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Background

During the 21st Meeting of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG (cf. Outcome, para 3-5 to 3-9), invited guests from the BalticRIM project consortium gave a presentation about the project results. The meeting welcomed the results of the BalticRIM project pointing out that some of the project results have already been taken into account in national MSPs.

The presentation highlighted the draft memorandum between the BalticRIM project and the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG. The Meeting agreed that the document should be thoroughly evaluated and discussed during HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 22-2021.

This document contains the draft memorandum for further discussions by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the draft memorandum for cooperation between the BalticRIM project consortium and HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and adopt the memorandum.

Memorandum on cooperation with HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG

Developed by the BalticRIM project

PREAMBLE:

- Having regard to the respective mandate of the HELCOM-VASAB Working Group on Maritime Spatial Planning;
- Having regard to the respective mandate of the Baltic Region Heritage Committee and its Working Group on Underwater Heritage and the Working Group on Coastal Heritage;
- Having regard to the Code of Good Practice for the Management of Underwater Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea Region (COPUCH, 2008);
- Having regard to the VASAB-HELCOM Guidelines on transboundary consultations, public participation and co-operation, in particular their part on co-operation;
- Having regard to the results of the BalticRIM project, which recognized the potential of maritime cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea, its importance for blue growth, consequences for spatial planning, identified gaps and challenges;
- In line with the findings of the previous transnational projects covering Marine Cultural Heritage (MCH), the PartiSEApate project in particular;
- Having in mind that the EU MSP Directive (DIRECTIVE 2014/89/EU) encourages member states to include underwater cultural heritage as an important topic of their maritime spatial plans, whereas broader notion of MCH is still waiting to be included in this document;
- Being aware that the current Roadmap on BSR MSP of the HELCOM-VASAB Working Group insufficiently covers the recognized MCH challenges;
- Taking note of the internet services/data & information sources/ produced by the BalticRIM project, namely:
 - BalticRIM DataPortal, <https://balticrimdataportal.eu/>
 - BalticRIM WIKI for terminology, Dokuwiki.balticrim.eu
 - BalticRIM homepage, <https://www.submariner-network.eu/balticrim>.
- Recognizing Maritime Cultural Heritage importance in building regional identity and its fragility and vulnerability to changing environment and physical destruction;
- Recognizing the role of MCH role in creating and enhancing well-being, quality of life, identity, sense of place, social capital, and Blue Growth ;
- Being aware that MCH as a source of aesthetical values for coastal societies, needs preservation and maintenance and simultaneously as a source of development stimuli

enhancing blue growth, sustainable high quality tourism in particular , it requires intensification of exploitation;

- Recognizing growing pressures that might negatively affect MCH in the BSR in particular noting growing competition for maritime space;
- Recognizing the role of MSP in strengthening its protection and boosting synergy with other sectors;
- Being aware of the need of common BSR MSP approach to MCH and important benefits derived of transnational coordination on MCH at BSR level;
- Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure
- Whereas:

[1] MCH is a cultural heritage that is formed by material and immaterial remains of seafaring and the use(s) of sea located on dry land and under water therefore the underwater heritage should be seen as a part of a larger maritime cultural heritage;

[2] MCH is constituted by both, tangible and intangible, elements i.e. visible elements located at sea or land (e.g. maritime cultural landscapes, single architectural monuments etc.) and emotions and values raised by them;

[3] General MCH knowledge among MSP planners and other sectors needs strengthening in order to include MCH into MSP processes in a decent way, otherwise the planning solutions might be insufficient in order to strengthen preservation and sustainable use of the MCH in the BSR;

[4] Narrowed concept of MCH still dominates among MSP planners and sectoral officers: underwater cultural heritage is limited mainly to wrecks, many other cultural heritage assets are neglected;

[5] The MSP approach to MCH varies among the BSR countries. Some MCH sites are marked as points and other as areas, depending on different legal protection status and reliable data accessibility;

[6] Objective criteria for the identification of the MCH areal sites (MCH as an area not as a single object i.e. paleo-landscapes) are missing;

[7] Effective guidelines and structures for safeguarding cultural heritage are missing;

[8] International law that provides bases for protection of maritime cultural heritage (also related to the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) has so far been insufficiently implemented in the BSR countries i.e.:

- Authority responsible for MCH in the EEZs is missing in some BSR countries

- Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe (Valletta, 1992), has been implemented inconsistently in the BSR, in particularly regarding the underwater heritage
- The UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage has been ratified only by Lithuania, thus other ways to adopt these principles on BSR scale are needed;

- [9] The information on BSR MCH is incomplete due to great number of water areas and coasts and high costs of MCH exploration in particular in the water areas. Therefore there is a need for identification not only MCH objects but also potential areas of their possible existence. To this end scientific knowledge and knowledge from neighbouring countries should be used in order to detect areas with high probability of the MU appearance (e.g. battle fields or stone-age settlements);
- [10] MSP planners should be aware of the diversity and versatility of MCH. MSP should take into considerations not only wrecks but also key seascapes and historic sites such as large sea battlefields, ship cemeteries, natural harbors, maritime recycling areas, wreck parks, historic sea routes, prehistoric underwater settlement areas and ensure /provide site-specific conditions for safeguarding them;
- [11] Due to the scale of MCH one should strive towards flexible protection therefore rather rules than zones for MCH. Zones make sense only in case of large archaeological sites. But rules should be enforceable;
- [12] Considering land sea interactions is vital for proper inclusion of MCH under MSP. In particular the influence of MSP plans on the MCH terrestrial objects should become a MSP planning routine;
- [13] MSP should encourage preparedness' i.e. spatial measures necessary since MCH can appear any time and place and not everywhere it can be protected in situ. So under MSP there is a need for adequate solutions i.e. how to change planning activities due to sudden discovery of MCH or what to do if MCH cannot be protected in situ (e.g. fairways, port areas);
- [14] Within a MSP process, exchange of MCH knowledge between neighbouring countries should be ensured, in particularly taking into consideration states with confidential underwater heritage registers;
- [15] MSP should help to detect areas with high probability of areal MCH appearance cross border, and to exchange good practices
- [16] There is also a need to secure that MCH survey precedes investment processes as a planning rule or planning solution for maritime governance;
- [17] MCH should be considered as very relevant sector to promote the multi-use concept at sea;

THE BalticRIM PROJECT PARTNERS HAVE SUGGESTED TO THE HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG ON MSP TO ADOPT THIS MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION ON MCH IN CONSIDERATION OF THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMON GOOD – THE MARITIME CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE REGION.

So far it has been agreed to:

- Take up the maritime cultural heritage higher in the HELCOM-VASAB WG on MSP agenda as an important part of Baltic countries identity which should be strengthened by MSP;
- Consider the maritime cultural heritage as one of the points in the HELCOM-VASAB Roadmap on MSP in particular in a form of bi-annual debates on MCH initiated by the HELCOM-VASAB WG on MSP (e.g. in a framework of biannual BSR MSP Fora)
- Establish the permanent cooperation between the HELCOM-VASAB Working Group on MSP and the Baltic Region Heritage Committee and its Working Group on Underwater Heritage;
- Establish the permanent cooperation between the HELCOM-VASAB MSP national contacts points with adequate national cultural institutions;
- Maintain the BalticRIM data portal as a part of the HELCOM-VASAB WG effort on MSP data;
- Establish the HELCOM-VASAB expert group (contacts) on MCH;
- Utilise experience and structures of the HELCOM-VASAB WG on MSP for dissemination of the BalticRIM project results and recommendations as well as success stories of inclusion of MCH into MSP by the BSR countries and in the long run all other MSP relevant information on MCH;
- Integrate the MCH into on-going work on the green infrastructure of the HELCOM-VASAB WG on MSP;
- Address all BSR countries with a plea of the HELCOM-VASAB Working Group on MSP to give duly attention to their MCH under the MSP process and in particular to make use of an integrated and holistic approach to that end;
- Stimulate education, information, and interactions discussing comprehensive ways to recognise MCH under MSP.