



THE FUTURE OF OUR OCEANS

Keynote introduction from France and Europe

Monday 20th October 2008

Keynote speakers: **José Manuel Barroso**, Video Message from the President of the European Commission
Hubert Falco, Secretary of State for French Minister of Ecology, Jean-Louis Borloo

In a video message, the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, called the BioMarine conference "an unmissable event" for those who feel strongly about the future of the world's oceans.

Policy segmentation was a "thing of the past" and Europe was taking the lead in developing an "integrated maritime policy" that has shaped EU initiatives in recent months in fields as diverse as ports, offshore energy, and transport.

Environmental issues were also high on the agenda: it was vital to take action on submarine biodiversity and climate change. Barroso described the oceans as the planet's "most important climate regulator," and pointed out that erosion and rising sea levels were "alarming coastal populations".

Though proud of European initiatives, Barroso called for a wider global approach, stressing that "Europe cannot bear all the responsibility for sustaining the oceans." BioMarine provided the perfect platform to "share ideas to achieve a common goal" in this regard.

Speaking on behalf of the French government, Hubert Falco – Secretary of State for French Minister of Ecology, Jean-Louis Borloo – extended a warm welcome to participants in the first international forum dedicated to the oceans, which brings together major actors, including the scientific community, the maritime sector, governments and NGOs.

He urged participants to go beyond the narrow self-interest of the past and focus on questions related to the seas from the point of view of the common good. BioMarine would tell us all "Don't forget the seas!"

France and the EU were working to help swing the dynamic in favour of the oceans, and what he called this "blue planet."



In addition to this, he noted, France believes that the maritime transport industry must participate in efforts to reduce CO2 emissions, which currently run at 400 million tonnes a year. Falco also proposed that ship owners should be given incentives to improve the quality of their fleets.

Man's behaviour and "relationship with nature" needs to change, he said. A new legal framework and set of bills are due to be presented to the French Parliament in the wake of the unprecedented "Grenelle de L'Environnement" meeting between the government and civil society in July 2007. The bills include provisions which will become a "national strategy for the seas." This will be applied to the 11 million square kilometers of French maritime territory, addressing issues such as fishing, energy, mineral extraction and biodiversity.
