



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

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**2014/2240(INI)**

2.6.2015

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on untapping the potential of research and innovation in the blue economy to  
create jobs and growth  
(2014/2240(INI))

Rapporteur: Laura Agea

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes the Commission communication which seeks to fully exploit the employment potential of European coasts, seas and oceans, and employment interaction between land and sea, through innovation – a key element in traditional and innovative sectors such as maritime transport and other shipping activities, shipbuilding, tourism, aquaculture, sustainable energy generation, marine biotechnology, environmental protection, port and leisure boat infrastructure and fisheries;
2. Points out that a better understanding of the seas and oceans, including the seabed and sea life, along with environmental impact assessments, will make it possible to exploit marine resources sustainably, improving the scientific foundations on which the EU's various maritime policies are based;
3. Stresses that small and medium-sized enterprises, start-up entrepreneurs and family businesses play a vital role as regards innovation and jobs in the blue economy; considers better access to credit for SMEs and improvement of existing business networks (clusters) to be necessary in order to create quality and sustainable jobs in the various sectors of blue economy;
4. Notes and fully supports the strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2018, which are currently being revisited in the context of a mid-term review;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to work together to collect, process and exchange data on the blue economy, including at local and regional level;
6. Stresses the close links between the blue economy and the green economy, including in economic and labour policy terms, especially with regard to innovative methods to clean up the seas and to profitably recycling the extrinsic, environmentally harmful and, in some cases, carcinogenic plastics found there;
7. Believes that the availability of more reliable data could foster public and private investment in the sector;
8. Stresses that blue growth should never be considered in isolation from the impact on the environment and people and the use of the resources in view of social, economic and environmental sustainability, which also includes the protection and restoration of ecosystems based on scientific evidence; stresses the economic opportunity to develop and promote in Europe innovative methods to address marine pollution, including the ever-more-alarming contamination as a result of plastic waste, plastiglomerates and disintegrating plastic microparticles;
9. Stresses the importance of sea and maritime research and of stronger cooperation on these

sectors among researchers, among Member States and among regions in order to overcome the existing gap between Member States and the geographical concentration in some areas and to boost the competitiveness of coastal areas and the creation of quality and sustainable local jobs;

10. Points out that it will only be possible to realise the growth and job-creation potential of the blue economy if adequate investment is available;
11. Taking into account the new potentialities to exploit sea resources offered by biotechnology, deep-sea exploration and alternative energy (wind, tide, sea current), stresses the importance of SMEs' involvement and the negative impact on long-term occupation when heavy industry takes on a leading role in these sectors;
12. Stresses the importance of improving the necessary skills for applying new technologies to the marine environment and of strengthening research and development coordination, demonstration and deployment in order to create sustainable jobs and contribute to the full achievement of the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy;
13. Stresses that a high risk of accidents is inherent to work at sea and calls on the Member States and the EU to ensure a high level of health and safety protection as regards equipment, the vessel and workers;
14. Stresses that support for and the development of a new, sustainable blue economy must be included in EU development policy, external policy and the policy of the Union for the Mediterranean, and that African countries bordering the Mediterranean, the East African island states in the Indian Ocean and the island states covered by ACP Economic Partnership Agreements must be seen as partners in efforts to establish a sustainable blue economy;
15. Takes the view that the blue economy comprises highly diverse sectors and its development requires highly skilled labour in all those sectors; calls on the Member States to promote the various sectors of the blue economy in their training programmes, taking account of formal and informal education, lifelong-learning systems and dual training;
16. Highlights the need to focus on environmental aspects and on improving the quality of the marine environment in order to safeguard a sustainable blue economy with the aim of boosting its growth and employment potential, specifically in emerging renewables sectors such as the offshore wind energy sector by reshaping the relevant ports and guaranteeing that for the specialised offshore shipping sector the deeply concerning skills gap in the offshore wind industry is addressed urgently; urges in this regard the Commission and the Member States to take measures to resolve this skills shortage; and stresses the importance of this also for ocean energy, such as tidal, wave, osmotic and ocean thermal energy and energy produced by ocean currents;
17. Takes the view that coastal, maritime and inland tourism make a great contribution to economic growth and to better and sustainable jobs, especially for the most vulnerable groups of society, as long as these activities take account of the principle of sustainable development and have no negative social or environmental impact; encourages the Member States to exchange best practices on tourism development policies and, with the

support of the Commission, to address solutions for growth and job creation in coastal regions;

18. Stresses the fact that while the EU remains a global leader in the blue economy, international competition in this sector is fierce and only a global level playing field can further secure sustainable growth and European job creation in this complex sector;
19. Points out that the Member States and regions have a key role to play in developing the blue economy and urges the Commission to support and encourage cooperation between these players, for example by means of Joint Programming Initiatives; stresses that joint coordination, notably at regional and local level, of all relevant economic activities connected to the blue economy is important in order to enable sustainable development of coastal areas;
20. Stresses the importance of developing tourism models that offer an alternative or complement to sunshine and beaches and help offset seasonality, such as ecotourism and cultural tourism;
21. Stresses the crucial role of European coastal regions in the development of a sustainable blue economy, and calls therefore for new ways to ensure regions' direct involvement and participation;
22. Stresses the importance of social dialogue and considers that all the social partners involved in the blue economy should be represented; highlights the importance of stakeholder consultations on the development of the blue economy in general, including with civil society as well as regional and local authorities;
23. Highlights the need to increase civil society's awareness of the sea's importance as an economic, cultural and social resource and the role of research and dialogue in reaching integrated sustainability between stakeholders and citizens;
24. Calls on the Commission, in close coordination with the Member States and regions, to gauge the financing needs of the blue economy (at sectorial, national, and European level) with a view to realising its growth and job-creating potential and taking particular account of start-up entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized enterprises and family businesses;
25. Considers that in order to maximise sustainable economic growth and increase the creation of quality and sustainable jobs based on blue technologies, joint development of ideas and the exchange of best practices between science and businesses should be encouraged in order to promote growth and job creation;
26. Feels that seas and coastlines are a valuable resource that should form one of the pillars of the EU's industrial renaissance policy; points out that steps should be taken towards revitalising blue industry while supporting the cohesiveness of the European economy and sustainable development, particularly in those regions where this potential has been marginalised as a result of the processes of globalisation;

27. Takes the view that the exchange of information and best practice could contribute to the sector's rapid and sustainable development;
28. Points out the complexity of activities, sectors and disciplines of socio-economic systems involved in the blue economy, and therefore considers it extremely important to increase the ability to adapt to changes, innovation and multidisciplinary and adapt the training of human capital.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	1.6.2015
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+:                51 -:                0 0:                0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Laura Agea, Guillaume Balas, Tiziana Beghin, Brando Benifei, Enrique Calvet Chambon, David Casa, Ole Christensen, Lampros Fountoulis, Arne Gericke, Agnes Jongerius, Jan Keller, Ádám Kósa, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Jean Lambert, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Patrick Le Hyaric, Jeroen Lenaers, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Javi López, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Anthea McIntyre, Joëlle Mélin, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Emilian Pavel, Georgi Pirinski, Terry Reintke, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Siôn Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Yana Toom, Ulrike Trebesius, Ulla Tørnæs, Marita Ulvskog, Renate Weber, Tatjana Ždanoka, Jana Žitňanská, Inês Cristina Zuber
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Heinz K. Becker, Lynn Boylan, Mercedes Bresso, Eva Kaili, Eduard Kukan, António Marinho e Pinto, Evelyn Regner, Michaela Šojdrová, Gabriele Zimmer
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Csaba Sógor