



**74<sup>th</sup> plenary session  
9 and 10 April 2008**

**OPINION  
of the  
Committee of the Regions  
on  
AN INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY FOR  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- regrets that important aspects such as maritime education and training, the creation of European Funds for Coastal Areas and protection of the seabed have been overlooked;
- regrets the failure to address the use and protection of the seabed and believes this policy should also include general strategic rules on matters relating to dumping and laying and using pipelines and cables on the seabed;
- reiterates the call it made in its opinion on Towards a future maritime policy for the European Union for an appraisal to be made of the option of revising the EU financial system towards one single simplified system for all or most of the maritime issues within a European Coastal and Island Fund;
- requests the Commission to present a roadmap of major mid-term and long-term objectives to be achieved in the European maritime policy until 2015 and 2020;
- still misses the clear links between the Maritime Blue Paper and the Marine Strategy Directive and therefore asks the Commission to clarify these links and to deal with both subjects more closely;
- once again, calls for a European maritime platform including local and regional authorities and stakeholders as a means of pooling expertise and exchanging best practice.

Rapporteur:

Dr Saima Kalev, Mayor of Jõgeva (EE/UEN-EA)

Reference(s)

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  
COM(2007) 575 final.

## I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

1. welcomes and approves the Communication from the Commission on "An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union". The Committee is pleased that an attempt is now being made to achieve an integrated approach to this fundamental issue which covers all aspects of people's relationship with the oceans and seas. This will provide a coherent policy framework allowing for the optimal development of all sea-related activities in a sustainable manner;
2. acknowledges the involvement of numerous stakeholders in the consultation process, but is concerned that such key aspects like: maritime education and training, creation of European Funds; for Coastal Areas and protection of seabed have been overlooked;
3. shares the view that all matters relating to Europe's oceans and seas are interlinked, and that solutions must be developed in a coordinated way. In order to achieve the desired results it is important to provide information about the progress on all actions in a coordinated way (e.g. one website)., Any compulsory action /regulation has to be based on scientific facts and evaluations that takes into consideration the local variation in ecosystems and regional differences in human use of marine resources;
4. is convinced that the EU maritime policy could become a very powerful policy in the long run, because more than 50 % of the EU-area is covered with water, including all its biological, physical and geological resources;
5. points out that an essential component of the marine environment, namely the issue of using and protecting the seabed – which falls within the competence of each Member State – is not addressed in the Communication on an integrated maritime policy. In the Committee's view, this policy should also include general strategic rules on matters relating to dumping and laying and using pipelines and cables on the seabed;
6. emphasises that the impact of maritime policy extends beyond national frontiers and requires efficient administration at a number of levels;
7. is in favour of an integrated, inter-sectoral approach, implementation of which requires cooperation and coordination of all sea-related policies at the different decision-making levels. A balance has to be struck here between competitiveness sustainability and environmental protection;
8. feels that local and regional authorities play an essential role in policy shaping and implementation and in the establishment of the requisite legal conditions, and also have a clear task to carry out in integrating the compartmentalised sector-orientated political

measures and to inform the general public about the potential of the sea and how human activities affect the maritime environment;

9. notes that for the successful development and implementation of an integrated EU maritime policy, it is essential that local and regional authorities make an effective contribution and that they continue to be ready to show commitment in this field;
10. agrees with the Commission that the Committee of the Regions can bring added value to this process. The Committee wishes to help draw up a blueprint to support that local and regional authorities participate in this process and make an effective contribution;
11. is considering how it can lend its support to local and regional authorities to help them draw up their implementation strategies and implement the Commission's proposed strategy taking into account (a) the diverse characteristics of the Member States and the individual maritime regions, which have a need for closer cooperation, including the islands, archipelagos and outermost regions, and (b) the international dimension;
12. recommends taking into consideration the regions' varying capacities and the diverse views put forward in the consultation process;
13. agrees with the point made in the Communication that all changes instigated by the maritime policy will above all affect coastal regions and the estuaries and inland waterways linked to them;
14. continues to advocate efforts to build up the capacities of local and regional authorities in order to secure mandatory funding, and to this end, set up a European Fund for Coastal Areas and Islands; Reiterates the call it made in its opinion on Towards a future maritime policy for the European Union for an appraisal to be made of the option of revising the EU financial system towards one single simplified system for all or most of the maritime issues within a European Coastal and Island Fund; Funding must be used in a way that is positive for the marine environment and ecology;
15. stands by the view expressed in opinion CdR 84/2005 that it is of crucial importance to support innovation and entrepreneurial development, particularly in terms of developing new maritime technologies;
16. agrees that an integrated maritime policy will help to solve problems relating to globalisation and competitiveness, climate change, degradation of the marine environment, maritime safety, and energy security and sustainability;
17. also feels that this policy must be based on excellence in marine research, technology and innovation, the Lisbon agenda for jobs, and the Gothenburg agenda for sustainability;

18. agrees with the Commission's view on the question of added value raised by the Committee in its opinion CdR 258/2006, which pointed out that an integrated approach helps to prevent conflict, create synergies and ensure an exchange of objective information with the general public and neighbouring regions;
19. acknowledges the Commission's endeavours, through this Communication, to lay the foundations for the governance framework and cross-sectoral tools necessary for an EU Integrated Maritime Policy and to set out the main measures the Commission will be introducing in the course of its mandate; in this context, the Committee welcomes the fact that, in its Annual Policy Strategy for 2009 (COM(2008) (72), the European Commission confirms that maritime policy represents one of its political priorities; the Committee does, however, deplore the low level of funding foreseen in this field in 2009, involving the redeployment of EUR 6 million from the resources available under the fisheries policy.
20. is pleased that the Commission will be guided in these actions by the principles of subsidiarity and competitiveness, an ecosystem-friendly approach, and stakeholder participation;
21. for the above reason requests the Commission to present a roadmap of major mid-term and long-term objectives to be achieved in the European maritime policy until 2015 and 2020;
22. feels that a document on a subject of such major importance as EU maritime policy should plan for a significantly longer period, extending beyond the duration of the current mandate;
23. feels that it is extremely important to cooperate, consult with and support regional and sectoral working groups and organisations operating within an EU framework in the Atlantic, Arctic, Mediterranean, Black Sea, Baltic and North Sea regions; Requests the Commission to organise the implementation of the integrative maritime policy within the *above named areas*;
24. points out that competences relating to the integrated approach are clearly delimited, therefore the EU will need to use those competences laid down in the Treaty for actions in the relevant areas, such as environment, transport, fisheries, regional or industrial policy, in full respect of subsidiarity;;
25. supports the Commission's call to Member States to draw up national integrated maritime policies, working closely with stakeholders, in particular the coastal regions and looks forward to guidelines of the Commission on this and on stakeholder consultation, which recognise the particular competences of regional and local authorities in relation to an integrated Maritime Policy;
26. feels that the decisions to propose a set of guidelines in 2008 for these national integrated maritime policies and to report annually on EU and Member States' actions in this regard from 2009 onwards are of key importance;

27. recommends additional supportive guidelines for local and regional authorities; requests the Commission to consider as basic principles within the guidelines for good governance on the national and the regional level : proposals for major maritime objectives, a methodology how these objectives could be achieved in an integrated approach, recommended deadlines for the objectives to be achieved;
28. takes the view that the coordination envisaged by the Commission will not guarantee integration, that guidelines could be interpreted in different ways and that consultation bodies do not yet have any structures for decision-making;
29. proposes to draw up a clear summary and list of best practices for regions;
30. recommends establishing a clear system to ensure that regions can continue contributing efficiently and effectively and that possible conflicts between regions can be resolved fairly;
31. emphasises that for this to happen an implementation regional strategies must be drawn up;
32. recommends that decision-making processes on maritime issues of based on dialogue with local and regional authorities should be speeded up. The CoR points out that both Member States and local and regional authorities must be directly involved in developing the implementation strategy. The strategy objectives must be jointly worked out with them, in line with the need for cross-sectoral integration in all activities. A similar approach could be followed for defining tasks and discussing funding issues;
33. supports the call for improved cooperation between Member States' Coastguards and the decision to take steps towards a more interoperable surveillance system to bring together existing ship 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; the Commission is requested to launch a first pilot project on this in the Mediterranean, with a view to extending it Europe wide;
34. welcomes the Commission's decision to develop a roadmap in 2008 to facilitate the development of maritime spatial planning by Member States;
35. feels that there is a need for the Commission to take steps in 2008 towards a European Marine Observation and Data Network, and consider the need for the multi-dimensional mapping of Member States' waters, in order to improve access to high quality data; the Commission is requested to launch a first pilot project on this in the North Sea, with a view to extending it Europe wide;

#### Action Areas for an EU Integrated Maritime Policy

##### *Maximising the Sustainable Use of the Oceans and Seas*

36. agrees with the Commission that a European Maritime Transport Space without barriers and in cooperation with other players in the transport system is needed to improve the efficiency of maritime transport in Europe and ensure its long term competitiveness;
37. is in favour of preparing a comprehensive maritime transport strategy for 2008-2018, which should consider promoting motorways of the sea and short sea shipping. This strategy, besides taking into consideration the network of major European ports connected to the Trans-European Transport Networks, should give special consideration to small and medium-sized ports, since they provide an efficient service for remote regions and islands, and also help to avoid congestion of major ports and roads;
38. requests the Commission and the Member States to encourage the cooperation among European ports to support: a) the transport of as many goods as possible in the EU by ship as the most environmentally friendly option, including import, export and transit, b) the cost-efficiency and eco-efficiency of the sea trade of goods, in particular in the light of the expected further growth of goods movement;
39. acknowledges the replies received during the consultation process to the question put to stakeholders regarding options for incorporating the Thematic Strategy on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment<sup>1</sup> and the Proposal for a Marine Strategy Directive<sup>2</sup> in the future common maritime policy, especially given that these have been identified by the Commission as components of an integrated strategy;
40. emphasises that the above-mentioned strategies constitute the environmental foundations of the integrated maritime policy, given that they call for an eco-systems-based approach with equal emphasis on environmental, social and economic issues. These strategies also set deadlines for achieving targets, such as achieving good environmental status by 2020;
41. The proposal for the marine strategy directive states that regions, where the condition of the sea is critical, are required to prepare and implement actions faster in order to obtain a satisfactory environmental status. In such regions it is of the utmost importance that the European Commission coordinates the different sectors involved, programmes and strategies, and also provides sufficient financial support. In order to achieve a truly integrated maritime policy it is necessary to include landbased activities such as agriculture, sewage handling, transport and energy production. Such regions may function as pilot areas for a true and completely integrated maritime policy.

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2005) 504 final.

<sup>2</sup> COM(2005) 505 final.

42. still misses the clear links between the Maritime Blue Paper and the Marine Strategy Directive and therefore asks the Commission to clarify these links, to deal with both subjects more closely and thereby avoid duplication of the proposed activities;
43. requests the Commission to come forward with a proposal on how to link the individual Natura 2000 off shore areas in the EU;
44. feels that Integrated Coastal Zone Management is based on a well thought out idea, and that a series of useful best practices could assist in framing maritime policy; in addition, proposes to investigate local and regional experience in the integrated use of coastal zones in particular existing Local Coastal Partnerships that made up by Local Authorities and relevant stakeholders to provide cost effective, bottom up ICZM and to explore means of reconciling integrated coastal zone management and maritime policy;
45. recommends developing close contacts with local and regional authorities implementing national water policy measures, in order to encourage cooperation on technical and management issues. Such cooperation is intended to achieve a good environmental status by 2015 for surface water at a distance of up to one kilometre from the coast<sup>3</sup>;
46. would refer, for a detailed definition of its views on European ports policy, to its opinion number 237/2007 on the Communication from the Commission on a European Ports Policy COM(2007) 616;
47. backs the proposal for a new ports policy which takes account of the multiple roles of ports and the wider context of European logistics;
48. recommends using Structural Fund support to facilitate investment in regional port structures and other appropriate projects;
49. supports the proposal to reduce the levels of emissions from ships in ports, namely by removing tax disadvantages for shore side electricity and to develop and to support EU wide or world wide technical standards for the transfer of shore side electricity onto ships;
50. also feels that there is a need to issue guidelines on the application of the relevant Community environmental legislation to port development;
51. also emphasises to secure future sustainable energy supply and asks the Commission and the Member States to systematically support for maritime clean renewable energies, such as from wind, waves, tide and ocean stream, in particular prioritise and systematically support research and development, as well as with financial approaches, such as sufficient feed-in-

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<sup>3</sup> Directive 2000/60/EC.



tariffs. Moreover, administrative barriers hindering the development of maritime renewable energies should be removed;

52. believes that locally owned, non for profit trust ports shall be protected from disrepair as their social, recreational and touristic benefit for the surrounding communities exceed its original economic function;
53. welcomes the Commission's constructive position on encouraging the formation of multi-sectoral clusters and regional centres of maritime excellence, and promoting a European network of maritime clusters;
54. in this connection, asks for clarification of the structure and form of the bodies to be set up, together with an explanation of the policy contribution expected from each body, and of the roles envisaged for the Commission and the Committee of the Regions;
55. supports the decision to reassess, in close cooperation with social partners, the exclusions affecting maritime sectors in EU labour legislation;
56. takes the view that, when it comes to improving levels of safety for persons working in maritime occupations, a high degree of responsibility rests with the Member States by virtue of the need to ratify international documents, such as the ILO Consolidated Maritime Labour Convention of February 2006 and the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, adopted by the ILO in June 2007;
57. approves the decision to promote a "Certificate of Maritime Excellence";
58. recommends taking steps to improve maritime training, so that professional training is internationally accepted and further training options available, thus ensuring the needed supply of skilled labour with the requisite qualifications;
59. is convinced that costal regions are the first to suffer from climate change and therefore recommends priority actions such as: the reduction of the emissions from ships, the development and expansion of renewable maritime energies, the halt in the decline of marine biodiversity, coastal protection and consequently welcomes the Commission's decision to launch pilot actions to reduce the impact of and adapt to climate change in coastal zones;
60. asks the Commission for clarification on its assessment of the need for such actions in non costal regions;
61. agrees that international efforts to reduce oil spills from ships are to be supported;
62. supports the decision to actively support international efforts to diminish greenhouse gas emissions from ships;

63. demands that the Directive on the taxation of energy is amended so as to include an obligation of Member States not to tax electricity supplied to ships in ports more than bunker oil, as the present system of the directive provides an incentive for air pollution, which in port cities comes up to 80% from ships burning bunker oil.
64. welcomes the efforts of the Commission and the Member States to reduce SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> levels and the emission of fine particles from ships in EU seas and in particular in ports. As this will not be sufficient in the long term, the Committee of the Regions calls for further reduction and therefore requests the Commission and the Member States to reduce the emission from ships to the same level as allowed by cars, at the latest by 2030;
65. calls for the integration of the emissions from ships into the EU Emissions Trade System;
66. welcomes the Commission's decision, taking due account of the ongoing work at international level, to make proposals for dismantling obsolete ships in an efficient, safe and environmentally-friendly manner;
67. supports firm action towards the elimination of discards and of destructive fishing practices such as high seas bottom trawling in sensitive habitats; It is particularly important to consider the interaction between countries in relation to overfishing;
68. supports vigorous action to eliminate illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing in regions where such action through facts and research is established to be required;;
69. recognises the need to promote and provide incentives for small-scale fishing which has a long tradition in European waters, is more selective and more environmentally friendly
70. with regard to these two issues, asks the Commission for its views on how an integrated policy can be implemented more effectively than hitherto;
71. expresses its support for promoting the development of an environmentally safe aquaculture industry in Europe;

*Building a knowledge and information base for the maritime policy*

72. welcomes the Commission's plan to present a fundamental European Strategy for Marine and Maritime Research in 2008;
73. requests the Commission to consider the concept of "European Oceans research Institutes" within the new maritime research strategy;

74. also feels there is a need to launch joint cross-cutting calls under the 7th Research Framework Programme to promote an integrated approach and to improve understanding of cross cutting issues in maritime affairs, such as the impact of climate change, induced rising sea levels and changing weather patterns on the usability of ports and on shipping in general;;
75. welcomes support for research to predict, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change on maritime activities, the marine environment, coastal zones and islands and requests the Commission to work towards a European Strategy for the adaptation to climate change impacts in coastal regions, which is based on a solid assessment of the rising costs of climate change adaptation at the coasts, and which helps to avoid that these become an impediment for economic growth at the coasts;
76. endorses the decision to support the creation of a European marine science partnership for a concerted dialogue between the scientific community, industry and policy makers;
77. would ask whether, and to what extent, the Commission supports this partnership, what form this support should take, how the partnership ties in with the consultation structure proposed by the Commission and how it would differ from that structure;
78. emphasises the importance of regional data and their evaluation from an inter-regional perspective;
79. feels that there is a need to compare statistics in order to promote sectoral competitiveness and reform activity (a point raised by Committee opinion CdR 258/2006, but which was overlooked in the "Blue Paper");
80. asks for information on the scope for regions to influence pilot projects, calls for scientific and development projects, and projects based on good practice;
81. once again, calls for a European maritime platform including local and regional authorities and stakeholders as a means of pooling expertise and exchanging best practice; proposes to draw up an ongoing list of best practices for regions as soon as possible, possibly on the basis of already existing European lists of regional maritime best practice in particular examples on : defining general maritime objectives, good governance, sectoral policies and their integration, regional maritime action plans;

*Delivering the highest quality of life in coastal regions*

82. feels that it is essential to promote sustainable coastal and maritime tourism as part of the forthcoming tourism initiative;

83. asks the Commission to clarify how it considers that local and regional authorities and coastal regions can help to improve quality of life in coastal areas, and what synergies might be identified, for example with other EU policy areas;
84. is in favour of the Commission urgently preparing a database on all regional policy projects funded by the EU which fall within the scope of maritime policy, as a basis for spreading best practices; this database should also create transparency on Community funding available for maritime projects and coastal regions,;
85. backs the proposal for a Community Disaster Prevention Strategy highlighting the risks to which coastal regions in particular are exposed; among other things, this would identify emergency ports which could be used by oil tankers in distress and ships with other hazardous cargoes. Maritime safety measures must also take into account the special aspects of maritime navigation in winter conditions ;
86. appreciates the significance of the Commission's decision to promote development of the potential of outermost regions and islands. Solutions to the specific problems faced by remote coastal and island regions must be found through joint efforts encompassing maritime policy and action in other policy areas at EU level;

*Promoting Europe's Leadership in International Maritime Affairs*

87. welcomes the decision to promote cooperation under the Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policies, and the Northern Dimension;
88. welcomes the decision to propose a strategy for the external projection of the Union's Maritime Policy through a structured dialogue with major partners;
89. asks for an explanation of how systematic use can best be made in external relations of know-how which is of largely regional relevance (e.g. HELCOM, the Helsinki Commission on protection of the Baltic);

*Raising the Visibility of Maritime Europe*

90. agrees with the European Commission that work must begin on production of a European Atlas of the Seas;
91. supports the proposal to celebrate an annual European Maritime Day as of 2008 and to include the local and regional authorities, stakeholders and their expertise from the very beginning;
92. suggests giving substantial support to and stepping up publicity work on all sea-related issues, through educational systems, the media, the Internet and other information channels;

93. believes that Marine National Parks could be a way of both raising public awareness and protecting sensitive marine areas;
94. proposes that a comprehensive package of measures be drawn up to enhance the visibility of maritime Europe, in particular taking into account our maritime heritage.

Brussels, 9 April 2008.

The President  
of the Committee of the Regions

Luc Van den Brande

The Secretary-General  
of the Committee of the Regions

Gerhard Stahl

## II. PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	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
<b>Reference document(s)</b>	COM(2007) 575 final
<b>Legal basis</b>	Article 265 (1) TEC
<b>Procedural basis</b>	-
<b>Referral</b>	10 October 2007
<b>Date of President's decision</b>	29 October 2007
<b>Commission responsible</b>	Commission for Sustainable Development (DEVE)
<b>Rapporteur</b>	Dr Saima Kalev (EE/UEN-EA), Mayor of Jõgeva
<b>Analysis</b>	9 November 2007
<b>Discussed in commission</b>	10 January 2008
<b>Date adopted by commission</b>	7 March 2008
<b>Result of the vote in commission</b>	Adopted by majority
<b>Date adopted in plenary</b>	9 April 2008
<b>Previous Committee opinions</b>	Own-initiative opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 12 October 2005 on EU maritime policy – a question of sustainable development for local and regional authorities CdR 84/2005 fin <sup>4</sup>  Opinion of the Committee of the Regions - Towards a future maritime policy for the European Union CdR 258/2006 fin <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> OJ C 81, 4.4.2006, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 146, 30.6.2007, p. 19.