



Commissioner Karmenu VELLA
Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Meeting with Archbishop Alain Paul Charles Lebeaupin

17 March
16:15 -17:15

BERL 08/275

Member of Cabinet responsible: Andras Inotai
Member accompanying: Andras Inotai
DG participants:tbc
(incl. contact numbers)

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Briefing prepared by:

-MARE B1

INTRODUCTION

SCENE SETTER

You are meeting Archbishop Alain Paul Charles Lebeaupin. You will have an opportunity to inform the Archbishop of the latest actions the EU has been taking to protect the oceans; as well as to convey an invitation to His Holiness to Our Ocean Conference 2017 [invitation letter co-signed by HRVP and yourself to be handed over at the meeting]

Pope Francis, in his encyclical on the environment and human ecology, *Laudato Si*, highlights the importance of the oceans, including as a source of food. He stresses the challenges the oceans are facing, in particular climate change impacts, ocean acidification, loss of biodiversity, the bleaching of coral reefs, as well as marine litter. He goes on to **state the fragmentation of the current governance system and the lack of strict mechanisms of regulation, control and penalisation**. He believes that the “open seas” need “*an agreement on systems of governance for the whole range of so-called “global commons”*” (paragraph 174). He also recalls the importance of strengthening ocean research.

Archbishop Lebeaupin may also inform you of the issue of forced labour and trafficking in the fisheries sector. The Vatican is committed to take action on this global challenge. On 21st November 2016, FAO and the Vatican organised a joint event, in which they called for an intensified international push to stamp out human rights' abuses in the world's fishing industry — including trafficking of people and forced labour — as well as an end to IUU fishing. Ambassador Tombinski of the EU Delegation in Rome participated in this event. You can welcome this initiative and refer to our ongoing IUU dialogues, in particular with Thailand.

OBJECTIVES

- To present our agenda for the oceans and highlight its alignment with the Vatican's views on the need to protect the marine environment.
- To convey an invitation to His Holiness to Our Ocean Conference 2017.

SPEAKING POINTS

OCEAN GOVERNANCE

- The oceans have increasingly been a central part of the international debate on achieving sustainable development. With the support of the EU, a specific target on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans was agreed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We now need to deliver on these commitments.
- I fully share His Holiness' words in his Laudato Si encyclical that *"fragmentation of the current governance system and the lack of strict mechanisms of regulation, control and penalisation"*.
- That is also why, in the EU, we have recently proposed an agenda for the future of our oceans and seas. Improving international ocean governance, including at regional level, is a priority for us. The agenda for our oceans proposes EU action at international level to ensure that oceans are secure, safe, clean and sustainably managed.
- Our proposals cover three priority areas:
- First, improving the international ocean governance framework – promoting a clear, comprehensive set of rules for everyone to follow.

- Second, reducing pressures on the oceans and creating the conditions for a sustainable blue economy. In this context, we are proposing action to address marine litter; mitigate climate change impacts on the oceans; strengthen the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; promote maritime spatial planning; and expand marine protected areas;
- And, third, strengthening international ocean research and data.
- We also believe in the importance of the social dimension of ocean governance, including for fisheries, and support your push to encourage further ratifications of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention and the Port State Measures Agreement. We would like to see a level playing field established with regard to working conditions in this sector.

OUR OCEAN CONFERENCE

- We are very happy to see that the interest in ocean affairs has increased tremendously. The series of Our Ocean Conferences have helped to channel major ocean commitments made by governments, industry, NGOs and foundations, providing an important platform.

- We are glad to inform you that the EU will also host the 4th edition of the Our Ocean Conference on 5-6 October 2017 in Malta.
- As in previous years, the conference will be a high-level, invitation-only event. The focus will be on the announcement and follow-up of initiatives and new and measurable commitments, mainly in four areas: marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, and climate-related impacts on the ocean.
- The presence and the words of His Holiness at this event would no doubt act as a major catalyst for such commitments by participants. Therefore, together with HRVP Mogherini, we have the honour to invite His Holiness to the Our Ocean Conference in Malta on 5-6 October 2017

DEFENSIVE POINTS

What is the link between Our Ocean 2017 and the SDG14 implementation Conference in NYC organised by Sweden and Fiji?

The SDG14 conference in June, and the Our Ocean conference hosted by the EU in October, are the most important events for oceans this year, demonstrating the importance accorded by the global community to oceans issues from the perspective of sustainable development.

Both conferences should be seen as mutually reinforcing and complementary, and will help to maintain continuous focus on oceans. We will need all the commitments possible to contribute to safe and sustainable oceans.

To complement the commitments made at the SDG Conference, the annual Our Ocean Conferences aims to inspire and empower a new generation of political leaders, entrepreneurs, scientists and civil society to identify solutions and commit to concrete actions for safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans. The Our Ocean 2017 conference will have a dynamic, nimble two-day programme featuring a number of high-level speakers that will focus on four main themes: marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, and climate-related impacts on the ocean.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ocean Governance

The joint communication on international ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans (JOIN(2016)49 final) was adopted on 10th November 2016. This initiative follows the mandate given to the Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Mr. Vella, by the President of the European Commission and the political priorities of the Commission, such as "Jobs and Growth" and "A stronger Global Actor". The joint communication proposes 14 sets of actions to be delivered in the next years, starting in 2017.

The objective of the joint communication is to secure an effective and coherent contribution of the EU and its Member States to increasing global efforts towards healthy, clean, secure, safe and sustainable managed oceans. This is essential to allow the use of ocean resources, and Europe's very competitive maritime economy, to continue to yield economic benefits in terms of jobs and growth whilst maximising the health of the world's oceans. This requires action at global, regional and bilateral levels, by all EU actors. It will also require coherent action in all relevant policy areas with an external "oceans" dimension, such as environment, security, development, research, trade, and foreign affairs.

The three priority areas identified in the communication are: first, improving the international ocean governance framework; second, reducing pressures on the oceans and creating the conditions for a sustainable blue economy; and third strengthening international ocean research and data.

Our Ocean 2017 Conference

Commissioner Vella announced to host the 2017 edition of the 'Our Ocean Conference' in Malta in autumn 2017. This conference aims at increasing awareness on the need for better ocean governance to secure its resources and services for the future, including the need to mitigate climate change. The first Our Ocean Conference was hosted by the US on the initiative of Secretary of State J. Kerry in 2014. In 2015 it was hosted by Chile. These conferences are a forum for tangible commitments by policy makers and stakeholders around the world.

The 2017 edition will in principle follow this formula but possibly with a different geographical focus in view of our geo-political priorities, in particular in Africa, and possibly will have a wider scope in substance beyond pollution, marine protection and fisheries, also in view of our comprehensive strategy for blue growth.

The conference is set to:

- Inspire a new generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, scientists and civil society to identify solutions and commit to actions for safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans;
- Seek commitment not only from government representatives, but also from broader horizons¹;
- Address additional challenges such as maritime, economic or environmental security, migration and capacity building;
- Track progress of previous commitments and celebrate their completion; and
- Continue to complement and drive other international efforts, such as delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals under Agenda 2030.

In February 2017, the official website² and a video³ have been successfully launched, which generated interest around the conference using social media tools.

The past three editions have generated commitments worth more than €8.6 billion.

¹ business leaders in ocean energy, blue biotechnology, aquaculture and fisheries, technologists, plastics producers, waste management companies, retailers and producers, financing institutions, the research community and civil society, including philanthropies and NGOs

² <http://ourocean2017.org>

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3UII9TbvUk>

ANNEX I

CV OF ARCHBISHOP ALAIN PAUL CHARLES LEBEAUPIN

Born: 1945.03.02 (France)

Ordained priest: 1975.06.28

Consecrated Bishop: 1999.01.06

Titular Archbishop of Vico Equense

Apostolic Nuncio to **European Union**

Representative for **European Communities** (1996 – 1998.12.07)

Apostolic Nuncio to Ecuador (1998.12.07 – 2005.01.14)

Titular Archbishop of Vico Equense (1998.12.07 – ...)

Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya (2005.01.14 – 2012.06.23)

Permanent Observer to United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
(2005.01.14 – 2012.06.23)

Apostolic Nuncio to **European Union** (2012.06.23 – ...)

