Integrated maritime policy (IMP) - Evaluation of progress made and new challenges

2010/2040(INI) - 11/09/2009 - Document attached to the procedure

The Commission presents a Communication entitled ?Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean?. The Communication highlights the mechanisms and tools that should be mobilised to achieve an integrated approach to governing maritime activities in the Mediterranean sea-basin. It is meant to complement the various sectoral actions that the EU promotes in the Mediterranean area. While the Integrated Maritime Policy is primarily addressed to Member States, the Communication calls for stronger co-operation with non-EU Mediterranean partners at the appropriate levels.

It sets out the key challenges, noting that the Mediterranean bears 30% of global sea-borne trade in volume from or into its more than 450 ports and terminals, and a quarter of worldwide sea-borne oil traffic. Its coasts are home to more than 150 million inhabitants, a figure which doubles during the tourist season. Half of the EU?s fishing fleet is active there together with an increasing marine aquaculture production. Pressure on fish stocks is also exerted by vessels from the Southern Mediterranean and non-EU countries.

Improved Maritime Governance: two major problems need to be tacked: (i) in most Mediterranean States, each sectoral policy is pursued by its own administration, just as each international agreement is performed within its own set of rules, rendering an overview of the cumulative impact of maritime activities, including at basin level, a difficult objective to attain; (ii) the large proportion of marine space made up of high seas makes it difficult for coastal States to regulate activities that directly affect their territorial seas and coasts. The combination of these two elements gives rise to a situation where policies tend to develop in isolation from each other and without proper coordination.

The role of Mediterranean coastal States: the Commission will:

- propose that High Level Focal Points of Member States regularly address the Mediterranean Sea in order to discuss progress made in integrated maritime policy making;
- encourage Member States to exchange best practices in integrated maritime governance, in particular through the European Territorial Co-operation Objective programmes for the Mediterranean;
- set up a working group dedicated to Integrated Maritime Policy, with a view to exchanging best practices with non-EU Mediterranean coastal States;
- provide technical assistance, under the European Neighbourhood Policy and Partnership Instrument, for Mediterranean partners that express an interest in an integrated approach to maritime affairs, thereby raising awareness and assisting in setting implementation mechanisms.

Governance of the marine space: the Commission states that it will:

- support dialogue amongst Mediterranean coastal States through high-level meetings, academic and other international organisations, with a view to improving governance of the marine space;
- provide an overview of existing agreements and organisations relating to maritime affairs in the Mediterranean;
- make recommendations for the improvement of cross-sectoral cooperation between existing agreements and organisations;
- encourage the ratification and concerted implementation of UNCLOS in its bilateral relations;
- launch a study on the costs and benefits of establishing maritime zones.

Improved stakeholder involvement: the Commission will encourage stakeholder platforms to address Mediterranean Sea issues, with the aim of suggesting priorities on integrated maritime policymaking at basin level. It will explore options for better associating stakeholders from all coastal States.

Crosscutting tools: improved maritime governance needs to be matched by cross-cutting tools, geared at generating additional potential for sea-borne economic growth and securing environmental protection.

Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Marine Strategies: the Commission will:

- launch a study on MSP in the Mediterranean basin, with the aim of identifying potential areas for its application;
- thereafter, launch a project to test the application of MSP at sub-regional level and encourage concrete cross-border practices;
- assist Member States, through a Common Implementation Strategy, to deliver on their obligations under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, including a comprehensive assessment by 2010 of marine waters and related uses.

Integrated management in coastal areas and islands: Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) national strategies are being developed by Member States in the Mediterranean and the EC has recently signed a first basin-wide legal instrument on ICZM, adopted within the framework of the Barcelona Convention. The Commission will:

- provide a web-based inventory of ICZM)tools, best practices and case studies, with a view to enhance its implementation;
- support under FP7 the development of the knowledge-base on ICZM in the Mediterranean, with particular focus on international co-operation;
- test possibilities for strengthening the land-sea interface, in particular linking up terrestrial and maritime planning, through the MSP actions proposed above.

Facilitating knowledge-based action: the Commission will:

- pay particular attention to the Mediterranean in setting-up an integrated marine ERA-NET (European Research Area Network) aimed at strengthening coordination in marine research between Member States;
- define a long-term strategic framework for basin-wide scientific co-operation in the Mediterranean, enabling marine research co-operation to develop within a structured agenda, responding to agreed common challenges;
- develop a major cross-thematic research effort under FP7, targeted at integrating knowledge on the Mediterranean Sea across all

relevant disciplines.

Integrated surveillance for a safer and secure maritime space: lastly, the Commission is:

- launching a pilot project to improve co-operation amongst national authorities of Mediterranean Member States responsible for maritime monitoring, and exchange of information between port authorities;
- presenting a set of principles guiding integrated maritime surveillance in the EU (see summary of COM(2009)0538), so as to move progressively from a sectoral to an integrated approach to maritime surveillance at EU and national level.