea basin**

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6th ASPC: Event Report

12 December 2019



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1. Introduction

This report presents the main features and outcomes of the [6th annual Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference \(ASPC2019\)](#) that was held in Porto, Portugal on November 12th and 13th, 2019. ASPC 2019, for the first time, was held in conjunction with a major Portuguese event, Business2Sea, which is organised jointly by ForumOceano and CetMAR. Business2Sea (B2Sea) was a three-day event starting from November 11th and running until 13th November 2019, in Alfandega Porto Congress Centre, located at the historic city centre.

[B2Sea](#) is an international event dedicated to facilitating interaction among people and organizations and to promote projects and businesses within the marine economy, open to the participation of any organisation. The event was referring to any stakeholder whose activities are related to the sea and its resources, including companies, associations, research centres, universities and public bodies, among others. The event was organized by [Fórum Oceano](#), a private non-profit association and [CETMAR Foundation](#), a public organisation depending on the Galician Government, aimed to improve marine environment.

The B2Sea 2019 edition addresses oceans' health and the sustainable use of marine resources, according to the United Nations' sustainable development goal n. 14, "life below water". Its aim was to strengthen the dynamics of strategic cooperation between all the marine economy stakeholders and raise social awareness about the need to protect oceans' health are crucial aspects to benefit from its whole potential.

On Monday November 11th, day 1, the event started with the plenary session Ocean Governance and Sustainability by Fórum Oceano, CETMAR and continued with the Celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Portuguese Maritime Cluster and a visit to the exhibition area along with Seafood tasting & Networking. During all three days took part several parallel workshops, business-to-business bilateral meetings and pitch sessions.

On 12th of November began the ASPC2019 two-day event, which combined plenary sessions, workshops and networking activities supported by the representatives of the main funding instruments took place and gave the chance to participants to promote and identify interesting project ideas, share good practices, make valuable contacts and explore areas for cooperation. At the same time, the Conference remained fully committed to its role as a leading hub for the exchange of know-how, networking as well as the development of projects relevant to both the Atlantic Strategy and the objectives of the Atlantic Action Plan (AAP).



SAVE THE DATE !

6th Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference

12-13 November 2019

Implemented by   Funded by the European Union

Porto – Portugal

The following format was chosen for the event:

- **Day 1**, Atlantic stakeholders had the opportunity to follow discussions centered around the much anticipated revision of the Atlantic Action Plan which sought:

- to identify the role of ports as blue economy hubs in the Atlantic Area;
- to discuss the use of open innovation concepts in ports;
- to gather insights about the thematic areas with innovative potential and relevance for Atlantic ports and related ecosystems and to finally explore the possibility of creating a network of innovative ports.
- Also, at the same time, the INTERREG ATLANTIC AREA programme discussed specific environmental actions undertaken on Atlantic coastal waters through its project initiatives and proceed to further explore possibilities to promote environment, climate action in its next programming period.
- **Day 2**, continued with the organisation of four (4) different and exciting workshop sessions that explored new and exciting initiatives in the Atlantic Area; discussed possible funding opportunities for the maritime industry while at the same time sought to emphasize opportunities for cooperation and development within the Atlantic Strategy and the Atlantic Action Plan.
- Both days, Atlantic stakeholders enjoyed the opportunity to have business-to-business networking sessions with other project promoters, representatives from funding institutions, maritime business operators and service suppliers so as to connect, innovate and grow internationally.
- A **Closing Plenary Session**: The Atlantic Strategy Group 2019 Portuguese Presidency, the next Atlantic Strategy Group 2020 French Presidency and a representative from the European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

2. Conference Planning

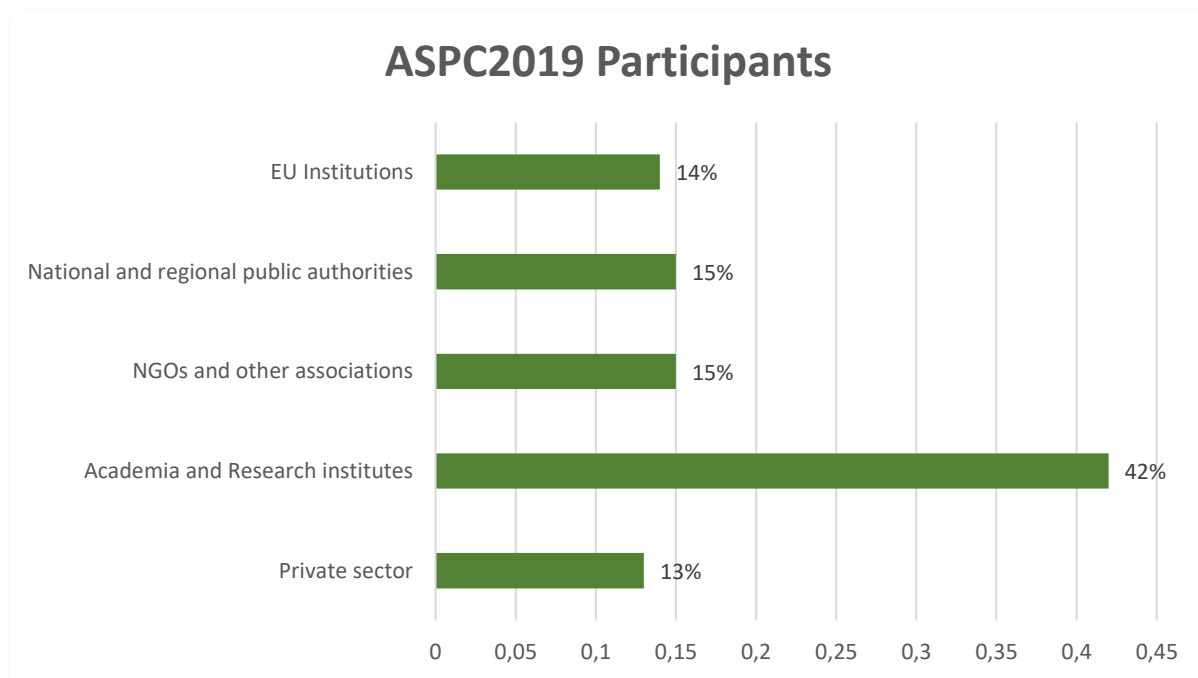
The planning of the 6th Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference commenced in September 2019, quite late as the ASG Presidency was heavily involved in the organisation of the EMD till end of May and then the summer period commenced. In this respect, a set of preparatory actions began to be implemented in a rush and a continuous coordination and close collaboration with DG MARE, EASME and the ASG Portuguese Presidency had to be ensured so as to provide for the timely organisation of the November 2019 event.

To be more specific, the Assistant Mechanism for the Atlantic Action Plan (AAM) - comprising basically of the Central Team and the PT National Hub, while the other National Hubs were more focused on information dissemination – proceeded to the implementation of the following activities:

- Design of the Conference Concept Paper which also included the identification/suggestion of key topics to be primarily addressed during the ASPC2019;
- Design of a dedicated Communication Plan for the promotion of the Conference (i.e. social media, ongoing campaign, e-flashes, newsletter, etc. of the ASPC2019);
- Organisation of the Workshop sessions;
- Design of the Plenary Session, identification of speakers in close collaboration with DG MARE;
- Organisation of the networking and matchmaking activities;
- Management of the ASPC2019 website (e.g. management of the preregistration and registration processes, regularly uploading the Conference agenda, dissemination 2 Newsletters in all 5 Atlantic languages);
- Booking of interpretation and hosting services;
- Preparation and dissemination of the Conference booklet;
- Design and launch of the online Conference evaluation.

3. Conference Implementation

In total, 662 stakeholders registered to participate in the ASPC2019 in Porto. The 2-day ASPC2019 was finally attended by 342 persons coming mainly from the private sector, academia and research institutes, NGOs and other associations, national and regional public authorities and EU Institutions.



During the event, the Conference agenda could be accessed by visiting the dedicated [ASPC2019 website](#).

In the following sub-sections, the main outcomes per key conference component are presented.

3.1. Opening Sessions

During the **Welcome addresses**, **Mr. Ricardo Serrão Santos**, the Portuguese Minister of the Sea, who officially opened the Conference, addressed the participants and after officially welcoming them to Porto proceeded to highlight the need for sustainable oceans, one of the main points addressed through the Atlantic strategy which should be a main tool for the successful diffusion of scientific progress and knowledge of the ocean.

Mr Felipe Araújo, Vice-President, Municipality of Porto, pointed out how sea and river have always been important for the city of Porto (i.e. exports, natural barrier, tourism), while also referring to the significance of the coastline for the new planning of the city and to the need of the aquatic sources to be managed in an integrated way.

Welcome Addresses were followed by a session that was dedicated to the new action plan for the Atlantic and the role of ports. During the “Scene Setter” as it was called, the floor was given to **Mr. Christos Economou**, Head of Unit, Sea-basin strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission, who presented *The Revised Atlantic action plan - Introducing a new pillar on “Atlantic ports as gateways and hubs for blue economy”* and following him to **Mr. Ruben Eiras**, Director General for Maritime Policy, Directorate General for Maritime Policy and **Mr. Goncalo Faria**, Beta-I representative, who

presented the case for the **Portuguese “Blue Tech Accelerator”** and set the scene for the closed workshop on Atlantic ports as hubs for blue economy that followed.

3.2. Workshops

On the 12th of November (the 1st day of the ASPC2019) two parallel workshops took place (1st 15:10-18:30 and the 2nd 15:30-16:30), while on 13th of November (the 2nd day of the ASPC2019) two rounds of two parallel workshop sessions took place (1st round 09:15-10:30, 2nd round 11:30-12:45).

1 st Day	Parallel workshops	Workshop: Atlantic ports as hubs for blue economy	Closed workshop	
		Workshop: Environmental Actions on Atlantic Coastal Waters	60	
2 nd Day	First round of two parallel workshop sessions	Workshop 1A: Digital Solutions in oceans and maritime industry	35	
		Workshop 1B: Feel inspired: how to make the most of EU Blue funding	60	
	Second round of two parallel workshop sessions	Workshop 2A: Opportunities and risks in Maritime Spatial Planning in the European Atlantic	~30	
		Workshop 2B: All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance Workshop	30	

Workshop: Atlantic ports as hubs for blue economy

The interactive workshop centered on the role of ports as blue economy hubs in the EU Atlantic area, the use of open innovation concepts with relation to ports, gather insights about the thematic areas with innovative potential and relevance for the Atlantic ports and related ecosystem and to explore the creation of a network of innovative ports. The workshop aimed to gather Atlantic port operators and maritime service providers and public authorities active in the EU Atlantic area, as well as start-ups, business accelerators and incubators and discuss with them how to operationalize the “Ports” pillar of the revised Atlantic action plan.

Workshop: Environmental Actions on Atlantic Coastal Waters

At a time when the update of the Atlantic Action Plan is under negotiation, the European Commission is taking concrete steps in order to safely steer the Atlantic Maritime Strategy into a promising future. Among the many topics around the Economy of the Sea that are currently on the table, the INTERREG Atlantic Area programme will highlight in this session the environmental actions on Atlantic coastal waters and bring some Atlantic projects that through their expertise are working together to tackle common challenges affecting the areas involved. Moderator of the Workshop was Prof. Francisco Taveira Pinto, Head of Marine Energy Group, Hydraulic, Water Resources and Environment Division, Faculty of Engineering of the university of Porto

- **Key Speakers:**

- **Mr. Sergio Jesus**, University of Algarve, Project JONAS (Joint framework for Ocean noise in the Atlantic seas)
- **Ms. Marisa Fernández**, Centro Tecnológico del Mar – Fundación CETMAR, Project CLEANATLANTIC (Tackling marine litter in the Atlantic Area)
- **Ms. Maria Jesus Belzunce Segarra**, Marine Research Division, AZTI-Tecnalia, Project MONITOOL (New tools for monitoring the chemical status in transitional and coastal waters under the Water Framework Directive)
- **Key topics discussed during your workshop (by speakers and audience)**

The workshop essentially provided an overview of some projects (which are currently being implemented) that have received Interreg AA Programme funding:

 - Clean Atlantic
 - The Jonas Project
 - Monitool project.

First round of two parallel workshop sessions

Workshop 1A: Digital Solutions in oceans and maritime industry

Workshop's organizer was Directorate General for Maritime Policy & Inova-Ria, Companies Association for an Innovation Network. This workshop has given an overview of some of the existing digital solutions of the blue economy developed in the Atlantic Area. There were presentations on good practices and experiences in the development and financing mechanisms that are supporting existing digital solutions, as well as discussion on opportunities and constraints to developing new start-up projects deriving from research and innovation produced at universities / research institutions. Moderator for the workshop was Mr. Nuno Mendonça, Advisor on Innovation and Entrepreneurship of the Rector of University of Coimbra.

Panel 1: Existing digital solutions

Ms. Susana Seabra, Senior Consultant, Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação S.A. (SPI) "Platicemar - Digital Solutions: A Potential Diagnosis in the Sea Economy", introduced the Platicemar project which is addressed at foster innovation and entrepreneurship in the sea economy.

Mr. Artur Costa, Offshore Business Development, CEIIA, Centre of Engineering and Product Development, introduced the "Understanding the Atlantic: The role of digitalization", explained the context of the activity of his company and highlighted that there is a high percentage of the marine environment still to discover.

Mr. Nelson Marques, Head of Division of Maritime Traffic Control Systems, Directorate General for Natural Resources, Maritime Safety and Services (DGRM), introduced "LSW - The Portuguese experience with the Logistic Single Window: the importance of port digitalization and portal shipping intelligence", which was included in the XXI Constitutional Government Program of Portugal www.projecto-jul.pt. He also talked about the vision digital transformation and technological leadership.

Panel 2: Upcoming Projects & Ideas

Ms. Marcia Lima, Project R5 Marine Solutions focuses to the following sectors: Offshore, renewables, aquaculture. They operate in offshore and coastal domain.

Mr. Tiago Cristovão, Project Undersee PT, which is aimed at creating a "Global water data provider". The work team includes: INL, Uni Coimbra, ESA, VODAFONE, BLUEBIOVALUE, NCE SEAFOOD among others.

Mr. Francisco Campuzano, Project [iFado](#), which is an Interreg Atlantic Area Project that combines conventional monitoring programmes, satellite data, emerging tech and models to develop tailor made products and innovative. www.lfado.maretec.org.

Mr. Frederico Pinto Ferreira, Project [IN 4.0](#) INTERREG ATLANTIC AREA. The stakeholders involved: DEPUTACIÓN DE PONTEVEDRA, ASIME, FORUM OCEANO, EMC2, CIT, CORK, ACLUNAGA. The scope of the project is to improve the competitiveness of the sector and the specific objectives: training workers in these sectors, designing innovative strategies among others. It has 4 main actions: 1) in context, 2) in work and in training, 3) in commercialization and costs, 4) in adaptation.

Mr. Hugo Metelo Diogo, Project BlueGrowth, which is a project funded by FundoAzul. Bluegrowth uses smart sensing systems and artificial vision. They collect data using sensors and AUVs, in order to monitor water quality and quality of seabed and introduce the data in a platform.

Workshop 1B: Feel inspired: how to make the most of EU Blue funding

Workshop's organizer was the Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME) – European Commission and the objective was to help companies who are looking for funding to develop a cutting-edge technology, and don't know how to do it, or those who have developed an innovative product and they need an investor to place it on the market. Moderator was Ms Luisa Prista, Head of Department A/COSME, H2020, SME & EMFF, Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME).

Panel 1: Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Mr Vincent Favrel, Head of Unit EMFF, EASME, “Blue Invest and Blue Window”, talked about the blue investment platform and how it benefits SMEs. Mr Favrel then discussed the two types of workshops that are important elements of the blue investment platform: 1) Thematic workshop and 2) Blue invest day.

Ms Bibiana Neves Dantas, European Enterprise Network Portugal. The EEN is dedicated to SMEs and start-ups, offers access to the largest network in the world - over 600 business partner organisations that help locally the companies and start-ups to find financing, innovation advisory services and international partnerships. Member organisations include: Technology poles; Innovation support organisations; Universities and research institutes; Regional development organisations; Chambers of commerce and industry.

Mr Ted Eriksson, EIC accelerator, Project Adviser Unit A2, EASME, joined the workshop by videoconference and highlighted that EIC accelerator is not aiming to support projects that could receive funds elsewhere.

Panel 2: Voices from projects

This section had more to do with the presentation of the companies, and not so much about the way they got financial help from EASME.

Mr Patrick Freire, Project [BMX-11](#), which produces antifouling from bacteria.

Ms. Oihane C. Basurko, Project [BlueNet](#), is using discarded fishing tools to create pallets and reuse them.

Ms. Julia Vera, Project [WAOH](#) is about ecotourism on the EU Atlantic façade, providing a “Blue adventure box” to help coastal destinations embrace ecotourism.

Second round of two parallel workshop sessions

Workshop 2A: Opportunities and risks in Maritime Spatial Planning in the European Atlantic

Workshop's organizer was SIMAtlantic project. **Objective:** The Supporting Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Atlantic (SIMAtlantic) project aims to support the establishment and

implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in five European Atlantic Member States (Ireland, France, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom) and is co-funded by the European Union's Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME).

In order to promote and highlight the work planned as part of the project an interactive workshop was organised as part of the Atlantic Stakeholder Partnership Conference, held in Porto, Portugal on the 13th November 2019. The workshop highlighted the current status of MSP implementation in Atlantic countries via a panel discussion with representatives from each of the five Atlantic member states.

- **Key Speakers:**

- **Dr. Stephen Jay**, Director, Liverpool Institute for Sustainable Coasts and Oceans (LISCO)
- **Ms. Anne Marie O'Hagan**, Research Fellow and SIMAtlantic Project Lead, MAREI, Ireland
- **Ms. Flo Clucas**, Councillor Cheltenham Council and Visiting Fellow Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place

- **Panel members:**

- **Mr. Stephen Jay**, Director, Liverpool Institute for Sustainable Coasts and Oceans (LISCO)
- **Ms. Ana Paula Simão**, Head of Environmental Monitoring Unit at the Directorate General for Natural Resources, Safety and Maritime Services, Portugal
- **Mr. Tom Woolley**, Marine Planning Advisor to the Irish Government's Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
- **Ms. Claude Wohrer**, French General Secretariat for the Sea

The workshop began with a brief introduction to the SIMAtlantic Project followed by a panel discussion with representatives from EU member states. Some of the questions were about the ways we can improve trans-boundary cooperation and how does Brexit affect all this planning. The workshop had also an interactive part, during which the group was split up into several tables to work, all the information collected, will be available on the SIMAtlantic website: <https://www.marei.ie/simatlantic/#tab-id-3>.

Delegates then partook in interactive roundtable discussions on two of four topics examining the four cross-cutting themes the SIMAtlantic project will investigate: 1) Governance 2) Cumulative Impacts and Strategic Environmental Assessment 3) Data Use and Sharing and 4) Land-Sea Interactions. These round table discussions allowed participants to identify challenges and opportunities associated with these themes and relate these to their own experiences. A full report on the workshop findings will be available shortly on the [SIMAtlantic website](#).

Workshop 2B: All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance Workshop

Workshop's organizer was Marine Institute Ireland. **Objective:** The European Union – Canada – United States Galway Statement on Atlantic Ocean Cooperation and the European Union – Brazil – South Africa Belém Statement on Atlantic Research and Innovation Cooperation signed in May 2013 and July 2017 respectively, were the basis for building an Atlantic Community that shares a vision of an Atlantic Ocean that is healthy, resilient, safe, productive, so that present and future generations can continue to reap the immense benefits. Under the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance, several initiatives and projects have been launched among which the #GoAtlanticBlue, campaign that relied heavily on social media for everyone to broadcast and celebrate their own unique connections to the Atlantic Ocean. In addition, the first All-Atlantic Ocean Youth Ambassador Summer School took place on 22 – 27 August 2019 in Galway, Ireland. The Youth Ambassadors will pitch their campaigns and achievements at the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Forum, taking place from 6 – 7 February 2020 in Brussels. During the Forum, the All-Atlantic Ocean Youth Ambassadors Forum will be launched, which

is an example of how the EU works together with its trans-Atlantic partners to empower the next generation of leaders for sustainable development along and across the Atlantic Ocean. The workshop will gather a panel of testimonials from stakeholders involved in the design and the implementation of this overall Atlantic alliance as well as project leaders who make it a reality.

- **Key Speakers:**

Ms. Margaret Rae, Marine Institute, Ireland, Contact: Margaret.raea@marine.ie, showed a film about the initiative executed in Ireland called “Lighting blue” where different local landmarks (buildings) were lighted in blue in June (8 June to celebrate the Oceans’ Day). The Project has an impact on society: Young people, students---different actions carried out around the world in order to raise awareness about oceans conservancy. Ms Rae also talked about the summer school carried out between 23th -27th August 2019. The program has 23 young ambassadors from 15 countries bordering the Atlantic and they are making a campaign to increase awareness and help protect the ocean. 5 students were invited to explain how their work was carried out and they mentioned that there are 3 working groups. Some of the core messages that they spread over: ocean for everyone, provides goods and services, data belongs to all etc. They detected problems: i.e. lack of community connection to the Atlantic, and they offered solutions: i.e. Empower young scientists.

- **Ms. Marta Norton**, FCT, Portugal, talked about AANChOR CSA Project. She explained the context in which the ATLANTIC OCEAN RESEARCH ALLIANCE was established.
- **Ms. Eugénia Barroca** – Portugal, **Ms. Johanne Vad** - United Kingdom, **Mr. John Armstrong** - Ireland, **Ms. Irene Sastre** – Spain, and **Ms. Odeline Billant** - France, Joint Presentation from the Atlantic Ocean Youth Ambassadors.

3.7. Closing Session

On the 2nd day of the Conference and during the Closing Session **Mr. Christos Economou** started by commenting that visiting Porto had been a pleasure for him and the team, in part as with the event the community of maritime stakeholders could really be seen, something which was very encouraging for the new Atlantic strategy and the future more generally, which was to be greener, digital, and closer to the citizens.

It was stated that the participants at the event had heard about successful projects and funding opportunities, and that it would be important for all to digest this information and from that produce further ideas. It was explained that the event had been held in Porto as the Portuguese held the presidency this year, who were to be congratulated on their work this year, particularly with linking this event with other relevant events. Next year’s French presidency were wished the best of luck.

Mr. Economou finished by reminding all that the community has to be thankful to the pioneers of the Atlantic strategy and for where the community is today, particularly on essential international cooperation as the issues concerned have no borders. Finally, the DG MARE team was thanked, as well as the Assistance Mechanism, and all were invited next year to the event in France.

Mr. Ruben Eiras thanked all participants for their work over the past days, and thanks Mr. Christos Economou for his motivating words. It was explained that with the Portuguese presidency this year there were two central goals: the creation of a new Action Plan; and the reformation of the Governance model. These goals were achieved by focused debate in which all Atlantic Member States took part, with the support of the EC.

It was underlined that the Atlantic Strategy is a Strategy centred in making things happen, focused on the future for people, countries and Member States in the Atlantic. It was also reminded to participants that this space is not only the European space per se, but also includes the territories

under Member State jurisdiction which are not necessarily in that geographic space. It was stated that the Atlantic Strategy could be an example of peaceful cooperation between countries, something that goes beyond the geographical borders of Europe.

Mr. Eiras finished by explaining that the name of Porto had a maritime connotation, and so therefore couldn't be more appropriate. It was highlighted that many events taking place in the city were dedicated to building a sustainable blue economy, such as one coming up the week after where global brands and leaders – including from the UN - will be in the city with one goal: to see how these big companies, practically, will place their budget and create products using ocean sustainability.

Finally, Mr. Eiras encouraged all to catch the wave of opportunity that was coming, and surf it all the way to shore.

Ms. Claude Wohrer thanked all for what had been done in this conference over the days, stating that the framework used had been amazing, and something to try to match in France next year.

It was stated that the Atlantic Action Plan would hopefully be done in the first quarter of next year, and that the public consultation was still open until December this year, this was allowing for a lining up also with financing programmes starting next year. The threat of Brexit was underlined, as well as the need to reflect on the way the Member States can incorporate other countries into this Atlantic Strategy, if it is wished to be expanded.

It was explained that in France a National Harbour Strategy National was to be adopted soon, which was very important as it was also a theme of the new Action Plan. Work here was expected to be similar as to that of the Atlantic Strategy, as important work with the regions will need to be done. It was also noted that it was important to be connecting the maritime strategy with its financing, which has to be done at the national and regional level.

Ms. Wohrer stated that the true value of the process was what was not actually seen, as new work methods had been developed, and work between different DGs of the Commission was also being done, this showed that the Atlantic Strategy was something that was helping people work together.

Turning to the next presidency, a desire was stated on cooperation during the French Presidency next year. The SIMAtlantic project was given as an example of representing all five states in one project, meaning less money was needed. This would suggest that as much as possible projects should have all five Member States working together. In addition, the Atlantic Games was highlighted as a project which still has no funding, an orphan project, a point of next year would be how to get good projects funding opportunities.

5. Overall evaluation of the Conference by the participants

The ASPC2019 participants were invited to complete an online Conference evaluation form (Annex 3). Overall 50 responses were finally received.

The participants were asked to evaluate several aspects of the Conference as 'very good', 'good' or 'fair', the answers received were analysed and the most significant of them were further visualized with the help of the following pie charts.

In general, the respondents appeared very satisfied with the event's registration process. The promotion of the Conference and the provision of information was also evaluated rather positively, as was the overall social media campaign prior to the event. Finally, the length of the ASPC was also mostly seen in a positive light.