COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The seas are Europe's lifeblood. Europe's maritime spaces and its coasts are central to its well-being and prosperity – they are Europe's trade routes, climate regulator, sources of food, energy and resources, and a favoured site for its citizens' residence and recreation.

Our interactions with the sea are more intense, more varied, and create more value for Europe than ever before. Yet the strain is showing. We are at a crossroads in our relationship with the oceans.

On the one hand technology and know-how allow us to extract ever more value from the sea, and more and more people flow to Europe's coasts to benefit from that value. On the other hand, the cumulated effect of all this activity is leading to conflicts of use and to the deterioration of the marine environment that everything else depends on.

Europe must respond to this challenge; in a context of rapid globalisation and climate change the urgency is great.

The European Commission has recognised this, and launched a comprehensive consultation and analysis of how Europe relates to the sea[1]. It has triggered a massive response from stakeholders that reveals clearly the enormous potential of the seas, and the scale of the challenge if we are to realise that potential sustainably. It has also provided a wealth of ideas as to how Europe can rise to meet this challenge.

**Building on this valuable input the Commission proposes an Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union, based on the clear recognition that all matters relating to Europe's oceans and seas are interlinked, and that sea-related policies must develop in a joined-up way if we are to reap the desired results.**

This integrated, inter-sectoral approach was strongly endorsed by all stakeholders. Applying it will require reinforced cooperation and effective coordination of all sea-related policies at the different decision-making levels.

An Integrated Maritime Policy will enhance Europe's capacity to face the challenges of globalisation and competitiveness, climate change, degradation of the marine environment, maritime safety and security, and energy security and sustainability. It must be based on excellence in marine research, technology and innovation, and will be anchored in the Lisbon agenda for jobs and growth, and the Gothenburg agenda for sustainability.

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[1] See Report on the Consultation process - COM(2007) 574. See also: Green Paper on *A Future Maritime Policy for the Union: a European Vision of the Oceans and Seas* - COM(2006) 275.

An EU Integrated Maritime Policy will:

- **Change the way we make policy and take decisions** – at every level compartmentalised policy development and decision-making are no longer adequate. Interactions must be understood and taken into account; common tools developed; synergies identified and exploited; and conflicts avoided or resolved.

- **Develop and deliver a programme of work** – action under the different sectoral policies must develop in a coherent policy framework. The Action Plan accompanying this communication gives a clear idea of the variety and magnitude of the work ahead. The following projects are of particular importance :

  - A European Maritime Transport Space without barriers

  - A European Strategy for Marine Research

  - National integrated maritime policies to be developed by Member States

  - An European network for maritime surveillance

  - A Roadmap towards maritime spatial planning by Member States

  - A Strategy to mitigate the effects of Climate Change on coastal regions

  - Reduction of $CO_2$ emissions and pollution by shipping

  - Elimination of pirate fishing and destructive high seas bottom trawling

  - An European network of maritime clusters

  - A review of EU labour law exemptions for the shipping and fishing sectors

This Communication lays the foundation for the governance framework and cross-sectoral tools necessary for an EU Integrated Maritime Policy and sets out the main actions that the Commission will pursue during the course of this mandate. These actions will be guided by the principles of subsidiarity and competitiveness, the ecosystem approach, and stakeholder participation.


## 2.     CONTEXT

Europe has a 70 000 km coastline along two oceans and four seas: the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans, the Baltic, the North Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea. The EU's maritime regions account for some 40% of its GDP and population.

Europe's well-being is therefore inextricably linked with the sea. Shipbuilding and shipping, ports and fisheries remain key maritime activities, but offshore energy (including oil, gas and renewables), and coastal and maritime tourism also generate massive revenues. Sea-ports and shipping allow Europe to benefit from the rapid growth of international trade and to play a leading role in the global economy, while the exploitation of mineral resources, aquaculture, blue biotech and emerging sub-sea technologies represent increasingly important business

opportunities. Equally significant are the recreational, aesthetic and cultural uses we make of the seas and the ecosystem services they provide.

Ensuring that use of the marine environment is genuinely sustainable is a prerequisite for these industries to be competitive. The growing vulnerability of coastal areas, increasingly crowded coastal waters, the key role of the oceans in the climate system and the continuous deterioration of the marine environment all call for a stronger focus on our oceans and seas.

Ocean sustainability is today widely recognised as a major global challenge, intimately connected with climate change.

Increasing competition for marine space and the cumulative impact of human activities on marine ecosystems render the current fragmented decision-making in maritime affairs inadequate, and demand a more collaborative and integrated approach. For too long policies on, for instance, maritime transport, fisheries, energy, surveillance and policing of the seas, tourism, the marine environment, and marine research have developed on separate tracks, at times leading to inefficiencies, incoherencies and conflicts of use.

Based on this recognition, the Commission's vision is for an integrated maritime policy that covers all aspects of our relationship with the oceans and seas. This innovative and holistic approach will provide a coherent policy framework that will allow for the optimal development of all sea-related activities in a sustainable manner.

## 3. A GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK AND TOOLS FOR A MARITIME POLICY

An Integrated Maritime Policy requires a governance framework that applies the integrated approach at every level, as well as horizontal and cross-cutting policy tools. It will also require a sound financial basis, taking into account the results of preparatory actions.

### 3.1. Applying the Integrated Approach to Maritime Governance

The Commission has set up a maritime policy function, with the task of analysing maritime affairs and the policies affecting them, coordinating between sectoral policies, ensuring that interactions between them are taken into account, and piloting the development of cross-cutting policy tools. It has also started bringing together EU agencies with maritime-related functions, with a view to ensuring their collective contribution to the development of the maritime policy.

Better regulation principles will guide the Commission policy-making on maritime issues from an early stage: identification of major maritime-related initiatives in the annual planning and programming instruments, consultation of civil society and interested parties, impact assessments and inter-service working groups will help to ensure that the Commission is able to design and deliver genuinely integrated proposals.

Other EU institutions and actors are invited to examine how best to apply the integrated approach to maritime policy affairs in a systematic way. Certain Member States have started developing co-ordination mechanisms in their maritime policy-making. All stakeholders should participate in the governance process and are invited to continue to bring to the Commission's attention any EU legislation that in their view is counterproductive in achieving the aims of an Integrated Maritime Policy.

- **The Commission will:**

  - **invite Member States to draw up national integrated maritime policies, working closely with stakeholders, in particular the coastal regions;**

  - **propose in 2008 a set of guidelines for these national integrated maritime policies and report annually on EU and Member States' actions in this regard from 2009;**

  - **organise a stakeholder consultation structure, feeding into further development of the maritime policy and allowing exchange of best practices.**

## 3.2. Tools for Integrated policy-making

An integrated governance framework for maritime affairs requires horizontal planning tools that cut across sea-related sectoral policies and support joined up policy making. The following three are of major importance: maritime surveillance which is critical for the safe and secure use of marine space; maritime spatial planning which is a key planning tool for sustainable decision-making; and a comprehensive and accessible source of data and information.

### 3.2.1. A European network for maritime surveillance

Maritime surveillance is of the highest importance in ensuring the safe use of the sea and in securing Europe's maritime borders. The improvement and optimisation of maritime surveillance activities, and interoperability at the European level, are important for Europe to meet the challenges and threats relating to safety of navigation, marine pollution, law enforcement, and overall security.

Surveillance activities are carried out by Member States but most of the activities and threats that they address are transnational in nature. Within most Member States surveillance activities concerning fisheries, the environment, policing of the seas or immigration fall under the responsibility of several different enforcement agencies operating independently from each other. This often results in sub-optimal use of scarce resources.

The Commission, therefore, advocates the need for a higher degree of coordination on maritime surveillance through deeper cooperation within and among the Member States' coastguards and other appropriate agencies.

The gradual achievement of an integrated network of vessel tracking and e-navigation systems for European coastal waters and the high seas, including satellite monitoring and long range identification and tracking (LRIT), would also provide an invaluable tool to public agencies.

- **The Commission will:**

  - **promote improved cooperation between Member States' Coastguards and appropriate agencies;**

- **take steps towards a more interoperable surveillance system to bring together existing monitoring and tracking systems used for maritime safety and security, protection of the marine environment, fisheries control, control of external borders and other law enforcement activities.**

*3.2.2.    Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)*

Existing planning frameworks have a largely terrestrial focus and often do not address how coastal development may affect the sea and vice-versa. We must address the challenges that emerge from the growing competing uses of the sea, ranging from maritime transport, fishing, aquaculture, leisure activities, off-shore energy production and other forms of sea bed exploitation.

Maritime spatial planning is therefore a fundamental tool for the sustainable development of marine areas and coastal regions, and for the restoration of Europe's seas to environmental health.

Following an EU Recommendation[2], Member States have begun to use ICZM to regulate the spatial deployment of economic activities and to set up spatial planning systems for Europe's coastal waters. Both these instruments contribute to meeting the commitments deriving from the Thematic Strategy for the Protection of the Marine Environment[3] and provide operators with improved predictability for their planning of future investments. A system for exchange of best practice among authorities engaged in maritime spatial planning and ICZM will be set up.

Decision-making competence in this area lies with the Member States. What is needed at European level is a commitment to common principles and guidelines to facilitate the process in a flexible manner and to ensure that regional marine ecosystems that transcend national maritime boundaries are respected.

- **The Commission will:**

  - **develop a roadmap in 2008 to facilitate the development of maritime spatial planning by Member States.**

*3.2.3.    Data and Information*

Availability and easy access to a wide range of natural and human-activity data on the oceans is the basis for strategic decision-making on maritime policy. Given the vast quantity of data collected and stored all over Europe for a wide variety of purposes, the establishment of an appropriate marine data and information infrastructure is of utmost importance.

This data should be compiled in a comprehensive and compatible system, and made accessible as a tool for better governance, expansion of value-added services and sustainable

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[2]    Recommendation 2002/413/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2002 concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe.
[3]    See Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Framework for Community Action in the field of Marine Environmental Policy (Marine Strategy Directive) - COM(2005) 505.

maritime development. This is a considerable undertaking with many dimensions, and will need to be developed according to a clear and coherent plan over a period of years.

- **The Commission will:**

    - **take steps in 2008 towards a European Marine Observation and Data Network[4], and promote the multi-dimensional mapping of Member States' waters, in order to improve access to high quality data.**

## 4. ACTION AREAS FOR AN EU INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY

An EU Integrated Maritime Policy will focus its action primarily in the following five areas:

### 4.1. Maximising the Sustainable Use of the Oceans and Seas

The first goal of an EU Integrated Maritime Policy is to create optimal conditions for the sustainable use of the oceans and seas, enabling the growth of maritime sectors and coastal regions.

In many Member States, the recent growth of the maritime economy has been higher than that of the overall economy, in particular in regions active in maritime logistics. Container movement has grown considerably since 2000 and is expected to triple by 2020. Regions active in other strong growth markets, such as marine equipment, off-shore wind energy, recreational boating and cruise shipping, will also continue to benefit from this growth. The potential for European industries to develop cutting-edge maritime products that can lead in world markets is also considerable, given Europe's considerable expertise in marine technology.

But much potential remains untapped. An updated strategic vision for the development of competitive, safe and secure shipping, ports and related sectors is essential if we are to achieve sustainable growth of sea-related activities while ensuring that maritime activities develop in a way that does not threaten marine ecosystem health.

*Shipping* is vital for Europe's international and domestic trade and remains the backbone of the maritime cluster. However, this industry will only continue to prosper if the Union keeps working to establish a high level of maritime safety and security, helping to safeguard human lives and the environment while promoting an international level playing field.

Although shipping is a preoccupying source of air pollution and $CO_2$ emissions, it remains considerably more energy efficient than road transport. For this reason, and because of the need to reduce trucks from Europe's congested roads, an Integrated Maritime Policy strongly favours the promotion of safe and secure shipping. Current EU programmes (TEN-T and MARCO POLO) will continue to support the creation of the Motorways of the Sea/Short Sea Shipping Networks. The future development of TEN should also take full account of the increasing uses of the seas in the energy field.

Nevertheless, shipping remains at a disadvantage compared to other means of transport. Other transport modes benefit from more public investment. Furthermore, a vessel travelling

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[4] Building *inter alia* on the GMES initiative.

between two EU ports is subject to more complex and time-consuming procedures than a truck would be, because a real internal market for maritime transport in Europe does not yet exist. In order to unlock the full potential of Europe's shipping industry this disadvantage of maritime transport compared with the other modes must be eliminated through the simplification of administrative and customs formalities for intra-EU maritime services.

- **With a view to improving the efficiency of maritime transport in Europe and ensuring its long term competitiveness, the Commission will:**

  - **propose a European Maritime Transport Space without barriers;**

  - **prepare a comprehensive maritime transport strategy for 2008-2018.**

*European seaports* are another essential link in the logistics chain that the European economy depends on. They are centres of economic activity that play a key role in determining the quality of their surrounding urban and natural environments.

Globalisation means that we are witnessing an unprecedented growth of international trade. Given that 90% of Europe's external trade and close to 40% of its internal trade passes through its ports, it is not difficult to understand the great challenge that Europe's ports face if they are to deal with increasing demand. Their capacity development must mirror the growth of Europe's domestic and international trade and occur in a way that is compatible with related EU policy objectives, in particular its environmental and competitiveness goals.

- **The Commission will:**

  - **propose a new ports policy, taking account of the multiple roles of ports and the wider context of European logistics;**

  - **make proposals to reduce the levels of air pollution from ships in ports, namely by removing tax disadvantages for shore side electricity;**

  - **issue guidelines on the application of the relevant Community environmental legislation to port development.**

Europe's maritime logistics chain also requires cutting edge *shipbuilding, repair and marine equipment industries* and the European Union will build on successful initiatives[5] to promote the development of these industries and in particular the small and medium companies.