

The discussion that was carried out online on April 6th, 2021 @ 19:00 EEST with the title “**SCIENTIFIC DIVING: CURRENT STATUS AND PERSPECTIVES IN GREECE**” was coordinated by Atlantis Consulting S.A and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki as part of the national workshops and in the framework of the [European Maritime Day-In my Country](#) and held in the form of an online discussion.

The planned event was national and was conducted in Greek.



Figure 1: The announcement of the event

The initiated with an introductory presentation that was implemented by Mr. Angelos Manglis, Founder of Atlantis Consulting S.A, partner in the ScienceDIVER project. Then, Miss Paschalina Giatsiatsou, Maritime Archaeologist from Atlantis Consulting S.A continued with the main presentation. With the end of the main presentation, Kimon Papadimitriou made a presentation of a questionnaire-based research results which is being carried out in the framework of the ScienceDIVER program (link: <https://www.sciencediver.eu/research-questionnaire/?lang=en>). The questionnaire was

created on the occasion of the event "Autonomous Diving and Citizens' Science" (Piraeus, Saturday 7th of March, 2020) and was structured for the needs of the program in order to capture the image of the wider diving community on issues related to scientific diving.

During the discussion portion of the webinar, the ScienceDIVER panel consisted of Dr. Kimon Papadimitriou from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Coordinator of ScienceDIVER project, Dr. Themistoklis Ioannidis Researcher from the Atlantis Consulting S.A and Dr. Alexandros Tourtas Post-Doc Researcher from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki were present. Mr. Angelos Manglis was also present as moderator. The discussion that followed was very fruitful and there were many representatives from relevant stakeholders in Greece that were able to express their opinion, propose some solutions and called attention to specific matters concerning scientific diving and the next steps of the project.

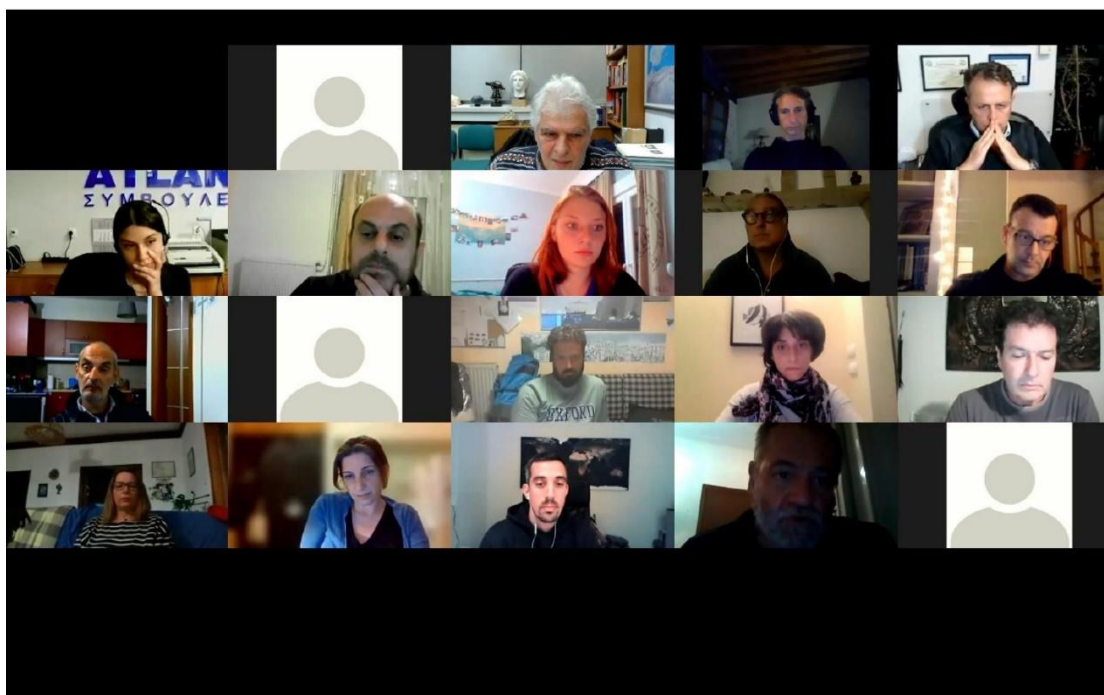


Figure 4: Screenshot from the event during the discussion part¹

Regarding EDUCATION/TRAINING FRAMEWORK matters, there was a general acceptance amongst panelists and attendees that a basic training first and foremost should be provided by the universities since they are more suitable types of institutions. The training should also provide for the basic knowledge and skills for scientific diving and can be modified according to the “science” that is addressed to. However, the matter of cost when it comes to additional training for extra skills from diving organizations should also be taken under consideration.

An interesting suggestion regarding the creation of a sustainable training that will be provided by the universities is that the training should precede any legal binding regarding scientific diving since there definitely would be problems organizing and creating an inclusive training manual that can have realistic practical application. It was also suggested that there should be taken under consideration the integration of scientists or divers that already working in scientific diving jobs which can be dealt with a checklist of skills (which is already followed by AAUS, USA).

¹ All attendees were formerly consented for the screenshots.

Concerning the LEGAL FRAMEWORK there was a general agreement that the most important step towards the harmonization of a legal framework is a common definition for scientific diving. On a national level, it is also important for Greece to define the term scientific diving and integrated into its legal framework. In this way, Greece can have an active role on relevant matters at a European level; an issue that until now remains unsolved. However, the definitions of a legal framework first to determine the insurance policies in Greece and then the guidelines to conduct a scientific oriented diving work possibly will untangle any relevant issues and set the standards for any further improvements. Moreover, it was suggested that for Greece a legal framework for scientific diving, based in the active practices is critical not only for the insurance policies but also to ensure that there is correspondence between the European and national framework.

Last but not least, regarding the PROFESSIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT there is an imminent need for distinctive clarifications between professional/commercial/ scientific diving in order to avoid any miscommunication and misunderstandings. It is also important, as stated, to take under consideration professional divers that work in scientific projects. Their contribution is essential especially when it comes to safety issues and required specific skills.

Conclusions

According to the discussed issues and suggestions there were four points that were noted from members of the panel as concluding remarks and are accepted by the majority of the attendees.

1. When it comes to scientific diving it was generally accepted by the participants of the online discussion that a scientific diver is first a scientist and then a diver.
2. Although scientific diving is part of professional diving since the individual is practicing his/her profession, lack of definitions and specific relevant terms in the Greek language can be a point of confusion.
3. **Training:** the establishment of a common training framework will not only solve professional acknowledgement and certification issues but will also assist in creating a general mindset in scientific diving.
4. The priority of Greece should be the creation of a legal framework regarding scientific diving which is set as a general standard for the development of training programs, the upgrade of the framework in professional diving and therefore professional acknowledgement.

The general outcome of the online discussion was very positive and most of the attendees agreed to keep in touch in order to discuss even more the issues regarding scientific diving in Greece.

The screenshot displays a virtual meeting interface. The main content is a presentation slide with a light blue background and a dark blue header. The slide text includes: "With the contribution of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund of the European Union" (with the EU flag), "Διαδικτυακή Συνάντηση" (Webinar), "Τρίτη 6 Απριλίου 2021" (Tuesday 6 April 2021), and "19:00-20:00". A logo for "Science Diver" features a stylized diver and a globe. The main title of the presentation is "Επιστημονική Κατάδυση : Παρόν και Προοπτικές στην Ελλάδα" (Scientific Diving: Present and Prospects in Greece). A secondary logo for "EMD IN MY COUNTRY" is also visible. At the bottom of the slide, a row of logos for partner organizations is shown: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Atlantis Consult, Università della Calabria, DAN, University of Stuttgart Germany, CMAS, and enviro.com. On the right side of the interface, a grid of video thumbnails shows several participants in the meeting.

Figure 2: Screenshot from the beginning of the event during the introductory presentation