

**Meeting of Commissioner Joe Borg
with the EP Intergroup on Sustainable Development
5 December 2007**

Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

- It is a pleasure to address you today, almost one and a half years since I last met you on the day the consultation process was launched to discuss a Maritime Policy for the Union.
- I am looking forward to engaging with you and listening to your ideas as we seek to implement what has now become a broadly-accepted and widely-supported Integrated Maritime Policy.
- The documents adopted by the Commission on the 10th of October are a culmination of the hard work and rich input given to us by the numerous stakeholders who participated in the one year long consultation process.
- They are also the fruit of the hard work of my, and the other, Commission Services who are looking at maritime affairs in a new light, as part of a joined-up and coherent approach to policy-making.
- The European Parliament has played a seminal role in this process. The work of the five Committees that prepared the Parliament's response to the Green Paper provided a good example of the integrated and hands-on approach that we wish to promote. Indeed, on the 10th of October, just after the adoption of the Blue Paper, I had the honour of addressing the EP as a whole, to present the then newly-adopted Integrated Maritime Policy package.

- Encouraged by your close involvement to date, I augur that the EP will continue to play a key role during the critical phase of implementation that we are now in. I feel that I can count on your group to keep this emerging European policy high on the agenda of the Parliament.
- Sustainability is one of the core concepts underlying the new Integrated Maritime Policy.
- The Integrated Maritime Policy aims to strike the right balance between the economic, the social and the environmental dimensions of the development of maritime activities, basing its proposals on the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas for the sustainable development of growth and jobs. The Integrated Maritime Policy is also fully founded on the Thematic Strategy for the Marine Environment.
- In the package adopted in October, there are a number of accompanying projects that will help bring the Integrated Maritime Policy to life. Sustainability also lies at the heart of these projects, such as:
 - Respect for the crucial role of European seaports in driving economic growth and an examination of how EU funding can best boost prosperity in remote and disadvantaged coastal regions.
 - Better use of planning tools, data networks and horizontal coordination to support decision-making for marine spaces and coastal areas and to ensure international compliance with rules
 - A European Strategy for Marine Research and a commitment to excellence in marine scientific research, technology and innovation, to help meet the Lisbon goals for growth and jobs and to fully exploit the opportunities inherent in new technologies.

- Deploying Europe's strengths to combat climate change, through research and innovation, more sophisticated planning for our vulnerable and ever-more crowded coastlines and taking the lead in international discussions.
 - Promoting sustainable marine energy exploitation through the more efficient exploitation of marine resources and the promotion of renewable energies.
 - Ensuring that all forms of development take account of the environmental impact, by fostering more environmentally-friendly shipping, reducing polluting emissions and promoting ecosystem-based fisheries.
 - Realising the huge growth-potential of coastal and maritime sustainable tourism and ensuring the quality of life of Europeans living on the coasts, islands and outermost regions of Europe.
 - Promoting the EU's maritime identity and heritage.
- Some of the actions that are part of our Maritime Policy's Action Plan have already been launched.
 - Since October, for example, the Commission has already adopted Communications on ports policy, coastal and maritime tourism, labour rights for seafarers, actions to eliminate IUU fishing and destructive fishing practices and a revision of the state of play of maritime clusters and energy issues. It has also launched a consultation on the motorways of the sea and a common maritime space without barriers.

- Further actions are in the pipeline and will be developed during the course of 2008 and 2009.
- Yet clearly this is not something finite, and nor is it something that we will be able to do all alone. The Commission needs the involvement and support of its partners, particularly the European Parliament, to fully implement the Integrated Maritime Policy. It will need this support both now and in the future.
- Other partners, such as the Council, have also received our October package most positively. This was amply demonstrated in the Ministerial Conference which took place under the Portuguese Presidency in Lisbon a few days later and was again reflected in the meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council on the 19th of November. We look forward to receiving equally positive and resounding support from the European Council meeting next week.
- This will serve to confirm what we have been expecting all along - which is the firm agreement of the Member States to make this new and integrated approach to a Maritime Policy for the Union, work.
- Member States are realising just how important the contribution of an Integrated Maritime Policy, to address the challenges facing Europe's sustainable development and competitiveness, really is. These challenges include growth and employment, globalisation, climate change, environmental sustainability, energy sustainability and the security of our external borders.
- Member States are also showing their willingness to work hand-in-hand with the Commission to bring the Integrated Maritime Policy to light.
- For this and for your own unwavering support, I am truly grateful.

- I look forward to hearing your views and to discussing further the Integrated Maritime Policy for the Union.