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Council confirms deal on maritime spatial planning

The Permanent Representatives Committee¹ today approved a draft directive establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning, which is aimed at contributing to sustainable growth of maritime economies and the sustainable development of marine areas. It herewith endorsed a compromise reached between the Greek presidency and representatives of the European Parliament on 6 March.

Maritime spatial planning is a process by which the relevant member state authorities analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives.

The draft directive requires member states to establish maritime spatial plans that map existing human activities in member states' marine waters and identify their most effective future spatial development. In doing so, member states must take into account land-sea interactions, as well as environmental, economic, social and safety aspects. Member states bordering marine waters will also have to cooperate with the aim to ensure that maritime spatial plans are coherent and coordinated across the marine region concerned.

The EU has adopted ambitious policy initiatives relevant to the oceans, seas and coasts, to be implemented in the next 10 to 20 years. The draft directive is an essential part of the ambition to develop "Europe's Blue Economy".

Once revised by the lawyer-linguists, the draft directive will have to be formally approved by the European Parliament at plenary and by the Council. It will enter into force 20 days after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU, and member states will then have three years to transpose the directive into national law.

¹ The Permanent Representatives Committee is composed of the ambassadors of the 28 EU member states. Its role is to prepare decisions of the Council.

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