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Maritime economic development must be integrated and sustainable

Press release from EFA MEP Ernest Maragall (Catalonia)

Exploitation of the so-called 'blue economy' to help jobs and growth must be both integrated and sustainable according to a report today approved by MEPs.

MEPs were responding to a proposal from the European Commission which aims at exploiting Europe's seas and realising the oceans' economic potential.

In particular, the European Parliament urged a cautious approach to deep sea mining, setting clear limits on exploitation for the sake of growth. The report approved by MEPs highlights the limits of deep sea mining, aquaculture and energy exploitation, and calls for further research on the impact that human activities have on marine ecosystems.

Greens/EFA spokesperson on the blue economy, **Ernest Maragall MEP** said:

"This is a good outcome in that we insist that exploitation of the blue economy must be both integrated and sustainable. The approach adopted today highlights both the sustainability and precautionary principles and the need for an eco-system approach.

"In particular we were able to achieve positive compromises in key sectors, including energy where we call for a focus on renewable marine energies. On sustainable aquaculture we insist upon sustainability criteria in production standards and labelling whilst favouring a transition to organic aquaculture.

"Finally on the contentious issue of deep sea mining, which the European Commission has favoured in the past, we now call for prior risk and socio-economic and environmental impact assessments, plus the introduction of no-go areas.

"There is great potential for job creation from the so-called blue economy, but this is only viable long term if we take an integrated and environmentally sustainable approach."

The report was adopted by a large margin by MEPs in Strasbourg.

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Ernest Maragall

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