I. CROATIA

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This document has not been adopted by the European Commission and should therefore not be relied upon as a statement of the European Commission. The purpose of this document is merely to provide a comprehensive overview based on available information without claiming to be exhaustive. Although stakeholder consultation has taken place to verify the collected information, it is possible that this document does not reflect the view of all stakeholders involved. This document has been updated until February 2011.

This country report provides a comprehensive overview and assessment of the current state-of-play with regard to Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in Croatia. After detailing Croatia’s country characteristics, its most important maritime activities are presented. Next, the country report discusses the legal aspects, key players, plans and projects related to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and MSP as well as the relevant international initiatives and platforms for cooperation. To conclude, the main findings related to Maritime Spatial Planning are summed up. The sources of information used and persons contacted are listed at the end. Please note that Croatia forms part of one of the four marine areas which were studied in further detail.

I.1. COUNTRY CHARACTERISTICS

The EU candidate country Croatia is located on the eastern side of the Adriatic Sea, bordering Slovenia in the north, Italy in the west and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro in the south. The country is divided into 20 counties and the capital city of Zagreb, of which seven are located along the Mediterranean seashore. Due to the high number of islands and coastal inlets, the Croatian coastline measures 6,278 km.

1 For the purpose of this study 20 country reports have been drawn up in total. Relevant available information on Monaco is included in the case study of the Western Mediterranean and information on the United Kingdom (Gibraltar) is included in the case study of the Alboran Sea.

2 Croatia consists of over one thousand islands; the largest Croatian islands are Cres and Krk which have a surface of 406 km² each; other islands with a surface over 100 km² are Brač, Hvar, Pag, Korčula, Dugi otok and Mljet.
Croatia has a territorial sea of 12 nm. With regard to the maritime border between Croatia and Slovenia, the countries have not yet reached an agreement on the exact delimitation of this sea area along the Bay of Piran. An Arbitral Tribunal has been set up to solve this matter. With regard to the maritime border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, a treaty on the maritime border of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s territorial sea was signed in 1999. The ratification of this treaty has not been completed yet.

In 2003, Croatia established an Ecological and Fishery Protection Zone (EFPZ) in order to mitigate the negative impacts on marine resources. However, in 2004 the Croatian Parliament decided that the implementation of the zone regime for the EU Member States would only begin after signing a fishery partnership agreement with the EU. Since no such agreement was signed, in 2006 the Croatian Parliament decided that the legal regime of the EFPZ with regard to the EU Member States was to commence as of 1 January 2008 at the latest. Subsequently, a new decision was adopted by which the EFPZ was provisionally not to apply to EU Member States “until a common agreement in the EU spirit was reached”. So far, the EFPZ only applies to non-EU Member States. A summary of Croatia’s country characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Country characteristics – Croatia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coastal regions (Counties)</th>
<th>Croatia</th>
<th>Istra, Primorje-Gorski kotar, Lika-Senj, Zadar, Sibenik-Knin, Split-Dalmatia and Dubrovnik-Neretva</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islands*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 244 islands, islets and reefs (3 259 km²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastline length*</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 278 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water depth*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ranges from 50 m to maximum of 1 233 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maritime zones</td>
<td></td>
<td>Breadth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial sea***</td>
<td></td>
<td>12 nm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological and Fishery Protection Zone (EFPZ)****</td>
<td>Area (km²)</td>
<td>31 710</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: Feedback Croatian government  
** Source: PAP/RAC  
*** Based on the national acts or decrees of the maritime zones; EarthTrends, Coastal and Marine Ecosystems – searchable database  
**** Declared on 3 October 2003 – in force since 3 October 2004 (does not apply to EU Member States)

Source: Policy Research Corporation

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3 Vidas D., 2008, The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the European Union and the Rule of Law, What is going on in the Adriatic?
I.2. MARITIME ACTIVITIES AND THE PROTECTION OF MARINE AREAS

In Croatia, the most important maritime activities are *maritime transport, marine and coastal tourism* and *fisheries*. At present, there are no concrete plans for the development of offshore wind farms4.

Since years, *maritime transport* has been an important economic sector in Croatia. Croatia has seven large ports – able to receive transoceanic vessels – and approximately 250 smaller ports and boat harbours. As several of the large ports are deep-water ports which can accommodate super-tankers, maritime traffic towards the ports of Croatia is expected to increase further. Croatia’s ports could provide a solution for today’s bottlenecks in oil export routes in Eurasia5.

In this respect, the pre-accession maritime transport strategy of the republic of Croatia mentions the following6:

− Modernisation of the port of Rijeka (currently Croatia’s largest port) in order to increase the cargo volume, particularly the cargos in transit and containerised and ro-ro cargos;
− Increase the volume of bulk and containerised cargos passing through the port of Ploce;
− Modernisation and reconstruction of the passenger terminal in the port of Dubrovnik;
− Building of the new passenger and ro-ro terminal in the port of Zadar;
− Building of supplementary seasonal (summer) berths in the port of Split;
− Encouraging the introduction of new cross-Adriatic shipping lines between the ports in the Adriatic Sea and the ports in the Ionian Sea.

As maritime traffic in the Northern Adriatic is expected to increase further, navigational safety is receiving more and more attention. Furthermore, there are several plans and projects to establish large Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals in the Northern Adriatic Sea basin, also along Croatian coasts7. A Croatian Vessel Traffic Monitoring Information System (VTMIS) is currently being implemented in order to avoid collision risks and to monitor the density of the international traffic.

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4 According to *4C Offshore*, an independent marine energy consultancy company, three wind farms are in the early planning phase in the territorial sea of Croatia but this was not confirmed by the Croatian Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, nor by the Directorate for Energy of the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship.


6 Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development, 2005, *Pre-accession maritime transport strategy of the Republic of Croatia*, Zagreb; in 2004, the total traffic of Croatian ports of national importance reached 7 million passengers and 17 million tonnes of cargo. The expected increase in traffic volumes therefore required additional facilities and equipment to be installed in the ports.

7 Relevant Croatian Ministries, meeting on February 2, 2010 in Zagreb.
Through a joint proposal of Croatia, Italy and Slovenia, the IMO established Traffic Separation Schemes in the Northern Adriatic to avoid collision risks.

**Figure 1: Maritime transport routes – Croatia**

Croatia’s long coastline combined with its numerous islands, bays, coves and cliffs and its good natural conditions provide a suitable environment for fishery activities. Fishery activities have always been an important economic activity in the region. Nevertheless, compared to the other parts of the Mediterranean, the Croatian part of the Adriatic is poor in fisheries resources. In 2008, nearly 49,000 tonnes of fish were caught.

In order to protect fishery resources, next to the establishment of the Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone, the Croatian legislation divided the Croatian territorial waters into seven fishing zones. These zones all have particular restrictions regarding the possible timeframe for and type of fishing activities. Fisheries are divided into two main categories: commercial and non-commercial. There are several sub-categories within the commercial category. The majority of the catches come from the pelagic fleet. The majority of vessels belong to small-scale multipurpose fleet.

Nowadays, although still at local level, more and more competition is experienced between sectors such as marine and coastal tourism and mariculture. Compared to fisheries, mariculture has only

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9 FAO, *Yearbook of fishery statistics*.
Recently been developed in Croatia\textsuperscript{11}. In 2008 12,000 tonnes of fish were produced through aquaculture\textsuperscript{12}. The Zadar county developed maps of suitable zones for mariculture, shell-fish farming and zones for demersal fish within the framework of the ‘study of use and protection of the sea and underwater area in the Zadar county’. This study mainly focused on Maritime Spatial Planning in terms of mariculture. The zones are specified in Figure 2, illustrating the potential competition between mariculture and marine and coastal tourism activities in the region.

**Figure 2: Zones suitable for fish farming, for shell-fish farming and demersal fish zones – Zadar county, Croatia**

![Zones suitable for fish farming Zones envisaged for shell-fishing farming Demersal fish zones](source)


Finally, the Croatian coastal area is also an attractive marine and coastal tourist destination. Especially recreational boating is highly popular along the many Croatian inlets and islands. In July and August, the monthly number of issued licences for coastal navigation amounts to, on average, between 16,000 and 18,000\textsuperscript{13}. A total of 11 million tourists arrived in Croatia in 2009. Tourist overnights amounted to 56 million\textsuperscript{14}. Regarding nautical tourism, Croatia expects an increase of the number of nautical ports and an increase of coastal moorings from 21,020 in 2007 to 33,655 in 2015. Nautical tourists are mostly attracted to areas under different categories of protection as they are characterised by a high natural value and their biodiversity. Particularly attractive are the national parks of Brijuni, Kornati, Krka and Mljet and the nature parks of Telascica and Lastovo islands, whereas the largest number of nautical tourists’ visits is realised in the national park of Kornati\textsuperscript{15}.

As to the protection of marine areas, the Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Mediterranean (MedPAN) indicates that six MPAs have been established along Croatia’s seashore with a total surface of 311 km\textsuperscript{2}. Marine environments in Croatia are mainly protected under two main

\textsuperscript{11} Relevant Croatian Ministries, meeting on February 2, 2010 in Zagreb.

\textsuperscript{12} FAO, Yearbook of fishery statistics

\textsuperscript{13} Ministry of Tourism - Croatian National Tourist Board, 2009, Tourism in figures 2008.

\textsuperscript{14} Ministry of Tourism, 2009, Tourist traffic in Croatia for the year 2009.

categories, namely National Parks and Special Marine Reserves\textsuperscript{16}. In addition, a number of various habitats are protected according to fishing regulations. They are not MPAs according to the Nature Protection Act. The MPAs are visualised in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Marine Protected Areas – Croatia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marine area surface (km(^2))</th>
<th>Legal status</th>
<th>International recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brijuni</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>National Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korcula</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>National Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lastovo</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>National Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limski Zaljev</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Special Marine Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malostonski Zaljev</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Special Marine Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mljet</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>National Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telascica</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Nature Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


I.3. \textbf{LEGAL ASPECTS AND KEY PLAYERS}

There is \textit{no specific Maritime Spatial Planning regulation in Croatia}, nor any spatial planning or coastal law which can also be applied to the sea. In Croatia, sectoral legislation is predominant. Important laws in this respect include the Maritime Code (1994 and 1996), the Shoreline and Marine Harbours Law (2003), the Law on Marine Fishery (2010), the Environmental Protection Law (2007) and the Law on the Protection of Nature (2005) which regulated the establishment of MPAs\textsuperscript{17}.

The 300 m marine belt, which is protected under the Act on Physical Planning and Construction and the Government Regulation on Development and Protection of the Protected Coastal Area, could be considered an exception. The backbone of the legislation on physical planning in Croatia is the Act on Physical Planning and Construction (2007). This act determines a protected coastal area consisting of all islands, a 1 000 m wide mainland and a 300 m wide marine belt measured from the coastline. This protected coastal area represents an area of special interest for Croatia. By the Regulation on Protected Coastal Area Development and Conservation (2004) special conditions were laid down for the planning, development and utilisation of the protected coastal area and for the purpose of its


conservation. All physical plans within the protected coastal area need to be approved by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction\(^\text{18}\).

Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning in Croatia are mainly a national affair. Moreover, even though the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction prepared the National Spatial Planning Strategy (1997) and the National Spatial Planning Programme (1999)\(^\text{19}\), monitors the implementation of physical planning and coordinates the licences of development permits, the regulatory system that governs the sea area is still characterised by a sectoral approach. In this respect, the following ministries should be taken into account\(^\text{20}\):

- Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure;
- Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship;
- Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development;
- Ministry of Tourism.

In Croatia, an Environmental Impact Statement is a compulsory part of project documentation for particular investments. This activity however, has never been incorporated into the spatial planning system.

### I.4. NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL PLANS, PROJECTS AND STUDIES RELATED TO ICZM AND MSP

The umbrella documents related to spatial planning in Croatia are the Spatial Planning Strategy of the State (1997) and the Spatial Planning Programme of the State (1999). Whereas the strategy defines the long-term objectives of physical development and planning, the programme defines specific measures and activities towards the implementation of the strategy. Both documents form the basis to develop physical plans either on national, county or municipal level\(^\text{21}\). Croatia has announced to develop an ICZM strategy in 2011.

Different sources of information indicate that despite Croatia’s long history of coastal spatial planning, dedicated ICZM strategies have not been developed so far\(^\text{22}\). Nevertheless, specific efforts are being made in this direction, predominantly emerging from sectoral needs. The planning authority

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\(^{19}\) The National Spatial Planning Strategy defines long-term objectives of the physical development and planning harmonised with the overall economic, social and cultural development; the Spatial Planning Programme defines measures and activities towards the implementation of the Spatial Planning Strategy.


\(^{22}\) Interviews with the different Croatian Ministries confirm that no ICZM strategies have been developed so far, but that ICZM principles have been integrated into spatial planning tools; however, no concrete examples have been provided.
of the Zadar county, for example, prepared a study to apply ICZM in order to identify suitable locations for mariculture. At present, the Zadar county is developing integrated sea use and management plans. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure aims to apply Maritime Spatial Planning principles (e.g. more coordination with sectoral ministries and cross-border cooperation) to maritime transport in Croatia. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development prepared the ICZM plan for mariculture in cooperation with other relevant ministries. This was a sectoral approach with three test sites.

In 2007, a number of issues with regard to the implementation of ICZM were identified in the context of the EU-funded project PlanCoast. These issues are also relevant to consider in the framework of Maritime Spatial Planning:

- The regulatory split: sectoral interests seem to be very strong; sectoral policy integration is not yet implemented;
- Limited trust in the institutions: the public does not have full confidence in resource management or results from instruments such as planning and environmental assessments;
- Limited integration between land and sea areas: there is limited understanding and consensus on the need for the integration of land and sea areas;
- Inadequate financing: decision makers do not have a clear understanding of ICZM resulting in a predominant focus on spatial planning to solve the coastal development problems;
- Limited sectoral integration: national spatial strategy and county spatial plans imply little sectoral integration (the essence of ICZM). According to feedback from the government, the different sectors should have adopted their respective strategies which would have contributed to coordination of sectors in this area;
- Limited vertical integration: a certain level of vertical integration is achieved on land; vertical integration on the seaside has not been achieved;
- Limited integration of environmental/biodiversity considerations in decision making;
- Limited technical capacity for ICZM: no educational or training systems for ICZM have been established;
- Limited public participation: public participation in ICZM and awareness raising programmes for ICZM are poorly developed.

23 Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, Directorate for Maritime Transport, Maritime Demesne and Ports, meeting on February 2, 2010 in Zagreb.
24 The EU-funded project PlanCoast is presented in Annex II of the final report.
I.5. INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES RELATED TO ICZM AND MSP

International initiatives (including EU-funded projects) related to ICZM and MSP in the Mediterranean Sea basin are presented in Annex II of the final report.

_Croatia_ is / was involved in:

- The _Trilateral Commission_ (for Protection of the Waters of the Adriatic Sea and Coastal Areas from Pollution) (Croatia, Italy, Slovenia and Montenegro);
- The _Adriatic-Ionian initiative_ (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Serbia, Montenegro and Slovenia);
- The _Adriatic Euroregion_ (26 members - Regional and local governments from Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece);
- MAP / UNEP / GEF Strategic Partnership (_MedPartnership_) for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem;
- GEF/UNDP/IMO _Globallast Project_ Building Partnership to assist developing Countries to Reduce the Transfer of Harmful Aquatic organisms in Ship’s Ballast Water (Globallast Partnerships);
- GTZ project ‘Integrated Coastal Zone Management’;
- The following EU-funded projects:
  - The _COASTANCE_ project (Croatia, Cyprus, France, Italy, Greece and Spain);
  - The _ECASA_ project (Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom);
  - The _IPA Adriatic Cross-Border Programme_ (within this programme, different projects will be set up involving different Adriatic countries, such as the project _Shape_ (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia and Montenegro));
  - The _MedPAN_ project (Algeria, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Malta, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey);
  - The _PEGASO_ project (Algeria, Belgium, Egypt, France, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Ukraine);
  - The _PlanCoast_ project (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovenia);
  - The _SECURSEA_ project (Croatia and Italy);
I.6. MAIN FINDINGS RELEVANT FOR MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING

The main findings with respect to the potential for the application of Maritime Spatial Planning in Croatia are:

Country characteristics and maritime activities:
- Croatia has a very long coastline with many inlets and islands;
- Croatia established an Ecological and Fishery Protection Zone (EFPZ), but this zone only applies to non-EU Member States;
- Competition between maritime activities in Croatia is mainly experienced at the national / local level (i.e. competition is mainly experienced around port cities; in addition, most competition is being experienced between marine and coastal tourism and fisheries (including mariculture);
- At cross-border / international level, Croatia mainly experiences competition between maritime traffic and the marine environment.

Current status of Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning:
- Croatia has an extensive spatial planning system, but an ICZM strategy has not yet been developed;
- There is no specific Maritime Spatial Planning regulation in Croatia, nor any spatial planning or coastal law which can also be applied to the sea;
- Interest in ICZM / MSP principles is emerging from specific sectors (e.g. mariculture and maritime transport).

International cooperation:
- Croatia is / was involved in several international projects / initiatives –primarily involving the Adriatic countries.
I.7. OVERVIEW OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED AND PERSONS CONTACTED

a/ Sources of information used:

− Croatian National Tourist Board, www.croatia.hr;
− Coastal zone planning, protection and management in the Primorje-Gorski Kotar county;
− FAO, Yearbook of fishery statistics;
− Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, 2006, Physical Planning System;
− Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development, 2005, Pre-accession maritime transport strategy of the Republic of Croatia;
− Ministry of Tourism - Croatian National Tourist Board, 2009, Tourism in figures 2008;
− Ministry of Tourism, 2009, Tourist traffic in Croatia for the year 2009;
− PAP/RAC, 2008, State of the Art of Coastal and Maritime Planning in the Adriatic Region, Synthesis report;
− Priority Actions Programme – the coastal management centre, www.pap-thecoastcentre.org;
− The Network of Managers of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean, www.medpan.org;
− Vidas, D., 2008, The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the European Union and the Rule of Law, What is going on in the Adriatic?;

b/ Persons contacted:

− Mr Antun Paunović, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, Institute for Physical Planning;
− Ms Goranka Radović, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction, Directorate for Physical Planning;
− Mr Ivan Benković, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, Directorate for Energy;
− Ms Katja Božić, Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, Directorate for Maritime Transport, Maritime Domain and Ports;
− Marko Prem, Director of the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Center;
Croatian authorities have provided feedback on a draft version of the country report.