

Workshop “Capacity building and harmonization of scientific diving in Europe”

Follow up and steps ahead



Photo: University of Calabria

ScienceDIVER project team organized a virtual workshop entitled “Capacity building and harmonization of scientific diving in Europe”. The event, held in December 2020 was tailored in three consecutive webinars, dedicated to topics concerning professional acknowledgment, legal framework and training framework and gathered a large community of scientific divers. The interest in the event crossed Europe’s borders and attracted 165 unique participants from Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South Americas, revealing the importance of discussed matter in global aspect. The majority of the audience was represented by diving scientists and experienced divers.

The workshop aimed at raising awareness on the project goals and activities towards creation of common framework for scientific diving in Europe. Representatives of the project partners introduced the project to the audience and presented the outcomes of performed studies that examined the current state of scientific diving and impediments deriving from the distinct legislative framework and lack of harmonization. Distinguished experts were invited to express their thoughts on the discussed issues and share their points of view and the applied practices in their countries.

The opening of the workshop was done on 2 December 2020 with the webinar “**Professional acknowledgment**”, which addressed topics related to the professional recognition of scientific divers. Based on the interaction with the audience (answering the questions raised) followed the presented projects’ outcomes and the expressed points of view, it was confirmed that the **scientific diving is highly complex matter with extremely different rules and systems** across the countries and difficult to harmonize, especially with regards to insurance and other sensitive topics.

The series continued on 9 December 2020 with the webinar on “**Legal framework for scientific diving**”, trying to identify legal gaps and potential good practices. The discussion concerning the existing legislation and the request of new Directive for scientific diving showcased that though **there is not a paved way yet, the scientific diving community will pursue harmonization of regulations** with common efforts. It was pointed out that the goal is to find the best solution on the basis of an applicable model.

The last webinar of the workshop, held on 16 December 2020 was devoted to the issues of the “**Training framework for scientific diving**”, bridging legislation and recognition. The key features

of the existing training courses were presented on the basis of the preliminary results of the data gathered on the matter and the comparative analysis of six main training schemes that have been investigated. The recognition of the offered training courses and the need for updates were discussed and it was reconfirmed that **harmonization is a key point**. Additionally, it was proposed **to reconsider scientific diving training in dependence of the particular environmental conditions** where the scientific tasks are applied



Photo: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Summarizing, it's obvious that ***despite the long-lasting efforts, the progress made so far and the achievements of the scientific diving community, a common legal framework, the standardization of the training framework and the mutual professional recognition are*** the pillars for the harmonization of scientific diving in Europe.

All questions emerged in the workshop framework have been answered by ScienceDIVER team's experts and are available [here](#)

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