

## **Application for Observer status to the Member States Expert Group on MSP**

Article 2(2)(b) of the Rules of Procedures of the informal Commission group of experts on the implementation of the EU Directive 2014/89/EU establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning:

Observers: The group may include representatives of accession or candidate countries, or a Member country of the European Economic Area or of the European Free Trade Association. The group may also include intergovernmental organisations and European or International non-governmental organisations which should have a specific profile and relevance with regard to the implementation of MSP.

### Presentation of the organisation:

The Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC), located in Split, Croatia, was established in 1980 by the decision of the Intergovernmental Meeting (UNEP/IG.5/7, paragraph 54) of 1977 to assist in the implementation of the Integrated Planning Component of the UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) adopted in Barcelona in 1975. The adoption of the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (ICZM Protocol) in 2008 and its entry into force in 2011 formalised the role of PAP/RAC in the field.

PAP/RAC's mission is to provide assistance to Mediterranean countries in implementing the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region, in meeting their obligations under the ICZM Protocol, and in implementing the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD). According to Article 32 of the ICZM Protocol on Institutional Co-ordination, PAP/RAC has to assist the Parties in the following functions:

- Development of a common regional framework for ICZM;
- Formulation and implementation of national strategies for ICZM and contribution to other strategic and policy documents at the national level, such as national strategies for sustainable development;
- Implementation of demonstration/pilot coastal management projects in selected Mediterranean coastal areas with a view to implement the ICZM Protocol;
- Development of regional co-operation and organization of training, education and awareness-raising activities, networking, publications and the dissemination of information related to ICZM;
- Development of ICZM methodologies and tools as well as addressing specific sectoral issues with coastal focus in the framework of ICZM, such as urban development, natural resources management, sustainable tourism, landscape and heritage protection, coastal and soil erosion, infrastructure and transport, pollution and waste, climate change, and specific coastal ecosystems.

### Profile and relevance with regard to the implementation of MSP:

Although MSP is not expressly mentioned in the ICZM Protocol, spatial planning of the coastal zone is considered an essential instrument of its implementation. According to Art. 3 the area to which the ICZM Protocol applies (i.e. the coastal zone) is the area between:

- the seaward limit of the coastal zone, which shall be the external limit of the territorial sea of Parties; and
- the landward limit of the coastal zone, which shall be the limit of the competent coastal units as defined by the Parties.

The geographic scope of the ICZM Protocol includes both the land and the sea and it follows that planning should be equally applied to both components of the coastal zones. While MSP is a relatively new term within the Barcelona Convention frame, it is clear that planning of the marine space is a concept already taken on board by the ICZM Protocol. In this perspective MSP can be considered the main tool/process for sustainable planning and management of the marine part of the coastal zone.

Several Mediterranean States being at the same time Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and EU Member States it is obvious that the MSP work led by PAP/RAC takes fully into consideration, finds inspiration in and seeks for synergies with the EU MSP Directive.

### Contribution to the work of the expert group (MSEG on MSP):

PAP/RAC would be happy to share the Mediterranean experience in implementing MSP, in the first place the work on the Conceptual Framework for MSP in the Mediterranean, a document that will be submitted for adoption to COP20 of the Barcelona Convention. This document is crucial for the implementation of MSP in the entire Mediterranean Basin and, in a way, for transposing the EU Directive to non-EU MS, as it was done with the MSFD and the EcAp process implemented under the Barcelona Convention.

On the other hand, the experience gained through a pilot project on MSP implemented in the Greek Ionian islands together with Greek stakeholders could be useful for other EU MS, as well as the results expected to be reached under two EASME-funded MSP projects in which PAP/RAC is partner: SIMWEDTMED for the Western Mediterranean EU MS and SUPREME for the Eastern Mediterranean MS.

PAP/RAC could also host one of the expert group meetings in its premises in Split, Croatia, and assist in organising a field trip.

Finally, the fact that other Regional Seas Conventions (e.g. OSPAR and HELCOM) are also observers in the expert group would facilitate synergies with them and joint progress on MSP issues, always bearing in mind the specificities of the Mediterranean Region.

EU level organisation: YES (Mediterranean organisation including EU and its MS as Parties)