



Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean

Wednesday, June 6, 2018 | Wilson Center—Washington D.C.



From left to right: Peter Heffernan, Craig McLean, Volker Rieke, Sigi Gruber, Minh-Hà Pham, Wojciech Wawrzynski, Nancy Knowlton, Lisa Levin, Mary Kavanagh, Mark Brownlow, Vladimir Ryabinin, John White, and Jan-Stefan Fritz

During the [Capitol Hill Ocean Week](#) in Washington DC, on June 6th, 2018, a celebratory event entitled “*Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean*” was held in the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars to celebrate 20 years of the EU-US Science and Technology Agreement and 5 years of EU-US marine research cooperation. This event brought together European and US representatives of industry, science and policy to identify the best ways for science to help us treasure and protect the Atlantic Ocean, to keep it healthy and productive and, to understand

and tackle the issue of plastics in the ocean. More than 100 people attended the event to listen to distinguished and prestigious panelists committed to this cause, and to know about the vision and achievements of the Galway Statement and the future of EU-US cooperation.

The program was organized by the Science and Technology Innovation Program at the Wilson Center along with the European Commission (EC), the Delegation of the European Union to the United States, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(NOAA), the German Marine Research Consortium and the BILAT USA. 4.0 project.

[Mike Sfraga](#), Director of the [Polar Initiative](#) at the Wilson Center, opened the conference: “It is a special day today. We celebrate 20 years EU-US cooperation of Science & Technology and 5 years of EU-US marine research cooperation. I am confident that we will elevate the ocean”. He went on to talk about the Galway Treaty and its meaning to the world. He pointed “Marine and Arctic research are among the priority fields of this transatlantic cooperation.”





Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean (cont')



Dr. Mike Sfraga, Director Polar Initiative at the Wilson Center



Dr. Mary Kavanagh, Minister-Counselor Research & Innovation, EU Delegation to the US



Mark Brownlow Series Producer, *Blue Planet II*

To this end, the European Union, the United States and Canada signed [the Galway Statement on Atlantic Ocean Cooperation](#) in 2013 with the aim of aligning the transatlantic ocean science and observation efforts to the three parts. The Goals are to better understand the Atlantic Ocean and to promote the sustainable management of its resources. Specific elements of Horizon 2020, the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation have been designed to advance the Galway Statement implementation.

After thanking all the panelists and organizers, Mary Kavanagh, Minister-Counselor, Research and Innovation at the Delegation of the European Union to the United States, and event moderator, was delighted to introduce Mark Brownlow, Series Producer, *Blue Planet II*. The Audience was fortunate to watch the preview of the film *Blue Planet II* and listen to the remarks of the award winning producer.

Mark Brownlow pointed out that "*Blue Planet II* became the most watched series in the UK in the last three years and helped to change the perception of society. We have a responsibility: the future, humanity depends on us," he added. "We believe that with our passion comes hope for a better future."

After Mr. Brownlow's presentation, Mary Kavanagh moderated and led the 1st panel entitled "The Galway Statement: Vision and Achievements", constituted of four distinguished EU - US Government members, and diplomats:

- [Amb. Judith Garber](#), Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Department of State
- [H.E. David O'Sullivan](#), Head of the European Union Delegation to the United States
- [Volker Rieke](#), Director General for International Affairs, German Federal Ministry of Education and Research

- [Craig McLean](#), Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and Acting Chief Scientist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

After being introduced by Mary Kavanagh, Judith Garber, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Department of State, took the floor. "It is such a pleasure to join you and I want to thank the organizers for putting together such a fantastic event to celebrate 20 years of EU-US science and technology and marine research cooperation". She pointed out that "even if we have done a lot in 20 years, 95 % of the ocean remains still unexplored. That is why we identify the best way to keep the oceans healthy, productive and plastic free; In summer, the NOAA ship will begin its mapping campaign."

H.E. David O'Sullivan, Head of the European Union Delegation to the United States in Washington



Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean (Cont')



Amb. Judith Garber, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Department of State



H.E. David O'Sullivan, Head of the European Union Delegation to the United States of America



Volker Rieke, Director General for International Affairs, German Federal Ministry of Education and Research

DC, emphasized that “Ocean research continues to be a priority for transatlantic cooperation and for the EU in the Horizon 2020 program; Through Horizon 2020 and EU Research and Innovation Programme with nearly € 80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014-2020), over 500 scientific teams are engaged in Atlantic Ocean research; To date, the EU has invested € 140 million of Horizon 2020 funding towards the implementation of the Galway Statement, and each year, the EU has been investing € 250 million in EU marine and climate change research through [Horizon 2020](#).”

AtlantOS, [the international integration of Atlantic Ocean observing activities](#), is one of the successful projects of Horizon 2020 and transatlantic cooperation with 62 partners from 18 countries (13 EU & 5 non-EU); The Plastic Free Ocean, [Ocean Plastics Lab](#), and

the [Atlantic Ocean Observing Blue-Print](#) are other examples of successful cooperation.

“The European Union is committed to improve a cleaner, safer, and protected Ocean. We are proud to bring the [Ocean Plastics Lab](#) to the US and I am pleased that you will be able to discover it this afternoon”, said Ambassador O’Sullivan. The exhibition is just one of the many successful examples of how, by joining forces and working together in partnership, we can illustrate that plastics in the ocean are a huge challenge, and science and society together can provide solutions.

Ambassador O’Sullivan ended his presentation by reminding the audience about the commitment of the European Union: “We look forward to continuing an increasing European Union-US cooperation through all areas of sciences of technology and in particular in Atlantic Ocean

research. We are all stewards of this magnificent ocean.”

Afterwards, Volker Rieke, Director General of International Affairs, German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, who has been a great supporter of the Galway Statement and the implementation of the Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance, took the floor and gave his point of view as another European of a member state. He pointed out “We probably never thought of plastic garbage that people used and where it ends up. 80% of the plastics that begin on the land end up in the sea. But plastic pollution is just the tip of the iceberg. This is one of the reasons why we are here today in bringing the Ocean Plastics Lab to the United States, and I want to thank all the people and institutions which contributed to realize this project. International research cooperation is the key to tackle plastic pollution. No single



Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean (Cont')



• Craig McLean, Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and Acting Chief Scientist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), presenting a commemorative cake.

law, no single initiative will solve this issue on its own! A long term large scale monitoring of the ocean and the international cooperation is therefore a big step in research.

Ocean research largely depends on research infrastructures such as research ships, observation stations, robots and satellites."

He underlined the importance and ambition of [JPI Oceans](#)— the Joint Programming Initiative for Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans, dedicated to increase the value of national investments in marine and maritime research— to further expand our cooperation with American and international partners such as [NOAA Research](#).

Volker Rieke ended his presentation by saying, "Let's join our forces and work together to solve this challenges for our planet and societies."

Craig McLean, Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and Acting Chief Scientist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), was the last speaker of the panel entitled "The Galway Statement: Vision and Achievements". He presented a cake to commemorate the 5th anniversary

of the Galway Statement Implementation, and was proud to say that what he accomplished together with the North American and EU partners was absolutely "magic". He stated "The fruit that we have prepared and prepare, are going to last a long time; we are building relationships between EU-US-Canada, between government to government." He reminded us that 5 years ago, they set up to achieve the following 5 key objectives:

- Improve ocean health and stewardship,
- Promote the techniques of sustainable management,
- Improve ecosystem assignment,
- Increase Ocean literacy,
- Generate new tools.

He also pointed out that mapping the North Atlantic together with North American and EU partners is a key accomplishment and that there are active research projects on both sides of the Atlantic. "We are very proud of all the results we have achieved. AORA is a model for many communities and government. This is a great time for us. There is a lot of energy and AORA Happy Birthday: 5 years is a great start."



Craig McLean is serving as the Acting Chief Scientist and acts as the senior scientist for the agency providing direction for science and technology priorities. He also serves as the Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (AORA).

In his role at Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, he is responsible for overseeing, directing and implementing NOAA's research enterprise including a network of research laboratories and the execution of NOAA programs including the Climate Program, National Sea Grant, Ocean Exploration, to name a few. Among a number of formal international engagements in science and technology, Mr. McLean serves as the U.S. Representative to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and as the Co-chair of the U.S. European Union Marine Working Group.

Mr. McLean has previously served in NOAA as Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator of the National Ocean Service, was the founding Director of OAR's Office of Ocean Exploration and Research and served in uniform for nearly 25 years in NOAA's Commissioned Corps, attaining the rank of Captain. Mr. McLean served aboard hydrographic, oceanographic, and fisheries research ships and was the first commanding officer of the NOAA Ship *Gordon Gunter*. Craig led NOAA's innovation and planning for the Smithsonian Institution's Sant Ocean Hall, and achieved a National Ocean Action Plan goal of securing a permanent, dedicated ship for the National Ocean Exploration Program, the NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*.

Craig is also an attorney and has practiced marine resource law for NOAA. He has been awarded the Department of Commerce Silver and Bronze Medals, the NOAA Corps Commendation Medal, and Special Achievement Medal. Mr. McLean is a Fellow of the Explorers Club, and of the Marine Technology Society, and a past-president and chairman of the Sea-Space Symposium.

- ▶ For more information on AORA, [click here](#)
- ▶ For more information on NOAA, [click here](#)



Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean (Cont')



Prof. Nancy Knowlton, Sant Chair for Marine Science, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History

Lastly, distinguished Professor Nancy Knowlton, Sant Chair for Marine Science at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History Institution in Washington D.C., author of the National Geographic's best-selling *Citizens of the Sea*, and editor-in-chief of the Smithsonian's Ocean Portal website, contributing regularly to the global ocean conversation via @seacitizens on Twitter, delivered a marvelous keynote speech.

She took the floor to talk about the importance of success stories and "[Ocean Optimism](#)", a collaborative marine conservation movement, which started in 2014 and that she helped launch, focusing on solutions rather than problems, and on connections rather than differences; it has spread over social media (Twitter, Instagram and Facebook), uniting all with a renewed sense of hope for our oceans. It has spread widely as a flag for stories reporting progress in solving marine conservation

challenges. Reaching over 60 million Twitter users since its inception, #OceanOptimism has inspired an international outpouring of marine conservation success stories.

In her presentation entitled "Ocean Optimism: Success Stories for Cleaners Ocean-Making the most of Informed Actions", she said, "We have to move from scientific awareness to public awareness, and I think that is also increasing in the sense that I think we are seeing a lot more attention to plastic pollution than we ever had before.

We remain largely unaware of the successes we have achieved. We haven't had a lot of successes, but it's amazing how little we know about the successes we have achieved, so that is why we need to tell successful stories to get attention."

She summarized her talk with the following points:



Pictures from the Smithsonian collection



- "We have to get Individual, government, and private sectors, all involved;
- We need to develop technical solutions;
- We need to document the success that we have.
- We need the public and policy makers to be aware of the success we had."

Finally, she emphasized that it is important to give people a vision of what a plastic free, less plastic world looks like, and not complaining but on the contrary using the inspiration of Martin Luther King and say: "I have a dream, and not... I have a problem."

► To read more success stories on Ocean Optimism, [click here](#).

► For more information on the conference, [click here](#)

► To watch live stream of the 1st panel, [click here](#)

► To watch livestream of the 2nd panel, [click here](#)

► To view pictures, [click here](#)

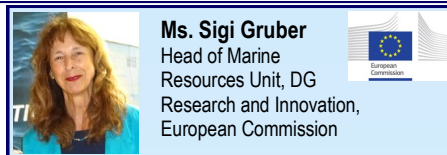




Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean (cont')



Sigi Gruber, Head of Marine Resources Unit, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission



Ms. Sigi Gruber
 Head of Marine Resources Unit, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission

Since January 2014 she is heading the Marine Resources Unit in the Directorate General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission. The Unit defines and implements research and innovation objectives and priorities to support the EU's integrated Maritime Policy, in particular the Blue Growth Agenda, thereby contributing to the sustainable and responsible management of marine resources, both in Europe and globally. Furthermore, the unit monitors and contributes to specific initiatives such as the Joint Programming Initiative *Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans (JPI-Oceans)*, the Article 185 based *Baltic Sea Research and Development Programme (BONUS)* while it coordinates the *Transatlantic Ocean Research Alliance*. It consults industry and other stakeholders concerned and ensures coherence between R&I objectives and the relevant EU agriculture, food, forestry, and bioeconomy policy objectives. Her work for the European Commission started in 1991 when she was appointed as an expert to launch the LINGUA Programme, the European Communities' first foreign language learning programme. From 1995-1999 she worked in the Directorate General for Education and Training where she was - inter alia - responsible for the actions dealing with foreign language learning for vocational training and for policy development of the vocational training programme, the Leonardo da Vinci Programme.

Then she became the General Secretary of the European Association for the Education of Adults before re-joining the European Commission in 2001, on this occasion in the Directorate General for Research. She was Head of Sector for Researchers' Careers, and her responsibilities included policy initiatives related to the *European Charter for Researchers*, the *Modernising Agenda of European Universities* and the *European Institute of Innovation and Technology*.

From 2007 to 2011 she headed the Unit responsible for Relations with Third Countries. This Unit aimed to promote coherence and synergy between Member States and the EU as regards international cooperation policies and activities with major partner countries and regions. At this time she was also responsible for launching the *Indo-European Research and Innovation Partnership*. This Unit also ensured the follow-up of cooperation with multilateral fora such as the G8 and Carnegie.

In April 2011 she took responsibility for EU science, research and innovation cooperation with North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, where she coordinated the signing of the *Canada-EU-US Galway Statement* which launched the *Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance*.

The Second part of the conference was a panel entitled "Where should our Atlantic Ocean Cooperation go from here?" constituted of 6 distinguished and high level European and American speakers:

- [Dr. Peter Heffernan](#), CEO, Marine Institute Ireland,
- [Dr. Lisa Levin](#), Distinguished Professor, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Co-lead of the Deep Ocean, Stewardship Initiative and the Deep Ocean Observing Strategy,
- [Dr. Wojciech Wawrzynski](#), Head of Science Support Department, International Council for the Exploration of the Sea,
- [Dr. Minh-Hà Pham](#), Science Counsellor, Embassy of France,
- [Dr. Vladimir Ryabinin](#), Executive Secretary, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and Assistant Director General of UNESCO,
- [John White](#), President and CEO, Consortium Ocean Leadership.

and moderated by two high level European and American dignitaries and administrators:

- [Sigi Gruber](#), Head of Marine Resources Unit, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission,
- [Craig McLean](#), Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and Acting Chief Scientist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

After introducing the top 6 top experts, Craig McLean invited Sigi Gruber, chair of the panel, to come to the floor and ask the panelists the first question on the future of the Ocean.

Sigi Gruber after pointing out that, "we have set a new level of ambitions and also have a responsibility toward our Atlantic communities who live on the coast" asked the panelists "what should be the new level of ambition now 5 years after the signing of the [#GalwayStatement](#) to make the policy makers to take the right decisions for a sustainability future"



Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean (Cont')



2nd Panel: The future of the collaboration of Transatlantic Research Cooperation. From left to right: Craig McLean, Sigi Gruber, Peter Heffernan, Lisa Levin, Wojciech Wawrzynski, Minh-Ha Pham, Vladimir Ryabinin, and John White,

CEO, Marine Institute Ireland, Peter Heffernan answered that one of the priority for the future is that “we really need to have an accurate map of our planet and that means we have to map the 75 % of it that it is not yet mapped. He added that “we need to put in place an observation service capacity similar to the one we use in satellite meteorology. Forecast and predict the health of the ocean is essential.”

Lisa Levin, distinguished professor, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Co-Lead of the Deep Ocean, was the second panelist to answer the question. She focused on the exploration of the deep ocean. “Overtime, we have began to industrialize the deep ocean and we are now in a place where we extract oil and gas deeper and deeper, and we are fishing increasingly in the deeper ocean; we are now facing to manage all these activities with their consequences on the environment and the health of the ocean. Scientists need to be directed to answer all these new questions

on ecosystem, knowing that there is an overlapping of climate change: What are the consequences for biodiversity loss? How do these changes affect the ecosystem function? How does function translate into ecosystems services? (Provisioning, regulating, supporting, cultural). Here are some questions that need to be answered to the public.”

Then, Wojciech Wawrzynski, Head of Science Support Department, ICES, commented on how we must implement action through working groups and national regulators. What society expects to provide from science is applicable solutions to solve problems. “There is a difference between knowing the way and walking the way”, he said. “For science, we need interdisciplinary, for policy, we need to work together internationally to trans bound marine issue and to trust each other.”

Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, was the 4th panelist to comment on

what we have to do in the next 10 years. He answered that we have to do a lot and the three priorities are:

- to do research
- to protect
- to use the ocean

“We have to develop science and how to use it,” he said.

He stressed that mapping, observing, and predicting the Ocean, are essential. “We need to go deeper, and we need to be able to predict the health of the ocean, and this can be difficult; we still don’t know the deep ocean ecosystem. There are strong intellectual challenges, but it is exciting”.

John White, President and CEO, Consortium Ocean Leadership, added that “we need to prioritize, and there must be an interaction between the private sector and NGOs”.

Using a wonderful hockey analogy, John White, told us “we have the chance of putting the puck of ocean science into the goal.”



Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean (Cont')



Jan-Stefan Fritz, Head European Office, German Marine Research Consortium gave the closing remarks

In terms of international cooperation, Minh-Hà Pham, Counsellor for Science and Technology at the Embassy of France, talked about French science diplomacy initiatives, including the French-American Doctoral Exchange program on Ocean ([FADE-X](#)) and the French American Climate Talks on Ocean ([FACT-O](#)).

On empowering the youth, panelists highlighted the gift of education, programs that give opportunities to young scientists and Investing in the young.

Jan-Stefan Fritz, Head European Office, German Marine Research Consortium, gave the closing remarks for the event. After thanking the audience and speakers, he reminded them that there are committed institutions like AORA that already have achieved a lot, but the most important fact is that science, policy, civil society and industry need to work together to find solutions. "It is work and progress," he added.

He finally thanked again all the partners — 40 committed people across the Atlantic — who worked massively to bring the Ocean Plastics Lab to the US.

Sigi Gruber had the last word and thanked warmly the Wilson Center for hosting the event, Mary Kavanagh from the Delegation of the European Union to the US, all her colleagues in Brussels, and all the partners in the US and in Europe (BILAT USA 4.0) who worked on this project, and particularly Germany. "It has been just a showcase on how we work across the Atlantic and we need to continue it. I look forward to the next 5 years," she said.

The Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence, FIU, which is one of the 6 American and 10 European partners of [BILAT USA 4.0](#), was proud to be part of this journey and have contributed to this project.

By Christine I. Caly-Sanchez



The event included in the afternoon a visit of the Ocean Plastics Lab which is on the National Mall in Washington DC from June 4 to 17 thanks to a joint effort of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the European Commission, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the German Marine Research Consortium in collaboration with the Consortium for Ocean Leadership, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation and other partners.

The Ocean Plastics Lab, graphically presents the problem by leading visitors through different sections of the exhibit to see the waste, detect its impacts, and examine potential solutions.

- ▶ To view pictures of the visit to the Plastics Lab on June 6, [click here](#)
- ▶ For more Information on the Ocean Plastics Lab, [click here](#).

Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence—FIU—Special Edition: BILAT USA 4.0—Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean



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From left to right: Mary Kavanagh, EU Delegation to the United States; Minh-Hà Pham, Embassy of France; and Sigi Gruber, European Commission



Amb. Judith Garber talking to Sigi Gruber



Minh-Hà Pham and Sigi Gruber talking to Mark Brownlow



Craig McLean, Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and Acting Chief Scientist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)



German Delegation: Jan -Stefan Fritz, Head European Office, German Marine Research Consortium, (Center), and Robin Mishra, Minister Counselor, Head of Section Science and Technology, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany (right)

Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence—FIU—Special Edition: BILAT USA 4.0—Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean



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Jan-Stefan Fritz, Head European Office, German Marine Research Consortium, and Sigi Gruber, Head of Marine Resources Unit, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission



Mary Kavanagh, Minister-Counselor, Research and Innovation, EU Delegation to the US; and Mark Brownlow, Series Producer, Blue Planet II



Minh-Hà Pham, Counsellor for Science & Technology, Embassy of France; and Christine Caly-Sanchez, Associate Director, Project Manager Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence, FIU, BILAT USA 4.0.



Sigi Gruber at the luncheon informing the panelists about the visit to the Ocean Plastics Lab



Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence—FIU—Special Edition: BILAT USA 4.0—Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean



Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean

Visit to the Plastics Lab | Washington D.C.—06/06/18



Elizabeth Newbury (left) and Christine I. Caly-Sanchez (center) during the visit to the Ocean Plastics Lab on the National Mall in Washington D.C.

Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence—FIU—Special Edition: BILAT USA 4.0—Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean



Transatlantic Research Cooperation to Treasure and Protect the Atlantic Ocean

Visit to the Plastics Lab | Washington D.C.—06/06/18



German Delegation from KDM German Research Consortium, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research



Team of German Marine Research Consortium and Ocean Plastics Lab: Jan-Stefan Fritz (left), Julia Schnetzer (center), John Hanus (right)

