

UN SDSN Sustainable Euro-Asian Seas Initiative Kick-off meeting - Follow-up

April 26, 2021, 10: 00-12: 00 CET

It was great meeting you all at the kick-off meeting of the UN SDSN Sustainable Euro-Asian Seas (SEAs) Initiative on Monday 26, 2021. During this meeting, we got to know each other sharing the highlights of our work and we outset the initial objectives of the newly established Sustainable Euro-Asian Seas (SEAs) Initiative. The proposed SDSN SEAs Initiative will build on research and demonstration projects, developed by a consortium and its collaborators worldwide, and will create an SDSN high-level working group, which will work on the Science-Policy interface related to Blue Growth, as well as on producing an SDSN SEAs annual report.

As a response to the climate crisis and its effect on Marine Ecosystems and Coastal Populations, SDSN Greece, SDSN Black Sea and SDSN Mediterranean bring together the three Initiatives, the [4-Seas Initiative](#), the [Global Roundtable for Sustainable Shipping and Ports](#), the [Plastic Busters Initiative](#), the newly formed [Global Maritime Accelerator](#), and several [Blue Growth research projects](#), to accelerate science driven blue growth and the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) in the Euro-Asian Seas and beyond. The new initiative aims to bring together in an interdisciplinary framework the work of SDSN National and Regional Networks that is related to Blue Growth. It will introduce a regular annual report on Technological, Economic and Social Transition Pathways of accelerating the systemic transformation required for the implementation of Agenda 2030 in our Seas and Oceans, including Science-Technology and Innovation-Policy interface agenda setting, model design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The Initiative is coordinated by

- [Phoebe Koundouri](#), Professor and Director of [ReSEES Research Laboratory](#), [Athens University of Economics and Business](#); Director of [Sustainable Development Unit](#) and [EIT Climate-KIC Hub Greece](#), [Athena RC](#); Fellow [World Academy of Art and Science](#); President-Elect of the [European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists](#); Co-chair [UN SDSN Europe](#) and [UN SDSN Greece](#)
- [Nikos Theodossiou](#), Professor at the [Aristotle University of Thessaloniki](#), Chair [UN SDSN Black Sea](#)
- [Yannis Ioannidis](#), Professor at the [National and Kapodistrian University of Athens](#), Former President [ATHENA Research and Innovation Centre](#), [UN SDSN Greece](#) Strategic Advisory Board

An Advisory Board led by [Jeffrey Sachs](#), Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, will be created. The role of the Board is to provide guidance and support the objectives of the initiative. It will comprise representatives from the triangle of knowledge (research, education and innovation). Invitations will be sent shortly.

Initially, **Prof. Phoebe Koundouri** introduced the Initiative and its preliminary goals and objectives, while she presented the relevant projects and initiatives that will complement this newly established initiative. She also stressed that through the cooperation of representatives of the state, civil society, scientists, researchers and investors we will be able to jointly formulate action plans in line with European and national strategies that will facilitate the acceleration of science driven blue growth and the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) in the Euro-Asian Seas and beyond transition. In this context, Prof. Phoebe Koundouri briefly presented the political framework for the sustainable development, namely the UN Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the European Green Deal and the Recovery Fund, which lay the foundations and the financing tools for the creation of synergies and for the acceleration of the sustainable development in these areas. Then, **Prof. Nikos Theodossiou** enriched the outline of the Initiative by highlighting the perspective of the SDSN networks in this initiative, the importance of the Mediterranean Basin, Black Sea and Caspian Sea driving sustainability and finally the need for collaboration with everyone who is interested in this initiative.

[Harris Papageorgiou](#), Research Director ATHENA RC, presented the [IntelComp \(Horizon 2020\) Project](#), titled “A Competitive Intelligence Cloud/HPC Platform for AI-based STI Policy Making”, which will support the SDSN SEAs Initiative through a dedicated case study on Sustainable European and Asian Seas and Oceans. IntelComp sets out to build an innovative Cloud Platform that will offer Artificial Intelligence-based services to public administrators and policy makers across Europe for data- and evidence-driven policy design and implementation in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy. Large STI datasets are processed on High Performance Computing (HPC) environments that are part of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) initiative. Public administration at all geographical and organizational levels, STI stakeholders and civil society produce a great amount of dynamic, multilingual and heterogeneous data (e.g., national STI strategies, plans and work programmes, calls, projects, reports, scientific publications, patents, dissemination articles, etc.), so understanding and analyzing this data is crucial for evidence-based policy making.

The stakeholders who participated in the meeting came from the triangle of knowledge; namely, *research, education and innovation* as well as from the *civil society, private sector and public and regulatory authorities*. In particular, the following institutions followed the meeting:

- **Research Centers and Institutes** located in:
 - Greece: ATHENA Research and Innovation Centre, ARION-Cetacean Rescue and Rehabilitation Research Center, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR)
 - Italy: Center for innovation of Fondazione Flaminia
 - Spain: Basque Centre for Climate Change
 - Portugal: Associated Laboratory for Green Chemistry (LAQV-REQUIMTE)
 - Norway: Norwegian Institute for Water Research
 - Sweden: Nordregio
 - Romania: Făgăraș Research Institute
 - North Macedonia: Institute for Research in Environment, Civil Engineering and Energy

- Tunisia: Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM)
- **Universities and Educational Institutions**
 - Greece: Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), International Hellenic University, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), American College of Greece (ACG), Ioannina University, University of the Aegean, University of Peloponnese, Hellenic Naval Academy
 - Italy: University of Siena, University of Foggia, Università degli Studi di Cagliari, University of Studies of Napoli Federico II, University of Bologna
 - Spain: Universitat Pompeu Fabra
 - Cyprus: Open University of Cyprus
 - Switzerland: University of Geneva
 - Denmark: University of Southern Denmark
 - Belgium: University of Antwerp
 - Czech Republic: Charles University
 - Moldova: Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova
 - Estonia: University of Tartu
 - Romania: Babes-Bolyai University
 - Turkey: Istanbul Technical University, Yeditepe University
 - Kazakhstan: Nazarbayev University
 - India: ICFAI Business School (IBS)-Hyderabad
 - Japan: University of Tokyo
 - U.S.A.: Albany Law School
- **Civil Society**
 - Greece: SDSN Greece, SDSN Black Sea, Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature, Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (Helmepa), ECOGENIA
 - Italy: SDSN Mediterranean
 - Geneva: Green Digital Finance
 - Finland: Sustory
 - France: SDSN Europe
 - Hawaii: World Ocean Council
- **Public and Regulatory Authorities**
 - Greece: Bank of Greece
 - Belgium: European Commission
 - Italy: Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Regione Campania
 - Poland, Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania: Association of Carpathian Euroregion
- **Private sector**
 - Greece: EVOTROPIA Ecological Finance Architectures P.C., Solmeyea, Rhoé, Data Consultants SA, Urban Camel, CLIMAZUL Ltd, BeyondCSR, BlueCycle

- USA: ClearValue

Then several the participants took the floor and introduced themselves:

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Prof. Grigoris Zarotiadis, Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Political Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, President of ASECU. Prof. Zarotiadis presented the Initiative "To drill or not to drill", which focuses on the developments in Eastern Mediterranean about the effort to exploit oil. An initiative that started by the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Academic Network (BSEMAN) (<https://bseman.net/>) in 2018. He emphasized on the connection between Blue Growth and Drilling Economy and its importance. BSEMAN formed an international and interdisciplinary working group (members from Canada, the Balkans, East.Mediterranean, Israel etc) towards a holistic analysis towards the benefits connected to the drilling economy in the Eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, he referred to the creation of an SDGs Observatory in the Black Sea area and how it could aid towards the implementation of the SDSN SEAs Initiative's Goals.

Dr. Marta Pascual, Researcher at the Baque Centre for Climate Change (BC3), Spanish Hub/Focal Point for the European WestMed Initiative and the European Atlantic Action Plan, Member of expert groups of the MSD platform. WestMed and the European Atlantic Action Plan are the European Sea Ports & Sea Basin Strategies, that Europe has for the developing of Sustainable Blue Economy. Hearing about the Intelcomp project, she offered the collaboration of her team, because in BC3, they have developed their own AI platform (ARIES) that works with its own semantics and they believe that in order to get a real AI interoperability it all comes in the end to the semantics. The developed semantics are able to link the different models, data, policy, languages that they use, to be able to provide a decision support system. So far ARIES has already been used for ecosystem services modelling, semantic metamodelling and more recently in natural capital accounting. More information can be found at: WestMED Initiative (<https://www.westmed-initiative.eu/>), ARIES (<https://aries.integratedmodelling.org/>) and integrated modelling (<https://integratedmodelling.org/>). She also said that they are open for collaborations (by sending an e-mail to her personally at marta.pascual@bc3research.org).

Dr. Antonios Magoulas, Director Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR), shared information regarding the role and contribution of the HCMR. HCMR is the biggest Research Centre for Marine Research in the Eastern Mediterranean Area and it includes three (3) different Institutes:

- IMBBC: Institute of Marine Biology, Biotechnology and Aquaculture
- IMBRIW: Institute of Marine Biological Resources and Inland Waters
- IO: Institute of Oceanography

Furthermore, Mr. Magoulas, presented the work of the Centre for the study and sustainable exploitation of Marine Biological Resources (CMBR), which is included in the Greek Roadmap for Research Infrastructures and includes: multi-omics bioprospecting, multi-use of the Offshore Sea Platform, Improvement Experimental Facilities, Support Genomic Observatories Network and Improve Computing Facilities. More can be found at <https://cmbr.hcmr.gr/>.

Prof. Yannis Ioannidis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), (former Director of ATHENA RC) talked about the importance of Blue Growth and its relationship with Big Data. He mentioned that “Sustainability is the key to enjoy and also to take advantage of all the blue riches we have (in a good sustainable way)”. He emphasized on the importance of data, by mentioning that “everything is data” and that “data on its own is useless”. “It has to be information and then action, so that we will have the wisdom to sustain our work, our seas and fresh waters”, as Prof. Ioannidis stated. He continued by emphasizing on the necessity of Big Data Analysis for the realization of the SDSN SEAs Initiative’s goals in terms of size, speed and accuracy. The interdisciplinary nature of the initiative commands the use not of small, slow, simple or truthful data, but of big data.

Dr. Cintia O. Quintana, Assistant Professor, University of Southern Denmark, mentioned that her team works with restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems, such as eelgrass beds and flooding of coastal areas (<https://www.avjf.dk/avjnf/naturomraader/gyldensteen-strand/>). They work with several stakeholders and their restoration approaches are assisting the policy and decision making on upscaling these activities in Denmark. In particular, they provide evidence-based knowledge on biodiversity and documentation on the improvement of environmental conditions including nutrients, blue carbon, and green-house gases emissions.

Harald Hasler-Sheetal, Researcher at the University of Southern Denmark, presented the interdisciplinary blue growth hub working in the Baltic/Nordic region and internationally. Their research is focused on ecosystem restoration, multi-actor approach, biogeochem, bridging biodiversity, climate change and ecosystem services. For more information regarding their activities: hasler@sdu.dk

Prof. Fabio Santeramo, Economics professor, University of Foggia (Italy). Prof. Santeramo is leading projects on the interconnections b/w climate changes, trade and policies in the agri-food sector. His team is open for corporations focusing on challenges and impacts of CC and on solutions for the blue economy. Contact e-mail: fabio.santeramo@unifg.it

Dr. Rolf Elmer, Director Nordregio (Sweden). Dr. Elmer suggested the Initiative to be extended to the Nordic and Arctic Maritime sectors in the future. You may find out more about Nordregio here: <https://nordregio.org/research/>.

Dr. Matteo Ranalli, Expert, Università degli Studi di Cagliari (Italy). Dr. Ranalli has worked as an Environmental Officer onboard cruise ships and was in charge of all aspects related to environmental protection & pollution prevention, from the operational and regulatory sides. He has covered several areas of research in the blue economy and is currently participating as an expert to “GRRinPORT”, an Interreg project about sustainable management of waste and wastewater in Italian and French port areas (University of Cagliari, Italy). He is willing to share his expertise with a focus on shipping and maritime spatial planning. Contact e-mail: mranalli@bluegrowth.inogs.it

Dr. Tiziana Campisi, Project Manager of Center for Innovation of Fondazione Flaminia (Italy). Involved in blue growth projects like LOOP-Ports project for circular economy transition of the port sector and Tavolo Porto for the co-creation of the roadmap of the Port of Ravenna for

green and digital development. Center for Innovation of Fondazione Flaminia is involved in marina litter projects, too. Their mission is the stakeholder involvement in these themes, the creation of quality education for public and private sectors as well as civic activation. You may contact her directly at: tcampisi@cifla.it or learn more about the activities of the Center for Innovation of Fondazione Flaminia at: <https://www.fondazioneflaminia.it/> (in Italian)

Dr. Antonio Marzocchella, University of Studies of Napoli Federico II. He is part of the Task Force on Blue Growth ad Federico II (part of the Cluster Tecnologico Nazionale Blue Italian Growth - <http://www.clusterbig.it/>). The Task Force at Federico II (<http://www.unina.it/ricerca/task-forces-di-ateneo/big-fed-ii#documenti>) includes researchers from 12 Departments (Agriculture, Chemistry, Biology, Drug, Chemical/Material Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Environmental Engineering). Researchers are involved in several projects focused on the sustainable exploitation of marine resources (biotic and abiotic), sea infrastructural systems, shipping propulsion and other related subjects. They would be very glad to cooperate.

Ms. Alice Guittard, Geographer focused on sea and coastal, ATHENA RC. She is part of Prof.Koundouri's team within the Cluster of Sustainability. Her work is mainly focused on governance, policy, stakeholders' engagement, transition pathways and system approaches. She is working on EU projects such as "H2020 COASTAL" (<https://h2020-coastal.eu/>) and the soon to be launched "BRIDGE- Black Sea" project. She is looking forward to build new collaborations and synergies for a sustainable Blue Economy!

Dr. Nicoletta Patrizi, Researcher at the University of Siena. She presented UNISI is the coordinator of the INTERREG MED project called BLUE DEAL. The project aims to increase the transnational activity of innovative clusters and networks of the BE sector, develop links and synergies between SME's, public authorities, knowledge institutions, and civil society and establish transnational and regional Blue Deal Alliances. This project will create a favorable environment for BE investments and sustainable development in the Mediterranean economy. If you are interested in the project, you can reach the team at bluedeal@unisi.it.

Prof. Ioannis Emiris, NKUA, President and General Director of ATHENA RC. Prof. Emiris talked about the impact of ICT in society and expressed his interest in getting ATHENA involved in the Initiative. Find out more about ATHENA RC: <https://www.athena-innovation.gr/en>

Prof. Benedek Jozsef, Director of Research Centre for Sustainable Development, Babes-Bolyai University (Romania). He presented the work of his team, which has developed a database with 90 SD indicators at local level. They have measured the SDGs for each locality in Romania. For more details, he shared the following link: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/sd.2180>

Prof. Athanasios Yannacopoulos, Department of Statistics, AUEB. Mentioned that the SDSN SEAs Initiative is "a wonderful initiative" and that he would could contribute from the point of view of Mathematical and Stochastic Modelling and in Robust Decision Making should such input is needed.

Dr. Wenting Chen, Researcher from Norwegian Institute for Water Research (Norway). The Norwegian Institute for Water Research has been working extensively on marine ecosystem services valuation, blue growth and marine-coastal ecosystem restoration. Background on Environmental Economy. The Norwegian Institute for Water Research is also working on marine and coastal ecosystem accounting and policy uptake of ecosystem accounting for example in the Oslofjord. The team's work was presented our work on the recent GOAP meeting (Global Ocean Accounts Partnership). Dr. Chen has worked on the Turpus project on combining agricultural, fishery, including the ocean economy and on blue financing for restoration. Furthermore, she has worked on climate change on the EU 2020 Project and the impact cost on the marine ecosystem and is currently working on the ecosystem accounting. Her e-mail is: Wenting.chen@niva.no

Dr. Ștefan Cibian, Member of the Board and Executive Director of the Făgăraș Research Institute (Romania) (<http://icf-fri.org>) and **President of NGO FOND** (<http://www.fondromania.org>). FOND organizes the Black Sea NGO Forum which brings together civil society organizations from around the Black Sea. They are interested in collaborating on issues related to the Black Sea and bridging more what is produced through research with community actions and civil society organizations. He expressed the interest of FOND for collaboration and he emphasized in the need for a much broader discussion about the Black Sea narrowly focused on the Sea and its surrounding communities. Finally, he concluded that “we need to find a way to engage discussions within the local communities regarding the well-being of the Black Sea”. You may find out more about FOND: <http://www.fondromania.org> and the Black Sea NGO Forum: <https://blackseango.org>. Contact e-mail: stefan.cibian@icf-fri.org

Dr. Aimilia Drougas, Co-Founder and Researcher at ARION. ARION's major scope as an East Mediterranean organisation is networking professionals towards a sustainable marine biodiversity. They train, educate and study populations and health matters of marine mammals and their habitat issues or threats, catacean strandings and sightings databanks as well as tissue and genetic databank. You can find out more at: www.arion.org.gr or by e-mailing Dr. Drougas at: adrougas@gmail.com

Maiya Suyunchaliyeva, PhD student at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Coordinator of Ban Ki-moon Institute for Sustainable Development in Kazakhstan. She focused on three topics: International Cooperation, Research and Model United Nations for younger generations. They aid young researchers take their projects globally. They invite international professors who share their experience, leadership skills and soft skills to help youth develop these skills. She personally works on SDG4, by the realization of a social education project oriented to young people who wish to grow and work on their professional skills, SDG9 and SDG11, mainly on the improvement of tourism.

Prof. Stella Tsani, University of Ioannina (Greece). Prof. Tsani is leading the work on the factsheets on blue economy and on the place of the Mediterranean in the EU Green Deal for the MED2050 foresight exercise coordinated by Plan Bleu (https://med2050.org/trombinoscope/?lang=en&fbclid=IwAR1Pzs2fXJpIX_wZX2EpcN51pN46K5KpGm48sX9ExGkHLU6ajbZHAnXbXAU). She is working on subjects of sustainable

resource exploration in the Mediterranean sea and beyond (e.g. Caspian or the Arctic: see our recent publication here <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/bse.2698>), on marine energy resources, on energy transition and its implications for just transition in the labour markets (indicative policy brief related to the MED region here: <https://www.femise.org/en/slideshow-en/covid-19-med-brief-no-17-energy-transition-sustainability-and-labour-market-policies-implications-and-recommendations-for-the-south-mediterranean-countries/>).

Dr. Georgios Papayiannis, Lecturer at the Section of Mathematics of Hellenic Naval Academy. Dr. Papayiannis said that the SDSN SEAs Initiative “is an excellent initiative” and that he would be happy to contribute to issues related to risk modeling and assessment, robust decision making and probabilistic modeling.

Prof. Dr. Gülgün Kayakutlu, Istanbul Technical University (ITU) Energy Institute (Turkey). The Energy Institute has projects for applying Optimisation techniques and Artificial Intelligence for Energy Systems and Sustainability. She refereed that she and Prof. Özgür Kayalica have been the pioneers to start the initiative Artificial Intelligence for Energy and Sustainability (AIES) work group as part of IFIP. The aim of this group is to make the young AI fan from Academia, Private Sector and Public Sector to Collaborate providing solutions for the Energy and Sustainability. You can find more information about the 1st Conference of IFIP regarding here: <https://wrconference.wixsite.com/aiesworkshop>. You can get in touch with Prof. Kayakutlu at: kayakutlu@itu.edu.tr and Prof. Kayalica at: kayalica@itu.edu.tr

Dr. Sushanta Kumar Mahapatra, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Department of Science Economics (DSE), University of Bologna, (Italy) (European Commission Erasmus Mundus fellowship) & Assoc. Professor at the Department of Economics, IBS Hyberabad (India). Dr. Sushanta Kumar Mahapatra expressed his willingness to contribute to the Initiative from Asian perspectives. Contact e-mails: sushanta.mahapatra@gmail.com, sushanta.mahapatra@ibsindia.org

CIVIL SOCIETY

Simone Cresti, Manager of SDSN Mediterranean, referred to the importance of collaboration and that SDSN Mediterranean is open for collaboration. SDSN Mediterranean leads the [Plastic Busters](#) (Interreg-MED) project, which aims to enable to assess the amount, sources, pathways, distribution convergence areas and effects of marine litter on biota as well as mitigate and reduce the impact of marine litter in the Mediterranean Sea.

Mr. Paul Holthus, President and CEO, World Ocean Council, presented the World Ocean Council (WOC). The World Ocean Council (WOC) is the global Blue Economy Business and Investment Organization that brings together all of the ocean industry (fisheries, aquaculture, energy, ports etc.) as long as the supporting ecosystem of cheap building, fuels, maritime, electronic etc. along with the investment, insurance and maritime legal community. The WOC works with more than 35,000+ business and investment stakeholders from around the world and across the sectors. They are partners in many European projects related to the Blue Economy/Ocean Sustainable Development and would be happy to bring the private sector

involvement to the SDSN SEAs Initiative and related projects. Find out more at: www.oceancouncil.org or e-mail at: paul.holthus@oceancouncil.org

Dr. Thanos Smanis, Independent Blue Economy Consultant. Dr. Smanis participates in different EU Assistance Mechanisms on Blue Growth for different sea basins (WestMed AM-<https://www.westmed-initiative.eu/>, Black Sea AM-<https://blackseablueeconomy.eu/>) and on MSP (EU MSP Platform - <https://www.msp-platform.eu/>). He particularly referred to the intent of the assistant mechanisms of the Commission to bring closer the stakeholders of Blue Economy by establishing National Hubs in each country, thus it would be important to aid these National Hubs in the Initiative.

Stefanos Papadosifos, Program development manager at ECOGENIA. Mr. Papadosifos referred to ECOGENIA, a new NGO dedicated to promoting sustainability through civic engagement, training and employment opportunities for young people in Greece.

PUBLIC AND REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

Sofia Cornalli, Political Researcher at the Parliamentary Assembly of Mediterranean (PAM). PAM is an international organization which gathers 34 members across the Euro-Mediterranean region. She emphasized on the need to create cohesive policies across the Mediterranean that are science-based and evidence-based. PAM operates on Human rights, Security and Humanitarian Issues, focuses on economic and environmental cooperation. Climate change is at the top of their agenda. She referred to the need to bridge science policy and policy making. PAM offers a platform for the purposes of this Initiative. Find out more at: <https://www.pam.int/>

Mr. Dawid Lasek, Secretary General of the Association of Carpathian Euroregion. Mr. Lasek referred to the importance of cooperation and that the Association is open to participate in the drafting of the report. He specifically emphasized the importance of idea sharing, potentials linking and creating a common future. Finally, he talked about the 3Seas Initiative (<https://www.3seas.eu/>), an initiative that brings together 12 EU Member States between the Baltic, Black and Adriatic seas: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, aiming at economic growth, greater interest among investors, energy security, geopolitics, smart connectivity and achieving climate goals.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Theocharis Vlachopanagiotis, Chief Executive Officer Rhoé Urban Technologies. Rhoé is a startup developing software for the intersection of the energy and mobility sectors. Its team has been working with Mediterranean Ports in optimizing and reducing their energy emissions in the scope of an INTERREG Project. Currently they work on the Current Direct project (<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/963603>), which concerns the creation of large capacity batteries for inland waterways. In the context of this project, they are exploring the possibility of extending this technology to shore-to-shore transport in Greek ports and organizations. You

may find out more about Rhoé at: <https://rhoe.gr/> or get in touch with Mr. Vlachopanagiotis at t.vlachopanagiotis@rhoe.gr or <https://www.linkedin.com/in/theocharisvlachopanagiotis/> .

Georgios Karakatsanis, Co-Founder & CEO of EVOTROPIA Ecological Finance Architectures P.C.

Mr. Karakatsanis, representing the green-fintech startup community, talked about EVOTROPIA and offered their expertise on natural capital valuation methods - with focus on its forms that have to do with the hydrosphere. EVOTROPIA considers ports as vital hubs for the transformation of the global “Blue Circular Economy” network and introduces a new “blue” business and financial engineering models supported by advanced data analytics. You may find out more at: www.evotropia.com

Elia Nikitopoulou, External Affairs Officer of BlueCycle. Ms. Nikitopoulou, referred to BlueCycle, a venture dedicated to the recycling and upcycling of marine plastic waste, focusing on plastic fishing and shipping equipment. Based on the principles of circular economy, BlueCycle takes a holistic approach against the problem of marine plastic pollution. Through a rigorous and innovative program, our company deals with all stages of production, from material sourcing and processing to the design and distribution of final sustainable products. Research is one of the main focus areas of BlueCycle, regarding the development of standard procedures for recycling marine plastic waste and of new products. You can find more at: <https://bluecycle.com/> or by sending an e-mail at: info@bluecycle.com

Furthermore, the meeting was supported by **Lydia Papadaki**, Manager UN SDSN Greece and **Charis Stavridis**, Manager UN SDSN Black Sea and joined by several experts, professionals and scientists from all around the world, as follows:

- **Dr. Ebum Akinsete**, Senior researcher, ATHENA RC
- **Dr. Thomas Alexopoulos**, Assistant Professor, Director E-Cube Lab, University of Peloponnese
- **Prof. Stella Apostolaki**, Environmental Studies Program Coordinator, Department of Science and Mathematics, Chair of Academic Advisory Board of the Center of Excellence for Sustainability, American College of Greece (DEREE)
- **Dr. Robert Aps**, Associate Professor, Head of Marine Systems Department, University of Tartu, Estonian Marine Institute
- **Evangelia Arvaniti**, Student-Mini MBA in Energy Management
- **Prof. Simone Bastianoni**, University of Siena
- **Dr. Juan Blanco**, Vice President of Design, Architecture and Urbanism, ClearValue
- **Dr. Christina Christou**, Associate Professor, Open University of Cyprus
- **Dr. Tine Compennolle**, Assistant Professor, University of Antwerp
- **Nic Craig**, Ocean Finance Project Manager, Green Digital Finance Alliance
- **Dr. Sara Cunha**, Researcher, LAQV-REQUIMTE
- **Berj Dekramanjian**, Researcher/PhD candidate, Universitat Pompeu Fabra / Mosquito Alert
- **Eren Deliaslan**, Research Assistant, Istanbul Technical University
- **Dr. Manu Dube**, Assistant Professor, Information Technology, Yeditepe University
- **Dr. Busmachi Eugenia**, Associate Professor Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova

- **Dr. Angeliki Fotiadou**, Research Associate, AUTH, School of Architecture & CERTH, CPERI, Natural Resources & Renewable Energies Lab
- **Tassos Fragos**, General Manager, University of Geneva
- **Dr. Alexandros Gasparatos**, Associate Professor, University of Tokyo
- **Dr. Fulvio Giugliano**, Referente Cluster Blu Italian Growth, Regione Campania
- **Alice Guittard**, Researcher, ATHENA RC
- **Denizhan Güven**, Research Assistant, Istanbul Technical University
- **Prof. Alexandra Harrington**, Albany Law School
- **Aizada Ismailova**, Project Manager, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan
- **Myrsini Karakasoglou**, Sustainability consultant
- **Prof. Theofanis Karambas**, Coastal Engineering, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)
- **Tina Karne**, CEO, Sustory
- **Dr. Clio Kenterelidou**, Research Scientist, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Faculty of Economic and Political Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)
- **Despina Kenteroglou**, MSc Student, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- **Argiro Kokogiannaki**, Developer, ATHENA RC
- **Panagiota Koltsida**, Research Associate / S/W Engineer, ATHENA RC
- **Andrianna Kopania**, Research Assistant, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- **Dr. Hariton Korizis**, Board Advisor BeyondCSR
- **Dr. Georgios Kotoulas**, Researcher, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR)
- **Professor Emeritus Yannis Krestenitis**, Coastal Engineering & Oceanography, AUTH
- **Maria Lentoudi**, Manager, UN SDSN Europe
- **Dijana Likar**, Head of Department, Institute for Research in Environment, Civil Engineering and Energy
- **Vasileios Liogkas**, Policy Officer European Commission
- **Dr. Eva Loukogeorgaki**, Associate Professor of Marine Structures, AUTH
- **Natalia Manola**, Research Associate, ATHENA RC
- **Dr. Helena Maragou**, Dean of School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, The American College of Greece The American College of Greece
- **Anastasia Ntavou**, Researcher/PhD Can, University of Athens
- **Matej Opatrny**, Researcher, Charles University Environment Centre
- **Eliza Panagiotidou**, Founder and Managing Director, Urban Camel
- **Prof. Andreas Papandreou**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, co-chair UN SDSN Greece
- **Anastasios Patrikakos**, Technology Transfer Officer, ATHENA RC
- **Prof. Giovanni Pieropepe**, Coordinator of Task Force Univ. Napoli Federico II Blue Growth, University of Naples
- **Angelos Plataniotis**, Insurance Supervisor, Bank of Greece
- **Dr. Dimitris Politikos**, Research Associate Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR)
- **Prof. Cherif Sammari**, GSO-BlueMed, Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM)
- **Dr. Alexandros Sikalidis**, Academic Scholar, International Hellenic University

- **George Soulos**, Manager, Data Consultants SA
- **Vasilis Stenos**, Founder & Researcher, Solmeyea
- **Eleni Toli**, Project Manager / Research Associate, ATHENA RC
- **Dr. Konstantinos Topouzelis**, Assistant Professor, University of the Aegean
- **Constantinos Triantafillou**, Head of Strategy & Development, Hellenic Marine Environment Protection Association (HELMEPA)
- **Maria Tsiadi**, Sustainability Consultant
- **Sam Vanhoof**, Manager, UN SDSN Europe
- **Dareia-Nefeli Vourdoumpa**, National Blue flag Director, Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature
- **Dr. Stefanos Xenarios**, Associate Professor, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan

The Initiative aims at producing an annual report on Technological, Economic and Social Transition Pathways of accelerating the systemic transformation required for the implementation of Agenda 2030 in our Seas and Oceans, including Science-Technology and Innovation-Policy interface agenda setting, model design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The report will be structured as follows. The first section will set the ground for discussion on how we can achieve an SDG-based Blue Growth in the Euro-Asian Seas will take place investigating the connections of the European Green Deal with the other Asian policies, how these policies map the SDGs and how the SDGs can be operational for the sustainability transition. In the second section, we will define the technological pathways for Sustainability transition exploring existing and forthcoming technologies and how these can be accelerated through innovation mentoring and incubating. The third section will focus on the economics, investments and the financing of these pathways. On the 21st of April, the EU launched the financial roots that will support the EU taxonomy, which identifies the sustainability that can be financed. The fourth section will showcase the societal benefits, such as job creation and equity consideration as well as the environmental benefits and how investments can mitigate the climate change effects. The final section will be comprised of participatory workshops seeking to engage the stakeholders in this transition and provide clear and explicit policy recommendations.

You can find the recording of the kick-off meeting at this [link](#).



Figure 1 - Prof. Koundouri presenting the UN SDSN SEAs Initiative



Figure 2 - Photo taken at the kick-off meeting of the UN SDSN SEAs Initiative

UN SDSN Blue Growth Initiative
Monday 26.04.2021(10-12 CET)

TIME	TOPIC
10:00-10:15	Registration and Welcome
10:15-10:30	Introduction to the Blue Growth Initiative
10:30-10:45	Keynote: The Blue Growth Initiative: A New Paradigm for Sustainable Development
10:45-11:00	Panel Discussion: The Role of the Blue Growth Initiative in the Sustainable Development Goals
11:00-11:15	Break
11:15-11:30	Panel Discussion: The Role of the Blue Growth Initiative in the Sustainable Development Goals
11:30-11:45	Panel Discussion: The Role of the Blue Growth Initiative in the Sustainable Development Goals
11:45-12:00	Panel Discussion: The Role of the Blue Growth Initiative in the Sustainable Development Goals



Prof. Phoebe Koundouri
AUJES, ATHENA-RC,
Co-chair UN SDSN Greece & Europe



Prof. Nikolaos Theodossiou
AUTH, Chair UN SDSN Black Sea



Haris Papageorgiou
Research Director ATHENA-RC

SHORT INTRODUCTIONS

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

CIVIL SOCIETY

PUBLIC & REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

PRIVATE SECTOR

Figure 3 - Snapshot from the MIRO board