

Presentation of Mister Thierry FAYRET
Deputy President of Brest métropole océane in charge of the Bay of Brest and
the coastline
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[Brest has a strong interest for marine and coastal biodiversity. Could you please explain to us how your collectivity rose up to tackle this issue?]

Hello,

I am Thierry FAYRET, deputy President of Brest métropole océane, in charge of the Bay of Brest and the coastline

Brest is a city located at the western tip of France, fronting the Atlantic Ocean. It is found at the heart of a territory that boasts a rich biodiversity.

The town and its suburbs are surrounded by two marine protected areas: the Iroise Sea on the western side and the Bay of Brest, one of Europe's major biodiversity sites.

At the crossroads between city, land and sea, Brest has a long-standing maritime history. Identified 300 years ago as a strategic defense site for the kingdom, it initially had a military function. Then, Brest the "military town" became Brest "city of the explorers". With Brest as their starting point, the French explorers and natural scientists of the 18th century (such as La Pérouse, Kerguelen, Bougainville and many others) went on to explore the world and its diversity.

Our values include openness to the outside world, social cohesion and dynamism. They are acknowledged throughout France. It follows that we enjoy a quality of life that I invite you to come and discover should you ever come to France!

Even so, we have had to face a few tragic events. They have led us to realize how fragile our rich biodiversity was and how important it was for us to protect it. For example, in March 1978, an environmental catastrophe occurred in the midst of this natural heritage: the shipwreck of the oil tanker *Amoco Cadiz*. It resulted in one of the worst oil spills to date.

This event has left its mark on the territory of Brest, on our shores as well as our minds. Indeed, it probably triggered an awareness that has never waned since then. It led to a commitment by the urban community to locally take on the challenges of marine and coastal biodiversity.

Thus, from very early on, Brest launched projects and actions that now fit in perfectly with the targets defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity for its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets adopted two years ago in Nagoya.

Today, three features define the urban community of Brest with respect to its commitment regarding marine and coastal biodiversity:

1. The first is a research cluster, unparalleled in Europe, that focuses on improving our knowledge of biodiversity;

2. The second is a strong commitment to undertake conservation, management and restoration actions;
3. The third is a commitment on the part of the urban community to include the challenges of biodiversity in its urban planning documents.

Brest hosts a research cluster intent on discovering, studying and protecting biodiversity and disseminating knowledge in France and abroad.

For more than 20 years now, with 500,000 visitors every year, with its numerous exhibits and aquariums, Océanopolis ocean discovery park combines a clear scientific communication approach with a spectacular staging of life underwater. Océanopolis also proposes many educational workshops.

Regarding coastal and onshore aspects, the Conservatoire Botanique National de Brest, a world authority and the oldest botanical conservatory in France, also runs an ongoing public awareness campaign. It organizes educational activities and aims at disseminating knowledge intended for public policymakers and protected area managers. Another fundamental mission of the botanical conservatory is to protect the seeds of threatened or endangered species of plants. Thanks to the work of the scientists, some plants have been successfully reintroduced into their original habitats, sometimes located several thousands of kilometers away from Brest.

Only recently, in December 2011, 30 extinct or threatened species of plants were reintroduced in Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean!

As regards conservation, management and restoration, Brest métropole océane, the urban community of Brest, has launched and coordinated numerous actions. Here are a few examples:

- Designating our coastline as a non-built-up protected natural area. 51km out of the 70km (i.e. two-thirds) of coastline under our responsibility are thus protected.
- Similarly, our urban planning documents specify the fact that one third of the urban area remains dedicated to natural habitats out of which more than 7% are protected wetlands.
- Finally, when conservation is not possible, we implement compensatory measures that extend beyond the natural areas that have been damaged or destroyed. Such measures may include the restoration of a damaged wetland or river continuity, the remeandering of a river or the creation of a pathway for animals.

Furthermore, in an effort to protect the Bay of Brest fronting it, Brest métropole océane has devised integrated management instruments that work with a multi-stakeholder governance.

In this respect, the Bay contract for the Bay of Brest, signed in 1998, was a founding instrument. It was an action plan aimed at restoring and managing the water and environment quality of the Bay of Brest and its catchment area. Its purpose was to develop economic activities and make them coexist while protecting the natural heritage.

In 2004, a Water Development and Management Plan (the **Schéma d'Aménagement et de Gestion des Eaux**) took over. Water conservation in the bay remained a priority target.

These two instruments resulted in other actions being undertaken to achieve the targets. For example:

- Implementation of a “no pesticide” policy whose aim is to end the use of toxic chemical products for the maintenance of the road network and green areas.
- Increased monitoring of how marine invasive plants are spreading along the coast as well as in the urban area. This is a major issue in Brest due to port activities and shipping.
- A restoration project for restoring fragile natural habitats such as rivers or wetlands and involvement in the management of the two Natura 2000 sites located in the Bay of Brest.
- Participation in management actions and protection activities alongside the Conservatoire du Littoral, the French coastal conservatory. The aim is to permanently acquire fragile natural coastal areas in order to handle their long-term management.

Difficulties are always encountered as these actions are undertaken. For example, though the actions implemented within the framework of the Water Development and Management Plan for our catchment area have led to a decrease in nitrate levels, they are still insufficient to actually reduce the eutrophication level. This is due to the fact that agriculture is an important

economic activity in the area and step changes would have major social impacts.

Finally, the urban community of Brest has intentionally integrated environmental concerns into the prescriptive documents for land use planning.

Such documents include:

- The Agenda 21, a strategic action plan for medium-term sustainable development,
- The Plan Local d'Urbanisme (PLU), a local development plan that deals with land use in our entire territory for the next 20 years while trying to contain urban sprawl and include in the territory's map what can be referred to as a green and blue network integrating biodiversity into the urban network.

Through these actions and plans, Brest métropole océane has adopted Aichi's five strategic goals and 20 targets. We believe, however, that the road does not end here and that it is possible to go even further.

[Brest métropole océane prove innovative in its proposition to other maritime territories committed to biodiversity to group and share their experiences. Could you please elaborate on this topic?]

In fact, Brest métropole océane is organizing **in Brest, on November 13th and 14th, 2012, the *International Meeting on marine and coastal biodiversity***. This

Meeting will be placed under the patronage of the Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The International Meeting is intended as a platform for exchanging experiences and feedback. It targets various stakeholders from maritime areas worldwide. A special invitation is extended to the partner coastal cities of Brest around the world to come and share their experience.

With this event, Brest métropole océane wishes to showcase the conclusive and innovative experiences of maritime communities worldwide. We believe it is a good way of mobilizing the communities and helping them adopt the Aichi targets.

With this event, we wish to enter in a partnership with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The November Meeting will be divided into three major parts:

- **The first part will be dedicated to the loss of biological diversity in the coastal and marine environment and to the challenges of mobilizing the maritime communities.**

This will be an opportunity to possibly identify all the various threats; to identify the main challenges that maritime communities may address to promote the protection of marine and coastal biodiversity; and to list the main triggers that maritime communities may use to effectively protect marine and coastal biodiversity.

- **The second part of the event will be dedicated to a series of workshops on management and protection instruments for marine and coastal biodiversity.**

Indeed, to protect marine and coastal biodiversity, ambitious environment management, protection and restoration measures must be implemented based on the scientific knowledge available.

- **Beyond the sharing of the participants' experiences, a third part will be dedicated to** (i) defining a work program for maritime communities committed to protecting marine and coastal biodiversity and (ii) putting things into perspective from various angles: territorial attractiveness, economic development and scientific cooperation. We will discuss how maritime communities can improve their attractiveness while protecting biodiversity.

The President of Brest métropole océane, Mr. François CUILLANDRE, and I would be delighted to welcome you in Brest on this occasion, on November 13th and 14th.

You can register on www.brest-biodiversite.fr.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries.

Thank you.