



## Is the integrated Maritime Policy on the right track?

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### Minutes

In her introductory remarks, **Corinne LEPAGE**, Chair of the Seas and Coastal Areas Intergroup emphasised the progress made by the Intergroup since its creation two years ago. She recognised the role of the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) as a lever to create jobs, including in the sectors of marine renewable energies, tourism and the shipping industry. She added that the IMP should not disregard social and environmental questions. The protection of human health and the environment should not be considered as the adjustment variables.

For **Gesine MEISSNER**, *Rapporteur* on the EP's Report for further support to the IMP in 2010, it was now time now to advance the maritime agenda. The IMP is closely connected with growth, particularly in the areas of maritime transport and coastal and maritime tourism etc. We need to develop the potential of the sea.

**Lowri EVANS**, Director General for DG Mare emphasised the role that Europe's Maritime Policy should continue to play in boosting growth and job creation. The coming decade shall be crucial for Europe's aim to maintain and develop its maritime edge, she said. The implementation phase of the IMP was over and much had been achieved to date, there remained nevertheless much to be done. We have reached a decisive moment, stressed **Ms Evans**. The Commission was developing a more targeted and results-oriented approach to the future development of the policy and this was why DG Mare was looking to firmly embed maritime objectives in the Community's funding instruments for the period 2014-2020. A Common Strategic Framework extending to all structural funds would ensure the mainstreaming of priority action to target maritime growth.

**Ms Evans** then outlined several areas where it was felt there was significant potential for the creation of new jobs in the maritime sector. The Commission had a clear strategy for future action and this would be unveiled in September 2012 in a planned Communication on blue growth. Action was foreseen in the areas of coastal and maritime tourism, ocean renewable energies and reforms to the Common Fisheries Policy, amongst others. Furthermore, said **Ms Evans**, we need to strengthen efforts towards sustainable aquaculture in Europe. To reach our desired goals, the Commission will set out what can be done by the EU, by Member States and by drawing upon increased involvement of Regions and Local Authorities to order to maximise outcomes, explained **Ms Evans**.

The Commission will come forward with legislative proposals on maritime spatial planning before the end of 2012. Improved knowledge and data concerning the state of the seabed was also essential for businesses and researchers and would help improve investment and policy-making decisions. **Ms Evans** highlighted the successes to date of boosting efforts for joint maritime surveillance which had led to a significant increase in joint coastguard and rescue operations across the EU. The Commission has a clear long-term objective, emphasised **Ms Evans** and the next ten years will be crucial. There is a continued need for support and involvement of the Seas and Coastal Areas Intergroup in carrying this work forward. DG Mare has a clear mandate until 2020. Maritime Policy is making headway in the

implementation phase and EU action must be targeted where its impact is greatest. Our seas offer the EU first-rate opportunities and realising their potential requires securing the necessary political commitment.

**George CHRISTOFI** Counsellor, Permanent Representation of Cyprus, stressed the need to ensure an ambitious budget for the EU's Maritime Policy given its importance as a tool for delivering growth and the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Cypriot Presidency places the IMP high up on its list of strategic priorities and we plan to organise an Informal Ministerial Conference in Cyprus on 8 October to provide a clear political steer for the next steps in support of Maritime Policy, explained **Mr Christofi**. He outlined in his presentation, "[Reenergizing the EU Integrated Maritime Policy: From Lisbon to Limassol](#)", work foreseen over the coming six months including preparations for the draft declaration that would be adopted during the Inter-Ministerial Conference. The 'Limassol Declaration' would push for action across many areas including maritime surveillance and maritime spatial planning.

**Henrik Ringbæk MADSEN**, Chairman for International Affairs, Nordjylland Region, outlined the initiatives launched by the European Commission since it presented its Communication for an IMP in 2007 and following calls by the CPMR for a new step in Europe's maritime agenda. While Mr Madsen recognised that important progress had been made, he believed that Europe could not afford to be shy in continuing efforts to strengthen its maritime agenda. The EU institutions should be bold in their approach and therefore, the announcement of an Inter-Ministerial Conference devoted to maritime issues was to be welcomed.

**Mr Madsen** then presented several key messages for next steps to advance an ambitious vision of the EU's Maritime Policy. He underlined the importance of the EU's maritime agenda being able to find the right balance in its support for economic, environmental and social dimensions of the maritime agenda. He urged the Commission to push forward with its vision for an integrated approach, particularly with regard to maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management and maritime surveillance. He also flagged up the issues of maritime safety, education and training and maritime transport as issues where he felt the Commission needed to make further progress. Mr Madsen highlighted the issue of marine energies and the need to connect peripheral regions and islands to the centre of Europe. This, he said, would help to limit the discrimination experienced by peripheral and island regions in the transportation and distribution of electricity. It is crucial to further develop the maritime dimension of macro-regional strategies too, reiterated Mr Madsen. He recalled the decisive role played by the CPMR maritime regions in developing the IMP. It was essential to maintain and to deepen the partnership between the EU institutions and the regions in order to maximise the outcome of EU efforts to promote its maritime agenda.

A number of questions and points were raised.

Q: It is important to support maritime and marine research and data collection. Also more should be done to make maritime professions more attractive. To this end, I have been highly supportive of the aim to establish a Maritime Erasmus scheme and pushed for the introduction of an amendment to the Commission's proposals during my time as *Rapporteur* on the draft Report, seeking further support for the IMP. Will the Cypriot Presidency be looking to address these issues? (**Gesine MEISSNER**)

A: Growth prospects in the maritime sector will be the key focus of the 'Limassol Declaration' to be adopted during the Informal Ministerial Conference. Furthermore, we will explore the broader issue of job creation in the maritime sector, for example the promotion of maritime tourism. The Cypriot Presidency is working closely with DG Mare on the preparations for this event. An open invitation is extended to the Seas and Coastal Areas Intergroup to make contact with our Presidency to highlight its interests. An important link has already been established with the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) which is actively engaging with the Cypriot Presidency on its maritime agenda. (**George CHRISTOFI**)

A: Could you elaborate on how you plan to involve stakeholders in this high-level ministerial event? Also how do you intend to support improvements in gathering maritime knowledge and data? (**Katherine ANGELL-HANSEN**, JPI Oceans)

A: Stakeholders will not be invited to take part in the Conference itself; however an open invitation is extended to all stakeholders to submit their thoughts and ideas which they wish to be reflected in the final declaration to be adopted. All interested parties are encouraged to get engaged in the debate. The aim is that the 'Limassol Declaration' will be highlighted in the Council conclusions of the General Affairs Council and the European Council. The issue of marine knowledge would be the subject of the Ministerial Conference. (**George CHRISTOFI**)

**Kriton ARSENIS**, MEP, Member of the Seas and Coastal Areas Intergroup then took the floor. The Seas and Coastal Areas Intergroup should be congratulated for its consideration of maritime issues in an integrated and coordinated manner, said **Mr ARSENIS**, particularly since the EU is often criticized for acting in a disparate fashion. The Cypriot Presidency initiative is very timely and is welcome. He underlined the need to ensure that environmental and sustainability questions are not overlooked when discussing the promotion of the maritime agenda. The European Parliament has raised a number of issues as regards the IMP and the tools necessary to ensure its implementation, including the issue of European Coastguards, he went on. Much of this is down to the Member States. We need to discuss how to better manage our seas, which includes improved policies towards fisheries and maritime spatial planning. The need to fund better marine research data collection too is important. In comparison with other policy areas that lack coordination at EU level, there are at least positive signs that Maritime Policy can be better coordinated in the future.

**Jan KOZLOWSKI**, Member of the European Parliament, focused on the economic and social development of coastal regions. He stressed the need for the new financial instrument to achieve the objectives of both the reformed Common Fisheries Policy and the IMP. **Mr Kozlowski** favoured a cohesive and integrated approach to Maritime Policy. Furthermore, this would require a broader understanding of maritime professions and their contribution to the EU's economic growth. **Mr Kozlowski** deplored the decline in interest in maritime professions and education. High educational standards should be among the priorities of the IMP, he stressed. Furthermore, it was also important to offer quality vocational training for those seafarers seeking to move away from the sea to work on land. To this end it is necessary to create mechanisms that support career continuity, he said. In addition more should be done to gather data on the socio-economic trends in maritime sectors.

During the discussion that then took place, **Henrik MADSEN** raised the matter of promoting territorial cohesion and in particular, access to energy supplies and problems faced by insular regions in this regard. In the North Sea, he continued, discussions are taking place concerning oil platforms and how to responsibly dismantle those that have come to the end of their life. Robust provisions should be put in place to deal with such matters and also to address oil spills at sea.

**Corinne LEPAGE** highlighted a hearing that had been organised by the Seas and Coastal Areas Intergroup in June 2011 in the aftermath of the Gulf of Mexico disaster and which discussed the likelihood of such a disaster happening in Europe. She also drew attention to the work of the Committee on Environment and the Committee on Industry and Energy dealing with the new Regulation on offshore oil platforms. We must be stringent in our approach. We need to be able to assess liability and to attribute responsibility, stressed **Ms Lepage**.

For **Lowri EVANS**, it was important that Europe learns from past mistakes. The question was not about taking action to deal with problems as they arose, but rather of taking adequate prevention measures. On marine research data the Commission knows what it wants to achieve over the next 2 years, but questions remain as to what should be done post-2014. We will launch a public consultation on the data collection issue in September to gather views.

Structural Funds programmes in the next period, she continued, will enable Joint Partnership Working Agreements between the Member States and the Commission. Integrated actions require early consideration about what projects should be flagged up for support and the appropriate governance arrangements to manage these actions. So far Member States seemed to have the upper hand on this matter. The CPMR still had a lot of work to do with its regions to ensure the influence of the maritime regions over future structural fund partnership arrangements. Regions had to get their voices heard in

national level debates. Important efforts were being made by those preparing the Atlantic strategy to achieve integrated ways of working.

Q: What are the current strengths and weaknesses of the IMP? (**Juan SUÁREZ**, University of Seville)

Q: The Ministerial Conference to be held under the Cypriot Presidency is to be welcomed; however there appear to be no plans to discuss off-shore wind energies. There are important challenges to be confronted in this area and they need to be addressed as part of the IMP. (**Anders CARLBERG**, Västra Götaland Region)

Q: Policy coordination was a key element of the IMP. There are concerns that the development of maritime spatial planning provisions in the EU may overlook environmental concerns. What measures can be taken to avoid this happening? (**Ann DOM**, Seas at Risk)

In responding to several of the issues raised, **George CHRISTOFI** explained that the 'Limassol Declaration' was that of a policy-oriented document. It aimed to put the spotlight on Europe's maritime interests and to highlight the priorities for action. There was no aim to have Ministers agree to legislative proposals. Maritime Spatial Planning was flagged up for discussion at the meeting as was the theme of off-shore wind energy.

In answer to the question of whether or not the IMP was on the right track, **Mr Kozlowski** responded that yes it was, but that further work was needed.

For **Lowri EVANS**, it was important to consider the strengths of and challenges faced by the IMP. Currently there is a better understanding of the IMP's strength. Greater attention is being devoted to the IMP and in the face of tight public sector budgets, this has surprisingly helped bring about better coordination of funding by Member States. Nevertheless, governance of the IMP remains a serious challenge and this is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future, unless Member States followed the example set by Portugal in restructuring its government. Given the significant number of stakeholders involved in delivering the maritime agenda, it remains difficult to gather all interlocutors around the table in order to achieve a coordinated response.

As for the environmental aspects of the IMP there is every chance that the Commission will get this right given that DG Environment and DG Mare are working together on the next steps for maritime planning and coastal management. There is no question of environment and sustainability aspects being marginalised in the overall discussion on blue growth.

**Henrik Ringbæk MADSEN** highlighted current efforts to develop a SuperGrid structure for electricity power generation to connect off-shore wind farms and other power sources across Europe. He also flagged up the need for sufficient funding for Interreg programmes in the post-2014 period as well as for the Horizon 2020 programme. These programmes are crucial to achieve territorial cohesion. We have the right tools and the ideas to drive the IMP forward, we just need the time to achieve it.

**Kriton ARSENIS** stressed the opportunity presented by the Lisbon Treaty for advancing the IMP and that the Cypriot Presidency was well placed to focus attention on the problems faced by insular regions.

In her concluding remarks **Gesine MEISSNER** recognised the challenge faced in the management of the IMP which remained a shared competence between different services and government departments. She expressed concerns that although Europe was well advanced in its ability to produce wind power, the means for transporting this energy was seriously lagging behind. Agreement on the Connecting Europe Facility may help to change this situation, however. Our seas present enormous potential and yet major challenges remain to be overcome. Discussions on the IMP must continue, concluded **Ms Meissner**.

The meeting was closed.