

Fisheries and aquaculture in the context of integrated coastal zone management in Europe

2008/2014(INI) - 07/06/2007

This Communication constitutes the Commission's report further to the [Recommendation](#) of the European Parliament and the Council of 30 May 2002, on the implementation of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) strategy in Europe. The main sources used for this report are:

- an external evaluation report, primarily assessing the coastal Member States' implementation of the EU ICZM Recommendation;
- a report by the European Environment Agency with an integrated spatial assessment of Europe's coastal zones;
- a report from the Working Group on Indicators and Data examining the use of indicators in the national reports, further to the EU ICZM Recommendation.

The EU ICZM Recommendation invited coastal Member States to report to the Commission on the progress made in implementing the Recommendation and, in particular, in relation to the development of a national strategy to promote ICZM. Of the 20 coastal EU Member States, 14 submitted official reports to the Commission, which represents 65% of coastal EU Member States and over 70% of the European coastline.

The reports often cover very different situations: (i) newly developed national strategies; (ii) a new phase in a longer on-going national process of implementing ICZM; (iii) the results of stocktaking exercises; (iv) initial proposals for a coastal strategy. Research indicates that all coastal EU Member States regulate coastal use and development in some form. Steps were taken during 2000-2005 towards a more integrated planning and management approach, but a mature and well-functioning ICZM involving all relevant levels of governance is still rarely observed.

The evaluation of the EU ICZM Recommendation has shown that the EU ICZM Recommendation has had a positive impact in stimulating progress towards a more integrated planning and management of coastal zones in Europe. Based on the conclusions outlined in the available reports, the Commission considers that continued efforts to support ICZM are needed at EU level:

- Coastal Member States are encouraged to implement their national ICZM strategies, or to develop ones where the EU ICZM Recommendation has not yet been implemented, with the aim of ensuring a balanced environmental, social, economic and cultural development, and in partnership with the relevant stakeholders;
- To achieve a more coherent understanding and implementation of ICZM across Member States, guidance needs to be developed to clarify the principles underlying sound coastal zone planning and management and ways to operationalise them;
- The proposed Marine Strategy Directive and the related work of regional seas conventions are key for the development of a holistic approach to the sustainable development of the EU oceans and seas. It is, therefore, essential to develop ICZM strategies in close co-ordination and co-operation with these instruments. By doing so, ICZM will become an important component of the future Maritime Policy of the European Union;
- More emphasis needs to be placed on cooperation at regional sea level, including coherence between plans, programmes and management covering the terrestrial and the sea parts of the coastal zones. The [proposed Marine Strategy Directive](#) and the related work of regional seas conventions will provide important instruments to take this forward;
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Given the high vulnerability of coastal zones to risks and possible impacts related to climate change, strategies to adapt to these risks should be developed and implemented in full coherence with ICZM strategies and instruments dealing with specific natural or technological hazards;

- More efforts are needed for comparative analyses and the communication and promotion of good practices regarding ICZM, including between coastal regions. The gathering of relevant data and effective information sharing and -use in policy and decision-making also needs to be furthered.

The integrated approach to policy-making of the [future EU Maritime Policy](#) and its environmental pillar, the [EU Marine Strategy](#), allows us to take important steps towards implementing the above agenda.

Lastly, as regards direct support for the further implementation of ICZM and, as of 2007, the European Cohesion Policy will be a major contributor, mainly through the Cooperation objective and the Regions for Economic Change Initiative, which includes coastal management among its themes. Moreover, the European Fisheries Fund includes an axis dedicated to the integrated and sustainable development of fisheries dependant areas. The EU-supported coordination action ENCORA, launched in 2006, will aim to structure the fragmented approach to coastal zone research and education in Europe.

In this context, the current EU ICZM Recommendation remains valid to support the implementation of the national strategies and to promote ICZM along Europe's coast.