

# DOSI attendance at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the IOC Assembly, Paris, June 2023

## Overview

DOSI has interacted with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in the past, and as a consequence, some DOSI members receive 'round-robin' letters from the IOC Secretariat inviting them to participate in IOC events. On this occasion, an invitation to participate in IOC's 32<sup>nd</sup> session of its Assembly (held at UNESCO HQ in Paris, France, 21-30 June 2023) was received by Lisa Levin. Lisa was unable to attend the event, so she forwarded the invitation to the DOSI Office for consideration, to identify an alternative DOSI representative. After consultation with other DOSI members with an interest in IOC activities, nobody was available to attend the meeting, yet it was felt that a DOSI presence would be advantageous. Chris Barrio of the DOSI Office offered to attend on DOSI's behalf, with the intention to seek opportunities to publicise DOSI amongst delegations and report back on proceedings during part of the Assembly and the scheduled Ocean Science Day. Chris attended the 32<sup>nd</sup> Assembly of the IOC from Wednesday 21 to Friday 23 June, 2023. Ocean Science Day was held on Thursday 22 June.

## Participants

Chris Barrio – DOSI Programme Officer, DOSI Office

## DOSI Actions

Prior to Chris' attendance to the IOC Assembly, a couple of briefing calls were organised between Chris and other DOSI members to advise him on what to expect and potential opportunities to look out for with regard to both DOSI and DOOS's engagement with the IOC. In addition, Chris was introduced to colleagues at NOC who comprise the UK's delegation at the Assembly.

On arrival at the Assembly on the afternoon of 21 June, there was one remaining session on the agenda, which dealt with the reactions of the assembled delegations to the Opening Statement presented earlier in the day by the IOC Executive Secretary. There was no opportunity or requirement for any formal interaction between Chris/DOSI and proceedings. In the evening there was the official reception for all delegates attending the Assembly, and Chris was able to mingle socially with several of those in attendance. Whilst interactions were necessarily informal, Chris took the opportunity to share his DOSI business card with everyone he met during introductions, which included the Executive Director of ICES, President and Chief Executive of the IOC, several members of the IOC Secretariat and the European Marine Board, and some national delegations. Many had already heard of DOSI, knew some of its members, or shared acquaintances with Chris.

Ocean Science Day on Thursday 22 June was an extracurricular activity in the Assembly's agenda, during which formal protocols were suspended. The format for the day was prescribed and consisted

of Side Events and lectures with little opportunity for interaction. However, some of the topics being presented (e.g., on the Ocean Acidification Research for Sustainability – OARS, and on the soon-to-be-launched International Panel for Ocean Sustainability – IPOS) had interesting parallels with processes within DOSI, from which much can be learnt and applied in order to streamline DOSI's operations and visibility. Chris made a note of ideas to be considered by DOSI Office for the improvement of DOSI. During lunch and coffee breaks, Chris was again able to interact informally with fellow attendees, introducing DOSI to those who had not heard of it before, and exchanging anecdotes about shared acquaintances with others, thereby creating new bonds and reaffirming existing ones between DOSI and other delegations. Conversations between Chris and the Spanish delegation revealed several colleagues in common and established a potentially advantageous rapport, given that both members of the delegation are the organisers of the 2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference (to be held in April in Barcelona, Spain), to which DOSI intends to contribute.

Friday 23 June saw the resumption of the Assembly's formal agenda, which by this time was already running later than initially planned. Already delayed presentations by Regional IOC groups, followed by delegations' reactions during plenary, extended beyond their allocated time slots, forcing scheduled sessions of interest to DOSI off the agenda during Chris' period of attendance.

In all, it was felt that DOSI's attendance at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Assembly of the IOC was useful and beneficial, despite a lack of opportunity to deliver formal interventions to proceedings. The opportunity to publicise DOSI informally and to have its presence noted in proceedings, together with the useful tips gleaned during other presentations, would suggest that in-person participation was worthwhile and beneficial to DOSI's mission of raising awareness of the deep ocean in high-level policy fora.



*Chris Barrio represented DOSI at IOC-UNESCO HQ in Paris, during the 32<sup>nd</sup> Assembly of IOC, June 2023. Bottom right: with Alan Evans of NOC, member of the UK delegation.*