



Euroregion Baltic Position Paper on Maritime Policy Green Paper

1. Overall position

Euroregion Baltic (ERB) welcomes the initiative to form a European Maritime Policy and is willing to undertake an active role in further discussions and work towards its full implementation. Hereby, ERB expresses its full support to the integrated approach presented in the introduction to the Green Paper.

Euroregion Baltic is a partner and one of the initiators of the Interreg III B project “Baltic Master”, gathering a wide range of the Baltic Sea Region actors, including regional authorities of the Euroregion Baltic member regions. The knowledge attained in the project implementation process has generated valuable contribution to this position paper adopted by the ERB Executive Board at its meeting on 2nd June 2007.

In line with lessons already learned from other EU integrated policies, especially the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agenda, ERB strongly underlines the necessity for broad and well anchored ownership, including local and regional authorities, at all stages of the integrated policy, such as formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

With regards to the implementation of the EU Growth and Jobs strategy, ERB would also highlight the importance of having the existing EU programmes to financially aid the implementation of the integrated European Maritime Policy if there is not going to be a specific support instrument. European Regional Development Fund could be made available for the improvement of port infrastructure and increasing accessibility to ports while European Social Fund should have the capacity of providing training possibilities or crews and other personnel involved in maritime issues.

It is our strong belief that the status of the Baltic Sea as a Particularly Sensitive Area (PSA) should be seen as a good opportunity of its further protection. Developing the PSA should take into account, e.g. numerous sensitive spots in the Baltic, maritime traffic monitoring schemes, waste handling, etc. Therefore, ERB stresses the need for transnational and crossborder cooperation in this field, and has welcomed the fact that several EU programmes already include aspects related to the future integrated European Maritime Policy.

2. Retaining Europe's Leadership in Sustainable Maritime Development

The European maritime sectors can retain or even increase their competitiveness if they are of high quality standards within the fields of products, services and education. These standards should be developed collectively and implemented in all EU maritime areas. By doing so, the availability of highly skilled personnel, solid knowledge infrastructure, which both consolidates knowledge and raises the level of innovation, will be strengthened.

Attention must be paid to the development of practical regulations on sustainability in line with the Gothenburg strategy and together with stakeholders. Developing and stimulating new investments should be focussed on long term strategies which governments will concentrate on while evaluating specific plans in the next 25 years. To be recommended are also making sustainable development knowledge and experience available, as well as tuning financial incentives to sustainable development since innovative business proposals that contribute to economic and ecological sustainability seem to receive more money than other applications.

Risk assessment is equally important in the process of improving safety at sea. Incidents can be of serious consequences for both people and environment. Risk assessment could help to encourage joint initiatives across sectors and member states to mitigate consequences of and to prepare for accidents at sea. Updated contingency plans may give a better chance to act quickly and reduce oil spills.

Marine related strategies should be developed by three sectors together: education research, entrepreneurs, governments at regional, national and EU levels. In developing and executing an EU research strategy a bottom-up approach should be applied since a lot of knowledge is available both at local and regional levels, as well as within businesses. Developing such networks may only be of value when connected to databases where unambiguous EU research data can be translated into information that can generate synergy.

A Maritime Policy must also meet the Kyoto protocols. Further measures must be taken at the European level in the fields of transport, energy, agriculture and fisheries. The development of alternative fuels should be actively encouraged and supported. With regards to shipping fuels a directive on the quality of marine fuels could ensure that minimum environmental standards be kept, which is a particular problem for ports. In the long term perspective, alternatives to fossil fuels must be developed.

3. Maximising Quality of Life in Coastal Regions

Nature, landscape and spatial quality can strengthen the standard of living, especially in settlements but also in tourism destinations. Differentiation in coastal areas is important with an emphasis on nature and landscape, as well as in coastal areas where possibilities for leisure and sports already exist or can be developed. Cultural historic values also need to be integrated in spatial planning. Therefore, a map containing all cultural historic values (archaeology, nature, monuments etc.) should be available. Furthermore, a geographical information system on land (and sea) use could be of benefit.

The planned Motorways of the Sea (MoS) will facilitate the increase in marine transportation and thus create higher density and traffic congestions at sea. The Motorways of the Sea are mainly oriented towards growth, commerce and integration, but far too often put safety and the environment on the side. It is important that a safety perspective is integrated in these planning themes. MoS, as an example, should be developed as a true system for safe transportation and include: information on places of refuge along their routes; clear and mandatory routes not interfering with sensitive areas and marine protected areas; contingency plans for at-sea and on-land response, systems for monitoring vessel traffic, functioning systems for sludge and waste handling, as well as ballast water management in the MoS-ports, pilotage, restrictions on emissions from ships and demands on environmentally friendly transports

Developing Coastal Tourism

Innovation in services and products related to coastal tourism can be effectively supported by premiums for investment, programmes on knowledge exchange, and international education programs for management and staff.

Furthermore, specific measures, promoting the sustainable tourism development of coastal regions and islands should integrate knowledge on sustainable enterprising in all sectors involved in coastal management, stimulate and co-finance initiatives on sustainable entrepreneurship in the field of coastal management and island development, collect unambiguous data, and enthuse exemplary projects.

4. Providing the tools to manage our relations with the oceans

A common Environmental Atlas would better link different sectors working within the coastal and marine areas, as well as serve as a common interface between organisations in different countries. Therefore, the atlas should map sensitive areas, explore the linkages between contingency planning and ICZM/MASP, and provide professionals and practitioners with the

same tool for both cross sectoral and cross border use. A complete and updated Baltic Sea Atlas should be available on-line. This digital version could be a part of a European Atlas.

ERB strongly recommends vessel tracking systems in the Baltic. Each vessel operating in the Baltic Sea Area should be fitted with a tracking device which provides information on the owner of the vessel, its flag state, crew and cargo.

5. Maritime Governance

Experience from ERB shows the importance of establishing good cooperation between sectors and different governmental actors, but also of forming strategic cooperation between countries and regions. Cross-sectoral as well as cross-border contingency planning is a key issue for creating and sustaining a strong state of preparedness.

Best practices in maritime governance are recommended for inclusion in the agenda of annual EU summits. From the ERB perspective, it will be of great significance that the EU recognises that its regions are each unique in history, economy, environment and culture. Thus, the regional dimension should be built into each aspect of the maritime policy. The involvement of local and regional actors in the development and delivery of maritime policies is to be encouraged.

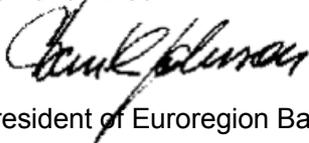
6. Reaffirming Europe's maritime identity

To support maritime education and heritage and to foster a stronger sense of maritime identity the following must be taken into consideration:

- relation of maritime heritage to spatial, social and economic development,
- stimulation of public-private co-operation,
- preservation of cultural historic elements, e.g. old fisheries, harbours, ponds, bird areas, wrecks a.s.o.,
- conservation and development of sailing heritage (old wooden and steel ships),
- maintenance of historic harbours and buildings,
- preservation and of extension of professional skills and education,
- increase in accessibility of heritage, both physical and educational,
- enhancement of water-land relations,
- conservation by development: new heritage destinations,
- relation of cultural and historic heritage to spatial development,
- preservation of, research and education in immaterial heritage, e.g. language and skills.

We need a more specific description of the contribution of culture and heritage to the maritime legacy and traditions of Europe in order to see how these can benefit the stated objectives of maintained coastal settlements, sustainable growth and better quality of life. The Maritime Policy needs to clearly identify and value the aspects of maritime and coastal heritage that still play a decisive role in defining identity among coastal dwellers, as much as it needs to beware of a unique, place-bound character that will attract and interest visitors.

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