



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 23.10.2013  
C(2013) 6978 final

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Eduskunta 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 Eduskunta'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 affect the content of maritime spatial plans or coastal management strategies.*

*It is particularly important to note that the proposed Directive would allow Member States to make maximum use of existing administrative structures and provisions, both internal and in the context of the cooperation with other Member States. It would not per se require the*

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*introduction of new administrative processes or structures, particularly in those Member States who already implement maritime spatial planning and/or integrated coastal management processes. Inter alia, the process requirements for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management processes proposed in the draft Directive are based on existing practice in those countries where such processes are currently implemented.*

*The Commission stresses that cooperation at the international level will enable marine spatial planning and integrated coastal management to ensure the involvement of third countries related to the given maritime area. The proposed Directive would allow Member States to choose the format and the means of such cooperation with third countries, as long as every effort is made towards coordination of their plans and strategies with that of the third country.*

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

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President*