

INTEGRATED MARITIME POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The integrated maritime policy (IMP) of the EU is a holistic approach to all sea-related EU policies. It is based on the idea that the Union can draw higher returns from its maritime space with less impact on the environment by coordinating its wide range of interlinked activities related to oceans, seas and coasts. Hence, the IMP aims at strengthening the so-called blue economy, encompassing all sea-based economic activities.

LEGAL BASIS

Articles 42, 43(2), 91(1), 100(2), 173(3), 175, 188, 192(1), 194(2), 195(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

The Treaty makes no explicit provision for legislative competence on maritime policy. However, Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which is based on the above-mentioned Articles of the TFEU, provides the legal framework for its implementation.

BACKGROUND

A growing awareness that all sea-based activities were interconnected, while corresponding maritime policies and decision-making processes were still quite fragmented by sectors, triggered efforts to deploy a holistic and more coherent policy framework. Consequently, in its [strategic objectives for 2005-2009](#), the Commission called for an integrated policy approach in maritime affairs. In October 2007, the Commission launched '[An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union](#)'. Since then, two progress reports have been presented by the Commission — [the first in October 2009](#) and [the second in September 2012](#) — describing the main achievements of the EU's IMP and corresponding maritime sectoral policies. Finally, Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011, establishing an intermediate programme to support the further development of an Integrated Maritime Policy, was repealed by Regulation (EU) No 508/2014.

OBJECTIVES

The EU's Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) is a policy framework aiming to foster the sustainable development of all sea-based activities and coastal regions by improving the coordination of policies affecting the oceans, seas, islands, coastal and outermost regions and maritime sectors, and by developing cross-cutting tools. The [main objectives and corresponding fields of action of the IMP](#) are:

- Maximising the sustainable use of the oceans and seas in order to enable the growth of maritime regions and coastal regions as regards shipping, seaports, shipbuilding, maritime jobs, the environment and fisheries management;

- Building a knowledge and innovation base for maritime policy through a comprehensive European strategy for marine and maritime research (e.g. the Maritime Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) and the Horizon 2020 programme ([2.4.5](#));
- Improving the quality of life in coastal regions by encouraging coastal and maritime tourism, creating a community disaster prevention strategy and developing the maritime potential of the EU's outermost regions and islands;
- Promoting EU leadership in international maritime affairs through enhanced cooperation at the level of international ocean governance and, on a European scale, through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) ([5.5.5](#)) and the Northern Dimension ([5.5.3](#));
- Raising the visibility of maritime Europe through the European Atlas of the Seas internet application, as a means of highlighting the common European maritime heritage, and by celebrating an annual European Maritime Day on 20 May.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The IMP covers the following converging policy fields:

1. Blue growth and blue economy

[Blue growth is a long-term strategy](#) adopted by the Commission in 2012 to unlock the potential of the blue economy and support the development of sustainable marine and maritime economic activities. It focuses on aquaculture, coastal tourism, marine biotechnology, ocean energy and seabed mining. Subsequently, the Commission launched a [communication on the role of innovation for the blue economy](#). The Commission has also played a leading role with some fundamental initiatives enhancing the Union's blue growth:

- A [communication on offshore wind energy](#), addressing the action needed to deliver on the Energy Policy Objectives for 2020 and beyond;
- [Strategic guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture](#);
- [The blue energy communication](#), setting an action plan to deliver on the potential of ocean energy in European seas and oceans by 2020 and beyond;
- a [European strategy for more growth and jobs in coastal and maritime tourism](#);
- The strategic roadmap entitled 'Building Ocean Energy for Europe', delivered in 2016 by the 'Ocean Energy Forum', a group of public and private stakeholders and organisations including representatives from the ocean energy industry, representatives of Member States and regions, financiers and NGOs.

Following the presentation of the European Green Deal in December of 2019, the Commission published a [communication that frames the blue economy as a way to achieve certain sustainability goals](#). The Commission encouraged Member States to reach sustainability goals by:

- Developing new technologies that can help decrease emissions from fishing vessels;

- Encouraging fishers to take an active role in decreasing marine pollution by collecting marine litter while at sea and using recyclable fishing materials;
- Utilising maritime spatial planning to protect and preserve marine biodiversity and promote renewable energies;
- Educating the public to enhance ocean literacy research, funding, and jobs;
- Facilitating international agreements to ensure that there is also blue economy growth in non-EU countries.

2. Marine data and knowledge

Comprehensive marine research, as well as the collection and integration of marine data, are key for the sustainable development of sea-based activities. Addressing this need, the Commission launched the [European marine and maritime research strategy](#) in 2008. It suggests concrete measures and mechanisms to improve marine and maritime research. In 2010, the Commission adopted the [Marine Knowledge 2020 strategy](#), seeking to improve the use of scientific knowledge on Europe's seas and oceans through a coordinated approach to data collection and assembly. Finally, after a [Green Paper consultation](#), the Commission published its [roadmap for the Marine Knowledge 2020 strategy](#) in 2014.

3. Maritime spatial planning

Increasing human impacts on the oceans, together with the fast-growing demand and competition for maritime space for different purposes, such as fishing activities, offshore renewable energy installations and ecosystem conservation, have highlighted the urgent need for integrated ocean management. Parliament and the Council therefore adopted [Directive 2014/89/EU establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning](#) (MSP). It seeks to promote the sustainable growth of maritime economies and the use of marine resources through better conflict management and greater synergy between the different maritime activities.

4. Integrated maritime surveillance

A safe and secure marine environment is also essential for the development of marine economic activities. Integrated maritime surveillance aims to provide common ways to share information and data among authorities involved in different aspects of surveillance, e.g. border control, maritime pollution and the marine environment, fisheries control, general law enforcement, and defence. In 2009, the Commission set out the guiding principles towards the development of a [Common Information Sharing Environment \(CISE\) for the EU maritime domain](#) and in 2010 presented a [roadmap for establishing CISE](#). Later, in 2014, the Commission published a [communication on the next steps for CISE](#), which is currently being developed jointly by the Commission and EU/EEA Member States. It intends to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of maritime surveillance by enabling appropriate, lawful, secure and efficient data sharing across sectors and borders throughout the EU. Ultimately, Maritime CISE is an important cornerstone of the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS), ([3.4.11](#)) promoting information exchange among maritime surveillance authorities.

5. Sea basin strategies

To better meet the specific economic, social and environmental characteristics of its maritime waters, the Commission has presented IMP sea basin strategies for all seas and oceans of the Union. A sea basin strategy is a region-tailored approach based on cooperation among countries within the same sea basin to address common challenges and opportunities towards the development of the maritime economy and marine environment protection. The [strategy for the Baltic Sea Region](#) was the first comprehensive strategy developed at 'macro-region' level, and a first step towards the regional implementation of the IMP. The Commission has adopted other sea basin [strategies for the Black Sea, the Atlantic, the Adriatic and Ionian Region, the Arctic](#) and [the EU's outermost regions](#). For the Mediterranean basin, two initiatives have been put in place: the first on [an integrated maritime policy for better governance in the Mediterranean](#) and the second for [the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean](#). Through these regional strategies, the EU also establishes closer cooperation with non-EU countries within shared sea basins, giving the IMP an international dimension.

Given the transboundary nature of marine ecosystems and maritime activities, robust international cooperation is needed in order to achieve the above-mentioned IMP objectives. Already back in 2009 the Commission published a [communication on the international dimension of the IMP](#) to strengthen the role of the EU in international forums. In 2016, the Commission and the High Representative published their [joint communication on an international ocean governance agenda for the future of the oceans](#). This comprises 50 actions towards safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans, which are being implemented worldwide. Efforts to strengthen international ocean governance are ongoing.

A number of specific actions have been launched by the Commission in accordance with its maritime policy action plan:

- A [communication on the strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy](#) promoting safe, secure and efficient shipping;
- A [communication and action plan with a view to establishing a European maritime transport space without barriers](#);
- A [proposal for a directive on reporting formalities for ships arriving in and/or departing from ports of Member States](#).

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

From the very beginning, Parliament has given active support to the different initiatives to establish the Union's integrated maritime policy. On 12 July 2007, in response to the Commission's Green Paper on a future Maritime Policy, Parliament adopted a [resolution supporting the integrated approach to maritime policy](#). Following the official launch of the Union's IMP, Parliament adopted several resolutions on an integrated maritime policy for the EU, including a [resolution in 2010 evaluating progress made and new challenges](#), and a [legislative position in 2011 on the proposal for a programme to support the further development of an IMP](#). On 30 November 2011, Parliament and the Council adopted [Regulation \(EU\) No 1255/2011](#)

[establishing a Programme to support the further development and implementation of the IMP](#). This regulation is no longer in force and was repealed during the course of the last common fisheries policy (CFP) reform through the adoption of [Regulation \(EU\) No 508/2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund \(3.3.4\)](#).

On 2 July 2013, Parliament adopted a [resolution on blue growth](#). This resolution seeks to revitalise and support the IMP, while stressing that the blue growth strategy, as part of the IMP, will encourage the development of synergies and coordinated policies, thus generating European added value.

[On 8 September 2015](#), Parliament adopted a [resolution on untapping the potential of research and innovation in the blue economy to create jobs and growth](#).

On 16 January 2018, Parliament adopted a [resolution on international ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals](#). Governance pertains to all human marine and maritime activities, both traditional and new, including fisheries.

On 27 March 2019, Parliament adopted a [legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment](#). In the framework of establishing a circular economy, it mentions the necessity for users of fishing gear containing plastic to consider re-usable alternatives and re-use systems.

On 4 April 2019, Parliament adopted a [legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the minimum level of training of seafarers](#). The aim is to improve the level of maritime safety and pollution at sea by developing maritime training and certification in line with international rules and technological progress.

On 17 April 2019, Parliament adopted a [legislative resolution on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe – the framework programme for research and innovation](#). Of the seven global challenges clusters, one includes research for sustainable and economically thriving aquaculture and fisheries, and for blue growth and the blue economy.

On 5 June 2019, Parliament and the Council adopted [Directive \(EU\) 2019/904 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment](#).

On 20 June 2019, Parliament and the Council adopted [Directive \(EU\) No 2019/1159 amending Directive 2008/106/EC on the minimum level of training of seafarers](#) and repealing Directive 2005/45/EC on the mutual recognition of seafarers' certificates issued by the Member States.

On 20 June 2019, Parliament and the Council adopted [Regulation \(EU\) No 2019/1239 establishing a European maritime single window environment](#) and repealing Directive 2010/65/EU. The main aim is to lay down harmonised rules for the provision of the information required for port calls, in particular by ensuring that the same data sets can be reported to each maritime national single window in the same way.

On 13 November 2019, Parliament and the Council adopted [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1896 on the European Border and Coast Guard](#). It establishes the European Border and Coast Guard Agency to assure European integrated management at the EU's external

border, manage border crossing efficiently and make the EU's return policy more effective, as a key component of sustainable migration management. It aims to address migratory challenges and potential future threats at the borders, combat serious international crime, and ensure internal EU security while fully respecting fundamental rights and safeguarding free movement.

On 28 November 2019, Parliament adopted a [resolution on the 2019 UN climate change conference in Madrid, Spain \(COP25\)](#). It recalls that climate change is one of the most important challenges facing humanity and calls for global efforts to fight it. It underlines that timely international cooperation, solidarity and a strong commitment to joint action is the only solution to fulfil the collective responsibility of safeguarding the entire planet.

On 15 January 2020, Parliament adopted a [resolution on the European Green Deal](#). It supported the Commission's proposal for a global binding target to protect and restore biodiversity to be set at the UN biodiversity conference in October 2020. It further urged the Commission to give the Green Deal a 'blue' dimension and to fully include the ocean dimension as a key element of the Green Deal by developing an oceans and aquaculture action plan, among other actions.

On 14 September 2021, Parliament adopted a [resolution on a new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy](#). Parliament urged the Commission to revise the existing strategy, to promote connectivity between ports and airports and the development of inland areas adjacent to maritime ports via multimodal connections, enhance education on the blue economy, promote the use of MSP to create areas for renewable energies, and encourage the use of impact assessments on vessels in this region.

On 16 September 2021, Parliament adopted a [resolution on Fishers for the future: Attracting a new generation of workers to the fishing industry and generating employment in coastal communities](#). This resolution aimed to make recommendations to address employment issues in the fisheries sector, including its generational renewal.

On 3 May 2022, Parliament adopted a [resolution toward a sustainable blue economy in the EU: the role of fisheries and aquaculture sectors](#). The importance of the two sectors was emphasised in this resolution, especially relating to the Sustainable Development Goal number two, which is to enhance food security. The resolution calls for specific action plans that discuss the fisheries and aquaculture sector, improved financial support for the blue economy, and for decisions to be based on scientific research and impact assessments in order to create integrated ecosystem-based legislation.

On 7 July 2021, Parliament adopted a [resolution on the impact on the fishing sector of offshore wind farms and other renewable energy systems](#). The resolution stressed that offshore renewable energy will only be sustainable if it has no negative impact on the environment and on economic, social and territorial cohesion, especially in fisheries-dependent regions.

On 18 January 2024, Parliament adopted a [resolution on the state of play in the implementation of the common fisheries policy and future perspectives](#). This resolution aimed at providing political guidance on future reviews of the CFP, with reference to the 2022 Commission report on the functioning of the policy. The report

focuses on the implementation of the current CFP, whether its objectives and tools are still relevant to tackle current and future challenges and whether certain aspects should be reformed, reviewed, adapted or improved.

Marcus Ernst Gerhard Breuer / Dana Divera Twisk
04/2024