



Newsletter

Introduction

"Blue Career Centre of Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea (MENTOR)" is a project, implemented by a consortium of seven partners from Cyprus (University of Cyprus, coordinator; Marine Institute of the Eastern Mediterranean; Cyprus Chamber of Industry and Commerce), Greece (National Technical University of Athens; Agricultural University of Athens), Bulgaria (Marine Cluster Bulgaria), and Romania (Constanta Maritime University). Neighboring non-

EU countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey are involved as observers.

The project started in March 2017 and the activities will be carried out during a period of two years (1.3.2017-28.2.2019). It is co-funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. The kick-off meeting of the partners took place in Athens on 22 March 2017.

Rationale about MENTOR

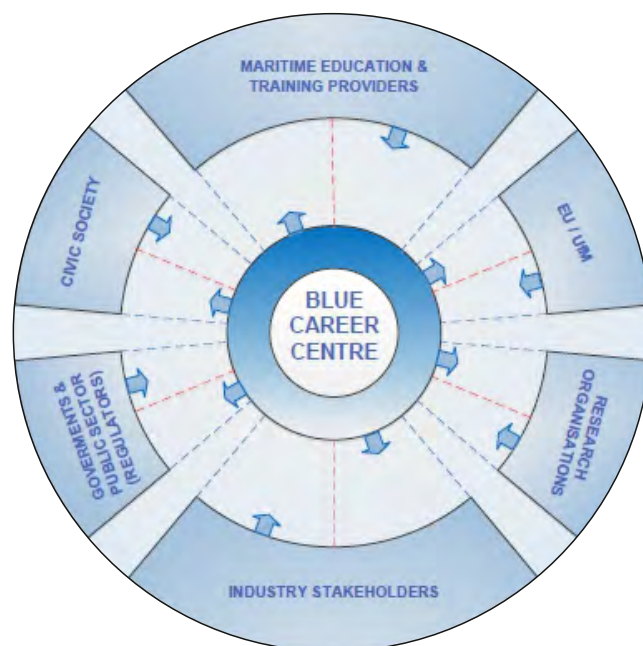
The EU Blue Growth Strategy identified and ranked marine and maritime activities of the highest potential for future growth and jobs perspectives in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. In order to achieve sustainable growth, the Blue Economy needs highly qualified and skilled professionals. Many Blue Sectors are experiencing difficulties in finding the eligible employees and these difficulties are expected to continue in the foreseeable future. The 2014 Communication from the Commission "Innovation in the Blue Economy: realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth" pointed out that the shortage of a skilled workforce is one of the main obstacles to the further development of the blue economy. To address this issue it is of crucial importance to bring industry and education/training providers together to promote and support the development of career opportunities in the blue economy.

General objective

The general objective of the project is to set up a regional platform – the Blue Career Centre - promoting the dialogue between business stakeholders, education & training institutions, research organizations, policy makers, the civic society as well as the EU and the Union for the Mediterranean allowing them to jointly develop and carry out measures to close the skill gap, tackle unemployment and make "blue careers" more attractive to the young people of the area. The project aims at attracting young people and experienced workers to key Blue Sectors in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea.

Blue Career Centre of Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea (BCC)

The Centre will act as a facilitator and mediator of change, encouraging the blue sector industries & businesses to take on leadership roles and see beyond immediate and individual company interests. This way the Centre will respond to the major concerns related to the skills gap and the shortage of qualified professionals in the respective sectors.



The project partners and observers will join forces in order to:

- Attract higher education graduates or persons with vocational/technical qualifications to maritime professions through targeted and innovative education and/or training initiatives (including career guidance);
- Offer mentoring and career guidance to students (age 15 - 18) for Key Blue Sectors in the region;
- Retrain and up-skill workers employed in other sectors and/or people currently unemployed for a job in the Blue Economy;
- Diversify and expand the skills of people currently employed in the Blue Economy to progress in their careers and/or to facilitate their mobility to other maritime jobs.

A Blue Career Centre Secretariat will be established in Cyprus with representations in Greece, Bulgaria and Romania.

Maritime sectors in the focus of BCC

An analysis of the needs of the local and regional labour market and of the industry, including cross-border level needs has been performed and four Marine and Maritime Economic Activities have been selected as of strategic importance in the Eastern-Mediterranean and Black-Sea regions:

- Maritime Transport (shipping, ports, shipbuilding and ship repair)
- Marine Aquaculture
- Cruise Tourism
- Offshore Oil and Gas

Maritime transport

Greece and Cyprus rank 2nd and 3rd in the European Union (EU) (in terms of GT) after Malta, whereas the Greek flag fleet ranks seventh internationally (in terms of dwt). The Greek owned fleet under EU flags accounts for 46.72% of the EU dwt tonnage. Moreover, Greek owners control 18.51% of the world tanker fleet (crude oil tankers), 23.32% of the world bulk carrier fleet and 13.81% of the world chemical and products tankers fleet in terms of dwt.

Cyprus is a major ship-management centre worldwide with a total of around 60 ship-management companies (several of these companies rank among the largest of their kind in the world) operating in its territory. Cyprus appears to be among the top five countries and territories in the world with the largest number of third party ship-management companies on its territory.



The perception of the maritime industry is that there is a desperate need for people to go to the sea and gain experience. People need to get the maritime education training, go to sea, stay at sea for a while or longer, gain those skills that are required and then become the officers that will operate and manage the ships for the companies. But it is not only that. Governments need these qualified people to staff their departments, military, coast guard, fisheries departments etc. These practical skills are currently being missed. There is a global need for officers at the sea. Especially on the technical side a lack is felt for university educated marine and maritime engineers and naval architects. The main driver is the prospects to build a maritime career.

There is a global current shortfall of about 16,500 maritime officers (2.1%), but the trend is increasing and projections foresee a need for an additional 147,500 officers by 2025 to service the world merchant fleet (BIMCO/ICS projections).

Marine aquaculture

Marine aquaculture is quite developed in Eastern

Mediterranean with Cyprus, Greece and Turkey producing 15% of the European aquaculture production and 80% of the seabass and seabream production (2014 data). The Eastern Mediterranean has competitive advantages compared to western Mediterranean for developing aquaculture.

The vision of the European Technology Platform predicts an increase of 305,000 tonnes (112%) in the period 2010-2030 for the Mediterranean.

Challenges to realise the vision for 2030, include: 1) Effective marine & coastal spatial planning; 2) Obtain robust fish, selected broodstock; 3) Disease control & prevention; 4) Ensure innovation, incorporate technological developments and best knowledge management and 5) Assure environmental sustainability.



Cruise tourism

The cruise product has become highly diversified and the cruise companies develop new itineraries, new concepts and vessels for all kind of tastes. The increasing demand for cruises in the Mediterranean basin is a fact that the Mediterranean market has to deal with. The Med market holds 75% of Europe's itineraries and is the most emerging cruise destination in Europe. This fact must be further communicated to people as it will be an important source of employment in the years to come.

Offshore oil and gas

There is also tremendous potential for positive developments in the EMS and BS due to the discovery of hydrocarbons in the Romanian and Cypriot EEZ as well as the wider Eastern Mediterranean region. Exploration in the BS had been limited and sporadic until 2012 when the huge Romanian well Domino-1 provided the largest discovery in the BS to date; 84 billion cubic meters of gas, in the country's block called Neptun. Comparable reserves on Bulgaria's sea shelf would go a long way towards ensuring Bulgaria's energy independence. The exploration of hydrocarbons and the development of offshore installations provide the blue economy with emerging opportunities in the region. Increasing exploration plans are foreseen for the Mediterranean region (in the Cypriot, Greek and Maltese continental shelves) as well as the Black Sea (Bulgarian and Romanian continental shelves). Oil and gas exploration or production also takes place in close vicinity of the EU, off the coasts of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Libya, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine. The sector is only now emerging in the region and needs to attract qualified personnel to ensure that skilled personnel will allow the smooth development of this Blue Industry in the region.

Expected results

To fulfill the main goal and specific objectives of the Blue Career Centre, at the end of the project, the following results are foreseen:

- Establishment of the Blue Career Centre of Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea Secretariat in Cyprus with representations in Greece, Bulgaria and Romania;
- Mapping of the provided maritime education and training in the Eastern Mediterranean (Greece and Cyprus) and Black Sea region (Bulgaria and Romania), including availability of infrastructure;
- Development of re-training schemes for blue professionals in the selected maritime sectors;
- Mentoring and career guidance to students (age 15-18) for the Blue sectors in schools in all participating countries;
- Re-training of blue professionals in the selected maritime sectors;
- Development of introductory e-learning courses for the selected maritime sectors;
- Inventory of available resources, such as maritime and engine simulators with the aim of sharing wherever feasible;

- Organization of Annual Blue Career Fairs (two in each participating country) EU;
- Mobility of students and staff within the region;
- A matching database for maritime professionals in the region will be established, in an effort to balance the demand and supply of maritime, aquaculture, and offshore oil and gas professionals in the region;
- Organization of the first Regional Conference of Maritime Education & Training providers to address the issue of harmonization of training programs.

The project partners envisioned that the successful operation of the first Blue Career Centre for the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea will set an example and model for all other sub-basins so that a European Network of Blue Career Centres may be established that will bring together all the stakeholders of the various European Marine and Maritime Clusters in the common effort to close the skill gap, tackle unemployment and make "blue careers" more attractive to the young people of Europe and its neighborhood.



Project partners

Cyprus - University of Cyprus
 Cyprus - Maritime Institute of Eastern Mediterranean
 Cyprus - Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry
 Greece - National Technical University of Athens
 Greece - Agricultural University of Athens
 Bulgaria - Marine Cluster Bulgaria
 Romania - Constanta Maritime University

Upcoming MENTOR or marine and maritime related Events / Career Fairs

(for more details on the events please visit project or partner's website)

October 2017 - Romania

November 2017- Bulgaria

November 2017- Cyprus

December 2017- Greece



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 AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS



Co-funded by the European Union, under the EASME project MENTOR, Grant Agreement EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.2/06/SI2.749365-MENTOR.

www.bluecareers.org