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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Regional
Policy and Regional Planning

on the ~~European~~ Coastal Charter

Rapporteur: Mr D.A. HARRIS

PE 76.156/fin.

On 8 July 1981, Mr De Pasquale and others tabled, pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure, a motion for a resolution on the European Coastal Charter (Doc. 1-390/81).

On the same date, the European Parliament referred this resolution to the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning as the committee responsible and to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection for its opinion.

On 24 September 1981, the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning appointed Mr David A. HARRIS rapporteur.

At its meeting of 25 and 26 May 1982, the committee considered the draft report and adopted it unanimously.

The following took part in the vote: Mr De Pasquale, Chairman; Mrs Fullet, Vice-Chairman; Mr Harris, rapporteur; Mr Cronin, Mr Gendebien, Mr Giummarra, Mr Griffiths, Mr Travaglini and Mr von der Vring.

The opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection will be published separately.

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
A. MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION	5
B. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	8
 ANNEX	
Motion for a resolution by Mr De Pasquale and others on the European Coastal Charter (Doc. 1-390/81)	18

The Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the European Coastal Charter

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr DE PASQUALE, Mr FAURE, Mr GRIFFITHS, Mr HARRIS, Mr HUTTON, Mr JOSSELIN, Mr PÖTTERING and Mr TRAVAGLINI (Doc. 1-390/81),
 - having regard to its resolution of 19 June 1981 'on the problems of coastal erosion in the European Community'¹,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning (Doc. 1-302/82),
1. Recognizes that Europe's coastal areas are under intense and growing pressures which require urgent action with a view to their protection and integrated development; also notes that these pressures are particularly severe in the peripheral maritime regions of the Community;
 2. Welcomes the initiative taken by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions to draw up, in close liaison with the Commission, a European Coastal Charter, backed by a specific action programme;
 3. Notes that this document was the subject of a general and definitive vote by the Plenary Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions meeting in Crete from 6 to 8 October 1981;
 4. Endorses the strategy proposed by the Charter which attempts to reconcile the objectives of development and protection of coastal zones through an integrated planning policy;
 5. Endorses the ten objectives laid down in Chapter II of the Charter, namely:
 - (1) Developing a competitive and selective coastal economy
 - (2) Protecting and exploiting the originality of each coastal zone
 - (3) Organizing the coastal space
 - (4) Administering the coastal area
 - (5) Guarding against hazards
 - (6) Controlling tourism

¹ See OJ No C 172 of 13.7.1981, pp. 124 and 125

- (7) Disseminating information widely
- (8) Developing scientific research
- (9) Harmonizing European law
- (10) Developing trans-frontier cooperation;

- 6. Believes that the action programme is a sound basis for achieving the above objectives;
- 7. Believes that, although prime responsibility will lie with national, regional and local governments, European institutions have an important role to play, in spite of the constraint of budgetary limitations, in supporting the fifteen elements of the action programme in the fields of knowledge, planning and control;
- 8. Emphasizes, with this prospect in view, the following objectives which appear of particular importance:

I. AS REGARDS KNOWLEDGE

- (a) The need to encourage cooperation, at the European level, between the different research centres and, where necessary, to coordinate and promote research and to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise;
- (b) To draw up by stages a comparative survey of the European coast and, on that basis, give priority to coastal areas in the preparation of the ecological mapping of Europe, currently underway;
- (c) To encourage the preparation and distribution of manuals/guides for planners and users of the coast by drawing on the comparative experience of the various European countries;
- (d) To launch a European information campaign, possibly to coincide with the proclamation by the Council of Europe of a 'European coastal year'.

II. AS REGARDS PLANNING

- (a) To work out a 'Community programme for the integrated development of coastal regions' as one of the principal elements of a regional policy aimed at improving the balance of development between the various parts of Europe; the protection of the coasts and coastlines from the natural, physical agents of erosion will form a preliminary and essential part of the programme;
- (b) To ensure that the regional coastal planning projects and schemes can be used in the regional programmes for the development of maritime regions and in the application of Common Policies concerning these regions;

- (c) To make widespread use of the procedure for impact studies, where coastal installations are concerned;
- (d) To provide the necessary coordination and, where appropriate, finance for the pilot operations launched with reference to the objectives of the Charter, such as 'Operation Coastal Impact';
- (e) To ensure that the necessary coordination exists within the relevant departments of the European Community institutions to expedite the planning objectives.

III. AS REGARDS CONTROL

- (a) To draw up a comparative survey of European and national rules and regulations relating to coastal matters, at least on those essential points on which fulfilment of the objectives of the Charter depends;
 - (b) To improve navigational safety in European waters with the support of Community means and to set up a system for coordinating the means of control;
 - (c) To reduce systematically widespread and persistent land-based sources of pollution, with priority to land-locked seas and the most vulnerable areas;
 - (d) To make a comparison of land policies and of the corresponding implementing procedures in the various countries;
 - (e) To encourage public participation in coastal planning;
9. Calls upon the Commission, therefore, to provide in cooperation with the Member States, for the administrative and budgetary means necessary for the achievement of these various objectives;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and report of its committee to the Council and the Commission of the European Communities, the Parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of the European Community.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. Background to the Coastal Charter

1. Europe's coastal areas are under intense and growing pressures. Uncontrolled industrial, commercial and housing developments have turned many places of outstanding natural beauty into man-made eyesores. Jobs in traditional coastal industries are threatened. The sheer number of tourists, concentrated in the peak summer months, often destroy what people come to the coasts to enjoy; and, offshore, the combination of pollution and the wasteful exploitation of resources, both living and mineral can put at risk the delicate ecological balance of the sea and threaten the long-term livelihood of coastal communities. The habitats of whole species of migrating birds are threatened. On top of all this, coastal communities, particularly those in remote areas often have acute economic and social problems. If such areas are to be spared and, indeed, play their full part in the Community's development, then it is essential that the conflicting demands of environment and development be reconciled through integrated development planning.
2. The need to tackle this growing European problem at the international level prompted the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) to take the initiative, with the assistance of the Environment Directorate of the Commission, in drawing up a EUROPEAN COASTAL CHARTER together with a Coastal Action Programme aimed at tackling the disparate coastal problems on an integrated European basis. The CPMR adopted the Charter in Flensburg, (Schleswig-Holstein), on 24th September 1980, and, at its plenary session in Crete from 5th October to 10th October 1981, it adopted the Coastal Action Programme which is designed to run from 1982 to 1985.
3. The Crete conference was attended by 48 voting delegates. It was also attended by Mr. DE PASQUALE, Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning. In a message to the Conference, Mme. Simone Veil, President of the European Parliament, stressed the important role played by the CPMR, and welcomed the concept of a Coastal Charter. The development of the peripheral maritime regions, said the message, should be encouraged by improving transport systems, optimally exploiting natural resources and the latest technologies.

4. This is an opportune moment to focus attention on the Coastal Charter because European Regional Planning Ministers will be meeting in Madrid in 1982 to discuss the European Coast.

The Coast of Europe is a feature common to all the Member Countries except Luxembourg, and is particularly important for the newer Members. The coast transcends local, regional and national boundaries as do the major coastal environmental problems such as pollution. The coastline is a central feature of our European heritage. The margin between the land and the sea, it is a place of employment in industry and commerce. It is too, a major place of leisure and a place of great open spaces. Environment policy overlaps with other Community and national policies in regard to coastal areas more often than elsewhere.

5. Although this report deals with the provisions of the European Coastal Charter, some of the wider economic and social problems facing peripheral and maritime regions, particularly islands, needs further examination, especially in the light of the recent and proposed enlargement of the Community.

The disadvantaged nature of the peripheral maritime regions is clearly highlighted in the first Periodic Report on the Social and Economic Situation of the regions of the Community. 1)

The special concerns of the peripheral areas include high living costs (energy, transport, housing, food etc.) making the most of the local environment particularly the agricultural resources and the resources of the sea, both for fishing and aquaculture, the importance of encouraging endogenous resources and in particular, the development of a skilled workforce to balance other high costs; a feeling of remoteness from the European core and the need for involvement in European development decision-making; the development of the service sector and the small and medium-sized business - it is an irony that in the current tight money situation projects (particularly in peripheral areas) can be too small for the funds available. Here your rapporteur welcomes the Commission's decision to drop the ten-job requirement for regional aid - the tourist industry and its interaction with other industries; the effects of offshore oil and gas development, and the crisis in the oil refining and derivative industries which are often coastal based.

1) COM (80) 816 FINAL

II. The Coastal Charter

6. The following is a summary of the charter:-

(a) The PREAMBLE states that -

The coastline - "a rare and fragile" - asset plays an essential part in human life both by providing physical and mental recreation for populations subjected to increasing urban pressures, and as a means of creating employment for local populations.

European coastal zones are experiencing increasing problems through erosion, pollution, industrialisation, urbanisation, destruction of natural ecosystems, overfishing, underemployment and the exodus of young people.

Protection and development must be reconciled, particularly as the coastline constitutes "the major trump" in development of maritime regions through adapting traditional activities such as fishing and tourism as well as by launching new activities based on oceanological research such as aquaculture and the exploitation of the sea bed and energy from the sea. Only an integrated and determined planning policy can lead to a solution.

Isolated action by the European States is no longer sufficient.

The European Institutions must accept their responsibility before it is too late.

(b) The OBJECTIVES of the Coastal Charter are tenfold:

- developing a competitive and selective coastal economy
- protecting and exploiting the originality of each coastal zone
- organising the coastal space
- administering the coastal area
- guarding against hazards
- controlling tourism
- disseminating information widely

- developing scientific research

- harmonising European law

- developing trans-frontier cooperation

The objectives may be summarised as the finding of means through PLANNING at different levels (European, National, Regional, Local) to allow the reconciliation of the demands of DEVELOPMENT and the requirements of PROTECTION. Overall the objective is to encourage integrated development in the peripheral areas of the Community, and to prevent the errors which have blighted parts of the developed regions.

Among the many detailed proposals made are:

Improvement plans must be defined for each coastal zone. In general terms, all constructions in the coastal zone should be submitted for prior authorisation - depending on the importance of the project, this might give rise to prior impact study taking account of the measures foreseen in the coastal improvement plan for the zone in question.

Plans must be made to assure free access to the coast by the public.

Priority should be given to drawing up an inventory of coastal areas which are of European interest and which should be preserved.

The European Community and Member States should consult together in order to release jointly the financial means necessary to help regional and local organisations to administer the coastal area, and "in particular to allow the purchase, in the shortest space of time possible, of land to be reserved and of sites to be protected".

The European Institutions should impose more rigorous controls and safety standards governing shipping, pollution and dumping at sea.

So as to strengthen the planning and the administration of coastal regions in some countries, there is a need at European level to coordinate, and in some cases promote, research as well as to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise.

There should be a better spread of tourism, so that the pressure on congested areas is relieved while greater benefits are felt by underdeveloped holiday regions. European Institutions have a role to play in promoting a European policy for the staggering of holiday periods.

III. First Action Programme

7. The Charter goes on to put forward ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT. This covers the First Action Programme 1982-85 and proposals for Operation Coastal Impact to get the programme under way.

The suggested programme covers three broad areas :

KNOWLEDGE - This includes compiling a register of research centres working on various aspects of coastal research, establishing links between them, and, possibly, extending the network and using the centres as "training centres" for people involved in the planning or administration of coastal zones. Other aspects include ecological mapping of the European coastline and making a European assessment of the coastal situation, as well as mounting general information campaigns. One idea is that 1983 should be designated "Year of the European Coastline".

PLANNING - Here the aim is to promote a policy for the integrated development of European Coastal Zones. It is suggested that all financing projects in the zones submitted to the different European funds should be examined with regard to the coastal improvement plans recommended by the Charter. The CPMR would like to see a number of pilot operations launched based on the objectives of the Charter.

CONTROL - This covers comparative studies of European and national regulations applying to coastal areas and an assessment of the degree of enforcement, as well as a proposal for the setting up of a more effective European system to control shipping in European waters. Another proposal is that all international measures relating to dumping at sea and in rivers should be brought together in a European agreement which would be enforced by an international authority. Other proposals include a comparative study in land policies as they relate to coastal management, and the participation of the public in sensible planning policies.

IV. Action by the European Institutions

8. Your rapporteur warmly endorses the general aims of the Charter and many of the proposals of the Action Programme. Like the CPMR itself, he recognises that the prime concern for striking the right balance in safeguarding these areas and yet encouraging appropriate economic development must rest with national, regional and local government. But, he shares the view that the European Institutions can play a useful role in spite of the constraint of budgetary limitations. Preliminary work by the Commission has highlighted the value of a Community approach to get those involved "talking the same language". Furthermore, pilot studies have shown that individual regional structural plans can have conflicting objectives which it would be in the common interest to coordinate.
9. The Community does not yet have a European Environment Fund as such, although the Parliament's Environment Committee has pressed repeatedly for the creation of one. In the present circumstances, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Investment Bank, and the Community's research and training funds would be the main financial instruments.
10. Both the ERDF and EIB make some money available for tourist projects, but large scale finance would be required if land acquisition was involved. At present there is no provision for making such purchases on purely amenity or conservation grounds. Certainly, help towards land purchase of sites of real significance could have a big public impact - for example, at the time of writing this report, the National Trust, a non-profit making charity which has safeguarded a great deal of the British heritage for the public, is considering whether it can buy one of the most famous pieces of coastline in the United Kingdom, Land's End - but it would be misleading to suggest that the European Community could embark easily on a large scale acquisition programme.
11. However, much has been achieved and a great deal of work in furthering the aims of the Charter could be done without heavy expenditure programmes. The Commission obviously has a major role to play, both in carrying out some of its present functions, particularly over such matters as shipping safeguards and controls over dumping at sea, and in a better coordination of research.

12. The first phase of the Community's environment policy was characterised by concentration on the problems of pollution and nuisance deriving from past development. More recently, policy has developed in response to the general public's wish to see rising living standards accompanied by an improvement in the quality of life. In this context, in spite of the work done at national and international level, protected areas remain too few. It is particularly regrettable that more progress has not been made in agreeing cross-border protected coastal zones. However, progress can be expected from the implementation of ecological mapping. 1)
13. Your rapporteur welcomes the progress that has been made in the methodology of classifying Community territory on the basis of its environmental characteristics, so-called ecological mapping. In this respect, the coastline forms a particularly sensitive and poorly documented sector of the European environment. 2) Whilst noting that implementation of a mapping programme will be a long term project, he welcomes the Crete conference decision that the coastal regions could become a priority area of application for the Community's ecological mapping project, which, after five years' preparatory work, is to be submitted to the Council of Ministers in 1982. It was also announced in Crete that the coastal regions were to figure highly in the global strategy approach of the Community's Third Environment Action Programme.
14. Community action in the area of coastal regions already includes the drawing up of handbooks on the integrated development of coastal regions and the integration of environmental considerations on Environmental Impact Assessment, currently under discussion, and the gradual integration of an environment compatibility clause in integrated development programmes. 3)
15. Your rapporteur notes the potential of pilot projects for setting Community wide standards, especially in mountainous and coastal zones where integrated management aimed at reconciling conservation and development is often proving more difficult to apply than elsewhere. In particular, such projects can illustrate the job protecting and job creating possibilities of protecting the environment.

1) ENV/311/80 Protected Areas in the European Community

2) ENV/661/81 "Ecological Mapping" of the European Community towards a European Information System on the state of the environment.

3) COM (80) 313 fin.

16. In these ways, the Commission believes that the proposed coastal action programme of the peripheral maritime regions would thus complement the work of the Community.
17. The Charter rightly draws attention to the wide disparities between Member States in expertise over land management and there is, too, the question of the variance between laws and regulations, current and projected, and their practical implementation. One of the main roles to be played at European level is to persuade Member States and Regional and Local Authorities to adopt the best practices before it is too late.
18. On information, exchanges between academic and research institutions, and on increasing public awareness through any project such as the designation of "A Year of the European Coastline", your rapporteur believes it is important to work in conjunction with the Council of Europe. He doubts whether there is sufficient time to mount a major campaign in 1983, but endorses the suggestion of having a European Coastline Year. He also believes strongly that it is important to make use of the considerable facilities of existing institutions, particularly the network of research centres, rather than create new ones. This view is shared by the Parliament's Committee on Energy and Research in their opinion on the creation in Brittany of a centre for research into the action against pollution. 1) Here again, the Community may have a role in ascertaining and disseminating the experience available at Community level.
19. In conclusion, the conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions is to be congratulated in drawing up the Charter and in taking the lead in initiating the action programmes in which its own member authorities will take a major lead. The Commission report on the integrated management of the coastal areas of the European Community 2) identified the following areas for Community action on coastal planning: acquisition of information, imparting information, the planning process, regulation, coordination, financing and monitoring. These areas were elaborated in detail in the action programme associated with the Charter. Your rapporteur commends the following course

1) PE 74.099/fin.

2) ENV/465/78-EN Integrated management of the coastal areas of the European Community

of action to the European Parliament. Firstly, in recommending that the motion for a resolution in the name of Mr. de Pasquale should be adopted, he suggests that the Commission, in collaboration with the various Committees of the European Parliament should be instructed to carry out a study of the practical application of the action programme focusing, in particular, on the following immediate problems : measures dealing with conflicting uses of offshore areas and the coastal fringe, controlling urbanisation to ensure the protection of the natural environment and combatting pollution. Secondly, following the CPMR's initiative in the preparation of "operation coastal impact" calls on the Commission, with the appropriate local participation to prepare a coherent programme to promote and coordinate the actions of the many national and local authorities involved.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOC. 1-390/81)

tabled by Mr DE PASQUALE, chairman, Mr E. FAURE, vice-chairman, Mr GRIFFITHS, Mr HARRIS, Mr HUTTON, Mr JOSSELIN, Mr PÖTTERING and Mr TRAVAGLINI, members

of the Committee on Regional Policy and Regional Planning

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of procedure on the European Coastal Charter

The European Parliament,

- whereas the coastal regions of the European Community are affected by serious problems of a specific nature which require urgent action but are particularly difficult to solve because of their complexity,
- whereas the solution of these problems is an important determining factor in the economic development of peripheral maritime regions, which are placed high on the list of priority regions referred to in the First Periodic Report on the social and economic situation of the regions of the Community,¹
- whereas the coastal regions are also among the priority regions of the European Community action programme on the environment,²
- whereas the solution of the problems of the coastal regions requires greater effort and increased coordination on the part of all the bodies responsible at local, regional, national and European level,
- whereas the European Coastal Charter, adopted in Flensburg on 24 September 1980 by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of the European Community, is designed specifically to bring about the conditions necessary to achieve these goals,³
- whereas, in particular, the European Coastal Charter is accompanied by a programme of action prepared in close collaboration with the relevant departments of the Commission⁴ and is intended to promote specific action to enable the principles of the Charter to be applied in coastal regions as soon as possible,
- whereas, lastly, the European Parliament must encourage the overall efforts which are necessary to ensure the protection and development of the European coastline,

¹ COM(80) 816 final, 7.1.1981

² Bulletin of the European Communities - Supplement 6/76

³ Doc. Flensburg/R.III.1

⁴ Integrated planning of the coastal regions in the European Community. EUR 6.105 (document drawn up by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions as part of a study authorized by the environment department of the Commission..)

1. Takes note of the text of the European Coastal Charter drawn up by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions;
2. Calls on the Commission and Council of the European Communities and the governments of the Member States to use this text as a working basis for the preparation of the necessary coordinated action to promote the coastal regions of Europe; (in particular, programme for the protection of the coastline, drafting of regional development plans, promotion of research applied to maritime and coastal regions, development of transfrontier cooperation, etc.);
3. Instructs the Commission, in collaboration with the relevant committees of the European Parliament, to prepare a detailed study of the body of the Charter and of the programme of action annexed thereto, and to submit to it a report on the measures which could be taken by the Community to contribute to the success of the programme;
4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission of the European Communities and to the governments of the Member States.