

**Committee of the Regions**

NAT-V-007

**88th plenary session
27 and 28 January 2011**

Reference to MarineKIC initiative:
see paragraph 26

**OPINION
of the
Committee of the Regions
on
THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY
AND MARINE KNOWLEDGE 2020**

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- strongly insists that sufficient funding be allocated to the further development of the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) until the end of the present Financial Perspective in 2013. It is also of the view that specific and adequate funding needs to be allocated for the development and further strengthening of IMP in the next budgetary period commencing 2014, and calls upon all parties involved in the drawing up of the EU budget to devote adequate attention to this need. This is vital in order to achieve the goals that have been set and not to allow all the progress and investments already made to be in vain;
- insists that greater emphasis be placed on the "sustainable economic growth, employment and innovation" priority. As Europe is still struggling to overcome the most severe economic crisis in living memory, actions to this end surely deserve more attention, not to mention the fact that they could significantly contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Europe 2020 programme;
- points to the need to keep earmarking EU funding for the integrated maritime policy after 2014 so as to sustain the policy and make it effective, subject to discussion of the multiannual financial framework post-2013. The coastal fund discussed by the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament could be an example here;
- demands that local and regional authorities be consulted when developing and implementing actions aimed at achieving the objective of improving the quality of public decision-making at all levels. The CoR has already called for governance in this field to be carried out in the spirit of multilevel governance and in compliance with subsidiarity, and also calls for greater involvement and cooperation with non-EU countries on matters of marine knowledge. The importance of improving coordination with these partners on other aspects of maritime policy has already been widely acknowledged and the benefits of more common actions in this field are quite obvious.

Rapporteur

Mr Noel FORMOSA (MT/EPP), Mayor of San Lawrenz, Gozo (Sindku, San Lawrenz, Gozo)

Reference documents

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Programme to support the further development of an Integrated Maritime Policy
COM(2010) 494 final

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - Marine Knowledge 2020 - Marine data and observation for smart and sustainable growth
COM(2010) 461 final

I. GENERAL COMMENTS

THE COMMITTEE OF REGIONS

1. strongly insists that sufficient funding be allocated to the further development of the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) until the end of the present Financial Perspective in 2013. Is also of the view that specific and adequate funding needs to be allocated for the development and further strengthening of IMP in the next budgetary period commencing 2014, and calls upon all parties involved in the drawing up of the EU budget to devote adequate attention to this need. This is vital in order to achieve the goals that have been set and not to allow all the progress and investments already made to be in vain;
2. underlines the great importance of guaranteeing the success of the IMP, as the alternative would be disastrous both from the environmental point of view and from the economic and social one. Far too many of Europe's regions are dependent on the sea for their prosperity for the former to be neglected;
3. welcomes the European Commission's intention to earmark EUR 50 million for further development and implementation of Europe's integrated maritime policy during the period 2011-2013, so as to support further progress with EU maritime policy, in particular "blue growth", or the sustainable use of our seas, oceans and coasts, protection of the marine environment and promotion of employment in the maritime sectors;
4. insists that greater emphasis be placed on the "sustainable economic growth, employment and innovation" priority. As Europe is still struggling to overcome the most severe economic crisis in living memory, actions to this end surely deserve more attention, not to mention the fact that they could significantly contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Europe 2020 programme;
5. welcomes the European Commission's intention to contribute through the support programme to implementing the strategies for individual sea areas. Regional maritime strategies can be used to find specific solutions for regional challenges through targeted allocation of funding;
6. points out that the Communication on Marine Knowledge 2020 states that it is largely concerned with data collection and assembly – both fields in which many local and regional authorities (LRAs) play an important role as financing authorities. Therefore, better coordination of efforts to avoid overlapping must be pursued;
7. points out that maritime spatial planning is an important instrument of the EU's integrated maritime policy and should be deployed wherever appropriate;
8. welcomes the prominent place the Commission has given to cooperation with non-EU countries. It is a well established position of this Committee that the EU alone cannot tackle

successfully the wide range of challenges faced by our seas and therefore it is imperative to involve as closely as possible our international partners. Initiatives such as the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) which is right now in its initial phase, will eventually become an effective tool for pursuing common interests in cooperation at a regional level;

9. sees a need to promote specific key projects for developing and demonstrating EU maritime know-how, e.g. developing a "European Clean Harbour" or "European Clean Ship". Such key projects could serve to identify technical approaches - in line with overarching policy goals - that could be used to raise legal standards in the medium term and enshrine them at European and international level, producing a competitive edge for Europe's maritime sectors (e.g. in energy efficiency, emissions reduction, alternative vessel propulsion or vessel safety). Such key projects can only be carried out in the long term if a secure financial framework can be put in place for the future;

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

10. welcomes the initiative to create a more integrated network for European maritime knowledge. Given the stage reached by ICT and the ever greater cooperation between the scientific communities of different states, the present fragmented structure seems both anachronistic and extremely cost-ineffective;
11. points to the need to keep earmarking EU funding for the integrated maritime policy after 2014 so as to sustain the policy and make it effective, subject to discussion of the multiannual financial framework post-2013. The coastal fund discussed by the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament could be an example here;
12. expresses regret that greater attention is not given to local and regional authorities, even though the Communication deals to a great extent with issues that fall within their competences and for which they are very often the financing and/or implementing authorities. Data collection may be the responsibility of Member States but in reality it is very often carried out at the local and regional level;
13. demands that LRAs be consulted when developing and implementing actions aimed at achieving the objective of improving the quality of public decision-making at all levels. The CoR has already called for governance in this field to be carried out in the spirit of multilevel governance and in compliance with subsidiarity, and also calls for greater involvement and cooperation with non-EU countries on matters of marine knowledge. The importance of improving coordination with these partners on other aspects of maritime policy has already been widely acknowledged and the benefits of more common actions in this field are quite obvious;

14. recommends that when considering the consequent measures for the promotion of coastal information systems in the follow-up to the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Recommendation, the Commission look for best practices among Europe's regions. Some of them, like Brittany, Schleswig-Holstein, and Zuid-Holland, among others, are at the forefront in this field and many of their practices can be adapted to other regions as well;
15. welcomes the idea to adopt a sea-basin level approach when it comes to marine observation systems and identification of important gaps. Indeed, the option to give Regional Sea Conventions and Regional Advisory Councils for fisheries more responsibilities, including potentially coordinating powers, is worth exploring. In all cases, however, the interoperability of data and the observation of high quality standards must be ensured;
16. proposes that the Commission support the development of regional data indicators, which could serve to better shape the priorities of the regional maritime strategies, as regions are among the main data collectors and users;
17. notes that better results are likely to be achieved through adopting a more holistic approach amongst others by giving greater emphasis to the potential role of private entities in the development of an IMP. Without losing sight of the European Union's social dimension, it is also important that all relevant stakeholders be involved at every step of the process, Furthermore, all relevant stakeholders must not only be invited to share the cost of data gathering and safeguarding but also to contribute ideas and good practices with a view of benefiting there from, thereby further stimulating economic growth and job creation within the European area;
18. acknowledges the improvement of marine knowledge is crucial not only in order to understand better the processes that take place inside our seas but also to strengthen the other two tools of the IMP, better spatial planning and integrated maritime surveillance;
19. notes that the present Communication concentrates on data collection and assembly, which form the two initial steps in the process of forming knowledge. At the same time, these are stages in which local and regional authorities are extremely active;
20. shares the view that the initiative in question is based on the requirements of several Directives which essentially aim at the creation of more coordinated monitoring programmes of marine waters, simplification of the exchange of information between public authorities, the release of public data, as well as at the establishment of certain common standards;
21. emphasises that the Communication makes specific mention of the importance of coastal data and the fact that a lot of regional authorities have developed coastal information systems. What appears obvious is that to maximise the benefit of these actions, a certain degree of interoperability needs to be achieved. For that purpose, the Commission should look into ways of improving cooperation and coordination at the regional level;

22. also acknowledges the importance of the concept that data should be maintained as close to the source as possible. While the proposal is certainly sensible, it must be ensured that it does not place additional burden on local and regional authorities. In this respect, the Commission's view that all relevant stakeholders should also contribute adequately for the safeguarding of data even after its social and commercial interest has expired, deserves greater attention;
23. notes that the Communication pursues three main objectives:
- to reduce operational costs and delays for the users of marine data;
 - to increase competition and innovation amongst users and re-users of marine data;
 - to reduce uncertainty in knowledge of the seas.

Achieving these goals and changing over from the current highly fragmented approach to an integrated network could also entail savings amounting to EUR 300 million per annum, most of which might benefit local and regional administrations;

24. recommends that the above-mentioned objectives are attained by further developing and improving existing EU instruments, such as the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security Initiative (GMES) and the "ur-EMODnet" (European Marine Observation and Data Network). Furthermore, strongly advocates that the Commission is to look at ways of making data from EU-supported regional development and marine research programmes more available for re-use, and in particular guaranteeing that access rules to fisheries data are fully implemented by Member States, and ensuring that gathered data meets common standards and gives possibilities for multi-purpose use;
25. agrees with the Commission's intention to continue forward towards the completion of what it calls an operational Marine Data Architecture. For this to be achieved, it is believed that the Commission should involve all stakeholders and encourage communication between national data centres, as well as set up a secretariat to manage ur-EMODnet;

26. suggests that the maritime community should encourage the European Institute of Innovation and Technology to set up a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) in the near future on protection and sustainable use of marine resources. Such a KIC could cover a broad spectrum of scientific, technological, economic and educational activities in the spheres of biological and mineral resources, as well as energy, while taking account of environmental protection issues.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Article 4

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>The Programme may provide financial assistance for actions in accordance with the objectives set out in Article 2 and 3, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) studies and cooperative programmes;(b) public information and best practice sharing, awareness raising and associated communication and dissemination activities, including publicity campaigns, and events and the development and maintenance of websites;(c) conferences, seminars, workshops, and stakeholders fora;(d) pooling, monitoring, visualisation of and ensuring public access to a significant amount of data, best practices and of database on Union funded regional projects, including where appropriate through a secretariat established for one or a number of these purposes;(e) actions relating to cross-cutting tools, including test projects.	<p>The Programme may shall provide financial assistance for actions in accordance with the objectives set out in Article 2 and 3, such as <u>but not limited to</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) studies and cooperative programmes;(b) public information and best practice sharing, awareness raising and associated communication and dissemination activities, including publicity campaigns, and events and the development and maintenance of websites;(c) conferences, seminars, workshops, and stakeholders fora;(d) pooling, monitoring, visualisation of and ensuring public access to a significant amount of data, best practices and of database on Union funded regional projects, including where appropriate through a secretariat established for one or a number of these purposes;(e) actions relating to cross-cutting tools, including test projects.

Reason

To achieve the goals set out by the proposal funds are to be made available, the use of 'shall' instead of 'may' makes its obligatory for funds to be allocated. The inclusion of 'but not limited to' will allow for other actions to be funded which are not included in the text.

Amendment 2

Article 6

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
The Programme may benefit third countries, stakeholders in third countries, and international organisations or bodies which pursue one or more of the general and specific objectives set out in Article 2 and 3.	The Programme may <u>shall</u> benefit third countries, stakeholders in third countries, and international organisations or bodies which pursue one or more of the general and specific objectives set out in Article 2 and 3.

Reason

The CoR believes that it is imperative to involve international partners.

Amendment 3

Article 7

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
The Commission shall implement the Programme in accordance the Financial Regulation.	The Commission shall implement the Programme in accordance <u>to</u> the Financial Regulation.

Reason

Missing word.

Amendment 4

Article 10

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
The beneficiary of financial assistance shall submit to the Commission technical and financial reports on the progress of work financed by the Programme. A final report shall also be submitted within three months of the completion of each project.	The beneficiary of financial assistance shall submit to the Commission technical and financial reports on the progress of work financed by the Programme. A final report shall also be submitted within three <u>six</u> months of the completion of each project.

Reason

More time should be allocated for the completion of the report.

Amendment 5

Article 11

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>The Commission shall ensure that, when actions financed under this Programme are implemented, the financial interests of the Union are protected by:</p> <p>(a) the application of preventive measures against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities,</p> <p>(b) effective checks,</p> <p>(c) the recovery of the amounts unduly paid and,</p> <p>(d) the application of effective, proportional and dissuasive penalties, if irregularities are detected.</p> <p>2. For the purposes of paragraph 1, the Commission shall act in accordance with Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95, Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 and Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999.</p> <p>3. The Commission shall reduce, suspend or recover the amount of financial assistance granted for an action if it finds irregularities, including non-compliance with the provisions of this Regulation or the individual decision or the contract or agreement granting the financial assistance in question, or if it transpires that, without Commission approval having being sought, the action has been subjected to a change which conflicts with its nature or implementing conditions.</p> <p>4. If time limits have not been observed or if only part of the allocated financial assistance is justified by the progress made with implementing an action, the Commission shall request the beneficiary to submit observations within a specified period. If the beneficiary does not give a satisfactory answer, the Commission may cancel the remaining financial assistance and demand repayment of sums already paid.</p> <p>5. Any undue payment shall be repaid to the Commission. Interests shall be added to</p>	<p>The Commission shall ensure that, when actions financed under this Programme are implemented, the financial interests of the Union are protected by:</p> <p>(a) the application of preventive measures against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities,</p> <p>(b) effective checks,</p> <p>(c) the recovery of the amounts unduly paid and,</p> <p>(d) the application of effective, proportional and dissuasive penalties, if irregularities are detected.</p> <p>2. For the purposes of paragraph 1, the Commission shall act in accordance with Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95, Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 and Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999.</p> <p><u>3. For the purposes of this Article, 'irregularity', shall mean any infringement of a provision of Union law, or any breach of a contractual obligation resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator which has, or would have, the effect of prejudicing the general budget of the Union or budgets managed by the Union by an unjustified item of expenditure.</u></p> <p>34. The Commission shall reduce, suspend or recover the amount of financial assistance granted for an action if it finds irregularities, including non-compliance with the provisions of this Regulation or the individual decision or the contract or agreement granting the financial assistance in question, or if it transpires that, without Commission approval having being sought, the action has been subjected to a change which conflicts with its nature or implementing conditions.</p> <p>45. If time limits have not been observed or if only part of the allocated financial assistance is</p>

<p>any sums not repaid in good time under the conditions laid down by the Financial Regulation.</p> <p>6. For the purposes of this Article, 'irregularity', shall mean any infringement of a provision of Union law, or any breach of a contractual obligation resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator which has, or would have, the effect of prejudicing the general budget of the Union or budgets managed by the Union by an unjustified item of expenditure.</p>	<p>justified by the progress made with implementing an action, the Commission shall request the beneficiary to submit observations within a specified period. If the beneficiary does not give a satisfactory answer, the Commission may cancel the remaining financial assistance and demand repayment of sums already paid.</p> <p>56. Any undue payment shall be repaid to the Commission. Interests shall be added to any sums <u>amounts</u> not repaid in good time under the conditions laid down by the Financial Regulation.</p> <p>6. For the purposes of this Article, 'irregularity', shall mean any infringement of a provision of Union law, or any breach of a contractual obligation resulting from an act or omission by an economic operator which has, or would have, the effect of prejudicing the general budget of the Union or budgets managed by the Union by an unjustified item of expenditure.</p>
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Reason

Definition of "irregularity" should be at the beginning of the Article.

Brussels, 27 January 2011.

The President
of the Committee of the Regions

Mercedes Bresso

The Secretary-General
of the Committee of the Regions

Gerhard Stahl

IV. PROCEDURE

Title	The development of an Integrated Maritime Policy and Marine Knowledge 2020
Reference(s)	COM(2010) 494 final & COM(2010) 461 final
Legal basis	TFEU, Article 43(2), Article 91(1), Article 100(2), Article 173(3), Article 175, Article 188, Article 192(1), Article 194(2)
Procedural basis	Optional referral
Date of Commission letter	Catherine Day letter of 23 June 2010
President's decision	16 September 2010
Commission responsible	Commission for Natural Resources (NAT)
Rapporteur	Mr Noel Formosa (MT/EPP), Mayor of San Lawrenz, Gozo (Sindku, San Lawrenz, Gozo)
Analysis	November 2010
Discussed in commission	14 December 2010
Date adopted by commission	14 December 2010
Result of the vote in commission	Majority
Date adopted in plenary	27 January 2011
Previous Committee opinions	<p>CdR 126/2010 fin, Opinion of the CoR on Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean, plenary of 9-10 June 2010; rapporteur: Michael Cohen (MT/PES)</p> <p>CdR 416/2008, Opinion of the CoR on the Maritime and Coastal Package, plenary of 17-18 June 2009, rapporteur: Michel Delebarre (FR/PES)</p> <p>CoR 22/2008, Opinion of the CoR on an integrated maritime policy for the European Union, plenary of 9-10 April 2008, rapporteur: Saima Kalev (EE/EA)</p> <p>CdR 258/2006, Opinion of the CoR on Towards a Future Maritime Policy for the European Union, plenary of 13-14 February 2007, rapporteur: Uwe Döring (DE/PES)</p>