

Planning Maritime Space: Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning European Directive (2014/89/Eu) in the Adriatic Ionian Region

La Planificación del Espacio Marítimo: Implementando las directrices Europeas (2014/89 /Eu) sobre Ordenamiento Espacial Marino en la Region Adriatico-Jonica

Planification de L'espace Maritime: Mise en Œuvre de la Directive Européenne (2014/89 / Ue) sur L'aménagement du Territoire Maritime dans la Région Adriatique-Ionienne

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Over the last decade, in response to the increasing demand for maritime spaces and resources (UNESCO 2012), a growing attention has been paid to Maritime Spatial Planning, identified as a viable tool for promoting a rational allocation of maritime uses and for balancing the demand for economic development of maritime activities with the need to preserve the integrity marine ecosystems (Ehler and Douvère 2009). Even if spatial planning is not a formal EU competence, the European legislator has established the need to develop a common approach to maritime spatial management across all Member States (COM(2007) 575; COM(2008)791 final). In particular, with the entering in force of the new Directive on MSP (2014/89/EU) to be ratified within 2016, all Member States will have to identify competent authorities and to develop trans-boundary maritime spatial management plans within 2021. The Directive on MSP is considered an inter-sectoral instrument of the European Integrated Maritime Policy (COM 575/2007) which would like to address two main issues:

- i) The economic development of the EU maritime spaces (Blue Growth maritime pillar COM 494/2012), and
- ii) The maintenance and improvement of the marine water conditions (Maritime Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/CE - environmental pillar).

As suggested by the EU Maritime Policy and the reference Directive, an MSP process to be effective must be:

- i) Adaptive: capable of learning from experience,
- ii) Ecosystem-Based: balanced ecological, economic and social objectives towards the maintenance of ecosystem services and through an holistic vision of maritime spaces,
- iii) Integrated: across sectors and among government levels,
- iv) Participatory: involving stakeholders actively,
- v) Strategic and future oriented: focused on the long-term, and
- vi) Placed-based: integrated management of all human activities within a spatially limited area.

A first test of MSP in the Mediterranean area was performed by Adriplan project. This project, supported by the European Commission DG Mare according to the EUSAIR (COM(2014)357final), set the first example of maritime spatial plan for the entire Adriatic-Ionian Macroregion (AIR) – East Mediterranean. The geopolitical and environmental features of the basin (3,000 km² with a coastline of 13000 km circa) made it a very interesting study area. Seven countries surround the Adriatic-Ionian sea space: Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia–Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece. Of these, 4 are part of the European Union (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia and Greece) while the remaining three are not subjected to the EU policies and restrictions. The project tested a trans-boundary MSP example for the AIR and for two focus areas starting from a “realistic scenario at 2020” and proceeded with the definition of an actions portfolio compatible with EU programs 2014-2020. The project would not be exhaustive of a complete MSP real process because of the short time constraints (18 months). Main goals of the project were:

- i) Identify a commonly agreed approach to cross-border MSP,
- ii) Define an effective methodology,
- iii) Construct and share useful tools,
- iv) Test tools and solutions on pilot areas, and
- v) Provide recommendations for the implementation of an MSP process.

The project methodology, constructed in accordance with the Unesco guidelines (Ehler and Douvère 2009), was organized in different phases. Firstly, available data and information about the study area environmental characteristics, maritime uses, socio-economic dynamics, planning regimes and future development strategies were collected. The information was acquired through a critical review of strategic policy and planning documents and thanks to the contribution of

scientific and institutional partners. Secondly, management and planning priorities were identified in terms of strategic objectives and planning objectives. For each category of uses (maritime transport and tourism, energy, fishery and aquaculture, environmental protection, sand extraction and military areas) high-level goals were defined, and successively declined, into specific management objectives. Thirdly, an analysis of the existing and future conditions of the AIR was performed with the help of two main tools:

- i) Analysis of the coexistence among uses: aimed at identifying areas characterized by a high intensity of uses both in terms of number of uses overlapping and characterization of different typologies of overlapping, as competition for space in time and compatibility level, and
- ii) Analysis of potential cumulative impacts: aimed at evaluating the distribution in space and intensity of impacts generated by the maritime activities on the identified environmental components. The analysis is one of the pillars on which the elaboration of the planning actions for the Adriatic Ionian Macro-Region was based. The analysis of environmental components sensitivity to pressures generated by each maritime activity was carried out through expert opinion.

Fourthly, relevant planning issues to be potentially addressed by planning strategies and measures were identified through a critical interpretation of the process results. In order to properly define MSP issues were considered:

- i) Conflicts and synergies among uses highlighted by the results of coexistence and compatibility tools' application,
- ii) Significant existing and potential interactions between maritime uses and relevant environmental components (cumulative impacts) and socio-economic interactions, and
- iii) Existing and potential regulatory, management and planning conflicts.

Finally, a phase of planning elaboration for the Adriatic-Ionian Region and the two Focus Areas was performed considering all the elements emerged in the previous phases and scale specific relevant issues. At the Macro-Regional level a strategic proposal was constructed. The elaboration of a strategy for the AIR considered primarily transboundary issues, which require the setting of a transboundary governance framework and aimed at identifying different types of management areas characterized by specific management objectives. For what concern the two Focus Areas, three relevant planning issues were identified for each focus area considering local conflicts and site-specific transboundary issues. For this reason the draft of the planning measures constructed for the two FAs was presented and discussed with the stakeholders involved during the project.

Some important considerations emerged from the Adriatic project:

- i) The introduction of MSP requires a strong commitments of regional and national government, especially in fragmented areas such as the Mediterranean Sea,
- ii) A strong interaction with local planning systems, accordingly a transboundary perspective, is fundamental,
- iii) To have homogeneous data is essential to build an effective transboundary analysis and interpretation phase,
- iv) Stakeholders' involvement, both sectoral and scientific, is difficult due to an insufficient understanding of the MSP aim and process and
- v) A competent and recognized authority for MSP is needed to define and implement effective planning proposals.

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