

## The Medimare Communication Project and Strategy

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**Abstract:** The MediMARE (Mediation in Maritime Affairs) Project is a partnership between Portuguese and Norwegian institutions, financed by the EEA Grants (PT-INNOVATION-0065), and intends to research the perception of the importance of mediation for a consensus-oriented conflict management in maritime disputes. In this paper, we will discuss the project outcomes, communication and dissemination plan, and strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of each of them according to their intended targets. The communication strategies were meant for the broader public, the academic community, students and professionals, journalists, and policy makers. Sustainability was one of the pillars of project communication, therefore, most communication was developed in an online format. The project reached an excellent public, on all continents, and what prevented it from reaching the broader public was that the project had a very short duration.

**Keywords:** Conflict Management; Maritime Disputes; Mediation; Science Communication.

**Basic ideas:**

- The project MediMARE had diverse communication and dissemination strategies structured to reach a variety of diverse stakeholders: the broad public, academic community, students and professionals, and policy makers.
- Sustainability was the project basis– most communication and dissemination happened online. Hybrid events were very successful, with the presence of several participants.
- The project communication successfully reached its goals. The duration of the project in our understanding could have been longer to achieve better communication and dissemination outcomes.

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## Introduction

The MediMARE (Mediation in Maritime Disputes) Project was funded by the EEA Grants (an agreement between Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland with the European Union, reference number PT-INNOVATION-0065<sup>2</sup>). MediMARE was part of the Blue Growth program, one of the five EEA Grant Programs. In Portugal, the program operator was *Direção-Geral de Política do Mar* (General Director of the Ocean Policy).

The project occurred between October 2021 and the end of September 2023 (it was extended two months from the agreed upon completion date), under the coordination of Dulce Lopes of the University of Coimbra Institute for Legal Research and had as project partners: the Polytechnic of Leiria, the MARE-NOVA School of Science and Technology (MARE – NOVA) and NTNU Social Research (the latter from Norway, and the previous three from Portugal).

Methods of dispute resolution included litigation, and the alternative methods, which tend to solve disputes without the participation of the judiciary and include arbitration, mediation, conciliation, and negotiation (Anishere, 2012). Alternative dispute resolution means have always been used in the maritime field, especially arbitration. Maritime mediation is an area under constant development. Although mediation has been developing in the world in the past decades, and as such it is not a new area, its development has exponentially grown and lately, there has been the passing of new legislation in the field. Maritime law is an intrinsically international area, and thus a field regulated extensively through international treaties and through private international law, *lex mercatoria* plays a very important role in its development. With the latest developments, Commercial and Maritime Associations have been recently using the term mediation instead of other alternative dispute resolution terms (Donato, 2023). One can mention the BIMCO Mediation/Alternative Dispute Resolution Clause (2021), ICC Mediation Rules (2014), LMAA Mediation Terms (2021), SMA Rules for Mediation (2016) and UNCITRAL (2021) Rules on Mediation.

The project's intention was to spread the use of maritime mediation, the knowledge of its benefits, including lower costs, speedier resolution, confidentiality and the maintenance of good relations in the maritime area (Donato, 2023).

Research in the alternative dispute resolution field is a newer field, not as “legally structured” as the most classic fields of law, since this is an area under development (Lopes, 2024). As such, it presents some challenges, especially due to it being a less known, accepted and regulated field. Most of the current legal operators have been trained to take legal action, meaning to

<sup>2</sup> “Through the Agreement over the European Economic Space (EEE), Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are partners in the internal market with the Member States of the European Union. As means of promoting a continuous and balanced reinforce of the economic and commercial relationships, the parties of the EEE Agreement established a pluriannual Financial Mechanism, known as the EEA Grants. The EEA Grants aims at reducing the social and economic disparities in Europe and reinforce the bilateral relationships between these three countries and the beneficiary States. For the 2014-2021 period, it was agreed a total contribution of 2.8 billion euros for 15 beneficiary States. Portugal will benefit with a budget of 102.7 million euros” (MediMARE, n.d.). More information on [eeagrants.gov.pt](http://eeagrants.gov.pt).

litigate, and the change of paradigm between such a response in training into the alternative dispute resolution field is a substantial process.

As such, it is important to study how mediation (here specifically in the field of maritime law) is understood by its users, and to develop means of communicating and disseminating studies on maritime mediation. As maritime mediation is usually conducted in a confidential manner, numbers on how frequently it is used are not available. As researchers, evidence is found on its increased use through the passing of new legislation in important countries, such as England, the European Union (with the Directive 2008/52/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on certain aspects of mediation in civil and commercial matters), its member countries, and Brazil. The Singapore Convention (formally known as the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation) is a relevant treaty for the field.

Therefore, to show the importance of this topic for the international community the project has elaborated strategies to communicate and disseminate the outcomes of its research. As a starting point, the project team developed a market research project with maritime operators to understand where they stood in the countries where they were studying. The market research demonstrated how much maritime operators understood and used maritime mediation.

Maritime mediation was frequently used in Norway, but this was not the case in Portugal. In Portugal, other alternative dispute resolution means are more commonly used, such as direct negotiations (this information can be retrieved from the project's interview report) (MediMARE, 2023a). Portuguese Law n° 35/86 also foresees the use of pre-judicial mandatory conciliation for some maritime matters (Lei n.° 35/1986).

The MediMARE Project developed a taxonomy to classify maritime conflicts and research on the perception of the importance of mediation for a consensus-oriented conflict resolution in maritime conflicts. With the result of and parallel to this, the team produced several other outcomes. The project also intended (and in our perception achieved) the goal of: increasing knowledge on mediation and maritime conflicts; supported the training of a group on maritime mediation; highlighted the complexity of maritime and international legislation and regulations (soft and hard laws) and forms of understanding and applying such norms; encouraged mediation as a better means of solving maritime conflicts; supported open science and developed maritime mediation as an extrajudicial form of solving conflicts, a better practice and good governance tool (MediMARE, 2020a).

The outcomes of the project were: a taxonomy for maritime conflicts; market research on legal operators and maritime actors; an online course on maritime mediation; an intensive program on maritime mediation; monthly workshops (and in some situations two or more in a month); a guidebook; a book from the scholarship holder; a MediMARE Glossary on maritime mediation; articles and events participation; a closing event, discussing the main outcomes of the project and communicating them to the community (and a second closing event at the end of the prorogation period); the exhibition "Countries of the Sea"; traineeships for maritime mediators at MARE, to develop further their capabilities; three online News Games; an international call for

papers that rendered a publication available with open access; flyers with information on the program; and maritime mediation course curricula.

All the information and outcomes of the project are concentrated on its website<sup>3</sup>. The website is designed to be visualized in a lighthouse, illuminating the ways, inspiring the communication plan and serving as a repository on the matters the project covers (MediMARE, 2020a). Email also played a major role in the communication strategy, with direct electronic mail inviting several hundred addressees to the events and forwarding the newsletters monthly.

The communication activities to reach the external public were described in the MediMARE Communication Project. Internal communication occurred through email, video calls, and through a document repository available to project participants via Dropbox. The final version of the project's outcomes is available on the project website.

This paper intends on being a descriptive analysis of the project's communication plan, what was accomplished, and to evaluate which of the communication strategies were most effective and the reasons behind the effectiveness of the approaches (or lack of). We intend to describe the project and the activities performed by the type of audience they were intended to reach, finalizing with an evaluation of such activities.

1. We have divided this writing into seven parts. The first one will contextualize the topic of the project: maritime mediation, and its relevance as a research theme. The second part will analyze the communication and dissemination of the project. The third through sixth parts will assess communication to the following communities: broader public, the academic community, students and professionals, and finally, policy makers. The seventh and final part will provide a general evaluation of the project as well as the concluding remarks. As we describe each of the parts, specific evaluations will be made.

## **1. Maritime Mediation**

Maritime law is an intrinsically international field (Donato, 2023; Sparka, 2009). Maritime disputes may include disputes of a public, private or mixed nature<sup>4</sup>. Public conflicts include International Organizations and States dealing with public matters and regulated by international public law. They may also refer to maritime border conflicts or a dispute over fisheries distribution of quotas among States.

Private conflicts are the most common, and they involve private companies and individuals. They may refer to commercial contracts of purchase and sale, shipping contracts, or labor contracts, among others. As private interests are at stake, and thus having party's autonomy in the decision of the conflict, it is possible for the parties to use alternative dispute resolution

<sup>3</sup> The project website is hosted at [medimare.eu](http://medimare.eu).

<sup>4</sup> This classification was introduced by Lopes and Donato at the MediMARE Online Course, and may be found at Donato, 2023, page 5. This publication was made during the course of the project with important academic remarks on the area.

means. There are also the mixed nature conflicts, which involve States and private parties in matters that are of a mixed nature, such as the purchase of a private property within an environmentally protected area. The types of conflicts studied at the MediMARE Project were mostly private conflicts. These conflicts may be solved through litigation or through alternative resolution forms.

When a conflict is international, additional factors may create complexity. A conflict that “touches” upon more than one legal system may cause legal uncertainty to the parties involved (Sparka, 2009). Having to litigate in a jurisdiction that is not your own might be a challenge as the legal system may be different (either common or civil law), it can be expensive, evidence may not be accessible (Sparka 2009) and in some cases, there is uncertainty on the impartiality of the judiciary.

There are some methods of preventing this uncertainty. Choosing a forum to litigate would be one of them, but that could bring up matters and discussions on the substantive law based on which the conflict would be decided.

The same goes for arbitration, which has its advantages due to the fact that the parties will choose an arbitrator with more knowledge of the area, but the possibility of higher costs is a disadvantage.

Mediation enters this list of possibilities as a win-win method of solving disputes. Through a mediation procedure, the parties can build a solution for their conflict in the best way for them. There is no requirement to choose a substantial law or procedural law. Costs are usually reduced, it is confidential, there is more flexibility, celerity and it is a completely voluntary process (Cebola, 2011).

## **2. The Communication and dissemination project**

In funded projects, communication and dissemination activities are foreseen in the call and should be planned by the project partners when submitting a proposal (Vannier, 2023). In the MediMARE Proposal, the above-listed activities were planned, and we will describe the planning and implementation, and to whom each of the activities were targeted (MediMARE, 2020b).

Communication activities are mingled with project activities and outcomes, since several of the activities that are directed to the public are communication or dissemination activities. There is, commonly, a misconception of what is science communication. Burns, et al. (2003) acknowledges that the term science communication is commonly understood as a synonym (with the use of these terms interchangeably) of public awareness of science, public understanding of science, scientific culture or scientific literacy. In the author’s conception, Science Communication “may be defined as the use of appropriate skills, media, activities, and dialogue to produce one or more of the following personal responses to science:

- Awareness, including familiarity with new aspects of science.
- Enjoyment or other affective responses, e.g. appreciating science as entertainment or art.
- Interest, as evidenced by voluntary involvement with science or its communication.



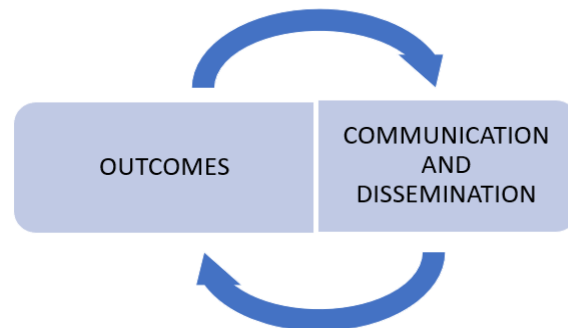
- Opinions, the forming, reforming or conforming of science-related attitudes.
- Understanding of science, its content, processes and social factors (Burns et al., 2003, p. 191).

In MediMARE's scenario, the main communication served as awareness, interest, opinions and understanding. As the project evolved, there was the development of more understanding and awareness, and acknowledgment of interest and opinions.

Also, besides communication activities being mingled with the outcomes, it is important to note that whenever they had one outcome and communicated or disseminated their result, it served as input for the next outcomes, since there was spontaneous feedback from the audience.

**Figure 1**

*Retro feeding process from outcomes' communications and disseminations*



*Note.* Created by the author.

The communication plan is very important in a project, since it will delineate the means, the schedule and the structure in which the project will relate to the public. And by public we are including the general public and specific targets to whom the project's outcomes and the communication or dissemination activities are directed to.

The authors also differentiate the public from participants. The term public involves all persons in the society, while participants are the ones that are directly or indirectly involved in science communication (Burns et al., 2003).

The EEA Grants Norms referred to sustainability as an important value, and so all the events that could be online for saving resources, happened in that format (Soares, 2019).

In our context, communication was developed in distinctive and common means to inform the public and participants, as we will see, but it is important to notice, as a starting point, what was the main objective of the MediMARE communication plan.

The aim of the communication plan is to enlighten the broad public as to the meaning of mediation, the importance of the sea for economic and environmental reasons for the partner countries, and to disseminate the project results and activities. Our communication plan will have the following goals:

- 1) Increase the knowledge on mediation and maritime disputes;
- 2) Promote the project, its results & deliverables;

- 3) Help to train the next generation on mediation;
- 4) Draw attention to the complexity of maritime and international laws and regulations;
- 5) Show the importance of the sea for partner countries;
- 6) Promote the use of mediation as a tool to solve maritime disputes;
- 7) Support open science, promote good practices and science-based policy-making (MediMARE, 2020a, p. 4).

The other communications strategies will be explained below.

There was a distinction between four targets of the communication and dissemination materials: the broader public, the academic community, the students and professionals (either from the legal, mediation or maritime areas) and policy makers. Although addressed to some specific audiences, the whole public was invited to the planned events, as a means of stimulating more participation and creating more input for the project, besides the communication itself.

The distinction between communication and dissemination is the target audience to whom the strategy is aimed at. Communication activities are the ones that will increase visibility of the project and all outcomes (Vannier, 2023). The language of the communication activities and outcome are more accessible, since the target is not a specialized audience. Dissemination, at the other end, are the activities aimed at the more specialized target, such as peer investigators and academics, scientific community and to policy makers. This audience is composed of a specialized audience, and should have a more technical language, to address more specific and detailed issues.

The effective communication strategy used were the dialogue and participation models (Trench, 2008) since the content of several of the outcomes (and a more evident example would be the workshops and final symposium and seminar) were defined based on the contacts during the events, when the project participants understood the gaps of the area and the need of the diverse public. We will address public participation further on.

The broader public included stakeholders, academics and journalists and the main outcomes were monthly newsletters, flyers, a final conference (the project was postponed for two months which resulted in a final symposium and a final seminar), and a final exhibition. For the academic community, the project partners and scholarship holders developed publications and presented them in Congresses and Seminars. The actions for students and professionals from legal, mediation and maritime areas involved monthly outcomes: workshops, online courses and an intensive training program. For the journalists, three news games were developed. The Policy makers were involved in the final dissemination events.

### **3. Communication to the Broader Public**

Communication to the broader public happened throughout the whole project (and is still available at the project webpage, where all the inputs are located). The first action taken was to explain what maritime mediation is, what constitutes the MediMARE Project and the EEA Grants, for the public to understand the partnership between Portugal and Norway and the development

of the subjects in the project (Vannier, 2023). Also, a brief explanation on what mediation is and what are the particularities of maritime mediation since the maritime area has its specificities.

The newsletters were sent monthly to a list of emails that initiated with 100 contacts and ended with over 400. The newsletters contained a report of everything that happened in the project, with invitations to new events, “save the dates” and news on what happened in the previous month. One can see a whole “picture” of the project by reading the newsletters. They were sent to all the stakeholders of the project, with the *caveat* that there was a warning that if the person was not interested in receiving the emails, they could answer with “unsubscribe”. There were less than five unsubscribe requests, so the communication was relevant to the vast majority of the audience.

There were monthly workshops in maritime law themes, mediation topics and maritime specific mediation topics. The project invited the public, through the project email,<sup>5</sup> and most of the workshops were conducted online, to facilitate the interaction between the teams in Norway, Portugal, and to allow the participation of international stakeholders. With time, the project team understood it would be desirable to record<sup>6</sup> the workshops for the participants that could not be present at the scheduled time, due to conflicting agendas or even conflicting time zones. The recorded workshops are available at the MediMARE website.

The topics chosen for the workshops related either to the material topic of the research and the project goals, or to the project communication objectives are detailed below:

**Table 1**

*List of Workshops – MediMARE Project*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker(s)</b>	<b>Title</b>
19/09/2022	Pernille Haukas	“Why President George W. Bush wanted ratification of the UNCLOS. The United States position related to the United Nations Law of the Sea”
24/10/2022	Roberta Donato	“Solving Maritime Disputes: Mediation as the preferred method”
15/12/2022	Joaquim Simplício	“Mediation in Maritime Disputes as a Safety Tool in a Charging World”
30/01/2023	Key note speaker: Rhys Clift and project partners	Online Workshop on Maritime Mediation
14/02/2023	Ana Carolina Riella	“A Mediator’s Toolbox: Active Listening as a communication skill”
17/03/2023	Letícia Fontestad Portales	“Mediación marítima versus Arbitraj e marítimo (de Londres)”
31/03/2023	Guilherme Brechbühler	“The contribution of Artificial Intelligence to the mediation process”
05/05/2023	Milena Barbosa	“Mediação e direito do mar: a arte do acordo” (“Mediation and law of the sea: the art of the deal”
26/05/2023	Carlo Corcione	“Mediation in Shipping: A Practical Insight”

<sup>5</sup> The project email was medimare@uc.pt.

<sup>6</sup> Workshops were recorded as allowed by the speaker(s) and involved participants.



Date	Speaker(s)	Title
26/05/2023	Giovanni Matteucci	“The Singapore Convention and Contractual Clauses”
19/06/2023		Seminar – Mediation in Portugal. Communication
21/06/2023	Lurdes Serra	“Mediation Process Design”
22/06/2023	Carlo Corcione	“Renegotiation of Contracts in Shipping
28/06/2023	Nuno Sardinha Monteiro	Strategic importance of the sea
30/06/2023		MediMARE Final Symposium
01/07/2023		MediMARE Final Symposium
12/09/2023	Jeffrey A. Weiss	“New York Maritime Arbitration Awards – How They Can Shape the Maritime Law.”
20/09/2023		MediMARE Final Event

*Note.* Created by the author with MediMARE workshops list and information.

The January 30<sup>th</sup> workshop was an important midpoint point for the project, with the presence of a keynote speaker (Rhys Clift, a commercial mediator at Sea Mediation Chambers), as well as the presentation from project partners communicating some of the outcomes and what had been developed up until that point.

The other very important and sizable events were the Final Symposium on Maritime Disputes, that took place on June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup> and the Final Seminar. At the Final Symposium there were presentations and/or participation of all the vital public mentioned as follows: the general public, the academic community, students and professionals (lawyers and maritime operators) and policy makers. Except for the general public, the others held separate panels to discuss the importance of maritime mediation from their perspective (the panels were Maritime Mediation: perspectives from Mediators; Maritime Mediation: perspectives from Lawyers; Maritime Mediation: perspectives from Maritime Operators; and Maritime Mediation: perspectives from Policy Makers). There was also a panel to present the main outcomes of the project and a round table discussion on the need of maritime mediation.

**Figure 2**

*Program of the Workshop on Maritime Mediation  
January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023*

*Note.* MediMARE Project. Events. Online workshop on maritime mediation. From <https://medimare.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023jan30-scaled.jpg>

**Figure 3**  
*Mediation in Maritime Disputes Final Symposium*



Note. MediMARE Project. Events. Final Symposium on maritime mediation.  
 From [https://medimare.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Poster\\_vf-scaled.jpg](https://medimare.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Poster_vf-scaled.jpg)

The final event was held on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and it marked the end of all project activities. The project group requested an extension of the final deadline and was granted a two-month extension to wrap up the paperwork. During this time, the team organized one more workshop and worked on the final project outcomes (the Guidebook and the Book Maritime Mediation), as well as planned the Final Seminar. The final seminar presented all the outcomes, and reached a wide range of public, since it had panels on the publications, the courses, communication and dissemination and stakeholder engagement.

The final workshops were imperative in communicating the project content and discussing next steps. All the workshops were very important communication moments. Either as a tool to publicize the content that was being developed in the project, materially and to discuss the next steps. The content of the final event was engaging and the interaction with the public that attended the events was important for the project partners to understand the impact of the project communication on the attendees. In the overall analysis, the workshops were the highlight of the project and connected the public to the project partners, allowing for the latter to get familiarized with the most interested parties on the topic, as well as for the stakeholders to get to know the project partners.

Two flyers (or leaflets) were produced with information on the program<sup>7</sup>. The first one described the project activities and the second one the main outcomes of the project. Both were printed and used at events to publicize the project to the public. They were important communication tools to get the project known and build trust with the project stakeholders.

On this topic there is a need to address the three online news games that were addressed to the broader public and journalists. The games have interesting maritime mediation topics (with explanations that could bring knowledge on the topics covered in each of the questions).

<sup>7</sup> Link to the flyers, or leaflets, is available at <https://medimare.eu/about-the-project/>.

## Figure 4

### *Mediation in Maritime Disputes Final Seminar – Presentation of Results*



Note. MediMARE Project. Events. Final Seminar: Presentation of results. From <https://medimare.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/29set2023-scaled.jpg>

The games are interactive decisions tree and in such format of games the players decide between two answers to advance and finalize the game. There isn't a right or wrong answer, just choices of paths taken by the players that will lead them to an outcome more or lesser favorable (Vannier, 2023). All the answers have explanations, so it is an important communication and learning tool. The topics of the games are ships deviation, damaged cargo and misleading Incoterm clause. All of them are correlated to maritime law issues and mediation is suggested as a form of solving an emerging conflict. The games reached the desired public, as the games were used in dissemination events of the MediMARE Project as well as for the University of Coimbra Institute for Legal Research, such as the Night of European Researchers and correlated activities to the event.

The Exhibition "Countries of the Sea" was an exhibition designed to promote the partnership between Portugal and Norway, the countries represented in the MediMARE Consortium (Vannier, 2023). The exhibition kickoff was a panel in the final Symposium, with Fernando Borges, Ana Paula Duarte, Antonio Campos and Sandra Patricio from the MediMARE Project, and the municipalities of Buarcos and Sines. It was exhibited at Colégio da Trindade, in physical and electronic formats. The exhibition material was developed and adaptable to digital platforms, so it may be used in websites, or even promotional events. The exhibition was directed to all the stakeholders presented at final symposium and final seminars, and ended up reaching all the visitors, students, professors and scholars who passed by the entrance of Colégio da Trindade during the period in which the exhibition was in place, from June 30<sup>th</sup> until September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The exhibition was organized by the University of Coimbra Institute for Legal Research, with the cooperation of Nucleo Museológico do Mar from the municipality of Figueira da Foz, the City of Sines and the Trondheim's Maritime Museum. In the words of the partner of the project responsible for such exhibition, Fernando Borges, the cooperating parties were approached by the MediMare team to collaborate with the project to provide the knowledge and the collection necessary for an exhibition. Their experience in documenting the seafaring life was invaluable to create the content for the exhibition.

The first challenge was to find a point of connection between Portugal and Norway able to show the countries link to the sea, and, at the same time, capable of providing a dialogue platform for both. Having mediation as the main subject of the project and having EEA Grants as funder, the partnership aspect between Portugal and Norway as a key aspect to focus. After meetings with Núcleo Museológico do Mar and Trondhjem's Maritime Museum, we learned that both had a good collection of photos documenting the codfish industry. The exhibition was later complemented with seafaring life aspects such as the specific jargon used by fishermen in Sines coastal village (MediMARE, 2023b, p. 68).

**Figure 5**

*The Countries of the Sea Exhibit*



*Note:* Picture taken by the author.

Since maritime law is a very restricted area, with terms that are not very common to all areas, the project team has decided to develop a Glossary with terms used in the project, for all their outcomes, to make the communication process more available to the non-specialized public. The glossary was called WikiMediMARE and it is composed of two parts. The first part is the Mediation and Maritime Glossary, and it is composed of more than 80 technical terms. The terms were published in the MediMARE Newsletters, which are available at the project website. It is also available as annex 1 of the book elaborated by the author of this paper. The second part is called WikiMediMARE Useful links, and it is in the annex 2 of the book Maritime Mediation. It is separated into International Conventions, International Organization and Courts and Mediation Societies, Mediation Rules and Clauses. All this content was also made available at the online course.

#### **4. Communication to the Academic Community**

For the academic community, the project partners and scholarship holders developed publications and presented them in events, such as Congresses and Seminars. There was also an international call for papers that rendered a publication available with open access at the project website and at the University of Coimbra Library website. The author (also a scholarship holder



of the project) published a book and the project team gathered to write a guidebook on the project. Also, the final symposium and the final event were directed to the Academic Community, as well as the development of a maritime mediation curricula.

The main goal of these activities was to disseminate the work to experts and transfer knowledge internationally. Regarding the participation in Academic events, the project team was present at the Conference of the Oceans of the United Nations in June 2022, in Lisbon, and the project's researchers presented their work at the International Congress of IBDMAR (Brazilian Institute of the Law of the Sea) of 2022 (and also in 2023, after the end of the project), at the International Congress Public Powers and Companies for a Sustainable Development at the University La Sapienza, at Rome, on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and 27th World Congress of Political Science – International Political Science Association in July 2023, Science 2023 – Meeting with Science and Technology in Portugal, an encounter devoted to “Science and Ocean beyond the Horizon”, in July 2023.

In the call it was foreseen that an academic book be written by the scholarship holder of the project. The book is entitled ‘Maritime Mediation’ and it is available through open access through the projects website and the University of Coimbra Library website<sup>8</sup>.

The purpose of the book is to develop in a more scientific manner the concepts that were worked throughout the project. The publication could be a handbook, an introduction to the field of maritime mediation. It is directed at students, maritime operators, mediators, lawyers and all interested parties in maritime mediation. The book is composed of six chapters. In the first one, the author introduces maritime conflicts, explaining what their concepts are, what types of conflicts were worked with in the project, and its actors and types, specially classifying the conflicts into public, private and of a mixed nature. Knowing how to differentiate these conflicts is important to know if maritime mediation may be used for the conflict at stake. Also, there is the introduction on the sources and leading organizations of international maritime law, as well as a discussion on the implications of the intrinsic international nature of maritime disputes. Chapter 2 discusses alternative dispute resolution means, differentiating arbitration and mediation, their advantages and disadvantages.

On chapter 3 the taxonomy developed at the MediMARE Project is introduced and explained, with several examples, named the extended taxonomy. Types of mediation and their characteristics, as well as how they could be applied to maritime mediation are presented in subchapter 3.4, as they were applied by project partner Catia Marques Cebola and Susana Sardinha in the intensive training on maritime mediation.

On chapter 4 international commercial and maritime mediation associations concepts were introduced, followed by chapter 5, where these associations' mediation rules were exposed, and, in chapter 6 the maritime mediation clauses. These were the topics covered in the project. The book was presented to the public during the Final Seminar. Some copies were printed and will be made available to libraries, to disseminate the content even further. On December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 109 copies of the book had been downloaded from the University of Coimbra website.

<sup>8</sup> Also available at DOI [10.47907/livroMaritimeMediation/ProjetoMediMARE/2023](https://doi.org/10.47907/livroMaritimeMediation/ProjetoMediMARE/2023).



On the MediMARE website the book was accessed 43 times. This number was requested for the page administrator.

Also, during the Final Symposium, there was an International Call for Papers. The Organizing Committee received fourteen proposals that were published in a Book of Abstracts and presented during the Symposium. The subjects were classified in three categories: Maritime Mediation and the Sustainable Development Goals, Maritime Mediation “deconstructed” (focusing on mediation procedure and foundations in maritime disputes) and New Directions for Maritime Mediation (which included online mediation and artificial intelligence). The presentation was recorded, and is available online, at the project website. The publication is available at the University of Coimbra Library’s website and the project website. As per the Book of Abstracts, it is available at the project website<sup>9</sup>. On December 29<sup>th</sup>, the book had been downloaded at the University of Coimbra website 154 times. As the Maritime Mediation book, the number of accesses was requested to the webpage administrator, and there were 10 accesses at the MediMARE website.

The project team has also developed a guidebook of the project. The Guidebook was coordinated by MARE-NOVA, with content developed by the project partners. It briefly explains what the project is, the taxonomy, the curriculum analysis, the interview report, explains how the online course, the intensive training and the traineeships were developed. Also, there is a part on communication and dissemination, and lessons learned. The Guidebook is available at the project website in four languages: English, Portuguese, Norwegian and French. The Guidebook in Portuguese was accessed 33 times, in English 26 times, in French 15 times and in Norwegian 10 times. Since this was the latest outcome uploaded, the numbers are interesting.

The Final Symposium and the Final Seminar (already described) also configured important opportunities for the academic community to receive and give contributions to the project.

Finally, there was the development of a possible curricula for maritime mediation to be used for educational institutions in case they intend on teach a course on the subject. The curricula were developed and were the basis for the intensive training on maritime mediation. So, the project partners could receive feedback and make adequate adjustments to the final version.

## **5. Communication to Students and Professionals**

The main communication strategies developed for students and professionals were workshops, the online course, the intensive training program, the final Symposium and Final Seminar, the International Call for Papers and the Traineeship at MARE.

As per the Workshops, already described above, they were directed to all the public and very used in special by students and professionals to get acquainted with the concepts of maritime mediation as well as with all that was brought by the lecturers at the workshops.

Regarding the online course, it was an open access course, broadly publicized through our newsletter and the project partner’s network. That allowed for the online course to get known

<sup>9</sup> The book is also available at <https://doi.org/10.47907/livroderesumos/ProjetoMediMare/2023>.

on all continents and the number of enrolled students by far exceeded expectations, leading to a second edition of the course.

The online course on maritime mediation aims at teaching the basic aspects of maritime mediation and is a self-paced asynchronous course, with 54 hours. It is composed of four modules, the first on “What is mediation: Principles and limits”; the second on Mediation and practice (mediators, models and procedures); the third on Maritime disputes as a field for mediation and the fourth on Specificities of maritime mediation.

The course was run in two editions. The first one had 227 enrolled students. 171 students accessed the course and 102 successfully completed it. There was a satisfaction evaluation questionnaire, and the results were extremely positive. One hundred percent of the students that took the course would recommend it to others. The overall feedback included some of these answers: “The platform was easy to use; The course structure was well organized; The contents were appropriate and are applicable professional/scientific context; The activities were useful; The evaluation methodology was adequate considering the objectives; Their level of knowledge increased with the course; The instructors were supportive; The instructors gave timely feedback; They did not feel conditioned by interaction occurring only online; The course met or exceeded their expectations” (Nolan, 2023).

As for the course’s strengths, the students mentioned: “well-organized and relevant contents; the user-friendly platform; the case-studies; the variety of resources; the flexibility, and the self-paced mode of the course” (Nolan, 2023). And for course’s weaknesses: “the weak interaction; absence of videos in some modules; the formative quizzes; and overlapping contents” (Nolan, 2023).

For the second edition, there were 107 participants and 58 successfully concluded the course.

The feedback received at the forum was very important as well as the ones from the evaluation questionnaire. Also, the professors included questions and topics in the forum for the students to interact with them, and that was a very valuable experience.

In our understanding the online course has by far exceeded the expectation regarding communication. The project has received enrollment requests from several countries, on all continents, and that demonstrates how a wide network of information dissemination has been developed throughout the project. Very effective, specially considering the specificity of the subject, which is restricted to a limited range of activities.

Regarding the intensive program on Maritime mediation. The program was designed for 20 students (from Portugal and Norway) and to be offered at the Polytechnic of Leiria. It lasted two weeks and had mostly face-to-face activities. 24 students attended the course, as four were scholarship holders of the project. The professors teaching the course were from Portugal and Norway and the program aimed at developing in the students the necessary tools to handle a mediation procedure, with a practical knowledge of what is maritime mediation. Several practical exercises were developed by the students in role plays and mockups. Also important were the case studies. The communication strategy during the course was very intensive and it was interesting to hear the students’ feedback and interests. Also, it is very rewarding to see that one

of the students in our course has decided to develop his PhD thesis on the maritime mediation topic. Another student, from Norway, has let us know that she is developing her final bachelor's degree writing also on maritime mediation. The feedback was very positive and inspiring for the project participants.

The Final Symposium and Final Seminar were also developed taking into consideration the students and professionals as main targets.

And finally, there was a traineeship for three maritime mediators at MARE, to develop further mediation capabilities. The project's intention was that the trainees were chosen from the intensive training course. There was a change of course since the intensive training course happened almost at the end of the project. So, the trainees were chosen through a call. Three trainees were chosen and they, besides the traineeship, also attended the MediMARE intensive training at Leiria.

All this information is important for us to realize that the project has achieved the desired feedback as intended: to spread the use, knowledge, and content of maritime mediation.

## **6. Communication to Policy Makers**

Communication and dissemination of the project to policy makers was made throughout the project, using the newsletter (which basically described all the project activities) as well as in the Final symposium, with the participation of important policy maker names, such as Maria de Assunção Cristas, former minister of Agriculture, Sea, Environment and Territory of Portugal, and João Reis, who substituted the Secretary of Fisheries Teresa Coelho. There was also a specific panel named Maritime Mediation: perspectives from policy makers that had the participation of Filipa Faria and Licina Simão.

The project participants were also at Science 2023 – Meeting with Science and Technology in Portugal, the above mentioned “Science and Ocean beyond the Horizon” encounter, in July 2023, presenting a poster on the Benefits of Maritime Mediation.

All those participations were very important for the communication of the project with the policy makers and for them to understand the results and outcomes.

## **7. Concluding Evaluation and Final Remarks**

Maritime mediation is an interdisciplinary area. It needs development specially in Portugal, where most of the partners of the MediMARE Project were located at. From our perspective, by been an area still under development, it has its difficulties, but at the same time it is a very rewarding area of research and science development. It is hard to find scholar sources on specific maritime mediation subjects, which also allows the researcher to be creative and structure their own path. Alternative dispute resolution means have long been used in the maritime area. With the confidentiality of mediation, it becomes harder to find figures and case studies described by scholars. And that was one of the project's main difficulties. To find real cases of maritime commercial mediation.

It is important to keep in mind that the communication project is just a project, and, as communication and dissemination activities are developed, it allows for inputs to be received by the research and some minor deviations in the projected path to happen. It enriches the process and drives the researchers to more structured decisions.

One of our main evaluations, and as a point of attention, was that the project had too many activities designed for its very short duration. When the project partners became acquainted and the public got familiarized with the concepts and requested participation in the project, it reached its term.

For a project with such an important and new topic, it would be interesting if more time was given for the development of the activities. And, on the basis that communication is made and supports the development of the project, some of the events, in special the intensive training course, the Final Symposium and Final Seminar were milestones for the communication of the project. Unfortunately, they were also developed at the end of the project's duration. It would have been interesting for them to happen and more activities to be developed after their feedback was received.

Also, sustainability is a value to the project's sponsors, and, therefore, most of the communication and dissemination events happened online. Nonetheless, it was very important to have face-to-face moments, in which there was a connection between the public and the partners of the project (and among partners of the project).

One more important point to be analyzed is the evaluation of the events. There was not one evaluation of the main events. For the online course and the intensive course, the evaluation happened, and it was very detailed (for both it was not mandatory, so all those who wanted could fill out the satisfaction survey). But for the workshops, for the Final Seminar and the Final Symposium (which happened in a hybrid form), for the online game there is no public access to how many access the outcomes had and what were the comments of those who participated in it. The same for the written outcomes: the taxonomy, the interview report, the book *Maritime Mediation*, the *Guidebook* and even the curricula on maritime mediation. The author had to request such numbers from the page administrator. This was the main weak point of the project strategy. But from the growth in the number of participants at the events and of the interested parties, one could perceive the overall positive feedback.

Also, there is no public data on how many downloads the written documents had, or how many accesses were made out of the University of Coimbra platform. It is hard to perceive an interested public and how the outcomes are being evaluated, in general, without the numbers.

Our overall analysis is that the project communication and dissemination was fulfilled and achieved its goal, to make the broader public, academic community, students and professionals and policy makers aware of maritime mediation and the need to develop it further.

With more time the project would have reached a broader public, as well as being able to disseminate and communicate more the intended main goal: the wide benefits of maritime mediation, especially in Portugal, where its use is not as widely disseminated as in Norway.

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