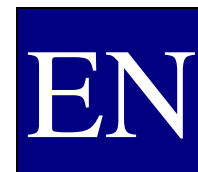




COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION



## Conclusions on integrated maritime policy

*3139th ENVIRONMENT Council meeting*

*Brussels, 19 December 2011*

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 2007<sup>1</sup>;
- the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council on 14 December 2007<sup>2</sup>;
- the Commission Progress Report on the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy<sup>3</sup> of 15 October 2009;
- the Council Conclusions on the Integrated Maritime Policy of 16 November 2009<sup>4</sup> and of 14 June 2010<sup>5</sup>;
- the Council Conclusions on Integration of Maritime Surveillance of 23 May 2011<sup>6</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 14631/07 - COM (2007) 575, Blue Paper "An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union" and Action Plan, 10 October 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Doc. 16616/07 (§58).

<sup>3</sup> COM(2009) 540 of 15 October 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Doc. 15175/09 .

<sup>5</sup> Doc. 10300/10.

<sup>6</sup> Doc. 9249/11.

# P R E S S

- Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Programme to support the further development of an Integrated Maritime Policy<sup>7</sup>;

CONFIRMING the relevance of the integrated approach to maritime affairs in a context of continued intensification of economic activities and environmental challenges and climate change affecting the seas, oceans and coasts;

RECALLING the initial objectives of the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), laid down in the Commission's Communication of 10 October 2007 on 'An integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union', to enhance Europe's capacity to maximise the sustainable use of the oceans, seas and coasts at the same time safeguarding healthy oceans and seas;

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

WELCOMING the agreement reached between the European Parliament and the Council on the Regulation establishing a Programme to support the further development of IMP, which will enable the implementation of actions in 2012-2013;

1. CONFIRMS the commitment towards integrated maritime governance in Member States; CALLS on the upcoming Presidencies to strengthen the structured dialogue at the political level between Member States and the Commission on the IMP and WELCOMES in this context the outcome of the High Level Focal Point Group meeting under the Polish Presidency, underlining the strategic role and contribution of the Group to the development of the IMP;
2. WELCOMES the successful European Maritime Day celebration under the motto "Maritime Policy: putting people first" in Gdansk on 19-20 May 2011, RECOGNIZES this event's contribution to define needs of maritime professions, to remove the barriers hindering sustainable growth coming from the sea, and to further develop other aspects of the IMP, and LOOKS FORWARD to the next European Maritime Day on 21 and 22 May 2012, in Göteborg, Sweden, on the theme "*Sustainable growth from the oceans, seas and coasts: Blue Growth*". In this context, RECALLS its Conclusions of 14 June 2010 inviting Member States and the Commission to reflect on how to further increase the added value of the European Maritime Day stakeholder conferences;
3. WELCOMES the intention of the upcoming Cyprus Presidency to set the IMP among its strategic priorities, as well as its plans to organise an informal Ministerial Conference on IMP with the purpose to create the framework for new impetus towards this cross-cutting policy;
4. RECALLS that all activities in the oceans and seas including those undertaken in the framework of the IMP, should be carried out in line with the legal framework set out by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and other relevant existing international conventions;

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<sup>7</sup> JO L 321, 5.12.2011, p.1

5. WELCOMES the contribution of the IMP towards meeting the objectives set in the Europe 2020 Strategy by harnessing the potential of Europe's maritime and coastal economy through advanced knowledge and innovation and by supporting the development of better jobs and qualifications to meet the needs of a globally more competitive, resource efficient and inclusive economic environment;
6. ENCOURAGES the Commission to pursue the initiative on "*Blue Growth*" aimed at fostering sustainable growth and employment based on marine resources, science and economic activities in established, emerging and prospective maritime sectors;
7. RECALLS its conclusions of 10 October 2011 on UN Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio + 20<sup>8</sup>, and in this context, UNDERLINES the importance of EU's contribution for an integrated approach to the governance of oceans, seas and coasts, including through the development of cross-sectoral policy tools which can help deliver results in key sectors which are relevant for the IMP;
8. NOTES that the maritime economic sectors are rapidly expanding, therefore requiring more human resources with sufficient qualifications, skills and experience in the field of new on- and off-shore industries; ENCOURAGES the Commission and Member States to consider, in the framework of the IMP, initiatives to strengthen education, and to stimulate employment and career opportunities in order to safeguard the EU's expertise in the long run and contribute to its competitiveness and sustainability;
9. ENCOURAGES the Commission to continue working on the development of integrated sea-basin strategies where there is a demand and a perspective of clear added value, taking into account the specificities of the different sea basins and sub-sea basins; RECALLS its conclusions of 15 November 2011 on the review of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region<sup>9</sup>; WELCOMES the adoption of a Maritime Strategy for the Atlantic Ocean Area<sup>10</sup>, launched in Lisbon on 28 November 2011, and CALLS on the Commission and the Member States concerned to continue work through the proposed Atlantic Forum so as to allow the adoption of an Action Plan for this Strategy in 2013;
10. ENCOURAGES Member States and the Commission to continue working on the integration of maritime policies in the Mediterranean along the line of its Communication of 11 September 2009; SUPPORTS in particular the ongoing work of Adriatic and Ionian Member States to enhance maritime cooperation with non-EU neighbours in the area within the framework of a macro regional strategy, and INVITES the Member States and the Commission to foster improved cooperation in maritime affairs in conjunction with international and regional organisations, as well as financing institutions, with a view to stimulating sustainable growth, employment and investments in the region, in liaison with the secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean as appropriate;

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<sup>8</sup> Doc. 15388/11

<sup>9</sup> Doc. 15848/11

<sup>10</sup> Doc. 17387/11

11. CALLS upon the Commission, Member States and next Presidencies to actively explore the opportunities and added-value that can be achieved in the context of the IMP by further developing the maritime cooperation in the Black Sea;
12. REITERATES the need to take into account the role and the importance of the outermost regions of the EU and interested associated overseas countries and territories in the development and implementation of IMP; ENCOURAGES the Commission and Member States to develop initiatives aimed at reinforcing the integration of maritime policies in outermost regions and interested overseas countries and territories, and INVITES the Commission to study how the outermost regions of the EU can contribute to EU's "Blue Growth" initiative";
13. RECALLS its Conclusions of 23 May 2011 "Towards the integration of maritime surveillance: A common information sharing environment for the EU maritime domain" and SUPPORTS the further development of the cooperation amongst all seven user communities, as described in CISE, including its pilot projects BluemassMed and Marsuno;
14. In the light of the CISE experience, ENCOURAGES Member States to enhance cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation between coastguard functions, within the existing legal framework, for example, to promote exchange of experiences and best practices in order to achieve effectiveness and coherence and TAKES NOTE of the Commission's support to such cooperation;
15. WELCOMES the "Marine Knowledge 2020" initiative which contributes to the objectives of the "Europe 2020" Strategy, notably the Innovation Union and the Digital Agenda for Europe, by unlocking the potential of Europe's marine knowledge in order to improve the competitiveness and efficiency of both public and private operators using marine data, to stimulate the creation of innovative new products and services and to improve predictability of our seas and oceans; ASKS the Commission to explore the feasibility of supporting initiatives which will allow to elaborate on a comprehensive set of marine data from the European sea basins, including the water column and the mapping of habitats and seabed at European level, in the Member States' marine waters;
16. CONFIRMS the importance of maritime spatial planning as a key tool of the IMP to ensure sustainable use of the seas, including the sustainable development of marine areas and coastal regions, while revealing their economic potential; INVITES the Commission to bring forward initiatives for the most appropriate actions in this field, such as facilitating coordination amongst Member States, in compliance with relevant legislation and taking due account of work already carried out by Member States;
17. ACKNOWLEDGES the important role of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) as the environmental pillar of the IMP, which requires the application of an ecosystem based-approach to the management of all human activities as an overarching principle; priority should be given to achieving or maintaining good environmental status in the Union's marine environment while enabling the sustainable use of marine goods and services by present and future generations;

18. **HIGHLIGHTS** that the implementation of the MSFD, including the obligation to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the marine environment to determine the characteristics of good environmental status and to establish environmental targets, should, in line with the Directive further define the boundaries of sustainability of human activities and provide a platform for their successful and sustainable development;
19. **TAKES NOTE** of the recent Commission proposal for the "Horizon 2020" research and innovation programme<sup>11</sup> and **UNDERLINES** the need to take an integrated approach to marine and maritime research, to ensure that it supports the IMP objectives; in this context **WELCOMES** the research Joint Programming Initiative on "Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans" (JPI Oceans), involving 16 Member States and associated countries, as a major contribution to the development of the IMP."

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<sup>11</sup> Doc.17935/11