

Baltic-wide Maritime Spatial Planning

The work on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea region is being followed up and further advanced in an intensive two-day meeting in Helsinki, Finland. The MSP Working Group by Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) and Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea (VASAB) is expected to evaluate the use of the joint broad scale MSP principles, adopted to give guidance for more coherent MSP systems in the Baltic.

The HELCOM Ministers agreed in 2010 to test, apply and evaluate the use of these joint principles when developing national Maritime Spatial Planning initiatives, as well as when using them regionally. The Group, established nearly two years ago, works to advance ecosystem based MSP processes in the Baltic Sea, especially in transboundary context.

The meeting also discusses the practical application of the ecosystem approach in spatial planning at sea and spatial data requirements and experiences.

Another topic on the agenda is the on-going revision of the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. HELCOM and VASAB are leaders for SPATIAL, Horizontal Action on developing a common approach for cross-border co-operation within Maritime Spatial Planning. The Group functions as macro-regional forum for implementing this Horizontal Action.

The meeting will be chaired by the Group's co-chairs Ms Anita Mäkinen, from the Finnish Transport Safety Agency, and Mr Andrzej Cieslak from the Maritime Office in Gdynia, Poland.

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