



# Country Fiche

## Latvia

Updated April 2018

## 1. General information



- Marine area under Latvian jurisdiction includes inland sea waters, Territorial sea (12 nautical miles from the baseline) and exclusive economic zone (EEZ).
- Total area of Baltic Sea (including Gulf of Riga) under jurisdiction of Latvia is about 28,500 km<sup>2</sup>, covering 668 km<sup>2</sup> of inland sea waters, 10 178 km<sup>2</sup> of Territorial Sea and 17 656 km<sup>2</sup> of EEZ.
- Marine area of Latvia border upon Lithuania, Estonia and Sweden.

## 1.1. Governance

Latvian marine area is owned by the state and the responsibility for them is divided between respective sectorial ministries (Environment, Agriculture, Transport, and Economics). Recently the competence of planning and management of 2 km zone seawards from coastline has been given to local municipalities.

## 1.2. Contacts

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## 2. General information on legislation

The legal base for MSP is laid down in the Spatial Development Planning Law enforced on 1 December, 2011. It gives the definition of the maritime spatial plan and deadline for starting elaboration of the plan. Regulations of the Cabinet of the Ministers Nr. 740 on Development, Implementation and Monitoring of Maritime Spatial Plan have been

approved by the Latvian Government in 2012, where the content, elaboration procedure as well as implementation and monitoring procedures of MSP are defined. Plan must be submitted and announced through ordinary legislative procedures according to the Cabinet of Minister rules of order. The Government shall approve the MSP.

Marine Environment Protection and Management Law enforced on 18 November 2010 defines the maritime spatial planning as a long-term process for development planning aimed at protection of marine environment, rational use of the sea and integrated management, as well as balancing the social welfare and economic development with the environmental protection requirements. The Law states the necessity of maritime spatial planning and requires to apply ecosystem approach, including featuring of the characteristics of the Baltic Sea, as well to take into account marine environmental status and trends.

Other relevant laws: Maritime Administration and Marine Safety Law; Fishery Law; Law on Specially Protected Nature Territories; Law on Protection Belts; Law on Protection of Cultural Monuments; Law On Subterranean Depths, Law on National Armed Forces, Law on Environmental Impact Assessment, Law on Land Management etc. Several issues of the sea are regulated by the Regulations of Cabinet of the Ministers.

Maritime Spatial Planning is developed taking into consideration the international liabilities of the Republic of Latvia and in cooperation with countries, with which Latvia has common sea border.

Maritime Spatial Plan of Latvia is a national level long-term (up to 12 years) spatial development planning document that defines the use of the sea, considering a terrestrial part that is functionally interlinked with the sea and co-ordinating interests of various sectors and local governments in use of the sea.

National MSP shall consist of:

1. **Strategic part** (includes long-term development vision, strategic objectives, development guidelines and tasks).
2. **Explanatory note**, which includes an assessment of the current situation and trends, covering:
  - 2.1. Relations of the marine plan to other planning documents and legislation;
  - 2.2. General marine and environmental characteristics;
  - 2.3. Overview of marine natural and cultural resources, including landscapes;
  - 2.4. Information on the sea uses, taking into account environmental, social and economic aspects;
  - 2.5. Marine and terrestrial functional coherence;
  - 2.6. Trend analysis on marine spatial usage.

3. **Graphical part**, which is made up of a map on marine permitted uses and, if necessary, thematic maps and schematic maps;

4. **Description of permitted marine uses** that includes:

4.1. The categories and types of permitted use;

4.2. Conditions for marine use of each category and types of use

Graphical part of the MSP shall be developed in WGS84 (World Geodetic System 1984) coordinate system of Mercator projection (57 °) using geodetic (elliptical) coordinates with the determination of scale 1:200 000. For the thematic plans of separate marine parts other appropriate scale may be chosen.

### **3. General applicability (e.g. territorial Sea, EEZ, other distinctions)**

The above mentioned legislation applies to all territory of Latvia, including inland sea waters, territorial sea and EEZ.

### **4. Spatial Plans**

No effective maritime spatial plan in place

### **5. What countries want to share**

#### **5.1. Pilot plans**

Within “**BaltSeaPlan**” project a pilot plan for Latvian territorial sea and EEZ waters of Baltic Sea was elaborated. The plan was a good practice for stakeholder involvement in planning process, where during the project:

- 17 stakeholders events were held in Latvia
- 245 individuals took part at the stakeholder’s events
- ca. 450 participants took part at all events in total
- Core group of stakeholders was established (ca. 30 people).

More information on pilot plan can be found here:

<http://www.baltseaplan.eu/index.php/Latvian;839/1>

### **6. New developments / current status**

Development of MSP for whole Baltic Sea area under Latvian jurisdiction was started in 2014 when a national MSP coordination group was established and initial enlightening seminar about national MSP for general public was organized.

Latvian MSP is still in elaboration and 1<sup>st</sup> draft was prepared during 2015. National public consultations and cross-border consultation within the framework of ESPOO Convention were held in late 2015 and early 2016. Currently amendments to the plan are made and the next draft will be prepared by April. The plan will be approved by the Government in 2017.

Elaboration of the plan is led by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development. In late 2014 consortium led by the Baltic Environmental Forum was contracted as a consultants for MSP related information gathering and analysis, as well as for making proposal for MSP draft and carrying out Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The Summary of the MSP 1<sup>st</sup> Draft and Environmental Report 1<sup>st</sup> Draft can be accessed by following this link: <https://iurasplanojums.net/english/> . Meanwhile we would like to emphasize that this is not the final version MSP.

## **7. How coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (HELCOM MPAs) are taken into account in MSP**

Environment and nature protection is a horizontal priority within the Strategic part of Latvian MSP and MPAs are listed as areas of priority interest in the sea. Areas of priority interest is a category, that includes the existing and potential uses of the sea essential to ensure the achievement of the priorities as defined in the Strategic Part, e.g. healthy marine environment and stable ecosystem, national security, developed maritime affairs and safe navigation, as well as sustainable fishery and tourism. The areas are established for these types of uses of the sea by excluding or setting restrictions to activities which can cause disturbances or damage to their existence or development.

In addition to that Investigation areas of nature values or potential MPAs were introduced with MSP – a total area of 1355.5 km<sup>2</sup>, where the issuing of licences for the sea uses activities, which could potentially endanger the protected marine habitats and species, are not allowed before the completion of the investigations. This includes wind parks, wave power stations, extraction of the hydrocarbons, aquaculture farms.