

An aerial photograph of a large, powerful ocean wave crashing, showing white foam and deep blue water. The wave is the central focus of the image, with smaller waves visible in the background.

# Annual Report 2015

Adopted by the AGM 2016

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SAR staff  
May 2016

## Highlights

2015 was a breakthrough year for Seas At Risk (SAR) and its work on tackling the climate impacts of shipping. A major initiative at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to expand the constituency of countries pushing for expedited action to reduce GHG emissions from ships resulted in significant support for a proposal by the world's third largest ship registry, the Marshall Islands, to set targets for ship GHG emissions. This led to the creation of a ground-breaking "coalition of the willing" to carry the issue forward into 2016. Seas At Risk was also instrumental in ensuring that the issue of ship GHG emissions had a high profile during the run up to and at the UNFCCC's COP21 in Paris. Shipping was not explicitly mentioned in the final agreement but the pressure placed on industry and other stakeholders during the process, and the implicit inclusion of all (including ship) emissions, resulted in a major shift in the position of the shipping industry. Prior to COP21 industry stakeholders were denying the need or appropriateness of any absolute emissions reductions from the sector; after COP21 the International Chamber of Shipping spoke for the first time about the need to decarbonise and supported moves at IMO to identify an appropriate share of emissions reductions for the sector. These two very significant developments have been a focus of SAR's work in 2015 and together resulted, in early 2016, in overwhelming majority support for the development of an IMO work plan to identify shipping's "fair share" of future GHG emissions reductions.

2015 was also a crucial year for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, with countries working on the development of their programmes of measures, and SAR members active in the public consultation rounds at national and regional levels. To support this process SAR organised a well-attended NGO workshop, in which NGOs agreed on a number of joint actions to be taken on the programmes of measures. In parallel, SAR organised coordinated input in the ongoing process of the revision of the Decision on Good Environmental Status to ensure that the revision does not weaken down the objectives of the Directive.

After the withdrawal of the Circular Economy Package in 2014, the new 'improved' package was proposed by the Commission in 2015, with a number of additional measures that are crucial for tackling marine litter. Most importantly, the headline marine litter reduction target was re-confirmed after a successful twitter storm by SAR members, a letter to the Commission from 15 MEPs coordinated by SAR and other advocacy actions. Other measures include the obligation for member states to produce litter prevention plans, economic instruments to encourage reusable packaging, other waste prevention measures to ensure that products are durable, repairable and recyclable, and extended producer responsibility schemes which cover the entire cost of waste management for the products. SAR will continue to work with our NGO partners to further strengthen the package as it passes through co-decision procedure.

## Activities

A number of successful events were organised during the course of the year including three policy workshops (two on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and one on aquaculture) and two side events at European Maritime Day (on aquaculture and on Port Reception Facilities in relation to marine litter).

Seas At Risk was invited to speak at numerous events, including a hearing at the European Parliament Fisheries Committee and several other events at the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, a Dutch fishing industry event, the G7 Dialogue Forum, 'Eliminating Plastic and Microplastic Pollution'

conference, Arctic Circle 2015, Maritime Cyprus 2015, EU conference on Maritime Spatial Planning and Environment, as well as at side events at the Paris Climate Change Summit.

Lobby work was undertaken in respect of all of SAR's policy priorities. SAR actively participated in and/or prepared various submissions to numerous meetings associated with the EU institutions and in meetings of the UNFCCC, IMO, G7, NEAFC, OSPAR and OECD. SAR has also regularly reported to members on discussions taking place at these events.

In addition to regular briefings to fisheries ministers, SAR also issued a policy paper on responsible sourcing of aquaculture feed and participated in a joint NGO coalition on waste which produced numerous briefings, leaflets and press releases.

The building of capacity among SAR's membership was achieved through assembly meetings, policy workshops, email, skype communication, the intranet and twitter.

In June SAR launched a newly designed website which will serve to greatly enhance the image and communication capabilities of Seas At Risk, with increased functionality, an integrated social media element and better use of visual materials.

Press work took place on a number of issues. SAR has sent several press releases, regular newsletters, and news alerts as developments took place. In addition, SAR has greatly enhanced its use of Twitter as a communication channel to media, stakeholders and decision makers.

## Results

The following results and impacts were achieved during 2015:

- A fundamental and positive change in the politics of climate change discussions at IMO, brought about by a major shift in the position of Pacific small island states and pressure on industry in Paris resulting in an end to their long-standing refusal to consider absolute emission reductions for the industry.
- Increased awareness of policy makers of the scale, impacts and solutions to marine litter; of the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the need to revise deep water fisheries management; of the need for a shift to low impact fisheries; of the importance of the MSFD and Blue Growth developments.
- On fisheries, SAR remains a focal point for issues discussed both in Brussels-based European institutions and Advisory Councils. SAR and allied NGOs are increasingly recognized as valuable stakeholders that contribute constructively to AC discussions.
- The Council and Parliament Briefings providing guidance on the implementation of the CFP have raised SAR's profile within the European institutions and national governments. SAR is increasingly recognised as a reliable source of information by these decision makers.
- Marine litter remains high on the policy and regulatory agenda, at the UN, G7, EU and OSPAR, in particular through SAR's work on the revision processes of the Port Reception Facilities Directive and the EU waste legislation package. SAR's work ensured that a marine litter reduction target, litter prevention measures and a focus on waste prevention were included in the Commission's Circular Economy Package.
- The MSFD entered a crucial stage with Member States developing their programmes of measures and the Commission working on a proposal for revision of the GES Decision. SAR ensured a continued involvement in the MSFD implementation process through participation in CIS meetings, by coordinating NGO responses to the Commission's proposal for GES revision, and by organising

two workshops for NGOs (one dedicated to programmes of measures, the other to the GES revision).

- An enhanced involvement in the Blue Growth policy processes, and in particular in the follow-up on the proposed Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning (with participation in EU and OECD working groups) and developments in deep sea mining.
- SAR has now firmly established a leading and coordinating role in NGO involvement in the setting of aquaculture policies. A policy paper on responsible sourcing of aquaculture feed was published and widely disseminated. SAR is also leading discussions with the sector on the establishment of the new Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC).
- SAR's membership stands better informed about EU and other international activities affecting the marine environment.
- Sound organisational finances and improved communications.

## Organisational Developments

In 2015 SAR has increased its workforce to 6.35 full time employees, including a full time operations manager. Staff continued to invest in longer-term funding applications and in broadening the funder base, so as to achieve an enhanced financial stability for the organisation in the medium and long term.

SAR continued to focus in 2015 on 7 key policy issues. With the EC grant system changing to a two-year period, strategic discussions were held with staff and the AGM on 2 year planning (2016-17). This resulted in the identification of 10 priority areas, including two new work areas of shipping in the Arctic and marine protected areas, as well as a policy for future recruitments. The need to provide support to members on a number of other issues means there is a natural limit to how far the organisation can narrow its area of work, and SAR continues to strive to strike this balance.

SAR successfully applied to the EC grant for operating support 2016-17, which will mean a significant increase in budget that will allow recruitment in 2016 of two additional policy officers.

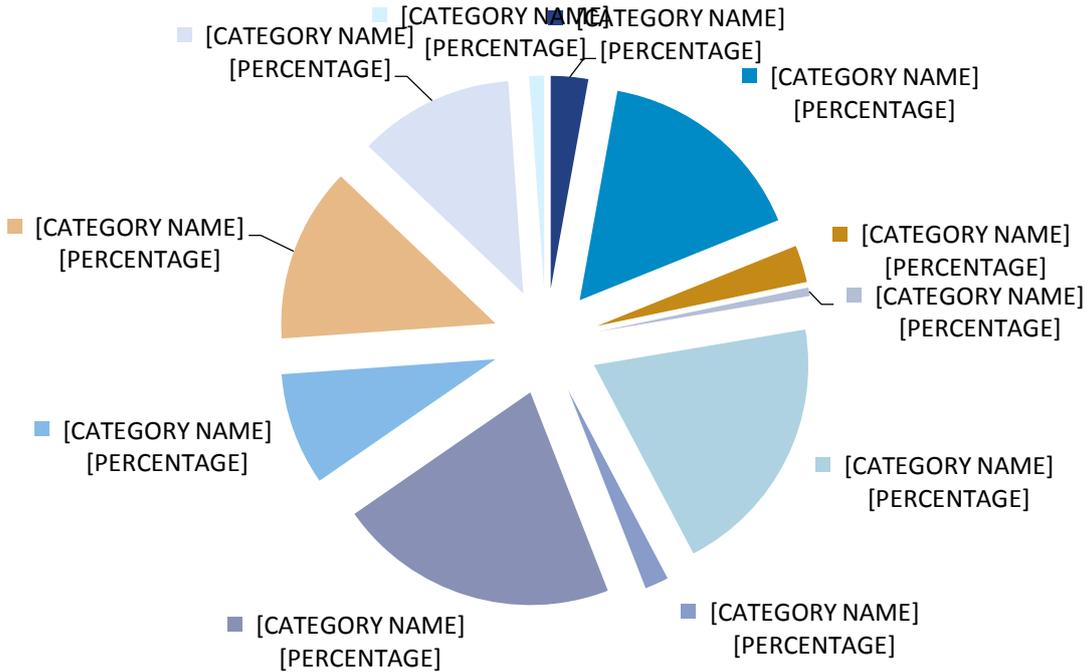
We believe that these improvements will not only make our work more effective, but they will also make SAR a more attractive umbrella for national organisations.

## Financial overview

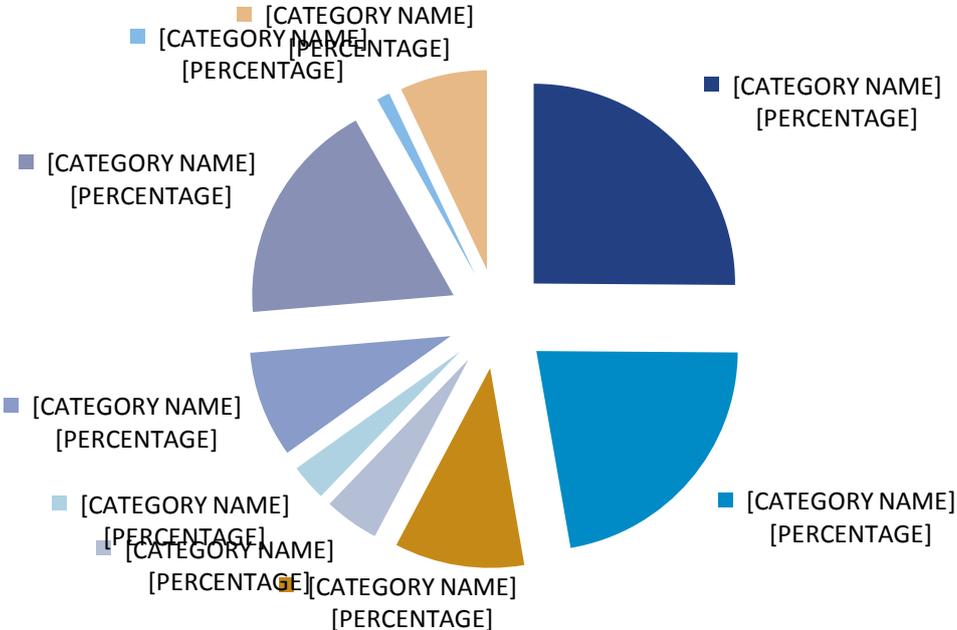
In addition to membership fees, Seas At Risk received funds from the following external sources:

- The Adessium Foundation;
- The Pew Charitable Trusts;
- The Waterloo Foundation;
- The Oak Foundation;
- The MAVA Foundation;
- The European Climate Foundation;
- BUND
- The Villum Foundation (through partnership with the North Sea Foundation).

### Seas At Risk - Income 2015



### Seas At Risk - Expenditure 2015



# Membership

At the end of 2015 Seas At Risk had thirty member organisations from sixteen countries and three international member organisations. New member are marked in *italics*.

Belgium	Sea First Foundation
	Natuurpunt
Croatia	Sunce
Denmark	Danmarks Naturfredningsforening
	Levende Hav
France	Surfrider Foundation Europe
	France Nature Environnement
Germany	BUND – Bund für Umwelt- und Naturschutz Deutschland
Greece	Mediterranean SOS network
	Archipelagos
Ireland	Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment
Italy	Legambiente
Malta	<i>Fish4tomorrow</i>
Netherlands	Stichting De Noordzee
	Waddenvereniging
	<i>Good Fish Foundation</i>
Norway	Norges Naturvernforbund
Portugal	Liga Para a Protecção da Natureza
	Grupo de Estudos de Ordenamento do Território e Ambiente
	<i>Sciaena</i>
Spain	ENT Foundation
	<i>Retorna</i>
Sweden	Svenska Naturskyddsföreningen
Switzerland	OceanCare
United Kingdom	Marine Conservation Society
	Environmental Investigation Agency
	<i>Surfers Against Sewage</i>
International	European Environmental Bureau
	Project Aware
	World Animal Protection