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## TEXTS ADOPTED

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### **P9\_TA(2021)0369**

#### **A new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy**

##### **European Parliament resolution of 14 September 2021 on a new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy (2020/2276(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 174, 225 and 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 23 July 2020 entitled ‘A new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy – Atlantic action plan 2.0: An updated action plan for a sustainable, resilient and competitive blue economy in the European Union Atlantic area’ (COM(2020)0329),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives’ (COM(2020)0380),
- having regard to the agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) in Paris on 12 December 2015 (the Paris Agreement)<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 entitled ‘The European Green Deal’ (COM(2019)0640),
- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the first Atlantic action plan of 13 May 2013 (COM(2013)0279) and the mid-term review of 23 February 2018 thereon (SWD(2018)0049),
- having regard to the EU strategies of 10 June 2009 for the Baltic Sea region (COM(2009)0248), of 8 December 2010 for the Danube region (COM(2010)0715), of 28 July 2015 for the Alpine region (COM(2015)0366) and of 17 June 2014 for the Adriatic and Ionian region (COM(2014)0357), and its resolutions on those strategies<sup>3</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 282, 19.10.2016, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 270, 7.7.2021, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> European Parliament resolution of 17 February 2011 on the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (OJ C 188 E, 28.6.2012, p. 30); European Parliament

- having regard to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Birds Directive)<sup>2</sup> and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the Habitats Directive)<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2020 on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2018 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (COM(2018)0390),
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency<sup>8</sup>,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Committee of the Regions of 19 March 2021 on the Commission communication entitled ‘A new approach to the

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resolution of 13 September 2016 on an EU Strategy for the Alpine region (OJ C 204, 13.6.2018, p. 57); and European Parliament resolution of 28 October 2015 on an EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region (OJ C 355, 20.10.2017, p. 23).

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 75, 19.3.2015, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 270, 7.7.2021, p. 94.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 159.

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> OJ C 232, 16.6.2021, p. 28.

Atlantic maritime strategy – Atlantic action plan 2.0: An updated action plan for a sustainable, resilient and competitive blue economy in the European Union Atlantic area’,

- having regard to its resolution of 25 March 2021 on establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the report of the Commission’s Mission Board on Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters of 21 September 2020 entitled ‘Mission Starfish 2030: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030’,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 5 June 2019 on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2011 on the European Strategy for the Atlantic Region<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2012 on the EU Cohesion Policy Strategy for the Atlantic Area<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission report of 20 May 2014 concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies (COM(2014)0284),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 26 January 2011 entitled ‘Regional policy contributing to sustainable growth in Europe 2020’ (COM(2011)0017),
- having regard to Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 May 2021 entitled ‘A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU – Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future’ (COM(2021)0240),
- having regard to Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2021)0109.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 353 E, 3.12.2013, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 124, 25.4.2014, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 288, 6.11.2007, p. 27.

environment<sup>1</sup>,

- having regard to the study by its Directorate-General for Internal Policies (Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies) of 15 January 2015 entitled ‘New Role of Macro-Regions in European Territorial Cooperation’,
  - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the Committee on Fisheries,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development (A9-0243/2021),
- A. whereas the Atlantic area is severely affected by the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 and the negative effects of Brexit;
- B. whereas the Atlantic area is the largest sea basin in the European Union;
- C. whereas coastal and maritime tourism is a major source of employment for the Atlantic regions and has been hit particularly hard by the socioeconomic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- D. whereas the climate crisis and rising sea levels are causing severe damage to all the Atlantic seabords and islands, which constitute a fragile and unique land and maritime environment;
- E. whereas the EU Atlantic area encompasses Madeira, the Azores, the Canary Islands, French Guiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe and Saint Martin as outermost regions (ORs), and whereas the new Atlantic action plan should be targeted at all these regions while fostering close cooperation with Atlantic overseas countries and territories (OCTs) and Atlantic non-EU countries and their regions;
- F. whereas in 2015, the total GDP of the Atlantic area stood at EUR 2 175 billion, representing 15 % of the EU’s GDP<sup>2</sup>;
- G. whereas the Atlantic strategy should include tangible and intangible exchange flows with Atlantic OCTs and non-EU countries, taking the EU’s Atlantic regions, including the ORs, as its base;
- H. whereas the new EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the review of the Renewable Energy Directive<sup>3</sup> and the blue economy are key elements in the transition to a highly energy-efficient and fully renewable-based economy, including reinforced sustainability criteria;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 197, 21.7.2001, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Commission study of December 2017 entitled ‘Study feeding into the mid-term review of the implementation of the Atlantic Action Plan’.

<sup>3</sup> Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, p. 82).

- I. whereas oceans are playing a fundamental role in adaptation to climate change;
- J. whereas healthy oceans and the preservation and restoration of their ecosystems are essential for humankind as climate regulators, producers of oxygen supply in Earth's atmosphere, hosts of biodiversity, a resource for global food security and human health, and a resource for economic activities such as fisheries, transport, shipbuilding, trade, tourism, gastronomy, renewable energy, research and health products;
- K. whereas the Farm to Fork Strategy aims to build an equitable, healthy and environmentally friendly food system;
- L. whereas ports and transport as a whole play a major role in the promotion of sustainable development and the transition to a carbon-free and renewable-based economy;
- M. whereas the EU maritime sector should also contribute to tackling biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, and to the objectives of the new EU biodiversity strategy for 2030;
- N. whereas the revised Atlantic action plan 2.0 must unlock the potential of the blue economy in the Atlantic area while preserving marine ecosystems and contributing to efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change;
- O. whereas blue skills education and training, joint research projects and raising public awareness of the potential and fragility of the ocean as a natural environment will contribute to the success of the strategy;
- P. whereas the Atlantic action plan 2.0 contains no reference to the Atlantic ORs that enhance the maritime and Atlantic dimension of the European Union;

### ***Impact of the Atlantic strategy since 2013***

- 1. Highlights the work done by all local, regional, national and EU stakeholders, particularly the Atlantic strategy group;
- 2. Notes with concern the effects of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic on Atlantic maritime and coastal areas; observes that as a consequence, economic, social and territorial cohesion in these territories might be jeopardised, with a major risk of depopulation trends being accelerated;
- 3. Considers that the 2013 Atlantic action plan contributed to developing a more comprehensive picture of what is happening across the Atlantic, but that because of its broad scope, the contribution was limited in terms of influencing priorities and supporting the development of relevant projects;
- 4. Highlights the efforts to promote the Atlantic strategy's international dimension, in particular through the success of the Galway Statement on Atlantic Ocean Cooperation of 24 May 2013 and the Belém Statement on Atlantic Research and Innovation Cooperation of 14 July 2017; recalls that the international dimension of the 2013 Atlantic action plan and the support for its implementation help to understand the ongoing changes in the Atlantic Ocean, as well as their effects on different coastal communities;

5. Notes with regret that the general results were a far cry from the action plan's potential and deplores the failure to earmark a budget for the action plan and the complexity of its governance system;
6. Points out that the 1 200 new maritime projects and nearly EUR 6 billion of investments flagged by the Commission<sup>1</sup> do not fully result from the 2013 Atlantic action plan, but welcomes the fact that the Atlantic strategy attracted or inspired some of those investments and projects; regrets, furthermore, that only around 30 % of the flagged projects were transnational<sup>2</sup> and that the mid-term review does not provide a real overview of the projects carried out through the strategy; takes the view that the Atlantic regions have been insufficiently involved in the governance of the strategy;
7. Deplores the fact that, although included in the 2013 Atlantic strategy, the sustainable fisheries and aquaculture sectors were largely left out of the Commission's 2017 mid-term review assessment;

## ***THE NEW ACTION PLAN 2.0: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT***

### ***General remarks***

8. Welcomes the review of the action plan and recognises the progress made regarding its governance; regrets, however, the persistence of various shortcomings;
9. Welcomes the new action plan's more strictly defined priorities as compared to the 2013-2020 Atlantic action plan and calls for practical measures to be taken, directly resulting from the strategy; suggests that specific roadmaps or milestones are included for each goal in order to make the actions defined more specific and easier to evaluate;
10. Deplores the fact that the EU budget contains no appropriations for the Atlantic action plan; recommends that the existing programmes and funding opportunities under the 2021-2027 MFF, such as Interreg, the European Regional Development Fund, the Connecting Europe Facility and Horizon Europe, promote calls for projects to deal with the multidimensional challenges and opportunities of the Atlantic regions;
11. Stresses that greater synergies are needed between the different EU funds, strategies and programmes, particularly directly managed programmes and national and regional programmes, in order to support a sustainable, robust and competitive blue economy in the Atlantic regions; calls on the Commission to consider labelling projects that meet the various priorities and objectives of the new strategy, in order to make them easier to finance under the relevant EU programmes and funds; calls on the Member States and regions involved to mention the strategy in the cohesion policy programmes and funds relevant to these regions;
12. Believes that the strategy can encourage joint planning and the development of blue economy sectors in the Atlantic area, following the best practices of collaborative, inclusive and cross-sectoral maritime spatial planning and by putting environmental,

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, 'The Atlantic Strategy and the 2013-2020 Action Plan', accessed on 20 July 2021, available at: <https://atlanticstrategy.eu/en/atlantic-strategy-glance/atlantic-strategy>

<sup>2</sup> Commission study of December 2017 entitled 'Study feeding into the mid-term review of the implementation of the Atlantic Action Plan'.

biodiversity and climate concerns at its core, thus contributing to the achievement of the EU's climate and energy objectives and promoting renewable offshore power generation technologies, such as tidal, wave, solar and wind energy;

13. Stresses the importance of making EU funding programmes widely known to potential beneficiaries and calls on the Commission to issue a clear and simplified guide on all of these opportunities; furthermore invites the Commission to consider labelling projects to make the European dimension visible to the public;

#### ***Outermost regions and islands***

14. Deplores the fact that there is only a short reference in the new Atlantic strategy to the Member States' islands in the Atlantic, in particular the ORs, even though these areas are greatly dependent on the blue economy for their socioeconomic sustainability and are home to a significant proportion of the biodiversity in the EU;
15. Recalls that the ORs give a true Atlantic dimension to the EU and that their full integration into this strategy is fundamental to its success and should therefore be strengthened; recalls that their insularity, remoteness and small size should be taken in account, in accordance with Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, to promote real social, economic and territorial integration, but also to bring to the fore their unique potential and distinctive assets, such as their geostrategic position;
16. Stresses the importance of developing strategies to fight the constraints of Atlantic regions resulting from remoteness or low population density, in particular in the islands of the Member States and the ORs, by promoting more sustainable transport connections, eliminating energy dependence by embracing renewable energies, such as solar, tidal and wind energy, and developing coordinated information networks;

#### ***Industry and jobs***

17. Recommends that an industrial strategy be developed at Atlantic level, with a strong sustainable environmental and socioeconomic blue economy component, and suggests that the action plan should focus on the development of flagship industries, as well as on relevant sectoral policies specific to the Atlantic area or areas where additional efforts to strengthen sea-basin-level cooperation have the highest potential;
18. Calls for the strategy to focus squarely on the creation of qualitative employment; considers that the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights are not sufficiently safeguarded in the new Atlantic action plan and is therefore of the opinion that it is necessary to include a stronger social dimension in the strategy; calls for an ambitious social component to combat poverty and social exclusion and promote qualitative job creation and, in particular, training for and access to maritime professions for young people, in areas such as shipbuilding and ship repair, aquaculture and fisheries;

#### ***Sustainable fisheries***

19. Regrets the fact that the strategy fails to mention sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, even though these industries play a vital socioeconomic and environmental role along the Atlantic coastline and in the ORs; calls for this key sector of the blue economy to be included in the new strategy, in line with the Commission's communication of

17 May 2021 on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU; considers that references to these industries should always allude to the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach to maritime management;

20. Warns against the harmful effects of overfishing and stresses the need for Member States and regions of the Atlantic area to effectively cooperate against unreported illegal fishing;
21. Stresses the importance of cooperation between the Commission, Atlantic coastal states and agencies on protecting fish stocks, achieving maximum sustainable yields and ending overfishing;
22. Stresses that the new Atlantic action plan 2.0 should promote greater synergies with the Farm to Fork Strategy and the biodiversity strategy for 2030 in order to support an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, robust and competitive blue economy in the Atlantic area;
23. Notes that the UK's withdrawal from the EU might alter the way EU vessels conduct their activities in the Atlantic Ocean and long-standing dynamics in the region;

#### ***Sustainable tourism***

24. Stresses the need to develop high-quality, smart and sustainable tourism as this is a crucial sector of the blue economy, and expects Parliament and the Commission to launch pilot projects in this area; urges the Commission to ensure that the Atlantic action plan 2.0 is properly aligned with the coastal and maritime tourism strategy and calls for an immediate reassessment of the latter; calls, furthermore, on the Commission and the Member States to develop new forms of sustainable maritime and coastal tourism that enhance the value of these areas by diversifying the activities on offer, while at the same time preserving them by combating the harmful effects of mass tourism on coastlines, the environment and cultural heritage; highlights the importance of the circular economy in the tourism sector in developing more sustainable practices that benefit local development and local employment throughout the year; notes the significant potential of gastronomic tourism linked in particular to fisheries and aquaculture products;
25. Stresses the importance of REACT-EU, which could give the Atlantic regions a new start through sustainable coastal tourism, innovation and port infrastructure; recalls that it is necessary to create, adapt and modernise specific existing maritime infrastructure, such as navigation and recreational support facilities;

#### ***Pillar I - Ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy***

26. Highlights the importance of enhancing the role of Atlantic ports and the need for investments in smart infrastructure, as well as the importance of the development and sustainable management of ports, including green ports; underlines the fundamental and strategic role of ports as gateways to the EU, logistics platforms, hotspots for tourism, energy production resources, storage hubs and industrial hubs; notes the need to swiftly adopt measures to offer ports the possibility to protect themselves from the consequences of climate change, particularly sea level rises;
27. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and their regions to foster innovative



environmental and socioeconomic sustainable projects in the Atlantic maritime sectors, in and around ports, all along the Atlantic shoreline and in maritime territories, such as the installation of ‘green’ maritime loading infrastructure;

28. Calls on the Commission to include in the new Atlantic action plan more measures to promote connectivity between ports and airports, when applicable, by enhancing their sustainability, and the development of maritime hinterland areas via multimodal connections; regrets the persistent problems concerning the interoperability of rail transport in the Atlantic Corridor;
29. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to complete priority projects included in the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) for the Atlantic Corridor, especially in cross-border areas and in the context of the future TEN-T guidelines and the Connecting Europe Facility (2021-2027), and to promote and invest in the full development of the TEN-T motorways of the sea connecting islands to the mainland;
30. Calls on the Commission and the Atlantic regions to develop strategies to eliminate rail bottlenecks, to continue with the development of high-speed rail links and the parallel upgrading of conventional lines, providing cross-border continuity, to draw up plans for multimodal transfer to sustainable modes of transport, to support the development of the Atlantic rail motorway, to enhance rail-port connections and to link them with other major TEN-T corridors, in particular the Mediterranean, North Sea-Mediterranean and Rhine-Alps corridors, as well as the other lines on the Atlantic Corridor, taking into account the objectives of the European Green Deal and the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030; notes with satisfaction the planned realignment of the maritime corridors between mainland Europe and Ireland following Brexit, and in particular the integration of Ireland into the Atlantic Corridor;
31. Welcomes the work of national and regional stakeholders to maintain and improve the safety levels of infrastructure through the implementation of appropriate legislation, cooperation and the sharing of best practices;
32. Calls on the Commission to boost the decarbonisation of maritime transport as a way to promote investments improving sustainability; invites the Commission and the maritime transport industry to evaluate the benefit of establishing an EU partnership for maritime transport, to foster innovation within the sector, to contribute to decarbonisation, to create infrastructure for loading, storing and supplying alternative fuels in ports and cargo terminals, and to develop waste management plans for Atlantic ports;

### ***Pillar II - Blue skills of the future and ocean literacy***

33. Stresses the need to create networks between universities and learning centres in the field of research and training on blue topics, and notes with interest the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme via the new initiatives of European university alliances and Centres of Vocational Excellence; encourages the further development of the European Blue Schools; stresses that specific education and training on the blue economy, including through the European Social Fund Plus, would contribute to raising awareness of marine ecosystems and of the need to protect them by tackling the problem of marine litter;
34. Stresses the importance of combating early school leaving and of formal and non-

formal education for improving the skills of maritime populations and encourages efforts to coordinate moves by the various relevant sectors to promote inclusive and competitive blue growth;

35. Stresses the importance of launching pilot projects in the Atlantic region in the field of ocean governance and knowledge, in the ORs and elsewhere, with the involvement of universities, research centres and maritime colleges;
36. Welcomes the increased development of new marine biotechnology research because of its potential use for industrial and medical applications; recalls that innovation projects and initiatives can contribute to the development of research capacities, networking and the sharing of best practices;

### ***Pillar III - Marine renewable energy***

37. Welcomes initiatives to speed up the adaptation to climate change and to reach the goal of becoming a carbon-neutral continent by 2050, such as the All Atlantic Skills Alliance and the creation of incentives to promote the installation of offshore and inland renewable energy facilities; stresses the importance of cooperation among Atlantic coastal states on research and development in emerging renewable energies such as solar, wave, tidal and wind energy; regrets that offshore renewable energy remains underdeveloped in the Atlantic region;
38. Points out that a revamped blue economy in the Atlantic area could contribute to the clean energy transition by harnessing the growing potential of offshore renewable energies and the sustainable management of maritime space in line with the European Green Deal, which highlights the essential role of offshore renewables production for the transition to a climate-neutral economy;

### ***Pillar IV - Healthy ocean and resilient coasts***

39. Regrets that the Atlantic action plan 2.0 and its pillars make no mention of the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach to marine management as required by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive<sup>1</sup> and stresses that it should apply to all activities that are part of the Blue Economy;
40. Supports research on the oceans and calls on the Commission and the Atlantic regions, under Pillar IV of the action plan, to promote a major joint project to clean up the Atlantic Ocean and its seabed, to support oceanographic research and observation on the ocean floor, and to promote sustainable measures for pollution prevention; calls, in this context, for the development of actions to contribute to the protection and decarbonisation of maritime sources, such as the carbon produced by vessels;
41. Is of the opinion that the circular economy should be expanded through the collection of maritime litter and its reintroduction into the economy; urges the Commission to

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<sup>1</sup> In its Article 1, the directive states that the ecosystem approach has to be applied in a manner that ensures that ‘the collective pressure of such activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of good environmental status and that the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes is not compromised, while enabling the sustainable use of marine goods and services by present and future generations’.

support the construction of centres for the collection and treatment of plastics and other marine refuse, particularly in the Atlantic ORs, which are heavily affected by waste carried by marine currents; suggests that a centre to prevent and combat marine pollution be set up in one of the Atlantic ORs;

42. Calls on the Commission and the Member States and their regions to develop enhanced prevention and risk management capabilities to deal with accidents on land and at sea and natural disasters; calls on the Commission to work closely with the European Maritime Safety Agency to support Member States in mitigating shipping-related environmental risks and in improving the overall sustainability and safety of the maritime sector;
43. Welcomes the reference in the Atlantic action plan 2.0 to the mapping and preservation or the recreation of coastal wetlands as part of Goal 6 on achieving stronger coastal resilience; calls on the Commission to ensure that these areas have effective management plans;
44. Highlights the importance of dedicated European Regional Development Fund/Interreg programmes especially aimed at climate mitigation and adaptation, and at the assessment and prevention of hydrogeological risks in coastal areas and wetlands;
45. Calls on the Commission to draw up, in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization, ambitious initiatives and a road map for ship decarbonisation based on an in-depth impact assessment;
46. Calls on the Member States to designate large protected maritime areas, and emphasises the importance of protecting all marine species; underscores the fact that marine protected areas do not only protect marine ecosystems, but also play a role in climate mitigation and adaptation and contribute to healthy and resilient oceans; reiterates the call of the Commission, in its biodiversity strategy for 2030, for at least 30 % of sea area in the EU to be protected, including through fish stock recovery areas, as provided for in the common fisheries policy, and for at least 10 % of EU waters to be classed as strictly protected areas<sup>1</sup>;
47. Stresses the importance of aligning the Commission and Member States' efforts to improve ocean health and stewardship and promoting the sustainable management of its resources, as outlined in the Galway and Belém Statements;
48. Underscores the importance of the 'Mission Starfish 2030: Restore our Ocean and Waters' report for the Atlantic action plan and calls for support measures and coordination with Member States and their regions in implementing policies to achieve its five general objectives: knowledge, regeneration, zero pollution, decarbonisation and governance;

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<sup>1</sup> The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 sets the objectives to legally protect a minimum of 30 % of the EU's land areas and 30 % of its sea area and to integrate ecological corridors (which means an extra 4 % of land and 19 % of sea areas compared to today). Moreover, it requires 10 % of EU land and 10 % of EU seas to be strictly protected areas (today, only 3 % of land and less than 1 % of marine areas are under strict protection).

## ***Governance***

49. Welcomes the fact that the Atlantic regions are now more closely involved in the Atlantic strategy's governance, that national delegations are free to invite representatives of their regions to participate in the strategic committee for the Atlantic region work and that the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions has been asked to take on an advisory role; points out, in this connection, that coastal regions, towns, cities and municipalities could significantly contribute to the implementation of this action plan;
50. Calls for representatives of all the regions concerned to be included in national delegations and for Atlantic OCTs and Atlantic non-EU countries to be invited to participate in the strategy;
51. Draws attention to the success of the Alpine strategy's governance structure;
52. Proposes yearly at least or more frequent meetings between the Member States, the regions involved in the strategy, the Commission, Parliament and all stakeholders in order to promote better coordination and frequent monitoring of the measures put in place by each region; believes that more visibility should be given to the new governance structure and to future meetings;
53. Recommends that the parties to the Atlantic strategy and the members of the Interreg Atlantic Area Monitoring Committee establish common objectives and decision-making procedures to better implement solutions in order to address regional challenges in the fields of innovation, resource efficiency, environment and culture, supporting regional development and sustainable growth; stresses that the Interreg Atlantic area programme does not have the administrative and financial capacity to be the only source of funding for projects falling under the Atlantic strategy;
54. Calls on the Commission, in the context of the specific Atlantic strategy goals, to focus on the least-developed regions of the Atlantic area; considers it fundamental to increase the number of specific calls for projects in the Atlantic regions, including for small, medium and large-scale transatlantic projects, on the less developed socioeconomic priorities of the Atlantic strategy; recalls, in this context, the importance of fully implementing the partnership principle, with socioeconomic partners and other stakeholders being involved in the drawing up of the cohesion policy programmes in the Atlantic regions, also in order to ensure better planning and implementation of the projects on the ground;
55. Urges the Member States, in cooperation with their regional and local authorities, as well as other stakeholders, to step up their involvement and implement joint strategic projects; stresses the importance of the strategic sectors covered in this action plan, such as transport, energy, sustainable tourism, environmental protection and sustainable use of resources, research and education;
56. Takes the view that environmental non-governmental organisations whose activities are directly related to the sea should be more actively involved in the creation, promotion and implementation of new projects, in education and other sectors, such as the protection of the Atlantic's ecosystems and biodiversity;

57. Calls on the parties to the Atlantic strategy, with the support of the Commission, to develop a specific information platform for the exchange of experiences and best practices of relevance for the Atlantic action plan 2.0;
58. Urges the Commission to review the current strategy, given the serious shortcomings identified;

***Towards an Atlantic area macro region***

59. Recalls that the Council, in its conclusions of 5 June 2019 on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, remained open to the creation of new macro regions; calls on the European Council to mandate the Commission to establish an Atlantic macro region model that reinforces the inclusion of regional authorities and the role of the Atlantic ORs in the governance of the Atlantic strategy, drives ambitious projects for the Atlantic area, better coordinates the use of EU funding in the regions and works in an integrated way, focusing on the synergies between the maritime dimension and economic, social and territorial cohesion;
60. Calls on the Commission to conduct an in-depth analysis on the benefits to the Member States and their regions of implementing an Atlantic macro region, which would address the common challenges faced by these regions; calls on the Commission to take the specificities of ORs into consideration in the action plan and in its analysis of the creation of an Atlantic macro region and stresses the need to take due account of their specificities by developing in each basin – the Caribbean basin, the Amazon basin and the Macaronesia basin – dedicated strategies focusing on the ORs' particular challenges, thereby guaranteeing that no region is left behind;
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61. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States and the regional parliaments of France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain involved in the strategy, as well as to the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.