

**MAIA PROJECT'S MEETING - INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP**  
**SHARING KNOWLEDGE TO SAVE OUR SEAS**  
**South West hosts international marine workshop**

September 26<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011, at Totnes (UK)

An international gathering of marine scientists, MPA managers, conservationists, fishermen and anglers will be taking place in Devon today with the aim of improving the way we protect our seas.

The **MAIA International Workshop at Dartington Hall (26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> September)** has been set up to identify best practice when it comes to planning and managing the **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)** which are being created throughout Europe. **MAIA** is a European partnership bringing together nine separate organisations in four countries (UK, France, Spain & Portugal), all involved in the preservation of the bio-diversity of our coastal and offshore waters.

During the course of the four day seminar, representatives from member countries will be joined by experts from the USA to discuss the varying methods being used to designate and operate the MPAs which will offer lasting protection to marine habitats and wildlife within the Atlantic Arc region of Europe.

This event represents the first time that European stakeholders (such as fishermen, conservationists, MPA managers and sea anglers) will have been able to listen to the perspectives and experiences of their counterparts. Due to the international nature of the event, all sessions will be simultaneously translated into French, Spanish and English.

**The four day seminar will particularly focus on the efforts being made to involve a wide range of interested parties in the creation of MPAs.** It will feature sessions including:

- The involvement of stakeholders in previous MPA developments.
- The methods used to get stakeholders involved and to map their input.
- The best ways of resolving disputes between stakeholders with conflicting interests.



The workshops will feature speakers from the UK, France, Spain, Portugal and the USA who will talk about the creation and management of a number of MPAs including Galicia's National Park 'De las Islas Atlánticas' and the Iroise Sea Marine Nature Park in Brittany. Delegates will also hear from those involved in Finding Sanctuary, the two year project set up to recommend locations for marine conservation zones in the South West.

Amandine Eynaudi is the Project Manager for MAIA; she believes the international gathering will present a valuable opportunity to share best practice.

She says: "From the Shetland Islands to the Azores, from the UK to Portugal, the conservation of marine biodiversity has become a key national issue for European countries bordering the Atlantic, especially through the creation of Marine Protected Areas.

"Marine life doesn't recognise national boundaries, so it's vital that the different nations work together to ensure the health of our waters. Nations may take different approaches but by collaborating we can make sure we create a coherent and accepted network of MPAs and also that we benefit from the experiences of others working towards the same goals."

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### Notes to Editors

The MAIA International Workshop is being held at Dartington Hall, near Totnes (26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011). The sessions are open to delegates only.

### **MAIA: a European project**

**MAIA** is financed by the Interreg IV B Atlantic Area programme under priority 2 - "protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainability." **MAIA** gathers 9 partners involved in MPA designation and management within the UK, France, Spain & Portugal. The purpose of **MAIA** is to create a **network of MPA managers** which will take **initiatives on an international level in terms of designation, governance and management** as well as being involved in the **development of a consistent, efficient and accepted network** of Marine Protected Areas within the Atlantic Arc.

### **MARINE PROTECTED AREAS**

The concept of the Marine Protected Area first appeared within the framework of the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea** (1982). It was further clarified in the **Convention on Biological Diversity** in 2000 and by the **World Summit on sustainable development** in Johannesburg in 2002. Today Marine Protected Areas are omnipresent in the debate on preserving the marine environment both internationally and on the European level, with the **European Marine Strategy**, the **Common Fisheries Policy** or the **"Habitats" and "Birds" Directives**.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature defines a Marine Protected area as "a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or effective means, to achieve the **long term conservation of nature** with associated ecosystem services and cultural values".

The objective is sometimes associated with a local socio-economic development goal or developed in conjunction with sustainable resource management. Steering can be entrusted to different kinds of bodies (local or national) each having their own statutes and governance.