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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-ORDINATION
MARITIME POLICY

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Ref.: ESEC input to the European Commission's progress report on Maritime Policy

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your letter addressed to Commissioner Borg dated 10 August concerning the progress report on Integrated Maritime Policy. I have been asked to reply on behalf of the Commissioner.

Firstly we thank you for making such a considered contribution, and we are pleased by your decision to remain an interested stakeholder in the development of IMP. The engagement of stakeholders is an enduring cornerstone of the approach to integrating maritime policy and your participation is appreciated.

The principle of the integration of environmental policy is already a clear objective of IMP and indeed the environment is not just another sector which needs to be integrated into joined-up policymaking. The policy aims for the preservation of ecosystems and the resource base upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend. The ecosystem based approach is taken up in other aspects of IMP, along side the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), for example in Maritime Spatial Planning.

We agree with your plea for transparency in policy making, particularly in the light of developing dialogue with stakeholders. The Commission's priority is to strengthen the self organisation across sectors.

With regard to the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, you are aware that the Commission is in "listening mode" following the publication of the Green Paper. I will pass you comments to my colleagues dealing with the reform. We note your point that the Common Agricultural Policy has not featured in IMP to date. However, on the problem of eutrophication, a response is emerging through the sea-basin approach. The strategy for the Baltic Sea¹ adopted by the Commission in June includes as one of its priority areas "to reduce nutrient inputs to the sea to acceptable levels."


¹ COM(2009) 248 final

Climate change is an important factor of IMP. With regard to mitigation, the EU is promoting a diversification of energy sources including offshore renewable energy. The reduction of GHG emissions from shipping is being actively pursued in the IMO. On adaptation, you will be familiar with the White Paper on adaptation to climate change², which includes proposals for increasing the resilience of coastal and marine areas. This has been followed up in DG MARE by a study on the cost of climate change adaptation in coastal areas, which is available on the DG MARE website³.

Alongside the progress report the Commission is preparing a Communication on international aspects of Integrated Maritime Policy. I will draw your comments on the neighbourhood policy to the attention of my colleagues dealing with that document.

The progress report is due to be adopted by the Commission in October. This marks one stage along the road of developing Integrated Maritime Policy, which is still a new policy approach. We would encourage your participation in the cross sectoral platform of stakeholders currently being formed. Planning has already begun for a stakeholder conference on European Maritime Day in 2010 at which there will be possibilities for stakeholder self organised events.

Yours sincerely

p/o

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² COM(2009) 147 final

³ http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/climate_change_en.html