

# Integrated maritime policy for the EU

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**PURPOSE:** to set out an “Integrated Maritime Policy” for the EU.

**CONTENT:** Europe’s maritime spaces and its coasts are central to its well-being and prosperity – they are Europe’s trade routes, climate regulator, source of food, energy and resources, and a favoured site for recreational and residence purposes. Yet the strain is showing and Europe stands at a cross-roads. The accumulated effect of over-activity in the maritime spaces is leading to conflicts of use and to a deterioration in the marine environment. In the face of rapid globalisation and climate change the need for Europe to address these challenges is great.

In a bid to address these challenges the Commission held a series of consultation exercises on how Europe relates to the sea. Based on the results of this exercise the Commission, in this report, sets out its vision of an “Integrated Maritime Policy” for the EU. This policy is based on the assumption that all matters relating to Europe’s oceans and seas are interlinked and that sea-related policies must be developed in order to reap the desired results.

The integrated policy will:

- Alter the way policies are adopted and decisions are made. This requires the development of common tools and the identification of synergies
- Develop and deliver a programme of work. This will require the differing sectoral policies to develop in a coherent policy framework.

The report lays down a foundation for the governance framework and the cross-sectoral tools needed for an effective Maritime Policy. It also sets out the main actions that the Commission will pursue during the course of this mandate. These actions will be guided by the principles of subsidiarity and competitiveness, the ecosystem approach and stakeholder participation.

As far as the governance framework for a maritime policy is concerned, the application of an integrated approach to Maritime governance (for example, better regulation) is analysed; and the kind of tools needed to deliver an integrated policy-making is set out. Tools that include a European network for maritime surveillance; maritime spatial planning an integrated coastal zone management system (ICZM); and data information.

In terms of the kind of actions that will be undertaken in order to implement the policy, this paper proposes:

- **Maximising the sustainable use of the oceans and seas:** The policy’s first goal will be to create optimal conditions for the sustainable use of the oceans and seas. This approach requires a new strategic vision for the development of shipping; the use of European sea ports, shipbuilding, repair and marine equipment industries, maritime jobs and the quality of the marine environment.
- **Building a knowledge and innovation base for the maritime policy:** Marine science, technology and research are crucial for the sustainable development of sea-based activities. The development of the Marine Observation and Data Network is an important tool for this strategy.
- **Deliver a high standard and quality of living in coastal regions:** Population growth in coastal regions and islands has been double the EU average over the last decade. The coastal regions also absorb large numbers of European tourists. Regional authorities and coastal communities have an important role to play in the regulation of coastal and maritime activities. The Committee of the

Regions, coastal regions and their networks are thus key partners in the development of an EU Integrated Maritime Policy.

- **Promote Europe's leadership in International Maritime Affairs:** The EU will work towards a more efficient international governance of maritime affairs and effective enforcement of international maritime law. It will urge the Member States to ratify any relevant instruments and will promote the coordination of European interests in key international fora.
- **Raise Europe's maritime visibility.** The integrated Maritime policy will seek to raise the visibility of a Maritime Europe and improve the image of maritime activities and the seafaring professions. It will also seek to promote Europe's maritime heritage, support maritime communities, support traditional skills and promote links between the various maritime communities.

To conclude this Communication, the Commission notes that an integrated maritime policy has the support of the Council which invited the Commission to present an Action Plan. Through this Communication and Action Plan the Commission has responded to this request whilst taking account of the views and opinions expressed by interested parties during the consultation round.