



RESTORE OUR OCEAN & WATERS

Concrete solutions for our greatest challenges

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The EU Mission event 'Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030' - Charting a Regional Course for the Mission Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030: Fostering Sustainable Innovations in the Centro Region, Portugal - took place on 4 June 2024 at the Centro Regional Coordination and Development Commission (CCDR).

Co-organised by the CCDRC and the University of Aveiro, in collaboration with the A-AAGORA and BlueMissionAA projects, the aim of this event was to mobilise citizens and key regional stakeholders, with a particular focus on the business sector, protected area managers and authorities in the Central Region of Portugal, to actively participate in achieving the objectives set by the Mission, in particular in co-developing innovative solutions in line with the Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3 Centro).

The event was opened with welcome speeches by the Vice-President of CCDRC, Alexandra Rodrigues, the Rector of the University of Aveiro, Paulo Jorge Ferreira, and the Head of Unit Ocean, Seas and Waters of the European Commission, Elisabetta Balzi.



In the plenary session, Elisabetta Balzi spoke about the opportunities offered by the Mission to develop local actions aimed at entrepreneurs, local government officials and citizens.

She mentioned the funding available and explained the importance of signing up to the Mission's Charter, a joint commitment to restoring our Ocean and Waters.





This was followed by the official signing of the Mission Charter by the CCDRC, the Portuguese Environment Agency (APA), the Port of Aveiro and the Intermunicipal Community of the Aveiro Region (CIRA). The University of Aveiro was also present at the ceremony, having already signed the Mission Charter in 2022.



During the day, there were four moderated panels with guest speakers and a question-and-answer session.

The first panel focused on **"How can the Mission support the sustainability goals of municipalities in the Centro Region? How are local authorities enabling the implementation of the Mission's objectives in Europe?"**

José Moutinho (AIR Centre, BlueMissionAA project) was the moderator. The guests were Nelson Silva (APA Ambiente), Alcina Costa (ADAE Mar2030) and Soraia Carvalho (Cascais City Council).



The second panel discussed **"What can the Mission offer the private sector? How can the private sector develop while pursuing the objectives of the Mission and supporting the development of regional smart specialisation?"**

Valerie de Liedekerke (AIR Centre, BlueMissionAA project) moderated the panel, which included speakers José Moutinho (AIR Centre), Nuno Lourenço (CoLAB +Atlantic / CEiiA), and Ana Rita Ribeiro (Colab B2E Blue Bioeconomy).



The third panel focused on **"What funding solutions and opportunities does the Mission offer for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)? How have MPAs contributed to the achievement of the Mission's objectives in Europe?"**

The panel was chaired by José Moutinho and included Luz Paramio (FRCT Açores), Catarina Eira (CPRAM-ECOMARE/UA) and João Monteiro (MARE-Madeira, CLIMAREST project).



The fourth and final panel discussed **“How can the Mission support initiatives by regional authorities, municipalities and/or NGOs to involve citizens, raise awareness, protect and restore our oceans and waters?”**

Ana Lillebø (CESAM/UA, A-AAGORA project) moderated the panel, which included speakers Ricardo Ribeiro (Ocean Alive), Nuno Miguel Costa (Ílhavo Maritime Museum) and José João (Figueira da Foz Salt House).



Highlights of the event:

The event was attended by around 70 participants (41% men and 59% women) from both the public sector (e.g. academia, inter-municipal communities, town and parish councils) and the private sector (e.g. ports, companies, Co-Labs, training organisations), associations and NGOs. The speakers expressed their experience and shared, in discussion with the audience, evidence of the activities carried out in a multisectoral context, with special emphasis on the involvement of local communities. The first panel emphasised the importance of working at different scales, from local/municipal to regional and national; of getting to know the territory and its communities. In the environmental component, the importance of considering the aquatic continuum of rivers and streams in coastal areas and their connection to the sea was also recognised. In the social and governance component, the importance of accepting differences and including different perspectives in co-creation processes was emphasised, as was the importance of conflict management. In the second panel, restoration actions were discussed as an opportunity to achieve the Mission's objectives. Sustainability was discussed from the environmental, social and financial perspectives, with emphasis on the difficulty of communicating existing financial mechanisms (opportunities are not always easy to understand and the business fabric is diverse, with a big difference between SMEs and large companies). The need for mechanisms to reduce the risk of stock upscaling was also emphasised. In the third panel, the importance of co-creation processes for MPAs was reiterated, involving stakeholders, in particular the fishing industry, and the importance of educating and raising awareness among tourists about MPAs and their environmental and socio-economic value, as well as the need to make them compatible with other activities. The existence of monitoring plans was identified as essential for informed decision-making (science-backed policies), as was the existence of communication plans to promote ocean values and literacy. In the fourth panel, informal education involving the local community as a source of alternative income was recognised as one of the mechanisms for preserving the natural heritage, cultural identity and lifestyle of local communities. The role of museums and local entities in passing on knowledge (traditions and customs, arts and crafts) was also highlighted, with an emphasis on multidisciplinary educational programmes. The word **'cooperation'** was recognised as a cross-cutting element in the enhancement and sustainable development of the territory.



BLUEMISSION AA

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