

BS RAC Workshop 19-20/2-09

Views on Maritime Spatial Planning

Executive Summary

The BS RAC members and invited speakers took part in a workshop on maritime spatial planning (MSP) in Tallinn on 19th-20th of February 2009. The aim of the workshop was to improve knowledge among BS RAC members on a variety of issues related to maritime spatial planning, to identify which aspects are relevant to the BS RAC and to help the ExCom decide on how the RAC should deal with MSP.

During the first part of the workshop, invited speakers gave presentations which addressed the issue of MSP in the context of fisheries. The speakers covered the following topics:

- International examples on good practices of marine spatial planning
- Maritime spatial planning as a key instrument for the Integrated EU Maritime Policy
- Results from a HELCOM workshop on broad-scale marine spatial planning
- Legal aspects of maritime spatial planning
- Examples of challenges of spatial planning in the Baltic:
 - Windmill parks
 - Marine protected areas (the BALANCE project)
 - Shipping
 - Fisheries management under Natura 2000
 - Construction of offshore pipelines
- Presentations by Member States (level of governance, procedure of decisions etc.)
 - Sweden
 - Poland

The second day of the workshop was devoted to plenary discussions on how the BSRAC can deal with MSP (but not to adopt any conclusions).

The following sums up the essence of the views presented during the final discussion at the workshop. The views do not form an official opinion by the represented participants. Presentations and background documents from the workshop can be found at www.bsrac.org

- Maritime spatial planning is already taking place on a broader scale. Increased uncertainty and increasing competition for marine space are making maritime spatial planning increasingly important.
- Maritime spatial planning provides both challenges and benefits. It puts increased focus on the sea as a valuable resource, gives stakeholders the chance to take part at the beginning of a process, and facilitates the involvement of multiple stakeholders. It can be used to anticipate and mitigate future problems, and not only ongoing situations. Challenges exist concerning the legal aspects and the different regimes at national and EU level, the implications of MSP for fisheries, and according to some, the risk of enhanced conflicts.
- Maritime spatial planning must be based on good governance, which means:

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- the application of best scientific practice,
 - legal instruments that guarantee a level playing field for all competitors,
 - a fair and transparent decision-making process with best stakeholder involvement.
- MSP is a new area for the BS RAC. The BS RAC needs to define its role in relation to MSP, and to identify the right arena where MSP should be pursued. With respect to how the BS RAC could best move forward on MSP, some suggestions were:
- to set up a coordination group to identify the needs of the BS RAC
 - to set up a spatial planning working group
 - to set up a smaller focus group
 - to study experience from other countries
 - to consider the work done on MSP by the North Sea RAC
 - to map areas important for fisheries
 - to define the target audience of the BS RAC with respect to who should be informed and influenced: at EU level, member states, the national public, or other groups
 - to define the main objectives and principles
 - to identify beneficial partners, such as ICES, the EU-Commission, HELCOM and VASAB, and to invite them to a collaboration process, in order to build strong alliances.
- Given the importance and complexity of the issue, and the strong implications of MSP for the members of the BS RAC, there was agreement to reflect further on the issue and to have an initial discussion on how to move forward with MSP at the next ExCom meeting on May 8, 2009. In particular, the issue of funding will have to be discussed, because resources are limited.