

# **UBC position paper on EU Maritime Policy**

## **Maritime policy as a horizontal policy issue**

1. The Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to launch a process of formulating a coherent maritime policy to the European Union. We see seas and sea-related activities as a horizontal policy area that has not dealt adequately by the European Union. The UBC also welcomes the basic philosophy of the Green Paper of not proposing new themes or topics but aiming at coordination between the existing policies. We also welcome the approach stressing the use of consultation and programmes instead of binding legislative measures.
2. The UBC stresses that maritime policy is of a particular importance to the Baltic Sea region, which in all practical terms is an internal sea of the European Union. As such it has a unique position among the sea areas of the Union. We believe that the views from the Baltic Sea region deserve an adequate attention in shaping the maritime policy.
3. The Baltic Sea hosts eight Member States with a coastal connection. In addition West-most regions of Russia (St. Petersburg area and Kaliningrad) and coastal regions of Norway are part of the Baltic Sea Region. We believe that these areas considerably add the weight of the region in the European Maritime policy.
4. The Baltic Sea is the main route of rapidly growing sea transport from Russian west coast harbours to the rest of Europe. Therefore we suggest that the weight and importance of these regions should be taken into consideration while formulating the common maritime policy by offering permanent consultation mechanisms for the neighbouring regions at all level of policy making and implementation.
5. The Union of Baltic Sea Cities offers a platform for cooperation with non-EU actors since our membership covers cities from non-EU regions as well. These links should be fully exploited already in drafting of the maritime policy. The Members of the UBC collaborate as individual cities with cities and regions of the adjacent countries. Our experiences support further activities as well.

## **Maritime governance as a multi-level system of governance**

6. The UBC believes that regions and cities have a pivotal role in the maritime policy. We emphasise the multilevel nature of the policy. The European level and the national level shall have a key role in defining of common policies. Naturally a European wide policy must be monitored and put into practice by the European institutions and the Member States. But cities and regions are key actors in the implementation of the common maritime policy.
7. The UBC stresses that the division of labour in the maritime policy must follow the logic of subsidiarity. Among the great number of stakeholders the position of cities and regions is between policy-making and delivery of the maritime policy. Cities are in key positions in securing good governance of the maritime policy.
8. Delivery of best practises and the surveillance of policy elements are in the responsibility of local and regional actors. Regions and cities shall have the main responsibility to ensure that the common policy is put into concrete actions. Costal areas and coastal authorities certainly have the best knowledge and particular expertise of the conditions of maritime regions under their administration.
9. Therefore the UBC has a strong opinion that the city authorities as important stakeholders must have a say also in the policy formulation phase of the common maritime policy and that an adequate consultation mechanism should be established in order to secure their voice to be channelled into decision-making
10. We note that the UBC and its Members are initiators of several activities in the Maritime sector. Among the issues in our interest has been actions related to ports. <sup>1</sup> In a similar way the UBC has devoted a interest in sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. We therefore urge the Commission to pay more attention to sustainability of maritime policy.
11. Sustainability and clean maritime environment are preconditions for many seaborne economic structures such as island economies, costal economies and maritime tourism. We urge the Commission to pay more attention to the relationship between sustainability and economic activities. More training and monitoring is needed to establish this relationship.
12. As a part of sustainability we would also like to see more attention to the preservation and cultivation of maritime heritage. The maritime

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum of Understanding on Sustainable Port and Maritime Policy for the Baltic Sea Region signed at the VIII General Conference, Turku, 29.09 - 2.10.2005

heritage issues should be seen as an integral element of a successful maritime policy.

13. The security of the seas is a key element in the maritime policy. From the Baltic Sea perspective the security is of a particular importance since we have witnessed an ever increasing volume of sea transportation of dangerous materials in an area which for substantial parts is seasonally covered by ice. This draws the attention of the UBC into the quality of transport services including the adequate system of pilot services, early recognition of signs of climate change and spatial planning.

### **Implementation – the crucial challenge**

14. The Union of Baltic Cities emphasises that implementation of the policy decisions are a crucial element of the maritime policy. Taking note of the variety of elements and dimensions of maritime issues as well as the great number of stakeholders the implementation of the maritime policy faces great challenges. A particular challenge is created by the fact that the implementation shall not be based on legal foundation but on project, programmes and framework decisions. This calls for extended cooperation between stakeholders at all levels.
15. We stress that the principle of subsidiarity must be respected. We also see that EU-wide maritime policy must be regionalised and an appropriate degree of flexibility in implementation has to be accepted. The conditions in the Baltic Sea region greatly differ from those in the Mediterranean region for instance.
16. The particular challenge of the implementation of the common maritime policy is the question of ownership: who and which level of authority in various dimensions should have the final ownership and responsibility in the implementation? The UBC suggest that the Commission devotes much more attention to the ownership issue.
17. The UBC understands that its members, the Cities in the Baltic Sea Region, shall take their responsibility in the implementation of the future maritime policy and thus take their share of ownership. Coastal and island cities have experiences in the themes introduced in the Green Paper. We stress the relevance learning and best practises in this respect. This emphasises the regionalisation of maritime policy.
18. Sharing and disseminating best practises and ensuring the ownership calls for effective monitoring. We propose the establishment of a regional monitoring authority for ensuring the implementation. Authority should work in close cooperation with regional stakeholders as well as with the European authorities.

