**Speech for the BSPC Rapporteur on Integrated Maritime Policy, Jochen Schulte, Member of the regional parliament of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, 27 August 2018**

Dear Colleagues, dear Jörgen

I am glad to present to you today together with my colleague Jörgen Pettersson some of the insights we gained in the field of maritime policy since our renewed appointment as BSPC Maritime Rapporteurs. For the long version please visit the BSPC website where our report is published.

Our account contains, following the structure of last year’s report, information about important conferences that have taken place, and about legislative developments at the EU level: We are focussing on blue growth, energy, infrastructure and environmental aspects with regard to maritime policy, and are informing about ongoing public consultations.

Since I am rapporteur especially for the maritime economy, let me make some points in this respect: In January, I presented the BSPC position at the first meeting of the **Maritime Cluster** “Maritime Safety and Security” in Rostock and discussed the emanating opportunities for the maritime economy. As I found, all issues of maritime security are bringing forward small and medium enterpises as well as bigger enterprises in the BSR – and vice versa – because they need innovation in technology and logistics.

In the field of Blue Growth the EU has in the meantime delivered on commitments made at the **“Our Ocean Conference”** in October 2017. The EU Commission has launched a new 14.5 million euro investment initiative to further promote sustainable blue growth across the EU. These resources are used for green projects to safeguard the marine ecosystems*.*

Funded under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, 8 million euros from this initiative are set aside to help SMEs, including start-ups, testing novel products and services in high-potential emerging blue economy sectors, including ocean renewable energy. In order to better tackle the growing challenge of marine litter – everyone has got “whirling” associations, I bet – further 2 million euros will target innovative technologies to prevent, monitor, remove and recycle marine litter from EU waters.

*(****Anmerkung: Gegebenenfalls:*** *In the matter of* ***fisheries****, let’s see now where we are and where we are headed: The latest* ***Annual Economic Report of 2017*** *is showing positive economic trends for the EU fishing fleet. Its overall economic performance improved again in 2015, and estimates for 2016 and 2017 point towards further profitability gains.*

*While still marginally profitable in 2009, the EU fleet registered record-high net profits of 798 million euros in 2015. The report is also demonstrating that economic performance stagnates where fleets depend on stocks which are still overfished or overexploited. More and more fleets that exploit stocks sustainably see clear improvements in their profitability and salaries. In 2015, the EU fleet's gross value added, i.e. the contribution of the fishing sector to the economy through wages and gross profit, amounted to 3.9 billion euros. This represents a 16 % increase compared to 2013. Average salaries in the EU fleet have also increased while average fuel consumption has decreased.* ***Fuel*** *use efficiency has improved, with fuel costs amounting to 15 % of the total revenue in 2015, compared to 24 % in 2008. This is largely because fleets tend to operate more efficiently. It is encouraging to see that the positive trend of the last years has resulted in higher salaries for fishermen, bigger profits for the fishing sector and more value added for the EU's fishing and coastal communities. This clearly shows that the joint commitment towards more sustainable fishing pays off. But more efforts are needed to allow also small-scale coastal fleets to fully benefit from this positive trend. Continued progress towards Maximum Sustainable Yield will therefore be a precondition for achieving economic viability.)*

*(****Ammerkung: gegebenenfalls*** *I’d like to convey some more perspectives now on the* ***new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2021-2027:*** *As in the current period, it will continue supporting the environmental, economic, social and employment objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy to ensure that fishing and aquaculture activities are sustainable in the long term and contribute to the availability of food supplies. It will focus on the conservation of the marine biological resources and on growth and jobs in coastal communities across the EU.*

*Its total budget in the new programming period consists of 6.14 billion euros.*

*As under the ongoing 2014-2020 period, the EMFF will support innovative investments from private stakeholders in the whole value chain of the fisheries sector and in aquaculture. It will also support projects that foster the growth of a sustainable blue economy and Member States' action in the maritime sector, such as fisheries control, the collection and processing of scientific data, and maritime security.*

*The EMFF will aim to achieve and maintain sustainable fishing based on Maximum Sustainable Yield and to minimise the negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem. That support will include innovation and investments in low-impact fishing practices and techniques and investments in on board fishing vessels in order to improve health, safety and working conditions, energy efficiency and the quality of catches.*

*In this context, it is worth to be mentioned, that there is an ongoing public consultation* [on the amendment to the state aid guidelines for fisheries](http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/mare/redirection.cfm?item_id=632597) which is still open until 27 September 2018.

The landing obligation is one of the main challenges of the Common Fisheries Policy. It has implied significant changes in fishing practices for the sector, sometimes with an important financial cost. The EMFF will therefore support innovation and investments that contribute to the implementation of the landing obligation, like investments in selective fishing gears, in the improvement of port infrastructures and in the marketing of ***unwanted catches***.

The EMFF will give small-scale coastal fishing improved preferential treatment compared to the 2014-2020 period through a higher intervention rate. In addition, certain types of support will be reserved for their vessels. Furthermore, member states will be asked to develop an action plan for small-scale coastal fishing setting out a strategy for the sustainable development of the sector.

Food security also relies on efficient and well-organised markets, which improve the transparency, stability, quality and diversity of the supply chain, as well as consumer information. To this end, the EMFF is supposed to support the marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, especially the promotion of new market outlets and the development and dissemination of market intelligence. Targeted support will also be available for the processing industry, under strict conditions justified by the good economic situation of that sector.

Public support is needed to foster private investment in new maritime markets, technologies and services. The blue economy relies on partnerships between local stakeholders that contribute to the vitality of coastal and inland communities and economies. The EMFF will provide tools to foster such partnerships through community-led local development. Their scope will be extended compared to the 2014-2020 period.

The EMFF will also focus on creating the enabling conditions for a sustainable blue economy by promoting an integrated governance and management of maritime policy, enhancing the transfer and uptake of research, innovation and technology, improving maritime skills, ocean literacy and sharing of socio-economic data, promoting a low-emission and climate resilient sustainable blue economy, and developing project pipelines and innovative financing instruments.

The Commission's proposal aims to simplify the delivery of the EMFF compared to the complex architecture of the current period, and gives greater flexibility to member states to use the EMFF in a way that best meets their needs. Measures or eligibility rules will no longer be pre-defined at EU level. Instead, national programmes will focus on the strategic priorities chosen by each member state.

However, as during the 2014-2020 period, the Commission's proposal does contain a list of operations that cannot be funded or are strictly conditional. There is, for example, a general ban of investments enhancing fishing capacity. And it will become more difficult to receive funding for investments and compensation for the fishing fleet.)

According to the annual report on the EU Blue Economy from June 2018 this sector has been growing steadily over the last decade. With a turnover 566 billion euros, the sector generates 174 billion euro of value added and creates jobs for nearly 3.5 million people. With investments in innovation and through responsible ocean management, integrating environmental, economic and social aspects, the sector could be doubled in a sustainable way by 2030, experts say.

In several EU member states, the blue economy has grown faster than the national economy in the last decade, softening the effects of the financial crisis.

Among the different sectors, that of the ‘living resources’ (i.e. fisheries, aquaculture and processing) has grown by 22 % between 2009-2016. Also the emerging sectors are booming: The biotechnology sector marks double-digit growth in member states and employment in the offshore wind industry has jumped from roughly 23.000 in 2009 to 160.000 in 2016, outnumbering employment of the EU fishing sector.

The Commission proposed to strengthen its support for the maritime economy compared to the ongoing period. The maritime fund will enable investment in new maritime markets, technologies and services such as ocean energy and marine biotechnology. Coastal communities will receive more and broader support to set up local partnerships and technology transfers in all blue economy sectors, including aquaculture and coastal tourism.

Dear colleagues, we all should continue our work in the sector of maritime economy – at this conference and at home. It has been and will be a core of our economies in the Baltic Sea Region. My colleague Jörgen Pettersson and I are willing to keep you informed about current developments.

Thank you for your attention!