

# Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in Cyprus focusing on the European MSPs' good practices.

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## Abstract

The implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in each European country aims to bring together different public authorities and stakeholders to sustainably organize and map marine and coastal resources. The first step for the development of MSP was achieved successfully for Cyprus, through the implementation of the first cross-border project, "THAL-CHOR." Following the "THAL-CHOR" project, its successor project entitled "THAL-CHOR 2", is expected to evaluate the increased needs for the management and monitoring of the maritime space, the design and implementation of relevant policies focusing on the European MSPs' good practices and to set up the draft maritime spatial plan for the marine waters of Cyprus. The implementation was achieved by combining the principles of maritime spatial planning with issues of wider maritime governance, politics and economics while taking into account good practices by international organizations and individual states. For the study of MSP, all data from THAL-CHOR project were combined with the updated data resulting from the implementation of "THAL-CHOR 2". The project is based on the institutional framework to analyze and organize human activities at sea and coastal space to achieve the synthesis of social, economic, environmental, and cultural objectives of the Republic. The aim is to submit different MSP scenarios to be a policy proposal that will promote sustainable development in the marine area and the coastal zones, pursuing the harmonious coexistence of activities and uses, applying an approach based on principles of sustainability.

**Keywords:** THAL-CHOR 2, activities, coastal, Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), European Good Practices

## 1. Introduction

The European Commission adopted the Blue Book by proposing an Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) for the EU and a detailed Action Plan on 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2007. The European Council urged the implementation of the IMP and the Action Plan on 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2007 (*European*

*Commission, 2010*). The MSP, which is a key tool for IMP, supports public authorities and stakeholders coordinate their actions and optimize the use of marine space for the benefit of economic development and the marine environment. The aim is to facilitate the development of the MSP by the Member States and to encourage its implementation at national and European level (*Commission of the European Community, 2008*). MSP is a public process of analyzing and allocating human activities spatial and temporal distribution in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social targets set through a political process. Many of the MSP's characteristics are based on ecosystems while at the same time they include the aspects of an integrated, adaptive, strategic, and participatory design. MSP is a practical way to create and establish a more realistic use of maritime space and the interactions between activities. The aim is to balance the requirements for development in combination with the necessity to protect the environment by providing social and economic results with open and free access to users and in a planned way (*Ehler and Douvère, 2009; The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2014*).

Many publications generated instructions learned from the previous MSPs to create an overview of best practices to guide the more effective development of future MSPs (*Beck et al., 2009; Gold et al., 2011; Halpern et al., 2012*). Nevertheless, publications recognize that not all procedures will be implemented in all regions and that a "single implementation for all" approach could be ineffective. In fact, there is disagreement about what makes up an MSP on its own as opposed to coastal zone management, marine protected areas networks and government frameworks in support of the MSP (*Collie et al., 2013*).

In July 2014, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a legislation to create a common framework for the MSP in Europe. Although each EU country can plan its maritime activities, the setting of minimum common requirements will ensure coherence of planning at local, regional and national level with consider to common

seas(*The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2014*)

The purpose of this article is to summarize the current experiences conducted by MSP. The following chapters summarize the situation of MSPs of European countries as well as their importance in the implementation of MSP in Cyprus. This study was carried out within the framework of the new INTERREG V-A Greece-Cyprus 2014-2020 program with the acronym "THAL-CHOR 2" aimed at enriching and studying new MSP practices either implemented or pilot projects in other European countries.

## 2. Good MSP practices in EU countries

Significant progress was made by governments considering the integrated sea planning and management for the last 30 years. Recent reviews of summaries of MSP activities in global regions show that 75 of 150 countries with sea waters have launched some form of MSP initiative and the interest for MSP continues to grow (*Ehler, 2020; Frazão Santos et al., 2018*). Nowadays, according to the binding EU legislation, MSP is mandatory across the region of Europe, with 23 countries adopting their maritime spatial plans by March 2021.

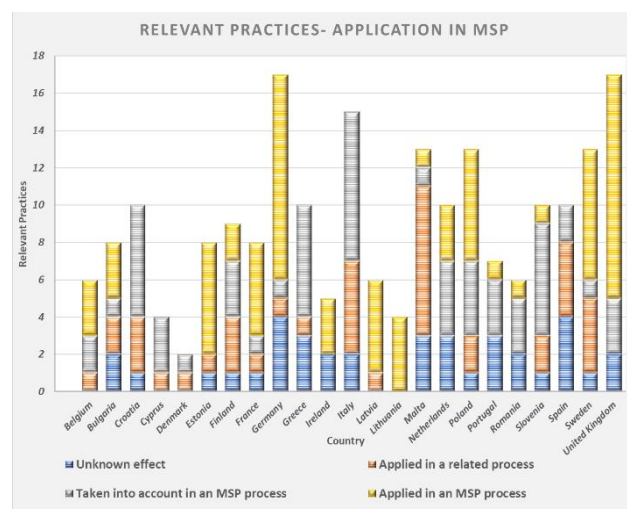
While the importance of "marine governance" or "management of marine ecosystems" is often mentioned by the maritime community, during the last ten - fifteen years these concepts were transformed into operational activities, some of which became known as "Maritime Spatial Planning" or MSPs. Many countries now have government-approved maritime spatial plans covering their exclusive economic zones or territorial sea, while some of them are in the second or third generation of development and implementation of their plans.

**Table 1.** Overview of MSP Authorities, Plans & Relevant projects and practices per Country.

Country	Authorities	MSP plan(s)	Number of (Relevant projects) – (Practices)
<i>Belgium</i>	National	National MSP adopted	(3) – (6)
<i>Bulgaria</i>	National	National MSP in preparation	(9) – (8)
<i>France</i>	National / 4 x Sub-national	Four (4) Sub-national MSP adopted.	(6) – (8)
<i>Germany</i>	National / 3 x Sub-national	Two (2) x National MSP adopted Three (4) Sub-national MSP adopted.	(8) – (17)
<i>Denmark</i>	National	National MSP in preparation	(4) – (2)
<i>Greece</i>	National	National MSP in preparation	(16) – (10)
<i>Estonia</i>	National	National MSP in preparation / Two (2) Sub-national MSP adopted.	(6) – (8)
<i>United Kingdom</i>	National	Considering the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union the content on the MSP platform is no longer being updated.	(0) – (17)
<i>Ireland</i>	National	National MSP in preparation	(3) – (5)
<i>Spain</i>	National /	National MSP in preparation	(7) – (10)

19x Sub-national			
<i>Italy</i>	National	National MSP in preparation	(13) – (15)
	National	National MSP in preparation	(12) – (10)
<i>Croatia</i>	7 x Sub-national	/ Seven (7) Sub-national MSP in preparation.	
<i>Cyprus</i>	National	National MSP in preparation	(5) – (4)
<i>Latvia</i>	National	National MSP adopted	(5) – (6)
<i>Lithuania</i>	National	National MSP adopted	(3) – (4)
<i>Malta</i>	National	National MSP in preparation	(10) – (13)
<i>Netherlands</i>	National	National MSP adopted	(7) – (10)
<i>Poland</i>	National	Five (5) National MSP in preparation	(3) – (13)
<i>Portugal</i>	National 2 x Sub-national	National MSP adopted	(7) – (7)
	National	National MSP in preparation	(7) – (6)
<i>Romania</i>		Four (4) Sub-national MSP adopted.	
<i>Slovenia</i>	National	National MSP in preparation	(10) – (10)
<i>Sweden</i>	National 80> Sub-national	Three (3) National MSP in preparation	(9) – (13)
	National	One (1) Sub-national MSP adopted and four (4) Sub-national MSP in preparation.	(10) – (9)
<i>Finland</i>	9 x Sub-national		

The above table (**Table 1**) indicates the status of the national Maritime Spatial Plans (in preparation or adopted), including national and sub-national authorities and the number of relevant projects and the good practices of each EU country. As per information provided on the above table, two hundred eleven (211) good practices were implemented for MSP so far in the twenty-three (23) European countries. It is worth noted that twenty-two (22) out of these good practices were implemented in cooperation with two (2) or more EU countries, resulting in one hundred seventy-nine (179) unique good practices. The information was collected from the MSP platform (*European Commission, 2021*), remarking the role used in implementing each country's MSP. The chart below presents more details about the good practices followed by each country. The following figure (**Figure 1**) summarizes all the good practices used in the marine spatial plans of each EU country.



**Figure 1:** Application in MSP of relevant practices per country

The practices were divided into four categories. The practices used in the MSP processes are shown in yellow color while the processes applied in related processes or were taken into account in an MSP process are shown in orange and grey color, respectively.

The following pie chart (Figure 2) indicates the type of good practices carried out by the twenty-three (23) European countries. Considering the information taken from the MSP platform, there are eight types of good practices. These types are divided as follows: Handbook; Methodology; Tools; Guidance; Study; Pilot plan; Plan; Other. The pie chart below shows that the largest percentage is related to Studies, Pilot plans and Tools. Plans used in MPSs sum up to twenty-two (22) and concern 10% of the practices for thirteen (13) European countries, while the smallest percentage is the use of Handbooks with 11 good practices (5%).

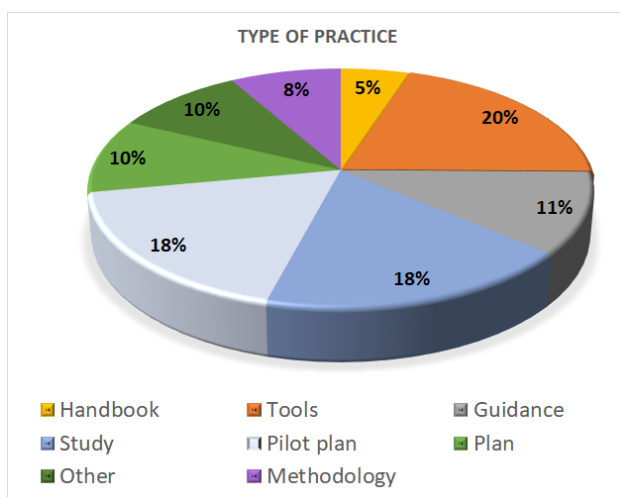


Figure 2: Type of relevant practices of European countries

The different uses in the coastal zone in each EU country differ. The uses and activities of the above good practices and projects from MSP platform were recorded for each EU country and are presented in Figure 3. This figure presents the number of countries that used the mentioned activities in their MSPs. It can be seen that the activities that are mostly used in EU's MSPs are the Fisheries, Tourism and Nature.

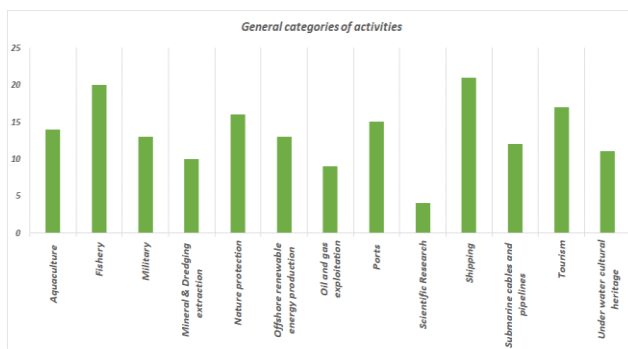


Figure 3: General categories of activities

### 3. MSP in Cyprus

As mentioned in the above chapter, a National MSP is in preparation for Cyprus. The MSP Processes of Cyprus applied, so far, are Pre-planning, Information collection/review, Stakeholder's dialogue, and Draft MSP. All European MSPs' good practices and their types were collected and mentioned in the previous chapter. Moreover, four good practices were implemented in Cyprus, namely: (1) Methodology for implementing MSP in Cyprus and Greece; (2) Pilot MSP plan in Limassol (Cyprus); (3) Web-GIS platform for implementing MSP in Greece and Cyprus; (4) Bologna Charter 2012. The types of the aforementioned good practices are related to the Methodology, Tools and Pilot Plan. In addition, three (3) relevant projects were implemented in Cyprus with acronyms THAL-CHOR, MEDTRENDS, Protomodea and two (2) ongoing projects with acronym CAMP, THAL-CHOR 2.

The ongoing programme with acronym "THAL-CHOR2", aims the implementation of MSP evaluating the increased needs for the management and monitoring of marine space. Furthermore, the planning and implementation of relevant policies were carried out, combining the principles of maritime spatial planning with issues of wider maritime governance, policy, and economy, while taking into account good practices by international organizations as well as individual states. In addition, the marine area design of boundaries and zones, the examination of alternative scenarios and the implementation/comparison of institutional directives, the analysis and correlation of natural and environmental data are carried out as well as the upgrading of the infrastructure of the specialized analytical tools.

The existing legislation (primary and secondary) of the Republic of Cyprus was recorded which defines and regulates uses or activities that take place in the maritime zones to exercise sovereignty or sovereign rights and jurisdictions. Also, the Republic of Cyprus' Competent Institutions responsibilities and obligations concerning the marine waters of the Republic were determined. Based on the institutional framework, the analysis and organization of human activities in the maritime and coastal area will be implemented to achieve the synthesis of social, economic, environmental and cultural objectives of the Republic. The scenarios for MSP will be a policy proposal advancing sustainable development in marine and coastal areas, seeking the harmonious coexistence of activities and uses, applying an approach based on sustainability principles.

### 4. Discussion

This article evaluated all the good practices of the twenty-three (23) European countries. A number of good practices was proven to be useful in analyzing and organizing human activities in the maritime and coastal area, based on the institutional framework. Additionally, based on these outcomes, the catalog related to identifying potential compatibilities and conflicts between the different

activities in Cyprus' coastal and maritime zones was revised. Reviewing the good practices of EU countries, benefits the THAL-CHOR 2 to implement MSP. The proposals/recommendations of maritime spatial planning scenarios will review, based on the National MSP Policy the National MSP Law and the institutional framework. These scenarios focus on the reduction of conflicts between sectors and activities as well as the creation of synergies between activities, the encouragement of investments, the strengthening of coordinated and integrated cross-border cooperation between Greece and Cyprus and, where possible, the neighboring third countries.

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