

Report - Draft
DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
Establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning

Introduction / Background

EU has recently published a proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council dealing with establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management. A presentation of the directive is attached as annex 1.

The main purpose of the proposed directive is to promote the sustainable growth of maritime and coastal activities and the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources by establishing a framework for the effective implementation of maritime spatial planning in EU waters and integrated coastal management in the coastal areas of Member States.

The increasing and uncoordinated use of coastal and maritime areas results in competition for maritime and coastal space and inefficient and unsustainable use of marine and coastal resources. Uncertainties and lack of predictability on appropriate access to the maritime space has created a suboptimal business climate for investors, with potential job losses.

Maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management

The proposal establishes a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management in the form of a systematic, coordinated, inclusive and trans-boundary approach to integrated maritime governance. It obliges Member States to carry out maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management in accordance with national and international law. The aim of the action is for Member States to establish a process or processes that cover the full cycle of problem identification, information collection, planning, decision-making, management, monitoring of implementation, and stakeholder participation.

The maritime spatial plans and integrated coastal management strategies will not set new sectorial policy targets. They have the purpose to reflect, integrate and link the objectives defined by national or regional sectorial policies, to identify steps to prevent or alleviate conflicts between different sectors and to contribute to the achievement of the Union's objectives in marine and coastal related sectorial policies. Most importantly, the proposal requires Member State action to aim for coherence of management across sea basins, through trans-boundary cooperation in the same marine region or sub-region and related coastal zone and appropriate data collection and exchange.

Implementing acts will ensure consistent implementation of the Directive throughout the EU and facilitate reporting from the Member States to the Commission and, where relevant, the exchange of data between Member States and with the Commission. Article 10 in the proposed directive especially focuses on data collection and exchange of information. Article 12 and 13 describes Cooperation with other Member States and third countries.

As seen from a HO perspective a MSDI could support such varied activities as coastal zone management planning and maritime spatial planning including the management of energy production at sea, fishing, marine environmental protection and nature conservation, planning charts, navigation, civil and military preparedness, tourism, and maritime spatial planning.

Conclusions

As coordinated maritime spatial planning also gains increased focus at the EU level, not least through the Integrated Maritime Strategy and the Marine Strategy Framework, the needs for better integration of maritime data are becoming increasingly evident. Towards this end, discussion has begun among HOs as to the degree to which the maritime-oriented elements of the INSPIRE Directive can be implemented at an accelerated rate.

As seen from a HO perspective, the MS now have a direct possibility to actively participate in the development of a well-functioning MSDI within the hydrographic domain and its surroundings with the possibility to benefit from a national and a regional approach.

The IHO MSDIWG is, in this perspective, seen as a vital WG. Together with RHC the MSDIWG can function as a discussion forum where practical solutions can be tested and pilot projects can be initiated.

The NSHC 31st Conference is invited to discuss the implication of the EU proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council dealing with establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management from a HO perspective and how MS can benefit from a regional approach to the proposal including a national and regional approach to MSDI.

Actions required from the NSHC 31st Conference:

- Members are invited to give a national status report on Maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management from a national approach
- The NSHC 31st Conference is invited to discuss the need for a common approach to Maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management and way ahead and to take proper actions