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

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE EU'S INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY**

{SEC(2009) 1343}

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**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE EU'S INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) has established itself as new approach to enhance the optimal development of all sea-related activities in a sustainable manner. It has confirmed the vision that, by joining up policies towards seas and oceans, Europe can draw much higher returns from them with a far lesser impact on the environment. EU institutions, Member States and regions have set-up governance structures to ensure that policies related to the seas are no longer developed in isolation and take account of connections and synergies with other policy areas. Stakeholders have confirmed the considerable interest shown during the broad consultation process of 2006-07, establishing the IMP as a particularly bottom-up driven policy of the European Union. Cross-sectoral tools such as maritime spatial planning, integrated surveillance or marine knowledge have registered tangible progress and should lead to substantial improvements in the way we manage our oceans. EU sectoral policies with a bearing on our seas and coasts, like fisheries, transport, environment, energy, industry or research policy, have all taken substantial moves in the direction of greater integration and consistency. The Commission has also made first steps to implement the IMP on a regional basis. In short, the EU IMP is changing the way Europeans look at their seas and oceans and reaffirmed the strategic importance of the continent's seas and coastal regions.

When it endorsed the EU IMP and the Blue Paper<sup>1</sup>, the European Council of 14 December 2007<sup>2</sup> asked the Commission to report within two years on the achievements of the policy. The present Communication sums up these achievements and charts the course for the next phase of the IMP. It also highlights how joined-up policy-making towards our seas, maritime sectors and coastal areas can contribute to addressing challenges posed by the current global economic crisis and by the need to take decisive action against climate change and environmental degradation. The October 2007 Blue Paper set out an ambitious Action Plan. It includes new working methods, cross-cutting tools and a wide range of specific actions that aim to improve the maritime economy, protect and restore the marine environment, strengthen research and innovation, foster development in coastal and outermost regions, provide leadership in international maritime affairs, and raise the visibility of Europe's maritime dimension.

Essentially the framework provided by the IMP seeks to achieve (and has started to do so) four objectives:

- To promote integration of governance structures by making them more inclusive and co-operative;

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<sup>1</sup> An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union, COM(2007) 575 final of 10.10.2007 and SEC(2007) 1278 of 10.10.2007

<sup>2</sup> 16616/1/07 REV 1

- To build the knowledge base and cross cutting tools necessary to enable the implementation of integrated policies;
- To improve the quality of sectoral policies, through an active search for synergies and increased coherence across sectors;
- In implementing all above, to take account of specificities of the regional seas around Europe, through tailor-made solutions.

The implementation of the Action plan has progressed well: Of the 65 actions in the plan, 56 have been launched or completed (mostly in the form of Commission or Council acts). On 9 actions various initiatives have been undertaken, although no formal documents are adopted yet. Following the first phase, the Commission and Member States are now focusing efforts on effective implementation on the ground, with additional activities in all relevant policy areas pursued where needed.

The Blue Paper and Action Plan were drawn up in a radically different economic climate. The crisis has not spared the maritime economy from declining revenues and downturn. Beyond achievements so far, this paper therefore also sets out where further action will be required in order to unlock the undeniable potential of our oceans, seas and coastal regions, but also to address the economic problems faced by maritime sectors.

## **2. MARITIME GOVERNANCE AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT**

The Blue Paper advocated a major re-think of our governance approach towards seas and oceans at all levels of government: EU institutions, Member States and regions. Political actors have on the whole been very responsive to this approach: two years on, steps have been taken throughout the Union to overcome the compartmentalised nature of several sea-related policies, involve maritime stakeholders more broadly, and identify policy synergies.

### *2.1. EU institutions*

The Commission has taken several steps towards integrating its maritime policy-making. A Steering Group of Commissioners has been operational since 2005 and has debated all the major policy initiatives included in the Blue Paper's Action Plan. Structures have been established for regular meetings among the Directorates-General involved in order to identify synergies and defuse possible policy inconsistencies. The Commission has also re-organised its services and expanded the mandate of its Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries in order to ensure overall co-ordination of the policy and to develop cross-sector tools where needed, as well as to take regional specificities into account.

The Council has shown a strong commitment to the IMP. In its conclusions of 8 December 2008<sup>3</sup> it not only recognised the IMP's cross-cutting nature by dealing with it through the General Affairs and External Relations Council, but also "confirm(ed) that an integrated approach to maritime issues constitutes a major objective, since the synergies, the coherence and the added value of sectoral action undertaken by the European Union need to be reinforced by being integrated into a comprehensive vision of the seas, oceans and coastlines, taking account of distinctive regional features (...)."

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<sup>3</sup> 16503/1/08 REV 1

In institutional terms, the active involvement of the Council and Member States is ensured in both General Affairs Council work and in the IMP Member States contact groups. These groups guarantee that existing expertise in national administrations is fully used, that the specific needs of Member States and coastal regions are given full attention, and that a political consensus is formed with maximum transparency and impact.

Support for, and coverage of, maritime policy in the European Parliament has been very positive<sup>4</sup>. However, maritime policy issues are still being dealt with separately by a number of committees and structures.

The Committee of the Regions has been providing beneficial impetus for the IMP. The Commission has in particular taken note of its opinion on the Blue Paper<sup>5</sup> which contains important input for future work. The Committee's recent "Maritime and coastal package" opinion<sup>6</sup> is a valuable example of how diverging interests can be linked in a coherent, complementary and synergetic fashion.

The European Economic and Social Committee issued an opinion which was particularly supportive of the IMP on 14 April 2008<sup>7</sup>.

## *2.2. Member States*

At the time of the Green Paper, only a few initiatives for integrated approaches in Member States existed. Two countries, France and the Netherlands, reported having the administrative structure in place to organise policy coordination of sea-related matters. Portugal had then already initiated concrete work towards an ocean strategy.

Since then substantial progress has taken place and more Member States have taken initiatives towards the integration of maritime policy and increasingly share best practice in integrated maritime policy approaches. These are fully in line with the guidelines published by the Commission in June 2008<sup>8</sup> and concern organisational changes and/or the development of longer term integrated strategies for the sustainable development of maritime sectors and coastal regions.

Important examples are the Dutch "Nationaal Waterplan", the French "Grenelle de la Mer", the German "Entwicklungsplan Meer", the Swedish bill on a coherent maritime policy, the Polish interdepartmental maritime policy plan and the UK Marine Bill.

Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia have also taken steps in this direction. Related activities are reported from Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Greece, Finland and Spain.

## *2.3. Regions*

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<sup>4</sup> Not least through the report by the late Willi Piecyk, MEP: A6-0163/2008 (Committee on Transport and Tourism)

<sup>5</sup> CoR 22/2008 fin, adopted on 9 April 2008

<sup>6</sup> CoR 416/2008 fin, adopted on 17 June 2009

<sup>7</sup> O.J. 2008/C 211/07

<sup>8</sup> COM(2008) 395 final of 26.06.2008

The coastal regions have been fully-fledged partners of the IMP since the very start. They are best placed to identify what is required to implement the policy locally and at the level of each sea basin. They have also shown great ability to work with their national authorities as well as with regions from other Member States in order to promote integrated solutions to sea-related issues. The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), which brings together some 160 European regions, closely follows the progress of the Action Plan through regular work at the meetings of the Aquamarina working group, set up to promote IMP actions at regional level.

Three major initiatives are worth underlining in this context:

- The first regional action plans on Integrated Maritime Policy - the Asturias Maritime Plan<sup>9</sup> and the Schleswig-Holstein Maritime Action Plan<sup>10</sup>.
- The Brittany coast charter of 29 April 2009<sup>11</sup>.
- The atlas "Channel Spaces — A world within Europe"<sup>12</sup>, by Arc Manche of November 2008, is a best practice example in the documentation of transnational maritime relations.

The Commission is aware of other regions following innovative integrated practices on coastal and sea governance and is fully supportive of them.

#### 2.4. Stakeholders

Ever since their overwhelming response to the consultation process carried out in 2006, stakeholders have been instrumental in establishing an Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU. Regional, business and NGO actors were the first to champion the need for joining up EU policies affecting seas, maritime sectors and coastal regions. Their contributions have provided the ground for innovative concepts and tools.

The afore-mentioned CPMR, the Maritime Industries Forum<sup>13</sup> (MIF), which currently represents 25 maritime trade associations, and the European Network of Maritime Clusters<sup>14</sup>, have been active supporters of the EU IMP. Major environmental NGOs are also actively participating in the IMP process.

The European Maritime Day stakeholder conference has established itself as the annual event where highly productive exchanges take place across the different constituencies<sup>15</sup>. The Commission will further support increased stakeholder involvement in this event. At the same time, stakeholders will be encouraged to organise again de-centralised events around European Maritime Day on 20 May, thus reflecting national, regional and local contributions to the IMP.

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<sup>9</sup> See "inforegio panorama", No. 23 of September 2007, ISSN 1608-389X

<sup>10</sup> Landesinitiative Zukunft Meer, see <http://www.schleswig-holstein.de>

<sup>11</sup> Charte des espaces côtiers Bretons, see <http://www.bretagne.fr/>

<sup>12</sup> Espace Manche : un monde en Europe, see <http://www.arcmanche.com>

<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.mif-eu.org>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.european-network-of-maritime-clusters.eu/>

<sup>15</sup> The EMD 2009 full documentation can be found here:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/maritimeday/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/maritimeday/index_en.html)

There have been recent and very encouraging signs that IMP stakeholders are establishing their own more permanent exchange structures. Whilst the research community, regional organisations, the maritime industries and environmental NGOs traditionally have their individual means to speak to the EU institutions, public dialogue between the different interest groups was the exception. The Commission will strengthen its support to self-organisation of stakeholders across sectors.

### **3. CROSS-SECTOR TOOLS**

The Blue Paper identified the need for cross-cutting tools to underpin the IMP, such as: maritime spatial planning, integrated surveillance, and the building of a marine knowledge base. The development of these three tools has progressed well and first important results can be reported.

#### *3.1 Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)*

Increased activities on Europe's seas lead to growing competition for limited marine space. MSP is a key instrument to balance sectoral interests and achieve sustainable use of marine resources with the ecosystem based approach as the underpinning principle. It is a process that provides a stable, reliable and oriented planning framework for public authorities and stakeholders to coordinate their action and optimise the use of marine space to benefit economic development and the marine environment.

The Commission adopted the "Roadmap on Maritime Spatial Planning: Achieving Common Principles in the EU" in 2008.<sup>16</sup> It sets out 10 key principles and seeks to discuss the development of a common approach among Member States encouraging the implementation of MSP at national and EU level.

Stakeholders from all relevant maritime sectors endorsed the 10 key principles as appropriate, comprehensive and as an important basis for the development of MSP at European level in discussions organised by the Commission during 2009<sup>17</sup>. The Commission also launched two preparatory actions in the Baltic Sea (as part of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region) and the North Sea/North East Atlantic, aiming at developing cross-border cooperation aspects of MSP, as well as a study on the potential of maritime spatial planning in the Mediterranean Sea and the economic benefits of MSP.

Following to the recommendation in the Commission's Blue Paper to set up a system for exchange of best practices in developing Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), the Commission launched in 2009 a support project to stimulate the sharing of best-practice and promote effective implementation of ICZM<sup>18</sup>. The Council signed at the end of 2008 the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management under the Barcelona Convention.

#### *3.2 Integration of maritime surveillance*

Integrating maritime surveillance should result in more efficient operations at sea and reduce operating costs. The potential savings at EU level are significant given the growing need to

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<sup>16</sup> COM(2008) 791 final of 25.11.2008

<sup>17</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/spatial\\_planning\\_en.html#6](http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/spatial_planning_en.html#6)

<sup>18</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/iczm/ourcoast.htm>

detect, track, intercept and control unlawful activities at sea as well as to prevent accidents at sea, detect illegal oil discharges, monitor fishing activities and safeguard the environment.

To date the Commission has produced detailed overviews of the different national, regional and European initiatives on the integration of maritime surveillance<sup>19</sup>, completed a study on the legal and regulatory aspects of the integration of maritime surveillance and carried out a stock taking exercise together with the European Defence Agency and the EU Military Staff in response to a request from the Defence Council<sup>20</sup>. It has also launched two calls for proposals, totalling €5.7 million<sup>21</sup>, for pilot projects for the integration of surveillance which promote closer cooperation between national authorities in the Mediterranean and in a Northern Sea basin.

These actions have reinforced considerably the internal coordination within the Commission's services and with the Member States on this sensitive subject. The Communication: "Towards the integration of maritime surveillance in the European Union"<sup>22</sup> builds on the work to date and sets out guiding principles for the establishment of a common information sharing environment for the EU maritime domain, based on existing and new surveillance capacities including pre-operational GMES services. Extensive consultation between the Commission and Member States to translate these principles into policy will need to be established.

### *3.3 Building a marine knowledge base*

There can be no maritime policy without proper data and knowledge on Europe's seas and coasts. So far marine knowledge remains very scattered and cost-ineffective. The European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODNET), as announced in the Blue Paper, aims to reduce uncertainty in knowledge of the seas as well as operational costs for those who use marine data. Existing databases and observation programmes need to be assessed in terms of coverage, resolution and data collection frequency. Data stemming from different sources should be compiled in a comprehensive and compatible way, and made accessible as a tool for better governance. Substantial preparatory actions are underway to assemble data layers for hydrography, geology, biology and chemistry at a sea-basin level. The Commission, through its statistical service, has collected sea-basin socio-economic data and identified a number of analytical challenges.

The European Atlas of the Sea project aims to raise public awareness of maritime issues.

## **4. KEY ACTIONS IN SECTORAL POLICIES**

The Action Plan provided for sectoral actions in all relevant policy areas related to the seas, be they transport, environment, energy, industry, employment, research, fisheries, external relations or other. Special attention has been given to adopting an integrated approach, working out the links between these various policies, identifying synergies and reducing inconsistencies across sectors. In the case of certain sectoral policies important initiatives have been undertaken with a prominently integrated focus. Their implementation will be

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<sup>19</sup> SEC(2008) 2337

<sup>20</sup> COSDP 949, PESC 1366

<sup>21</sup> Calls for proposals MARE/2008/13 and 2009/04

<sup>22</sup> COM(2009) 538 final of 14.10.2009 and SEC(2009) 1341



directly relevant in the next years to the development of cross-cutting approaches within the broad framework of the IMP. Two important cases should be highlighted:

The Marine and Maritime Research Strategy<sup>23</sup> is the first ever European strategy to promote marine research. This strategy is a pioneering action for the implementation of the European Research Area, which promotes scientific excellence and development of cutting-edge innovations both through better integration of existing research efforts and by developing new capacities across a multidisciplinary scope of sciences. This integrated research strategy will help serve key sectors of the maritime economy, ranging from energy through shipping and the new blue biotechnologies, right through to the goals of EU environmental policy.

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive<sup>24</sup> (MSFD), which constitutes the environmental pillar of the IMP, requires Member States to achieve good environmental status in their marine waters by 2020, thereby protecting the resource base upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend. The implementation of this Directive will benefit from the further development of cross-cutting tools of IMP, such as marine spatial planning and EMODNET, while in return, the various actions required for its implementation, such as the socio-economic analysis of human activities related to the sea, due in 2012 and regularly thereafter will underpin the further development of the IMP. Closely related to the MSFD, the Common Fisheries Policy has also integrated the ecosystem approach as an overarching principle. For the global commons, the EU has taken the lead in policy making at global level and has adopted a Regulation on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the high seas from the adverse impacts of bottom fishing gears<sup>25</sup>.

In addition, beyond these integrated developments within some sectoral policies, the Commission has been successful in improving coordination and developing a more strategic approach across the board to sectoral policy making, which is expected to have a lasting positive impact, and will continue to be developed further.

Thus, on 13 November 2008, the Commission adopted a Communication on offshore wind energy<sup>26</sup>, which identifies the challenges to be tackled to exploit Europe's potential for offshore wind energy. A key point here is the contribution maritime spatial planning will make to the sustainable development of off-shore energy.

In its conclusions on the Integrated Maritime Policy of 8 December 2008, the Council welcomed this Communication as an important contribution to the Integrated Maritime Policy, while stating that further work is necessary for non-wind off-shore renewable energies, including wave, tide, currents and thermo gradient sources<sup>27</sup>.

The EU's cohesion policy funding in the period 2007-2013 supports important programmes with a clear maritime dimension in e.g. the Greek Islands and the Baltic Sea. In addition, cohesion policy supports programmes for all the Outermost Regions, with significant funding opportunities for maritime-related actions.

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<sup>23</sup> COM(2008) 534 final of 3.9.2008

<sup>24</sup> Directive 2008/56/EC of 17 June 2008

<sup>25</sup> Regulation (EC) N° 734/2008, OJ L 201/8, 30.7.2008

<sup>26</sup> COM(2008) 768 final of 13.11.2008

<sup>27</sup> Point 8 of Council Document 16503/1/08 Rev 1 of 5.12.2008

The 2009-2018 Maritime Transport Strategy<sup>28</sup> presents the main objectives for the European maritime transport system for the years to come. It identifies key areas where action by the EU will strengthen the competitiveness of the sector while promoting quality shipping and enhancing safety, social and environmental performance.

Of particular importance in this context is the Communication and action plan with a view to establishing a European maritime transport space without barriers<sup>29</sup>. The measures put forward, largely in the area of customs and sanitary inspections, require a high degree of cross sectoral cooperation. They will simplify and speed up administrative procedures for sea transport between ports located in the EU and extend the Internal Market to intra-EU maritime transport. This should push short sea shipping in Europe and create new opportunities for growth and jobs.

To improve working conditions of seafarers, elements of the Maritime Labour Convention of 2006 were incorporated into Community law<sup>30</sup>. The Commission has also been working on a reassessment of the exclusions of maritime workers from parts of the European labour and social legislation.

The IMP has also clearly increased coordination in many other EU relevant policies, including those on safety of navigation and ports; the promotion of maritime clusters; the support of Europe's shipbuilding and marine equipment sector as developed in the LeaderSHIP 2015 process; the development of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism; or the strategy on climate change adaptation.

Other sea-related sectoral initiatives put forward by the Commission, as well as a number of Commission documents, which are not directly sea-related but contain nevertheless a clear maritime dimension, are indicated in the Commission Staff Working Document accompanying this Progress Report<sup>31</sup>.

In conclusion, this Commission has thus not only focused on developing both cross-cutting and sectoral actions supporting the sustainable growth of coastal regions and maritime sectors. It has also given priority attention to implementing a more strategic and integrated approach to sea-related sectoral policy making that is expected to have a lasting positive impact, and will continue to be developed further.

## **5. REGIONAL STRATEGIES**

Europe's sea basins are extraordinarily diverse. Their ecosystems and economies have been shaped by very diverse geographic, climatic, historical, political and human influences. While the broad principles that underpin the IMP are the same everywhere, the implementation of the policy requires translating them into targeted strategies and specific measures tailored to the specificities of each sea basin. The Commission has, therefore, embraced a sea-basin approach for the implementation of the IMP whose fundamental premise is that each sea-region is unique and needs individual attention in balancing its uses in a sustainable manner. Likewise, the environmental specificities of Europe's varied seas are also a key element in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) which recognises different marine regions.

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<sup>28</sup> COM(2009) 8 final of 21.1.2009

<sup>29</sup> COM(2009) 10 final of 21.1.2009

<sup>30</sup> Directive 2009/13/EC

<sup>31</sup> SEC(2009) 1343

The strengthening of co-operation within these sea regions is therefore an important building block for a successful implementation of the IMP.

So far, regional approaches have been put forward by the Commission for the Arctic and the Mediterranean Sea, and a strategy was launched for the Baltic Sea.

Thus, the Communication on "The European Union and the Arctic Region"<sup>32</sup> presents specific proposals in order to protect and preserve the Arctic in unison with its population, promote the sustainable exploitation of resources and improve multilateral governance. The Commission intends to enhance its input to the Arctic Council and to strengthen Dialogue with the Arctic States and related stakeholders.

In June 2009 the Commission proposed the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region<sup>33</sup>. This is the first EU macro-regional strategy, addressing environmental challenges, energy and transport related issues, economic growth potential as well as safety and security issues. With its strong maritime dimension and its integrated approach, the Strategy constitutes an important first step towards the regional implementation of the IMP in the Baltic. It will help meeting the challenges in the region not only through strengthened internal coordination within Member States, but also through cross-border networks and good cooperation with Russia.

The Commission's Communication on the Mediterranean<sup>34</sup> suggests ways forward to establish an integrated maritime policy in the complex political context of the region. A semi-enclosed sea with very densely populated shores, the Mediterranean can only be managed through increased dialogue and co-operation amongst EU Mediterranean Member States as well as with non-EU coastal States. The Communication suggests options to improve governance of maritime affairs and to ensure a greater involvement of coastal States in managing the marine space.

## **6. OUTLOOK AND FORWARD VISION**

The last two years have confirmed the IMP as a highly promising policy providing a significant contribution to growth, jobs and environmental sustainability for Europe's coastal areas and beyond. Despite its young age, this new EU policy has already changed the way in which Europe deals with its maritime and coastal assets.

After three years of intense deliberations, it is fundamental to keep this momentum in order to address the essential mid- and long term challenges of environmental protection and economic growth and well-being. The double impact of climate change and the economic crisis is particularly felt in the maritime world: oceans are the drivers of our climate and maritime industries have been the drivers of globalisation and prosperity. It is therefore important to unlock the economic potential of maritime Europe, optimise government action on the seas, and further explore the synergies that allow economic growth and environmental stability to reinforce each other.

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<sup>32</sup> COM(2008) 763 final of 20.11.2008

<sup>33</sup> COM(2009) 248 final and SEC(2009) 712 of 10.06.2009

<sup>34</sup> "Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean", COM(2009) 466 final of 11.09.2009

The Commission considers that these objectives will be best achieved through a combination of progress in six strategic directions.

**Integrated maritime governance** must be further enhanced. The progress registered over recent years needs to be turned into effective integrated structures at all levels of government. EU institutions, Member States and coastal regions have a particular responsibility in ensuring upstream policy integration and in adopting coherent, joined up agendas for maritime affairs, further counteracting the prevalence of isolated sectoral policy thinking. Stakeholder involvement in maritime policy-making should also be enshrined more permanently in governance structures. This should also lead to a more intense dialogue between the EU, Member State's Governments and coastal regions, which often hold key expertise necessary for an integrated approach to Maritime Affairs. For the same reason the formation of a cross-sectoral platform for stakeholder dialogue on maritime affairs should be supported.

**Cross-cutting policy tools** are of utmost importance to enhance economic development, environmental monitoring, safety, security and law enforcement on Europe's oceans and seas. In particular, maritime spatial planning, in combination with increased marine knowledge, can unblock considerable economic investment and drastically improve the way we manage our maritime spaces, preserving their ecosystems. It must become a practical instrument on all relevant levels of governance, including with the relevant mechanisms to ensure joined-up decision-making over cross-border investments. The integration of maritime surveillance has the potential of making a difference to the way key policy objectives such as the fight against illegal immigration, the safeguard of commercial shipping and the protection of natural resources are carried out by national authorities. Member States and the Commission will have to continue to work together on these items so that the processes which were initiated in the last two years will bear their intended fruit.

The **definition of the boundaries of sustainability** of human activities that have an impact on the marine environment in the years ahead, in the framework of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, will provide clarity and design a platform for the successful development of all maritime activities, paying due attention to their cumulative impacts. Hence, the implementation of this Directive will remain a key objective of the IMP, which should also develop the necessary cooperation between all relevant sectors and services to this end, including *inter-alia* between marine science and the marine environment policy.

**Sea-basin strategies** are key to a successful implementation of the IMP. This is where the priorities and the tools of the policy can be adapted to the specific geographic, economic and political contexts of each large maritime region. Co-operation with and among Member States and regions sharing a sea basin is a crucial element of success and, whenever necessary, this should be accompanied with proper dialogue with third countries sharing a sea basin with the EU. Action at the level of sub-basins can also be useful in establishing positive examples and best practices.

The **international dimension of the IMP**<sup>35</sup> will also require more attention, as illustrated by the dedicated Communication published together with this report. Europe must take a leading role in improving global maritime governance, as it has done in the matter of piracy or with regard to destructive fishing practices. The Commission intends to strengthen dialogue with a

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<sup>35</sup> "Developing the international dimension of the Integrated Maritime Policy of the European Union", COM (2009) 536 final of 14.10.2009

limited number of major maritime partners and its participation in international fora and informal processes.

The implementation of the IMP, in the present context of economic downturn, should put a **renewed focus on sustainable economic growth, employment and innovation**. Hence, in the future, the EU should explore synergies between the European Energy Policy and the IMP, promoting energy generation from the sea, including renewable forms of energy, and use the sea more for energy transportation through pipelines, underwater grids and vessels. It will also be necessary to further link the EU's Climate Change Policy with IMP, by developing a strategy for adaptation to climate change in coastal and maritime areas, aiming at protecting coastal infrastructure and preserving marine biodiversity. As part of the developing debate on territorial cohesion, it will be important to ensure that maritime and coastal areas are fully taken into account.

The EU will also have to promote better maritime transport in order to foster co-modality, to implement the concept of the Motorways of the Sea, and to improve the EU programme for short sea shipping. Still aiming at the economic development of maritime activities, it will be necessary to find ways and means of further stimulating maritime employment and investment in EU-flagged shipping, while remaining determined to advance the idea of clean ships. Indeed, support for innovation and research towards very low or even zero emission ships will continue to be a major part of the Community's response to the strategically important shipbuilding sector. In this manner the EU can give to European shipyards and the marine equipment industry a competitive technological edge over other regions of the world, and will make maritime transport, in particular along the coasts of Europe, safer and more sustainable.

Finally, the Commission is examining the future funding needs that IMP-related actions may involve as part of its overall reflection on the next financial perspective.

The Commission intends to produce in 2010 a policy document detailing projects and initiatives aimed at further developing the above six strategic directions, following consultations with stakeholders.