

## **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention  
on Environmental Impact Assessment  
in a Transboundary Context

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention  
on Environmental Impact Assessment in  
a Transboundary Context serving as the  
Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on  
Strategic Environmental Assessment

### **Identification of synergies and possible cooperation activities in marine regions**

#### **Report of the second joint technical meeting**

Geneva/Online, 16 June 2022

Prepared with support from consultants to the UNECE secretariat

#### *Summary*

The present document provides a short report on the second joint technical meeting between representatives of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, and five regional seas conventions and their protocols for the identification of synergies and possible cooperation activities in marine regions (Geneva/online, 16 June 2022).

The report briefly summarizes the key points arising from the presentations made and discussions held during the informal meeting. Annex I to the document lists proposals and recommendations for possible cooperation activities in marine regions put forward thus far, as updated based on the feedback from the meeting participants during the meeting.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The second joint technical meeting on cooperation on strategic environmental assessment and transboundary environmental impact assessment in marine regions between the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment and the regional seas conventions, bodies, and the interested contracting Parties to these instruments was held in Geneva on 16 June 2022<sup>1</sup>. A follow-up coordination/management meeting involving the respective treaty secretariats/commissions took place the day after, on 17 June 2022. Both meetings were held in a hybrid mode, with most participants attending them remotely. They were organized by the secretariat to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol, with support from two consultants, and moderated by the Secretary to these two instruments.
2. The meetings were held in accordance with the joint workplan for 2021–2023 of the Espoo Convention and its Protocol<sup>2</sup>, which foresees mapping out of synergies and possible future cooperation activities between these two legal instruments and interested regional seas conventions that are located fully or partly in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region. This workplan activity is funded by Italy. It involves the preparation of assessment reports with proposals for cooperation, the organization of three joint meetings to discuss them, and the collection and compilation of good practice case studies in the application of transboundary environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment to projects and plans in marine regions. The activity aims to contribute also to enhancing contacts with non-ECE countries.
3. The meeting was attended by representatives of secretariats/bodies to the following four regional seas conventions: the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and its seven Protocols; the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention) and its three Protocols; the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki Convention) and the Baltic Sea Action Plan; the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention); the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention) and its four Protocols. The meeting was also attended by the representative of the European Commission, and the representatives of Cyprus, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (see the attached list of participants).

## **II. KEY DISCUSSION POINTS**

### **A. Introductory session**

4. The Secretary to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol, Ms. Tea Aulavuo, opened the meeting, and welcomed the participants. She introduced the purpose of the meeting and briefly presented the work carried out so far, thanking again Italy for funding the activity. She pointed to the informal discussion paper “the draft assessment report”, which incorporated inputs from the regional sea convention secretariats, and which had been sent to the registered participants for comments during the meeting.
5. The introduction was followed by an initial tour de table with the representatives of the donor country for the activity, Italy, Ms. Anna-Maria Maggiore, and of the secretariats to UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention, the Bucharest Convention, the Helsinki Convention, the OSPAR Convention and the Tehran Convention, who made introductory statements, briefly presenting their framework and relevant activities in this area, welcoming the work conducted so far and reiterating their interest in the activity. The session stressed the benefits for the marine environment of the early assessment and management of negative environmental impacts of plans and projects, including in a transboundary context, and of the further exploration of possible synergies and cooperation opportunities in this respect. Sharing existing guidelines and specific operational experience/good

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<sup>1</sup> The provisional agenda, presentations and the report on the meeting (forthcoming) are available at: <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Environmental-Impact-Assessment/events/368518>.

<sup>2</sup> ECE/MP.EIA/30/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/13/Add.1, decision VIII/2–IV/2, annex I. See also ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2021/5 available at: <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/working-group-eia-and-sea-espoo-convention-10th-meeting>

practice for transboundary environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments were mentioned as useful and easily implementable examples of cooperation.

6. Attending the joint meetings for the first time, the representative of the Bucharest Convention secretariat, Ms. Iryna Makarenko, provided initial information on the relevant provisions under that Convention as well as suggestions for possible cooperation activities. In particular, article XV of the Bucharest Convention dealing with "Scientific and technical cooperation and monitoring" stipulates that when there are "reasonable grounds for believing that activities under their jurisdiction or control may cause substantial pollution or significant and harmful changes to the marine environment of the Black Sea, Parties shall, before commencing such activities, assess their potential effects on the basis of all relevant information and monitoring data and shall communicate the results of such assessments to the Commission". The subsequent provisions stipulate that the Contracting Parties shall cooperate in developing and harmonizing their laws, regulations and procedures relating to liability, assessment of and compensation for damage caused by pollution of the marine environment of the Black Sea, in order to ensure the highest degree of deterrence and protection for the Black Sea as a whole. Ms. Makarenko also recalled that draft recommendations on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context had been developed for countries around the Black Sea in 2009–2010, with support from the Espoo Convention secretariat, but these had not been adopted by the Parties to the Bucharest Convention at that time. She also highlighted the existing good contacts with the other regional seas conventions, in particular the Barcelona Convention, and suggested that the draft recommendations produced within the present Espoo Convention activity on the identification of synergies and possible cooperation activities in marine regions could be reviewed and resubmitted for consideration by the Parties to the Bucharest Convention, together with proposals for possible cooperation activities.

## **B. Environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context in the respective marine regions**

7. Ms. Aulavuo introduced the key provisions of the 1991 Espoo Convention<sup>3</sup>, its Parties (currently 45, including the European Union), and its future opening for accession by all UN Member States. She emphasized that the Convention applied to activities (listed in its appendix I) that were likely to significantly damage the environment of other Parties, such as large-diameter pipelines for the transport of oil, gas or chemicals; trading ports and also for inland waterway traffic; offshore hydrocarbon production; or major wind-power installations. The Convention required that the Parties that proposed activities subject to the Convention ("Parties of origin") notified other Parties likely to be affected by them ("affected Parties"); prepared EIA documentation and shared it with the affected party or parties, allowing both their authorities and the public the opportunity to comment on the activity and the assessment of its impacts, and to take their comments into account in the final decision. The final decision on the activity in question had to be shared with the affected Party/Parties that had participated in the transboundary process. The Espoo Convention provided for a common framework and binding but flexible procedures for concerned countries to discuss and to cooperate at the international level in order to avoid or to reduce negative environmental impacts and to improve international cooperation and the transparency of decision making. The Convention's procedures are well-established, and its Parties have gathered a wealth of evidence of good practice in their implementation. The online networks of points of contacts for notification and of national focal points for administrative matters have importantly facilitated contacts between the countries over the past decades<sup>4</sup>. The remaining implementation challenges were commonly associated with the lack of awareness of the differences in the Parties' national legislations and implementation practices, potentially leading to confusion about procedural issues, such as, time-frames or definitions of key terms, or with various language issues related to translation of documentation, or interpretation. Participants were also made aware of the institutional structure under the Convention (and its Protocol), the publicly available national implementation reports and summary reviews<sup>5</sup>, the review of compliance procedure led by the Implementation Committee, guidance material<sup>6</sup>, events for the exchange of experience, sub-regional cooperation and, resources permitting, technical assistance and capacity building support.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information see: <https://unece.org/environment-policy/environmental-assessment>

<sup>4</sup> <https://unece.org/environment-policy/environmental-assessment/points-contact-regarding-notification>; <https://unece.org/environment-policy/environmental-assessment/focal-points-administrative-matters>

<sup>5</sup> <https://unece.org/environment-policy/environmental-assessment/review-implementation-national-reporting>

<sup>6</sup> <https://unece.org/publications/environmental-assessment>

8. Ms. Marta Truszevska (Poland) presented a good practice example of transboundary EIA procedure for the Baltic Sea Pipeline. She pointed out that, thanks to the practical application of the Espoo Convention, the concerned countries - Denmark, Germany, Poland, and Sweden - were well guided in this procedure. Since the project was carried out in the Baltic Sea, Poland had notified the Secretariat of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission, HELCOM) as well. She stressed that cooperation and transparency were crucial for initiating projects with possible transboundary impacts, and that transboundary consultations had been useful also for sharing related scientific knowledge and technology, including that available under the other relevant Conventions. She also mentioned that during the recent Baltic subregional meeting that Poland had organized under the Espoo Convention framework<sup>7</sup>, interesting proposals on how to facilitate cooperation during transboundary procedures had been discussed, which could possibly be replicated in a broader context in the future. For example, for improving the knowledge about the other countries' offshore wind farm planning and permitting systems, brief templates were being prepared for all countries to complete and for further joint discussion about procedures.
9. Ms. Daniela Addis (consultant to UNECE) briefly introduced the main content of the draft Assessment report on identification of synergies and possible cooperation activities in marine regions prepared by the consulting team. She highlighted key findings, including initial evaluation of the coherence of the relevant provisions and practice of the regional sea conventions and bodies against the main procedural requirements for transboundary environmental impact assessment provided for by the Espoo Convention, as well as identifying remaining information gaps.
10. The participants welcomed the draft assessment report and raised some questions. Ms. Virginia Estévez (Spain) asked how to consider proposals related to Biodiversity of areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) which are being developed under the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) with regard to transboundary aspects of environmental assessment procedures that are being addressed within the present activity. Mr. Alexandros Koulidis (Greece) also commented on the same issue, stressing that related negotiations under UNCLOS were still ongoing and that the Espoo Convention dealt with transboundary aspects within the national jurisdiction of Parties, and that, therefore, one was to be cautious when reflecting on this issue under the present activity.
11. Mr. Jiří Dusík (consultant to UNECE/ team leader) presented the draft areas of interest for possible cooperation activities in marine regions related to EIA in a transboundary context on behalf of the team. He also outlined the latest inputs provided by the Espoo Convention Bureau as well as the draft case study template that would be soon finalized and shared with the Parties to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol and the secretariats of the relevant regional sea conventions/bodies. He also invited participants' views on what proposals to follow and what to prioritize. The presentation was followed by a discussion on the initial ideas for possible future cooperation activities related to transboundary EIA processes in marine regions. The proposals, as modified as a result of the discussions, are listed in annex I to the present report.

**C. Strategic environmental assessment – in national and transboundary contexts - in the respective marine regions**

12. Ms. Aulavuo introduced the key provisions of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that was adopted in 2003 to extend the application of environmental impact assessment also to plans and programmes, and, on a non-mandatory basis, also to policies and legislation. Intervening at earlier and more strategic levels than the project-level environmental impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment is seen as a key tool for delivering sustainable development and for climate proofing, allowing also coordination among the various government plans and facilitating the consideration of cumulative impacts. In force since 2010, the Protocol has currently 33 Parties, including the European Union, and was open to all member states of the United Nations. Unlike the Espoo Convention, the Protocol applies to both negative and positive likely impacts (of plans and programmes) in both the national and transboundary contexts. She pointed out that several countries in the ECE region still lacked compliant legislation and/or sufficient experience and capacity in implementing strategic environmental assessment. The assessment of health and the involvement of the health sector in strategic environmental assessment was also not that simple. The challenges and solutions related to transboundary consultations were similar to those already enumerated for EIA.

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<sup>7</sup> the meeting page will be added in the final version

13. Ms. Vesna Kolar-Planinšič (Slovenia) and Ms. Anna Maria Maggiore (Italy) presented two good practice examples of the application of SEA and the related transboundary consultations for maritime spatial plans in the Adriatic Sea that are required by a European Union Directive 2014/89/EU on a common framework for maritime spatial planning. Ms. Kolar-Planinšič presented the Maritime Spatial Plan of Slovenia in which the planning/approval process and the cross-border consultation procedures on environmental effects were conducted in parallel and involved extensive cooperation between the SEA Protocol focal points of Slovenia, Italy and Croatia. The entire process started in June 2019 and was completed in June 2021 – including all the procedural steps set out in article 10 of the SEA Protocol. The transboundary consultations conducted within the joint planning and SEA processes facilitated an extensive data exchange and cooperation on scientific matters. Ms. Maggiore agreed on the usefulness of transboundary consultations with Slovenia because the implementation of the Maritime Space Plan of Slovenia involves some potentially significant cross-border activities, such as, the development of coastal construction, the construction of the island in Isola; and the construction of structures and infrastructures and the increase in maritime transport (Port of Koper). She then continued with a presentation of the SEA process of the Italian Maritime Space Management Plan which follows the procedural steps set out in article 10 of the Protocol on SEA. Given the transboundary nature of the marine environment, Italy decided to consult states potentially interested in the SEA process. The states that have been involved so far include: Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania and Greece (for the Adriatic Area); Tunisia, Algeria, Spain and France (for the Tyrrhenian and Western Mediterranean Area); and Greece, Malta, Tunisia and Libya (for the Ionian and Central Mediterranean Area). Out of these countries, Croatia, Montenegro, Greece, Malta, Algeria, and Slovenia have so far shown interest in transboundary consultations. At the moment the SEA process has just completed the scoping phase and the preparation of the environmental report begins, paving the way for future consultations with the potentially interested countries.
14. Ms. Addis then briefly illustrated the main content of the draft Assessment Report regarding strategic environmental assessment, highlighting key findings, including initial evaluation of the coherence of the relevant provisions and practice of the regional sea conventions and bodies against the main procedural requirements of the Protocol on strategic environmental assessment, as well as identifying remaining information gaps. Mr. Dusik presented the draft key areas of interest for possible cooperation activities related to SEA in marine regions, both in national and transboundary contexts, and again invited participants' views on the proposals made and on what should be prioritized.

#### **D. Closing remarks**

15. Ms. Aulavuo summarized the steps taken and the next steps to be taken before the third joint meeting (tentatively scheduled to be held online, on 6 and 7 July 2023), and their time-schedule. She highlighted that, as an activity under the joint workplan of the Espoo Convention and its Protocol for 2020–2023, its implementation was regularly monitored by the Bureau and the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment. The outcomes of the work would be presented for consideration of the Meetings of the Parties under the two treaties at their next sessions in December 2023, including for the Parties to confirm which of the proposed cooperation activities should be included in the next intersessional workplan 2024–2026, ensuring also the availability of resources for their implementation.
16. In parallel, and within the same timeframe, it will be for the respective governing and relevant subsidiary bodies of each of the regional sea conventions and bodies to continue to duly consider and express themselves on the possible cooperation activities.

**POSSIBLE COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN MARINE REGIONS  
REFLECTING INPUTS OBTAINED DURING THE INFORMAL  
DISCUSSION AT THE SECOND JOINT TECHNICAL MEETING**

**I. Introduction**

The present annex contains proposals put forward thus far for possible cooperation activities between the Espoo Convention and its Protocol and the respective regional sea conventions/bodies in marine regions. The proposals reflect informal comments and suggestions obtained during the 2<sup>nd</sup> joint technical meeting of 16 June 2022 and the ensuing informal consultations with the regional sea conventions/bodies secretariats (on 17 June 2022) and in writing thereafter.

The possible cooperation areas and options for related activities, as discussed during the joint meeting, are categorized as follows:

- a) Information-sharing
- b) Collection and dissemination of good environmental assessment practices in marine and coastal areas
- c) Strengthening implementation of existing environmental assessment provisions under the relevant regional sea treaties
- d) Pilot projects
- e) Information sharing on the potential for cumulative impacts
- f) Long-term coordination/cooperation opportunities

The proposals remain an indicative set of suggestions. It is a preliminary menu of options for Parties and stakeholders under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol and the regional sea conventions/bodies to facilitate their future collaboration, if they so agree, within the framework of the respective workplans and available resources.

The proposals can also serve as a basis for the future preparation of potential informal “*aide memoires*” that outline practical cooperation arrangements between the Espoo Convention and its Protocol and each specific regional sea convention/body in a greater detail.

**II. Proposals for future activities regarding:****A. Information-sharing**

- i. The secretariats to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol and the regional sea conventions/bodies would share relevant information and meeting invitations with each other, for further dissemination to the relevant networks of Parties and stakeholders under the respective instruments, as appropriate;
- ii. The UNECE secretariat would create a dedicated page on its website for presenting all the results of the activity funded by Italy, together with links to any additional information on the practical arrangements for cooperation between the relevant instruments and their structures and networks. The regional sea conventions/bodies secretariats will provide a link to that webpage from their respective websites, for also their Parties and stakeholders to refer to, when relevant.
- iii. Parties and stakeholders to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol and the regional sea conventions/bodies would be encouraged to mutually and directly coordinate and share information on the application and effectiveness of the relevant transboundary environmental impact assessments or strategic environmental assessments in marine regions nationally and, at the international level, by making use of contact databases of national focal points/points of contact under the respective treaties. Specifically, the national focal points to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol can explore the application and the effectiveness of such assessments with their national counterparts under the respective regional sea conventions/bodies and, possibly report on their experience and lessons learnt during the meetings and workplans of the relevant conventions/bodies.

- iv. To facilitate cooperation focusing specifically on one particular marine region, (e.g. the Mediterranean), the representatives of the concerned Parties to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol would consider organizing meetings with other parties and stakeholders (in the Mediterranean Basin) with a view to informally exchanging about their forthcoming or ongoing transboundary procedures and other issues of relevance to that particular marine region, and invite also the representatives of the respective regional sea convention to such meetings. A similar practice has proved useful for creating robust networks; for improving the informal exchanges of information as well as for cooperating and coordinating among the Parties to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol from around the Baltic Sea that, over nearly two decades, have taken turns to host and organize such “sub-regional” cooperation meetings, either on an annual basis or at longer intervals<sup>8</sup>. These meetings are listed in the three-year joint workplans and their costs are covered in-kind by the concerned countries themselves.
- v. The regional sea conventions/bodies could organize additional events/discussions within the their future activities and meetings to explore the application of transboundary environmental impact assessment or strategic environmental assessment. Transboundary EIA and SEA could be, for example, held within the framework of the following fora:
  - The HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group and/or HELCOM Working Group on the Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area;
  - The OSPAR Convention activities on the development and scaling up of offshore renewable energy in a way that cumulative environmental impacts are minimized;
  - The Barcelona Convention activities on climate change, integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning;
  - The meeting of the Tehran Convention on the occasion of the entry into force of its Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context; etc.
- vi. The Parties to the Espoo Convention and the SEA Protocol and the interested regional sea conventions/bodies would be also invited to consider establishing voluntary/informal practical arrangements to (voluntarily) inform the concerned regional sea convention secretariats/bodies of any relevant transboundary environmental impact assessments or strategic environmental assessments conducted in their respective marine regions.

**B. The collection and dissemination of information on good environmental assessment practices in marine and coastal areas**

- i. The Parties to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol and the regional sea conventions/bodies would be invited to provide information on examples illustrating their good environmental assessment practices in marine and coastal areas in the application of the provisions of the two treaties. The information would be provided through the secretariat, via templates (that are in the process of being finalized).
- ii. The Parties to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol and to the regional sea conventions/bodies would be encouraged to make use of the good practice recommendations and guidelines developed under the Espoo Convention, its Protocol, the regional seas conventions and/or the European Union or UNECE system to strengthen the consideration of coastal and marine environmental protection in the relevant environmental assessment processes.

**C. Strengthening implementation of existing environmental assessment provisions under the relevant regional sea treaties**

- i. The regional sea conventions/bodies would periodically critically evaluate, as part of their respective reporting or implementation reviews, the implementation of their relevant provisions related to transboundary environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment; and use the ensuing results to flag related areas where further improvements and/or assistance would be useful.
- ii. As relevant, the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Implementation Committee of the Espoo Convention and its Protocol would be invited to a meeting of the corresponding bodies under the regional sea conventions that address compliance/implementation of their relevant provisions (e.g. the Compliance Committee of the Barcelona Convention), to exchange

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<sup>8</sup> <https://unece.org/baltic-sea>

experience on compliance matters related to transboundary environmental impact assessment or strategic environmental assessment of relevant plans and projects.

- iii. Any interested convention would also encourage its contracting parties to establish bilateral and/or multilateral cooperation arrangements between the Espoo Convention parties and non-parties for the application of transboundary environmental impact assessment or strategic environmental assessment. Such potential cooperation agreements could build on, e.g., lessons from twinning of marine protected areas or similar cooperation instruments in marine regions<sup>9</sup>.
- iv. Subject to availability of resources, and as required, legislative assistance or capacity building support would be provided to Parties and future Parties for strengthening/aligning of national regulatory frameworks with the respective treaty obligations related to transboundary environmental impact assessment or strategic environmental assessment and supporting their practical implementation.

#### **D. Transboundary EIA or SEA pilot projects in marine regions**

- i. Pilot transboundary environmental impact assessments or strategic environmental assessments would be implemented in marine regions, for example for testing newly drafted legislation and for demonstration purposes to gain hands-on experience in the application of the assessment tools; to facilitate engagement and to help to build trust between the concerned countries. Such pilot assessments may be particularly useful in the following fields with likely significant adverse transboundary impacts/effects:
  - maritime/marine spatial plans (on country or sub-regional levels, e.g., Western Mediterranean);
  - offshore hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation;
  - offshore renewable energy;
  - pipelines and high-voltage power-lines;
  - LNG terminals.
- ii. While the Espoo Convention secretariat has no capacity for fundraising for such pilot projects, they could be implemented subject to the availability of resources or conducted via bilateral donor arrangements and be facilitated by the secretariat. The relevant international development banks - starting with the European Investment Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development could also be invited - to explore opportunities for supporting such pilot projects through their operations in the respective marine regions.

#### **E. Exchanging data on the potential for cumulative impacts**

- i. With a view to supporting future transboundary environmental impact assessments or strategic environmental assessments in marine regions, Parties and relevant intergovernmental mechanisms under the regional sea conventions/bodies would identify the emerging cumulative impacts and cross-border issues through the following anticipatory processes:
  - regional or sub-regional scale assessments exploring the potential cumulative effects of the planned development of offshore renewable energy resources; and
  - analyses of evolving baseline trends and impacts of development projections under the business-as-usual scenarios in the relevant assessment reports that the regional sea conventions/bodies prepare.

#### **F. Potential long-term coordination/cooperation opportunities**

- i. In the long-term perspective, Parties to the regional sea conventions/bodies can coordinate with the Parties to the Espoo Convention and its Protocol if they develop any future approaches for the assessment of the potentially significant adverse impacts (of plans, programmes or activities) on the marine environment.

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<sup>9</sup> See e.g. [https://www.rac-spa.org/spami\\_project](https://www.rac-spa.org/spami_project)

- ii. The Espoo Convention and its Protocol and the regional sea conventions/bodies may also explore options for the harmonisation of procedures and assessment methods, taking into account coastal zone sensitivity, carrying capacity, vulnerability to climate change and land-sea interactions. Such cooperation may gradually begin with sharing of information on marine environmental policy innovations that may be relevant for environmental assessments – such as maximum allowable inputs of nutrients that is being implemented and updated since 2007 within the framework of the Helsinki Convention. Such policy innovations could offer a useful reference framework for transboundary environmental impact assessments or strategic environmental assessments in different marine regions exposed to excessive pollution load levels.

**ANNEX II: Meeting agenda**  
**IDENTIFICATION OF SYNERGIES AND POSSIBLE COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN MARINE REGIONS**

**Second joint technical meeting**  
**16 June 2022 (CET/Geneva time)**  
**Online (via WebEx)**

Language: English

**Participants:**

Registered representatives of secretariats and Parties/member states from:

- The Barcelona Convention and its Protocols
- The Bucharest Convention and its Protocols
- The Espoo Convention and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- The Helsinki Convention and the Baltic Sea Action Plan
- The Ospar Convention
- The Tehran Convention and its Protocols

**Aims:**

- Introduce the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA and the activity under their joint workplan for 2021–2023 for the identification of synergies and possible cooperation activities in marine regions.
- Discuss a draft assessment report prepared by consultants based on inputs from the treaty secretariats.
- Present selected examples of good practice in the application of the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA in marine regions.
- Discuss key areas of interest and proposals for possible cooperation activities in marine regions.
- Discuss remaining information gaps and further steps.

**AGENDA**

<b>Indicative timing</b>	<b>Item</b>
8.30–9.30	<i>Testing of the online (WebEx) connections</i>
9.30–10.00	<b>I. Introductory session</b>
09.30–09.35	<b>Opening</b> (Tea Aulavuo, Secretary to the (Espoo) Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, UNECE)
09.35–10.00	<b>Introductory statements</b> by the donor country, Italy (Anna-Maria Maggiore, Head of sector, Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea) and the secretariats of the regional sea conventions/bodies
10.00–noon <i>(Including a short break)</i>	<b>II. Environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context in the respective marine regions</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Key provisions of the Espoo Convention</b> (Tea Aulavuo, Secretary)</li> <li>• <b>Good practice example</b> – Baltic Sea Pipeline (Marta Truszczyńska, General Directorate for Environmental Protection, Poland)</li> <li>• <b>Key findings from the draft assessment report</b>, including initial evaluation of the coherence of the relevant provisions and practice of the regional seas conventions and bodies with the Espoo Convention; and identification of remaining information gaps (Daniela Addis and Jiří Dušík, consultants to UNECE)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Key areas of interest for possible cooperation activities in marine regions</b> related to EIA in a transboundary context, addressing also opportunities/benefits as well as challenges and possible solutions regarding the application of transboundary EIA (Summary by Jiří Dusík, consultant, followed by a tour-de-table and facilitated discussion)</li> </ul>
Noon–13.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
13.00–15.00 <i>(Including a short break)</i>	<b>III. Strategic environmental impact assessment – in national and transboundary contexts – in the respective marine regions</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Key provisions of the Protocol on SEA</b> (Tea Aulavuo, Secretary)</li> <li>• <b>Good practice example</b> application of SEA in a transboundary context to Maritime Spatial Plans in the Adriatic Sea (Vesna Kolar-Planinšič, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenia, in cooperation with Italy)</li> <li>• <b>Key findings from the draft assessment report</b>, including initial analysis - evaluation of the coherence of the relevant provisions and practice of the regional seas conventions and bodies with the Espoo Convention, and identification of remaining information gaps (Jiří Dusík and Daniela Addis, consultants)</li> <li>• <b>Key areas of interest for possible cooperation activities in marine regions</b> related to SEA in marine regions – both in national and transboundary contexts - addressing also opportunities/benefits, challenges and possible solutions to its application (opening summary by Jiří Dusík, consultant, followed by a tour-de-table and facilitated discussion)</li> </ul>
15.00–15.15	<i>Break</i>
15.15–16.45	<b>IV. Key areas of interest and proposals for possible cooperation activities in marine regions and remaining information gaps</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recap on the key suggestions and points made</b> under the sessions II and III above (Jiří Dusík and Daniela Addis, consultants)</li> <li>• <b>Tour de table and discussion</b> on possible priority cooperation activities in marine regions</li> </ul>
16.45–17.00	<b>V. Closing remarks</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next steps before the third joint meeting (tentatively scheduled to be held online, on 6 and 7 July 2023) (Tea Aulavuo, Secretary to the Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA)</li> </ul>
17.00	End of the meeting

**ANNEX III: Meeting attendees**

**Governments (UNECE Bodies) - ECE Member States**

***Cyprus***

Ms. Theodora IOANNOU Environment Officer Department of Environment	1411 Nicosia, Cyprus Nicosia Cyprus Phone: +35726804574 Email: theoannou@environment.moa.gov.cy
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***France***

Mr. Mehdi KHNISSI Chargé de mission - Droit de l'évaluation environnementale	23 rue de la Brèche aux Loups Paris France Phone: +33764074720 Email: mehdi.khnissi@developpement- durable.gouv.fr
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***Greece***

Mr. Alexandros KOLLIPOULOS Legal Advisor Legal Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs	10, Zalokosta street Athens Greece Phone: 302103683648 Email: kollio@mfa.gr
Mr. Alexandros KOULIDIS Head of Unit C in the Directorate of Environmental Licensing Ministry of Environment and Energy	11, Alexandras Av. Athens Greece Phone: +302106417951 Email a.koulidis@prv.ypeka.gr
Ms. Erietta SCALIERI Legal department MFA	Zalokosta 10 Athens Greece Phone: +302103682743 Email: scalieri@mfa.gr

***Israel***

Ms. Ayelet ROSEN Head, MEAs Ministry of Environmental Protection	7 Bank of Israel Street Jerusalem Israel Jerusalem Israel Phone: +972506736708 Email: ayeletr@sviva.gov.il
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***Italy***

Ms. Anna Maria MAGGIORE Head of sector	via Cristoforo Colombo 44 Rome Italy Phone: +393478614314 Email: maggiore.annamaria@minambiente.it
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Ms. Cecilia BACCHETTI  
technical support

via sisto IV 5  
Rome  
Italy  
Phone: +393394062525  
Email: bacchetti.cecilia@mite.gov.it

Mr. Federico BREGA  
Italian ministry member

Aldo Moro 7  
Serra San Quirico  
Italy  
Phone: 393351456752  
Email: brega.federico@mite.gov.it

Ms. Valentina LOGGI  
  
Technical Support

via le mosse 26B  
Camerino  
Italy  
Phone: 3495722314  
  
Email: loggi.valentina@mite.gov.it

### ***Malta***

Ms. Leonora D'AMATO  
Senior Officer  
Environment and Resources Authority

Hexagon House, Spencer Hill  
Marsa  
Malta  
Phone: 35622923739  
Email: leonora.damato@era.org.mt

### ***Poland***

Ms. Dorota TORYFTER-SZUMANSKA  
Deputy Director

Wawelska Str. 52/54  
Warsaw  
Poland  
Phone: +48 885 654 610  
Email: dorota.szumanska@gdos.gov.pl

Ms. Marta TRUSZEWSKA  
Senior specialist

Wawelska 52/54  
Warsaw  
Poland  
Phone: +48 885 654 537  
Email: marta.truszevska@gdos.gov.pl

### ***Romania***

Ms. Mihaela MACELARU  
  
Counsellor

12 Libertatii Boulevard, Bucharest  
Bucharest  
Romania  
Phone: 0040752119630  
Email: mihaela.macelaru@mmediu.ro

### ***Slovenia***

Ms. Vesna KOLAR-PLANINŠIČ  
Head of SEA/EIA Division  
Ministry of the Environment and Spatial  
planning

Dunajska 48  
Ljubljana  
Slovenia  
Phone: +38651325852  
Email: vesna.kolar-planinsic@gov.si

Mr. Mitja BRICELJ  
Secretary  
Ministry of Environment and Spatial  
Planning

Dunajska 48  
Ljubljana  
Slovenia  
Phone: +38631367101  
Email: mitja.bricelj@gov.si

***Spain***

Ms. Virginia ESTÉVEZ ADÁN  
Technical Advisor

Plaza San Juan de la Cruz s/n  
Madrid  
Spain  
Phone: +34915976558  
Email: vestevez@miteco.es

***Sweden***

Ms. Emma SJOBERG  
Desk Officer  
Ministry of the Environment Sweden

Ivan Hedqists väg 5 129 43 Hägersten  
Stockholm  
Sweden  
Phone: 0046730769135  
Email: emma.m.sjoberg@gov.se

***Tunisia***

Mr. Mohamed Sghaier BEN JEDDOU  
MAP focal point of Tunisia

Ministère de l'environnement Tunisie  
Tunis  
Tunisia  
Phone: 0021698577699  
Email:  
mohamed.benjeddou@mineat.gov.tn

***Türkiye***

Ms. AYSUN BOŞÇA  
Expert  
Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and  
Climate Change

Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and  
Climate Change  
Ankara  
Türkiye  
Phone: 905332168141  
Email: aysunvatansever@gmail.com

Mr. Mehmet Tamer ÇOBANOĞLU  
Expert  
Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and  
Climate Change of Türkiye

ANKARA/TURKEY  
Ankara  
Türkiye  
Phone: +903125863059  
Email: mehmet.cobanoglu@csb.gov.tr

Ms. Özlem ÖRME  
Branch Manager  
Ministry of Environment , Urbanization  
and Climate Change

Ankara Turkey  
Ankara  
Türkiye  
Phone: +903124103045  
Email: ozlem.orme@csb.gov.tr

***United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland***

Mr. Andrew SCARSBROOK  
Head of UK Marine Strategy  
DEFRA

Defra. Seacole Building, Marsham Street.  
Westminster.  
London  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland  
Phone: +447901657772

Ms. Samantha WATTS  
Policy official  
DEFRA

Email: andrew.scarsbrook@defra.gov.uk

46 Victoria House, Mayhill Way  
Gloucester  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland  
Phone: +447934603445  
Email: samantha.watts@defra.gov.uk

## **European Union**

### ***European Commission***

Ms. Milena NOVAKOVA  
Legal and Policy Officer

BREY 2 DG ENVIRONMENT Unit E.4  
Brussels  
Belgium  
Phone: +32222995379  
Email: milena.novakova@ec.europa.eu

## **United Nations - Secretariat**

### ***UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention secretariat, UNEP-MAP***

Mr. Ilias MAVROEIDIS  
Programme Management Officer-  
Governance

Vas. Konstantinou 48, Athens 11635  
Athens  
Greece  
Phone: 302107273132  
Email: ilias.mavroeidis@un.org

Mr. Stavros ANTONIADIS  
Associate Administrative Officer

Vas. Konstantinou 48  
Athens  
Greece  
Phone: 306942559337  
Email: stavros.antoniadis@un.org

### ***PAP/RAC Regional Activity Centre of UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention***

Mr. Marko PREM  
Deputy Director

Kraj sv. Ivana 11 21000 Split Croatia  
Split  
Croatia  
Phone: +38521340475  
Email: marko.prem@paprac.org

### ***Tehran Convention Secretariat, UNEP***

Mr. Mateusz BENKO  
TC Officer  
UNEP, TC

Chateliane 2  
Geneva  
Suisse  
Phone: 41774760717  
Email: mateusz.benko@un.org

## **Intergovernmental Organizations**

### ***Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - HELCOM***

Ms. Lotta RUOKANEN  
Professional Secretary

Katajanokanlaituri 6 B, 00160 Helsinki,  
Finland  
Helsinki  
Finland  
Phone: +358405050392  
Email: lotta.ruokanen@helcom.fi

***Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution***

Ms. Iryna MAKARENKO  
PMA Officer

Maslak Mh, Buyukdere Cd., 265 Sariyer  
34398 Istanbul  
Istanbul  
Türkiye  
Phone: +905333936225  
Email: iryna.makarenko79@gmail.com

***OSPAR Secretariat***

Mr. Philip STAMP  
Deputy Secretary

12 Finsbury Square  
London, EC2A 1AS  
London  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland  
Phone: +447932088831  
Email: philip.stamp@ospar.org

**Other**

Mr. Jiří DUSÍK  
Consultant

Mezi silnicemi 17  
Plzen  
Czech Republic  
Phone: +420603214487  
Email: jiri.dusik@integracons.com

Ms. Daniela ADDIS  
Consultant

Piazza dell'Oro, 3  
Rome  
Italy  
Phone: +393516229550  
Email: daniela.addis@gmail.com

**UNECE Secretariat**

***United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)***

Ms. Tea AULAVUO  
Secretary, Convention on  
Environmental Impact Assessment in a  
Transboundary Context (Espoo  
Convention) and the Protocol on  
Strategic Environmental Assessment  
United Nations Economic Commission  
for Europe

Palais des Nations, 8-14 avenue de la Paix  
Geneva  
Switzerland  
Phone: +41229171723  
Email: tea.aulavuo@un.org

Ms. Maricar DELA CRUZ  
Programme Management Assistant  
United Nations Economic Commission  
for Europe

Palais des Nations, 8-14 avenue de la Paix  
Geneva  
Switzerland  
Phone: +412291722682  
Email: maricar.delacruz@un.org

