



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on integrated maritime policy

*2973rd GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 16 November 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council of the European Union

HAVING REGARD TO

- the Commission Communication on an Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union and Action Plan, presented on 10 October 2007¹;
- the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of 14 December 2007²;
- the Council conclusions on the Integrated Maritime Policy of 8 December 2008³;
- the Commission Progress Report on the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy of 15 October 2009⁴;

ACKNOWLEDGING the achievements described in the Progress Report, and CONFIRMING the validity of the integrated approach to maritime affairs;

¹ Doc. 14631/07 (COM (2007) 575).

² Doc. 16616/07 (para. 58).

³ Doc. 16503/1/08.

⁴ Doc. 14363/09 (COM (2009) 540 final).

P R E S S

RECOGNISING the need to keep the momentum in the unfolding of the EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) addressing the essential mid- and long- term challenges of environmental protection, maritime safety and security, economic growth, quality jobs and well-being; RECOGNISING that the double impact of climate change and the economic crisis is particularly felt in the maritime sector; EMPHASISING the importance of further enhancing the economic potential of maritime Europe within the concepts of sustainability in line with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)⁵, of improving the effectiveness of government action on the seas, and of further exploring synergies to improve economic growth and environmental stability, while keeping in mind the social dimension of IMP;

RECOGNISING that the priority given to the oceans, seas and coastal regions in EU policy-making yields significant results; NOTING in particular progress in areas relevant for the sustainable development of the oceans, seas and coastal regions, such as marine environmental protection⁵, maritime transport⁶, research⁷, renewable energies⁸ and fisheries⁹;

REAFFIRMING that cross-cutting policy tools are of utmost importance to enhance sustainable economic development, environmental monitoring, safety, security and law enforcement on Europe's oceans, seas and coastal regions following the ecosystem approach as well as the better integration of these issues; HIGHLIGHTING that maritime spatial planning, in combination with increased marine knowledge, can contribute to considerable economic investment, drive new innovative projects and significantly improve the way our maritime spaces are managed, preserving their ecosystems; RECOGNISING that the cross-sectoral integration of maritime surveillance will increase the effectiveness in the way that key policy objectives as well as facilitation of trade and for the promotion of the economic interests of the European Union and its Member States can be reached¹⁰;

RECOGNISING that sea-basin strategies are keys to a successful implementation of the IMP, as far as they represent added value and are a tool to adapt to the specific geographic, climatic, economic and political contexts of each maritime region; EMPHASISING that co-operation with and among Member States and regions sharing a sea basin - and with third countries whenever relevant and appropriate - is a crucial element of success;

⁵ Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC).

⁶ Third Maritime Safety Package, (OJ L 131, 28.05.09); Conclusions on European Maritime Transport Space without Barriers (Doc. 5775/09); Council conclusions on the Commission communication on the strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2018 (Doc. 7866/09).

⁷ Council conclusions on a European Strategy for Marine and Maritime Research (Doc. 16761/08).

⁸ Regulation (EC) No 663/2009 establishing a programme to aid economic recovery by granting Community financial assistance to projects in the field of energy (OJ L200 of 31.07.2009, page 31).

⁹ Political agreement of 20.10.2009 on the proposal for a Council Regulation establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy.

¹⁰ Council conclusions on Integration of Maritime Surveillance (Doc. 15176/09).

UNDERLINING that the implementation and further development of IMP, in the present context of the economic downturn, should put a renewed focus on sustainable economic growth, employment and innovation in an eco-efficient way;

HIGHLIGHTING the necessity to develop links between Europe's Climate Change Policy and the IMP, by developing a strategy for adaptation to climate change in coastal and maritime areas, aiming at protecting coastal infrastructure and preserving marine biodiversity;

STRESSING that the EU shall also implement the Action Plan on European Maritime Transport Space without Barriers as foreseen in the Council conclusions¹¹ in order to foster co-modality, to facilitate maritime transport, to implement the concept of the Motorways of the Sea, to improve the EU programme for short sea shipping and to foster territorial cohesion; RECOGNISING the necessity to find ways and means to further stimulating quality maritime employment and the competitiveness of the European merchant fleet, while remaining determined to advance the introduction of clean ship technologies;

RECOGNISING that the EU and Member States have played a major role in strengthening global maritime governance, as seen in combating piracy or destructive fishing practices and protecting vulnerable eco-systems, and should continue to do so;

THE COUNCIL THEREFORE;

1. WELCOMES the strong commitment towards integrated maritime governance in Member States; INVITES Member States and the Commission to continue to implement and to elaborate further a comprehensive strategy for growth, jobs and sustainability for the oceans, seas and European coastal regions, with due respect to subsidiarity and proportionality and on the basis of a continued strong involvement of stakeholders;
2. LOOKS FORWARD to the continuation of the regular strategic dialogue between the Commission and Member States on the Integrated Maritime Policy, the High Level Focal Points Group, chaired by the Presidency;
3. RECALLS that the MSFD has been welcomed by the European Council as the environmental pillar of the IMP; ACKNOWLEDGES the MSFD, with the ecosystem based-approach to the management of human activities as an overarching principle, as a basis on which to develop more successfully all maritime activities within the concepts of sustainability in line with the MSFD, having regard to their cumulative impacts, and STRESSES the need to integrate the sustainable use of marine goods and services by present and future generations into decision-making;

¹¹ Doc. 5775/09 (COM (2009) 10 Final).

4. INVITES the Commission to report on the outcomes of the discussion on the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Roadmap and to come forward with initiatives aimed at encouraging the development and use of MSP that is based on an ecosystem approach during early 2010, and which, in the light of increased economic activities at sea, help coordinate and balance sectoral interests to contribute to a sustainable use and development of the European maritime areas;
5. NOTING the need to further explore synergies between the European Energy Policy and the IMP, by promoting energy generation from the sea, in particular renewable forms of energy, not only offshore wind, but also wave, tide, currents and thermo gradient sources;
6. WELCOMES the continued implementation of the EU Strategy for Marine and Maritime Research aimed at providing the knowledge base for the implementation of the IMP. The strategy should support policy-making in relation to the MSFD and the work on MSP; UNDERLINES that efforts should also foster innovation by identifying the economic value of marine goods and services, including ecosystem services, and by developing core ocean technologies and exploring future market potentials in relation to maritime clusters; INVITES the Commission to make proposals regarding governance of marine and maritime research, with a view to improving the use of scientific knowledge by policy-makers and ensuring a coordinated and sustained development of marine research infrastructure at EU level;
7. WELCOMES the idea of establishing an integrated approach to maritime surveillance, through a common information sharing environment;
8. NOTES the Presidency conclusions of the European Council on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region¹²;
9. WELCOMES the IMP approach presented for the Mediterranean¹³ and CALLS for further dialogue and co-operation in order to improve the governance of the marine space and coastal areas in the Mediterranean area, taking into account its sub-regions; EMPHASISES the need to engage, where necessary and appropriate, in an early dialogue with Mediterranean neighbours on this item, taking into account the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);

¹² Doc. 15265/09; See also Council conclusions on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (Doc. 13744/09).

¹³ Commission's Communication "Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean" (Doc. 13365/09).

10. ENCOURAGES further dialogue in order to strengthen the Black Sea Synergy¹⁴-based cooperation and its relevance for the IMP;
11. CALLS for a further development of the strategic approaches to regional sea basins where there is a demand and a perspective of clear added value, taking into account the experience made so far with existing strategies, and a sound and speedy implementation of the specific actions under these specific strategies, inter alia by setting up relevant pilot projects, also including seeking synergies with other EU policy instruments and funding, such as Cohesion Policy, Neighbourhood policy and External Relations, and the regional dimension in the implementation of the MSFD;
12. WELCOMES the presentation of the Commission's Communication "Developing the International Dimension of the Integrated Maritime Policy of the European Union"¹⁵ and RECOGNISES the importance of the dialogue at international level on an integrated maritime policy and other maritime issues in the competent fora, including on the ratification and implementation of UNCLOS and relevant existing international conventions based on UNCLOS ;
13. NOTES its guidance for a next step towards an EU policy on Arctic issues that is provided in relation to the Commission's Communication "The EU and the Arctic region"¹⁶;
14. EXPRESSES gratitude to the Italian Government to have held a successful European Maritime Day Stakeholder conference in Rome on 19-21 May 2009 and its appreciation to the Spanish Government and the Regional Government of Asturias for the invitation to hold the Stakeholder conference at the occasion of the European Maritime Day in the city of Gijon, on 19-21 May 2010; NOTES with satisfaction that a number of Member States are proposing to host the European Maritime Day Stakeholder conference from 2011 onwards¹⁷, and ENCOURAGES the Governments of Member States and stakeholders to also organise de-centralised events celebrating the European Maritime Day across Europe;
15. INVITES the Commission, Member States and next Presidencies to explore the opportunities and synergies that can be achieved by a further development of the integrated approach to maritime affairs;

¹⁴ See Council conclusions on the Black Sea Synergy Initiative (Doc. 9432/07) and Communication from the Commission "Black Sea Synergy - A new regional cooperation initiative" (COM (2007) 160).

¹⁵ Doc 14360/09.

¹⁶ Council conclusions on the European Union and the Arctic Region, to be adopted by the Council in December 2009.

¹⁷ Interest to host the annual European Maritime Day Stakeholder Conference has been expressed by Germany (Bremen), Malta (Valletta), Poland (Gdansk) and Sweden (Göteborg).

16. INVITES the Commission to detail its policy intentions on the IMP during 2010, taking account of these conclusions, inter alia with a renewed focus on sustainable economic growth, employment and innovation in an eco-efficient way for consultation with Member States and stakeholders;
 17. INVITES the Commission to present the necessary proposals for the financing of integrated maritime policy actions within the existing Financial Perspective, with a view to entry into force by 2011;
 18. CALLS upon the Commission to present a progress report on the implementation of the IMP in good time for the European Council at the end of 2012."
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