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Future challenges in European marine science and technology

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Ivan MELNIKOV and other members of the Assembly

Seventy-one per cent of the earth's surface is covered by the oceans and an additional seven per cent by rivers and lakes.

The oceans have a vital function for life on earth. Their exploration and exploitation assure humanity important minerals and hydrocarbons (gas and oil) as well as living resources such as fish, algae etc.

Developments in off-shore technology have given access to huge deposits of oil and gas under the sea floor and to new untapped mineral resources.

4. "Marine renewable energies", comprising the use of wind in off-shore sites and coastal regions as well as the use of waves, tides, and water currents to produce electricity, have considerable potential.

The production of fresh water for human consumption, for agriculture and for industry through desalination of sea water may in the future be of major importance for many regions in the world.

Fisheries and aquaculture, but also the exploitation of other living marine resources must be subject to sustainable management regimes if biodiversity is to be preserved and ecosystems are not to collapse.

The use of the oceans for transport purposes is of fundamental importance for world trade and has contributed to important economic developments in coastal as well as inland regions. New developments in this sector, including the renewal of port infrastructures will be of great importance for European competitiveness and for employment.

Sub-water archaeological treasures can be identified and recovered using new scientific and technological means.

Finally, coastal zone development and sea space utilisation pose new scientific and technological challenges for our society for the next millennium.

The Assembly considers that all the issues referred to above are in need of new scientific and technological initiatives in order to increase the knowledge-base for ocean management and exploitation and to increase the competitiveness of European enterprises working in the marine environment.

It welcomes the United Nations initiative to declare 1998 International Year of the Oceans and the choice of "*The Oceans, a heritage for the future*" as the central theme of the 1998 Lisbon International Exhibition . Expo' 98, to which the Assembly intends to contribute.

In this context the Assembly calls on member governments and in particular those of coastal states as well as the European Union

1. to give more emphasis to research and technical development (RTD) for off-shore production systems of the future including equipment recycling;
2. to increase RTD efforts for the use of marine renewable energies (wind, waves, tides, currents);



3. to promote the development and use of fisheries technologies compatible with the sustainable use of these resources;
4. to make sure that aquaculture RTD will prepare the industry for strict environmental and health standards as well as increased production targets;
5. to explore the production and use of living marine resources for different uses in industry and for human consumption;
6. to strengthen research in the field of marine biodiversity and biotechnology;
7. to study and develop technologies for the extraction of different mineral resources from the sea floor;
8. to step-up RTD efforts for the inexpensive production of desalinated water;
9. to assess and develop sustainable user systems for coastal resources - including new uses of sea space;
10. to promote RTD activities that will strengthen the competitiveness and technical excellence of the European ship building, off-shore constructions and related industries;
11. to give higher priority to the development of safe, environmentally friendly sea-transport systems, including by the use of new communications and space technologies;
12. to improve the design and functioning of port facilities;
13. in general, to strengthen research, development, education and training on marine issues;
14. to create a federalist European structure to promote cooperation among the many European centres of excellence and all other interested parties.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed:

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