EMD
European Maritime Day
IN MY COUNTRY

BLACK SEA BEYWATCH

#EMDinMyCountry

Black Sea Blue Economy Youth and Women Watch

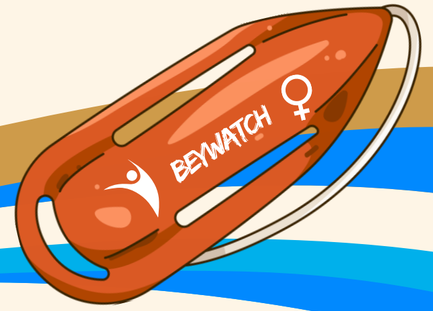
Tuesday, 20 October 2026

Women on Board: Promoting Inclusion and Equality for Women in the Blue Economy Labour Market

Interreg Europe
Co-funded by the European Union
Women on Board

Dr. Eudokia Balamou

Larnaca and Famagusta Districts Development Agency



UNIVERSITY OF THE AEGEAN
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF SHIPPING TRADE AND TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR BLACK SEA STUDIES
ICBSS
BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

WOMEN ON BOARD

Promoting Inclusion and Equality for Women in the European Blue Economy

Interreg Europe
Co-funded by the European Union
Women on Board

Co-funded by the European Union

DIFFERENT SEAS. SHARED OPPORTUNITIES.



9 Partners | **8** Countries | Blue Economy | Gender Equality | Policy Improvement

Building a more inclusive, innovative and resilient blue economy by increasing women's participation and leadership.

PEOPLE
POLICIES
PROGRESS
BLUER FUTURES

#EMDinMyCountry

Women on Board: Promoting Inclusion and Equality for Women in the Blue Economy Labour Market

Project Information

- Policy Objective 4: More social Europe
- Specific objective: Social Inclusion
- Project Duration: 1/5/2025 – 31/7/2029

	Duration	Start date	End date
Core phase	36 months	01 May 2025	30 April 2028
Follow-up phase	12 months	01 May 2028	30 April 2029
Closure phase	3 months	01 May 2029	31 July 2029

Project Overview

- Addressing the **significant underrepresentation of women** in **blue economy** professions/ **gender imbalance**
- **Breaking prevalent gender stereotypes**, through increasing female representation in blue economy/ **more inclusive workplace environments in the blue economy.**
- Develop **effective policy responses** to close the gender gap and aleviate barriers to womens' participation in blue economy professions,
- **Increase women involvement** in the **bottom-up development, implementation, and evaluation of policies** and programs impacting the broader blue economy sector.

Interreg Europe
Co-funded by the European Union
Women on Board

Women on Board: Project Objectives

#EMDinMyCountry

- ✓ **Improve policies that can empower women to participate extensively in the blue economy**
- ✓ **Close the gender gap** in maritime/marine/blue economy training and employment
- ✓ Foster **cooperation and exchange best practices** for integrating women into maritime/marine/blue economy professions.
- ✓ **Increase the involvement of women in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs** impacting the broader blue economy sector and its supporting ecosystems.
- ✓ **Enhance workplace safety and create conducive working conditions** to **attract and retain women** in **blue economy professions**.
- ✓ Promote **gender inclusivity through awareness campaigns** aimed at **reducing workplace harassment** and **encouraging diversity**.



1,755,206
EUR

Interreg Europe
Co-funded by the European Union
Women on Board

The Women On Board Team

Larnaca and Famagusta Districts Development Agency
Lead Partner (Cyprus)

Autonomous Provincial Company Port Center (Belgium)

Blue Centre of Competence (Norway)

Saranda Municipality (Albania)

KMOP Social Action and Innovation Centre (Greece)

MARIKO Maritime Competence Center non-profit organization (Germany)

Region of Western Greece (Greece)

Brest Métropole (France)

Iasi Municipality (Romania)

Policy Instruments Addressed for Policy Change

#EMDinMyCountry

Name of the policy instrument	Name of the policy responsible authority	Involvement of the policy responsible authority	Investment for Jobs and Growth programme	Country
Regional Development Strategy for the Fisheries Area of Larnaca and Famagusta Region for the programming period 2021-2027	Larnaca and Famagusta Districts Development Agency	Partner	No	Cyprus (Κύπρος)
The Value Creation Strategy	Trøndelag County Council	Associated Policy Authority	No	Norway (Norge)
Regional Action Strategy Weser-Ems 2021-2027	Office for Regional Development, Weser and Ems Region	Associated Policy Authority	No	Germany (Deutschland)
Strategic Multi-Annual Plan of the Province of Antwerp	Province of Antwerp	Associated Policy Authority	No	Belgium (Belgique/België)
Metropolitan Economic Development Strategy Cap 2030	Brest Métropole	Partner	No	France (France)
Iasi Integrated Strategy for Sustainable Urban Development 2015-2030	Iasi Municipality	Partner	No	Romania (România)
Regional programme 2021-2027 Dytiki Ellada	Region of Western Greece	Partner	Yes	Greece (Ελλάδα)

Interreg Europe | Co-funded by the European Union | #EMDinMyCountry

Women on Board

Women on Board

& the Synthesis Report

From regional evidence to shared policy action

Working towards….

9 partners



Women on Board promotes inclusion and equality for women in the blue economy labour market across Europe.

The synthesis report brings together seven regional mappings to identify recurring barriers, regional differences and practical policy responses.

7

REGIONAL STUDIES

One shared evidence base

1

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Practical action, not only analysis

Why this matters for Europe's blue economy

A workforce and value-creation issue

The blue economy is strategically important for jobs, innovation, food, energy and coastal and rural development. But its workforce remains markedly gender imbalanced.

4.88M
PEOPLE EMPLOYED
EU blue economy, 2023

€263B
GROSS VALUE ADDED
EU blue economy, 2023

~29%
WOMEN IN WORKFORCE
Available European evidence

The practical risk

Losing talent when the sector needs skills, innovation and long-term workforce capacity.

The policy opportunity

Design entry, work and progression so more people can contribute and remain.

The wider benefit

More inclusive systems support both social inclusion and value creation.

Sources: EU Blue Economy Report 2025; EU Blue Economy Observatory/WIN-BIG; Women on Board synthesis report.

What we synthesized

Seven different regions | One comparative lens

Trøndelag

Aquaculture • fisheries • maritime industries • suppliers • marine technology • ports • R&D

Antwerp

Port • logistics • maritime services • shipping • industry • energy

Brest/Brittany

Maritime economy • research • coastal sectors • fisheries • transport • shipbuilding

Weser-Ems

Shipping • shipbuilding • offshore wind • ports • suppliers • logistics • education • research

Cyprus

Shipping • tourism • fisheries • aquaculture • maritime transport • emerging blue sectors

Western Greece

Tourism • shipping • fisheries • aquaculture • ports • emerging blue industries

Iași

Inland aquaculture value chains

Method choice

The synthesis does not pool percentages. It compares recurring mechanisms and keeps regional differences visible.

Policy message: transfer the function of a solution, not the exact measure mechanically.

Seven Cross-Regional Findings

Gender Parity in the Blue Economy

1 Participation is uneven



Women are present across the blue economy, but they remain concentrated in selected occupations and functions.

2 Invisible work is under-recognised



In fisheries, aquaculture and family-run businesses, women's contribution is sometimes informal, unpaid or absent from official statistics.

3 Progression remains unequal



Women are still underrepresented in technical, senior and decision-making roles across many blue-economy sectors.

4 Workplace culture still matters



Bias, harassment, weak recognition and male-coded norms continue to shape everyday working life.

5 Retention is structural



Work-life balance, scheduling, safety, workplace design and life-phase demands affect who can remain and progress.

6 Access to resources is unequal



Training, networks, finance, ownership and career support are not equally accessible to women.

7 Policy gaps weaken progress



Many regions have strong ambitions, but implementation, accountability and gender-disaggregated data remain insufficient.

Based on seven regional studies in the Women on Board project (2025–2026).

One clear conclusion: women are already part of the blue economy but presence does not guarantee progression, safety, recognition or long-term career opportunity.



Gender-sensitive measures benefit the whole workforce

How measures identified through a gender lens can improve working conditions for everyone in the blue economy

Barrier identified through a gender lens	Wider workforce benefit
Poor PPE, tools and equipment fit	Better ergonomics, safety and comfort for all workers
Rigid shifts and unpredictable schedules	More sustainable working lives and better retention
Limited support for care responsibilities	Greater flexibility for women and men across life phases
Opaque promotion and informal career systems	Clearer progression pathways and stronger trust
Weak reporting and harassment prevention	Safer workplace culture and clearer accountability
High physical strain and low work adaptation	Reduced strain through better design, ergonomics and automation
Insufficient gender-disaggregated data	More efficient workforce planning, monitoring and policy decisions

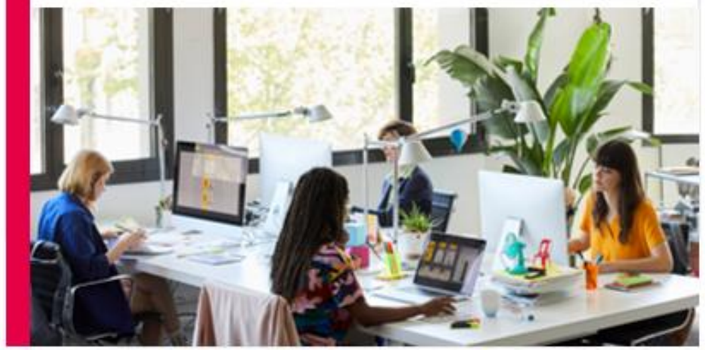
Gender-sensitive workplace design is often better workplace design

Source: Women on Board Synthesis Report, 2026.

Three policy-critical findings

1. Segregation persists

Women are more visible in administration, support, tourism, research and selected processing roles. Technical, operational, sea-based and senior roles remain less balanced.



2. Retention is structural

Work-life balance, scheduling, safety, PPE, facilities and life-phase adaptation affect who can stay and progress.



3. Policy gaps weaken progress

Many regions have ambitions on equality, skills or blue growth, but implementation, indicators and workplace practice remain uneven.



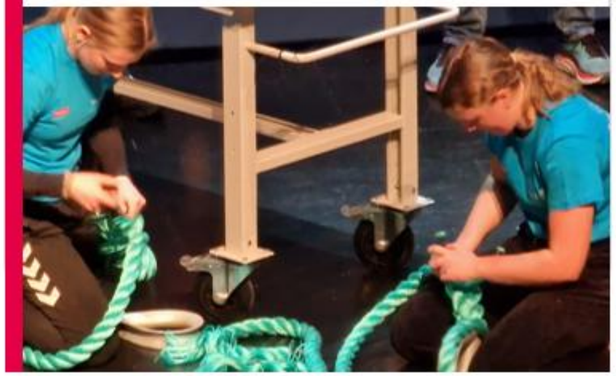
The task is to move from representation to conditions that support entry, belonging, development, leadership and retention.

Where are people being excluded or lost?

Before entry • at recruitment • in everyday work • during progression • when life circumstances change

1 Not only recruitment

The report asks what conditions allow people to remain, progress and lead.



2 Not only women adapting

Work systems must be designed for a broader workforce.



3 Not only intent

Implementation, indicators and accountability decide whether policy changes outcomes.



How do we translate this into policy action?

ATTRACT	ENTER	BELONG	DEVELOP	LEAD	STAY	MEASURE
Visibility	Access	Culture & safety	Training	Authority	Life phases	Accountability

Women on Board Policy Recommendations Framework

From participation to long-term inclusion in the blue economy

1 ATTRACT

- Visible role models
- Outreach, awareness and confidence building

2 ENTER

- Transparent job ads with objective requirements
- Clear pathways to leadership and decision-making

3 BELONG

- Safe workplaces
- Inclusive culture, HSE, PPE and facilities

4 DEVELOP

- Mentoring and sponsorship
- Skills, digital and STEM pathways

5 LEAD

- Transparent promotion
- Gender-balanced governance and boards

6 STAY

- Flexible work options, hours and scheduling
- Work-life balance, care support and return pathways

7 MEASURE

- Gender-disaggregated data
- Targets, accountability and monitoring

The aim is not only to recruit more women, but to create conditions for long-term inclusion, progression and value creation.

Source: Women on Board Synthesis Report, 2026.

Use it as a policy checklist:

Who sees the sector? Who gets in? Who belongs? Who develops? Who leads? Who stays? What changes are measured?

What policy owners can do next

Turn the evidence into implementation

1 **Review existing instruments**

Check whether blue economy, skills, innovation and equality policies address documented barriers.

2 **Define responsibility**

Move from general ambition to named owners, budgets, milestones and reporting.

3 **Fund practical change**

Use programmes, procurement and support schemes to improve recruitment, training, work design and data.

4 **Measure outcomes**

Track recruitment, retention, progression, leadership, pay and workplace experience by gender and role.

An inclusive blue economy is built through practical systems, not by asking women to adapt to systems built without them in mind.

Interreg Europe
Co-funded by the European Union
Women on Board



EDUCATION & CAREER ORIENTATION

6 PRACTICES

- Havenwereld: Gender-Inclusive Port Education
- Embedding Port Visits in Education Pathways
- Gender-De-Biasing Training for Career Counsellors
- Other education-focused initiatives



ROLE MODELS & AWARENESS RAISING

4 PRACTICES

- Inspiring Girls
- Jenter i Havbruk
- Employer branding initiatives
- Communication and awareness campaigns

20 GOOD PRACTICES

Inspiring change for a more inclusive blue economy

POLICY & INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

4 PRACTICES



- Gender Equality Award in the Shipping Sector
- State Postgraduate Scholarships for Women
- Policy and governance initiatives
- Other institutional support measures



ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

3 PRACTICES

- Women Entrepreneur Program
- Grant Scheme for Youth & Women Entrepreneurship in Cyprus
- Other business and skills-support initiatives

WORKPLACE INCLUSION & COLLABORATION

3 PRACTICES



- Collaboration Agreement for Gender Equality in the Norwegian Fisheries Sector
- Industry partnerships for inclusion
- Workplace culture and safety initiatives

KEY FINDING: Most good practices focus on attracting women into the blue economy through education, role models and awareness, while policy support, entrepreneurship and workplace inclusion help ensure long-term participation and career progression.

SAME OCEAN
MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Interreg Europe

Co-funded by the European Union

Women on Board

#EMDinMyCountry

Thank You

https://maritime-forum.ec.europa.eu/theme/governance/european-maritime-day-my-country_en

www.interregeurope.eu/women-on-board

