

Report from the One Ocean Forum in Milan, October 2017

Notes from Norddeutscher Regatta Verein and St Francis Yacht Club attendees.



One Ocean Forum has been conceived as a moment for sharing, cooperation and the raising of awareness about environmental sustainability. It is intended to become a regular event to promote effective actions related to marine preservation.

The aim is to launch an international dialogue on ocean sustainability, creating a network of "intelligence" and identifying best practices in order to raise awareness about the issues affecting the marine ecosystem.



Tobias König, member of NRV in Hamburg, reports:

The One Ocean Forum was a very well planned and organized event. It has been the first of this kind, which I attended. The topic itself is of paramount importance to mankind, however, despite the many different initiatives the oceans are still full of plastic and each year millions of tons of plastic are adding to the problem. Unless people around the world will change their habits, the pollution will only get worse.

I have discussed the pollution of the oceans with many people and I am always saddened when I hear that you cannot clean up, unless you can make money doing so. But that's a very common mindset, which needs to be dealt with. And quite frankly, while awareness will help to reduce further pollution, we have to find ways to recycle the plastic and a way to pay for the clean-up. Companies like Nike and Adidas are starting to use recycled plastic to make sneakers. But there are many other ways to make use of the plastic.

At the One Ocean Forum, different commercial initiatives were presented. Of course, the focus was on Italian companies. At NRV, we are now working on expanding the scope and considering to host such forum in Hamburg next year.

There is a lot of work ahead of us and we must not stop until we have taken the last piece of plastic out of our oceans, which means we must never stop. As sailors, we know much more about the environmental pollution of our oceans than the people ashore. Therefore we should see ourselves as "Ambassadors of the Oceans" and state our case whenever possible. The Charta Smeralda is a good way to start, but signing it doesn't make the difference. We ourselves must roll up our sleeves and start the clean-up. I really believe that there cannot be enough initiatives around the world as this is a paramount task.

Paul Cayard of St Francis Yacht Club made a great presentation and I am sure that he will be open to helping the US Yacht Clubs to either join the One Ocean Forum, or start their own initiative.



Paul Cayard reports: The forum was a good event to bring people together from a vast company of interested parties, from the UN to individuals. Presentations were offered in sharing information and creating awareness about the state of our oceans, the alarming damage we are doing, and activities and enterprises that have been addressing solutions.

The conference produced Charta SMERALDA, which you can download at OneOceanForum.org. It contains a series of commitments, both individual and organizational to minimize pollution and promote sustainability in the ocean.

Charta Smeralda encourages all players/participants/ everyone to undertake immediate and appropriate action.

- *Prevent marine and coastal pollution*
 - *Preserve water resources*
- *Reduce energy consumption and carbon footprint*
- *Minimise use of non-renewable natural resources*
 - *Promote practices of reuse and recycling*
 - *Use renewable resources and energy sources*
- *Eliminate use of disposable plastics (e.g. throwaway mineral water bottles)*
 - *Protect marine and terrestrial habitats*
 - *Adopt sustainable, ethical, socially responsible behaviour*
- *Promote the adoption of the Charta Smeralda model among partners, members, guests, suppliers and other yacht clubs.*

Ocean sustainability is not new to ICOYC Clubs, as many have in recent years developed programs and initiatives to participate in mutual goals. As an example, the program of the Royal Hong Yacht Club, (<http://www.rhkyc.org.hk/SustainabilityVisionandPrinciples.aspx>) explains what they have done to "become an acknowledged supporter of marine conservation, inspiring & educating members and the wider public to ensure we leave the sea and shore in a healthier condition than how we found it."