



Proposal for a Directive Establishing a Framework for Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management

JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN WWF AND THE EUROPEAN WIND ENERGY ASSOCIATION

WWF and the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA) welcome the European Commission's proposal for a Directive establishing a framework for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Management (ICM).

WWF and EWEA believe that a common framework for MSP and ICM in Europe is essential to provide for the coherent development of the blue economy based upon the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources such as offshore wind and the protection of marine biodiversity and ecosystem services. As such, MSP should apply an *ecosystem approach* so as to ensure that the collective pressure of all activities is kept within environmental limits while enabling the protection and sustainable use of marine goods and services by present and future generations. MSP can notably encourage the development of offshore wind, a strong catalyst for blue growth enabling coastal economies to move out of recession, as well as a key contributor to climate change mitigation.

Under the Directive Member States will be required to develop plans which identify the most efficient and sustainable current and future uses of maritime space and to coordinate all relevant policies affecting coastal areas. MSP will help the implementation of several other EU policies relevant for marine and coastal areas and will be a key tool to help Member States meet their environmental, economic and social objectives, including renewable energy targets, the obligation to contribute towards the achievement of Good Environmental Status of Europe's seas by 2020 under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and obligations under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.

WWF and EWEA agree that a common, legally-binding framework for MSP and ICM will provide for:

- More efficient use of marine space by identifying synergies between compatible maritime activities that can be co-located and fewer conflicts between different activities or sectors that are competing for space;
- Effective cross-border co-ordination of plans and projects such as the development of offshore wind farms, the European integrated offshore grid and the efficient development of Marine Protected Area networks;
- Better environmental protection by identifying the cumulative effects of proposed developments, safeguarding of natural resources and assessing the risks associated with climate change;
- Improved investment opportunities by increasing transparency, predictability and stability for investors as well as reducing co-ordination and transaction costs;
- Enhanced resilience of marine ecosystems by identifying and protecting sensitive sea areas and connecting 'blue corridors' to enable ecological coherence between these areas;

- Vibrant coastal communities and employment opportunities in long-established and emerging marine industries such as offshore wind that contributes to revitalise coastal areas.

A legally-binding framework is required to provide direction on how MSP can be applied in the most effective manner and in a coherent way across all EU waters. Without a legally-binding framework there is a high risk that Member States will continue to plan and manage the protection and use of marine resources through a 'patchwork approach' that, at best, fails to recognise the opportunities for co-ordination of activities and sustainable investments and, at worst, could lead to over-exploitation of marine resources and continued degradation of the marine environment.

WWF and EWEA urge Member States and the European Parliament to act to ensure that the Directive:

- Provides coherent direction and clear goals and a timeframe for these to be met, whilst safeguarding proportionality and subsidiarity by leaving Member States some flexibility with regard to the content of the plans and strategies to achieve objectives already set at European level;
- Requires Member States to cooperate and work together to ensure that plans and strategies are coherent across coastal zones and marine regions. This requires that competent authorities in each Member State are identified and are responsible for co-operating with other Member States or third countries;
- Involves all relevant stakeholders and authorities in the production of maritime spatial plans and coastal strategies and provides public access to the results once available;
- Ensures that plans and strategies are based on best available data that should be collected, as far as possible, by making use of existing instruments established under other EU initiatives;
- Provides for synergies between sectors by encouraging co-location of compatible activities or uses that can occupy the same spatial footprint;
- Requires all maritime plans and strategies to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the provisions of Directive 2001/42/EC;
- Provides for coherence between marine planning and terrestrial planning regimes, using ICM as the 'zip' between the two.

WWF and EWEA believe that the proposal for a Directive is an important step forward for the sustainable management of Europe's maritime sectors and the protection of the natural resources and the ecosystem services upon which they depend. We believe that a sustainable maritime economy depends upon a healthy marine ecosystem and that MSP and ICM are fundamental to achieving this vision.

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