

6th European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) (Torremolinos, Spain: 19-20 May 1983) on "Prospects of development and of spatial planning in maritime regions"

Resolution No. 1 on Planning policies in maritime regions

The European ministers responsible for regional planning meeting in their sixth session,

1. Having considered the reports presented by the French, Italian and Dutch ministers;
2. Being aware of the importance of discussing at European level the various problems inherent in the development and protection of maritime regions of the countries meeting within the conference;
3. Emphasising that the European maritime regions are at the same time a sensitive natural heritage, an important centre for trade, a prime area for the siting of commercial and industrial activities, an area for applying energy, mining and harbour policies, a starting point for the industrialisation of the sea and a particularly attractive area for mass tourism;
4. Being aware that the different sectoral policies applied in these areas provoke conflicts which can only be resolved by a comprehensive regional development policy based on integrated planning and focusing on long-term objectives, since the protection, development and planning of maritime regions are strongly interdependent and cannot be considered in isolation;
5. Meeting in order to exchange information and pool experience with regard to national policies for maritime regions and considering it necessary, despite the many initiatives already taken by European and international institutions, to establish closer European co-operation over the protection and development of maritime regions;
6. Considering that the conclusions of the 4th European Ministerial Conference on the Environment, which is to be held in Greece in 1984 on the theme "Coastal areas, river banks and lake shores: their planning, development and management in keeping with the ecological balance", may make an indispensable contribution to the further definition of regional planning objectives for European maritime regions;

7. Considering the European Coastal Charter adopted on 8 October 1981 by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of the European Community and the Resolution adopted on this subject by the European Parliament on 18 June 1982 as an important contribution to the definition of a co-ordinated regional planning policy for maritime areas at European level;

8. Taking into account the principles set forth in Committee of Ministers Resolution (73) 29 on the protection of coastal areas and recalling the provisions of the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities;

9. Adopt the following resolution and recommend that governments, local and regional authorities, the appropriate Council of Europe bodies and the European institutions and organisations base their development and planning policies for maritime regions on the following principles:

1. General principles and objectives

The ministers consider that the general objectives of a regional/spatial planning policy should be as follows:

Balanced development of maritime regions

A policy aimed at the balanced development of maritime

regions is essential. Policies for transforming such regions must be monitored and limits fixed to the burdens which they can be expected to bear. A balance also needs to be struck in physical planning between heavily urbanised coastal regions and less densely populated peripheral regions, taking relations between these two types of region into account.

A new view of coastal areas

Henceforth regional planning policies should regard the coast not as a rigid dividing line, but as a region whose importance for mankind is determined by its proximity to the sea – and the sea not as a different and boundless world, but as a feature of our daily lives and one which, because of the resources available in the sea-bed and its subsoil, can be put to a greater variety of uses than in the past.

Land and sea were formerly seen as opposites, but nowadays the “coastal strip” has become a much wider and less static physical and, more particularly, orographic concept and one which offers ever greater scope for an evolving, relational theory of economic space.

Regional planning should further regard the continental shelf as an integral part of the land surface, that is, as a submerged area of dry land.

The protection of coastal areas

Pending the conclusions of the 4th European Ministerial Conference on the Environment in 1984, the following points may at this juncture be made:

- Measures to protect European coastal regions should be taken as a matter of the utmost urgency;
- Measures to protect European coastal regions can only be effective if accompanied by a planning and protection policy in the adjoining inland areas;
- Measures to protect European coastal regions must not be confined to ecological aspects, but must also strive to preserve the distinctive socio-cultural features of each coastal area;
- The demands of the protection of coastal regions and those of their economic and industrial development must be reconciled.

The principle of in-depth planning

Within the institutional framework of each country, great emphasis should be placed on the introduction of in-depth planning in two directions, namely seawards from the shore and landwards from the shore.

This principle should govern not only the use of marine resources and shipping routes but also harbour, urban, industrial and tourist policies onshore and the management of river systems and other extensive inland areas.

Integrated planning of "land–sea systems"

Planning strategies for maritime regions must give priority to the interconnection between land and sea activities as shaped by technological and economic progress. This requires effective integrated planning of land–sea systems and effective guidance of scientific research and its practical application.

This principle will have to be followed in future European and national spatial planning strategies and in planning measures at national or regional level. It can also be observed by each country in reforming political and administrative structures not particularly suited to the complex management of the new land–sea relations.

The need for a more comprehensive land–sea approach to the physical planning of coastal regions implies the need for effective administrative and legal instruments to implement these policies.

The co-ordination of offshore activities

The growth of offshore activities necessitates co-ordination of fishing, boating and commercial navigation, exploitation of energy resources, exploitation of raw materials, and military and other activities, and the taking into account of environmental factors.

Maritime planning: development of a careful, step-by-step approach

Planning of the open sea was hitherto almost non-existent. As the sea does not come exclusively under the (full) jurisdiction of the countries it adjoins or surrounds, the formulation of planning policies for non-territorial waters must be approached with a certain caution.

There are a number of differences between the situations at sea and on land:

- at sea, more allowance must be made for the vertical dimension;
- owing to the movement of water, several maritime functions and activities are not tied to a particular location;
- attention must be drawn to the legal and administrative limits of decisions applicable outside territorial waters.

Controlled urban development

The uncontrolled urbanisation of European coasts must be stopped as a matter of urgency, given the limited capacity of coastal areas.

It is necessary to concentrate and control major developments in certain zones and to restrict these developments in areas where conservation is an important priority. Control over the arbitrary spread of holiday homes and other housing is especially significant in this respect.

Within the most urbanised coastal regions, there are huge pressures on land for recreation, agriculture and nature conservation. Physical plans at regional level should allow for enough open space to enable these activities to function adequately. At the same time, regional plans should ensure that the open spaces set aside are not needlessly harmed by the excesses of activities typical of them, such as recreation, water supply, transport etc.

To this end, it would be desirable to designate an area along the coast in which no further building is permitted.

Various coastal activities associated with a high level of urbanisation (industrialisation, intensive recreation) can have a negative effect on other functions such as fishing, aquaculture, nature conservation, landscape protection and extensive recreation. Priority should be given to combating these negative effects at both national and international level.

Control of industrial activities

Industrial development in coastal areas calls for great caution, as its growth is already creating not only pollution of the atmosphere and water but also new communication routes. Industry should therefore be concentrated in selected development areas reserved exclusively for companies dependent on a coastal site. These rules should also govern regional policy strategies to promote employment in coastal regions.

Pollution control

Although marine pollution problems will be discussed at the 4th European Ministerial Conference on the Environment in 1984, it should nonetheless be stressed that planning and development policies for maritime regions need to take appropriate account of the need to combat pollution caused by solid and liquid urban waste, industry, power stations and the use of pesticides in agriculture.

Rational organisation of tourism

The development of recreation must be prevented from leading to irreversible deterioration of the precious natural environment of certain European coastal regions. Tourism should be controlled and, where necessary, limited in specific areas to prevent destruction of the environment and the population's natural surroundings and avert further ecological or aesthetic pressures on the coastline.

Free access to the coastline for all

Steps should be taken to halt the increasing private ownership of coasts and to ensure that everyone has free access to the coast.

2. Development of European co-operation

Having regard to the interdependence of the problems discussed and their effects, which reach beyond national frontiers, and to the fact that harmonisation and co-operation in this field are still insufficient, the ministers stress the need to intensify their collaboration and are of the opinion that CEMAT represents an appropriate framework especially for continuing exchanges of information and mutual consultation.

With regard to offshore activities

The ministers, having regard to the need to conserve natural resources and co-ordinate their exploitation, assert that:

- the co-ordination of maritime activities, which are constantly increasing, requires that international consultations and agreements be expanded and take into account the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea;
- In particular, activities at sea require fuller co-ordination in the fisheries sector, and, in the Mediterranean, binding agreements are needed between European countries and North African and Middle Eastern countries on fishing in territorial and non-territorial waters;
- The immense future potential for exploration of the seabed in order to extract hydrocarbons and minerals generally calls for enormous technical and financial resources and hence for special channels of international co-operation;
- The work done by IMCO on shipping routes and traffic separation zones should be continued in order to increase safety at sea and establish an integral system of safe sea lanes;
- since the legal and administrative framework for decision-making is limited and operations outside territorial waters are attend by uncertainty, the drawing up of maritime planning policies by way of international conventions should be treated with caution.

With regard to onshore activities

The ministers call for:

a. greater co-ordination between the European countries concerned in the preparation of development plans and programmes implemented in coastal regions at national, regional and local levels. For instance, development targets in coastal regions on the same seaboard should be jointly discussed before their final adoption in order to assess their possible consequences and interaction, to establish future transfrontier co-ordination of programmes and plans as well as specific objectives for the protection and development of coastal areas. Consideration should be given to the possibility of harmonising certain legal regulations applicable to programmes and plans for coastal regions and to the advantages this might have for the development of coastal areas;

b. a very detailed study of the function and role of European ports, as part of the preparatory work for a European regional planning strategy;

In view of the present competition between ports, the scope for co-operation between European ports should be studied in order to avoid certain costly

excesses and possible over-equipment. This work could eventually pave the way for preparation of a European ports plan, with as comprehensive an approach as possible to ports, particularly as regards their relationship with the hinterland.

In this context, an effort must be made:

- to give or restore to medium-sized ports their rightful place, since they play (or can play) an essential role in the development of certain peripheral maritime regions;
- to strike a better balance between the Mediterranean and Atlantic seabords in continental maritime transport, by means of local, integrated and specialised port complexes; to give more importance to inshore and intermodal shipping;

c. considering the imbalances which exist in the numbers of tourists visiting European coastal areas, a detailed study by CEMAT to identify the trend of major international tourist movements to the European coasts;

d. recalling the possibilities offered by the Council of Europe's Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation, the intensification of co-operation at regional and local level as a means of facilitating transfrontier co-ordination of specific objectives concerning the development and planning of coastal areas;

e. a comprehensive inventory of particular pressures on the environment in coastal regions be prepared in order to facilitate the formulation of appropriate planning objectives in the framework of a European regional planning strategy and concerted measures for the effective protection of coastal areas at international level.

With regard to the hinterland

a. The quality of coastal communications (not only roads, railways, inland waterways, airlines and pipelines, but also telephones, data processing networks etc.) plays a vital role in the development of these regions, and particularly in the potential function of seaports in relation to their hinterland, which often extends beyond frontiers.

The growth of tourism, the present-day "oceanisation" of European economies, the demands of balanced regional development in Europe, energy needs and other pressures require constant improvements in communications between coastal (and especially peripheral maritime) regions and other parts of Europe. Comprehensive physical planning in Europe presupposes a European network of trunk communications, establishing the main priorities and acting as a framework for a European regional planning strategy.

The CEMAT must therefore continue to work along these lines, taking full account of the studies so far carried out by the Council of Europe (particularly the Parliamentary Assembly and the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities Europe) and other European bodies;

b. Policies on river systems are very important for down-river coastal regions, and must take account of land–sea systems by controlling the amount of water used for many different domestic and industrial purposes.

Such policies, which lend themselves to international comparison and consultation, should cover the major river basins and river systems. Here, new policy guidelines should be drawn up, especially for the Mediterranean, to encourage economic development in large areas which lack links with the major river basins and direct access to the coast.