



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 25 November 2008 (26.11)  
(OR. fr)**

**16019/08**

**RECH 383  
COMPET 506  
ENV 861  
TRANS 416  
PECHE 321  
POLGEN 123**

**NOTE**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Council

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No. prev. doc.: 15555/08 RECH 352 COMPET 463 ENV 803 TRANS 389 PECHE 306  
POLGEN 120

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Subject: Commission Communication on a European Strategy for Marine and Maritime  
Research:  
– adoption of the Council conclusions

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1. On 5 September 2008 the Commission adopted its Communication entitled "A European Strategy for Marine and Maritime Research. A coherent European Research Area framework in support of a sustainable use of oceans and seas"<sup>1</sup> which represents major progress towards the development of the European Research Area (ERA).
2. Further to the intensive efforts of the Working Party on Research, at their meeting on 21 November 2008, the Permanent Representatives Committee approved the text of the Council conclusions on the European Strategy for Marine and Maritime Research, annexed hereto.

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<sup>1</sup> 12699/08.

3. The Council is therefore asked to adopt the Council conclusions at its meeting on 1 and 2 December 2008.

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DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON A EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR  
MARINE AND MARITIME RESEARCH<sup>1</sup>

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING:

- the conclusions of the European Council on 14 December 2007, which welcomed the Commission Communication "An integrated maritime policy for the European Union"<sup>2</sup> and the associated Action Plan setting out the first practical steps in developing an integrated approach to maritime questions;
  - the obligations arising under Directive 2008/56/EC of 17 June 2008, the "Marine Strategy Framework Directive", to which marine and maritime research can contribute, notably in terms of maintaining or achieving good environmental status in the marine environment;
1. UNDERLINES the importance of Europe's maritime heritage, spread right across the globe, and EMPHASISES the need to protect the ecosystems of the seas and oceans around Europe, as well as around the outermost regions and overseas countries and territories;
  2. RECOGNISES the importance of strategic cooperation in the management of the seas and oceans for the sustainable economic development of Europe and RECALLS in this respect the key role played by the fields of marine and maritime research underlying the following scientific and technological areas:
    - addressing climate change through measures to mitigate and adapt to its effects;

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<sup>1</sup> The changes from 15555/08 + COR 1 are shown in **bold**.

<sup>2</sup> 14631/07.

- basic understanding of the ocean environment and protection of biodiversity and the most vulnerable maritime zones (coasts and deep seas, regional and semi-enclosed seas);
- exploitation and sustainable management of maritime renewable energy resources as well as raw materials from the sea bed and the ocean floor, while protecting the environment and ecosystems;
- functioning of the ecosystems and management of food resources from the sea (fishing and fish farming) with due regard for natural balance;
- development of marine biotechnologies and marine resources for the pharmaceuticals sector, biomaterials and, more generally, for fine biochemistry purposes;
- development of environment-friendly technologies for fisheries (including fish-farming), shipping and port infrastructures;
- development of instruments for surveillance and maritime security;
- impact of human activities on the functioning of coastal and marine ecosystems and the services they provide, and management of those activities;

3. RECOGNISES the excellence of European research in the field of marine and maritime sciences in support of Europe's competitiveness and EMPHASISES the benefit of promoting the integration of the various research disciplines in order better to meet the challenges in this area and to use the available resources as efficiently as possible;

4. UNDERLINES the large number of existing initiatives in the field of marine and maritime sciences at European level, through ERA-NETs<sup>3</sup>, ERA-NET+<sup>4</sup>, the Technology Platform<sup>5</sup> and Networks of Excellence<sup>6</sup>, which demonstrate that there is considerable potential for more coordinated management in this S&T field at European level;
5. CONSIDERS that mobilisation of national and Community funds for R&D activities in the field of marine and maritime sciences could be better coordinated in order to attain a critical mass and respond to major challenges, notably by mobilising appropriate instruments of the 7th RTD FP, through means including increased support for existing ERA-NETs, or possibly via a new ERA-NET which would aim to cover the entire field of marine and maritime sciences and technologies;
6. In this context, WELCOMES the Commission Communication on "A European strategy for marine and maritime research"<sup>7</sup>, which deals with the complexity of the marine and maritime research system and puts forward an innovative model of governance for this research field; WELCOMES the Communication's aims, designed to boost the overall potential of European marine and maritime research, and to reduce its fragmentation through increased integration and through cooperation between all the actors in this area; RECOGNISES that the proposed strategy represents significant progress towards the development of a European Research Area (ERA);

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<sup>3</sup> ERA-NETs "MARINERA", "MARIFISH", "AMPERA", "ECORD", "CIRCLE", "MARTEC" and "TRANSPORT".

<sup>4</sup> ERA-NET+ "BONUS".

<sup>5</sup> The Technology Platform "WATERBORNE".

<sup>6</sup> The Networks of Excellence "MGE", "MARBEF", "EUROCEANS" and VISIONS.

<sup>7</sup> 12699/08.

7. [...] **INVITES** [...] the Commission **to submit in early 2009** to the Council and the European Parliament a proposal to transform the ERA-NET+ "BONUS for the Baltic Sea Science – Network of Funding Agencies" into a joint research programme based on Article 169 of the Treaty;
8. **INVITES** the Member States concerned and the Commission to envisage appropriate proposals for R&D activities in all European maritime regions seas and oceans, with particular emphasis on the Mediterranean and Black Sea basin;
9. **HIGHLIGHTS** the relevance of the joint calls for proposals in the field of marine and maritime sciences across several themes of the 7th RTD Framework Programme which the Commission has undertaken to launch in 2009 and 2010 and **INVITES** the Commission to develop, within the 7th RTD Framework Programme, an integrated concept of marine and maritime scientific research;
10. **RECOGNISES** the need for a standardised system at European level for the collection of scientific data for marine and maritime sciences, as well as the need to ensure access to this data; **RECALLS** the broad-based international cooperation effort already mounted to harmonise the methods and standards used by all the countries of the world; **RECOGNISES** that European-level coordination should be increasingly organised and developed on the basis of international agreement and standards; **NOTES** that the GMES<sup>8</sup> initiative and the launch of the EMODNet<sup>9</sup> network can significantly improve the situation in this respect; in this context, **INVITES** the Commission and the Member States to develop and to consolidate the GMES initiative, in particular as regards the support which it provides for marine and maritime sciences and the creation of a European operational oceanography service, and the networking of infrastructures for observing the marine environment;

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<sup>8</sup> The oceanic component of which is the "Marine Core Service".

<sup>9</sup> European Marine Observation and Data Network.

11. INVITES all the Member States and associated States concerned to coordinate their national approaches to the marine and maritime sciences;
12. STRESSES the importance of world-standard infrastructures for supporting the marine and maritime sciences and INVITES the Member States and associated States to look into the conditions for pooling their resources more extensively in this area in order to contribute to the development of world-class research infrastructures in support of the marine and maritime sciences in Europe, notably through relevant projects on the ESFRI list which aim at greater coordination of Member States' contributions to oceanographic research, ocean monitoring systems and marine biology stations;
13. WELCOMES the Commission's intention to bring together all key players in the European marine and maritime research sector in a forum with a remit to deliver strategic advice on the definition of research priorities and to promote the integration of, and synergies between, national programmes;
14. INVITES the Commission to monitor implementation of the European strategy for the marine and maritime sciences and WELCOMES the Commission's intention to submit a progress report no later than 2012.

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