

Mediterranean Sea Community of Common Interest

1. Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)

Overview

In general terms the issue was extensively debated in Palma at the GA1, with the outcome that *“all CCI members are invited to investigate current state of affairs within their national procedures and provide update at CCI meeting”*.

Unfortunately, no contribution has been received so far by the Mediterranean Members, which makes compulsory to provide the Assembly with a picture which is very general and deprived of any updates on the single States' initiatives on the ways they are going to apply Directive 2014/ 89/EU.

Some summary information is just related to Italy in para 2.

1.a. The issue

For easy of reference, Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) provide the framework for integrated management of human activities at sea and are in line with the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) goals, aiming to ensure that the collective pressure of human activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of good environmental status.

Actually, the high and rapidly increasing demand for maritime space for different purposes, such as installations for the production of energy from renewable sources, oil and gas exploration and exploitation, maritime shipping and fishing activities, ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, the extraction of raw materials, tourism, aquaculture installations and underwater cultural heritage, as well as the multiple pressures on coastal resources, require an integrated planning and management approach.

The objective is to avoid potential conflict and create synergies between different activities. The benefits of maritime spatial planning are:

- a) **Protect the environment** – through early identification of impact and opportunities for multiple use of space.
- b) **Encourage investment** – by instilling predictability, transparency and clearer rules. This will help boost the development of renewable energy sources and grids, establish Marine Protected Areas, and facilitate investment in oil and gas.
- c) **Reduce conflicts** between sectors and create synergies between different activities.
- d) **Increase cross-border cooperation** – between EU countries, on cables, pipelines, shipping lanes, wind installations, etc.
- e) **Increase coordination** – between administrations in each country, through the use of a single instrument to balance the development of a range of maritime activities. This will be simpler and cheaper.

2. MSP within the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean Basin is a fragile coastal and marine ecosystem, undergoing tremendous pressure due its nature and its use by the multi-cultural nations living along its inter-continental coasts, as well as the tourists originating from all over the world. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that it is judiciously preserved and used for the common benefit of all people. The (ICZM) Protocol of the **Barcelona Convention**, adopted in 2008, aims to ensure the Mediterranean management, through co-operation amongst the Contracting Parties.

2.a. Italian maritime activities and protection of marine areas

Human activities in Italy's coastal areas (e.g. tourism, fishing, mariculture and energy production) predominantly take place in the narrow coastal strip. These activities seem to compete with each other and with the protection needs of the marine environment.

The Italian **fishing fleet** consists of around 14 000 vessels mostly operating in the Mediterranean Sea basin: more specifically, the majority of these vessels operate in waters around the Italian peninsula. Moreover, **the mariculture sector** has been developing considerably since the 1970s. The current trend in aquaculture is to reduce plants on land or along the coast and develop deep-sea activities, like offshore cages to be used for sea farming.

The merchant fleet controlled by Italy (around 600 vessels) is the fourth biggest fleet in the EU in terms of vessels.

Figure 1 visualises the major shipping routes near Italy and the major Short Sea Shipping routes (SSS) ports.

Major shipping routes near Italy (including major SSS ports)

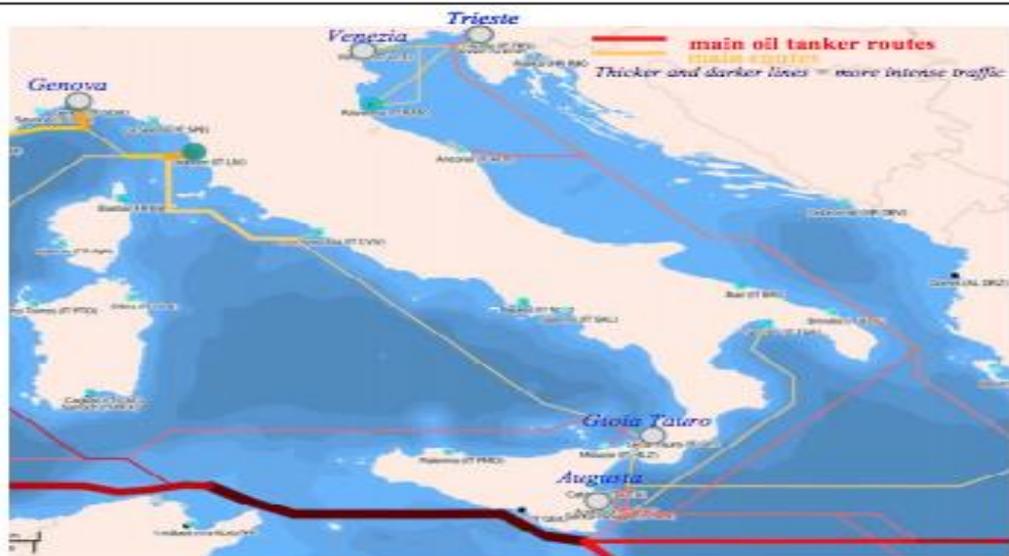


Figure 1

2.b. Wind farms

Currently, Italy has no active offshore **wind farms**. However, a considerable number of offshore wind farms is expected to be installed in medium terms.

Figure 2 visualises the future locations of the offshore wind farms in Italy.

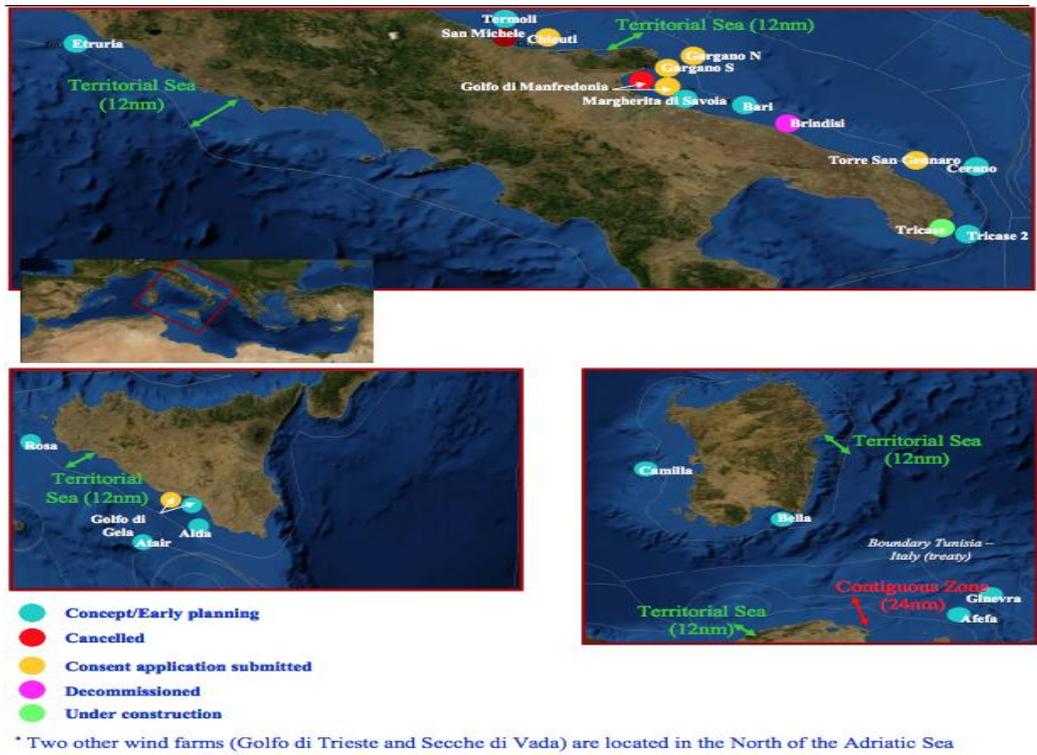


Figure 2

2.c. Marine Protected Areas

Italy has currently established a considerable number of MPAs under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment.

The areas are listed in **Figure 3** and the whole surface measures 4 470 km².

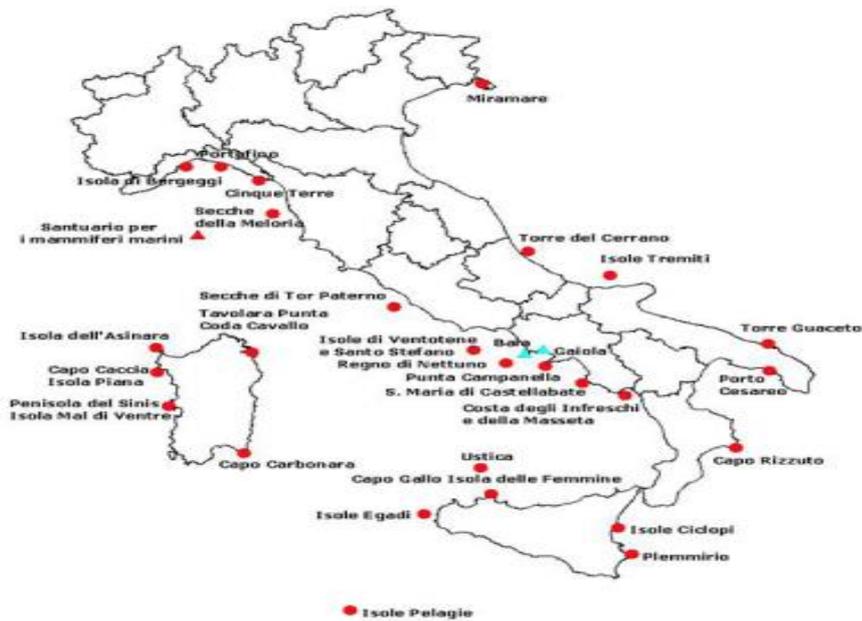


Figure 3

2.d. Boating in Marine Protected Areas

Numerous initiatives have been promoted aimed at changing the relationship between recreational boating and MPA. The objective wasn't that of questioning the need to protect the sea, but rather some of the criteria used and the uniformity of the regulations. The macroscopic fragmentation of the regulations is in fact such that the user must distinguish between national protected marine areas, those areas of the national parks that border on the sea, underwater parks, international parks, natural reserves such as Montecristo, regional protected marine areas, the blue 'oases' and so on. A variety of agencies, institutions and above all regulations, that are often contradictory and that make observance of the norms and rules very complicated.

The signing of the Protocol for sustainable recreational boating promoted by the Ministry for the Environment, UcinA and the main environmentalist associations has laid the foundations for an initial reform and homogenization of the rules. Some have already been launched and are fully operative, which mark a significant contribution so that recreational boaters can get to know and see together the Italian marine areas.

2.e. New "marriage" between mega-yachts and protected marine areas

The yacht will no longer be obliged to keep two miles away of Italian MPA, but, in compliance with all standards and undergo constant monitoring, will be able to enjoy the beauty of sailing those waters. Mega yacht will be provided of a special status that allows them to approach Italian coasts and avoid bans of mooring and navigation established for passenger ships, cruise ships and cargo. It's recognized the importance of balancing the need of protecting the natural environment especially in high value areas such as Sardinia

and Liguria, with the opportunity of attracting flows of top range yacht tourism, very important for the national blue economy.

2.f. Additional frames: the MOSE project

The waters of the Veneto region are intensively used, which leads to competition among the activities taking place and put huge pressure on the marine environment.

Specifically, the Venice lagoon is intensively trafficked and vulnerable.

In order to protect this environment, the **MOSE project** – a coastal defence system was initiated. Together with other complementary measures (e.g. coastal reinforcement, the raising of quaysides and paving and improvement of the lagoon environment), these barriers will protect the city of Venice from extreme events such as the floods and from morphological degradation.

Figure 5 illustrates the MOSE details.

MOSE project

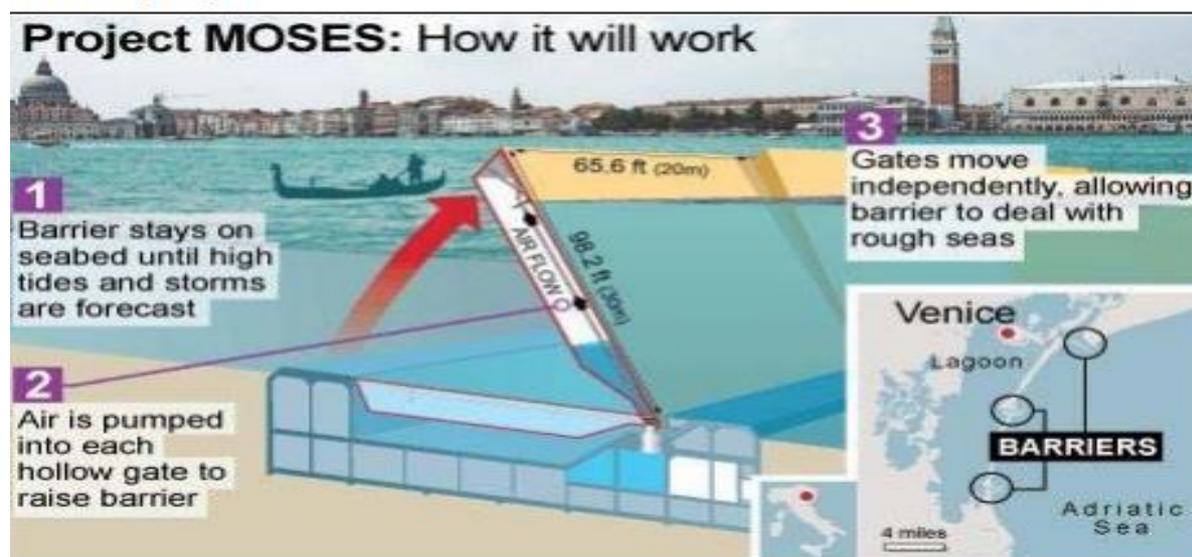


Figure 5

3. Adoption of the EU Directive 2014/ 89/EU

As for the requested updates on the current state of affairs within its national procedures, Italy is about to bring into force the appropriate provisions necessary to comply with the above mentioned instrument. Consultation is in place and all spatial plans will be in place by 2021, while Tourism and Recreation are considered separately to shipping.

On this issue, the contribution by other "Mare nostrum" Countries on their national state would be extremely appreciated in order to outline a more exhaustive Basin's situation in the framework of the Mediterranean CCI.

4. Protect the Mediterranean environment with safe boating

4.a. Over the last years, the Mediterranean Area has been facing emerging environmental challenges, whilst the environmental status of the Basin has remained a high priority on the international political agenda. The goal of de-polluting the Mediterranean Sea requires enhanced efforts, among which further and better implementation of policies supported by reliable, targeted and, above all, shared environmental initiatives.

4.b. Attractive landscapes and rich biodiversity, cultural heritage and traditional lifestyles, coupled with favourable environmental conditions such a mild climate, beaches and clear seawater have made the Mediterranean Basin one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. With a coastline of 46 000 km, the Mediterranean region is the world's leading tourist destination; in 2015, it accounted for around 295 million tourist arrivals or 32 % of international tourism in the world.



4.c. In this context, **boating in the Mediterranean** is predominantly concentrated along the coastal strip (40 % of which is built up), and peaks during the summer season. It is therefore highly spatially and seasonally variable. This concentration strongly amplifies the impacts on the environment due to increased waste production, increased discharges of untreated Waste- water and pressures on natural resources. The effect of all these pressures leads to environmental degradation.



Actually the number of boats at sea and at berth along the Mediterranean coast reaches a magnitude of approximately **2.0 million boats**. Although ensuring passenger safety should be a priority, safeguarding against environmental impacts while boating also is a concern and all, boaters and marine habitat users, are ethically obliged to put in place the possible efforts to protect our sea environment.

4.d. Recreational boaters can do their part to keep marine and inland waters pristine by adhering to some sound advice. Here are stressed essential tips **for eco-friendly actions**:

Keep trash on board.



Do not throw any litter overboard and pick up plastic bags floating in the water; separate organic materials and packaging to be recycled and designate a place for storing it out of the wind; In the harbor, throw waste in designated bins, comply with recycling instructions and encourage others to do the same; Only empty waste water tanks in designated places.

Use pump-out stations.



Pump out stations at marinas enable boaters to safely dispose of the contents from sanitary systems without waste ending up in the water, which could transfer biological materials, like bacteria and plants, from foreign waters. These materials can compromise the integrity of ecological systems

Reduce engine exhaust.



Whenever possible, row, paddle or use sails to decrease engine use and subsequent exhaust. When engines must be used, do not idle unnecessarily. Always steer clear of the aft of the boat, where fuel fumes and carbon monoxide can cause serious health implications. Following proper boating practices and etiquette can protect everyone on-board.

Use environmentally safe products: No biocides, phosphate detergents or toxic wax. Antifouling paints are applied to the underside of vessels to prevent or slow down the growth of barnacles and other organisms. These paints can harm other sea life and prove dangerous when scraped off and not discarded properly.

Keep boats in proper working order.



Poorly maintained boats may harm the environment. Inefficiently working engines can produce more exhaust and contaminate the air and water. Oil and other mechanical fluids can leak into the water and affect the marine environment. Proper maintenance helps keep boats safe and minimizes their impact on the environment.

Respect marine eco-systems.



Boaters who plan to enter the water and explore should tread delicately. Coastal areas often play home to birds and other wildlife. Use caution around habitats. Safe boating involves following the rules of the water and also keeping marine environments clean and protected:

Be a Good Steward of Our Waters!!!!

Final remarks:

In absence of alternative or additional inputs, I've tried to stress the potential lines of actions which could be taken by boaters in order to make a sound use of the Mediterranean waters, with the aim of exploiting its beauties and values, preserving at the same time the integrity of its ecosystem.

My hope is these notes could trigger a dynamic debate during the Friday 21 October meeting, where comments or observations will be extremely appreciated, should they be propaedeutic of substantial outcomes and potentially leading to an EBA position.

Looking forward to seeing you soon, receive my best regards.

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Sardinian eco-system