



# STATEMENT

September 2002

## TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN COASTAL ZONE

Statement of the EEAC Working Group on Coastal Zones and Marine Environment for the EU Integrated Coastal Zone Management Policy

## The following EEAC councils have endorsed these recommendations:

<i>Belgium</i>	Mina-Raad, Environmental and Nature Council of Flanders
<i>Finland</i>	Finnish Council for Natural Resources (FCNR)
<i>Ireland</i>	Irish Heritage Council
<i>The Netherlands</i>	Dutch Wadden Advisory Council (WAR)
<i>Portugal</i>	Portuguese National Council on Environment and Sustainable Development (CNADS)
<i>United Kingdom</i>	English Nature Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) endorses this statement besides the proposal for a quantitative target, Strategies and Priority Targets, point 4.

Following both the EEAC Annual Conference in Sesimbra (Portugal, 2000) and in Gent (Belgium, 2001), a new Working Group on "Coastal Zones and Marine Environment" [in the following: EEAC WG] has analysed the problem of Integrated Coastal Zone Management, basing their reflections on the "*(Amended) Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Recommendation concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe*"<sup>1</sup> and on the reports and draft recommendations of the European Parliament's Environmental Committee<sup>2</sup>.

The EEAC WG welcomes the progress that is being made and that the member states will be asked to develop National strategies to implement the principles for integrated management of the coastal zone (Chapter IV, paragraph 1, COM (2001) final, A5-0219/2001).<sup>3</sup> These future measures on national level however should be supported by non-conflicting European regulations and structural stimulating measures. The WG therefore suggests that the Commission should review the proposed Recommendation within three years and should propose a Community legal framework on ICZM (cf. also proposed amendment of the EP Environmental Committee, 2000/0227 (COD), PE 314.343).

This EEAC WG statement gives examples of issues that have to be improved to achieve better coastal management in Europe, and suggests strategies and priority targets for the first three years which will advance the process of ICZM in Europe. The common thread within this paper on ICZM is that in order to safeguard biodiversity as a life basis both for nature and people, the inhabitants and users of the coastal zones and the sea in general should have their socio-economic perspective taken into account. Provision must be made for people to continue earning their living on the coast if structural change is made to the fishing industry or other traditional coastal activities.

## Strategies and Priority Targets

1. A coherent strategy is required to achieve clarification of institutional competencies and responsibilities at all levels with respect to the coastal zone;
2. The geographic definition of the coastal zone is considered to extend to the 12 nautical miles limit, without prejudice to the ultraperipheral regions. The absence of a clear geographic definition, however, can't be an excuse to delay the ICZM Strategy;
3. The drawing up of risk maps for the coastal zone (erosion, flooding, habitats sensitivity, shipping calamities), taking into account scenarios of climate changes and environmental risk;
4. The implementation of a European network of marine protected areas encompassing a significant area, no less than 15% of the aggregate of the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and the 12-miles zones of the Member States, taking into account regional environmental, social and economic conditions, and preferably defined within the legal and financial Community framework, namely broadened Birds and Habitats Directives, and future provisions of the Common Fisheries Policy.
5. The creation of a monitoring strategy for permanent observation of the institutional, social, economic and environmental dimensions of the integration of policies in the coastal zone;
6. The development of a strategy for Community programmes on sustainable tourism, particular a European nature tourism programme, to make the most of the dynamic of the International Year of Ecotourism;
7. The setting up of research programmes on monitoring and indicators of sustainability for the coastal zone, together with the development of codes of good practices or conduct, in co-operation with the European Environment Agency;
8. The development of strategies for the co-ordination of policy and programmes for education and awareness about the environment, with particular reference to the coastal area, and their articulation with the principles of environmental citizenship (employment, stewardship, quality of life and balanced ecosystems);
9. The effective implementation of the Framework Directive for Community Action in the Field of Water Policy taking full account of coastal policy and ICZM experience and its articulation with the 'Bathing Water Directive';
10. The development of a new and broader concept of land- and "sea-use" planning, sustainable urban planning and articulation with the Sustainable Cities Network (ICLEI and Local Agenda 21), with the reinforcement of the environmental dimension of sectoral strategies.

## Reference framework and main proposals of ideas

1. The EEAC WG acknowledges that proposing a European Strategy for the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is a decisive step towards the implementation of Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, and marks important progress in the governance of the Oceans and, within the context of the 'Principles and Declaration of Lisbon', it could be a decisive instrument of policy and Strategy for Sustainable Development in the European Union and a demonstration for other regions of Europe. The WG urges the EU to re-establish the natural space of the 'sea' as an instrument for development, political affirmation and cohesion, and to use the problem of the coastal zone to internalise the maritime dimension and the relationship with the oceans in an integrating, holistic perspective. The WG agrees that there is an urgent need to establish new mechanisms at EU and member states level to undertake planning functions in the marine environment, namely a new institutional structure to co-ordinate and integrate all the activities in the coast and marine environment.
2. The EEAC WG reaffirms its opinion that it is fundamental to integrate the European ICZM strategy in the 'European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)'. It considers the solution of coastal zone problems to be urgent and critical, particularly pollution, urban planning, land- and "sea-use" planning, port and tourist activities, the impact of industry, agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries and, on a broader scale, the relationship of these issues with climate change and its impact on the coast, when associated with variations in sea levels. The WG strongly recommends that National Strategies for Integrated Coastal Zone Management be adopted by member states as soon as possible (by 2005).
3. The EEAC WG acknowledges that integrated institutional action at European and national level is a priority for ICZM, and identify the dispersion and fragmentation of competencies and jurisdictions at national and EU level as one of the primary obstacles. It recommends improved institutional articulation in both the European Commission and the member states as well as the clear identification of the 'responsible entity' at each level. At national level the same principles should be part of any ICZM strategy in the context of implementing the Cardiff and Lisbon processes, including the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. The WG considers it crucial for the 'coastal zone' to be clearly defined institutionally, considering the wider scope involved in the oceans and their sustainable governance.
4. The EEAC WG acknowledges the fundamental importance of ICZM for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, within the context of interaction between the ocean and the atmosphere, and the influence and impact of global phenomena at regional level. It recommends the institutional reinforcement of the Observatories on Climate Change, and the implementation of the respective national strategies, particularly the monitoring of changes in rainfall patterns, greenhouse gases, changes to the coast line due to variations in sea level, changes in the temperature of the waters and their effect on biodiversity, and the impact that the frequency and magnitude of extreme climatic phenomena have on the coastal zone. Variation in marine biodiversity, due to climate change, can be used as a very important element in climate change modelling (cf. Marine Biodiversity and Climate Change Project MARCLIM).
5. Within the context of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, of the Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity and the Natura 2000 Network, the EEAC WG acknowledges that appropriate action has fallen short and failed to meet the objectives for 2000 in the chapter on the conservation of nature in the marine environment, particularly with regard to the percentage of territory covered by protected maritime areas, both at European and world levels. The WG is concerned about the impacts of accelerated sea level rise<sup>4</sup> and the loss of European coastal habitats designated under the Habitats Directive. There should be a process of shoreline management planning as a part of ICZM for all EU coasts, undertaken by member states. For the case sea level rising can't be stopped, and where appropriate, a managed retreat can be prepared to aim at a new steady state.
6. The EEAC WG considers the implementation of a European network of protected maritime areas of adequate and representative size to be a fundamental component of ICZM and national strategies. The protection of marine biodiversity and coastal habitats, including the creation of 'no-take reserves', should be a priority. The WG reinforces the recommendation of the 8th EEAC Conference (Sesimbra, 2000), that protected marine areas need to be designated and, more broadly, the conservation of nature and of biodiversity in the marine environment must be promoted. In this context the WG adds the specific character of the ultraperipheral regions of the EU, from the islands of the Canarias, Açores and Madeira to the archipelagos of Sweden, Denmark and Finland, recognising the need for specific measures and actions to preserve their biodiversity, endemic features and natural areas of world importance such as seafloor hydrothermal features. In terms of instruments this should preferably be done within the existing legal framework, namely by broadening the Birds and Habitats Directives and future provisions in the Common Fisheries Policy. It shall be observed whether a specific Directive on protected marine areas will be required.
7. The EEAC WG acknowledges that it is vital to fight marine pollution, particularly of telluric origin, and therefore strongly recommend the full application of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities, and the implementation of the OSPAR Convention, widening its scope to the ultraperipheral regions.
8. The EEAC WG acknowledges that the Framework Directive for Community Action in the Field of Water Policy has an integrated vision of ecosystem management in a continuum of the different water masses, and is a fundamental instrument for the recovery of coastal ecosystems, a priority objective to be achieved within set time limits. Its application would also make an effective contribution to cross-frontier, integrated water mass management. At the same time the WG is of the opinion that the Bathing Water Directive<sup>5</sup> should be a complementary instrument, and urge its scientific revision and up-grading within a wider concept of the environmental quality of bathing zones, to include the coastal strip, which is used intensively by humans and is highly sensitive ecologically. The Framework Directive for Common Action in the field of Water Policy should ensure that coastal waters (within 12 miles) are fully protected in the implementation of the Directive. It should make full use of the experience generated by the ICZM Demonstration Programme. Urgent institutional changes will have to be made to permit the functional application and interconnection of both these instruments.

9. The EEAC WG acknowledges the fundamental importance of the 'European Coastal Stakeholders', as an indispensable instrument for the joint and efficient management of the coastal zone, but strongly recommend its articulation with the principles of the Aarhus Convention<sup>6</sup>, and encourages the rapid ratification and implementation of the Convention by the Member-States. In this context, it is considered a priority to develop programmes for public education and awareness about the environment, promoting a sense of responsibility and a duty of care for the marine environment by the local stakeholders, with particular emphasis on the coastal problem.
10. The EEAC WG acknowledges that urban, land- and sea-use planning are vital for establishing sustainable coastal zone management, which is why it stresses the need to apply the 'European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)' in articulation with the European Sustainable Cities Network. There is a greater need to promote decentralisation and support for the regional development of the interior, as a way of attenuating the demographic disparities between the coast and the interior.
11. The EEAC WG acknowledges the impacts of the economic policy and activities of the fishing, fish farming and tourism sectors on the coast. The WG reinforces its recommendation that the integration of environmental requirements in structuring sectoral policy is necessary in view of the reform of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the United Nations Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and the Revision of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), stressing the over-fishing problem, as well as the need to develop sustainable tourism. Likewise, given the importance for the sustainable local management, it is crucial to focus on those local fisheries not covered by CFP. The WG strongly recommends that an effective co-operation between DG Environment and DG Fisheries is needed to achieve the management of fishing as possibly<sup>7</sup> [the single most damaging activity in the coastal zone. Special attention should be paid to the problem of aquaculture and its impacts on the marine environment, to the introduction of foreign or alien species through movement of both foreign stock and ballast water, as well as to continuing pollution from shipping and eutrophication.
12. Within the framework of Common Agricultural Policy, a revised Common Fisheries Policy and the need to develop sustainable tourism, the WG considers it crucial to deal with the question of employability in the coastal zone, in a logic of conversion to new areas of work, and recommends that special attention be paid to the development of employment policy which is appropriate to the new opportunities generated by necessity, and providing the training required to create new, environmentally sustainable employment in the coastal zone.
13. The EEAC WG acknowledges that for a strategy for Integrated Coastal Zone Management to be implemented and monitored, the process of integrating scientific advances into the decision-making process must be improved, for which it recommends that in RTD and monitoring programmes clear priority be given to the subject of ICZM, related to regional policy and sustainable development, and to follow on from the 'Demonstration Programme on Integrated Coastal Zone Management'<sup>8</sup>.
14. The EEAC WG is of the opinion that the successful development of a strategy for ICZM is intrinsically related to the appropriate application and interconnection of Community financing mechanisms, particularly the INTERREG, URBAN, FIFG, LIFE, and RTD programmes, as well as the financing of agriculture and the support of employment. It is thus considered necessary for the line of support for ICZM to be explicit within each programme, as a specific priority mechanism. At the same time, under these programmes, the WG recommends that financing be granted only when an integrated strategy for coastal zone management has been correctly and effectively prepared and implemented. There should also be continuous financing for ICZM by promoting regular tasks or duties of a Member State. The principle of cross-compliance, as used in CAP, should also be applied in ICZM with respect to financing/subsidising those activities that take place in the coastal zone.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 COM(2000) 545 final, 08.09.2000; COM(2001) 533 final. 25.09.2001.
- 2 "\*\*\*\*I Report (A5-0219/2001)" (20.06.2001, Environmental Committee of EP), "\*\*\*\*II Draft Recommendation for Second Reading of the European Parliament" (2000/0227 COD, PE 314.343, 06.02.2002, Environmental Committee of EP).
- 3 The EEAC WG expects that some progress will be made through related instruments such as the Fisheries Integration Strategy (Council Decision from 25.04.01), the Biodiversity Action Plan for Fisheries (Communication from the Commission, 28 March 2001, adopted by the Fisheries Council on 18.06.01, and the Environmental Council on 29.10.01) and the proposals for an Ecosystem management approach with increased local and regional management of fisheries is expected in the outcome of the CFP review in the near future.
- 4 From 1990 to 2100 the full range of the Third Assessment Report IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change) scenarios project a sea level rise of 0.09 to 0.88 m with a central value of 0.48 m.
- 5 76/160/EEC.
- 6 Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.
- 7 In expectation of the results of a research program in the Wadden Sea, the question whether (shell)fishery in the Dutch Wadden Sea leads to inadmissible damage to the ecosystem has to be answered in 2003.
- 8 COM(1995) 511 final.



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