



**Response to the European Commission Green Paper
Towards a Future Maritime Policy for the Union, (COM (2006) 275 final)
by the Chairman of the EEAC Working Group on Marine and Coastal Zones Policy**

The EEAC is the network of European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils, with around 30 Member Councils from 16 European countries, ranging from scientific/expert to multi-stakeholder councils. For further information, see www.eeac-net.org.

The Working Group Marine (WGM/EEAC) is made up of representatives from nine Member Councils from six EU Member States with an active interest in the marine environment of Europe. Since 2003, we have focussed our work on the developing European Marine Thematic Strategy, and in October 2004 an EEAC Statement, [*Towards a European Marine Strategy*](#), was elaborated as our contribution towards this process, with the support of 18 EEAC Member Councils from 11 EU Member States.

We were subsequently invited to send representatives to the various EC Working Groups developing the Strategy, and played an active role in both the Expert Group on the Ecosystem Approach (EAM) and the overarching Strategic Goals and Objectives (SGO) Group. We have also prepared a briefing note for European Parliament debate on the European Marine Thematic Strategy and Draft Marine Strategy Directive.

We feel that is now important to contribute to the consultation on the European Commission's Green Paper *Towards a Future Maritime Policy for the Union*, and in this way share our overall experience in this field, particularly in relation to the environmental and sustainable development aspects of such overarching policy. In my capacity as chairman of this EEAC Working Group I would therefore like to make the following contribution, which was elaborated based on input from representatives of six councils.

OVERVIEW

We welcome the initiative of the European Commission to launch a debate about a future Maritime Policy for the EU "*Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: A European vision for the oceans and seas*" (COM(2006) 275 final) (hereafter referred to as 'the European Maritime Policy', 'the Maritime Green Paper' or 'Green Paper'), and are **broadly supportive of the need to implement an holistic approach to all maritime activities and the marine environment. But we also have concerns that protection of the marine environment and its resources must be adequately addressed by a future European Maritime Policy in order to allow sustainable management of the European seas.**

We also support the Green Paper's commitment to 'ecosystem-based management, built on scientific knowledge' as one of the principles that should underpin the Maritime Policy, but consider that there are other important principles and concepts that should inform the subsequent development of actions. These are:

- i. Sustainable development;
- ii. Integrated management;
- iii. Conservation of biological diversity;
- iv. Robust science;
- v. The precautionary principle; and
- vi. Stakeholder involvement.

Below is a summary of the key points in this response, each of which is elaborated on in more detail in the main text (numbers refer to the text chapters). We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these points further with the Maritime Policy Task Force and to contribute with experience and advice to appropriate initiatives in support of the European Maritime Policy.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS:

1. Stronger emphasis on the importance of integrating the European Union Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS)¹ in the European Maritime Policy is required. **Sustainable development should provide the overarching framework for the EU Maritime Policy**, which should acknowledge that a healthy marine environment underpins a strong economy and social equity. An integrated European Maritime Policy also needs to incorporate, and in some cases go beyond, the targets and actions contained in the **EU's Biodiversity Communication**².
2. The Marine Thematic Strategy, particularly **the Marine Directive** (as currently drafted), **cannot by itself form the 'environmental pillar' of the Maritime Policy** for a number of reasons. Indeed, all efforts have to be taken to guarantee the implementation of the Marine Thematic Strategy objectives and in this context the Maritime Policy must help, in particular by ensuring that other Community measures are able to assist deliver the aim of the Marine Strategy Directive, as proposed by the Commission (COM(2005) 505 final), to provide a "strong, integrated EU policy on marine protection".
3. The European Maritime Policy should ensure that the **various sectoral policies are brought together and integrated** in order to achieve the sustainable development objectives. Among the measures needed are:
 - 3.1 Conservation and recovery of fish stocks and other exploited marine resources at a reproductive, sustainable level is of utmost importance to ensure a **sustainable fisheries development** in the European seas. This includes the implementation of a mixture of established and innovative measures in relation to allowable catches, fishing gear, marine protected areas, subsidies, individual transferable quotas, discards and monitoring.

¹ A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development. COM(2001)264final

² Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and Beyond, Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being, COM(2006) 216

- 3.2** The EU Maritime Policy needs to promote a **strategic and sustainable approach to port development** which, taking account of existing mechanisms, is fully integrated with other transport systems and minimises the impacts of ports on the environment and biodiversity. This should mean that the strategic direction for managing the effects of major infrastructure projects is determined well in advance of the point of need. The EU has a role in ensuring that port-related activities consistently meet high environmental standards across Europe, including port reception facilities, port state controls and sea traffic monitoring which in some cases need to be improved.
- 3.3** In relation to the **shipping sector**, the EU, through the Maritime Policy, could and should play a more significant role through **better enforcement of applicable international law and EU environment protection and safety provision**. Greater attention needs to be devoted to pollution from discharges of operational and loading residues and from ships' waste tipping into the oceans. Furthermore, external costs of international, long-distance transportation of goods need to be acknowledged, incorporated into economic analyses and minimised through the European Maritime Policy. Short-sea shipping could make an important contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions but can only be achieved by new mechanisms that make carbon-efficient transport competitive.
- 3.4** In what concerns **sustainable tourism**, priority actions to be emphasised in the Maritime Green Paper include the establishment of protected areas and full enforcement of protected area provisions and the further development of assessment and evaluation of local and regional tourism.
- 4&5** The European Maritime Policy is one means by which climate change issues, such as sea-level rise, increased coastal flooding and ocean acidification, should be addressed. The Policy should include **measures to promote use of the ocean in ways that help to combat and adapt to climate change**, such as marine renewables, sustainable maritime transport, and shoreline management planning.
- 6.** The EU has an important role to play in relation to **Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)** but will need to be clear where it can add value (a number of activities are suggested). The Maritime Policy should then set out measures that need to be taken at an EU level.
- 6.1** Since many of Europe's seas are relatively well studied, a lack of data should not be a barrier to developing MSP but there is a **need to make the most of existing spatial data**. The Maritime Policy should stimulate prioritised data collection and better data management and access, to support better decision making and policy development.
- 7.** We support the Green Paper's assertion that "*EU maritime policy has a major stake in the success of ICZM*" and suggest that the **measures outlined in the ICZM Communication should be integrated into the future Maritime Policy**. Additional measures will be needed to ensure that there is effective coordination of plans, policies and activities across the land-sea interface; to build co-operation, coordination and understanding between sectoral interests; to encourage better engagement of local communities; and to initiate programmes of action, where appropriate.

8. The use of **eco-regions** (within the general framework of the **Large Marine Ecosystems concept**) in regional management and planning must be supported. These need to be taken into account in the development and implementation of the Maritime Policy as well as the Marine Strategy. The Policy needs to ensure effective and complementary links with other 'regional' mechanisms, as for example **RACs**, and integration with the **Regional Seas Conventions**.
9. A **knowledge-based approach** should be fully endorsed by the European Maritime Policy, with an explicit commitment to science and financial instruments applied to marine scientific research.

GENERAL ISSUES

1. Ensuring the future maritime policy is underpinned by sustainable development

What mechanisms should be in place to ensure that new maritime development is sustainable?

The rationale for the Maritime Green Paper starts with the acknowledgement that Sustainable Development is at the heart of the EU agenda. However, it does not refer to the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS)¹ in the actual text, downgrading it to a footnote in page four. **We believe that a stronger emphasis on the importance of integrating the EU SDS in the European Maritime Policy is required.**

Sustainable development should provide the overarching framework for the EU Maritime Policy, which should acknowledge that a healthy marine environment underpins a strong economy and social equity. In the past there has been little effort to put an economic value on the goods and services provided by marine ecosystems. This is now changing and early studies (see Annex A) are beginning to show the huge economic importance of Europe's marine and coastal habitat. The Maritime Policy needs to reinforce the point that there are important economic arguments (in addition to the obvious environmental case) for maintaining healthy marine ecosystems. In order to achieve the social and economic objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and the wider aims of the EU SDS, as adopted in 2006³, it is essential that more effort is made both at EU and national levels to protect and recover marine ecosystems. The European Maritime Policy provides an important opportunity to take measures to achieve this.

An integrated European Maritime Policy also needs to be consistent with the commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002⁴. In particular, a European Maritime Policy should contribute to the Gothenburg target to halt the decline of biodiversity by 2010. It therefore should **integrate, and in some cases go beyond, the targets and actions contained in the EU's Biodiversity Communication**⁵.

³ Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy, Council Conclusions 10917/06

⁴ Including, *inter alia*, application of an ecosystem approach by 2010, the establishment of networks of marine protected areas by 2012, the restoration and maintenance of fish stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield by 2015 and the implementation of integrated coastal zone management strategies

⁵ Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by 2010 – and Beyond, Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being, COM(2006) 216.

In this respect, priorities include:

- i. completing the European marine Natura 2000 network by 2008 and establishing management priorities and necessary conservation measures by 2012;
- ii. developing programmes of measures to achieve ‘good environmental status’;
- iii. integrating biodiversity concerns in the development and implementation of horizontal marine environmental legislation and instruments;
- iv. ensuring that all environmental assessments of transport, energy, urban and industrial and extractive programmes and plans under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive take full account of impacts on biodiversity;
- v. ensuring that the Convention on Biological Diversity guidelines on sustainable tourism are promoted, adopted and implemented as appropriate by key stakeholders.

In this context, it is paramount that the European Maritime Policy is strongly grounded on the EU SDS. Only this will ensure that the environmental pillar of the future European Maritime Policy can be sustained.

Furthermore, the full range of environmental Directives, policies and measures will need to be considered and integrated into the European Maritime Policy including the Birds and Habitats Directives, the Water Framework Directive, the Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment Directives and the Environmental Liability Directive.

In addition, the future European Maritime Policy should also fully integrate the impacts and influences of other activities such as the Common Agricultural Policy and land based pollution effects on the marine environment.

2. The Marine Strategy Directive

*How can maritime policy contribute to maintaining our ocean resources and environment?
How can a maritime policy further the aims of the Marine Thematic Strategy?*

We are concerned that the EU Marine Thematic Strategy, in its current state, is referred to as *the* environmental pillar of the proposed European Maritime Policy. **We believe the Strategy, particularly the draft Marine Strategy Directive, still needs a number of improvements, in particular:**

- i. The Draft Directive currently stops short of reiterating specific commitments that are fundamental to the Maritime Policy initiative, e.g. the EU’s Gothenburg target to halt the decline of biodiversity by 2010 or the Convention on Biological Diversity requirement for creating a global network of marine protected areas by 2012.
- ii. Whilst the proposed Directive allows for Member States to make recommendations to the Commission where Community action is needed, the Strategy is limited in its scope to proactively bring together relevant measures and efforts in a truly holistic way. For example, measures regulating fisheries management can only be taken in the context of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP); it is therefore critical that the CFP gives due recognition to the Directive and takes account of its requirements in future reforms.

- iii. The strategy notes that the regional seas conventions (OSPAR, HELCOM and Barcelona) have few enforcement powers and this compromises their effectiveness in achieving agreed goals. For a serious support of the implementation of the international marine environment protection agreements the strategy needs to provide clear guidelines for the integration of goals and measures agreed under these conventions.
- iv. The proposed Directive (Article 13) allows for exceptions to achieving Good Environmental Status, including a provision for Member States to claim 'overriding public interest which outweighed the negative impact on the environment'. The Directive does not provide a clear definition of such public interest and nor does it clarify what is meant by 'ad hoc' measures to mitigate or prevent further impacts.

As a result of these weaknesses, the Marine Strategy will struggle to provide “*a strong, integrated EU policy on marine protection*” and will not be sufficient in itself to form “*the environmental pillar of the future Maritime Policy*”. Indeed, any such policy should address these limitations by, for example, ensuring other Community measures are able to help deliver, rather than hinder, the aim of the Marine Strategy Directive, and address the points noted above.

In this context all efforts have to be taken to ensure the implementation of the Marine Thematic Strategy targets and objectives. This includes a stronger recognition that the Marine Strategy underpins the European Maritime Policy and associated activities and policies, and a presumption against measures that counteract the targets proposed in the Marine Thematic Strategy.

3. Key sectoral policies that must be improved to achieve sustainable development

3.1 Fisheries

How should the Common Fisheries Policy be further developed to achieve its aim of sustainable fisheries?

The pressure of fishing activities remains very high and many commercial fish stocks and other exploited marine resources are overexploited. **To ensure a sustainable fisheries development in the European seas, conservation and recovery of stocks at a reproductive, sustainable level is of utmost importance.** Therefore a mixture of established and innovative measures is necessary, such as:

- i. fixing of total allowable catch levels on the basis of scientific recommendations;
- ii. full integration of the ecosystem approach in fisheries regulations;
- iii. adaptation of fishing gears to lessen their impact on the marine environment;
- iv. implementation of networks of marine protected areas for fisheries purposes;
- v. withdrawal of all subsidies that directly or indirectly contribute to maintaining overcapacity. Funds should be directed at making the sector sustainable and, where appropriate, of supporting those fisheries and producer cooperatives which already meet sustainable resources management requirements;
- vi. the implementation of an individual transferable quota management system could contribute to the conservation of fish stocks, reduce over-capacity and enhance profitability of the fishing industry;
- vii. a general ban on discards with effective sanctions; and

- viii. monitoring should be performed, or at least overseen, by the European organisations and the EU Commission. The EU Commission's initiative of the new Community Fisheries Control Agency to achieve centralised, independent organisation of monitoring is welcomed.

The European Maritime Policy cannot lose this opportunity to define and implement such priority actions.

3.2 Ports

How can the EU best ensure the continued sustainable development of ports?

Ports and marinas are mainly located in estuaries where they compete for sheltered locations with crucial coastal habitats (e.g. mudflats and saltmarshes) and associated wildlife. Most of the major ports in Europe lie within or adjacent to sites that are designated as Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation or Ramsar sites. These are essential habitats that support the functioning of many marine ecosystems.

There is a need for integrated planning of European transport systems, to ensure that goods transported by sea are delivered to their markets by the most appropriate routes in terms of energy efficiency, efficient use of natural resources, and avoidance of environmental damage. **Past practice of allowing the market alone to determine ports investment and development (which leads to competition between ports for business, wasted investment, increased the movement of jobs between areas damaging local communities and providing minimal net employment gain, and unnecessary environmental degradation) should be avoided.**

The European Maritime Policy needs to take account of existing mechanisms to promote sustainable port development, and further to encourage the minimisation of impacts on the natural environment. It should promote a strategic approach that safeguards zones around ports to accommodate projected new port capacity and associated road and rail infrastructure. These safeguards also need to dovetail with long-term planning for shoreline management, including responding to sea-level rise and other climate change impacts.

Further consideration of the relationship between strategic planning for major port infrastructure projects and the delivery of compensatory measures to offset wildlife impacts they impart must be sought. Natura 2000 management plans form one possible mechanism, but the absence of legal mechanisms to support a programme of offsetting measures means that no package of measures can be implemented before the absolute impacts of a particular development have been evaluated. In crude terms, a solution is "habitat banking" but this has many possible pitfalls unless there is clear strategic direction and a legal framework for securing offsetting measures in advance of individual consents processes. **The strategic direction for managing the effects of major infrastructure projects should therefore be determined well in advance of the point of need** and consideration should be given to the best way of achieving the necessary environmental compensation measures as soon as possible. Marine Spatial Planning may assist in this process.

3.3 Shipping

How can energy efficiency improvements and fuel diversification in shipping be achieved?

Much more must be done to place shipping on a sound ecological footing. Given the pollution and risks that remain, shipping is not reaching the level of environmental compatibility that could reasonably be achieved using modern technologies and practices. **The EU, through the Maritime Policy, and working through initiatives such as under the auspices of the IMO, could and should play a significant role including through supporting better enforcement of applicable international law and EU environment protection and safety provision.**

Transporting goods at long distances has various detrimental environmental impacts, including direct effects on biodiversity and emissions of CO₂. These **external costs of international, long-distance transportation of goods need to be acknowledged, incorporated into economic analyses and minimised through the European Maritime Policy.** Short-sea shipping could make an important contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions but can only be achieved by new mechanisms that make carbon-efficient transport competitive. There would also be advantages in establishing a transparent system for informing consumers of the total distance that products have been transported to reach the market, such as labelling of ‘product kilometres’ or ‘product carbon footprints’, although this proposal probably goes beyond the scope of an European Maritime Policy.

In addition, greater attention needs to be devoted to pollution from discharges of operational and loading residues and from ships’ waste tipping into the oceans. The EU has a role in ensuring that port-related activities consistently meet acceptable environmental standards across Europe, including port reception facilities, port state controls and sea traffic monitoring which in some cases need to be improved.

Priority actions include:

- i. the phasing out agreed at EU level of single hull tankers – according to ship category between 2005 and 2010 – and the ban on the transportation of heavy oil in such tankers must now be put into practice;
- ii. consideration of whether EU and international law should prohibit use of the space between both hulls as additional capacity for transporting oils, other hazardous substances or liquids;
- iii. greater attention must be given to the training of ships’ crews. Immediate action should be taken to ensure that all crew members fulfil the requirement of high standard education;
- iv. it must be ensured that all Member States make available an adequate number of inspectors at all ports and berthing places and fulfil the minimum control rate;
- v. new monitoring and information systems should enhance sea traffic safety;
- vi. binding restrictions on the sulphur content in shipping fuel and NO_x emissions. This could be achieved in a staged approach, starting by implementation in EU waters and ports;
- vii. wherever possible, compliance with more stringent emission standards should be backed by financial incentives; for example, more attractive berthing fees and lower control fees; and

- viii. there is an urgent need for stricter sanctions under criminal law that apply to anyone who pollutes the ocean wilfully or through gross negligence or is an accessory to such an offence as an incentive to comply with existing environment protection and safety provisions. These sanctions should not only affect the ship's captain and the ship's owner, but also the responsible individual within the classification society or the company that owns the cargo.

3.4 Tourism

What specific measures promoting the sustainable tourism development of coastal regions and islands should be taken at EU level?

The impacts of tourism on the coastal zone and marine environment are well known and studied. Nonetheless, environmentally sound planning and management of tourism activities still pose a great challenge. The European Maritime Policy cannot lose this opportunity to promote the sustainable development of tourism.

Regional specificities aside, **priority actions include: (i) the establishment of protected areas and full enforcement of protected area provisions; and (ii) the further development of assessment and evaluation of local and regional tourism using meaningful, uniform criteria.**

The concept of environmental impact assessment under the Viabono eco-label along with proactive marketing of environmentally sound tourism services, such as the EU eco-label for tourist accommodation services, are approaches that are both right and worthy of promotion.

Furthermore, the Commission is working on the preparation for a European Agenda 21 for the sustainability of European tourism, which will contribute to support the efforts to promote the sustainability of Europe's coastal areas and islands.

4. Climate Change Mitigation

What further steps should the EU take to mitigate and adapt to climate change in the marine environment?

Climate Change is one of the biggest challenges of our common future. The increase of CO₂ emissions has a strong influence on the ocean by increasing temperature, causing sea level rise and acidification. In addition, the ocean is a key component of the Earth's climate regulatory system, and over the last 200 years, has absorbed approximately half the CO₂ produced by burning fossil fuels. This important ecosystem function is itself under threat from the processes of ocean warming and acidification, with potential to seriously accelerate climate change effects. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a consistent and ambitious climate protection policy. After reviewing available studies, we are of the opinion that a demanding climate protection policy is not only technologically feasible but also economically acceptable. Such a strategy would confirm the EU's world leadership in renewable energy and environmental technologies.

The European Maritime Policy is one means by which climate change issues, such as sea-level rise, increased coastal flooding and ocean acidification, should be addressed. The Policy should include measures to promote use of the ocean in ways that help to

combat and adapt to climate change, such as for carbon sequestration, marine renewables, sustainable maritime transport, and shoreline management planning, including managed realignment.

4.1 Carbon Sequestration

The most important action required over the longer term is the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. In conjunction with policies to reduce the use of carbon-based fuels, carbon capture and storage in the geosphere potentially offers an important contribution to this action. The pumping of carbon dioxide into depleted hydrocarbon reservoirs (such as has happened already in pilot projects in the North Sea) could be a way to promote this objective.

At present it is not clear when the technology with which to accomplish this will be commercially viable. In the mean time, **there are questions that need to be addressed** before it will be known whether and to what extent CO₂ sequestration is acceptable, e.g. is it possible to permanently store CO₂ safely, what are the environmental risks? **To store CO₂ in the water column and seabed (in the deep sea) is associated with very high ecological risks and therefore is not safe in a long-term perspective and should be prohibited.**

4.2 Renewable Energies

How can innovative offshore renewable energy technologies be promoted and implemented?

Dealing with Climate Change through incentives to the development of renewable energy sources should be at the heart of the European Maritime Policy. This is intrinsically related with climate change mitigation and a form of development through innovation, which can make the European economy more competitive, and addresses the issue of energy security, which is more and more relevant in today's world.

Subsidies or incentives for renewable energies must continue. Associated costs can be justified as constituting an investment in making Europe a lead market in the area of renewable energies, a market whose diffusion throughout the world would be climatically necessary and economically beneficial. Because of these benefits it may be appropriate to provide commercial incentives to developers and operators of these technologies in order to achieve timely deployment. Market-based mechanisms provide one way of delivering such assistance.

Because of the relative youth of the marine renewable energy industry little is known about the potential adverse impacts of these technologies on the environment. These environmental uncertainties, coupled with potential conflicts with other users can give rise to delays in the promotion and implementation of offshore renewable energy projects. **In order to maximise the beneficial potentials of these technologies, Marine Spatial Planning together with appropriately resourced Strategic Environmental Assessment processes should be used. The European Maritime Policy could provide a potentially excellent framework to develop and implement these instruments.**

5. Climate Change Adaptation

What further steps should the EU take to mitigate and adapt to climate change in the marine environment?

What must be done to reduce the vulnerability of coastal regions to risks from floods and erosion?

There is increasing recognition that coastal hard defences are very costly to build and maintain and can damage the natural resilience of the coastline and its capacity to adapt to changing conditions, such as the increased storm surges and sea level rise associated with climate change. **The European Maritime Policy should acknowledge this and ensure that any EU funds for coastal management promote a strategic approach (e.g. through use of Shoreline Management Planning) and are available to finance natural responses instead of hard defences wherever appropriate.**

Climate change will also considerably affect fish stocks and other exploited marine resources. These effects will need to be allowed for when deciding appropriate harvest limits. **The European Maritime Policy should make such considerations an explicit part of the EU's decision-taking process under the Common Fisheries Policy.** Due to the ongoing movement of fish faunas and other marine creatures as a response to current trends of change, planning instruments, particularly those associated or including marine protected areas, need to take due consideration of the fact that we are dealing with a rapidly changing environment.

GOVERNANCE TOOLS

6. Marine Spatial Planning

What are the principles and mechanisms that should underpin maritime spatial planning systems?

A rational, systematic and well-informed management regime for our marine resources is required. **A spatial planning framework is a logical and necessary part of such a regime. Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is an obvious tool to help implement an ecosystem approach** and to facilitate the more integrated approach to management and governance envisaged in the Maritime Green Paper. However, it should not be considered in isolation and should complement and be complemented by other existing measures such as Environmental Impact Assessment.

MSP should encompass the principles that underpin sustainable development and in doing so share many of the principles set out in the EU Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). More specific principles that should underpin MSP are detailed in Annex B.

Experience to date suggests that MSP is most likely to be implemented at the level of the Member State and regions within this, and there is understandable reticence amongst European countries to develop cross-border marine spatial plans. **The EU will therefore need to be clear where it can add value to what will be done at the Member State level, activities already being undertaken between countries (e.g. within regional conventions**

like OSPAR) and EU-wide measures already available (e.g. under the Espoo Convention and associated EU implementing legislation).

How can the EU add value to the many national, local and private initiatives which already exist in the maritime field?

EU-level activities, undertaken under the umbrella of a European Maritime Policy, which would bring added value, include the following:

- i. ensuring that MSP, including measures undertaken at the Member State level, adequately encompasses issues that lie within EU, rather than national, competence, e.g. fishery policy;
- ii. providing a process for assessing the interaction between different EU (sectoral) policies, including to assist Member States in taking them into account as consistently as possible;
- iii. addressing broad-scale issues that extend beyond one Member State, like possible cumulative effects, ecological continuity and climate change consequences;
- iv. encouraging and facilitating trans-national co-operation and co-ordination across borders (both lateral and offshore), as well as sharing of best practice and information between Member States, and where appropriate providing EU guidance, to foster a common understanding of MSP and to help deliver efficient and consistent implementation; and
- v. fostering projects within and between Member States to research and develop MSP in practice.

6.1 Spatial data and analysis

What data need to be made available for planning in coastal regions?

The waters around many parts of Europe are relatively well studied and there is a significant amount of data to be drawn on. **A lack of data should not therefore be seen as barrier to developing Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). Where information is lacking, decisions should be guided by the objectives and principles on which MSP is based until such time as relevant information becomes available and provides a more effective basis for making decisions.**

Undoubtedly, there is a need to collect further information about the environment and marine activities to support decision-making. However, before doing so it is essential that effort is devoted to **collating existing data, making them available, and extracting maximum value from them through ‘reuse’ or new interpretation.** In this line, the Mapping European Seabed Habitats⁶ trans-national project and the Marine Data and Information Partnership and UKSeaMap⁷ initiatives in the UK are relevant examples.

⁶ www.searchmesh.net

⁷ Connor, D.W., Gilliland, P.M., Golding, N, Robinson, P., Todd, D., & Verling, E. 2007. *UKSeaMap: the mapping of seabed and water column features of UK seas.* Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough

Priorities for a future European Maritime Policy and Community action include:

- i. using data from different sources to provide an overview of issues that extend over more than one Member State (e.g. bird migration routes and shipping traffic) and to identify Europe-wide patterns and trends. Such work should include spatial analyses, e.g. assessments of policies, forecasts and scenario setting. This would continue work already undertaken by the EEA⁸, although there is a need to ensure such work complements, rather than duplicates, initiatives such as those under the auspices of the Regional Seas Conventions and ICES. If this is what is intended by the proposed “Atlas of EU coastal waters” then this could usefully inform MSP and is worth supporting.
- ii. complementing Member State initiatives to collate data and make them available by co-ordinating efforts at EU level, facilitating the exchange of data (e.g. by providing common standards, where appropriate) and sharing best practice. INSPIRE should play an important role in this regard;
- iii. ensuring a strategic approach, so that information from different parts of the European Commission and associated with different policies is brought together;
- iv. ensuring that data needs are given sufficient priority in relevant policies and funding mechanisms, e.g. Framework Programmes for Research and Interreg;
- v. ensuring a sensible allocation of resources to collecting, collating, presenting and using information. The suggestion for a “European programme to develop the comprehensive mapping of European coastal waters” needs to be built upon existing information already collected by the different Member States. Any business case will need to set out a prioritised approach, e.g. to address clear gaps or areas of potential conflict, and to demonstrate that the best use has been made of existing data.

7. Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and its relationship with Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)

How can ICZM be successfully implemented?

Following the adoption of the EC Recommendation on ICZM (2002/413), the European Commission has recently carried out an evaluation of progress towards implementing ICZM in Member States, and will issue a further Communication to steer future ICZM policy. **We support the Green Paper’s assertion that “EU maritime policy has a major stake in the success of ICZM” and suggests that the measures outlined in the ICZM Communication should be integrated into the future Maritime Policy.**

Whilst the introduction of a comprehensive system of MSP will be a major step towards better integrated management of development and use in the coastal zone, MSP alone cannot deliver ICZM. **Additional measures will be needed to ensure that there is effective coordination of plans, policies and activities across the land-sea interface; to build co-operation, coordination and understanding between sectoral interests; to encourage better engagement of local communities; and to initiate programmes of action, where appropriate.**

⁸ For example EEA. 2006. The changing faces of Europe’s coastal areas. EEA Report No 6/2006.

8. A Regional Approach

What regional specificities need to be taken into account in EU maritime policies?

We fully support the idea of need for action and governance mechanisms at a ‘regional’ level. We also advocate using, or at least taking account of, ecologically relevant boundaries, such as the idea of ‘eco-regions’ (based on the Large Marine Ecosystem concept) proposed in the Marine Strategy in regional management and planning. This is an obvious implication of taking an ‘ecosystem-based approach’. However, it also reflects regional differences which are important and which need to be taken into account in the development and implementation of the European Maritime Policy as well as the Marine Strategy. The agreed eco-regions should therefore be fully integrated into the Maritime Policy.

We note that a ‘regional’ approach is being adopted in an effort to decentralise the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) through a system of Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) run largely by fishery interests. Although the stakeholder involvement constitute a first step in the right direction, this sectoral focus has however lead to highly imbalanced composition of stakeholders in the RACs, lack of environmental focus, and lack of success in developing new concepts of fisheries management. **It is critical that effective links are established to ensure that these sectoral ‘regional’ mechanisms both contribute to and are informed by any overall regional management approach.**

A very important aspect of regionalisation of decision-making and management is the work being carried out under **Regional Conventions** such as OSPAR, HELCOM and Barcelona. **It is important that the Maritime Policy complements and supports the implementation of those conventions, and strengthens their programmes.** This should include providing clear guidelines for the integration of goals and measures agreed under the conventions.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

9. Alignment to policy needs

How can a European Marine Related Research Strategy be developed to further deepen our knowledge and promote new technologies?

Should a European Marine Research Network be developed?

How should the maritime policy be reflected in the discussions relating to the next EU Financial Framework?

Despite much of the present marine research efforts, we still do not know enough about the way marine ecosystems work to be able to predict how they will respond to current trends and threats. **It is, therefore, fundamental that when the science is uncertain the European Maritime Policy ensures we adopt a precautionary approach where there appear to be significant risks, learning from experience and adapting to inevitable change.**

European research and information priorities must be aligned to policy needs. **A knowledge-based approach should be fully endorsed by the European Maritime Policy, with an explicit commitment to science and financial instruments applied to scientific research.**

We also acknowledge that much can be done with existing initiatives and a good deal of relevant activity is already underway through the Common Implementation Strategy for the WFD with the methods of measuring in the different Member States being inter-calibrated to be sure they are compatible. A similar approach should be implemented in the marine environment.

We should strive for better knowledge of Large Marine Ecosystems and eco-regions, which call for integration of large scale marine research and monitoring programmes within the EU (such as Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning (MARBEF), the 6th Framework Programme, an enlarged European Global Ocean Observing System (EGOOS) and Mediterranean Global Ocean Observing System (MedGOOS)).

Non-scientific based stakeholder participation in monitoring is currently deemed to be lacking. To strengthen the social basis data, to reduce the gap between science and stakeholders (e.g. fishermen), **stakeholders should be involved in monitoring.**

The European Maritime Policy calls for more attention to be given to marine information management related to research technology and development, as recognized by the European Centre for Information on Marine Science and Technology (EurOcean) on its position paper regarding the Maritime Green paper. We support this view and highlight as priorities the following actions:

- i. facilitating the access to valuable information related to research activities and technological development on key aspects addressed by the Green Paper;
- ii. stimulating the development of quantitative indicators, including common standards, on marine science and technology and related to environment and socio-economics;
- iii. contributing towards improved cooperation and coordination between the European organizations through information sharing; and
- iv. enhancing public outreach and education activities.

As it is recognised in the Green Paper "*...it will be necessary to reflect on how emerging EU Maritime Policy goals can be supported through EU financial Instruments...*" Whilst realising that the original goal of having a specific integrating financial line for Marine Research and related issues in the context of the 7th FP was not achieved, **special attention should be given to the effective implementation of a mechanism to optimise the fragmented components under which Marine Research is presently being funded.** An open forum of interested parties, supported by an appropriated information system could contribute to the success of such mechanism and to prepare the ground for future adjustments to respond in an integrated manner to the requirements of a European Maritime Policy.

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ANNEX A: Valuing the Environment

In order to optimise the long-term economic and social benefits, the EU Maritime Policy must consider the value of the goods and services provided by marine ecosystems. It is widely recognised that not enough information exists to truly estimate the benefits provided by the ocean and the coastal zones. This must change and the EU Maritime Policy can go a long way to achieve this.

European marine and coastal ecosystems are important sources of food (e.g. fisheries) and raw materials (e.g. energy supplies and aggregates). They also provide valuable regulating services such as:

- i. climate regulation, flood and storm protection, and waste processing;
- ii. cultural services, such as tourism, education and recreation; and
- iii. other supporting services, such as nutrient cycling.

As an illustration of the economic value of marine ecosystem services, a recent study⁹ found that UK marine biodiversity supported ecosystem services with the following approximate annual values (some of which may be under-estimates):

- i. food provision of £513 million;
- ii. raw materials of £81.5 million;
- iii. gas and climate regulation of £420 million - £8.47 billion;
- iv. disturbance prevention of £17-32 billion;
- v. education and research values of £317 million;
- vi. leisure and recreation values of £11.77 billion; and
- vii. and non-use values of £500 million.

It is also estimated¹⁰ that the annual economic value of ecosystem benefits from Europe's coastal waters amounts to more than €18 billion, making coastal zones the most economically valuable areas in the EU.

These values provide a strong economic justification (above and beyond existing regulation through the European Habitats and Birds Directives) for maintaining marine biodiversity and ensuring no 'net loss' of associated protected sites.

Consideration of the repercussions of human activities on the provision of these ecosystem services will help to avoid undesirable costs and to support a strong European economy with a good quality of life and a healthy marine environment for its citizens. Economic assessment techniques, based on welfare economics, exist at present that are capable of valuing in monetary terms the impacts on these ecosystem services. Such approaches are being considered already in other policy areas, such is the example of the Water Framework Directive. Furthermore, the proposed Marine Strategy Directive also proposes a similar approach. It is therefore expectable that a future EU Maritime Policy will include such notions.

⁹ Beaumont, N., Townsend, M., Mangi, S., Austen, M. 2006. *Marine Biodiversity: An Economic Valuation*. Plymouth Marine Laboratory and the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/resprog/findings/mb-economic/mb-economic.pdf>

¹⁰ Firm Crichton Roberts 2000. *An Assessment of the Socio-Economic Costs and Benefits of Integrated Coastal Zone Management*. Commission of the European Communities, Brussels.

ANNEX B: The Principles that should underpin Marine Spatial Planning

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) should:

- i. provide a strategic, integrated and forward-looking framework for all uses of the ocean that takes account of economic, social and environmental objectives and so helps to achieve sustainable development;
- ii. apply an ecosystem approach to the regulation and management of development and activities in the marine environment by safeguarding ecological processes and ecosystem resilience, thus ensuring the environment retains the capacity to deliver ecosystem services and so support social and economic benefits;
- iii. provide a means to articulate policies and activities affecting the marine area and improve integration between those policies and activities to achieve shared objectives;
- iv. enable more efficient decision-making, offering benefits to marine regulators, developers, users and their advisors;
- v. provide a framework to identify, conserve, and where appropriate, recover important components of coastal and marine ecosystems, including species, habitats, physical features, natural processes and natural heritage;
- vi. embrace all existing and future marine uses, developments and activities, together with natural resources, features and processes;
- vii. extend to all marine areas;
- viii. contain a hierarchy of levels that comprises, as a minimum, a national and sub-national (regional) levels;
- ix. create a more efficient and rational use of marine space, to provide a balanced view between competing pressures, highlighting where one activity might preclude another, helping avoid or minimise conflicts of interest, and optimising the co-location of compatible activities;
- x. enable a better understanding of the cumulative effects of different types of activities, both on marine ecosystems and on each other;
- xi. promote participation by being transparent, open and inclusive, and ensure involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including marine users and local communities;
- xii. facilitate co-ordination with and between other governance tools and measures, such as land use planning, the Water Framework Directive and Marine Protected Areas, and thereby contribute to Integrated Coastal Zone Management;
- xiii. be based on the best available information and evidence. Where information is lacking, decisions should be guided by the principles and concepts outlined in point 2., until such time as relevant information becomes available; and
- xiv. provide a strategic and efficient, and therefore cost-effective, approach to information gathering, collation, management and access, thus reducing the burden and duplication of effort between individual sectors and encouraging greater data availability than at present.