Maritime spatial planning

2013/0074(COD) - 12/03/2013 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management.

PROPOSED ACT : Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council

ROLEOF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the ultimate aim of maritime spatial planning is to draw up plans to identify the utilisation of maritime space for different sea uses. Maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management are complementary tools. Applied jointly, they improve sea-land interface planning and management.

Increased use of coastal and maritime areas as well as climate change effects, natural hazards, and erosion, put pressure on coastal and marine resources. They require **integrated and coherent management to secure sustainable growth and preserve coastal and marine ecosystems** for future generations.

In 2008, the Commission published its 'Roadmap for Maritime Spatial Planning: achieving common principles in the EU', followed by a 2010 Communication entitled 'Maritime Spatial Planning in the EU — achievements and future development'.

This draft directive is an essential part of the ambition to develop the EU's Blue Economy as described in the Commission Communication on Blue growth: opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the impact assessment evaluated the effectiveness and the economic, environmental and social impacts of **three options**: (1) guidance and development of best practice, (2) non-binding measures, and (3) legally binding measures, including a 'framework-type' directive or regulation.

The impact assessment concluded that, even though non-binding options offer some advantages, **a legally binding approach by means of a directive is the most appropriate instrument** in order to:

- ensure predictability, stability, and transparency of maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management, whilst leaving flexibility for implementation to Member States and not interfering with the latter's competences;

- ensure that timelines for implementation are coherent with the timeframes of other relevant EU legislation and policy initiatives (e.g. Renewable Energy Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Europe 2020 targets, etc.);

- foster growth of economic activities at sea in a context of increased competition for space.

LEGAL BASIS: Articles 43(2), 100(2), 192(1), and 194(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

CONTENT: the main purpose of the proposed directive is to promote the sustainable growth of maritime and coastal activities and the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources by establishing a **framework**

for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management in the form of a systematic, coordinated, inclusive and trans-boundary approach to integrated maritime governance.

To ensure the sustainability and environmental health of the various uses, maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management will have to employ an **ecosystem-based approach** that ensures the protection of the natural resources that provide the basis for carrying out various activities. The proposed action covers **all policy areas of the TFEU with an impact on coasts, seas and oceans**.

The proposal:

- obliges Member States to carry out maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management in accordance with national and international law. The aim of the action is for Member States to establish a process or processes that cover the full cycle of problem identification, information collection, planning, decision-making, management, monitoring of implementation, and stakeholder participation. Planning details and the determination of management objectives are left to Member States. The EU will not take part in this process;

- requires Member States' actions to aim for coherence of management across sea basins, through trans-boundary cooperation in the same marine region or sub-region and related coastal zone and appropriate data collection and exchange.

Implementing acts will ensure consistent implementation of the Directive throughout the EU and facilitate reporting from the Member States to the Commission and, where relevant, the exchange of data between Member States and with the Commission.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the proposal has no implications for the EU budget.