

# European Maritime Day Rome, 18-19-20 May

## Concluding Statement

European Maritime Day confirms that the sea links up peoples and states. The sea, as a geographical feature, has proved to be a great catalyst of shared interests, and is especially important for Europe.

With the Integrated Maritime Policy, the community of stakeholders working with the sea and benefitting from the sea is more evident. The Integrated Maritime Policy acts as a champion in mobilising actors and in creating a new dynamism of dialogue and cooperation with the common goal of sustainable growth in coastal regions and maritime sectors. We need to pursue our efforts to involve interested parties in the further development of this policy.

European Maritime Day has, once again, confirmed that the sea is an essential resource to the European Union as:

- 22 Member States are coastal States;
- there are more than 1,200 sea ports in Europe;
- 3 to 5% of EU GDP comes from industries and services belonging to the maritime sector;
- Maritime regions produce more than 40% of GDP;
- 90% of foreign trade and 43% of trade within the EU take place via maritime routes;
- European shipbuilding represents 10% of global production and we are world leaders in value of production;
- There are around 95,000 boats involved in fisheries and aquaculture;
- The sea is a source of energy: besides traditional energy extraction, renewable off-shore energy is being used in many countries. The possibility of power plants powered by the sea is being studied and considered;
- The sea is a fragile environment and is exposed to different types of threats, such as chemical pollution and the discharge of dangerous and non-degradable substances. It is also subject to high-impact phenomena such as climate change, coastal erosion, the depletion of fish resources and natural habitats. The implementation of the European Directive for the environmental protection of the sea (the "Maritime Strategy Framework Directive") is therefore a priority;
- The sea represents a great opportunity and a challenge for research on issues such as the impact of climate change, environmental protection and sustainable fisheries, as well as maritime technologies and shipbuilding.

The sea-related sectors of the economy are very much affected by the global economic crisis. In order to overcome this crisis, we must invest in maintaining and further developing the maritime transport sector, ports and shipbuilding. The sustainable development of these sectors can be further enhanced by focusing more on green ships and green shipping.

European Maritime Day has shown, once more, that the circulation of goods and people by maritime transport is becoming more and more an essential feature of the way forward for all countries.

Through a far-sighted approach, the European Union has always acknowledged that the sea transport sector plays a primary role. Through the identification and development of the "Motorways of the Sea" and through the initiative for a common European Maritime Transport Space without Barriers, the EU has launched new effective and efficient ways of overcoming the challenges in this sector.

During the workshops, the subject of maritime security was also debated. This critical issue must be dealt with through a common and effective action by Member States. This is an indispensable common action in order to reach concrete and tangible results.

The Integrated Maritime Policy, together with these various activities, is a real driving force for growth and sustainable development in coastal regions and of maritime sectors throughout Europe.

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