

ERRIN INPUT TO OCEAN & WATERS MISSION IMPLEMENTATION CHARTER

25 February 2022

Following ERRIN members' invitation to and participation in the European Commission's co-creation event on the Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters Implementation Charter on 8th February 2022, the network and its Blue Economy Working Group leaders are pleased to provide the following written input on the Charter.

Basin approach

We are concerned that the basin-approach is being too strictly enforced across the Ocean and Waters Mission, including in the Charter. During previous ERRIN discussions on the Mission, as well as during breakout sessions on 8th February, there was consensus that the ambitions of the Mission are interesting to all geographical basins, regardless of the thematic area that has been assigned to them. For this reason, we feel it is important that everything is done to maximise exchange between basins and thematic divisions. This is also important for ensuring that broader water issues are prioritised and not just sea based/maritime activities. Beyond this, we would like to see a commitment to cooperation with other EU Missions, such as Adaptation, as many of the challenges and solutions are likely to overlap and we should avoid repeating efforts when they can be streamlined.

Providing access to authoritative knowledge for restoring the ocean and waters

What is meant by the choice of the word 'authoritative' in this section of the Charter? The implication seems to be that all research, data and results in the Mission Ocean Knowledge Centre will be 'sound'. We hope this is a nod to a promise that research results shared in the Centre will be validated via peer-review but there is concern that the use of 'authoritative knowledge' excludes findings from citizen science activities. Citizen science is listed as a core tool in the Mission implementation plan and we would like to see its role in this area of the Charter to be made clearer.

Role of citizens, regions & other stakeholders

ERRIN advocates for the engagement of quadruple helix stakeholders in research and innovation. This means breaking silos so that public and local authorities, academia and research organisations, industry and citizens are all involved in every step of innovative processes. As indicated above, the role of citizens in this and all Missions is important and valuable but it is not a replacement for all stakeholders within a region from being engaged, a priority that is missing from the Charter. We also think that there should also be less focus on informing citizens and increasing their awareness of the challenges at hand but instead specific emphasis on involving citizens in the generation and implementation of solutions. Regions are at the forefront of actions towards climate neutrality, they have competence on territorial and maritime spatial planning, managing structural funds and recovery resources and represent whole ecosystems of innovation.

Who can sign the Charter?

It is difficult to foresee how network organisations such as ERRIN can commit to the Charter, even though we wish to support and mobilise different regions and their research and innovation ecosystems to meet the Mission's goals. The Charter should go further to promote community

building by encouraging stakeholders that are currently off the radar to sign and make it possible for organisations like ERRIN to sign so that they can ratify their community's commitment.

ERRIN's Blue Economy WG leaders:

Aki Ishiwa, **Emilia Romagna Region - ART-ER Attractiveness Research Territory (IT)**

Martine Elise Farstad, **Agder County Brussels Office (NO)**

Saara Nuotio-Coulon, **Turku-Southwest Finland EU Office (FI)**

Pernille Dagø - **South Denmark European Office (DK)**, currently represented by Helle Bech Sørensen-Hylle

For more information:

Pirita Lindholm, ERRIN Director, pirita.lindholm@errin.eu

Hilary Webb, Policy & Communications Officer, hilary.webb@errin.eu