European Parliament
2014-2019

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2017/2055(INI)

31.5.2017

DRAFT REPORT

on International ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans in the context of the 2030 SDGs
(2017/2055(INI))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

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Rapporteur for the opinion (*):
....., Committee on Transport and Tourism

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on International ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans in the context of the 2030 SDGs
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The European Parliament,

– having regard to the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 10 November 2016 on 'International ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans' (JOIN(2016)0049),

– having regard to the Draft Council conclusions of 24 March 2017 on 'International ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans',

– having regard to the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 29 March 2017 on the Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – International ocean governance: an agenda for the future of our oceans (JOIN(2016)0049)[1],

– having regard to the document adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on 25 September 2015 entitled 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included therein,

– having regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 2015 Paris Agreement, which entered into force on 4 November 2016 and its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) aimed at reducing carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions,

– having regard to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which entered into force on 29 December 1993,

– having regard to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) of 3 March 1973,

– having regard to the ongoing preparatory process for the UN Ocean Conference to be held from 5-9 June 2017 in New York,

– having regard to its negotiation mandate on the waste package (proposals for amending Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives[2], European Parliament and Council Directive 94/62/EC of 20 December 1994 on packaging and packaging waste[3], Council Directive 1999/31/EC of 26 April 1999 on the landfill of waste[4], Directive 2000/53/EC

[1] REX/482 EESC-2016
[2] OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3.
[3] OJ L 365, 31.12.1994, p. 10.
[4] OJ L 182, 16.7.1999, p. 1.

of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 September 2000 on end-of-life vehicles[1], Directive 2006/66/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 September 2006 on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators and repealing Directive 91/157/EEC[2], and Directive 2012/19/EU of the European parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)[3]),

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2015/757 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015 on the monitoring, reporting and verification of carbon dioxide emissions from maritime transport, and amending Directive 2009/16/EC[4],

– having regard to its negotiation mandate on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/87/EC to enhance cost-effective emission reductions and low-carbon investments[5],

– having regard to its resolution of 16 March 2017 on an integrated European Union policy for the Arctic[6],

– having regard to its resolution of 1 December 2016 on liability, compensation and financial security for offshore oil and gas operations[7],

– having regard to the European Academies Science Advisory Council policy report 28 of January 2016 on 'Marine sustainability in an age of changing oceans and seas',

– having regard to Parliament's study (PE 569.964) of November 2015 on 'Emission Reduction Targets for International Aviation and Shipping',

– having regard to the European Environment Agency's (EEA) report on 'Marine protected areas in Europe's seas' (EEA 3/2015),

– having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the opinions of the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the Committee on Fisheries (A8-0000/2017),

A. whereas it is widely agreed that the environmental health of the oceans is under significant threat and at risk of being irreversibly damaged unless targeted and coordinated efforts are undertaken by the world community;

B. whereas current pressures on the marine environment include damage to habitats, invasive species, pollution and nutrient enrichment, as well as high exploitation rates of marine species and acidification induced by climate change;

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[1] OJ L 269, 21.10.2000, p.34.
[2] OJ L 266, 26.9.2006, p. 1.
[3] OJ L 197, 24.7.2012, p. 38.
[4] OJ L 123, 19.5.2015, p. 55.
[5] Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0035.
[6] Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0093.
[7] Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0478.

C. whereas the trans-boundary nature of the ocean means that activities and the pressures that they cause necessitate collaborative work between governments across marine regions to ensure the sustainability of shared resources; whereas the multiplicity and complexity of ocean governance measures therefore calls for a broad range of interdisciplinary expertise as well as regional and international cooperation;

D. whereas maritime transport has an impact on the global climate and on air quality, as a result both of CO_2 emissions and other non-CO_2 emissions, such as nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, methane, particulate matter and black carbon;

E. whereas, according to the scientific evidence presented in the 2014 International Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), the warming of the climate system is unequivocal, climate change is occurring and human activities have been the predominant cause of the warming observed since the middle of the 20th century, the widespread and substantial climate change impacts of which have already become evident in natural and human systems on all continents and across the oceans;

F. whereas the Paris Agreement aims at a 'global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible', in order to limit the global average temperature increase to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursues efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C, while the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) recently reported that global warming rose to a remarkable 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels in 2016;

G. whereas failing to meet the Paris Agreement's objective of an average temperature increase of well below 2ºC would have enormous environmental impacts and economic costs, including among other things, increasing the likelihood of reaching tipping points at which the temperature levels would begin to limit nature's ability to absorb carbon into the oceans;

Improving the international ocean governance framework

1. Recalls the essential role of oceans for supporting life on earth, sustainable development, employment and innovation; shares the growing concern about the need for better governance and protection of the oceans;

2. Welcomes the Joint Communication on International ocean governance, which highlights the EU's commitment to achieving the conservation and sustainable use of oceans as identified in SDG 14 of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; calls for the EU to assume a leading role as global actor to strengthen international ocean governance;

3. Notes that, in order to implement the actions listed in the Joint Communication successfully, the Commission ought to have set clear deadlines, put forward legislative proposals, where appropriate, and set up mechanisms to support coordination at EU level;

4. Recognises the key role of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in providing a basic legal framework by which to coordinate efforts and achieve coherence in addressing global ocean-related issues; urges coastal Member States to respect their

duty under UNCLOS to protect and preserve the marine environment;

5. Notes, furthermore, with regard to international law on air pollution that, under UNCLOS, Member States are not permitted to inspect ships, even in cases of solid evidence of infringement; calls, therefore, on the UN parties to enhance the legal framework of UNCLOS with the aim of addressing any existing governance gaps and of establishing robust enforcement mechanisms for international environmental law;

6. Stresses that improving transparency, access to information and the legitimacy of UN organisations, such as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is a matter of priority in addressing existing governance shortcomings;

7. Stresses that improving the ocean governance framework will entail strengthening regional and global efforts by promoting multilateral instruments which have already been agreed on as well as strategies and their improved implementation; encourages the Commission to foster greater international maritime cooperation, in particular in maritime science and technology, as suggested by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD);

8. Underlines the need for a specific and tangible action plan on the EU's engagement in the Arctic, in which the aim of preserving the Arctic's vulnerable ecosystem should be the starting point;

9. Reiterates its call from 2014for the Commission and the Member States to take all necessary measures to play an active role in facilitating the ban on the use and carriage of heavy fuel oil (HFO) as ship fuel in vessels navigating the Arctic seas on the basis of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and through port state control, along similar lines to the way the waters surrounding Antarctica have been regulated; invites the Commission to include the environmental and climate risks of the use of HFO in its position on International Ocean Governance; calls on the Commission, in the absence of adequate international measures, to put forward proposals on rules for vessels calling at EU ports prior to journeys through Arctic waters, with a view to prohibiting the use and carriage of HFO;

Reducing pressure on oceans and seas and creating the conditions for a sustainable blue economy

10. Emphasises that creating a sustainable maritime economy and reducing pressures on the marine environment require action on climate change, marine pollution and eutrophication, on the preservation, conservation and restoration of marine ecosystems and biodiversity, and on the sustainable use of marine resources;

11. Urges the Member States to make further efforts for the timely implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in order to achieve good environmental status for marine waters for 2020, with a particular commitment to avoiding harm to the coastal and marine environment from marine litter, as well as to removing harmful subsidies and strengthening the global fight against marine litter and plastic;

12. Welcomes the forthcoming strategy on plastic by the Commission as well as the other measures aimed at combating marine litter and expresses its deep concern about the

scale of the issue;

13. Recalls its position for an ambitious circular economy package with EU marine litter reduction objectives of 30 % and 50 % in 2025 and 2030 respectively and increased recycling targets for plastic packaging;

14. Urges the Commission to support international efforts to protect marine biodiversity, in particular within the ongoing negotiation of a new legally binding instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction;

15. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to support the CBD and CITES and stresses the need for a coordinated approach in implementing the decisions taken in the framework of these conventions for the protection of marine species and biodiversity;

16. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to provide funding opportunities for the establishment of marine protected areas and the exchange of best practices as a contribution to the achievement of the global target of 10 % of marine and coastal areas to be designated as Marine Protected Areas by 2020;

17. Calls on the Member States to step up their efforts to implement a holistic approach to the design, management and evaluation of Marine Protected Areas, in order to reach their full potential for protecting marine biodiversity; calls on the Member States to increase the number of designated Marine Protected Areas;

Addressing increasing shipping emissions from maritime transport

18. Notes that even the Third IMO Greenhouse Gas Study of 2014 states that, depending on future economic and energy developments, maritime CO_2 emissions are projected to increase by 50 % to 250 % in the period up to 2050, while Parliament's 2015 study entitled 'Emission Reduction Targets for International Aviation and Shipping' states that if an IMO action plan to combat climate change were further postponed, the share of maritime CO_2 emissions within global GHG emissions might rise substantially to 17 % for maritime transport by 2050;

19. Reiterates that, in accordance with the Paris Agreement, all sectors of the economy are required to contribute to the reduction of CO_2 emissions; urges the adoption of clear targets to reduce international maritime CO_2 emissions at global level through the IMO; notes, furthermore, that the EU should contribute in parallel to the reduction of CO_2 emissions from shipping by introducing a robust pricing mechanism as soon as possible;

20. Requests, in the light of the rapidly developing scientific understanding of the CO_2 and non-CO_2 impact of maritime transport on the global climate, that the IPCC carry out an assessment of the impacts of maritime transport, along similar lines to the IPCC special report 'Aviation and the Global Atmosphere' for the air transport sector;

Strengthening international ocean research and data

21. Stresses the importance of developing innovative services for public and private actors in order to obtain a good knowledge of the environmental status of marine waters;

welcomes, in this context, the full operability of the Copernicus Marine Environment Monitoring Service and the intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO);

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22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Oceans and seas account for 70% of the planet's surface, and seawater for 97% of its waters. Seas give us food, energy, mobility, medicine and leisure but they also regulate our climate, provide us with half of our oxygen and take up a considerable proportion of the carbon dioxide we emit. The oceans are in fact our strongest allies against climate change and were included in the Paris Agreement, with a special Report from IPCC dedicated to the oceans.

Oceans, along with coastal and marine resources, play an essential role in human well-being and social and economic development worldwide. They are particularly crucial for people living in coastal communities, and provide livelihoods and tourism benefits, as well as subsistence and income. In fact coastal and marine resources contribute an estimated $28 trillion to the global economy each year through ecosystem services. However, those resources are extremely vulnerable to environmental degradation, overfishing, climate change and pollution.

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identified conservation and sustainable use of oceans as one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 14), this decision demonstrates that in the international fora the crucial role of the sustainable use and preservation of marine and coastal ecosystems and their biological diversity has been recognised as essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda for a new global development framework.

The SDGs are strongly interlinked, oceans offer a potential for the economy, but also a potential to solve the increasingly urgent challenge of food security. With the world's population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050, the demand for food could rise by 60%. The socio-economical potential of the oceans will be maintained only if the marine ecosystems are preserved in terms of habitat protection and mitigation of the climate change impacts, in particular in terms of water acidification and warming.

On water acidification the pH of surface waters has been relatively stable for millions of years. Rapid increases in atmospheric CO2 concentration due to emissions from human activities are now threatening this stability, as the CO2 is subsequently partially absorbed in the ocean. The uptake of CO2 in the sea causes ocean acidification, as the pH of sea water declines, even though ocean surface waters will remain alkaline. The ocean acidification reduce the availability of carbonate that is essential for marine calcifying organisms as reef-building corals, mussels and plankton and also affects biological molecules and process with damage to the entire marine ecosystems.

The warming of the World Ocean accounts for approximately 93 % of the warming of the Earth during the last six decades and all available ocean temperature projections suggest that the global ocean will continue to warm. The oceans absorb 25% of the carbon emissions we produce and redistribute heat around the globe.

Shipping emissions is another issue that need a global solution in order to tackle the forecasted strong increase of emission from the maritime transports. To act effectively a better knowledge of the maritime transport impacts on climate change is needed.

Marine litter is another major threat to oceans. Marine litter is a global concern, affecting all the oceans of the world. Every year, millions and millions of tonnes of litter end up in the ocean worldwide, posing environmental, economic, health and aesthetic problems. Marine litter can cause serious economic damage: losses for coastal communities, tourism, shipping and fishing. Potential cost across EU for coastal and beach cleaning was assessed at almost €630 million per year, while the cost to the fishing industry could amount to almost €60 million, which would represent approximately 1% of total revenues of the EU fishing fleet (in 2010).

Taking into account its accumulation and dissemination, marine litter may be one of the fastest growing threats to the health of the world's oceans. In this regards, we need an ambitious circular economy package with EU marine litter reduction objectives of 30% and 50% in 2025 and 2030 and increased recycling targets for plastic packaging.

To tackle all these issue a better international governance is need, in order to strengthen regional and global efforts. Ocean partnerships with key ocean players as a means to achieve better international ocean governance; should be increased within an international vision.

Encourages the Commission to develop ocean partnerships with key ocean players as a means to achieve better international ocean governance. The sharing of data and coordinated action are possible if a clear ocean governance framework is set. In this vain the UNCLOS plays a fundamental role and the development of a legally binding instrument on the conversation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction under UNCLOS deserve a fully support.