



All- Atlantic High-Level Conference

4 de junho 2021

Caro Presidente do Governo Regional dos Açores e prezado amigo José Manuel Bolieiro,

A special virtual greeting to Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

Prezado colega e amigo Manuel Heitor, Ministro da Ciência, Tecnologia e Ensino Superior,

Ministers and ministerial representatives; Angola, Cabo Verde, Angola, Austria, Brasil,

Secretários e secretários regionais do Governo dos Açores participants,

I want to start by acknowledging the All-Atlantic community involved in this conference for joining efforts toward innovative scientific insights and solutions to the future of our common ocean. The Atlantic, as a shared resource, with a long history of conflicts and greed upon its resources, calls for cooperation. The importance of scientific cooperation among Atlantic nations is now widely recognised.

In recent years the EC has signed two important declarations to promote that cooperation. The “Galway Statement”, in 2013, that envisages to engage North Atlantic countries in increasing the knowledge on the Atlantic and the Arctic. And the “Belém Statement”, signed in 2017, to promote Atlantic research and innovation in the South Atlantic. These statements were not dead wording and were clearly invigorate through several steps of which I highlight the transposition to the H2020 programme of some of its aims and objectives translated in funding mechanisms for projects and actions.

Yesterday I went to Fayal to take testimony of the preliminary results of a cruise led by the University of the Azores, involving an international team of researchers aboard of the Dutch RV Pelagia, funded by Eurofleets+ and developed under the scope of the Horizon 2000 project iAtlantic, a programme seeking to assess the health of deep-sea and open-ocean ecosystems across the full span of the Atlantic Ocean.



New breakthrough technologies were used, as sampling of environmental DNA together with high resolution acoustic technology coupled with video imaging that identified some still and unknown “pristine” habitats at the northern part of the Azores Mid Atlantic Ridge.

The Oceans in general and the Atlantic in particular demand this kind of technical and scientific sophistication. For scientists this is an opportunity, but it is also a tremendous responsibility that cannot be achieved outside international cooperation.

Overall, the Oceans are going through processes of change that go well beyond conspicuous facts as overfishing or plastic pollution.

The oceans are deeply hurt by acidification, increased average temperature, lowering of oxygen levels originated by the greatest blight of our time, global warming. This means cumulative stresses.

While the marine scientific community mobilises and contribute to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, launched in Berlin on the 1st of June, we must foster and intensify multidisciplinary partnerships, cooperation and dialogue, at all levels and scales.

Scientific knowledge is mandatory to guarantee productive and sustainable seafood systems and to contribute to fair and equitable coastal societies, across the planet. But science is not enough if it is not followed by good governance and science based policies.

In the EU the “*Starfish mission*” for Healthy Oceans, in the scope of Horizon Europe, will be central to promote applied knowledge to the blue agenda in the the Green Deal. To boost scientific cooperation with third countries the EU also launched the framework of the International Ocean Governance European policy.

Let me refer the vision of Portugal concerning these subjects.

Portugal through its new National Strategy for the Sea 2030, recently approved, recognizes the centrality of innovative marine research and resulting scientific knowledge. It aims to maintain a healthy and productive ocean, to leverage a sustainable, circular and decarbonizing blue economy, providing fair and equitable progress of our coastal communities.



At the Ministry of the Sea, we will continue to promote research and operational activity, such as observation, monitoring and surveillance of the sea and the atmosphere.

The infrastructure Blue Hub, which includes the Maritime Cluster in the Azores, to be supported by the national Recovery and Resilience Plan, is the most recent example.

We continue to stimulate the Blue School program and other initiatives, as the blue component of Ciência Viva, to spread ocean literacy among young people and the society. The new generations are key to drive the "*new relationship*" we should have with the oceans, an urgency that I defended two days ago, in the UN in New York, at the High-Level Thematic Debate in Support of SDG14: Life Below Water. Those are steps to pave the road for the UN Ocean Conference to be held In June 2022 in Lisbon, organised by Portugal and Kenya.

Portugal has a long-lasting commitment to the ocean's diplomacy, and to promoting an action-oriented debate on the future of the oceans. Recently, under the Presidency of the Union, the Prime-Minister of Portugal, António Costa, proposed to the European Union to promote a 2050 Global Agenda for the oceans, given the urgent need for its regeneration.

Finally let me I acknowledge once again the present conference as a step forward in the work developed by the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance and community, confirmed by the new Azores Declaration that tackles the complexity of the nexus Ocean-Space-Climate-Food, well represented in the agenda of international consortia "*Atlantic International Research centre*", based in the Azores with Hubs across several bordering countries in the Atlantic.

In view to have the "*science we need for the ocean we want*" in 2030 it is crucial to bring together Ministries, high-level representatives, ocean leaders, researchers, entrepreneurs and youth ambassadors, as we are doing today.

Thank for your attention.