Basic information

2003/2065(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Protection of marine environment: sustainable use of the seas, conservation of ecosystems **Subject** 3.70.01 Protection of natural resources: fauna, flora, nature, wildlife, countryside; biodiversity 3.70.05 Marine and coastal pollution, pollution from ships, oil pollution 5.05 Economic growth	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	GONZÁLEZ ÁLVAREZ Laura (GUE/NGL)	09/12/2002

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
PECH Fisheries	MCKENNA Patricia (V/ALE)	20/02/2003

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Environment	2491	2003-03-04

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Environment	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
02/10/2002	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2002)0539	Summary
04/03/2003	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
10/04/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
30/04/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
30/04/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0158/2003	

18/06/2003	Debate in Parliament		
19/06/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0295/2003	Summary
19/06/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2003/2065(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/5/19415

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0158/2003	30/04/2003	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0295/2003	19/06/2003	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2002)0539	02/10/2002	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0024/2003 OJ C 244 10.10.2003, p. 0034-0041	09/04/2003	
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0578/2003 OJ C 208 03.09.2003, p. 0016-0021	14/05/2003	

Protection of marine environment: sustainable use of the seas, conservation of ecosystems

2003/2065(INI) - 02/10/2002 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present a new approach to protect and conserve marine ecosystems and promote sustainable use of marine resources. CONTENT : under the terms of the sixth Environment Action Programme (EAP) the EU recognises the need for a thematic strategy when facing the dual challenges of protecting and conserving the marine environment. The EAP has long since acknowledged the many threats facing the marine environment. These

threats include loss or degradation of biodiversity and changes in its structure, loss of habitat, contamination by dangerous substances and nutrients and the possible future effects of climate change. The main culprits contributing to these threats are commercial fishing, oil and gas exploration, shipping, waterborne and atmospheric deposition of dangerous substances and nutrients, waste dumping and the physical degradation of the habitat due to dredging and extraction of sand and gravel. Those regulations, which do or could protect the marine environment do so through a quagmire of international, national and regional bodies. Indeed, the EU has a number of measures in place to try and protect the marine environment. However, the institutional and legal complexity of any such marine measures is one of the main challenges confronting a fresh EU strategy. This present Commission Communication adopts a pragmatic approach and claims to be action and sector oriented in order to describe the complexity of the task at hand. It is intended to ultimately establish the foundation upon which a thematic strategy can be built. When reviewing the existing legislative landscape the Communication offers a comprehensive list of the challenges with accompanying points on the measures currently in place. The headings are as follows: - Biodiversity Decline and Habitat Protection. The most significant policies and actions within the EU are the Habitat and Birds Directives, the CFP, CAP and the Biodiversity Action Plans. - Hazardous Substances. EU measures for controlling pollution and hazardous substances include the IPPC, the Water Framework Directive and the New Chemical Policy. - Eutrophication. The main EU instruments to combat eutrophication are the Nitrates Directive, the Urban Wastewater Directive the Water Framework Directive and the CAP. - Chronic Oil Pollution. The IPPC and EIA Directives would apply to chronic oil pollution. Nevertheless, no specific EU policy or legislation addressing the offshore oil and gas industry currently exists. - Contamination with Radionuclides. A global moratorium on the dumping at seas of radioactive waste currently exists. - Health and Environment. The main pieces of EU legislation controlling microbiological pollution are the Bathing Water Directive and Urban Wastewater Directive. - Maritime Transport. Community legislation in the field is extensive and highly regulated though it is inevitably often related to legislation adopted at the global level. Having listed the existing regulatory measures in place the Communication goes on to recognise that a major problem for future policies is the lack of basic information relating to themarine environment. A problem confounded by a fragmented monitoring strategy. Bearing this in mind the Commission proposes a number of objectives, which given time, should help alleviate the current fragmentation in a coherent marine policy. Importantly, the overall objective should be to promote the sustainable use of the seas and conservation of marine ecosystems, including seabeds, estuarine and coastal areas, with particular attention given to sites holding a high biodiversity value. The Commission lists fourteen objectives with a further twenty-three action lines proposed. The Commission recognises that its policy proposals are both ambitious and pragmatic. Yet, it is the publication of this document, which marks the first step in the development of an overarching EU marine strategy. On a final note, the Commission hopes that this is but a starting point for a marine strategy which can be developed in an open and collaborative process involving the Community institutions, relevant regional organisation and other stakeholders.

Protection of marine environment: sustainable use of the seas, conservation of ecosystems

2003/2065(INI) - 19/06/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European parliament adopted its own-initiative report drafted by Laura GONZALEZ ALVAREZ (GUE/NGL, Spain) on protection of the marine environment. (Please see the summary of 30/04/03.) Parliament concurred with the Commission's analysis that overfishing is a common problem worldwide, resulting in depleted fish stocks, threats to species such as other fish, sharks, birds, marine mammals and turtles, damage to the marine habitat and threats to jobs linked to fishing. Whilst overfishing is but one of the serious threats that harm the marine environment, it is one of the most important to deal with rapidly if fish stocks are to recover and provide hope for coastal communities. Fish from around the world is available in the Community, either caught by EU-flagged vessels or obtained on the international market. This gives the Community a significant responsibility for the impact of fishing. The Council and the Commission must take the necessary action to conserve fish stocks both on the high seas and in the waters of third countries. Parliament felt that in order to improve the knowledge base to which the Communication refers in relation to surveys, science, monitoring and decision-making and so as to reach the ambitious targets set out in the strategy, more technical, financial and human resources need to be made available. The control measures of the marine conventions aimed at protecting the marine environment are difficult to enforce. The Commission is asked to put more emphasis on implementation, reporting and uniform enforcement of current regulations, and to seek the earliest possible review of the old conventions, under which the sea is "everybody's right but nobody's responsibility". With regard to the measures proposed by the commission, Parliament expressed its concern that Action 2 appears to limit the Commission to the Natura 2000 network as the only tool to protect biodiversity. It felt that the protection and conservation aspect of this Communication should be put beyond the limits of the Natura 2000 network. Finally, Parliament made several recommendations on the measures proposed by the Commission, with particular reference to hazardous substances and chronic oil pollution.

Protection of marine environment: sustainable use of the seas, conservation of ecosystems

2003/2065(INI) - 04/03/2003

The Council adopted Conclusions concerning a thematic strategy to protect and conserve the marine environment. This strategy aims at ensuring sustainable and healthy seas and oceans and their ecosystems, as well as the sustainable exploration of their resources. It recognises that some significant improvements in the quality status of European seas have been realised and some of the negative trends have been halted and in some cases reversed.

The Council underlines that, in order to deal with the huge variability of marine ecosystems, including sea beds, estuarine and coastal areas, marine protection policy requires full consideration of regional conditions and that it is of particular importance to apply the precautionary principle, that preventive action should be taken, that environmental damage should, as a priority, be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay.

It requests the Commission to propose an ambitious, clear and coherent set of objectives with a view to promoting the protection and conservation of marine ecosystems, including sea beds, estuarine and coastal areas and the sustainable use of the seas and its resources; pursue the implementation

and enforcement of both existing and new legislation in an integrated manner; guide the development and implementation of the ecosystem approach within the marine strategy which integrates both the environment to be protected and the human activities which have an impact on the marine environment; provide for a coordination and streamlining of monitoring and assessment to achieve the highest synergistic effect; promote and facilitate effective coordinated and integrated actions by the relevant national and international parties (Member States, accession countries, neighbouring countries, organisations and stakeholders); invite neighbouring countries to participate in the process and develop partnerships, particularly in the Baltic, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.