



Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Declaration of the European Ministers responsible for the Integrated Maritime Policy and the European Commission, on a Marine and Maritime Agenda for growth and jobs the “Limassol Declaration”

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"The Limassol Declaration"**

We, Ministers responsible for the Integrated Maritime Policy of the European Union Member States, Croatia and the European Economic Area, under the chairmanship of Efthemios Flourentzou, Minister of Communications and Works, and in the presence of Demetris Christofias, President of the Republic of Cyprus, José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission and Maria Damanaki, Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, on the occasion of the Informal Ministerial Meeting in Nicosia Cyprus, on 7 October 2012, have agreed to the following:

1. **Considering** that the present economic context calls for the European Union to find a fast and effective road to recovery based on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; **Recognising** that Member States need to approach the Europe 2020 goals from innovative perspectives that can unlock new sources of growth and jobs;
2. **Recognising** that marine and maritime sectors are crucial drivers for growth and jobs for the EU economy, since their annual Gross Value Added amounts to 495 billion euros, 5,4 million Europeans are employed in those sectors across EU Member States, and that 88 million Europeans are working in coastal regions, where over 205 million live;
3. **Highlighting** that EU Member States share several sea basins with third countries and that the sea basins, outermost regions and associated overseas countries and territories are strategic gateways from and into the Internal Market and important for the development and implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy;
4. **Recognising** that the development of an integrated approach to maritime affairs since 2007, consistent with other sectoral policies, contributes to the enhancement of Europe's capacity to maximise the sustainable use of the oceans, seas and coasts, while at the same time ensuring safety of people and the health of oceans and seas;

5. Recognise the value of marine ecosystem goods and services and the protection of the marine environment as an important element for sustainable development and prosperity;
6. **Stressing** the importance of promoting dialogue, enhanced cooperation and exchange of best practices on maritime affairs at regional and international level; **Recalling** that all activities in the oceans and seas, including those undertaken in the framework of the IMP, should be carried out in line with the legal framework set out by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and other relevant existing international conventions.

A DYNAMIC MARINE AND MARITIME AGENDA FOR GROWTH AND JOBS

7. **Affirm** that Europe's seas and oceans offer unexplored areas for innovation, sustainable growth and employment;
8. **Stress** that the Europe 2020 strategy should be backed by a dynamic agenda for seas and oceans that supports the growth, competitiveness and job-creating potential towards a sustainable blue economy;
9. **Call** on European Institutions to support sustainable development of marine and maritime activities in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, i.a. within the framework of the Cohesion Policy, without prejudice to the outcome of the ongoing negotiations;
10. **Support** the appropriate development and implementation of integrated sea basin and macro-regional strategies as important platforms to drive sustainable growth in coastal regions.

Taking into account the above, confirm and work towards our shared goals for a European Marine and Maritime Agenda, notably to:

11. **Enhance the competitiveness of the EU shipping sector**, maintain its leading role worldwide, and increase the share of short sea shipping in intra-EU trade, while developing the EU ports infrastructures and services;
12. **Maximise opportunities for innovation in the European shipbuilding and marine equipment industry** in order to improve the environmental performance of ships, diversify into emerging sectors and exploit the increasing demand for recreational crafts;

13. Contribute to the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy with respect to carbon emissions and renewable energy, and create new employment opportunities by **increasing marine renewable energy production and exploration**, so as to strengthen the EU's global leadership position;
14. **Ensure the uninterrupted availability on the European market of energy** and its associated services; without compromising the safety of people and the health of oceans and seas;
15. Support research and innovation to **improve the sustainability and competitiveness of aquaculture and to stimulate sustainable fisheries** activities notably by increasing selectivity and creating more added value products;
16. **Foster the cultivation of aquatic products** to stimulate the growth potential of algae aquaculture and other bioproducts. Sustain the development of the blue biotechnology sector, and promote the access and fair and equitable benefit sharing arising from the use of genetic resources;
17. **Support the development of a highly diversified and sustainable coastal and maritime tourism in Europe**, including maritime and coastal heritage, nautical, cruise and leisure activities, by addressing the issues of competitiveness, seasonality, product diversification, connectivity, improved infrastructure and skills;
18. **Foster the development of new technologies for the safe and sustainable harvesting of marine mineral deposits** by developing further possibilities for the sustainable exploration and exploitation of raw materials for industry and green technologies.

THE BLUE ECONOMY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

We reaffirm that growth can be boosted by coherent and effective public policy that sets out the conditions necessary for the full development of the blue economy. It should reduce administrative and regulatory burdens and remove bottlenecks for innovation and investment. We therefore call for involved parties to:

19. **Enhance innovation and marine and maritime research** to ensure targeted and cross-cutting research aiming at realising the high growth potential of the blue economy, in particular through Horizon 2020;
20. **Work towards the effective development and accessibility of marine knowledge** notably by improving ocean observation, marine scientific research and seabed mapping of Member States' marine waters by 2020;
21. **Support the integration of maritime surveillance** towards an active operational Common Information Sharing Environment for the EU maritime domain by 2020, as an effective and cost-efficient way of safeguarding EU interests;
22. Stress the **importance of improved maritime governance** including increased cooperation, at the appropriate level, among the competent authorities performing functions ensuring cleaner, safer and more secure seas and oceans;
23. Improve planning transparency for investments and a balanced approach between relevant sectors and stakeholders, by deploying **maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management** in Member States and in their crossborder areas, to ensure coherence with environmental, societal and economic objectives;
24. Achieve or maintain good environmental status of marine waters by 2020, by continuing the effective implementation of the obligations of the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive** being the environmental pillar of the IMP, including the development of a coherent network of marine protected areas, and implement the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020;
25. Implement suitable management, prevention and adaptation practices, in order to enhance the resilience of coastal areas, marine ecosystems and maritime activities, **to the impacts of climate change;**

26. **Enhance marine and maritime careers** and their attractiveness by bridging the gap between education, science and industry, ensuring relevant training, and promoting a safety culture and appropriate labour mobility;
 27. Ensure that local communities, the workforce in peripheral regions of Europe and civil society, are **participating in and benefit from the development of innovative activities** especially through European maritime clusters and cooperation with social partners;
 28. Enhance sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation, **exchange best practices and promote dialogue at international, national and regional level**, both between Member States and with third countries sharing a sea basin with the EU, as well as with international and regional organizations;
 29. We call on the Council to endorse this policy agenda as a substantial component of the Union's strategy for growth and jobs, and on the Commission and the forthcoming Presidencies, in close cooperation with other EU Institutions, to undertake appropriate initiatives and set milestones, taking this declaration as a basis, to further develop and implement the Integrated Maritime Policy.
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