

ENVIRONMENT

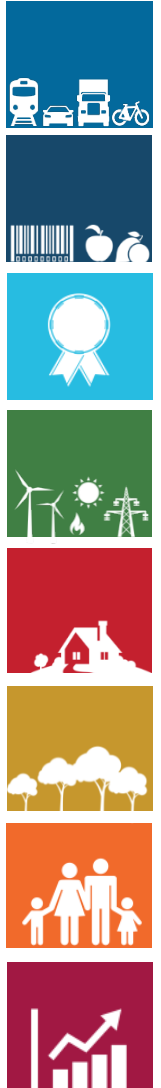


Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

IDENTIFICATION OF SYNERGIES AND POSSIBLE COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN MARINE REGIONS

Third joint meeting between representatives of the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA and interested regional seas conventions

Online, 16 May 2023



Activities updates at the third joint technical meeting



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- Updates from representatives/secretariats from relevant marine regions and corresponding instruments/bodies:
 - The Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
 - The Bucharest Convention and its Protocols
 - The Helsinki Convention and the Baltic Sea Action Plan
 - The Ospar Convention
 - The Tehran Convention and its Protocols
 - International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
- Updates from representatives of Parties/member states from: Azerbaijan; France; Slovenia; Spain and Sweden.
- Draft Assessment Report (available now in French and Russian)
- Case studies – Estonia Saare Wind Energy; Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Maritime Spatial Plan – Italy.

RSC Secretariat interventions

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Provided their Parties/intergovernmental organs the draft report on synergies and possible cooperation activities in marine regions (ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2023/9):

- Black Sea Commission
 - Commission which has been inactive since the war in Ukraine began, the Commission requires consensus to adopt decisions, which is why they have not yet properly informed the involved parties.
- Helsinki Commission – HELCOM
 - Strategic pause and all the formal meetings of HELCOM bodies have been postponed.
 - At the informal consultation session of the heads of delegation in December 2022, HoDs took note of the October 2022 draft report.
 - IC of HELCOM in March 2023 where it was recommended to revise the Recommendation 17/3 (mentioned as a good practice in the draft report) to clarify the procedures of information sharing also relevant to Article 7 of the Convention.
- Tehran Convention
 - Convention held their COP in October 2022 in Baku, where the draft assessment report was submitted for consideration of the Parties, the Parties took note of the draft report.

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Provided information on relevant planned or approved activities under their workplans
– and possible needs for cooperation/inputs for their implementation

- Barcelona Convention
 - A regional consultation meeting is planned which aims to introduce environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment in the Mediterranean regions, involving all Parties of the Barcelona Convention and the Espoo Secretariat. Their program of work for the next biennium includes a component on wind farms, an assessment of wind farms, and guidelines on sustainable development by December 2023, this is in preparation for the Conference of the Parties (COP) in Slovenia.
- Black Sea Commission
 - Large project in the Black Sea, implemented by UNDP and UNESCO is scheduled to start in December 2023. It is planned to introduce all relevant tools, including the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment. They aim to develop marine spatial planning (MSP) and will also involve Espoo Convention in these efforts. The next regular meeting is planned for October 2023.
- Helsinki Commission-HELCOM
 - The joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group workplan 2022-24 approved the development of a Baltic SEA-framework by 2025, where the marine regions cooperation under Espoo Convention is mentioned separately. HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG informal consultation on 24-25 October 2023 the collaboration with the Espoo Convention and the proposals on the draft workplan for 2024-2026 of the could be presented.

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Indicated their priorities and/or additional suggestions for specific focus areas and activities for potential future cooperation – in 2024-2026 and/or beyond

- OSPAR Convention
 - North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030 - S5.O3: *By 2024, OSPAR will establish a mechanism to provide that where Contracting Parties are authorising human activities under their jurisdiction or control that may conflict with the conservation objectives of OSPAR marine protected areas in the Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, these activities are subjected to an environmental impact assessment or Strategic Environmental Assessment. Analyze the Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement provisions on environmental impact assessment and their implications for OSPAR and then assess **options for developing a regional mechanism for environmental impact assessment**, consistent with the BBNJ Agreement. **Helpful to draw on Espoo Convention knowledge and experience** in order to specify the details of the mechanism to comply with the BBNJ Agreement.*
- Tehran Convention
 - The Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context in the Caspian Sea Region were developed together with the Espoo Convention. The Guidelines require an update in light of the signing of the EIA Protocol to Tehran Convention which **could be a joint initiative under Espoo and Tehran Convention.**

Parties' interventions at the third joint technical meeting



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- **Azerbaijan** expressed the importance of cooperation in the Caspian Sea region as it is Party to both the Espoo and Tehran Conventions, involving information exchanges with other regional sea conventions, sub-regional meetings or workshops and also through active communication between the treaties' focal points.
- **Slovenia** expressed their appreciation for the exchange of good practice and positive experiences in the marine regions. Slovenia supported the holding of regular meetings in the Mediterranean region for informal exchanges on transboundary issues which were highly necessary. They thanked Italy for offering to host the first meeting in 2024 and committed to hosting a second meeting in Slovenia in 2025.
- **France** and **Spain** also thanked Italy for its leadership and funding for promoting cooperation in Mediterranean sea region. They both expressed their interest in participating in the informal subregional meetings to be held in that region the next intersessional period 2024-2026, considering such exchanges as helpful for countries around the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Sweden** presented the Arctic 2021-2025 Workplan, which includes assessments of the fishery free zone in the Central Arctic Ocean, and protected areas in the Arctic. Projects in various Arctic regions aim to assess the ecological status, human impacts, and management of these areas and legal agreements, such as the agreement for the central Arctic Ocean. Each Arctic state implement their own regulations and measures to regulate activities in their own region. Additionally, there are numerous MPAs established in the Arctic region aiming to safeguard the ecological integrity.

Interventions at the third joint technical meeting



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- Global Environment Facility as an important instrument which is funding many activities in marine regions, like development of blue economy strategies, specific marine spatial planning processes, and other good-practice pilot projects which present good opportunities for undertaking EIA and SEA in both domestic and transboundary contexts.
- UNDP has already integrated basic provisions for SEAs and transboundary consultation that broadly respect the principles of UNECE SEA Protocol into new UNDP project for the Black Sea and can in the future show examples of how environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment is carried out in marine regions. UNDP will notify the Espoo Secretariat if similar projects get prepared in other marine regions and foster their cooperation with the Espoo Convention and its Protocol.



Thank you for your attention.

