



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS  
**SHIPPING DEPUTY MINISTRY**

**POLICY STATEMENT ON MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING**  
(unofficial translation)

**21 DECEMBER 2021**

## **PREAMBLE**

The Policy Statement (PS) is the strategic framework for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and the Maritime Spatial Plan (MSPlan) which will be subsequently prepared in the marine waters of the Republic of Cyprus.

The PS sets the vision, priorities, goals (economic, social, cultural and environmental) and strategic guidelines of the State, taking into account the need for sustainable growth.

The PS is prepared on the basis of the provisions of the Maritime Spatial Planning and other Related Matters Laws of 2017 and 2021 (Law 144(I)/2017 which adopts Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Union, as amended by Law 34(I)/2021) and other relevant policies and related legislation at European and national level.

The PS was based on the deliverable of a special study entitled "*Study for the Policy Statement on Maritime Spatial Planning*" which accompanies it as a supporting document.

The PS takes into account the existing economic, social, environmental and cultural dimension of marine waters, as well as the Development Plans implemented in coastal areas of Cyprus (according to the Town and Spatial Planning Law) and the Strategy and Action Plan for the Integrated Coastal Zone Management. As a result, land-sea interactions are taken into account and the coherence of the MSP with the respective institutional procedures related to the integrated coastal areas management is promoted.

Furthermore, the PS takes into account the main challenges the marine space faces, such as the effects of climate change, cross-border issues and cooperation with neighbouring countries, and the EU's shift to sustainable investment.

## 1. VISION

Cyprus's vision for its marine waters is their sustainable exploitation and growth.

This vision stems from the Cyprus's National Strategy for an Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) approved by the Council of Ministers on 22 August 2014 and therefore it must be ensured that the marine waters are "clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse".

## 2. STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

In order to achieve the characteristics of the vision "clean, healthy and biologically diverse marine waters" the following strategic guidelines are selected, which derive from both the Cyprus's National Strategy for an Integrated Maritime Policy and the Limassol Declaration:

- Protection and sustainable use of the marine environment.
- Enhancing marine research, knowledge and innovation.

In order to achieve the characteristics of the vision of "safe marine waters", the following strategic guidelines are selected, which derive from the Cyprus's National Strategy for an Integrated Maritime Policy:

- Development of national consciousness for the seas.
- Strengthening the international dimension of the Cyprus's IMP.

In order to achieve the characteristics of the vision of "productive marine waters", the following strategic guideline is chosen, which derives from both the Cyprus's National Strategy for an Integrated Maritime Policy and the Limassol Declaration:

- Development of a sustainable maritime economy, with sustainable exploitation of natural resources (including minerals), with quality, reliability and social and environmental responsibility.

## 3. STRATEGIC GOALS

The above strategic guidelines can be specified in the following strategic goals based on the components of sustainable growth:

### **For the Blue Economy (BE)**

- Planning sustainable actions taking into account the Green Deal, the circular economy, the need for gradual independence from fossil fuels in the energy sector and the EU's shift to environmentally friendly technologies.

- Increasing the competitiveness of the marine and maritime development sectors.
- Unleashing the growth potential of the Blue Economy by promoting innovations and development of marine areas for testing, verification and demonstration of innovative technologies.
- Securing the necessary investments and promoting public-private partnerships.
- Encouraging the development of new (green) technologies for safe and sustainable exploitation of marine mineral deposits.

#### **For Social Cohesion (SC)**

- Utilising of the socio-cultural character of the lifestyle centered around the sea and the coasts and its strengthening with appropriate policies, in order to protect and stimulate the cultural identity of the local communities, to improve the living standard of their inhabitants and to function as an attraction and dynamism pole.
- Enhancing the attractiveness of the marine and maritime professions, by providing appropriate training and promoting a safety culture in the workplace and the mobility of the workforce between sectors and between cities and/ or countries.
- Ensuring that local communities and civil society in general are given the opportunity to participate and benefit from the development of existing and new innovative activities.
- Improving working conditions in the marine and maritime professions.

#### **For the Protection of the Environment (PE)**

- Ensuring Good Environmental Status of the sea, promoting the objectives of the relevant EU Directives.
- Developing a coherent network of marine protected areas, based on the principle of Ecological Approach, and ensuring biodiversity with the respective ecosystem services.
- Addressing air and marine pollution from ships and other sources-activities.
- Preserving the physiognomy of coastal landscapes and at the same time concern for the non-alteration of the cultural identity of the local communities.
- Increasing knowledge about the sea and its diffusion.
- Implementing appropriate management, prevention and adaptation practices to the effects of Climate Change and the effects of other processes, in order to enhance the resilience of coastal areas, marine ecosystems and marine activities.

#### **For Governance (G)**

- Ensuring compatibility and synergy of marine uses with coastal ones, taking into account the land-sea interaction.

- Strengthening cooperation and maritime governance, providing for clear and effective decision-making and consultation processes with coordination and transparency, taking into account the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy and Action Plan and the corresponding institutional procedures.
- Strengthening integrated maritime surveillance and developing a National Common Information Sharing Environment.
- Formulating of coherent planning for investments.
- Ensuring coherence of economic, social and environmental goals.
- Defending national security.
- Strengthening cross-sectoral collaborations and exchange of good practices at national and international level.

#### **4. SPECIFIC GOALS**

For the implementation of both the Vision for the marine waters of Cyprus and the aforementioned Strategic Guidelines and Strategic Goals which are specialized based on the components of sustainable growth, the following Specific Goals per development sector<sup>1</sup> are identified, for the implementation of which the competent government Services already have ongoing strategies, policies and programs or actions:

##### **Fisheries and Aquaculture**

- Encouraging sustainable fishing activities. (BE)
- Developing economically viable, environmentally compatible and socially acceptable aquaculture. (BE, SC, PE)
- Supporting research and innovation in the aquaculture sector. (BE)
- Improving the competitiveness, efficiency and productivity of Cypriot aquaculture. (BE)
- Supporting the development of blue biotechnology, with an equal distribution of benefits from the use of genetic resources. (BE, PE)

##### **Energy**

- Rational and sustainable exploitation of the potential hydrocarbon deposits of the Cypriot EEZ. (BE)

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<sup>1</sup> They are listed with a neutral approach, without hierarchy and in alphabetical order (in the Greek text). The correlation with the components of sustainable growth as described in the Strategic Goals is shown in parentheses.

- Rational and sustainable development of submarine energy infrastructure, such as the routing of electricity cables and gas pipelines (e.g. natural gas or hydrogen), as well as their protection. (BE, G)
- Utilization of marine renewable energy sources, taking into account the 'Green Deal' of the EU for net zero emissions by 2050. (BE, PE)
- Maximizing innovation opportunities. (BE)
- Encourage the development of technology and infrastructure for carbon capture and storage. (BE, PE)

### **Maritime and Coastal Tourism**

- Supporting sustainable maritime and coastal tourism (according to the approved National Tourism Strategy). (BE, SC)
- Promotion of alternative forms of coastal tourism with a focus on maritime activities as a result of land-sea interdependence, to increase the attractiveness of Cyprus as a destination. (BE, SC)
- Recording/ documentation, protection, promotion and safe management of marine antiquities.
- Maximizing innovation opportunities. (BE)
- Preserving the cultural identity of local communities. (SC)

### **Shipping - Ports**

- Improving competitiveness. (BE)
- Maximizing innovation opportunities. (BE)
- Supporting integrated maritime surveillance. (PE, G)
- Ensuring the cleanliness, protection and safety of the seas. (PE)
- Promoting the ecological operation of ports ("green" ports) with the use of renewable sources or other sustainable options. (PE)

### **Additional Specific Goals**

In addition to the above-mentioned specific goals per development sector, for the further implementation of the Vision and the Strategic Guidelines and Strategic Goals regarding the **environmental and socio-cultural dimension**, the following additional Specific Goals are identified, deriving from policies and programs of the competent government Services:

- Management and protection of Natura 2000 Network areas and protection of marine endangered species and their habitats.

- Control and prevention of water and soil pollution from the operation of facilities and activities and, in general, from any activity that can or tends to pollute the water and the soil, especially in the coastal area.
- Ensuring good quality of bathing waters.
- Protection of coastal areas from erosion, taking into account the possible consequences of Climate Change, the possible sea level rise, as well as the Land-Sea Interactions.

Finally, for the implementation of all the above General and Specific Goals, the importance of timely **orientation of investments** for each individual development sector is pointed out as a **horizontal objective**, so that they really contribute to sustainable growth, given the new EU policies of Green Deal and taxonomy of investments, and they have the potential for achieving Community funding.

## 5. PRIORITIES FOR THE MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING

The following economic-social and environmental-cultural priorities are set for the preparation of the spatial organisation of the marine and maritime development activities and uses of the Cyprus's sea through the MSP and consequently through the MSPlan:

### 5. 1 Economic - Social priorities

The following economic-social priorities are recorded with a neutral approach, without hierarchy:

- **Utilisation of hydrocarbon reserves and sustainable development of related infrastructure.** The MSPlan should take into account plans for the future development of energy infrastructure, such as submarine gas pipelines (e.g. "EastMed" Project of Common Interest), as well as their protection.
- **Protection of the existing submarine cable network and sustainable development of new networks** in the Cypriot EEZ, which ensures the operation of basic infrastructure and provision for future infrastructure approved in the framework of international telecommunications and energy cooperation (e.g. "EuroAsia Interconnector" and "EuroAfrica Interconnector" Projects of Common Interest).
- **Development of offshore renewable energy facilities.** The location and operation of offshore facilities for renewable energy sources, taking into account their interaction with projects on land. The implementation of RES projects could help reduce dependence on fossil fuels, reduce the carbon footprint and tackle Climate Change and its effects.
- **Safety of Navigation.** Safety of navigation and the provision of the necessary **supporting infrastructure** (e.g. port facilities and port areas) are of paramount importance. The

MSPlan should have the necessary spatial provisions for the operation of these activities and future extensions that will be deemed necessary, taking into account the navigation corridors, existing and planned ports, marinas and pleasure crafts' berthing areas.

- **Strengthening maritime and coastal tourism.** Given the importance of coastal tourism, the MSPlan should provide marine recreational areas in relation to land-based tourism facilities and in combination where appropriate and possible with other compatible marine uses.
- **Fisheries protection and sustainable development of aquaculture.** Fishing may be compatible with several other marine uses, but catches may be significantly affected by some marine activities and relocated from their habitats, sometimes affecting local communities. The MSPlan should provide areas for coexistence of uses and conditions for mutual benefit. Aquaculture is also a relevant sector with an export perspective and socio-economic benefits for the country. The MSPlan should provide suitable sites for the location of these units, taking into account the existing facilities, with prospects for the development of the sector in the coming years, with the necessary land infrastructure combined for more units where possible.

## 5.2 Environmental - Cultural priorities

The following environmental-cultural priorities are recorded with a neutral approach, without hierarchy:

- **Preservation of Protected Areas.** The spatial arrangements will adopt the regulations regarding the declared Protected Areas, the geomorphological formations of special importance, as well as the habitats of the marine protected species, providing, where necessary, coherent corridors between them and buffer zones.
- **Protection of marine waters from pollution.** The MSP will take into account Cyprus's commitments to both the relevant EU Directives<sup>2</sup> and the Barcelona Convention and its related Protocols, which have been ratified by corresponding laws. The proposed spatial planning solutions should contribute to the implementation of the individual commitments as much as possible.
- **Improving the quality of the atmosphere.** Inclusion of potential adverse effects of activities on air quality as there are both marine and coastal activities that contribute to air pollution.

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<sup>2</sup> In particular, the Water Framework Directive, the Bathing Water Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, as well as any decisions arising therefrom.



- **Mitigation of negative effects of noise to the marine environment.** Inclusion in order to avoid and control the negative effects of noise on the marine environment, as it can adversely affect sensitive marine species as well as humans.
- **Inclusion of the effects of Climate Change** in Cyprus. These impacts have been assessed by the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in order to be addressed. Appropriate adaptation measures in various sectors (tourism, ports, marinas, pleasure crafts' berthing areas, fisheries-aquaculture, desalination units) should be taken into account in the preparation of the MSPlan.
- **Inclusion of erosion and deterioration of sensitive shores.** Appropriate spatial planning solutions can reduce the negative consequences. The MSPlan should also provide for measures to reduce geomorphological changes that may be caused by the existence of some coastal and marine uses.
- **Protection of coastal and marine Landscapes** Their protection should be in line with the European Landscape Convention<sup>3</sup>, as well as the Cultural/ Historical Heritage<sup>4</sup>, if and where they exist and depending on their importance and the risk of their loss.

## 6. SPATIAL GUIDELINES

In addition, the following spatial guidelines are given for the spatial organisation of the marine development activities and uses of Cyprus and the preparation of the MSPlan:

- The MSPlan will be **unified, functional and coherent**, which will integrate the individual existing, under licensed or future marine activities and uses and will cover the marine waters of the Republic of Cyprus.
- For a better documentation of the proposals of the MSPlan, it is necessary to prepare the following studies/ actions as part of the procedural step of data analysis:
  - **identify compatible and incompatible uses and activities and the compatibility terms of some of them**, using appropriate tools and methodologies,
  - **recording, mapping and evaluation of the ecosystem characteristics of the sea and the seabed and the ecosystem services** they provide. Utilisation of the recordings so far,
  - **assess the cumulative impact of existing and planned marine activities**, using appropriate tools and methodologies, and identify necessary actions to ensure a Good

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<sup>3</sup> The European Landscape Convention (Ratification) Law of 2006 (Law 4(III)/2006) is relevant.

<sup>4</sup> The Republic of Cyprus ratified the International Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1975.

Environmental Status, and

- assessment of **total risk and sensitivity/ vulnerability of areas**, in accordance with existing sustainable development policies, using appropriate methods.
- The MSPlan proposals will include defined **key areas/ zones** for the development in each of them compatible marine activities and uses, taking into account in particular:
  - the **ecosystem-based approach** and the need to respect the integrity of ecosystems as much as possible,
  - the existing and planned activities and uses in the adjacent **coastal/ land area** to ensure synergies,
  - the need to protect **marine antiquities**, and
  - the possibility of organising compatible activities and uses in parallel **in all three "dimensions" of the marine space**: the surface, the water column and the seabed.
- Proposal of additional **regulations, which ensure the good operation** within each area/ zone and/ or development of conditional activities in sea areas outside these predetermined sea areas/ zones.
- Identification and use of **spatial options**, which can help to ensure compliance with the criteria and indicators of **Good Environmental Status** of marine waters (and any selected surface terrestrial) waters.
- Identify and use of **spatial options**, which can help to **adapt to the expected effects of Climate Change**.
- Inclusion in the MSPlan of a mechanism for **systematic monitoring and evaluation of its implementation**.