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## Background

Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning was adopted on 23 July 2014. It entered into force on 18 September 2014. The text of the Directive is [available in all EU languages](#).

Member States are required to transpose the Directive into their national legislation and nominate the Competent Authority in charge of the implementation of MSP by 2016. Maritime plans must be established before March 2021.

The Member State Expert Group (MSEG) on MSP is the main forum where the Commission and Member States will discuss transposition and implementation of the Directive. The objectives are to:

- Share information and work towards a more coherent understanding on the interpretation of certain articles;
- Develop informal guiding and supporting documents on key aspects of the Directive to aid and promote best practice.
- Promote coherence between the implementation of the Directive and sectoral and structural policies;
- Foster integrated application of cross-cutting principles of the Directive;
- Help build capacity in Member States for an effective implementation of the Directive;
- Promote cooperation between member States;
- Promote a coherent approach towards Third Countries regarding their involvement into MSP.

The European Commission and Member States have been discussing a support strategy for the implementation of the Directive. The adoption of the strategy is under silent procedure, ending on 2 February. It should be noted that any document produced by the MSEG will have an informal and non-legally binding character. The main elements of the strategy which support the objectives listed above are:

- Drawing up of a transposition checklist;
- Preparation of non-binding guidance documents on specific issues linked to the provisions of the Directive, as requested by the MSEG (ecosystem-based approach, data and MSP, cross-border cooperation...);
- An assistance mechanism for Member States (focal points in each sea basin to provide expertise, support for project proposals and development, technical studies, exhaustive website with resources for MSP implementation...). The Assistance Mechanism will be launched in February;

- Financial support for cross-border projects. The aim is to provide funding for Member States to launch their MSP and to put into place structures for cross-border planning. The first 2 projects will be launched in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea in February/March 2015.
- Support for regional cooperation on energy and maritime spatial planning in the North Sea (first workshop on 29th January, in Edinburgh, UK)
- Specific conference on the links between the MSP and MSFD Directives (second semester 2015).

### Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the final text of the MSP Directive and the objectives of the Implementation Support Strategy and use it as a background for discussions when needed.