



Annual Report 2016

Adopted by the AGM 2017



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SAR staff
April 2017

Highlights

An absolute highlight of 2016 was **the adoption of a new and ambitious regulation for the management of deep sea fisheries in EU waters of the North-East Atlantic**. This regulation is a big victory for the protection of the deep sea against the destructive impacts of fisheries. It includes a ban on bottom trawling below 800 meters in EU waters and establishes an obligation and procedures to close deep-sea areas to bottom fishing below 400 meters where vulnerable marine ecosystems like cold water corals are known or likely to occur. The adoption brings to completion a very long process that started in 2007 with a review by the European Commission, which concluded that the EU had severely overfished most deep-sea fish species and failed to protect vulnerable deep-sea marine ecosystems from highly destructive fishing. Only in 2012 the Commission proposed a new regulation, and it took another four and a half years of discussions and delays in the parliament and council, and sustained and intensive joint NGO campaigning, before an agreement was reached on this politically 'hot potato'. Seas At Risk was actively involved during the entire process.

2016 also saw **the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) stick to an agreement on the reduction of sulphur in marine fuel by 2020**, and Seas At Risk was instrumental in preparing the ground for that decision. The sulphur content of ship heavy fuel oil (HFO) is up to 3,500 times higher than today's European diesel standards. The IMO unanimously agreed in 2008 that from 2020 marine fuel sulphur should be capped at 0.5%. However, the agreement also stipulated that if there would not be sufficient low sulphur fuel available in 2020, then the implementation would be delayed to 2025. Working closely with NGO T&E, Seas At Risk was involved in the committee responsible for the IMO review of the availability of low sulphur fuel, which concluded that there would be sufficient fuel available in 2020. In addition, Seas At Risk and T&E commissioned a health study and published important data showing that an implementation in 2020 would prevent at least 250,000 premature deaths globally from diseases such as lung cancer and heart disease, triggered by SOx pollution. This received a lot of press attention and helped the IMO to take the right decision to stick to the 2020 deadline. An additional positive development in **the IMO** was that it **finally agreed to the need for further work on ship greenhouse gas emissions** in order for shipping to contribute to meeting the objectives of the Paris Agreement and keep global warming below 2 degrees. This marks a turning point in the seriousness with which climate issues are treated at the IMO, something Seas At Risk has been advocating for several years.

2016 was an important year for deep sea mining, with events proliferating, indicating the acceleration of this emerging sector. **Seas At Risk organised a well-attended multi-stakeholder conference 'Deep sea mining: Exploring the unknowns'**, on 26th April 2016. Some 70 participants from industry, government, NGOs, European institutions and the scientific community came together for a lively debate around the need for deep sea mining, the current technological and regulatory state of play, and the knowledge gaps that prevent us from understanding the full potential impacts of this industry. It signified the highest level meeting of stakeholders at the EU level yet on the topic of deep sea mining, confirming the interest of a broad cross-section of stakeholders in connecting around this topic and exposing the gaps in knowledge that need to be bridged. It further demonstrated the speed at which technology and industry are progressing towards actual mining activities, even while the International Seabed Authority is in the process of developing exploitation regulations.

Activities

A number of successful events were organised during the course of the year including a multi-stakeholder conference on deep sea mining and policy workshops on marine protected areas, aquaculture, marine litter, as well as a side event at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

Seas At Risk (SAR) was invited to speak (i.e. make a presentation or participate in panels) at numerous events. Advocacy work was undertaken in respect of all of SAR's policy priorities. SAR actively participated in and/or prepared various submissions to several meetings associated with the EU institutions (such as EU Expert Groups) and in meetings of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, and the OSPAR Convention. SAR has also regularly reported to members on discussions taking place at these events.

In addition to regular briefings to fisheries ministers, SAR also made submissions regarding the implementation of the Marine Strategy (including the revision of the Decision on Good Environmental Status and the Programmes of Measures), the Communication on International Ocean Governance, the revision of the Port Reception Facilities Directive, the International Seabed Authority's draft regulation for contracts for deep sea mining, the European Ombudsman's inquiry on the transparency of dialogues, the Communication on 2017 fishing opportunities and various submissions to the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC).

The building of capacity among SAR's membership was achieved through assembly meetings, policy workshops, assistance with policy submissions and position papers, email, skype communication, the intranet, twitter and articles produced by members hosted both on SAR website and in the SAR regular newsletter.

The public web site continued to play an important role, allowing SAR to communicate effectively with the outside world. Further improvements were made to the website design and web pages have been recently updated.

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.

SAR commissioned a report and materials in support of its work on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and shipping, and marine litter.

Results

The following results and impacts were achieved during 2016:

- An enhanced involvement of NGOs in the Blue Growth policy processes, and in particular regarding the implementation of the Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning. SAR managed to open up the Member State Expert Group on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) for stakeholders, and together with WWF and BirdLife has become observer in the group. This will be our main channel to influence the future implementation of the directive.
- The Marine Directive (MSFD) entered the last stage of the first cycle of implementation with Member States submitting their programmes of measures and the revision process of the Decision on Good Environmental Status (GES) drawing to an end. SAR ensured a continued involvement in the MSFD

implementation process through participation in meetings of the Common Implementation Strategy, by coordinating NGO responses to the public consultation on the review of the Decision on Good Environmental Status, and by producing a report with Oceana evaluating the quality of the Member States' programmes of measures based on a survey of 16 national and international NGOs.

- Marine litter has risen high on the policy and regulatory agenda, both in the 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. A number of key SAR policy recommendations are now being incorporated in European legislation and SARs is a key marine litter policy stakeholder, participating in a number of EU Expert Groups and being invited to give talks and interviews on the issue.
- SAR started up a new campaign on advocating fisheries measures in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), with a workshop kicking off the work in September 2016 and the promotion of a toolkit, produced jointly with ClientEarth and our member the Marine Conservation Society, containing scientific and legal arguments for our members to promote the implementation of fisheries measures MPAs in their country.
- On fisheries, SAR remains a focal point for issues discussed both in Brussels-based European institutions and Advisory Councils. SAR and allied NGOs are highly valued stakeholders that contribute constructively to discussions in Advisory Councils the European Parliament.
- The Council and Parliament policy briefings providing guidance on the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy have raised SAR's profile within the European institutions and national governments. SAR is recognised as a reliable source of information by these decision makers.
- The creation of the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC) was a highlight after almost four years' preparatory work. SAR is holding a vice-chair position in the AAC and managed to ensure the necessary NGO participation in the AAC. As such, SAR firmly established a leading and coordinating role in NGO involvement in the AAC.
- A big step in the protection of the deep sea was taken with the adoption of a new and ambitious regulation of deep sea fisheries, after more than four years of discussions and delays in all European policy fora. It contains several of the NGO key demands such as a ban on bottom trawling below 800 metres in EU waters and the obligation to close areas to bottom trawling below 400 metres where vulnerable marine ecosystems are present or likely to occur.
- On deep sea mining SAR has become the main NGO working on the link with the EU institutions and linking to the international level via its participation in the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC). A multi-stakeholder conference organised by SAR-DSCC helped to raise the awareness in the Commission about the urgency of looking into circular economy alternatives, an approach which SAR has advocated in various events and submissions.
- On shipping, SAR work in 2016 saw an agreement in the European Parliament Environment Committee on including shipping in the EU Emission Trading Scheme. Also, an agreement reached at IMO on on-time implementation of the global low sulphur fuel standard and on a roadmap leading to a comprehensive IMO Greenhouse Gas strategy, as well as the start of discussions about how best to protect the Arctic from the use by ships of heavy fuel oil.
- As to the organisation's development, SAR is on track with the implementation of its five-year development plan with expansion of its staff and budget. We improved our visibility in the press and social media, and our membership stands better informed about EU and other international activities affecting the marine environment.

Organisational Developments

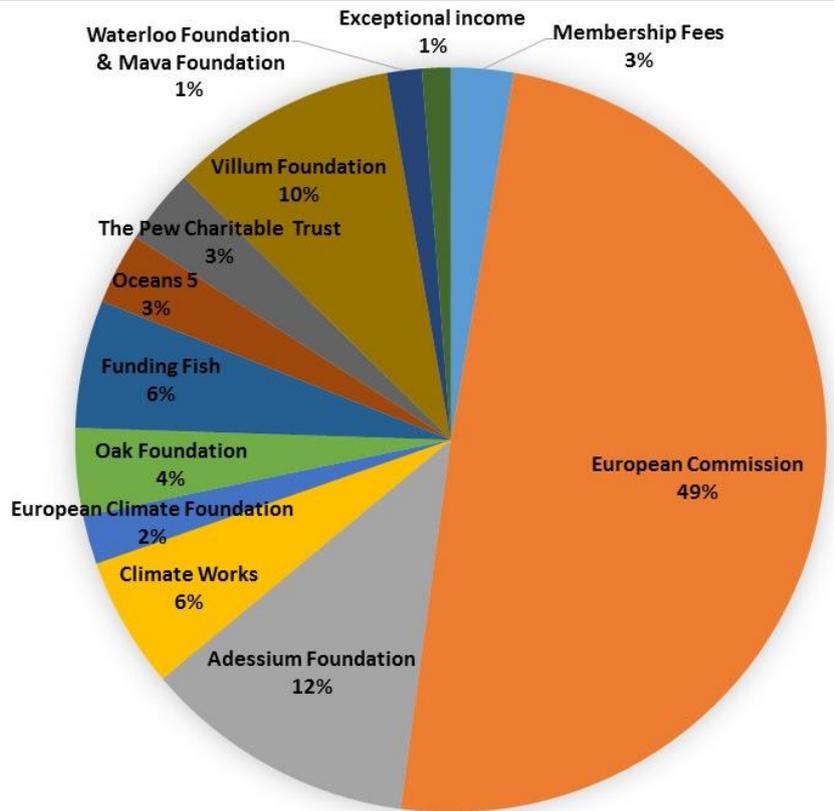
Triggered by the rapidly developing blue economy reality and the changing policy scene, SAR made the strategic choice for the period 2016-2017 to expand its work area and grow as an organisation. The implementation of this strategy is on track with a successful start on four new work areas: deep-sea mining, maritime spatial planning, shipping in the arctic and management measures in Marine Protected Areas. Furthermore, SAR's annual budget grew and its workforce increased from 5.9 to 8.3 FTE employees.

This organisational growth is paying off in terms of effectiveness. SAR's visibility has improved, the membership base and capacity enhanced, and the new work areas helped to ensure an even stronger involvement of our members in the work programme. We are convinced that the further implementation of our strategy will ensure SAR can deal effectively with the blue economy developments and changing policy scene.

Financial overview

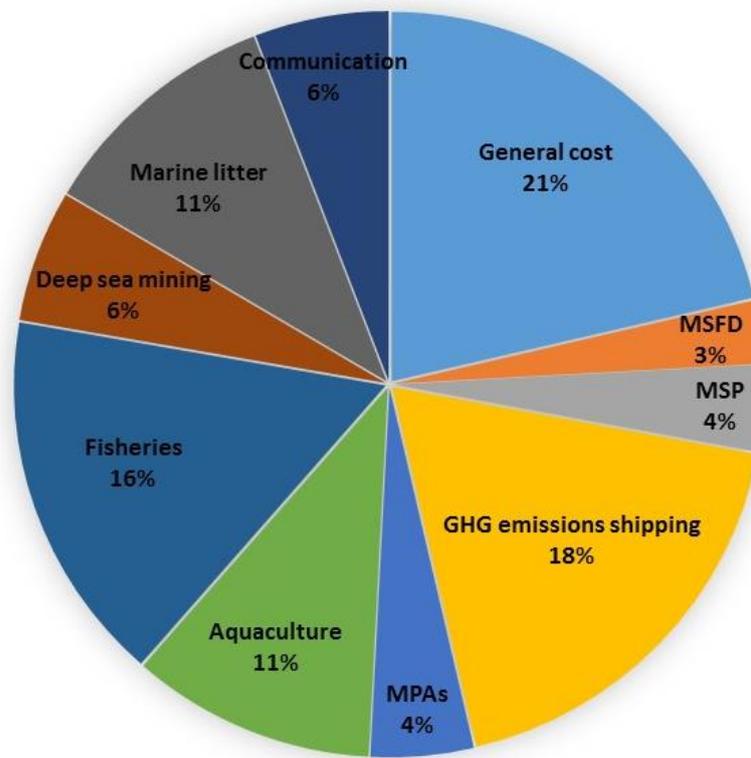
In addition to membership fees, Seas At Risk received funds from the following external sources:

- 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);
- Climate works
- The European Commission life grant
- Funding Fish
- Oceans 5



2016 SAR Income

In 2016 Seas At Risk operated with a total budget of € 807,778.



2016 SAR Expenditure

Member organisations

At the end of 2016 Seas At Risk had thirty four member organisations from seventeen countries and four 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 Sustainable Water Action Network (SWAN)
Italy	Legambiente
Malta	Fish4tomorrow
Netherlands	Stichting De Noordzee Waddenvereniging Good Fish Foundation
Norway	Norges Naturvernforbund
Poland	<i>MARE Foundation</i>
Portugal	Liga Para a Protecção da Natureza Grupo de Estudos de Ordenamento do Território e Ambiente Sciaena <i>Quercus</i>
Spain	ENT Foundation Retorna
Sweden	Svenska Naturskyddsföreningen
Switzerland	OceanCare
United Kingdom	Marine Conservation Society Environmental Investigation Agency Surfers Against Sewage
International	European Environmental Bureau Project Aware World Animal Protection Surfrider Foundation Europe