



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS & ENERGY

Sectoral Committee

Weekly Update
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Marine Knowledge

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

Knowledge is an engine for sustainable growth in the interconnected global economy. Improving knowledge of the seas and oceans that make up 71% of our planet's surface is one of the three cross-cutting tools of the EU's integrated maritime policy. Indeed marine knowledge can also help achieve the other two tools – better spatial planning and integrated maritime surveillance. The magnitude of future changes in oceanic systems, their impact on human activity and the feedbacks on the ocean from these changes in human behaviour cannot be forecast without understanding the way the system works now and how it worked in the past. Knowledge is necessary to achieve good environmental status of marine waters, in accordance with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

The creation of marine knowledge begins with observation of the sea and oceans. Data from these observations are assembled, then analysed to create information and knowledge. Subsequently the knowledge can be applied to deliver smart sustainable growth, to assess the health of the marine ecosystem or to protect coastal communities.

This Communication is largely concerned with the first two stages of the process chain - i.e. data collection and assembly – on the basis that public information is fundamentally a public good that can benefit a wide body of stakeholders whereas applications are more specialist and can be dealt with either through the market or through targeted policy initiatives. Data collection is mostly, for subsidiarity reasons, the responsibility of Member States. The EU has the potential to add value in the assembly phase because of the need to ensure coherence across borders and between different user communities.

The Council conclusions on integrated maritime policy of 16 November 2009 encouraged the Commission to make proposals on improving the use of scientific knowledge. This Communication responds to this request by outlining the case for a more coordinated approach to marine data collection and assembly and describes an action plan whereby the different EU policy measures are contributing pieces to an overall jigsaw that will achieve this aim.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0461:FIN:EN:PDF>



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Energy: Informal Energy Council

An informal meeting of energy ministers from the 27 Member States was held in Brussels on 6 and 7 September 2010. This informal ministerial meeting focused on three issues: consumer-related aspects of the EU's energy policy, the grid infrastructure and energy efficiency.

One of the sessions was devoted to the development of a modern and integrated European grid, the financing thereof and energy efficiency. The EU Energy Ministers highlighted the need to carry on developing the European grid in order to meet the EU's targets in terms of renewable energy, security of supply and energy independence.

The EU has achieved significant progress towards improving the functioning of the energy market. Yet, there are still shortcomings. Market integration is hampered by a lack of interconnections or by heterogeneous legislation. These differences bring about long delays for cross-border projects.

The Council also advocated a greater harmonisation of the permitting procedures because, it was argued, if these projects became more attractive to private backers thanks to the lessening of administrative burdens and the harmonisation of planning and permitting procedures, it would be easier to attract the capital required.

In the light of these financial needs, the challenges regarding energy and climate change and the importance of cooperation with the industry with a view to preserving a competitive European energy market, Belgian Minister Magnette, on behalf of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union, proposed to launch an « Energy Round Table Conference » which will gather the stakeholders (industry, financial and public sectors) in the field of energy in Europe.

Finally, the last issue dealt with during this Informal Council was energy efficiency. The Presidency highlighted the need for significant efforts to reach the 20% target by 2020 and spoke about the need for more public investments in the field of energy efficiency given the incapacity of the market to attract enough financial investments.



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Digital Agenda for Europe: Consultation on public sector data

Public sector information (PSI) covers all sorts of data generated by public sector bodies - e.g. maps, meteorological, legal, traffic, financial and economic information - that can be re-used by anyone else in innovative products such as car navigation systems, weather forecasts, and travel information applications that can be downloaded on smart phones. According to a 2006 study, public data that is reused (for free or for a fee), generates an estimated market turnover of at least €27 billion in the EU every year. Contributions to this consultation will feed into the review of the PSI Directive, part of the Digital Agenda for Europe that aims to contribute to the EU goals of increasing competitiveness, innovation and job creation.

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on the EU Directive on the re-use of public sector information (PSI). All interested parties are invited to send their views on key issues of PSI re-use and, in particular, on possible amendments to the provisions of the current Directive. These relate to the scope, charging fees and licensing of data; the definition and digital format available to users; practical measures like the need for awareness-raising through national web portals; and the effects of changes that have taken place and/or barriers that still exist.

In its Digital Agenda policy strategy, the Commission highlighted that governments can stimulate content markets by making public sector information available on transparent, effective and non-discriminatory terms. This is an important source of potential growth of innovative on-line services.

The consultation will run until 30 November 2010.

On-line consultation:

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=psidirective2010>

Commission's Public Sector Information Website:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/psi/