

Willi Piecyk

Green Paper Rapporteur

European Parliament

"THE NEW EUROPEAN MARITIME POLICY"

- *The Political Green Paper Debate* -

Thursday 23 November 2006, Brussels

Check against delivery

The sea doesn't need us, but we need the sea, and because of that, we have to treat it well, carefully and in a sustainable way.

This is simple, almost trivial, a common knowledge. When you are living at or near the seaside, you know that. Nevertheless, we have to appreciate that the Commission drafted the green paper and put the sea as a topic on the European agenda.

The Commission deserves praise for finally thinking of shipyards, ports, maritime transport, fishery, tourism, research and maritime environment as parts of one integrated maritime policy.

But the praise stops here. Those who have read the green paper on maritime policy get the impression, that if the conjunctive mood did not yet exist, the green paper certainly invented it. It is full with "should", "could", "would" and "maybe", and sometimes, for a change, a strong, resounding "on the one hand" / "on the other hand".

I don't mean that to be offensive. I think that also the green paper's authors know that we need to improve the text and that we have to table concrete demands. I can promise you one thing: if I as the rapporteur have my way, the European Parliament will draft a text that will give the Commission plenty of homework to do for the next years!

But we are not starting from scratch here. There are, of course, already several initiatives. They give Europe a leading role, something that really helps our image.

But: there had to be major catastrophes for us to become active - they carry names like Erika and Prestige.

As you know, the Parliament is dealing with the so-called Erika-III-package, which contains important initiatives which once more will help improve maritime and ship safety.

You know as well that last week, the Parliament adopted two reports dealing with a single Thematic Strategy to the protection and conservation of the marine environment and a Framework for Community Action in the field of Marine Environmental Policy. The Parliament considered "with disappointment, that the proposal for a Marine Strategy Directive in its present form will not succeed in mobilising the regional and local authorities to take the appropriate measures". We also called for a strong EU policy on marine protection, preventing further loss of biodiversity and deterioration of the marine environment and fostering the restoration of marine biodiversity

The adopted amendments to the Commission proposal call for that the establishment of a framework within which Member States in

order to achieve good environmental status in the marine environment by the year 2017, and not by 2020 as proposed by the Commission.

You are probably aware of the fact that in May, the Commission adopted a recommendation on the promotion of shore-side electricity for use by ships at berth in Community ports. It can not come as a surprise that member states will react overly euphoric to this proposal.

In my opinion, what we need to set up an integrated maritime policy, are several "concrete utopias", setting ambitious goals and a deadline, let's say 2020, for their realisation.

One example for such a "concrete utopia" would be the "green ship", which takes into account the environmental aspects of its existence "from the cradle to the grave". It starts with its construction at the shipyard:

- With the use of environmentally friendly materials - we have already improved with regards to ship paintings.

- With low emission power trains - we need to do something about sulphur, NOX and grime, if the ship is to be the most environmentally friendly transport mode. And, of course, it is not forbidden to use regenerative energies such as wind and sun on ships.
- With double hull design, which should not be limited to tankers only. Huge cargo ships are carrying thousands of tons of heavy oil as fuel, enough to cause serious pollution in case of an accident.
- With safe and modern systems for the disposal of ballast water, oil and waste.
- With a concrete idea about what to do with a ship at it's life's end. A ship has to be constructed with the end of its lifecycle already in mind. Europe right now is going the easy route, getting rid of old ships by selling them to third world enterprises who are putting them at some beaches in South

Asia, where they are dismantled under appalling social and environmental conditions. That has to change!

Europe has the chance to be a world leader with all these measures, gaining an technological and competitive edge on its rivals. The green paper repeatedly insists, and rightfully so, that protection and utilization of the seas do not necessarily have to be contradictory, and that they indeed depend on one another in the long run.

So: "concrete utopia green ship"

It is directly connected to the next "concrete utopia": the environmentally friendly port. Imagine you have a motor caravan, and you're entering a camping site during your holiday. Now, if you keep you engine running in order to produce the energy you need for cooking, heating and light, the other guests will quickly pay you an unfriendly visit.

This is exactly the situation we have in our ports. From an environmental and tourism perspective, this is unacceptable. In my region at the Baltic Sea the seaside towns are labelled according to their air quality. This "health status" is permanently threatened by air pollution caused by ships. An environmentally friendly port needs at least the following elements:

- Landside energy supply for the ships at port. I already mentioned the Commission's recommendation from last May. A recommendation is too weak an instrument, we need legislation.
- Any ship waste has to be disposed in the ports. I witnessed the farce concerning the "Port Waste facilities" and still remember it too well. The Commission was on the Parliaments' side, but the behaviour of the Council was a disgrace. An indicative 30% share, you won't find a worse compromise! We need a relaunch.

- Usually, ports are situated at or near estuaries. If it is correct that ships contribute around 15% to the total pollution of the seas we have to stress the role of sea pollution caused by land based activities. Runoff from traditional agriculture is having a significant impact on the marine environment near the coasts.

The green paper is only gingerly touching this subject. We need a concrete, ambitious and consistent action plan to radically reduce eutrophication! Such a plan will cause heavy lobbying, but without it all other measures remain symbolic at best. To put it differently: the coast needs protection, but the sea also needs to be protected from the coast!

As you can see, the Commission has stirred up a hornet's nest.

Congratulations!

There are several other points that need to be raised. I will mention some of them just briefly:

- *Key word "training"*

We know that the ports are utter job machines. Still, training must not be limited to seafaring. Shipbuilding with its supply industry as well as the whole sector of marine research are in desperate need of trainees.

- *Key word "production of energy"*

We need to stress the role of sea in the area of energy production, or should I say: the potential role. And I am not only talking about oil and gas, but about the great opportunities for alternative energies.

- *Key word "research"*

We do have a lot of information on various topics. The question is: do we always make good use of this information? "Data cemeteries" are not helping anyone. There's no such thing as a "common Institute for Marine Research". And in some areas, we are missing important information: I am not aware of any study about the interrelation of tourism and fishery.

- *Keyword "Transport" once again*

As of yet, short sea shipping is not integrated in the internal market. It is treated as international transport. This is an anachronism compared to the other supply chains. And the project "Motorways of the sea" is still "stuck in port".

To sum it up: there is much to do - let's get started