



## **SPECIAL SESSION ON THE EU MARITIME POLICY**

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Chair: Awni Behnam, President of IOI  
Rapporteurs: Ranier Fsadni and Peter Serracino Inglott



## Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU

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### Abstract

On 10 October this year, the European Commission adopted a Communication setting out its vision for an Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU, together with a detailed Action plan laying down an ambitious work programme for the years ahead.

Scientific discoveries, huge strides in technological development, globalisation, climate change, and marine pollution are rapidly altering Europe's relationship with the seas and oceans, with all the opportunities and challenges that this presents. An integrated maritime policy proposed by the European Commission will enable the European Union to change the way we think and the way policy is formulated in the maritime sectors. It will enable the relevant authorities to analyse interactions between the various sectors and policy areas concerned and to take them into account at every level so as to develop common tools to exploit synergies and avoid conflicts. The new policy will be anchored in the Lisbon agenda for more and better jobs and growth, and in the EU's overarching commitment to ensuring that economic development does not come at the price of environmental sustainability.

The Communication and accompanying Action Plan list a range of concrete actions to be launched during the mandate of this Commission. They are also accompanied by a report on the results of the consultation which revealed strong stakeholder support for the Commission's initiative. The proposed actions cover a wide spectrum of issues ranging from maritime transport to the competitiveness of maritime businesses, employment, scientific research, fisheries and the protection of the marine environment.

The Commission has already begun to deliver the Action Plan by presenting a review of labour law exemptions in the maritime sectors and publishing a report on the interlinkages between the EU energy policy and the new integrated maritime policy. Recently, it has also adopted ports policy, Communications on Sustainable Tourism and on Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing.

Furthermore, with the October ministerial conference in Lisbon, the European Commission together with the Member States has started work on the conclusions of the December European Council of Heads of State and Government. The Commission hopes that those conclusions will constitute a sound basis for the development of an Integrated Maritime Policy for the Union in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

An integrated maritime policy will only succeed with the continued engagement and support of all the actors and stakeholders concerned. Thus, the Commission will continue to work with stakeholders and authorities at European, national and regional levels in order to translate its vision into reality

### Introduction

As you know on 10th October last year, the Commission adopted a Communication setting out its vision for an Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU, together with a detailed action plan setting out an ambitious work programme for the years ahead. The two documents are accompanied by a report on the results of the consultation, which lasted for one year and revealed strong stakeholder support for the Commission's initiative.

An integrated maritime policy will focus primarily on 5 areas, such as: maximizing the sustainable use of the oceans and seas; building a knowledge and innovation base for the Maritime Policy; delivering the highest quality of life in coastal regions; promoting Europe's Leadership in International Maritime Affairs and raising the visibility of Maritime Europe.

This new emerging European maritime policy is not only about changing the way we make policy and take decisions introducing and applying an integrated approach. As I already mentioned, with this new strategy the Commission has also put forward an extensive plan the delivery of which has already begun.



The Commission is proposing horizontal planning tools that cut across sea-related sectoral policies and support joined up policymaking. These are: 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.

In the area of maritime surveillance the Commission will promote an improved cooperation between Member States' coastguards and appropriate agencies; it will take steps towards integration of all surveillance monitoring systems at EU and regional level.

The Commission will develop a roadmap to facilitate the development of maritime spatial planning by Member States. A system for exchange of best practice among authorities engaged in maritime spatial planning and ICZM will be set up.

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. The Commission will establish the European Marine Observation and Data Network, and promote the multidimensional mapping of Member States' waters, in order to improve access to high quality data.

The question of sustainability is a critical one in the Commission's vision for our oceans and seas, and is, therefore, central to both the Integrated Maritime Policy and the Thematic Strategy for the Marine Environment, that is an environmental pillar of the maritime policy.

To achieve the first goal of a vision which is maximizing the sustainable use of the oceans and seas, the Commission is proposing a number of actions covering maritime transport, ports and logistics, the development of multisectoral clusters enhancing the competitiveness of Europe's maritime companies, the strengthening of careers and employment in the maritime sectors, sustainable maritime tourism, reduction of air pollution from ships, ship dismantling, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and the protection of the high seas.

I will comment on some of them. Shipping is vital to Europe's international and domestic trade and remains the backbone of maritime clusters. Nevertheless, shipping remains at a disadvantage compared to other means of transport. A vessel traveling between two ports is considered to be international and thus is subject to more complex and time-consuming procedures than a truck would be. To improve the situation, the Commission has already launched a consultation on a European maritime transport space without barriers and on how to boost the motorways of the seas.

European seaports are another essential link in the logistics chain that the European Economy depends on. They are centers of economic activity that play a role in determining the quality of their surrounding urban and natural environments. 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. To understand the critical role of ports in domestic and international trade driving economic growth in Europe, the Commission proposes an overall strategy for EU ports, including guidelines for the application of environmental legislation to their development.

Business integration and competitiveness in the maritime sector are greatly enhanced by the formation of multisectoral clusters. The Commission has prepared a Staff Working Document outlining the role, diversity and importance of European maritime clusters.

Another priority is to foster more environmentally friendly shipping by reducing pollution and CO<sup>2</sup> emissions from ships. The Commission is following closely the International Maritime Organisation discussions on the revision of MARPOL Annex VI and if it concludes that the results are insufficient, it will consider alternative proposals for action.

The human element is a key factor in maritime safety and the protection of the environment. Thus, this should be reflected in the training and certification of seafarers and appropriate labour conditions for those working onboard ships.



Another Commission's aim is to increase the number and quality of maritime jobs for European citizens. The decline in seagoing employment is worrying and needs to be reversed, as seafarer's experience is key also for shore-based jobs. The Commission will work to provide young Europeans with more attractive prospects for a life-long career in the maritime clusters and facilitate mobility between sea- and land-based jobs.

The Commission will also aim to raise the quality and skills of European seafarers to ensure safety at sea and the protection of the environment. It will promote a certificate of Maritime Excellence, to be endorsed on a voluntary basis, with the aim of supplying highly knowledgeable personnel to the shipping industry and the maritime clusters.

Currently maritime sectors are excluded from the scope of some EU social legislation. Thus, the Commission will reassess, in close cooperation with social partners, the exclusions affecting maritime sectors in EU labour legislation.

Europe's energy situation and policy imply more reliance on oceans, seas and ports. As we all know, maritime transport of energy in European waters is projected to grow considerably in the next years; marine energy resources, both fossil and renewables, will be important in the diversification of Europe's energy supply. The Commission has already adopted a Document, which looks at the connections and synergies between Europe's energy policy and maritime policy.

Fisheries and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management occupy another important part in a vision and action plan. The recovery of fish stocks will be energetically pursued, requiring sound scientific information and reinforcement of the shift to multiannual planning.

Dumping overboard of dead, unwanted fish caught as by-catch is a serious issue that needs to be addressed as a priority by the Common Fisheries Policy. The Commission has already set out the principles of a policy for the progressive elimination of discards and will present a roadmap for the preparation of relevant legislation.

Action against illegal unregulated and unreported fishing has been ongoing for some time at the European, international context, and within regional fisheries management organisations. The European Commission has adopted a Communication to tackle those aspects of IUU that can be covered by EU legal instruments.

In October 2007, the Commission already issued a legislative proposal to regulate destructive fishing practices on the High Seas by EU fishing vessels.

Marine science, technology and research are crucial for the sustainable development of sea-based activities. They are key in reconciling the economic growth of sea-based activities with environmental sustainability. Thus, building a knowledge and innovation base is another important goal of maritime policy.

The Commission is planning to launch a European Strategy for Marine and Maritime Research and a commitment to excellence in scientific research, technology and innovation. It will help to exploit business opportunities and new uses of the sea such as exploration and exploitation of nonliving resources, renewable energies, offshore aquaculture, blue biotech and emerging subsea technologies.

Europe's coastal regions, including the outermost regions, are its gateway to the sea and, beyond that, to the wider world. They are a source of wealth, and a store of history and culture, in their own right. The maritime regions already generate over 40% of Europe's GDP with even bigger economic potential. That explains why the Commission has chosen delivering the Highest Quality of life in Coastal Regions as another important goal of its Maritime policy.

The European Commission believes that more transparency on projects funded by European budgets in coastal regions would provide a better foundation for strengthening the



dissemination of best practices among the regions. It will set up a database on projects in maritime regions and their funding and make it available online.

Coastal regions are increasingly exposed to risks, due to increased development and the effects of climate change. Thus, the Commission will deploy strengths in combating climate change, through research and innovation and through sophisticated planning for our vulnerable coastlines. It will develop a strategy for disaster prevention and a strategy for adaptation to climate change.

New offshore technologies, such as carbon capture and geological storage, are essential to meet the Community's climate change objectives and thus the Commission will take all actions to bring these into effective operation.

The development of tourism as a major sector in the EU maritime economy requires that positive linkages are made between the tourist economy and other economic sectors and that environmental requirements are fully included. Following the consultation on the report of the Tourism Sustainability Group, the Commission has adopted an "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism".

The Commission will continue in its efforts to promote the development of quality coastal tourism. The sustainable development of maritime and coastal tourism must be planned at all levels and, therefore, the achievement of sustainable development will be greatly determined by national and particularly local policies and decisions.

Studies carried out in the course of the preparation of the Green Paper point to both the inadequacy and the lack of harmonisation of available data. More and better quality data are needed. The Commission plans to address these inadequacies creating an integrated socioeconomic database for maritime sectors and coastal regions.

Europe's leading position in maritime activities and scientific research gives it a duty to maximise its influence in international maritime affairs. The European Commission will produce an assessment of the situation of the EU within all the international organisations with maritime objectives.

The European Union plays a leading role in developing and setting international standards for maritime action. It is all the more important to ensure that the EU itself and its Member States ratify and implement such international rules speedily. Therefore, the Commission will maintain a database on the ratification by Member States of international conventions.

And the last but not least goal of maritime policy is raising the visibility of Maritime Europe as well as improving the image of maritime activities and the seafaring professions.

To achieve this, the Commission has an intention to organize a European Maritime Day annually which will launch a week of activities including a conference, awards, an annual report, specific awareness campaigns and networking. The idea is not just to raise awareness, but also to bring maritime heritage organizations, museums and aquaria together to exchange experiences and best practices.

The development of an integrated approach to maritime policy also requires transparent information, and the visibility of the actions undertaken and the linkages between them. The Commission has already started providing on its website all the information on ongoing actions in the Maritime Policy.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that the integrated maritime policy is just at the beginning of its development. The Consultation process has proved that it will only succeed with the continued engagement and support of all the actors and stakeholders concerned. The Commission will continue to work with stakeholders and authorities at European, national and regional levels in order to translate its vision into reality.



## **Making the EU Maritime Policy work in the Mediterranean – the support from Operational Oceanography**

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Throughout history the sea has played a crucial role in the socioeconomic development of the Mediterranean region. Today the quest for environmental security, based on the concepts of sound ocean governance, sharing of knowledge and the controlled use of resources, is the precursor for prosperity, sustainability and peace. The importance of marine resources to our wellbeing calls for the sustainable use of the sea in both open and coastal domains. There is an ever increasing responsibility on the scientific community to provide accurate and routinely updated information for a more comprehensive knowledge on the state of the sea and the marine ecosystem, to support the chain of policy, planning and decision-making undertakings, to understand and address climatic change impacts, to provide frameworks for more effective surveillance and monitoring, as well as to further applications in marine-related economic activities. There is, moreover, a recognition of the opportunities and advantages which transpire from regional cooperation on marine research and environmental monitoring especially in a region like the Mediterranean, where the multitude of jurisdictions and multiple uses of marine space calls for more stringent regulations, a holistic approach across disciplines, and collaborative management across stakeholders and across countries.

Twenty-first century science and technology is called to meet these demands. Further research and developments in methodology, equipment and analysis of observations, as well as additional, improved and cost-effective long-term monitoring systems for reliable systematic observations are required to improve the ability to detect, attribute and understand the various processes - including climatic changes - in order to reduce uncertainties, improve impact assessments, and predict change down to local and coastal scales. Indeed the role of operational oceanography is of essence here, and its evolution towards the provision of integrated service-oriented applications will be an essential step to tackle the needs of a knowledge-based society. The future is pointing towards multiple-purpose observing systems, linking observations across economical, environmental and social domains, and targeting a wide range of applications that cater not only for monitoring, but also for the provision of services in key marine realms and industries as well as for security, safety and enforcement. The advent of multi-disciplinary, spatially widespread, long-term data sets is expected to trigger an unprecedented leap in the economic value of ocean data. This will bring about a radical transformation in our perception of managing marine resources, and will be critical to competitiveness, product development and enhancement of services.

Most of the existing structure in operational oceanography in the Mediterranean has been coordinated by means of the MFS (Mediterranean Forecasting System), which was conducted as a EuroGOOS regional sea program. Its continuation, the Mediterranean Operational Oceanography Network – MOON, has established an even larger consortium aiming to the consolidation and maintenance of the existing observing and forecasting systems in the region.

The EU Maritime Policy recognises that excellence in marine research is a key ingredient, but also considers sound governance and international cooperation as important pillars for achieving its targets. Europe needs to pursue these goals within international fora, and in collaboration with global institutions and third countries. It is recognized that opportunities and advantages transpire from regional cooperation on marine research and environmental monitoring. This is especially relevant in regions like the Mediterranean where the multitude of jurisdictions, the far-reaching impacts of marine practices beyond national domains, and the multiple usage of marine space, including extra-Mediterranean influences on the open seas, calls for the simultaneous respect of the very specific characteristics of this sea.





These pointers direct to the need for stronger linkages with the South-Eastern Mediterranean countries with the setting up of regional partnerships, arrangements and mechanisms for capacity building, comanagement, sharing of efforts and co-exploitation of benefits, possibly within the framework of a stronger EU-Mediterranean Cooperation in the marine sector and a future Euro-Med Research Area. The overarching strategy is to develop a greater sense of pan-Mediterranean solidarity within the ambit of more effective forms of Euro-Mediterranean common structures. The enlargement of the EU, the Barcelona Process and the EU's Wider Europe/New Neighbourhood concept are three complementary exercises that together provide the Mediterranean with the means to achieve the stability that has eluded it in the past.

In the realm of operational oceanography this is the task of MedGOOS, the GOOS Regional Alliance for the Mediterranean. In its brief history since 1998, MedGOOS has staged a concerted effort to identify gaps and needs for ocean observations in the region, to strengthen the network with capacity building activities, and to promote the regional co-development of operational ocean/coastal observation and forecasting systems. MedGOOS is seeking support to launch the 'Al-Bahri' initiative to internationalise the EU maritime policy in the Mediterranean, by promoting synergies between experts, environmental managers, decision makers and authorities from all the riparian countries, disseminating practices targeting closely coordinated and better management, applying new technologies and innovative solutions at the service of a shared regional maritime policy, developing an integrated approach and supporting cooperation in conducting maritime affairs in the Mediterranean.

Through its 5-week intensive course on regional ocean governance held annually in Malta, the International Ocean Institute (IOI) is contributing to build stronger coherence between the EU and its neighbouring countries in their engagement towards the shared governance of the regional seas, promoting inter-regional comparisons, shared experiences and exchange of best practices, and fostering direct interactions between the mid-career professionals that attend the course from European, Eastern European, North African and Middle East countries bordering the Mediterranean. The theme of the course draws upon the conduct of maritime affairs in line with the Lisbon Strategy, targeting the Millennium Development Goals and building upon a holistic and integrated maritime policy following the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The course upholds a principles-and-application concept, focusing on an integrated and cross-cultural approach, with special attention to the linkages between the natural, social and economic sciences for the development of sustainable ocean governance, and on the research-management interface that can render governance operable.