



7th INSULEUR Forum (Gozo, November 2nd 2007)
The Future EU maritime policy and the European Islands:
Which integrated approach for
a sustainable development in the Islands?
Press Release

The Future EU maritime policy: European Islands in shady circles...

During its 7th Forum in Gozo (November 2nd 2007), the INSULEUR Network dealt with the last developments of the European works on the future EU maritime policy. EU Island Chambers have two feelings vis-à-vis the Blue Paper: Questioning and disappointment.

This year, INSULEUR Network organised its last Forum in Gozo (Malta), on November 2nd 2007. It tried to answer to the following question: “The Future EU maritime policy and the European Islands - Which integrated approach for a sustainable development in the Islands?”

In order to reach such a goal, this Forum had the pleasure to listen to:

- The European Commission (particularly through the presence of Commissioner Joe Borg) which:
 - o presented its strategy from the Green Paper to the Blue one;
 - o reminded it was a long process which had to be driven step by step;
- The practical experiences of Chambers when creating initiatives in order to develop economic growth in Islands. Such presentations were done in order to give the EU institutions concrete ideas for the implementation of the Blue paper;
- Several representatives from public authorities (EESC, French ESC, CPMR, National parliaments, Greek Representation to the EU, Members of Maltese national and local authorities) who gave their ideas for an efficient maritime policy and their comments on the Blue paper.

The debates which rose during the forum showed that the people concerned with the issue of maritime policy expected a lot (maybe too much?) from the Blue paper. As INSULEUR wrote it last year in its position paper on the Green Paper, the latter had to be the Green Paper on Islands. If it is true that the Blue paper propose actions regarding for instance innovation, fisheries, environment, it is above all source of questions for Island SMEs. Thus, it calls for efficient tools of governance (particularly through partnership, the consultation of the stakeholders, or data preparation & processing) and urges for taking Islands and Outermost regions into account. However, it is difficult to see how such good intentions could be implemented.

Therefore, the Blue paper must be considered as the foundations of an edifice which still needs to be built. INSULEUR will keep on taking part of the works. And the 7th Forum was a concretisation of its will.

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