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Chairman's Report

This year again was dominated by the question: What will be the future role of EuroGOOS? What organisational structure is needed to fulfil this role and to meet the present and future challenges? Most of my activities were related to these issues.

1. Since the last annual meeting we held four Board meetings: in Brussels immediately after the annual meeting, in January in London, in May in Gdansk on the occasion of the European Maritime Day and in October in Sopot after the EuroGOOS Conference. The main subjects, we discussed, dealt with the future of EuroGOOS including the future legal structure of EuroGOOS and a relocation of the EuroGOOS Office, the preparation of the EuroGOOS Conference, the work plan for the EuroGOOS Office, the on-going activities on European level, and the preparation of the 2011 Annual Meeting. One of the problems we face at Board meetings is that due to other commitments not all members are present, though the dates for meetings are fixed already immediately after the annual meeting; that is deplorable in particular when far reaching decisions have to be prepared.
2. In addition I participated together with the Director in the work of the EGFEG. However, as it is up to the EuroGOOS members to decide about the future of EuroGOOS we confined ourselves to observing the discussions and giving advice when deemed necessary. Together with the EGFEG Chairman and the Director I had a meeting with the Secretary General of EUMETNET to learn from his experiences as concerns the establishment of an EIG. Following the EUMETNET example we mandated their Belgian lawyer to draft an EIG agreement for EuroGOOS. For this reason we had two meetings with him in Brussels and additionally discussed the drafting work by email. This resulted in a draft agreement which together with the EGFEG Report – after acceptance by the EuroGOOS Board – was submitted to the members for further consideration.
3. In preparation of the far reaching decisions which have to be taken at this year's Annual Meeting the Director and I offered our members to visit them for discussing the upcoming matters with heads and leading representatives of their institutions. We visited several of them, e.g. in Hamburg, Delft, London and Oslo.
4. As concerns the MyOcean Project I participated in the MyOcean User Workshop in Stockholm on 7/8 April 2011 and chaired one of the sessions. I continued in co-chairing the MyOcean Advisory Committee which had a meeting in Brussels on 26 September 2011 in Brussels. Among other items the meeting discussed the relations with users, in particular in the light of the outcome of the user workshop, and the plans to establish a European Centre for Ocean Monitoring and Forecasting (ECOMF). As regards ECOMF I felt myself in a difficult position as to date there does not exist a EuroGOOS position concerning this initiative.
5. Together with the Director and Kostas Nittis I am involved in the MARCOM+ project. This project aims at an integrated marine and maritime science and technology community by bringing together a partnership sustainable over the long term, involving existing networks and key partners. I attended the first MARCOM+ Open Forum on 25 November 2010 and participated in

the MARCOM+ Policy Interface Panel which met in Ijmuiden on 14 February 2011 and in Porto on 3 and 4 November 2011. The panel discussed what structure should be established for giving advice to the European science policy makers.

6. Again EuroGOOS participated in the European Maritime Day which was held in Gdansk on 19 and 20 May 2011. At this event EuroGOOS organised a workshop on “Oceanographic Services for the European Regions” which was chaired by me and offered a good opportunity to highlight the importance of oceanographic services and the role of EuroGOOS. The next European Maritime Day will be held in May 2012 in Gothenburg. I strongly recommend that EuroGOOS participates again and organises its own workshop as this is a valuable occasion to meet European decision makers and raise the visibility of our association.
7. Together with the Director I attended part of the 26th IOC Assembly in June. We were especially involved in the considerations about the future government structure of GOOS. We also participated in the 5th GOOS Regional Forum which took place in Sopot, Poland, on 3 October and was chaired by the EuroGOOS Director and Kostas Nittis. Representatives from most of the existing GOOS Regional Alliances participated. They agreed on the conclusion that these fora are quite valuable, in particular with regard to the establishment of a regional GOOS. EuroGOOS plays a leading role in this context.
8. I supported the Director in strengthening our contacts with the European Commission and other European bodies. Among other matters we had a meeting with the EEA to discuss a close cooperation with regard to in-situ measurements.
9. The main event was the 6th EuroGOOS Conference which was held in Sopot, Poland, from 4 to 6 October. The conference was a very successful event due to the very good organisation by the EuroGOOS Office and the Polish Institute of Oceanology. A great number of valuable presentations were made and quite intensely discussed. The Conference Proceedings will be published as soon as possible. In addition to this conference the Director and I participated in the Symposium “The Future of Operational Oceanography” which was organised by the BSH in Hamburg from 25 to 27 October.

Taking all in all my feeling has grown that the question about the future of EuroGOOS is more demanding than ever. On the European level a lot of initiatives are going on which present new challenges and need new answers:

- As concerns the establishment of a marine core service in the GMES framework the development of an ECOMF is under consideration. That raises the question about the role EuroGOOS should play in this context. We started a discussion on that on the occasion of the EuroGOOS Conference, but did not come to clear results. Should EuroGOOS take the lead? Or should that be done by the participating institutions outside EuroGOOS?
- The establishment of EMODNET is advancing and needs an organisational structure. Again the question about the role of EuroGOOS comes up.
- The EEA is taking over responsibilities relating to in-situ measurements. EEA has to cooperate with those institutions that are doing these measurements. Should EEA do that by collaborating with EuroGOOS or by direct contacts with those institutions?

Though EuroGOOS is more or less involved in these activities it is still very difficult to formulate a EuroGOOS position and to pursue it, as I do not really know what our members think about these matters. And besides that it is not clear whether our members’ view is shared by their responsible governments. In the light of this, a major weakness of EuroGOOS is becoming more and more evident: We are normally developing our ideas and views on a working level only, but we do not know about the more strategic and political views of the heads of our member institutions and the

governments. So we miss their backing. And I am not sure whether governments in their official deliberations on European level pursue the same ideas as we do. When we discuss these matters with colleagues from our members my feeling is that they often expect to hear from me and the Director what EuroGOOS should be and should do. But this cannot be answered by us. This has to be answered by the members. We are only executing their decisions. Our members must decide whether EuroGOOS is still needed and what they expect from this association. They must decide whether they want to have a variety of institutions dealing with aspects of operational oceanography on the European level including EuroGOOS, ECOMF, EuroArgo, but also EMODNET, EEA and EMSA. They have to decide about any hierarchy in the framework of these organisations and the need for coordination. These decisions cannot be taken on the working level, but they require the involvement of the heads and leading representatives of the member institutions. If they do not confirm a firm interest in EuroGOOS I have severe doubts whether EuroGOOS will have a future at all.