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EU MARITIME POLICY GREEN PAPER (DOCUMENT COM(2006) 275 FINAL)**BUSINESSEUROPE COMMENTS****The need for a comprehensive reform agenda**

BUSINESSEUROPE supports the initiative by the European Commission with its maritime policy Green Paper. We welcome the holistic and integrated approach to maritime management taken in this Green Paper. The future approach should rest firmly on two pillars: the Lisbon Strategy and improvement of the status of the ocean itself. A very important aspect of the Growth and Jobs strategy is the effort to make it into a comprehensive reform agenda. The strategy is also applicable for an integrated maritime policy. It is important to have an integrated management regime for the marine environment and coastal areas to achieve sustainable use for the future. This includes activities such as shipping, fisheries, oil and gas exploration, shipbuilding and ship repair, and coastal tourism. Through an integrated maritime policy, the EU can create a level playing field for the co-existence of these businesses.

The policy should also incorporate explicitly the Better Regulation initiative, and in particular the requirements for a less burdensome regulatory environment for businesses and other activities. The focus should remain on providing a transparent and solid framework that provides sustainable enterprises and businesses, and by applying the tools set out in the Better Regulation initiative.

Governance

Ecosystem-based management built on scientific knowledge is essential in a sound maritime policy. The Thematic Strategy for the Marine Environment is of great significance. On the basis of the evaluation of waters objectives, indicators are defined to achieve a good ecological status. When measures are drawn up to achieve these objectives it is very important to consider their economic and social consequences. BUSINESSEUROPE stresses the importance of performing impact assessments and cost/benefit analyses before measures are implemented.

A common approach across different sectors in establishing sound risk management systems is important. Both natural risks, like coastal erosion, and human-induced risks should be addressed. An integrated risk management model must create a general understanding of risk and facilitate the use of risk analysis. Risk assessment must be used in operations at sea in a cost-effective manner. Risk assessment is an important tool for the offshore industry. Risk is an element for consideration in all phases. Risk assessment is therefore a natural part of everyday operation offshore. Environmental assessment tools to verify the effects of discharges are important to improve the environment.



Coastal zone management is a challenge today. This is particularly connected to adapting to challenges facing the different activities in the coastal zone, fish farming, industrial activity, oil and gas refining, etc. Furthermore, clean and healthy oceans are basic conditions for all seafood production. The key to successful Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is strong involvement and empowerment of local authorities combined with active participation of all stakeholders in the planning process. Integrated and coherent regulation of spatial management must be supplemented by complementary sector-specific regulation. A major portion of pollution in the seas and coastal zones originates from urban, agricultural and industrial activities.

Research, development and education

Europe needs a vision and a strategy for marine related research. We believe that the Commission should establish an advisory group of international marine-related organisations, research institutes, networks and national research councils to develop such a vision and strategy. A reasonable timeframe must be given to the chosen initiatives to allow them to achieve their goals. For instance such a European Maritime Research Network must be given enough time to produce results.

We state this because past experience with the Fifth Research Framework Programme (FP5) (when the thematic network for certain upstream projects was closed down by its successor, the Sixth Research Framework Programme) demonstrated that decision-makers do not understand the required long horizon such projects need to provide successes. Businesses need to be included in the strategy-planning phase and to be held accountable during the operational phase. This can give significant input for policy-makers, based on experience from enterprises.

The Commission should consider arranging an annual conference to discuss marine-related research in Europe as a whole, including priorities of the Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7). Coordination of marine-related research within FP7 is essential. EU should set challenges in FP7 for the service and supply industry in Europe to maintain and extend their leadership in design, construction and operation of offshore fixed and sub-sea facilities with minimum energy input and minimum emission to air and discharge to sea. Offshore renewable power production could be used in conjunction with offshore oil and gas production to reduce/replace traditional gas turbines, thus reducing CO₂ emissions.

The world faces a serious and accelerating climate problem, partly as a result of greenhouse gas emissions from human activity. The consequences of the anticipated climate change are complex and varied. To gain control over the situation, major cuts in global greenhouse emissions are necessary. Understanding and adapting to climate change is therefore a key topic for European business and industry.

Climate change-relevant technology can play a significant part in this respect. For example the capture and geological storage of CO₂ has a role to play in combating human-made climate change. On the Norwegian Shelf alone there is enough capacity in such saline formations to store total European emissions for many centuries. It is therefore important to develop further technical guidance for the storage of CO₂. Research to solve climate change challenges should be in cooperation between private and public stakeholders.



Maritime clustering should be used as a vehicle for achieving policy objectives, for example by sharing knowledge, carrying out joint research and innovation, pooling education and training. Maritime certificates should be standard for all European countries. This would ease the flow of labour between countries and ship owners, and contribute to knowledge dissemination.

Fisheries and aquaculture

The fisheries and aquaculture industry covers the entire value chain, including fish meal, fish feed, aquaculture, industry and export and bio-marine ingredient industry. The seafood industry is viewed to have a major impact in future food production, economy and employment. It is a difficult task to determine global, regional and national priorities of fishery resource management and further development of aquaculture and sea-based food production.

Overlapping fish stocks demand joint management with neighbouring regions, management based on common principles and mutual understanding of the vital importance of a sound approach. A sustainable approach to resource management is needed to prevent over-fishing. It is our hope that the problems generated by discards can be solved after a general consultation and with the consensus of the different stakeholders, and that effective measures will be taken against "ghost fishing". There must be a clear and unbroken chain of responsibilities on enforcement and sanctions in management of the live marine resources.

New transport corridors

Policy-making and measures taken in the field of transport need to be sufficiently connected to an integrated approach to maritime policy. The establishment of viable transport corridors, with sea transport as their core, is a key element in building Europe's internal transport market and Internal Market. The opening-up of new transport corridors utilising less congested ports and routes is strongly recommended because it could lead to decreased costs for business and industry and a better functioning internal transport market.

BUSINESSEUROPE is of the opinion that the ports issue must be addressed in a constructive and thoughtful manner with a view to avoiding past mistakes. It is vital that a common port policy takes into account the differences among existing ports in Europe with regard to size, location and function. The issues of congestion and efficiency in and between ports require particular attention in this regard.

Experience has shown us that a 'one size fits all approach' has not proven to be either successful or helpful in the ports arena. Such an approach should be avoided at all costs in a European Ports Policy.

Any such Ports Policy must in our view focus on and address the many issues that directly relate to the provision of a favourable environment which allows port industries to flourish, to fostering the upgrade and expansion of port capacities, and how to establish an effective and competitive single market for transport services.



In order to make seamless transport corridors and to promote maritime transportation as such, the European transport policy should focus on ports as efficient logistic terminals in the overall transportation network. Investments should be made in ports and in hinterland connections, giving Europe efficient and seamless logistic chains. The growth of short-sea shipping during the last decade should be further enhanced in an integrated European transport system.

The success of establishing new and alternative transport corridors also calls for international cooperation and this should be taken into account in future actions.

Directorate-General Energy and Transport and Directorate-General Fisheries and Maritime must cooperate closely if this is to be achieved.

Tourism

Tourism and cultural heritage are connected in the most profound way. Development of business and industry in coastal areas must be in harmony with local and regional specificities. The rich natural environment and cultural surroundings in European coastal areas provide a good basis for maritime-related tourism in coastal zones. It is important to maintain local identity and distinctive features. Coastal tourism should be developed with a basis in each country's traditions and characteristics. It is also important to maintain the diversity in each region so that these characteristics can be further developed. Culture and traditions must be given the possibility to thrive and grow in harmony with an area's distinctive character. These elements should be taken into consideration when housing, infrastructure and power plants are being planned.

Experience shows that synergies between passenger ferry and cruise companies and land-based tourism is a key to ensuring future growth in both sectors. Enhancing these synergies facilitates the diversification of tourism products and opens up for a range of new market segments that can add value to local communities as well as SMEs.

Conclusion

It is important to achieve more and better jobs in a more dynamic, innovative and attractive Europe. At the same time it must be ensured that valuable marine resources are conserved in a sustainable way. The correct balance between entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability will help economic growth today and in the future, and which will benefit society as a whole.

Composed of 39 member federations from 33 countries, BUSINESSEUROPE represents important stakeholders in various maritime sectors. BUSINESSEUROPE is ready to participate actively in the follow-up to the Green Paper.
