



## Maritime Spatial Planning Country Profile

Bulgaria

# Contact

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# Background Information

## Basic facts on Marine Waters



The Bulgarian territorial sea (12-nm zone from the baseline, including internal waters, covers approximately 6,358 km<sup>21</sup>. The contiguous zone (12-nm zone from the territorial sea) is approximately 5,200 km<sup>2</sup>, and the Exclusive Economic Zone, agreed with Turkey in 1997, is about 29,052 km<sup>2</sup>. Delimitation of boundaries with Romania is pending (Territorial Sea, Continental Shelf and EEZ)<sup>1</sup>.

## Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) authorities and legislation

### General

Until 2018, Maritime Spatial Planning has followed a sectoral approach. Some general measures, that cover MSP and ICZM, are mentioned in the Development Strategies of the coastal districts (Burgas, Varna and Dobrich), in the National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture in Bulgaria (2014-2020), in the National Regional Development Strategy (2012-2022) and in the Marine Strategy for Conservation of the Environment in the Marine Waters of Bulgaria 2016-2021 and its Programme of Measures according to the MSFD.

#### Planning on national level

Bulgaria transposed the MSP Directive<sup>2</sup> at the beginning of 2018 by an amendment of the Maritime Spaces, Inland Waterways and Ports of the Republic of Bulgaria Act<sup>3</sup>. Since then, the Advisory Council on Maritime Spatial Planning has

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/STATEFILES/BGR.htm> - the link is not updated with the latest amendment of the [Maritime Spaces, Inland Waterways and Ports of the Republic of Bulgaria Act](#)

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the maritime spatial planning.

<sup>3</sup> Law on amendment of the Maritime Spaces, Inland Waterways and Ports of the Republic of Bulgaria Act, promulgated State Gazette No. 28 of 29.03.2018; the act is available in Bulgarian at: <http://dv.parliament.bg/DVWeb/showMaterialDV.jsp?idMat=124492>.

been working on the development of the Plan. Bulgaria has had a National Maritime Strategy<sup>ii</sup> since 2016 related to the MSFD.

National MSP authority

Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works

Planning at a regional level

Some general measures, that cover MSP and ICZM, are mentioned in the Development Strategies of the coastal districts (Burgas, Varna and Dobrich), in the National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture in Bulgaria (2014-2020) and in the National Regional Development Strategy (2012-2022). Pilot plans have also been developed as part of cross-border projects (e.g. PlanCoast, MARSPLAN-BS).

Regional MSP authority

Not applicable.

## Details

The **Maritime Space, Inland Waterways and Ports of the Republic of Bulgaria Act** establishes the legal regime for the maritime space and for maritime spatial planning. In March 2018, a new Chapter titled “Using the Maritime Spaces and Protection of Marine Waters” was introduced into the Act. According to the new **Article 51a**, maritime spaces of the Republic of Bulgaria are to be used in compliance with the principle of integrated maritime management. To promote sustainable growth of the marine economy, sustainable growth of the Bulgarian Black Sea region and sustainable use of the natural resources, Maritime Spatial Planning is applied – an instrument of the Integrated Maritime Policy of the European Union. The provision explains the term “Maritime Spatial Planning”: it includes analysis of all activities related to the use of maritime spaces and organising them in a way, which allows their joint existence to achieve environmental, economic and social objectives.

The overall management and coordination of the Maritime Spatial Planning related activities is performed by the **Minister of Regional Development and Public Works**, who is also responsible for developing and maintaining the Maritime Spatial Plan of Bulgaria (Article 51b). Furthermore, an Advisory Council on Maritime Spatial Planning has been established as a subsidiary body to the Minister. The latter supports the cooperation and coordination between relevant stakeholders during the Maritime Spatial Planning process. Its tasks and responsibilities are defined within the ‘Regulation on the Functions, Tasks and Composition of the Advisory Board on Maritime Spatial Planning to the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works’, effective from 25th September 2018, issued by the Minister, and published in the State Gazette.

The next new article stipulates that Bulgaria’s Maritime Spatial Plan shall cover its maritime spaces pursuant Art. 5, paragraph 1 of the same Act, including coastal waters. The Plan will not be used for defining and delimiting maritime boundaries in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It defines the spatial and temporal distribution of existing activities and those planned for the future with regard to maritime spaces, except those activities related to defence and national security.

Relevant MSP provisions have also been introduced in the [Regional Development Act](#)<sup>4</sup>. Art. 14 (2) and (3) stipulates that the scope and the content of the Maritime Spatial Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria as well as the terms and conditions for its elaboration, adoption, implementation and actualisation are stated in the Maritime Spaces, Inland Waterways and Ports of the Republic of Bulgaria Act. The Act also provides that the Maritime Spatial Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria should be developed by a state consulting company at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.

The Maritime Spatial Plan of Bulgaria covers :

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|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The maritime traffic regulation system of the Republic of Bulgaria;</li> <li>2. Zones and polygons designated for military trainings;</li> <li>3. Zones for exploration, extraction and exploitation of natural resources;</li> <li>4. Fishing zones;</li> <li>5. Aquaculture zones;</li> <li>6. Zones for tourism and recreational activities;</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Protected zones and protected areas of the national ecological network;</li> <li>9. Protected zones of national cultural heritage;</li> <li>10. Routes of underwater linear objects (e.g. pipes &amp; cables) of the technical infrastructure;</li> <li>11. Installations and facilities related to shipping;</li> <li>12. Installations and facilities used for exploration and exploitation of mineral and energy resources;</li> </ol> |
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<sup>4</sup>Regional Development Act, promulgated State Gazette No 50 of 30 May 2008; last amended: State Gazette No 21 of 13 March 2020; the act is available in Bulgarian at: <https://www.lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2135589285>.

#### 7. Zones for scientific research;

#### 13. Objects of underwater cultural heritage.

The Maritime Spatial Plan of Bulgaria was developed on the basis of analysis of existing environmental, geological, geomorphological and physical information, data accessible through the National Spatial Data Portal, and data on the social and economic activities listed above. The following issues are being taken into account:

- specific features of the Black Sea region;
- status of biological, mineral and energy resources;
- existing and future activities related to the use of marine spaces as well as their impact on the environment, underwater cultural heritage;
- land-sea interactions;
- cross-border cooperation in the Black Sea region.

# Maritime Spatial Plans

## Progress

The Black Sea Basin Directorate published an Evaluation of the Condition of the Maritime Environment (2013). It was prepared in accordance with art. 8 of the MSFD and the Ordinance for Environment and Sea Water Protection. The report covers the maritime area that falls within the Exclusive Economic Zone, where the littoral state (in this case Bulgaria) exercises its sovereignty for the purposes of research and exploitation, as well as for the protection and management of natural resources and the seabed.

The draft version of the Maritime Spatial Plan was presented to the European Commission on 31 March 2021 and was open to public consultation until 26 June 2021. At the same time, the Environmental Impact Assessment, which is considered an integral part of the plan, was launched.

The process of public consultations for the draft National Maritime Spatial Plan covering the period 2021-2035 and the Report on the Ecological Assessment of the plan, have been completed. On 31 August 2021, a public online event called “Public discussion of the two major documents” was carried out and hosted by the Ministry of Regional development and Public Works. The opinions, remarks and comments received during the whole consultation process from all stakeholders have been reflected within the draft Maritime Spatial Plan and the Report on its Ecological Assessment. The final approval of the MSP Ecological Assessment was given by the Ministry of Environment and Waters as a competent authority.

## MARSPLAN-BS

In parallel with the MSP process, Bulgaria took part in the EMFF funded “Cross-Border Maritime Spatial Planning for the Black-Sea – Romania and Bulgaria ([MARSPLAN - BS](#))” project. It was implemented in 2015-2018 jointly by the Romanian and Bulgarian authorities responsible for spatial planning, maritime affairs and waters, and a number of scientific institutes. The organisations from (Bulgaria were the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works of Bulgaria; the Bulgarian Ports Infrastructure Company; the Executive Agency “Maritime Administration”; and the Institute of Oceanology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences). The project supported the setting up of an institutional framework for cross-border cooperation with regard to maritime spatial planning, defining a common methodology for analysis and spatial planning in the cross-border area, a common strategic framework for maritime spatial planning in Romania and Bulgaria, and for elaboration of a pilot Maritime Spatial Plan of the cross-border area “Mangalia – Shabla”. Along with the completion of the MARSPLAN-BS project (2015 - 2018), the MSP Directive 2014/89/EU was transposed into the national legislation.

## Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Bulgaria adopted its maritime spatial plan, the Marine Spatial Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria, in May 2023.

The Plan will be reviewed every 10 years or earlier if significant changes in the socio-economic conditions of the country occur.

## Overview of MSP related uses and issues

The Black Sea is a key EU Eastern gate, a junction between Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East; an important transport and energy hub; a crossroad of different cultures; and a region with a large political, social and economic fragmentation. Bulgaria and Romania provide the EU access to the Black Sea and are therefore the main drivers of the initiatives related to MSP in the Black Sea region.

The Black Sea Basin Directorate Management Plan for the period 2016-2021 specified integrated measures and aimed at protection against pollution, protection of specially designated areas, protection of coastal marine areas, water efficiency, adaptation to climate change, and other aspects.

The area is confronted with several issues, in particular: nature protection and recreation under the Habitats Directive. Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive list 58 habitat types, 79 animals and 6 plants<sup>5</sup> in the Black Sea. Some of these are marine species such as the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin. There are also 40 coastal Sites of Community Importance (SCIs).

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<sup>5</sup><https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/info/pubs/docs/biogeos/Black%20Sea.pdf>

# Aspects of the MSP process

## Sustainable development and growth in the maritime sector

Between 2015 and 2018, the European Union has supported the region's blue economy, which represents all economic activities related to our oceans, seas or coastal areas, with more than 13 million euros. In May 2019, ministers from seven Black Sea countries – Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine – met in Bucharest to endorse the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea. With this, the Black Sea region joins the rest of the sea basins bordering the EU in setting a basin-wide initiative for more, and more sustainable, economic growth.

[The Black Sea CONNECT](#) is a key H2020 coordination and support action (CSA) which will scientifically, technically and logistically support the broader Black Sea Blue Growth Initiative, supported by the European Commission (EC) and composed of country-appointed experts, stakeholders and various national and international organisations. Black Sea CONNECT is the first project in its own field for the Black Sea. The overall objective of the Black Sea CONNECT is to coordinate the development of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), based on the defined principles in the Burgas Vision Paper and support the development of Blue Growth in the Black Sea<sup>6</sup>.

The H2020 project “Developing Optimal and Open Research Support for the Black Sea” ([DOORS](#)) aims to implement the Strategic Agenda for Research - Innovation of the Black Sea at the level of the entire maritime basin. The project is led by GEOECOMAR and will harmonise research and provide the infrastructure to better understand the Black Sea, particular ecosystem characteristics, develop the framework to support Blue Growth and early development of start-ups, and provide evidence to inform policy and behavioural change. To reach its ambitious objectives, the project team will work closely with stakeholders from the start to develop an open research system and establish a framework to support continuous stakeholder dialogue. DOORS will implement three Work Programmes: a System of Systems to harmonise approaches and provide an accessible data repository, a Blue Growth Accelerator to support enterprise, and Knowledge Transfer and Training to share best practice and build capacity<sup>7</sup>.

The H2020 project “[BRIDGE-BS](#) - Advancing Black Sea Research and Innovation to Co-Develop Blue Growth within Resilient Ecosystems” proposes a multidisciplinary, multisectoral programme building on regional and international initiatives. The project will develop predictive tools and capabilities necessary to understand and predict the impacts of climate-driven and anthropogenic multi-stressors on the services stemming from Black Sea ecosystems. These services and their responses to stressors will be mapped, monitored and modelled in order to identify a safe operating space within which a sustainable blue economy can flourish. To this end, BRIDGE-BS is structured around “three” interconnected nodes: Service Dynamics, Blue Growth Incubators and Empowered Citizens<sup>8</sup>.



### Ecosystem-based approach (EBA)

According to the Ordinance for Environment and Sea Water Protection, promulgated in State Gazette 94/30.11.2010, the Marine Strategy should be based on the EBA.<sup>iii</sup> In addition, the Ordinance gives a definition for a Maritime Protected Area. It does not however deal with issues strictly pertaining to MSP.

It should be noted that all measures elaborated by the Ministry of Environment and Waters, with the participation of the responsible public bodies according to Art. 13 of the MSFD, are in compliance with the ecosystem-based approach.

Moreover, the MISIS project supported an increase in the size and number of Maritime Protected Areas in the Black Sea. Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey have established protected areas, which include marine parts, the categories of protection being quite similar. The process of designing protected areas has been carried out mostly in the frame of Natura 2000 in Bulgaria and Romania, and the Emerald Network and Ramsar Convention in Turkey. Bulgaria already has a total of 19 marine protected areas<sup>9</sup>, which comprise parts of both marine and terrestrial (coastal) environments.

The project CREAM dealt with the establishment of a research network for promotion of an Ecosystem-based approach to fisheries.

<sup>6</sup> <http://connect2blacksea.org/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://geoecomar.ro/noutati/doors-un-nou-proiect-h2020-coordonat-de-catre-geoecomar/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101000240>

<sup>9</sup> <http://natura2000.moew.government.bg/Home/Map>



## Resilience to climate change impacts

In October 2019 the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy<sup>10</sup> and Action Plan for the Republic of Bulgaria was approved by the Council of Ministers. This strategy is setting a series of general strategic objectives:

- Mainstream and integrate climate change adaptation.
- Build institutional capacity for climate change.
- Raise awareness on climate change adaptation.
- Build climate change resilience.

It also defines objectives in various fields such as agriculture, energy, biodiversity and ecosystem services, forestry, human health, tourism, transport, urban environment and water. The document considers the possible impacts and risks to the marine environment. Rising temperatures can have negative effects on aquaculture and fisheries as the droughts may lead to a reduction in the water levels, which could threaten farming systems. Spawning seasons can also be affected by possible temperature rises. Rises in sea-levels represent a threat for tourism, as it can lead to the loss of coastal areas. Burgas, Varna and Dobrich regions offer the main tourism products, as they are popular sites, especially in the summer. A rise in sea-levels is also a threat to infrastructure such as energy infrastructure, which could become more vulnerable.

The Strategy is intended to serve as a reference document and sets adaptation actions and priorities until 2030.



## Land-sea interactions

Land-Sea Interactions were addressed within the MARSPLAN-BS project<sup>11</sup> as one of the five case studies, namely Burgas Case Study. It was focused to investigate the land-sea interactions related to the needs of Maritime Spatial Planning. The case study was performed by a team from the Institute of Oceanology at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IO-BAS). Burgas is the largest Bulgarian Black Sea port and one of the most important in the Black Sea with significant infrastructure for supporting the associated economic activities. Burgas is a leading centre of the oil industry. There are valuable natural protected areas (Natura 2000) and wetlands in the surroundings of Burgas, as well as important Ramsar sites, such as the lakes of Atanasovsko, Burgas and Mandra - Poda.

The case study aimed to:

- Follow the land-sea interactions with a special focus on biodiversity.
- Identify the impact of land-based infrastructure on wetlands and maritime space.
- Find out what are the interactions, conflicts and impacts between uses, sectors and interests both terrestrial and marine.
- Identify key stakeholders and involve them in the process of identifying current and future trends, sector priorities and interests.
- Develop different agenda options, recommendations and solutions for identified case area issues.

The Black Sea Basin Directorate Management Plan for the period 2009-2015 specified measures to protect the coast from erosion and abrasion and addressed the following sectors: wastewater treatment, sewage, agriculture, shipping and ports, fisheries and aquaculture, and conservation under the Habitats Directive.



## Stakeholder Involvement

In July 2013, the Black Sea Basin Directorate organized a meeting with various stakeholders, where the progress in implementation of the MSFD (the initial reports under the MSFD 2008/56/EC) was reported.

Following this, a public consultation<sup>iv</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> Sept. – 10<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2014) initiated by the Council of Ministers took place. The subject of the public consultation was the series of monitoring programmes for on-going assessment of the environmental status of the national marine waters under the MSFD. However, there have been no coordinated public information and participation activities on MSP.

Within the first MARSPLAN-BS project, two stakeholder meetings were conducted with the Shabla Municipality (cross-border area of Bulgaria), and one meeting with stakeholders from the Burgas Municipality to actively involve them in the case studies elaboration. Additionally, a stakeholder seminar was organized in Varna with representatives of Black Sea municipalities, the Black Sea Basin Directorate, the Ministry of Environment and Water, and other concerned ministries, local NGOs and

<sup>10</sup> Documents available here: <https://www.moew.government.bg/en/climate/international-negotiations-and-adaptation/adaptation/>

<sup>11</sup> The full document of the case study can be downloaded from: <http://msp-platform.eu/practices/case-study-burgas-land-sea-interactions>



Romanian partners to discuss the proposed legislation under MSP and report on the initial assessment of maritime space and the drafted Case Studies.

The Elaborated Programme of measures for good environmental status of marine waters according to Art. 13 of the MSFD started in 2015, with a broad participation of relevant Bulgarian state institutions and in collaboration with Romanian partners. All relevant opinions and remarks were published on the website of the Black Sea Basin Directorate. Most of the measures planned are relevant to MSP and the period for their implementation is 2016 – 2021.

Finally, the Marine Spatial Plan being developed by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works was open for stakeholder and public consultation and, after a number of meetings, the process was successfully completed in September 2021.



## Co-existence of uses

Multi-Use (MU) means a joint use of resources in close geographic proximity. This can involve either a single user or multiple users (Angela Schultz-Zehden et al., 2018. Ocean Multi-Use Action Plan, MUSES project. Edinburgh). The Action Plan of the Horizon 2020 MUSES project was published in 2019. The MSP Directive is still the only document to support MU and MSP provides the needed policy to overcome barriers for MU development.

For the Black Sea the MU concept is still novel and it should be supported by the Marine Spatial Plan. It is a “win-win” situation as the Plan supports the MU implementation and the MU can facilitate the implementation of MSP.

The Multi-Use in European Seas (MUSES) project was a Horizon 2020 funded project that explored the opportunities for Multi-Use in European Seas across five EU sea basins (Baltic Sea, North Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, and Eastern Atlantic). One of the project findings was that the environment and tourism are the key drivers for MU combinations in the Black Sea. Therefore, the project MARSPLAN-BS II intends to address the MU concept within MSP in the cross-border area of Bulgaria and Romania following the MUSES Action Plan. A report on Multi-Use Case Study in Bulgaria has been published as one of the main deliverables of MARSPLAN-BS II project. It represents, as a case study, how the MU concept could be considered and addressed with the Maritime Spatial Planning commencing in the cross-border area of Bulgaria. Notably, the case study explores the potential for development of one MU combination: Tourism, Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) and Environmental Protection. More specifically, based on active stakeholder engagement the study identifies a variety of driving factors and key barriers for this MU development, as well as how these barriers could be overcome with the support of MSP.



## Trans-boundary cooperation

For its Maritime Spatial Planning, Bulgaria is cooperating with the other countries in the Black Sea region, including within the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, and the Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea. Cooperation with Romania is aimed at promoting consistency and coordination of the national maritime spatial plans on all issues of transnational nature. The Plan of Bulgaria could be developed as part of a Cross-border Maritime Spatial Planning of the Black Sea. Numerous cross-border projects have also been conducted.

Relevant experience in cross-border planning has also been gained by a strategic project – Common territorial strategy for the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria – which was implemented in 2012-2015 ([www.spatial.mdrap.ro](http://www.spatial.mdrap.ro)).

The endorsement of the [Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea](#) in May 2019 is the latest example of concrete transboundary cooperation in the Black Sea.



## Use of best available data

The Maritime Spatial Plan of Bulgaria is being developed on the basis of analysis of existing environmental, geological, geomorphological and physical information, of the data accessible through the [National Spatial Data Portal](#), EMODNet and in full compliance with INSPIRE.

## Coherence with other processes

### Marine Strategy Framework Directive

The MSFD has been transposed into the Bulgarian Water Act and into other relevant regulations (e.g. Ordinance for Environment and Sea Water Protection, No. 273/23th Nov. 2010) in November 2010<sup>v</sup>. The Ministry of Environment and Water of Bulgaria (MOEW) is responsible for the implementation of the MSFD.

The main responsible bodies under the MSFD are:

- the Council of Ministers – Consultative and Coordination Council for Environmental Protection of Marine Waters in the Black Sea;
- the Minister of Environment and Water;
- the Director of the Black Sea Basin Directorate;
- the Minister of Transport, Information Technologies and Communications;
- the Minister of Agriculture and Food;
- the Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works;
- the Minister of Energy; the Minister of Health;
- the Chairman of the Institute of Oceanology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IO-BAS).

In December 2016, the Council of Ministers adopted the Marine Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria<sup>vi</sup>, and a Programme with measures for its implementation<sup>vii</sup>. The Strategy assesses the status of the marine waters (in compliance with Article 8 of the MSFD), determines Good Environmental Status, and establishes environmental targets (in compliance with Articles 9 and 10 of the MSFD) in accordance with 11 descriptors.

The Programme contains both existing and new measures for implementation of the Strategy. Among the existing measures are (i) monitoring of marine waters for assessing the resources stock; (ii) preventive measures against invasion of alien species; (iii) and strengthening the Black Sea coast for protection against landslides. New measures, both of national and cross-border influence, are (i) adoption and implementation of a Regional Action Plan for the Black Sea in relation to marine litter; (ii) encouraging environmentally friendly practices for fishing vessels engaged in small-scale fishing; (iii) development of multi-annual management plans on certain fish groups; (iv) and others.

### Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Some general measures that cover ICZM, are mentioned in the Development Strategies of the coastal districts (Burgas, Varna and Dobrich), in the National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture in Bulgaria (2014-2020) and in the National Regional Development Strategy (2012-2022). Except via regional planning, there are no specific national strategies in place. There is no clarity about how MSP will be linked to ICZM. One of the main barriers why ICZM is not taken forward is the lack of a common ground across different ministries.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive) applies to a wide range of public plans and programmes (e.g. on land use, transport, energy, waste, agriculture, etc.). It is transposed into domestic legislation by the Environmental Protection Act, Chapter Six: Ecological assessment and environmental impact assessment, Section I and II (<https://www.moew.government.bg/en/environmental-protection-act-7628/>), which is in force since 2001, and was last updated in 2012; and by the Regulation on the Terms and Conditions to Carry out Ecological Assessment of Plans and Programmes, last updated in 2019. (<https://www.moew.government.bg/bg/naredba-za-usloviyata-i-reda-za-izvurshvane-na-ekologichna-ocenka-na-planove-i-programi/>)

A set of guidance is available on <https://www.moew.government.bg/bg/prevantivna-dejnost/ekologichna-ocenka/ukazaniya-po-prilaganeto/rukovodstva/>.

To date, two SEA related to MSP have been carried out:

- Environmental assessment of a draft Marine Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (<https://www.moew.government.bg/bg/vodi/morski-vodi/morska-strategiya-na-republika-bulgariya/>)
- Environmental Assessment and Compatibility Assessment of the Black Sea Flood Risk Management Plan ([https://www.bsbd.org/bg/purn\\_2016-2021.html](https://www.bsbd.org/bg/purn_2016-2021.html))

## Cooperation with third countries

For its Maritime Spatial Planning, Bulgaria has been cooperating with the riparian countries in the Black Sea region, including within the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Commission on the Protection of the Black

Sea against Pollution. Cooperation with Romania is aimed at consistency and coordination of their respective national maritime spatial plans on all issues of transnational nature.

The Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme 2017-2013 permitted collaborative development between Black Sea countries. A programme was opened for 2014-2020 through the ANEMONE Project, a Black Sea cross-border cooperation project involving Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Ukraine. It aimed to deliver, through collaborative efforts among partners, a common strategy related to the Joint Monitoring of the Black Sea, using the most adequate common agreed assessment criteria and indicators, in order to assess the status of the Black Sea, as a basis for further actions.

### **Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2019, Ministers and Vice-Ministers from Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine met in Bucharest to endorse the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea<sup>12</sup>. The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea represents a follow-up to the commitment of the 2018 Burgas Ministerial Declaration “Towards a Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea” and a result of a process initiated and backed by the European Commission for the implementation of the Black Sea Synergy.

The Agenda focuses on fields related to the ‘blue economy’, which can contribute to the sustainable economic development of the region and especially of the coastal regions. Its main goals are:

1. Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems.
2. A competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy for the Black Sea.
3. Fostering Investment in the Black Sea blue economy.

The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea was officially launched on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in Sofia. Based on the positive experience of sustainable development initiatives in other sea basins, such as the West-Med Initiative, the steering committee decided to schedule a number of regional seminars, stakeholder events and high-level meetings to raise awareness, facilitate stakeholders’ involvement and networking and identify significant projects for the region.

The seven member countries of the initiative (Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Ukraine and Turkey) convened in Sofia for the 1st Steering Group meeting. Marine litter, protection against pollution of marine resources, green sustainable shipping and digital connectivity were the key issues addressed. The Bulgarian Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications is coordinating the implementation of the Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda in 2020.

The initiative is supported by key organisations such as the organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Commission for the protection of the Black Sea against pollution, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Conference of peripheral and maritime regions and the managing authority of the Joint Operational Programme for the Black Sea basin. The WWF, the World Bank and the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank have also showed their interest in supporting the Common Maritime Agenda.

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<sup>12</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/mare/document.cfm?doc\\_id=59315](https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/mare/document.cfm?doc_id=59315)

## Sources

### Relevant legislative acts

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