



welcome to ERVO
the European
Research Vessels
Operators

ERVO WAY AHEAD:

first results of the ad-hoc WG

2015 IRSO meeting

Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla (USA)

- ✧ **Informal pan-European long-lasting network, with no legal status and financial resources**
- ✧ **Created in 1999** as an initiative of the European Science Foundation - Marine Board (ESF/MB) as a complement to the **Ocean Fleets Exchange Group (OFEG)**, for the **co-ordination of small to medium sized RV operators in Europe**
- ✧ The number of participating countries has risen from 7 to 19, proving to be **a useful platform for about 30 regular attendees (40 in 2014, 50 in 2015)**
- ✧ Very useful **independent network** and its activities are entirely driven by participants
- ✧ ERVO is the **ideal focal point** for any organization in Europe looking for ways to communicate directly **with the experts on research vessels and related instruments and equipment**

To create and maintain a forum for European RV operators

- ✧ *attend ERVO meetings where common **technical, operational, safety, environmental and legal issues/problems** are identified and discussed, and possible solutions presented*
- ✧ *contribute to the development within Europe of **best practices in the operation of RVs and associated equipment***
- ✧ *learn about **developments and plans for procurement** of new RVs, equipment and instruments, and **upgrades** of existing ones*
- ✧ *be a member of a **pan-European network** of RV operators*
- ✧ *identify **methods and ways to minimize the impact of the operations of RVs and associated instruments and equipment on the environment and marine life***

- ✧ **Terms of Reference** of the ERVO Group, **adopted in 2011** at the 13th ERVO meeting in Oristano (Italy)
- ✧ **Annual membership fee** (300 Euro), **established** at the 14th ERVO meeting (Faial, Portugal, **2012**) to cover the cost of the services provided by the **EurOcean** (*European Centre for Information on Marine Science and Technology*) **Office** to the ERVO Group
- ✧ **EurOcean/ERVO Agreement**, officially signed in **April 2014**
- ✧ **EUROFLEETS** **participates actively to ERVO meetings** (topic in the ERVO agenda since 2008, 10th ERVO meeting, Varna, Bulgaria)
- ✧ Since 2012 ERVO is a **permanent invitee to EUROFLEETS meetings** and its present and future chairs are beneficiaries of EUROFLEETS2. Moreover, 13 (42%) EUROFLEETS2 beneficiaries are active members of the ERVO Group

SEVENTEEN MEETINGS

Date	Venue	Host Organisation
13-14, December, 1999	Roscoff, France	ESF, Marine Board and CNRS/INSU
27-28, April, 2000	Galway, Ireland	Marine Institute
19-20, April, 2001	Rome, Italy	National Research Council of Italy
24-26, April, 2002	Bergen, Norway	Institute of Marine Research
25-26, April, 2003	Constanza, Romania	GeoEcoMar
16-17, June, 2004	Barcelona, Spain	CSIC
7-8, April, 2005	Lisbon, Portugal	COI/MCTES
19-21, June, 2006	Reykjavike, Iceland	Icelandic Institute of Marine Science
19-20, June, 2007	Oostende, Belgium	Flanders Institute
20-21, May, 2008	Varna, Bulgaria	Institute of Oceanology – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
13-15, May, 2009	Copenhagen, Denmark	DTU Aqua – National Institute of Aquatic Resources
04-06, May, 2010	Southampton, UK	National Oceanography Centre (NOC)
10-11, May, 2011	Oristano, Italy	National Research Council of Italy
08-09, May, 2012	Faial, Portugal	DOP/University of Azores (DOP/UAç)
05-06, June, 2013	Brest– Plouzané, France	French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea
11-12, June, 2014	Barcelona, Spain	CSIC (UTM-CMIMA)
10-11, June, 2015	Galway, Ireland	Marine Institute

- ✧ Since its birth in 1999, ERVO evolved positively and a relative large group of research vessel managers used the forum annually
- ✧ However, over the years a possible overlap with the **IRSO (International Research Ship Operators) Group** grew while other initiatives (like **EUROFLEETS1&2**) also have increased **the need for a more formal platform and a more active role of ERVO**
- ✧ To sustain its success, ERVO therefore needs **to re-think its concept, to consolidate what has been achieved over the past decade and to prevent “bore-out” of the group**
- ✧ ERVO has therefore **to decide how its future should be and what role it wants/needs to play** in the near future
- ✧ **The real pressure on ERVO should be to establish what its raison d'être is, i.e. its positioning and added value in the future European and International “landscape”**

- ✧ At ERVO 2014 meeting, it was decided to set up an “ad hoc” WG to initiate a strategic discussion about ERVO aspirations, goals and opportunity
- ✧ **Members:** G. Magnifico (CNR, Italy), O. Quédec (Ifremer, France), A. Fitzgerald (MI, Ireland), P. Nieuwejaar (IMR, Norway), E. Koning (NIOZ, The Netherlands), D. Cattrijsse (VLIZ, Belgium), J.J. Danobeitia (CSIC, Spain) and in addition V. Mazauric (EUROFLEETS2 Project Coordinator) as an observer
- ✧ **Seven topics** have been **proposed** and then **discussed** among WG members:
 - ✧ *ERVO legal framework/structure*
 - ✧ *EUROFLEETS1+2 legacy*
 - ✧ *ERVO/IRSO relationship*
 - ✧ *Collaboration with EurOcean*
 - ✧ *ERVO/OFEG relationship*
 - ✧ *ERVO and European Ocean Observing System (EOOS)*
 - ✧ *Proposal for a new organisation of ERVO*

- ✧ The very fundamental question the WG has discussed is **what ERVO wants to be in the future**. The **two main alternatives** are:
 - ✧ **Staying on as it is** (not very much influence, impact and visibility), or
 - ✧ **Move to a more formal organisation** (more manpower and some money)
- ✧ The WG opinion is that **ERVO needs to be more visible**, both nationally and on a pan-European level, **and to have a “voice” within the European Marine Research community** in the same way as other “special interest groups” and projects dealing with particular parts of the marine data collection systems, e.g. EOOS, EMSO, JERICO, etc.
- ✧ ERVO should, and to a large extent does, represent the **“European view” on research vessels and large exchangeable equipment**, and should have a **“much stronger say”** in questions regarding European policies, plans, technological developments etc.

- ✧ RV users, the scientists, have already a number of interest groups and agencies talking on their behalf, e.g. Marine Board, EOOS and others, with paid staff and a legal status that enables them to receive funding from both member institutions and the EC
- ✧ In order to have someone to represent the European Research Vessel users, owners and operators from Public Institutions, the WG think that **ERVO should consider steps to become such a “focal point” or “voice” on behalf of the RV community**
- ✧ **There is the need of something, which could represent the ERVO community formally in different meeting places/initiatives where RVs are a relevant part of the picture since RVs and the service provided by them are transversal to many different initiatives and the RV community voice should therefore be heard before and when decisions are made**

- ✧ **EUROFLEETS2 produces things that are of interest to ERVO and, after the EUROFLEETS2 project comes to an end, certain results from the project could and should, whenever possible, be maintained for the benefit of the European ship operators**
- ✧ **The WG supports the idea of ERVO adopting the EUROFLEETS1+2 legacy by 2017 when EUROFLEETS2 stops**
- ✧ **In this regard, ERVO should identify, in collaboration with EurOcean, the optimal way to protect and maintain all networking tools and know how after the completion of EUROFLEETS2**
- ✧ **What this exactly means and how ERVO needs to implement it as an informal body, which meets once a year for a couple of days, without any legal structure, financial resources and manpower, is the first and major issue to discuss for ERVO strategy**

- ✧ The EUROFLEETS projects legacy should be discussed and handled as three separate entities:
 - ✧ **Networking Activities (NA) legacy**
The NA legacy, mainly documents, standards, reports, is expected to be maintained by EurOcean and ERVO should identify the list of reports/documents of interest to the Group
 - ✧ **Trans National Access (TNA) legacy**
ERVO cannot take on the task of being the “TNA agency” of the future since it is not a legal entity, and does not have the necessary financial resources and manpower
 - ✧ **Joint Research Activities (JRA) legacy**
The JRA results must be maintained by somebody else since it is a variety of products for different use and therefore not something that is a “typical” task for a group like ERVO to take “ownership” of

✧ Possible solutions to avoid overlap between the two groups have been discussed:

✧ **By emphasizing a European component**

ERVO should seek its European dimension in its activities, finding the way of being the proper European equivalent to IRSO

✧ **By alternating meetings**

Alternating meetings seems to be a bad idea because the loss of continuity; the meetings of the two groups do not seem to be too close together, ERVO being May-June and IRSO typically October

✧ **By focusing on Regional/Coastal vessel**

For the next years a 'target region' could be appointed for each meeting and 1 day or half a day spent on ERVO topics highlighting this target region and the ERVO countries in the region

- ✧ In April 2014 an Agreement for cooperation between ERVO and the EurOcean Foundation was officially signed: the document defines the legal and financial framework for the development and execution of the activities to be performed by EurOcean for ERVO
- ✧ It is very important to have a continuous dialogue between ERVO and EurOcean, not only about the ERVO part of the EurOcean website, but also about the other parts of the EurOcean web portal that covers topics that are of interest to ERVO, e.g. the RV Infobase and the Large Exchangeable Equipment Infobase
- ✧ Since a number of ERVO members are also EurOcean delegates, maybe one should be appointed as the ERVO liaison to the EurOcean Steering Committee and be responsible for reporting to ERVO about EurOcean issues/policies/plans etc. seen from an ERVO point of view

- ✧ **OFEG is a restricted cooperation between a few countries with very specific needs and interests** that are beyond the scope of most of the ERVO members
- ✧ **OFEG members are also members of ERVO** so there will always be connections and sharing of ideas, information and lessons learned
- ✧ **OFEG should be seen as an example of how such a system works**, with the idea that it may be an option to try and establish a similar structure for regional areas
- ✧ The WG believes **that there is no need to set up a proper strategy in relation to OFEG** although OFEG is of particular interest to ERVO

- ✧ **ERVO's possible role in the development of the European Ocean Observing System – EOOS** (space crafts, research vessels, vessels of opportunity, landers, observatories, buoys, moorings, HF-radars, tide gauges, gliders, drifting buoys, AUVs etc.)
- ✧ **A European OOS will not compete with RVs necessarily, but rather being complementary with regards to data collection** and it is therefore vitally important that politicians, decision makers, funding agencies and even scientists understand this properly
- ✧ **ERVO could establish a kind of formal or informal link to the ESF Marine Board and EOOS**, either through ERVO members who belongs to institutions that are represented in both ERVO and ESF/MB and/or EOOS, or the ERVO chair could be the link between the three groups

- ✧ The WG has, based on the considerations expressed for the previous topics, thought about how the **ERVO group could evolve in to a somewhat more formal and structured group without losing its identity and flexibility**

- ✧ **Actions proposed:**
 - ✧ *ERVO Executive Committee (ERVO ExCom)*
 - ✧ *ERVO General Assembly (ERVO GA)*
 - ✧ *Regional focus*
 - ✧ *More visibility*
 - ✧ *ERVO membership fee*

✧ ERVO Executive Committee (ERVO ExCom)

- ✧ *The ERVO ExCom consists of **no more than 8 members**, including the ERVO chair and ERVO vice-chair as ex-officio ERVO ExCom members*
- ✧ *The **initial ERVO ExCom is composed of members of the current “ERVO way ahead” WG + the new ERVO vice-chairman + 1 delegate from EurOcean and 1 from the EUROFLEETS2 project (the coordinator) as invited observers on request***
- ✧ *All relevant **ExCom material** will be posted on the ERVO website*
- ✧ *ERVO ExCom reports its **annual work at the annual ERVO General Assembly for approval***

✧ Proposed tasks of the ERVO ExCom

- ✧ *Give **inputs to the agenda** of the next year ERVO meeting*
- ✧ *Propose and maintain a **standard format for the ERVO agenda** to be used in the coming years, with thematic sessions*
- ✧ *Participate in the continuous development and improvement of the **ERVO website***
- ✧ *Maintain and adapt the **ERVO Terms of Reference** as necessary to reflect any new directions or organizational developments within ERVO*
- ✧ *Develop and maintain an **annual ERVO work plan**, including a list of actions and the associated milestones*
- ✧ *Develop and maintain an **ERVO strategy paper for the next 5 years**, to be revised periodically, and to develop a list of topics of interest*
- ✧ *Develop and maintain a **report covering the history and main events of ERVO***

✧ ERVO General Assembly (ERVO GA)

- ✧ *The WG proposes to have, during the annual ERVO meeting, an ERVO General Assembly (ERVO GA) session, open to members only*
- ✧ *At least one representative from each ERVO country (from Public Institutions operating RVs) should attend the annual ERVO GA where the ERVO ExCom reports on its work since the last annual ERVO meeting and presents its plans for the coming year to be approved by the ERVO GA*

✧ Regional focus

- ✧ *To foster more regional cooperation among ERVO members, ERVO should extend the annual ERVO meeting to two full days, where half a day is reserved to focus on the specific European region where the meeting takes place*
- ✧ *This would also ensure that all countries from such a region really engage in the meeting because they are expected to present their issues and opportunities*

✧ More visibility

- ✧ *Foster formal (direct or indirect) ERVO links/representation/regular communication with special interest groups covering some of the same areas of interest as ERVO, e.g. ESF/Marine Board, Polar Board, RVOC, UNOLS, EurOcean, EUROFLEETS2, ESFRI, EOOS, EuroGOOS, FixO3, POGO, Seas-ERA, JERICO, SeaDataNet, EMODNET, BONUS, INMARTECH, IRSO, OFEG and OFEG Tech, EMSO, IMP-Med, etc.*
- ✧ *Identify ERVO members as ERVO representatives/points of contact towards these groups and projects based on their positions and competence*
- ✧ *IN GENERAL, each ERVO member should take every opportunity (at a national and international level) to promote the collective expertise and knowledge that ERVO represents, and then to report to the Group*

✧ ERVO membership fee

- ✧ *To establish a **fixed ERVO membership fee of 300 € per country (RVs operating Institutions)**, to be adjusted at annual ERVO GA as necessary*
- ✧ ***3,000 € will be used to cover the EurOcean service provided to ERVO** (web site etc.)*
- ✧ ***The surplus will be used to cover annual ERVO ExCom expenses** such as renting meeting rooms, consumables etc.*
- ✧ ***A volunteer ERVO member** (necessarily also an ERVO ExCom member) should act **as ERVO treasurer**, collecting ERVO membership fees, paying EurOcean for the service provided to ERVO, managing the extra budget for ERVO ExCom and report about budget, income and expenses at the annual ERVO GA **to maintain transparency regarding financial matters***

THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH VESSEL OPERATORS GROUP



Welcome to ERVO the European Research Vessels Operators

Thanks for your attention

2015 IRSO Annual meeting,
Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla (USA)