**Maritime spatial planning in the Black Sea**
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# The European Maritime Spatial Planning Platform The Assistance Mechanism for implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning in the European Union

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**ABSTRACT.** The European MSP Platform is an information and communication gateway designed to offer support to all EU Member States in their efforts to implement Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the years to come. With the adoption of the **EU Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning (2014/89/EU),** all coastal EU Member States are required to prepare cross-sectoral maritime spatial plans by 2021. This paper presents main information about European MSP Platform and its Assistance Mechanism for implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning in the European Union.

**KEYWORDS.** European MSP Platform; Maritime Spatial Planning; MSP Projects; European Seas; Member States; Maritime Policy.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Funded by the **EU Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE),** the European MSP Platform acts as the central exchange forum for the rich knowledge generated in past, current and upcoming Maritime Spatial Planning - MSP processes and projects. This allows officials, planners and other stakeholders interested in MSP to build on what is already available, avoid duplication of efforts, assist in capacity building and foster development of new practices.

The approach for the European MSP Platform is based on the following basic principles: (1) giving and taking, (2) identifyind source of knowledge – to connect the right contributive people, (3) personal approach – to act the trusted partner, (4) find specifics through a broad resource, (5) service to all EU Member States.

## II. STRENGTH BASED ON EXPERTISE

The dedicated Team of experts of the EU MSP Platform operated in all European sea-basins offices. Information on MSP continuously draw and delivered by these experts based on a common work and experience which are focused on funding and training opportunities, relevant events from across Europe, MSP projects and practices, etc., in available, interactive

and easy-to-use formats, readily accessible through the website: http://www.msp-platform.eu/.

The central office:

- coordinates all activities and services of the European MSP platform, including technical studies, up-dating resources, designing delivery formats, ensuring continuous information exchange among team members.
- assists the European Commission in all organisational aspects of the Member States Expert Group meetings as well as the European Commission workshops and conferences related to MSP.

The main Focal Points cover information from all Member States and sea basins, covering: *Atlantic Ocean (*United Kingdom, North Ireland, Ireland, France, Portugal), *Baltic Sea (*Finland, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Germany, Sweden, Denmark), *Black Sea (*Bulgaria, Romania), *East and West Mediterranean (*Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus; respectively Spain, France, Malta, Italy*), North Sea* (Belgium, Netherland, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway). In the Black Sea basin, NIMRD 'G.Antipa' Constanta is MSP Focal Point for Romania and 'Ecorys', Sofia is for Bulgaria (Fig.1, 2).

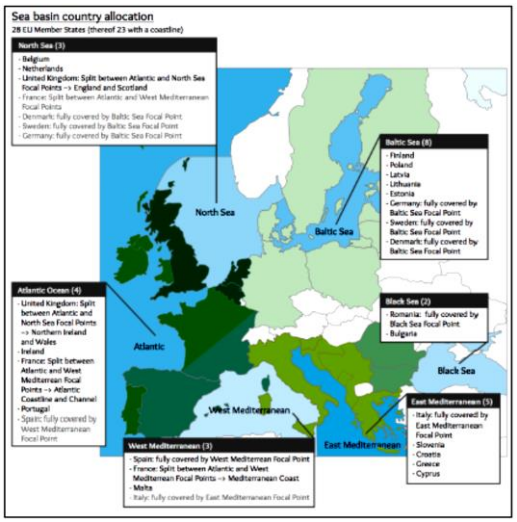


Fig. 1. Network of MSP Platform Teams
Fig. 2. European MSP Platforms Experts

The MSP Focal Points for each European Sea basin are available to offer advices in MSP:

- The experience gathering and sharing is one of the main aim of the EU-MSP Platform in suitable formats, according to specifically needs;
- Short info briefs on specific topics related to MSP are prepared, based on available practices and projects;
- different types of meetings, round tables, workshops or seminars are prepared and arranged, on the basis of received information requests, giving assistance in all maritime fields.

For areas where gaps exist, the assistance mechanism is asked to conduct studies on topics defined by the Commission in cooperation with the Member States experts.

## III. EU-MSP PLATFORM - AN INTERACTIVE INFORMATION GATEWAY (FIG.3)

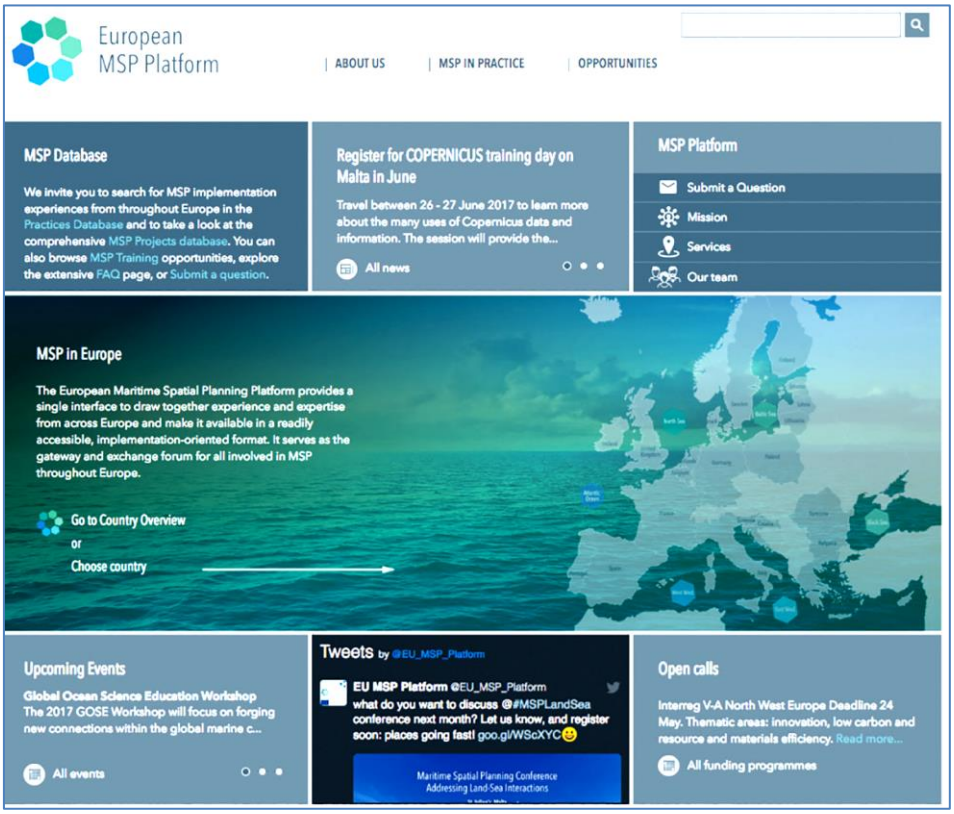



Fig. 3. European MSP Platform - Home Page - http://www.msp-platform.eu/

This website http://www.msp-platform.eu/ provides a diverse array of knowledge and resources drawn from existing MSP processes and projects, continuously expanded and updated. The website reflects the dynamic process of MSP development throughout Europe.

The Home page of the website include **Practical experiences, *Country information, *Sea Basin overview, *Funding opportunities, *News, *Upcoming events, *Twitter feed*.

Could be mainly explored the following:

- **MSP Country Information** showing the status on MSP processes in each coastal EU Member State as well as **Sea basin overviews,**
- **Practical Experiences** stored and searchable through a multi-filter database,
- Overview of previous and ongoing **MSP Projects** and their outputs,
- EU-wide and national **funding opportunities,**
- **MSP training** programmes and workshops,
- An extensive **FAQ section,**
- Future and past **events,**
- News and updates on MSP on the **website** and via **newsletter.** Twitter @EU_MSP_Platform.

## IV. EU-MSP PLATFORM - QUESTION AND ANSWERS SERVICES

Availability for quickly and accurately responses to MSP requests for advices and questions is assured, concerning diverse disciplines and latest developments in MSP. These include Sea-basin specific questions, covering also the language needs of the respective region.

Developed answers include relevant examples from practical MSP experiences, as found in Practices Database of the Platform (Fig.5) and the overview of MSP projects. A generalized version of submitted questions and answers available are in the **FAQ section** to continuely sharing the collective MSP knowledge.

EU-MSP Platform offers pro-active project development concerning EU directly managed programmes such as *Horizon 2020*, the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (*COSME*), *LIFE* and Connecting Europe Facilities, and the European Structural and Investment Funds, including the European Regional Development Fund (*ERDF*), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (*EMFF*), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (*EAFRD)* and the Cohesion Fund (*CF*).

It has assured assistance also to *MARSPLAN BS* Project; the project partners contributed with information for MSP Platform, concerning MSP countries and sea basin fishes, practices, other projects details (Fig.5-9).

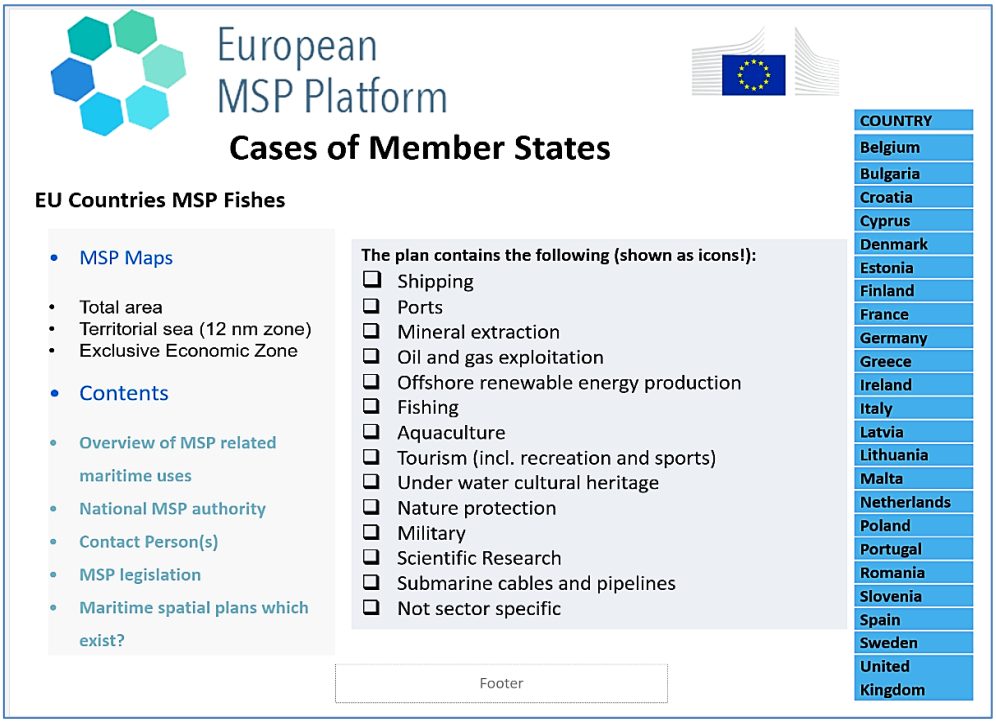



Fig. 4. List of European countries MSP Fishes, main maritime fields and fishes chapters

# V. EU-MSP PLATFORM - TECHNICAL STUDIES – PRACTICES DATABASE

Permanent MSP up-dating topics across Europe lead to conducted studies on MSP objectives implementation and have contributed to the collective knowledge base development.

The '*MSP Data Study - Evaluation of data and knowledge gaps to implement MSP'*, covers data and information needs for MSP, as best example, in spite of diversity imposed at local conditions and diversity in opinions regarding the application.

https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/documentation/studies/msp-data-study-evaluation-data-and-knowledge-gaps-implement-msp_en

The successful development and implementation of MSP relies on the availability of and access to spatial information on the marine environment and maritime activities, in present and future; this is underlined by this study, under European Commission publishing. Its aim is:

- investigation of actual MSP information requerests, focusing on what planners need to know and how data can be translated and used in providing this information, data processing, spatial plans elaboration;
- technical aspects for data infrastructures creation;
- raw data converting into useful formats for planning;
- ways and possibilities for data sharing across borders.

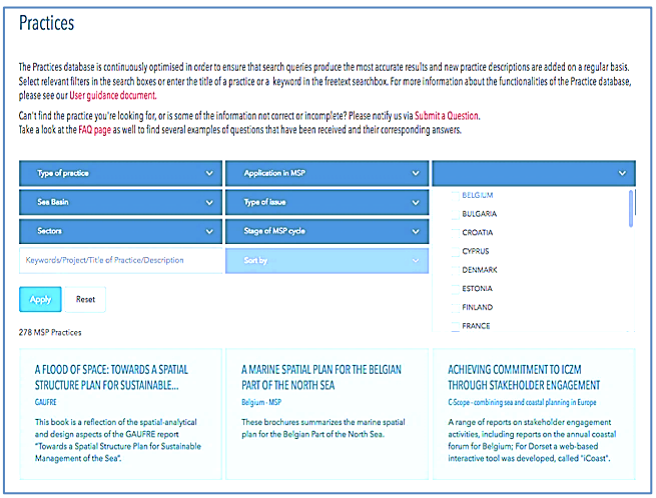



Fig. 5. European MSP Platform - Page of MSP Practices

The on-going study MSP for Blue Growth – MSP, as a tool to support sustainable Blue Economy' is also prepared; it is focused on three tasks:

– Developing a methodology for a sea basin vision;
– Developing a methodology to investigate current and future spatial potential demands of key maritime sectors;
– Developing a manual on MSP indicators;

Future study topics are in preparing for determined based upon Member State needs, in cooperation with the European Commission Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. http://msp-platform.eu/sites/default/files/msp_brochure_short2pf_rev.pdf

The Practices Database (Fig.5) consists in 300 entries, showing MSP practical information, filtered and classified as type of practices, type of MSP issues, sectors, countries (Fig.4, 6, 7), year of publication; 100 MSP Projects (Fig.7,8), relevant legislations, institutions, contact persons are also added to.

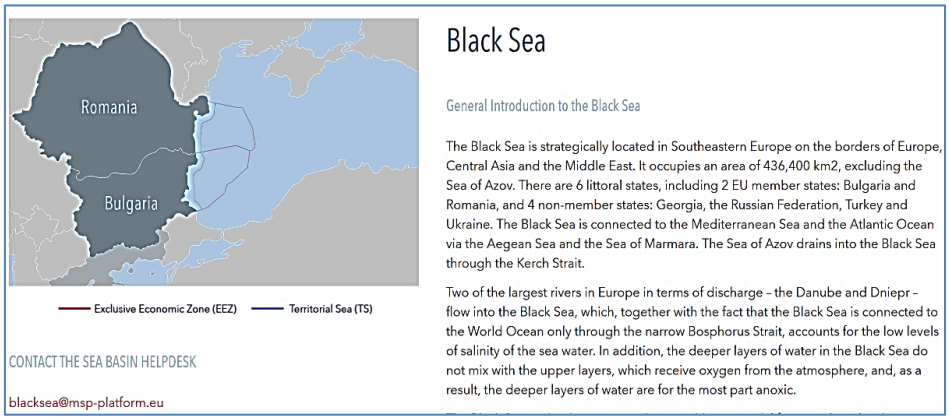



Fig. 6. European MSP Platform - Black Sea Fishe
(http://msp-platform.eu/sea-basins/black-sea-0)

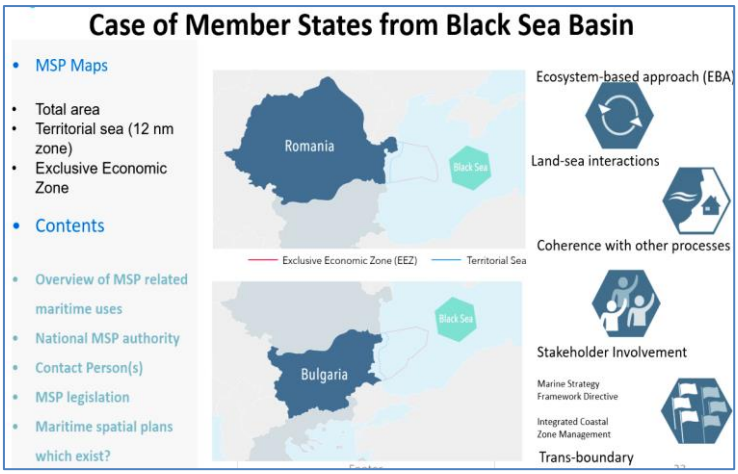



Fig. 7. European MSP Platform - MSP Country Fishes for Romania and Bulgaria
http://msp-platform.eu/projects/cross-border-maritime-spatial-planning-black-sea

## VI. EU-MSP PLATFORM – WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

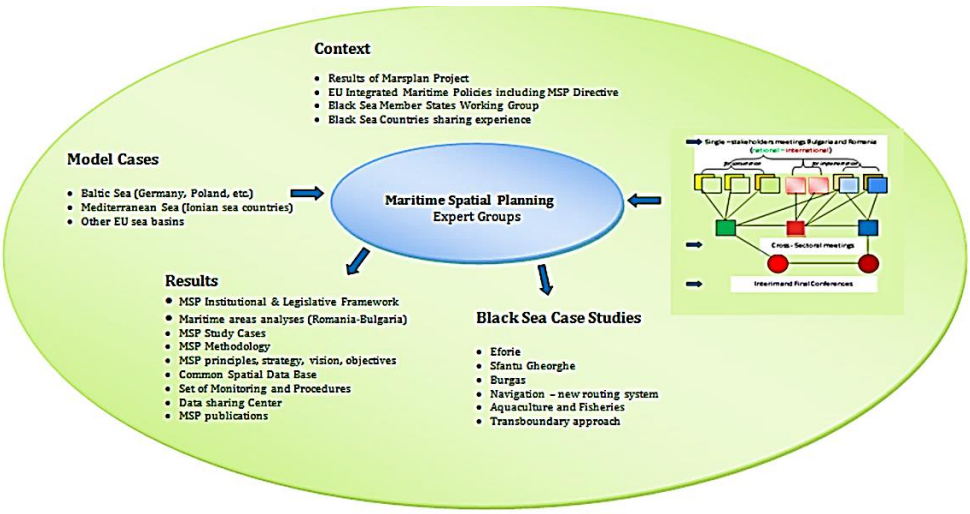
To have facilitated active knowledge exchange and generation between MSP practitioners**:**

- The European Commission is supported by EU-MSP Platform which organise Member States Expert Group meetings on MSP and other different events.
- All interested MSP organisms and stakeholders could ask on MSP Assistance and support in event organization.

Permanent **Opportunities** are based on Funding programmes, Training opportunities, Up-to-date Events page.

Fig. 8. European MSP Platform - Project example: MARSPLAN BS, http://msp-platform.eu/sea-basins/black-sea-0

Fig. 9. European MSP Platform - MARSPLAN BS Project Scheme of objectives and Results



## VII. CONCLUSIONS

For a strong European MSP Platform, permanent improvement, communication and contact, it is very important a continually contribution of all Member States and Focal Points with new information, experience sharing, information accessibility and availability, website uses, information gapes filling. In this aim, it is recommended:

- Sea basin experts support,
- Answer to all questions about MSP via the Q&A service, contributing to the FAQ page,
- Promotion of all MSP practices and projects,
- Events and news item presentation,
- New workshops and events preparing,
- Contact maintaining via info@msp-platform.eu, following Twitter @EU_MSP_Platform.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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*** http://www.msp-platform.eu/.

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