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of European
maritime policy**

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Other contributors: Jean-Yves Dalleau, Pierre Ergo, Jean-Luc Janot

Editor: Ana-Paula Laissy, European Commission, DG Regional Policy.
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Regions at the heart of European maritime policy

Depending on your particular vision of development, the oceans and seas can be regarded as either an obstacle which slows down communication and trade or, quite to the contrary, as a bridge between territories and markets. The European Union clearly subscribes to the latter view. Because they provide the interface between land and sea, the maritime regions have a key role to play in territorial cohesion and a central role in economic growth and job creation in the EU. They are home to many economic interests: fisheries, coastal tourism, marine research, offshore fossil fuels reserves, wind and wave energy, shipbuilding and of course maritime transport, including the world's biggest network of seaports and its number one merchant fleet. In this context, it is clear that the sea and coastal areas also present enormous potential for future sustainable economic growth and employment in the European Union.



In October 2007, the Commission adopted the Blue Paper, "An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union". Several objectives of this policy – maximising the sustainable use of the oceans and sea, building a knowledge and innovation base for maritime policy and delivering the highest quality of life in coastal regions – are fully aligned with the objectives of the Cohesion Policy.

In the programming period 2007-2013, Cohesion Policy programmes will help coastal regions to address the challenges and opportunities linked to their coastal situation through a variety of sea-related investments. These investments include research projects in the fields of marine sciences and maritime technologies, activities targeted at training the maritime workforce, protection of heritage in coastal areas and the development of interregional maritime cooperation.

The action plan accompanying the Integrated Maritime Policy Blue Paper specifically targets issues affecting maritime regions: maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management, maritime transport and ports policy, European maritime research, and maritime and coastal tourism. It also encompasses the seven outermost regions, giving a worldwide dimension to the EU's maritime policy. These regions have a close relationship with the sea, shaped by their maritime economic activities and their marine natural heritage, but also by their vulnerability to climate change and to extreme weather phenomena. Their full integration into an EU Maritime Policy is, therefore, of particular importance.

As regards islands, the outermost regions and other isolated maritime regions, the Commission believes that the creation of networks for the exchange of best practice could contribute to diminishing the effects of isolation and to furthering sustainable development. We therefore actively encourage the participation of these regions in the networking activities supported under the Regions for Economic Change initiative.

With this 23rd issue of Inforegio Panorama we believe the European Commission demonstrates that regions are indeed at the heart of the Union's new Integrated Maritime Policy.




Danuta Hübner
 Member of the European Commission,
 responsible for regional policy


Joe Borg
 Member of the European Commission, responsible for fisheries
 and maritime affairs

Fourth European Cohesion Forum

Twenty years on: a new and dynamic cohesion policy

The fourth European Cohesion Forum took place in Brussels on 27 and 28 September 2007. The European Commission initiated a wide public consultation, going beyond the programming of the 2007-2013 structural funds, aimed at outlining regional policy until 2020.



Training in automobile robotics (Lisbon, Portugal).

Held every three years, the European Cohesion Forum met for the fourth time, bringing together more than 800 participants including 31 national delegations (the Member States as well as Croatia, the Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Norway), representatives of the European institutions (EU Council, Commission, Parliament, Court of Auditors, European Investment Bank, Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions) and some fifteen European associations.

2007-2013: 450 programmes for 268 regions

The debates⁽¹⁾, which were based on the results of the fourth report on economic and social cohesion⁽²⁾ adopted by the Commission on 30 May 2007, were held before starting on the programming for 2007-2013. This will be based on the national strategies (all validated by the Commission, see box)

and on the resulting 450 operational programmes, the adoption of which is well underway. A “scoreboard” of the programming is available online⁽³⁾.

In addition to this agenda, the forum also provided Danuta Hübner, the Commissioner responsible for regional policy, who introduced the meeting, with the opportunity to launch a major European consultation on key issues concerning the future of cohesion policy, which were published in the fourth report (see *Inforegio Panorama* n° 22). This consultation, organised on the Commission’s website⁽⁴⁾ and running until 31 January 2008, concerns all citizens and all players involved in regional policy. The results will be published in spring 2008 at the same time as the fifth progress report on cohesion. They will also be used in the Union’s 2008-2009 budget review.

(1) To read the speeches available online visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/4thcohesionforum/home_fr.cfm?nmenu=0

(2) See *Inforegio Panorama* n° 22 and the website of the fourth report:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/index_fr.htm

(3) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/newsroom/pdf/scoreboard22102007.pdf

(4) To take part in the consultation and to read the speeches visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/4thcohesionforum/consultation_en.cfm?nmenu=4

The regions in the front line of globalisation

"(...) The conviction that the true interest of each consists in recognising and accepting in practice the interdependence of all" – these are the words of Robert Schuman, quoted by the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso at the opening session of the forum, to define solidarity, one of the cornerstones of Europe's construction. Mr Barroso said: "Never lose sight of this founding ideal," of which the cohesion policy is "emblematic." This policy, "reformatted" by the Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment, has a vital role to play in addressing the economic, social, environmental and demographic challenges of the modern world.

The regions of Europe, said Mr Barroso, are *"direct players in the front line,"* of globalisation. The challenge is to ensure *"a highly visible and very direct regional dimension, focusing much more heavily on the Union's most deprived regions."* Drawing a parallel between the significant progress already made and the extent of the disparities that still exist, the President of the Commission said that the cohesion policy was a *"structural" instrument, working in-depth over the long term, and that its success depends on sharing expertise at all levels in partnership between players bound by a "contract of subsidiarity."* He added: *"Yes, subsidiarity is the fundamental European value,"* and, *"In a world more open than ever before, it is our strength."*



Resistance test for a ski lift in Vorarlberg (Austria).

The meeting of 2009

Over these two days, speeches and debates have taken place *"without prejudice, without taboos and without excluding any subject,"* said Mr Barroso. One of the many speakers, the President of the Committee of the Regions, Michel Delebarre, drew particular attention to the revision of the EU's budget for 2009. He said: *"The Committee of the Regions believes that the cohesion policy (...) provides leverage supporting the objectives of the Union. It also believes that the success of the renewed strategy for growth and employment depends on its capacity to mobilise resources in all of the territories, cities and regions of the Union." In this respect, the regional players "feel assured, as they have already demonstrated the efficiency of this cohesion policy on the ground. (...) We aim to produce tangible results very quickly in time for the 2009 meeting."*

"However, we also have some concerns," he added. Some proposals in the past have called this policy into question or attempted to renationalise it. *"Without doubt, such proposals will resurface. The Committee has concerns about the superficiality of the analysis and the underestimation of the effects of the cohesion policy which have underpinned these proposals,"* said Mr Delebarre, calling for an *"improvement of the European project so that it can deliver prosperity and solidarity."*

Twenty years of cohesion has done what was required, but more can be achieved

Just twenty years old, the cohesion policy is *"young and dynamic, widely recognised today as the most practical demonstration of European solidarity and an effective force for economic progress,"* said Danuta Hübner in her closing speech, without any hint of self-satisfaction. The policy has received international recognition, underlined by the interest shown by countries such as India, China, Brazil and Russia, all faced with disparities and growing social tension. The cohesion policy is one of the EU's main tools for meeting the challenges of the age and fulfilling the Lisbon objectives. In summing up the debates of the forum, the Commissioner underlined four points:

- A **new paradigm** is emerging in which the less developed regions are catching up with the most advanced ones, while at the same time efforts are being made to enable both to progress in the globalised economy. A paradigm that focuses on *"opportunities for the future by harnessing underexploited potential rather than compensating for the problems of the past."* This is a *"dynamic process of empowerment"* which underpins the 2007-2013 programmes.
- Apart from classical macroeconomic criteria such as per capita income, it is important to take account of **qualitative criteria** and sustainability of growth in a policy addressing *"structural competitiveness factors, which include the environment and social durability."*
- The cohesion policy has played *"a pioneering role in the introduction of regional strategies for innovation and the knowledge-based society."* It has been a prelude to new policies ranging from development clusters to financial engineering and from territorial cooperation to integrated urban projects. It can increase its leverage effect by fostering improvements in **structures of governance**, thanks to its integrated policy approach and use of solid public-sector/private-sector partnerships. It has been and must remain an *"intelligent subsidiarity"* factor, helping to cut across institutional boundaries between ministries and other regional and national bodies to ensure *"the stability of development by means of short-term policy cycles."*
- Finally, the cohesion policy should step up action to enhance the **provision of public goods** in structurally weak regions by means of *"the creation of efficient institutional and entrepreneurial environments, going beyond simply providing direct aid."* In this sense, it *"acts as an instrument of economic regulation which addresses market failures"* and improves the way in which it works without replacing it.

Twenty-seven national cohesion strategies

The twenty-seven “National strategic reference frameworks” (NSRFs) 2007-2013, presented to the Commission by the Member States, were adopted on 8 October 2007. An initial review⁽¹⁾ of the NSRFs shows that the cohesion policy – the main investment target of the EU budget with EUR 347.41 billion (35.7% of the total) – makes a direct contribution to achieving the EU’s objectives regarding growth and employment.

- **Average rate of key investment** provided for by the Lisbon Strategy: 62% within the convergence objective and 77% in the regional competitiveness and employment objective, constituting a total investment of EUR 215 billion (50 billion more than in 2000-2006).
- **R&D and innovation:** almost EUR 60 billion, of which two-thirds will go to SMEs. The proportion of this sum allocated to new Member States will be four times higher than in 2004-2006.
- **Energy efficiency:** the states commit themselves to increasing their energy efficiency, developing renewable energy and alternative technologies with investment five times higher than previously for the convergence objective and four times higher for the competitiveness and employment objective.
- **Entrepreneurial spirit:** this is valued in all the NSRFs, particularly in services for SMEs. Significant provisions have been made for aid in the form of loans, risk capital etc., and increased use of the new instruments JEREMIE and JESSICA⁽²⁾ is also anticipated.
- **Human resources:** the emphasis is placed on inclusion and the younger generations, with significant resources for the modernisation of education and training systems (in particular in the convergence objective) and for active labour market policies.
- **Environment and risk prevention:** this is a priority everywhere with a total investment of EUR 51 billion. New programmes are aimed at improving environmental protection and growth.

- **Transport:** EUR 76 billion, of which half is for trans-European transport networks. Other priorities are secondary links, respect for the environment (in particular in urban areas) and more balanced mobility at regional level based on circumstances and particular assets.
- **Institutional capacity of public administrations:** this priority forms part of almost all the NSRFs concerning the convergence objective with a total of EUR 3.6 billion. Focused on the drawing up of and adherence to legislation, improving regulations (and in particular their simplification with regard to economic activities) and the creation of one-stop shops, it also aims to improve the quality and accessibility of public services.
- **Partnership:** the various authorities, the economic and social partners and NGOs have actively taken part in the definition of strategies, the implementation of which will be more decentralised and should be more transparent and involve the partners to a greater extent.
- **Coherence with the “national reform programmes” (NRP) linked to the Lisbon Strategy:** the drawing up of the NSRFs in close collaboration with the (generally different) ministerial offices responsible for the implementation of the national reform programmes.
- **Coordination with other political communities:** all the NSRFs define the mechanisms for the vital coordination between the Structural and Cohesion Funds and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Fisheries Fund (EFF).

(1) Press release: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/419&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

(2) <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/693&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Territorial cohesion - close to the ground, but with an integrated vision

Returning to the notion of integrated policy, Mrs Hübner underlined its key role in areas such as innovation and territorial cohesion. The latter is set to be enshrined in the Treaty in the same way as economic and social cohesion. However, the Commissioner often has “*the impression that territorial cohesion is seen from a geographical perspective,*” where the territory is divided into small, separate entities instead of looking at the bigger picture. A good example is the relationship between the city and the countryside, where

purely “*rural*” or “*urban*” strategies can lack a vital dimension of regional competitiveness,” constituted by “clusters”. In the same way, the twin poles of growth and innovation should be included in the strategies “*to ensure balanced development of the hinterland.*”

Twenty years after its birth, which was linked to the opening-up of the single market and the impact of globalisation on the economies of many of the Euro Area regions, is the cohesion policy still as relevant today? It remains “*as important as ever,*” said Danuta Hübner.

European maritime policy: from a green paper to an action plan

By Nicolas Mariel and Frederico Ferreira ⁽¹⁾

When on 10 October 2007 the Commission presented its Blue Book for an integrated maritime policy for the European Union ("An ocean of opportunity") and the action plan contained in it, it was responding to a need that had been felt for many years but for which the evidence was not established until recently - that of coordination of public policies in the field of European maritime and coastal areas.



Deep-sea fishing in Thyborøn (Denmark).

As well as regulating the climate of the planet, the sea provides employment for five million Europeans and constitutes a source of jobs, particularly in sectors such as renewable energy and telecommunications.

Until now, European intervention in maritime affairs has been restricted to providing a framework for the development of sectoral activities (transport, environment, research) by means of restrictions or incentives, without focussing on sustainable development that takes account of the future of this common patrimony.

This trend now seems to have been reversed thanks to the launch of the new integrated European maritime policy initiated by the Barroso Commission in the framework of its 2005-2009 strategy. The implementation of this policy involves several stages, beginning with a consultation phase.

The **green paper** for an EU maritime policy, presented in June 2006, initiated a major 13-month consultation process

on the need for an integrated maritime policy and the identification of specific needs in this area. The results surpassed expectations, with almost 500 written contributions from governments, regions, private companies, unions, NGOs and ordinary citizens being sent to the ad hoc maritime policy task force created to draw up and monitor this new policy within the Directorate-General for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs.

A compass...

Encouraged by this support from civil society, and also from public authorities such as the Committee of the Regions and the German Presidency of the European Union (first half of 2007), the Commission decided to launch a second phase that would focus on the drawing-up of measures to enable the establishment of a specific framework for the creation of an integrated maritime policy. This is the challenge for the Blue Book, presented on 10 October 2007 by the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and Joe Borg,

(1) Policy officer and assistant policy officer in the maritime policy task force, DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, European Commission

the Commissioner with responsibility for fisheries and maritime affairs. The Blue Book is a “package” that brings together two Commission communications on policy and two working documents – an action plan and an impact study - drawn up and coordinated by the maritime policy task force in the framework of intensive high-level inter-service cooperation, with the Commissioners themselves meeting in a contact group.



Training in maritime safety.

The **action plan**, which should be adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2007, is really the “bible” of the new European maritime policy. It sets out some thirty measures categorised under five main objectives:

- To encourage sustainable exploitation of the seas and oceans;
- To create a basis of knowledge and innovation for maritime policy;
- To provide better quality of life in the coastal regions;
- To promote the leading position of the Union in international maritime affairs;
- To increase the visibility of maritime Europe.

Some of these measures are “structural,” i.e. they concern traditional policies of the Union. That is the case with the communications on ports policy, which comes under the transport policy, and on the fight against undeclared and unregulated illegal fishing, which comes under the common fisheries policy. Others are new and extend beyond the framework of traditional policy. There is also the implementation of new policy decision-making tools laid out by the Blue Book, such as the spatial planning of various maritime activities, the integrated management of coastal areas, the establishment of a European maritime observation and data network, and the interoperability of European surveillance systems.

The **road map** determined by the action plan sets out a packed timetable which anticipates the implementation of most of the measures during the course of 2008 or by the start of 2009 at the latest. Some measures have already been set out through the publication of documents: working document on maritime clusters, communication on ports policy,

consultation document on motorways of the sea and maritime transport without frontiers, communication on destructive fishing practices, communication on the review of social maritime regulation, working document on the maritime energy policy etc.

...and a helm

It is important to point out that the adoption of the action plan introduces the premise of a new order in governance. The idea is not to add regulation to existing regulation, nor to create additional administrative structures, but above all to involve the various participating parties as much as possible in the decision-making process, in order to gain their consent before introducing specific measures. This is particularly true of the new tools such as spatial planning, which will be implemented through pilot projects. The action plan also places great importance on incentive measures and earmarks resources for projects that observe good practice.

It could be argued that the majority of the measures would have been adopted by the Commission's services in any case. But the whole aim of the European integrated maritime policy is to coordinate these in order to meet a global objective of planned development. This concern was expressed in the consultation process on the green paper, and this is why the “maritime affairs” structure of DG Fisheries should be confirmed and its powers increased in the near future.



Modernisation of the port of Quarteira (Portugal).

The outermost regions: Europe's great expanse

The Azores, the Canaries, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Madeira, Martinique and the Reunion Island, the seven outermost regions, have permanent handicaps (1) associated with distance and isolation, and climatic, territorial, demographic and economic constraints which justify the possibility of adapting EU policies to their circumstances. But, as EU-integrated regions in two oceans (Atlantic and Indian), the outermost regions also have certain advantages. With more than 3,000,000 km², the "exclusive economic zones" (EEZ) of the outermost regions have a total surface area equivalent to that of the Mediterranean or the Baltic. If the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) (2) are added, the European Union has a presence in three oceans and possesses the largest maritime space in the world



The outermost regions still have relatively well preserved fish stocks, which allows for planned development of fishing. In addition, they have tourism resources. On account of their geographical and geophysical characteristics and the richness of their marine biodiversity, they constitute "laboratories" in fields such as the environment, climate and energy, in line with the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives for sustainable development.

In this respect, the outermost regions form a unique zone at the fringes of the Union for sustainable co-development by all territories of their respective maritime basins.

(1) Article 299-2 of the Treaty.

(2) OCT: some twenty territories which constitutionally belong to four Member States (Denmark, France, Netherlands, United Kingdom) without being part of the territory of the EU or being independent states.

When they are not isolated by sea, like the Azores for example, they are located in the immediate vicinity of third countries that are faced with even greater development challenges. The dialogue between the EU, the outermost regions, their Member States and the third countries can contribute to significant progress in many areas: joint management of sustainable fish stocks, the fight against poverty, maritime security and migratory movements.

It appears that the outermost regions have every interest in the introduction of a European maritime policy. Within the framework of the INTERREG IIIC South programme, they have developed a RUPMER project as their contribution to the green paper on the matter. The drawing-up of this policy in particular involves international considerations for these regions. One of RUPMER'S first conclusions is the need for an approach differentiated by maritime basin in order to take into account the specific circumstances of the outermost regions compared with the rest of the EU and between the Caribbean, south-west Indian Ocean and Madeira/Azores/Canaries regions.

Protection of the marine environment in the outermost regions implies the inclusion of information on this subject in European databases for the creation of a future atlas of the sea. The promotion of specialist research in the outermost regions (renewable energy, blue biotechnology, climate change, risk prevention) requires the setting-up of a network between their R&D organizations and those of the rest of Europe. Finally, fishing illustrates the need for a policy adapted to the geographical context of the outermost regions in order to contribute to their own development, as well as to the joint management of sustainable resources with neighbouring third countries.

The communication on an integrated maritime policy, which raises in particular the possibility of an integrated approach for each of the three maritime basins concerned, and the importance of the outermost regions in terms of R&D, indicates the right course to follow.

Contact: regionreunion1@wanadoo.fr

NET-BIOME: research for the sustainable development of the outermost regions

Net-Biome is a project of the 6th Framework Programme for research and technological development, which brings together for the first time the seven outermost regions and most of the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) of the tropical and sub-tropical zones belonging to five European countries (Spain, France, Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom). The outermost countries and the OCTs possess exceptional terrestrial and marine biodiversity, which is a major benefit to their sustainable development (agriculture, fishing, tourism). However, their environments are more vulnerable to climatic changes, natural risks and human activity than the rest of the EU. Net-Biome aims to ensure cooperation in research into biodiversity to develop original sustainable-management strategies and models that can be shared with continental Europe and their neighbouring third countries.

Contact: josiane.irissin-mangata@cr-reunion.fr

Aiming for sustainable growth - the European ports policy

In the wake of its communication on an integrated maritime policy, the Commission adopted a communication on a European ports policy ⁽¹⁾ on 18 October 2007 that reflects the results of extensive consultation with the parties involved.

Whether they are located on the coast or on rivers, Europe's ports are faced with complex challenges: increasing demand for transport; major technological changes (container transport, telecommunications, computerisation); environmental requirements, including the intermodal management of forms of transport where the role of the ports is favoured; the need for dialogue between all the players concerned with port activities, including cities and regions; and finally, adherence to community rules, in particular with regard to transparency and competition. In order to foster a port system that contributes fully to sustainable growth and employment, the Commission has drawn up an action plan that contains the following elements:

- **To improve the performance of the ports and relations with the hinterland.** While the largest European ports may be considered efficient, many ports are affected by bottlenecks in terms of capacity, connections and organisation. It is necessary to ensure integrated management of the transport chain and to look at new routes, while carrying out careful evaluation of the construction of new infrastructure.
- **To increase capacity while respecting the environment.** The Commission is to publish its guidelines aimed at facilitating the application of the environmental directives (habitats, birds, water, waste) on port management. This also involves setting up adequate facilities for treating

waste, ensuring the clean management of waters and sediments, and combating climate change and air pollution.

- **Modernising port activity** by introducing new maritime safety and telecommunications systems. Online maritime transport, in particular, facilitates the administration of navigation and logistics. New automated port equipment also plays an important role. There are grounds for simplifying the procedures concerning short-haul maritime transport in order to encourage its use in the internal market and to foster the creation of "motorways of the sea."
- **To establish fair and transparent laws for investors, operators and users:** the role of the port authorities, public finance, port concessions, technical nautical services (piloting, towing), handling of cargo, port dues, competition with third countries.
- **To establish a structural dialogue between the ports and the cities** (see article).
- **To develop sectoral dialogue on employment in the ports** and to improve training, safety and hygiene conditions.

(1) COM(2000) 616 final of 18.10.2007:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0616en01.pdf



The ports in transition

By Patrick Verhoeven ⁽¹⁾

In order to achieve growth and sustainable development, ports and cities must once again become partners.



There are more than 1,000 sea ports across Europe. The vast majority of these, however, are medium to small-sized ports. Seven hundred ports handle less than one million tonnes of cargo annually. At the other end of the scale, around a dozen super ports handle more than 50 million tonnes.

The sea ports - poles of growth for Europe

Many European ports have experienced a sharp increase in activity over the course of the past twenty years. This trend looks set to continue, in particular for container transport, where strong growth should be sustained. This is on account of the rapid expansion of the Asian markets and, in particular, imports from China.

This trend favours the involvement of a greater number of European ports in global markets. The container ports which experienced the strongest growth in 2006 were all small or medium-sized, and were spread across the continent. The sector is therefore becoming increasingly diversified in terms of the number of ports involved and their roles and services, which offers charterers more choice in terms of routes.

In order to respond to this growth, the European ports must invest more in new handling capacity and have reliable connections to their hinterland. However, one of the main obstacles is the legal uncertainty concerning the implementation of European environmental standards. As a result, major port projects have seen significant delays owing to the slow, weighty procedures

Redevelopment of ports

The modern port appeared in the United Kingdom at the beginning of the 19th century. In terms of infrastructure, engineering and handling and management techniques, ports such as London and Liverpool were the forerunners that provided inspiration for competitors in the rest of Europe. In a way, history repeated itself 150 years later, when in 1981, with its Docklands development, London opened the way for the redevelopment of former port areas throughout Europe.

Even though the projects may differ, they all have something in common - the restitution of abandoned or neglected port areas to create office space, residential accommodation and leisure facilities, with port activities being carried out on the periphery, some distance from the centre. A good example of this kind of transition is the "HafenCity" project in Hamburg. The income generated from the sale of buildings located directly on the waterside in the old port close to the city centre has financed the state-of-the-art container terminal in Altenwerder on the south bank of the river Elbe.

Restoration of the port cities

This re-appropriation of seafront and river bank areas, which has taken place throughout Europe, has often divided cities from their ports. In many cases, visitors would not immediately notice that they were in a city that was home to a major European port. More often than not, they will only see an expanse of water occasionally crossed by barges and pleasure boats, quays converted into promenades, docks which have become home to tourist attractions and old warehouses transformed into loft conversions.

(1) Secretary-General of ESPO (European Sea Ports Organisation)
E-mail: pverhoeven@espo.be – Web: www.espo.be

However, more and more port managers are beginning to ask themselves whether this policy is sustainable. The first problem is space, because the anticipated rates of growth in maritime transport will require increasing handling capacity. A lack of available land and considerable environmental pressure limit the expansion of ports, which often forces the port authorities to return to city centres to redevelop former port areas for current port activities.

Another significant problem is the “Not in My Back Yard” syndrome, which makes it difficult to locate ports near residential areas. It is, however, an unavoidable process for many ports that requires effort from both sides. The port authorities must make sure that their port is kept as clean, discreet and safe as possible, while the citizens must understand that the port is important to their standard of living and general well being. Only under these conditions can a real revitalisation of Europe’s port cities be achieved.

To encourage local residents to look more favourably on port activities, the port must firstly be made more visible to the general public. It is a matter of convincing people that ports, by their very nature, are fascinating places. In this respect, there are many ways, which have largely been ignored, of creating partnerships with tourism, leisure, culture and heritage sectors to familiarise citizens with the port and maritime transport environment. In the age of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) and other safety measures, this is a challenge that requires a certain degree of creativity on the part of the port authorities.

Sustainable development of ports at the heart of the new European ports policy

On 18 October 2007, the European Commission published a new communication on the European ports policy⁽²⁾. In comparison with previous initiatives, this communication attaches great importance to the sustainable development of ports, recognising the need to clarify the rules for applying EU environmental legislation. The European port authorities belonging to the European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) welcome the announcement made by the Commission to produce guidelines for the application of the legislation concerning the development of ports.



The communication also aims to improve cooperation between cities and ports. This was also very well received by the port sector. Even though local authorities and port authorities are mainly responsible for the integration of ports into cities and urban life, the European Commission can serve as a catalyst in the process by supporting good practices and mutual understanding. Its proposal that a “ports open day” be organised every year is a good example of the partnership that can be developed between Europe’s port and urban authorities

(2) COM(2000) 616 final of 18.10.2007: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/fr/com/2007/com2007_0616fr01.pdf

Maritime clusters - where innovation and regional development meet

By Patrick Bernard-Brunet⁽¹⁾

Maritime clusters can be a key instrument in an ambitious maritime policy, producing results in technological innovation and the economic development of the territories.



The term cluster refers to a grouping of companies from the same sector often located in the same employment basin. More specifically, according to Michael E. Porter of Harvard University, a cluster is *“a concentration of interconnected companies, specialised suppliers, service providers and associated institutions (universities, trade associations).”*

Different forms of clustering

These groupings of companies and professionals, which are found in all sectors, can take several forms. Therefore, in the maritime sector, it is important to distinguish national clusters – which often act as intermediaries for certain industries or maritime professions – from regional clusters (known in France as “poles of competitiveness”). The latter are dedicated to the development of the maritime economy by means of innovation and collaboration between research, training and industry. They support research projects (conception of the project, search for partners and financing), improving the access of SMEs to new markets, and are therefore fully in line

with the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy, which recognises the importance of innovation policies.

Innovation is a necessity in the field of maritime affairs, in particular with regard to the shipbuilding and logistics sectors (the construction and delivery of a ship is the product of the work of a huge network of suppliers), the use of energy and marine biology resources (off-shore petroleum, renewable energy produced by currents, waves and tides, development of new molecules through marine biodiversity), safety, security and finally the environment, including risk prevention, combating the effects of climate change, development of sustainable tourism and protection of the coastline.

As well as being driving forces of innovation, the clusters also enable European Union maritime know-how to be maintained at regional level, as, by definition, they bring together players from industry and professional training. For this reason, the development of clusters must be accompanied by investment in education and maritime training.

(1) Policy Analyst, European Commission, DG Regional Policy, “Thematic development impact” unit.

Finland's maritime cluster

Thirteen clusters have been created in Finland within the framework of the "Centres for Expertise Programme" implemented by the Council of State for the period 2007-2013.

The aim of the Finnish maritime cluster is to give impetus to and bring together the development of activities, training and research in sectors such as shipbuilding, offshore projects and maritime logistics. The areas that will benefit are processing materials and technologies, the internationalisation of the sector, safety and environmental issues and business development.

Bringing together industrialists and researchers at the highest level, five centres of expertise are actively involved in this cluster, which is coordinated by Koneteknologiakeskus Turku Oy. The centres are in south-east Finland, south-west Finland, western Finland and Satakunta, as well as the centre for expertise in metallurgy of Bothnia.

The cluster strategy aims to foster the creation of innovative activities, products and services; to improve productivity and networking; to increase the supply of qualified labour. This involves attempting to encourage investment in research and development and improving the skill levels of companies, the exchange and centralisation of information, the organisation of specific measures, the internationalisation of and cooperation between SMEs.



*Contact: Mervi Pitkänen, programme director
mervi.pitkanen@koneteknologiakeskus.fi*

The potential lack of skilled maritime workers could have alarming consequences, in particular with regard to infrastructure and maritime safety. There is also the risk that certain clusters may become weakened or relocate in regions where a better qualified workforce is available.



Ferry in the port of Kiel (Germany).

European support

The European Union encourages the development of maritime clusters in several ways. Firstly, in 2005 the European Commission took part in the creation of the technology platform WATERBORNE⁽¹⁾, which brings together the main players in maritime transport. The objective is to define through focus groups (shipbuilding, navigation, systems, safety), a long-term vision in a sector where development depends on significant technological progress. This platform also aims to bring European maritime research priorities into line with the requirements of industry (supporting clusters is part of this).

Furthermore, through the EUROPE INNOVA⁽²⁾ initiative, the European Commission has initiated a project mapping European clusters. The objective is to provide, between now and the end of 2007, a pan-European map for all Member States that identifies the initiatives carried out concerning clustering at both regional and national level.

(1) <http://www.waterborne-tp.org/>

(2) <http://www.europe-innova.org/index.jsp>

The Commission has also launched a number of networks in the field of research and innovation, many of which aim to ensure the exchange of good practices. However, these networks may in time result in the emergence of transnational clusters. In order to stimulate cooperation between European clusters and to encourage the creation of Europe-wide projects, the Commission set up the European Cluster Observatory in July 2007 (within the framework of the EUROPE INNOVA initiative). The role of this observatory will be to collect statistical data, to develop indicators to measure the dynamism of European clusters and to evaluate the impact of national and regional clustering policies. This work will complement that carried out by some European clusters to facilitate the transfer of measures implemented by the most advanced regions (the Nordic countries, the United Kingdom, Austria, Spain, Northern Italy) to the regions and Member States where the networks of companies are still not very well developed. Clearly, the maritime clusters benefit from both of these initiatives and the work carried out by the European Observatory.

In the field of research, some clusters geared towards these activities will benefit from funding from the European Union's framework programme, in particular through the "regions of knowledge" pilot project. The aim of this support is to develop the research capabilities of the regions and to integrate them into the regional development strategies.

Clusters and cohesion

Finally, clusters can rely on significant support from the European cohesion policy. In fact, of all the investment that will be made in the period 2007-2013, innovation would appear to be a priority sector for all the regions and Member States - investing in innovation will help to ensure sustainable economic growth and to achieve this objective, the development of clusters is one of the means available to



Car terminal in the port of Valencia (Spain).

Pomerania, "Amberland"

The coastline of Pomerania (Poland) is rich in amber, the fossilised oleoresin secreted by conifers around forty million years ago. In the region, some 10,000 jobs depend directly on this much sought-after resource, exports of which generate EUR 350 million a year.



The creation of a "cluster of amber" brings together all the players involved in the process: craftsmen and manufacturers of amber-based jewellery and beauty products, local and regional associations, the institute of market economy and the Gdansk society of international fairs (which organises the "Amberif" and "Ambermart" exhibitions each year), museums, universities, and other organisations associated with the sector.

Combining tradition, innovation and cooperation, this pole of competitiveness principally aims to enhance the value of the raw material in terms of quality and quantity, to extend and consolidate the outlets for amber products and to develop tourism based on this precious resource. As those behind the project say, it's about turning Pomerania into Amberland and making Gdansk the "capital of amber."

Contact: Krystyna Wróblewska,
director of the international cooperation service,
office of the marshal of the province
of Zachodniopomorskie
k.wroblewska@woj-pomorskie.pl

the regions. The EU's strategic guidelines on cohesion⁽¹⁾, adopted by the European Council in October 2006, state that investment to be made in the field of research and development must particularly promote "strengthening co-operation among businesses and between businesses and public research/higher education institutions by supporting the creation of regional and trans-regional clusters of excellence." This clearly applies to the coastal regions and to the clusters that they will develop in the maritime sector. Still within the framework of the European cohesion policy,

A system enhanced by the "Regions for Economic Change" initiative

From 2008, the EU's maritime regions will have the opportunity to cooperate within networks in the framework of the "Regions for Economic Change" initiative. Supported by the new interregional cooperation programme INTERREG IVC, these networking activities will be organised on the basis of 30 priority themes of which two are particularly relevant to the development of maritime clusters: "Reaping the benefits of the sea" and "Improving the capacity of the regions for research and innovation."

The idea is that, in a first phase, the regions identify and network their best projects according to these 30 priority themes. Then, in a second phase, they hand over the networking work to the policymakers, experts and bodies concerned so that lessons can be learned from these projects and integrated into the operational programmes of the cohesion policy.

The best thematic networks that are proactive in distributing and integrating the results will benefit from continued assistance – in terms of expertise and services – which the European Commission will provide within the framework of the "fast-track option" of the initiative.

For further information visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index_en.cfm

the "Regions for Economic Change" initiative (see box) will also promote, by means of networks of cooperation involving regional authorities, the development of all the potential that the clusters represent.

Since 2005, the European Union has demonstrated a willingness to introduce an integrated maritime policy. This new interest in maritime activities has highlighted their economic importance as well as their degree of interconnection. It has also underlined the contribution of these industries to European growth and their requirements in terms of innovation. For all these reasons, the European Union will continue to support the development of innovative maritime clusters, in particular through its research and cohesion policies and its measures to promote business and industry in general. The clusters could well be the key instrument of an ambitious maritime policy, delivering good results in terms of both technological innovation and the economic development of the territories.



Development of the container port of Las Palmas (Canary Islands, Spain).

(1) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/osc/index_en.htm

LATVIA

Renovation of a jetty at the port of Mersrags



Total cost: 2 000 000 EUR

EU contribution: 1 300 000 EUR

"Implemented in 2006 and 2007, the project involves the renovation and 120-metre extension of the north jetty in the port of Mersrags. The total length of the structure will be increased to 430 metres, which will allow the handling of more cargo, aiding the development of the region and local economy. The port and local communities will benefit from increased financial stability, while new employment opportunities will also be created."

Sanda Rieksta, head of the information unit, European funding department
www.esfondi.lv

ITALY

The new sailing port in Vieste



Total cost: 12 700 000 EUR

EU contribution: 1 400 000 EUR

"The many sailing enthusiasts who visit Puglia's coastline each year now have access to 650 long and short-stay mooring berths built at the new sailing port in Vieste within the 2000-2006 regional operational programme. The project provided the infrastructure needed for basic and advanced services: shipbuilding yards, a berthing area, business units and a sailing club, a storage area and a maintenance service for small vessels etc. Work involved the extension of the jetty, the dredging of the port, the development of a quay and floating pontoons, the construction of six commercial buildings and port facilities such as warehouses. The new port now has the capacity to welcome some 3,500 sailing enthusiasts each year."

Francesco Antonio Piracci, Aurora – Porto Turistico di Vieste SpA
info@portoaurora.eu
<http://www.portoaurora.eu/>

AZORES (PORTUGAL)

International network of oceanographic research



Total cost: 200 000 EUR

EU contribution: 170 000 EUR

"Insufficient data and the complex topography of the archipelago make it difficult to predict the movement of waves, tides and currents around the Azores. The CIMBA project aims to gather three-dimensional images of the ocean currents and to study their seasonal variations. The development of an international oceanographic research network concerning the archipelago will identify, in particular, the locations best-suited to the production of wave energy and the areas where biological productivity is strongest."

Ana Martins, project organiser, Department of Oceanography and Fisheries, University of the Azores
anamartins@notes.horta.uac.pt
<http://oceano.horta.uac.pt>

ESTONIA

Development of Pärnu beach



Total cost: 1 300 000 EUR

EU contribution: 831 000 EUR

"Thanks to its geographical location, its historical architecture and its cultural activities, Pärnu (44,000 inhabitants) is Estonia's most well-known seaside resort. The construction, thanks to the ERDF, of a new promenade along the beach has modernised the image of the resort and helped to boost its appeal as a tourist destination."

Mirje Auksmann, project coordinator, town of Pärnu
mirje.auksmann@lv.parnu.ee

“Europe’s future maritime policy will be both regional and global”

Xavier Gizard, Secretary-general of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)



Climate change, globalisation and the demand for energy have, through the pressure of events, had a great impact on the Union’s political agenda.

How should we deal with these changes? What strategies can be developed to protect the populations and to foster the development of the territories? The 68,000 kilometres of European coastline sees a great deal of activity owing to its economies and the size of its population, which makes up 50% of the total. Clearly, this raises a number of safety issues for the future if rising sea levels and climatic phenomena such as tsunamis, cyclones and storms – which regularly threaten the lives of millions of people – continue to occur. It is the emergence of these climatic changes that underlines the necessity to step up the adaptation of the maritime regions, ensuring they are prepared for the consequences of such phenomena by supporting mitigating measures.

At an economic level, this adaptation must take account of the potential for growth and employment in coastal regions. Tourism in coastal regions, for example, alone contributes 5% of GDP and is growing by 3% each year. That is without taking into account Europe’s 1,200 ports, which constitute a resource to be harnessed as well as sources of renewable energy which, thanks to the wind, the sun and the tides, will always be in plentiful supply on the coast.

The regions that are members of the CPMR were fully involved in the discussions on Europe’s maritime policy, putting forward ideas with a view to enhancing the value of Europe’s maritime economic potential, and to deploying a new development model based on the principles of sustainable development and the integrated management of coastal regions.

They will welcome the positive proposals set out in the *“Blue Book for an integrated maritime policy for the European Union.”* These include the creation and development of maritime clusters, the launch of pilot projects to mitigate the effects of climate change on the coasts, as well as the European strategy for marine and maritime research which the Commission will present in 2008.



The port of Bari (Italy).

The European regions will be a driving force in the implementation of these measures. However, the sea and the oceans do not know any borders. The global dimension is a significant aspect of maritime policy, while the outermost regions, by definition, will ensure this dimension is part of the Union’s future maritime policy, as the globalisation process gathers pace.

This is the reason why Europe needs to pool and compare its analyses and investigations with those of other continents and other players to produce a maritime policy for the 21st century. In this context, the regions of the CPMR and other global maritime players met in the Azores in July 2007 for a seminar entitled *“Maritime policies and globalisation,”* at which a comparison was made of European, Chinese, North American, Australian and Indonesian experiences. In the same spirit, the CPMR also created the first global network of regions: the Forum of Networks of World Regions. In the field of maritime affairs, as in other sectors that are faced with global challenges, the European regions will have to enter into alliances with regions from other continents.

Contact: <http://www.crpm.org/>

Restructuring and integrated development in Asturias (Spain)

The coast is vital for the future

With key sectors of its economy undergoing restructuring – agriculture, fishing and steel – the region of Asturias aims to make the most of the natural, cultural and human advantages provided by its coastline to ensure its development. This is exactly what the regional maritime strategy aims to do.



Castropol in the far west of Asturias.

*“The key to our success is that even businesses consider the coast to be the jewel in the crown of Asturias,” said Manuel Carrero de Roa, proudly pointing to the magnificent Penarronda beach at the bottom of the cliffs. Manuel is one of five town planners/developers involved in “POLA” (Plan de Ordenación del litoral de Asturias), a project for the development of the coastline of Asturias. Here, close to Castropol, just before the border with Galicia, POLA has created one of three beach parks in Asturias. Manuel explained: “The aim is to create fifteen between now and 2015. Our beaches are extremely beautiful, but quite small and they get very crowded in summer. Our approach firstly involves getting rid of cars from the beach. Thousands of people flock to Penarronda in July and August. Before these footpaths and the car park that you can see down there were created, everyone parked on this sandy area, almost on the beach. Now people have to walk for a couple of hundred metres, but nature has reasserted itself. You can see that dunes have begun to reform and typical coastal plant life, such as *ammophila arenaria*, has started to grow.”*

With a budget of EUR 80 million for a ten-year period, POLA represents the contribution of Asturias to the integrated management of coastal areas, an approach that the region is pioneering in Spain⁽¹⁾. POLA's experts also took part in the consultation on the regional maritime strategy drawn up in 2007 (see box). Operational since 2005, and recognised in 2006 by the European Council of Town Planners, the plan is the product of a regional approach initiated at the start of the 1990s, which initially aimed to regenerate and protect as many natural sites as possible within 500 metres of the 400-kilometre coastline of Asturias. *“The coastline of Asturias has undergone something of a paradox,”* explained María José Rodríguez, head of the department for European affairs in the Asturias region. He said: *“On the one hand, there is heavy industry here. On the other, the lack of good communications infrastructure on land has isolated the region, but also preserved a large part of its coastline. Asturias has more natural sites recognised by UNESCO than any other region in Europe.*

(1) Between 2003 and 2006, the principality of Asturias piloted the “Coastatlantic” project along with 11 other European regions. This project concerned the integrated management of coastal areas (see the “INTERREG in action” section).

However, it was still time to intervene. New roads mean that you can now get from here to Madrid in less than four hours and the number of second homes has increased sharply in recent years. But thanks to POLA, we now have the tools necessary to ensure protection of the coastline and sustainable tourism."

Tourism is one of the key strategies being pursued by the region as part of its redevelopment. This can be seen in particular in Luanco (5,000 inhabitants), which until now has been both a fishing port and a steel-production site. *"Both of these industries are undergoing restructuring, but, in view of the proximity of Cap de Peñas and our location halfway between Avilés and Gijón, we are extremely well placed to develop tourism and leisure,"* said Victor Cuervo, head of the local authority's training and employment service. The programme involves the creation of tourism businesses (with EQUAL funds), increasing the amount of rural accommodation available (with LEADER+), development of a sailing port (with the ERDF and INTERREG) and professional training (EUR 800000 thanks to co-financing by the ESF) in order to meet the demand for tourism. *"It doesn't really involve a radical change,"* said Constantino Rocés, director of the farm-produce training centre in Luanco. He added: *"There is no need to reinvent the wheel. By means of training, we diversify and build upon traditional trades and know-how in areas such as the fish trade, the canning industry, baking/cake-making and cookery based on local products."* And the results are good. *"Around 80% of trainees find a job after completing the training. In some areas, in particular in the fish trade, supply does not meet demand,"* said Ines Lombas, lecturer in biology at the centre.

From the hook to the plate

While fishing in Asturias, as elsewhere in Europe, is experiencing major difficulties, the sector is far from finished. At the start of the chain, fishermen are focussing on quality and origin to improve the marketability of their catches, while further along the chain producers of fish products are improving their packaging facilities. In both cases, structural funds and other European instruments are making a contribution.

The town of Cudillero is a very good example. Here, within the framework of the "Collaboration@Rural" technological project supported by the 6th framework programme for research and development, the Virgen del Carmen guild of fishermen is experimenting with a total traceability system using GPS. *"It's from the hook to the plate,"* said Enrique Plaza, of the fisheries department of the government of Asturias, enthusiastically. *"The system provides full and instantaneous traceability. When the fishermen are coming back from the area where they have made their catch, they make a record of it and send this information to the port of Cudillero by WiFi connection or satellite, before the boat returns to shore. The managers of the fish auction can then issue a certificate of origin and a number, which enables the fish to be authenticated at the retailer's. Everyone stands to gain: the fishermen, the inspectors, food production companies, the retailers and ultimately the consumers."*



Training of new employees in Cudillero.

In the village of Oviñana, also in Cudillero, two fish and seafood production companies have extended and modernised their sites. Wholesale importer/exporter of fish and seafood, Inocencio Rodriguez, has invested EUR 10 million in the construction of a new unit called "Nuevos Desarrollos de la Pesca" (New Developments in Fishing). *"It is important that the operators in Asturias have enough capacity to handle everything that is fished here and a little bit more, so that the added value remains in the region and that the excess can be processed and exported,"* said Rodriguez, who is also president of the association of fish wholesalers in the principality of Asturias. European aid of EUR 3.5 million supplemented the EUR 6.5 million invested by the businessman in a state-of-the-art production plant and research laboratory, which will create 80 new jobs. A smaller-scale investment, but using a similar approach, has been made nearby at Mariscos Oviñana - a company producing top-of-the-range seafood products - which is building more spacious new premises. *"We have reached the limits of our capacity,"* said Dionisio Otamendi, owner of the company. *"In the big cities, the demand for seafood has gone through the roof. We couldn't keep up with demand and we couldn't allow this opportunity to pass us by."*

Sailing

Not allowing the opportunity to pass them by is also the concern of the management of the sailing port of Gijón situated at the heart of Asturias' biggest city (250,000 inhabitants). Constructed twenty years ago, the port was a little bit sleepy, as sailing is a less popular sport in Spain than in other countries. *"Forty people out of 300 have a sailing boat in France compared with one in 300 in Spain and one in 1,000 in Asturias,"* explained José Carlos Martínez, steward at the water sports club. Demand is set to increase dramatically in this sector too. The Spanish are discovering

A first regional maritime strategy

In order to ensure integrated development, to better coordinate the action of the various public and private sector players and to optimise the impact of the projects, the principality of Asturias has developed a regional maritime strategy that will guide its socio-economic policies throughout the 2007-2013 period.

Set out in a document entitled "*MAREA - La MAR, una estrategia para Asturias*," the approach is the result of wide consultation that has involved around a hundred organisations and citizens during the first half of 2007.

Good governance

Firstly, the regional maritime strategy of Asturias has an objective of **good governance**. In a field that covers a multitude of sectors in which a large number of public administrations and private operations intervene, the document aims above all to put in place an integrated management structure involving the various regional, national and European levels of responsibility. The regional maritime strategy puts forward an organisational structure that can be summed up as follows:

- At **regional level**, set up a **commission for maritime policy** bringing together all the regional ministries concerned; make provision for organisations offering advice and technical assistance, in particular a **scientific council** (to deal with environmental issues and innovation) and a "**maritime forum for Asturias**" (bringing together all the socio-economic players).
- At **national level**, the Spanish government could coordinate the organisation of **sectoral conferences** and the implementation of **joint action plans** and **cooperation** between autonomous coastal communities; a **general protocol** agreed between Madrid and the autonomous coastal communities would define a general framework and a methodology for cooperation in the field of integrated maritime policy.
- At **European level**, the maritime strategy for Asturias proposes setting up a **tripartite cooperation framework** or a "**European territorial pact**" between the autonomous community, the Spanish government and the European Commission. A **Transnational consultative maritime council** made up of **scientific committees** would facilitate the implementation of the policies and inform the debate on maritime challenges at a superregional level.

Objectives and priorities

The public consultation, the 21 written contributions, the evaluation carried out by the region itself, combined with the European Commission's green paper and other relevant political considerations, have produced the following objectives and strategic priorities:

- **Environmental objective: to protect the coastline and the sea** (protection and rehabilitation of the coastline and marine resources; development and management of coastal areas).
- **Economic objective: to make better use of marine and coastal resources** (improve the competitiveness of the maritime sector and coastal activities; encourage activities based on marine and coastal resources contributing to sustainable development; identify new or potential activities).
- **Socio-cultural objective: improve the quality of life on the coast of Asturias** (encourage the creation of employment opportunities for the local population; improve facilities and services for both residents and visitors; contribute to maintaining the cultural identity of the coastal towns and villages).

These three objectives will be enhanced by the integration of the following transversal objectives:

- **Research, development and innovation** (promote research based in Asturias on maritime issues and their integration into public policies; encourage the integration of scientific and technological know-how in the maritime sector; facilitate innovation).
- **Training and raising awareness** (better adaptation of training to the requirements of the maritime sector; create new employment opportunities for the coastal population; make citizens more aware of the importance of the resources of the sea and the coast).
- **Drawing up an innovative public management model** (integrated management of the coastal areas; integration of environmental and social conditions in public contracts; creating databases; use of performance indicators).

For further information, please visit:

<http://www.asturias.es/portal/site/Asturias/menuitem.fe57bf7c5fd38046e44f5310bb30a0a0/?vgnextoid=c26f8bf1631b1110VgnVCM10000098030a0aRCRD&i18n.http.lang=en> <http://www.asturias.es>

the attractions of sailing and yachting and French sailing enthusiasts are finding it difficult to find berths at affordable prices in their own ports. There was therefore an opportunity in the form of a public/private-sector partnership that the port authority of Gijón, owner of the site, decided to seize. In 2005, the franchise for the sailing port was given to a private company that invested EUR 4 million in increasing and modernising equipment. New pontoons were built and others renovated to increase the number of berths from 750 to 1,100, and infrastructure was created to provide new services (easily-accessible water and electricity, WiFi access, conference room), and environmental quality was improved (sorting of waste, ISO standards). *"We have some 650 permanent customers, we were visited by more than 1,000 boats in transit in 2006 and the figures are set to rise,"* said Felix Gonzalez, communications manager. *"We are the least expensive sailing port on the Cantabrian coast, Gijón is a very hospitable city and we organise all sorts of social and sporting activities such as tuna fishing and regattas in conjunction with the French ports of Arcachon, Royan and La Rochelle."*

It is difficult to assess the economic impact of this new wave of sailing enthusiasts on the town. Even Humberto Moyano, director of research and development for the port authority of Gijón, cannot answer the question and he has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the maritime sector and could talk forever about local development. He said: *"One thing is for certain, the port of Gijón represents 7% of the GDP of Asturias."*

The port of Gijón, which also handles 20 million tonnes of goods each year, is clearly a key factor in regional development. It has undergone expansion since 2004, largely supported by the European Union, which has provided EUR 563 900 000 - almost half of that amount coming from the cohesion fund, while EUR 250 000 000 has been loaned by the European Investment Bank. This expansion will increase the capacity for handling and storing maritime freight passing through the main port of Asturias. It mainly involves strengthening the breakwaters and expanding the storage and mooring areas in order to handle the largest kinds of vessels, in particular container ships, still not enough of which use Gijón, whereas this market is growing rapidly. *"All this new infrastructure will enable us to speed up our processes, but I would also like to draw your attention to another aspect of Gijón, which is at*



The steel terminal in the port of Gijón.



■ The Oscar Niemeyer centre which will transform the town of Avilés.

least as significant," Humberto Moyano pointed out. "We have been involved in all the European research and development projects concerning ports over the last fifteen years – that's no less than 42 projects since 1992 through the various framework programmes but also LIFE and, of course, INTERREG, six of whose projects we are currently involved in. In the context of globalisation and the economic, social and environmental challenges that we are faced with, it is thanks to research and innovation that Gijón can create real added value on for itself, as well as for ports in the rest of the world. For instance, the environmental protection scheme that we have introduced for volatile materials has been exported all around the world."

Oscar Niemeyer

However, Asturias also has a second important port - Avilés. It is smaller than Gijón in terms of freight (6 million tonnes handled each year), but it is the largest fishing port on the Cantabrian coast. It has also undergone substantial expansion work (new fish market, which is the most modern in Spain, new quays and promenades running along the estuary), but many other projects concern the whole of the town to the extent that Avilés is perhaps the quintessence of all restructuring in progress in Asturias. The town (85,000 inhabitants), which once had high levels of pollution, has gradually transformed itself into a services centre. It is also focussing on tourism and is set to become a very important cultural centre in the very near future.

Avilés has increased the number of clean-up and urban development projects over the past ten years. "Almost completely geared towards industrial activities, the town was turning its back on the sea," said Jorge Juan Manrique, European projects coordinator for the local authority of Avilés. "It's a question of giving the estuary back to the town and its people and discovering a new centre. It's a long-term task which involves many public-sector, private-sector and associated

players, each with their own interests. In this respect, the regional maritime strategy is a great help."

The flagship project is without question the spectacular Oscar Niemeyer international cultural centre, the construction of which is about to get underway. Designed by the great Brazilian architect, this complex will be made up of a huge esplanade and four futuristic buildings situated on the redeveloped site of a former steelworks (44,213 m²) on the right bank of the estuary. The development will house a 1,000-seater auditorium, a museum, exhibition space and conference rooms, a cinema and a panoramic restaurant. "The Oscar Niemeyer Centre expresses everything Asturias wants to communicate - the future, innovation and excellence. And all this at the rather modest cost of EUR 30 million," said Natalio Grueso, the project manager. The complex is scheduled to open in 2010. In the meantime, Avilés is hosting a conference of the world's most important cultural centres in December 2007 (Lincoln Center, Centre Pompidou, Sydney Opera House, Hong Kong Cultural Centre) and Woody Allen is making a film set at the mouth of the estuary.

For further information visit: <http://www.asturias.es>

INTERREG IIIB North Sea

“Sharing knowledge on the management of the risks of coastal flooding”



Niels Roode, head of the SAFECOAST project,
Rijkswaterstaat (centre for the management of water), Netherlands

Since the catastrophic tidal waves of 1953 and 1962, the coastal countries of the North Sea have introduced large-scale coastal defence schemes - dykes and storm surge barriers have been built to protect vast areas of low-lying land, while existing coastal dunes have been strengthened. Throughout the 1990s, the sand defences proved themselves to be an effective “soft” measure to counteract coastal erosion in countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

However, this success did not come about by chance. Over the past fifty years, despite continuous investment in coastal defences, the potential risk of tidal waves has significantly increased, while awareness of these risks on the part of citizens and policymakers may have decreased, as there have been no serious incidents.

While it is anticipated that climate change will accelerate the rise in sea level and cause increasingly violent storms, the consequences of flooding have become more serious owing to the importance of the socio-economic infrastructure concentrated in supposedly protected flood zones. The Asian tsunami and the flooding in New Orleans caused by hurricane Katrina are two prime examples of the vulnerability of low-lying coastal areas. Similarly, the floods that hit England in the summer of 2007 underline how people and infrastructure are under threat in the flood plains.

Many initiatives have been taken in the North Sea countries to counteract these threats on a long-term basis, combining aspects of safety, economic growth and environmental friendliness. It seems that many of the responses are a balanced combination of the roles of the coastal areas, judicial development of the territory and crisis preparation, all of which depend upon ongoing efforts in the field of research.

The differences in context and culture between countries and regions can be a huge source of mutual

learning. However, it is necessary to harmonise efforts and understanding to efficiently deal with the knowledge and information available in order to produce a critical mass of basic common know-how.

With a budget of EUR 2.3 million, half of which was provided by European funding, the INTERREG “Safecoast” cooperation project brings together coastal managers and researchers to form a common understanding of the same problem. It is a matter of learning through action: carrying out risk assessments together, organising awareness campaigns, exchanging data and information, producing very detailed maps which do not stop at national borders, etc.

All of this should lead to a comprehensive report on the situation of the North Sea region in order to enlighten the managers and policymakers concerned in the various countries. The results will be published on 21 May 2008 in the framework of a conference organised in conjunction with the “Chain of Safety” project where trans-border coastal managers and crisis managers will meet and hopefully set out new ideas for a more integrated approach to combating coastal flooding.

For further information visit: www.safecoast.org



Dunes provide both protection and scenery.

INTERREG IIIA Ireland/Wales

“IMAGIN”: using the aggregates of the Irish Sea



Total cost: EUR 1 246 111
EU contribution: EUR 841 976

“Profitable sources of materials for the manufacture of mortar or concrete (gravel, sand, chippings) are becoming increasingly rare in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Other resources have to be found. The use of significant deposits of aggregates found on the seabed in the south of the Irish Sea can contribute to the development of coastal regions. The ‘Irish Sea Marine Aggregates Initiative (IMAGIN)’ project brings together various organisations specialised in the geography of coasts, geology, the management of maritime resources etc., with the aim of defining a scientific, strategic and operational framework to ensure an environmentally-friendly use of aggregates.”

Gerry Sutton, project manager, University College Cork
gerry.sutton@ucc.ie
www.imagin-eu.org

INTERREG IIIB Baltic Sea

“Baltic Gateway”: linking up the south of the Baltic



Total cost: EUR 1 043 500
EU contribution: EUR 664 500

“Involving 38 partners from seven countries, the ‘Baltic Gateway’ cooperation project aims to develop a comprehensive transport system and high-quality logistical services between Scandinavia, north-west and central Europe, the Baltic countries, Russia, Belarus, the Ukraine and Asia. It concerns encouraging economic growth and the sustainable development of the south of the Baltic. The project has enabled a series of studies to be carried out and resulted in various economic investments.”

Bengt Gustafsson, project coordinator
bengt.gustafsson@regionblekinge.se
www.balticgateway.se

INTERREG IIIB Atlantic area

“Coastatlantic”: integrated management of coastal areas



Total cost: EUR 2 535 079
EU contribution: EUR 1 753 768

“The aim of the ‘Coastatlantic’ cooperation project is to encourage clean and sustainable development of the coastal areas by means of an approach that takes into account the environmental, social and economic circumstances of the coastal areas. Twelve Atlantic regions from Spain, France, the United Kingdom and Ireland now share a common vision in terms of management of the territory and the integrated management of coastal areas, which was already the case in other parts of Europe (North Sea, Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean) but less so with regard to the Atlantic Ocean.”

Guillermo Morales Mato, project coordinator
guillemm@princast.es
www.coastatlantic.org/

INTERREG IIIC North

“InterMareC”: support of maritime clusters



Total cost: EUR 3 250 000
EU contribution: EUR 1 750 000

“The InterMareC - using maritime clusters to stimulate growth in coastal regions - project was born out of cooperation between three peripheral regions which have direct access to the sea, (Schleswig-Holstein, Brittany and Pomerania), searching for a common strategy to harness, through maritime clusters, previously untapped potential. It is also concerned with stimulating both activity in the maritime sector in three key areas (off-shore and oceanographic technologies, coastal activities and services, shipbuilding) and the economy of the coastal regions by means of cooperation between authorities, researchers and businesses. InterMareC is developing new products and services in underwater acoustics and robotics, “meteocean” forecasting, hydrodynamics and the environment.”

Frieder Henf, project coordinator
intermarec@kern.de
<http://www.intermarec.net/offshore-oceanograph.html>

Interregional cooperation 2007-2013 ("INTERREG IVC")

The regions and cities of Europe: the map of cooperation

Approved by the Commission on 11 September 2007, the new interregional cooperation programme for the period 2007-2013 got underway at a forum organised in Lisbon on 20 and 21 October⁽¹⁾, with a first call for proposals with a closing date of mid-January 2008. The aid available for ERDF is EUR 321 million out of a total budget of EUR 405 million.



Often called "INTERREG IVC," this new programme differs from INTERREG IIIC (2000-2006) in that it is no longer a straightforward "Community initiative" programme set up by the Commission to complement the main regional development programmes, but it is rather an integral part of one of the new priority objectives of the Structural Funds 2007-2013: the *European Territorial Cooperation*. The latter involves cross-border cooperation (between one part of a border area and another), *transnational* cooperation (within geographic areas) and *interregional* cooperation (between all regions concerned by means of networks and exchanges of experience).

Change of scope

This change of scope is due to the success achieved by INTERREG since its launch in 1990, and reflects the importance of the territorial dimension of the cohesion policy. Another way in which it differs from INTERREG IIIC is that the new interregional cooperation is organised in just one programme instead of four. It covers the 27 Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland. Anchored in the strategy of Lisbon and Gothenburg for growth, employment, innovation and sustainable development, it aims to increase the efficiency of regional policy through two priority themes:

- **Innovation and the knowledge-based society** (ERDF: EUR 177 million). Sub-themes: innovation and R&D; entrepreneurship and SMEs; information society; employment, human resources and education.
- **Environment and risk prevention** (ERDF: EUR 125 million). Sub-themes: natural risks and

technologies; water management; waste management; biodiversity and natural heritage; energy and sustainable transport; cultural heritage and landscapes.

In addition to these two areas, there is an ERDF budget of EUR 19 million for technical assistance.

Acceleration

Interregional cooperation 2007-2013 is also characterised by two forms of intervention: "*regional initiative*" projects covering a wide range of activities from classical cooperation networks to pilot projects, and "*capitalisation*" projects aimed at accelerating the transfer of good practices into the main regional development programmes, which may consist of fast-track projects.

"INTERREG IVC" therefore constitutes a driving force of the initiative launched by the Commission in November 2006 under the title "*Regions for Economic Change*" (see Inforegio Panorama n° 21). This initiative aimed to refocus the interregional cooperation activities (previously INTERREG IIIC) and urban development (previously URBAN II) within the European Territorial Cooperation Objective 2007-2013, thanks to regional partnerships strengthened by additional assistance from the Commission for projects that are particularly in line with the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy.

Who to contact?

The regional council of Nord – Pas-de-Calais, in Lille (France) has been designated as the authority responsible for managing the programme and any proposals should be addressed to the joint technical secretariat⁽¹⁾. Four regional information points⁽²⁾ have also been set up in Rostock (Germany), Valencia (Spain), Lille (France) and Katowice (Poland).

(1) <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1364&format=HTML&aged=0&language=FR&guiLanguage=fr> and <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/366&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

(2) The "Contact" page on the INTERREG IVC site: <http://www.interreg4c.net/> also provides more detailed information on the programme and assistance for candidates

See also the September 2007 information bulletin on the INTERREG IIIC website ("Future Interregional Cooperation"): <http://www.interreg3c.net/sixcms/detail.php?id=5580>

REGIO & networks

Public consultations

The European Commission has initiated two public consultations. The first concerns the future of the EU's cohesion policy. How should this policy be adapted to meet the new challenges? How can its results be improved to maximise its impact in future? This consultation is open until 31 January 2008.

A second consultation aiming to gather ideas to contribute to defining the future of European strategy for the outermost regions is open until 31 March 2008. The Commission is expecting to receive contributions on themes such as climate change, demographic trends and migratory movement, the role of agriculture in the outermost regions, and their role in the maritime policy of the European Union.

Cohesion policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/4thcohesionforum/consultation_fr.cfm?nmenu=6

Outermost regions:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/rup/index_fr.htm

Launch of URBACT II

The URBACT network held its annual conference on 4, 5 and 6 November 2007 in Berlin. The URBACT and URBAN programmes were closed and the new programme URBACT II was launched. Subjects debated included the development of urban issues in the European agenda, in particular with regard to the integration of the URBAN principles into mainstream policies and the role of the Regions for Economic Change initiative for cities. The results of URBACT and URBAN were presented and the new call for URBACT II projects was made.

http://urbact.eu/fr/actualites-et-evenements/focus-sur/actualite-seule/article/urbact-urban-conference-berlin-novembre-4th-5th-6th-2007.html?tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=54&cHash=359b591e7b

AER: Training for European regional managers

European regions deal with similar issues which are relevant to their citizens, including economic development, infrastructure, tourism, energy, transport, social affairs, public health, culture, education and policies for young people. These subjects are taught generally in several institutions but never approached from a regional perspective. The regional representatives want to learn to promote and increase the international or European dimension of their administrations. The Assembly of European Regions (AER) has therefore launched a "training institute," the first education programme in Europe that is specifically geared to the regional authorities. The various modules will cover a wide range of skills necessary for efficient regional government, including European policies and programmes, management of financial and human resources specific to each sector, in particular transport, the environment and emergency plans. The training is provided by various members of the AER: Baden-Württemberg (D), Bruxelles-Capitale (B), Friuli-Venezia Giulia (I), Île-de-France (F), Salzburg (A), Comunidad Valenciana (E) and the representation of South West UK in Brussels.

<http://www.a-e-r.org/fr/presse/2007/2007091001.html>

Agenda REGIO

Dates	Event	Location
26-27 November 2007	"Telling the story – Communicating Cohesion Policy together" http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/commu/conferences/november07/index_en.cfm	Brussels (B)
25-26 February 2008	Conference: "Regions for economic change – Exchanging good practice between Europe's regions" http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index_en.cfm?nmenu=1	Brussels (B)
11-14 March 2008	EASY-ECO Vienna Conference 2008 "Governance by Evaluation: Institutional Capacities and Learning for Sustainable Development" http://www.sustainability.eu/easy/	Vienna (A)

Recent publications

Growing Regions, Growing Europe



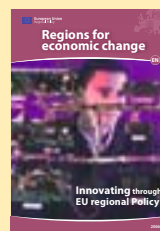
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/index_fr.htm
Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion.
Available in 22 languages.

Regions for economic change – fostering competitiveness through technologies, products and healthy communities



http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/documents_fr.cfm?nmenu=2
Available in 19 languages.

Regions for economic change – Innovating through EU Regional Policy



The challenge of research and innovation for 2007-2013, illustrated by 15 projects in progress.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/documents_fr.cfm?nmenu=2
Available in 19 languages.

The urban dimension in Community policies



The community policies concerning cities in the programming for 2007-2013
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/guides/urban/pdf/urbanguide1_fr.pdf
Available in DE, EN and FR.

<http://www.interreg4c.net/>

With a view to becoming more comprehensive and multilingual, the website of the new interregional cooperation programme, INTERREG IVC (see page 26), provides most of the information required to submit an application: explanation of the programme, online forms, frequently asked questions and, above all, the site's main value-added, a "projects" database, providing the option of searching for partners online.



<http://labforculture.org/>

Defined as "an indispensable tool for all those working in the arts and culture and who create, cooperate, share and produce across borders in Europe," LabforCulture is an online platform dedicated to European cultural cooperation. It is complemented by a wide range of offline services and activities. Available in five languages (DE, EN, ES, FR, PL), the site provides access to considerable information and resources: networks, research bodies, cultural and artistic databases, NGOs, financing. A "target region" section focuses on the least-known regions of the enlarged EU.



<http://www.bsssc.com/>

Founded in 1993, the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC) brings together the regional authorities of the coastal states of the Baltic Sea and Norway. The BSSSC portal is, like the organisation, a point of reference and an excellent point of entry for anyone wishing to enter into cooperation with partners from this part of Europe.



<http://www.lga.gov.uk/>

The Local Government Association (LGA) is an association of the local authorities of England and Wales. The interest in its site from a European regional development point of view is that it provides access to lots of information and publications, the content of which extends beyond Anglo-Welsh socio-economic and institutional affairs. The LGA also has a new European and International Unit, which publishes an e-newsletter called "The Voice of Local Government in Europe and Worldwide" (<http://international.lga.gov.uk/>).



Inforegio website: the key pages are available in 22 languages

"La Politique" and "Les Moyens" The first two sections of our new website (and their respective sub-sections) are now available in 22 languages. Visitors can therefore read detailed information on the history, the main objectives and the key elements of the regional policy 2007-2013 in the languages of the 27 Member States.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_fr.htm

European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy
Unit 01 - Information and Communication
Ana-Paula Laissy
Avenue de Tervuren 41, B-1040 Brussels
Fax: (32-2) 29-66003
E-mail: regio-info@ec.europa.eu
Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/comm/dgs/regional_policy/index_en.htm
Information on the European Union's regional aid
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm

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