



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
IMPACT ASSESSMENT BOARD

Brussels, 31 August 2007

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Opinion

Title **Impact Assessment on: an EU maritime policy**
(draft version of 8 August 2007)

Lead DG **DG FISH**

1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion

(A) Context

The Barroso Commission declared in its strategic priorities that there was a particular need for an all-embracing maritime policy. In 2005 the Commission presented a roadmap towards such a maritime policy, which announced the presentation of a Green Paper. This was published in June 2006, and followed by one year of consultation. On the basis of the consultation, a vision for a maritime policy and action proposals are being developed. The initiatives announced in the action plan will be subject to separate IAs as needed.

(B) Positive aspects

The paragraph 'Steps towards a maritime policy' provides a good and concise explanation of the political process so far and the direction that this initiative is now about to take, as well as useful information on the context in which maritime policy needs to be seen.

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

The recommendations below are listed in order of descending importance. Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG.

General recommendation: The IA report is unusual in the sense that no major policy actions are presented or assessed. Hence, without knowledge of the content of the vision document and action plan under preparation, the Board cannot comment on the adequacy of the present IA report. The Board would be happy to provide further advice should the author service consider it appropriate and feasible –under the time constraints it is subject to– to submit a revised IA report that would contain an assessment of substantial policy options.

(1) The sections on problem definition, objectives, and policy options should be

Commission européenne, B-1049 Bruxelles / Europese Commissie, B-1049 Brussel - Belgium. Telephone: (32-2) 299 11 11. Office: BERL 6/29. Telephone: direct line (32-2) 2981898. Fax: (32-2) 2965960.

E-mail: impact-assessment-board@ec.europa.eu
Website: http://www.cc.cec/iab/i/index_en.cfm

aligned. The sections on problem definition and policy options deal largely with government-internal matters, whereas the section on objectives addresses much more fundamental issues such as quality of human life and reaching Europe's full innovation potential. These three sections should be made to fit each other, so that a coherent chain of thought and logic of intervention is presented.

(2) The status of the concrete actions listed as headlines in paragraph 7 should be clarified. The IA report states that the initiatives listed in paragraph 7 have been selected for the action plan on the basis of an initial cost-benefit screening and that the list is non-exhaustive. The IA report should either provide more detail on these actions as well as the analysis that underpins this selection, or it should make it clear that this is an indicative pre-selection and that the final decision on new initiatives will be based on further IA work. Furthermore it should be clarified how the 'instruments to deliver policy' examined in section 5 relate to the list in paragraph 7.

(3) The IA report should aim to assess more than two options. It is not obvious that there exist no other feasible options than the two presented to address the policy choices and possible future action to address the identified problems.

(4) The background information provided could be streamlined and emphasise what is relevant to the remainder of the IA report. The background information presents lots of data demonstrating the importance and relevance of the maritime economy at large. It should ensure that in the condensed manner of presentation no nuances get lost about for instance the number of people employed in this sector, and it should avoid presenting information of which the relevance to the remainder of the IA report is not clear, such as data on container traffic.

(D) Procedure and presentation

The IA report frequently quotes from stakeholders' contributions to the consultation. Whenever quotations are used the IA report should clarify how representative these are, and whether or not the Commission shares the views expressed.

Moreover, the IA report should clarify whether it is also intended to meet the requirements from the Financial Regulation for ex-ante evaluation, and if so provide the necessary elements for such an evaluation. It should also provide more information on especially the monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

2) IAB scrutiny process

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