

Integrated maritime policy

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European contact point	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE)	

// abstract:

The integrated maritime policy (IMP), led by the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), is an example of a policy instrument that focusses on the protection and the conservation of the coastal and marine environment as well as the sustainable use of the economic potential of the seas and oceans. It develops an integrated approach to all maritime policy matters, and tries to create interactions between all appropriate levels for instance by creating common tools and identifying synergies. It is believed that such an approach will lead to a higher yield with less environmental damage. Through the Action Plan, a clear idea of what is needed and what needs to be done is given. The most important principles in the IMP are those of subsidiarity and competitiveness, the ecosystem-based approach, and stakeholder participation. The IMP of the EU is aimed at the following goals:

- Creating optimal conditions for the sustainable use of the oceans and seas, enabling the growth of maritime sectors and coastal regions;
- Building a knowledge and innovation base for the maritime policy (effects of human activities, climate change, etc.);
- Delivering the highest quality of life in coastal regions and the outermost regions, with scientific developments going hand in hand with respect for the environment;
- Promoting Europe's leadership in international maritime affairs;
- Raising the visibility of maritime Europe and improving the image of maritime activities and the seafaring professions.

Three instruments are very important to the development of an IMP. These are (1) a European network for maritime surveillance to ensure a safe exploitation of the seas, and the security of the European maritime borders, (2) an integrated management of the coastal areas (land and sea) for the promotion of maritime spatial planning and (3) a comprehensive and accessible data and information source on the natural conditions and the human activities in the oceans in order to facilitate strategic decision making on the maritime policy.