



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 23.10.2013
C(2013) 6971 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Riksdag for its Reasoned Opinion concerning the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management {COM(2013) 133 final}.

The Commission takes note of the Riksdag's concerns regarding the compatibility of the proposal with the principle of subsidiarity. The Commission believes that the objectives of the proposal – streamlined action on maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management in all Member States and consistent and coherent implementation across the EU – can be best achieved at Union level.

The proposed Directive would deliver added value by enabling Member States to reach minimum commonalities to allow cross-border cooperation and to contribute in time to the implementation of related legislation, including the Renewable Energy Directive, the Common Fisheries Policy, the Trans-European Transport Network and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Marine and coastal ecosystems, fishing grounds, marine protected areas, maritime infrastructures, such as cables, pipelines, shipping lanes, oil, gas and wind installations, as well as risks related to natural hazards and climate change run across national borders. Maritime and coastal activities have a cross-border and often EU-wide impact and the respective national planning processes differ considerably, which is why a framework for the planning processes at sea and the integrated management of coastal zones needs to be established at Union level. Cross-border cooperation on these processes, which is essential both for economic development and sound management of resources, is currently rare, not systematic, or even absent.

The proposed Directive would leave Member States significant room for discretion as to how its objectives should be reached. It foresees only procedural obligations and would not regulate the content of maritime spatial plans or coastal management strategies. It is particularly important to note that the proposed Directive allows Member States to make

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maximum use of existing administrative structures and provisions, both internal and in the context of the cooperation with other Member States. Notably, the proposal would require that processes be in place, but does not foresee the imposition of changes to existing maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management structures or processes where these are already in place and in conformity with the minimum requirements.

Finally, the proposal explicitly excludes town and country planning as referred in Article 192(2) TFEU from its scope.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the concerns raised by the Riksdag and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

