



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU

### OVERVIEW

In October 2007, following an extensive consultation exercise, the European Commission adopted a Communication on an Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union (ref. COM (2007) 575). It included a number of actions which the Commission wanted to launch during its mandate, now soon coming to a conclusion, and that would cover various areas in its bid to exploit opportunities and address related challenges.

Among others this included:

- The creation of a European Maritime Transport Space without barriers (Communication and action plan presented in January 2009);
- A European Strategy for Marine Research (presented in September 2008);
- The call on Member States to develop national integrated maritime policies;
- The launch of a roadmap towards maritime spatial planning by Member States (presented in November 2008);
- The elimination of pirate shipping and destructive high seas bottom trawling (related legislation has come into force during the past years);
- The promotion of a European network of maritime clusters (a working document was made available in October 2007);
- A review of EU labour law exemptions for the shipping and fishing sectors (presented in October 2007);
- A European Marine Observation and Data Network;
- A Strategy to mitigate the effects of climate change on coastal regions.

Besides these, other initiatives have also been taken at hand, covering various sectors.

In June 2008, the European Commission adopted a Communication providing guidelines for an Integrated Approach to Maritime Policy (ref. COM (2008) 395) and highlighting the role of policy makers and stakeholders in the process.

The Council discussed the matter in its General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting of 8 December 2008, noting progress achieved on various fronts including on the common fisheries policy, the maritime safety package, the Directive on pollution caused by vessels and on the proposal to implement the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention. It also stressed on the importance of offshore production of renewable energy, such as tidal power.

During this year the European Commission has adopted a number of initiatives including a strategy for the European maritime transport system covering the period till 2018, and the White Paper on adaptation to climate change which touches on relevant areas. During the next month it is expected to adopt a communication on the Baltic Sea Region.

Based on the interventions made by the President of the Commission José Barroso and Commissioner Joe Borg during the recent European Maritime Days conference in Rome (19-20 May), emphasis shall be heightened on the aspects of governance, the sea-basin approaches,



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the various cross-sector instruments such as surveillance, spatial planning and research, and on the progress to be made on the international scene.

By October 2009 the Commission is expected to prepare a full progress report on what has been attained so far on integrated maritime policy. Importantly, it is also expected to include future actions which could be taken up.