



CONNECTING SEAS

First North Sea and Baltic Sea MSP conference

13-14 February 2019, Hamburg, Germany

The NorthSEE and Baltic LINes maritime spatial planning conference Connecting Seas took place on 13 – 14 February 2019 in Hamburg, Germany. For the first time more than 200 MSP experts and stakeholders from both the North and Baltic Sea Regions gathered to exchange knowledge and experience dealing with MSP and discuss topics related to the NorthSEE and Baltic LINes main project findings.

The Connecting Seas conference took place in Hamburg – a place where the Baltic and North Seas meet. The conference was opened by three welcome addresses from Dr Karin Kammann-Klippstein the president of the German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH), Dr Michael Frehse the head of Department H – Community – of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community and Jan Schmidt from the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme. They all stressed out that the conference is a great place to learn from each other and gain knowledge of similar challenges in MSP in both regions.

During the conference almost 50 speakers looked closer to the topics related to main findings of the NorthSEE and Baltic LINes projects as well as the main issues in planning across the borders. Participants had a unique opportunity to explore deeper the MSP processes in the countries of the North and Baltic Sea Regions during the virtual 'MSP sailing tour'. It was a chance to meet planners, ask questions and get more understanding about national MSPs. Furthermore, the conference hosted 9 interactive workshops.

Follow the conference highlights:

[Photo gallery](#)

[Conference video](#)

[Presentations](#)



CONFERENCE OPENING

13 FEBRUARY 9.30-10.00

Opening speeches:

Dr Karin Kammann Klippstein a president of the German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) welcomed the conference participants in Hamburg. She pointed out the fact that the North and Baltic Seas have always been connected, nevertheless, the Connecting Seas conference for the first time brought together the North and Baltic Sea region's maritime spatial planning communities. Two projects, Baltic LINes and NorthSEE, worked together on important fields in transnational marine management: shipping, energy and environment. Baltic LINes project continued a long and successful history of maritime spatial planning projects in the Baltic Sea Region contrary to the NorthSEE project as this was a first project on maritime spatial planning in the North Sea Region.

Dr Michael Frehse a head of Department H – Community – of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community welcomed participants by saying that Hamburg is a perfect location for a maritime spatial planning conference of North and Baltic Sea Regions because Hamburg is at the same time located on both seas. The conference is a great place to learn from each other and gain knowledge of similar challenges in both regions. It marks the cooperation of two projects one of the North Sea and one of the Baltic Sea Region Interreg programmes that ran parallel over the last two and a half years. He thanked project partners for their efforts made to the project results especially the successful cooperation which in itself is a result of two projects. He expressed the fact that MSP obligates us to cooperate and North Sea Region should create a similar organisation in MSP cooperation to the Baltic Sea Region's organisation – VASAB to continue a transnational cooperation in MSP after the projects are finished.

Jan Schmidt from Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme thanked Baltic LINes project partners for great results that have been achieved during the project implementation. He expressed that the role of MSP projects in the Baltic Sea Region has long traditions, naming the successful examples of the following projects – Baltic SEA plan, PartiSEApate, Baltic RIM and Baltic LINes. MSP is an important issue for developing more sustainable Baltic Sea Region, in the name of the Interreg BSR programme he appreciates that there are projects that address MSP issues and hope to support MSP projects also in the future.

CONNECTING SEAS PLENARY SESSION

13 FEBRUARY 10.00-11.00

The aim of the plenary was to give an introduction about the topics discussed in the Baltic LINes and NorthSEE projects. Speakers introduced with 6 general topics:

NorthSEE and Baltic LINes at a glance. Kai Truempler from German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) gave an insight into the Baltic LINes and NorthSEE projects stressing out that MSP issues we face are broad scale and of a joint nature. He expressed that there is a lack of information to plan across borders and there are patches in both seas that indicate a lot of work in the future. Both projects have contributed to the planning across the borders and filling some of the patches, of course not all is done, but now we are closer to common understanding of the future work.

Shipping. Joreon Van Overloop from Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport in Belgium explained the importance of shipping in the Baltic Sea and North Sea and what should be taken into consideration for MSP. For a long time, ships have been the masters of sea, however, a question is are they still important today? Shipping is the blood of economy, as more than 80% of all transported goods are on board of a ship, showing it's importance also today. Shipping should be taken into consideration also in the future as new technologies are developing also in shipping, e.g. autonomous ships that are already in the sea.

Energy. Andronikos Kafas from Marine Scotland described the energy sector. If shipping is the blood of economy, energy is the heart of economy. Energy systems are being transformed just now. Energy demand is growing and there is an expansion of renewable energy. The important factor for this trend is a climate change, that looks pessimistic for the future unless actions are taken. In the energy sector government policies have a very strong role to play. The Northern European sea basins are quite crucial for the production of renewable energy, as TOP 5 leading countries in the field of offshore wind are around the North Sea and the technologies developed here can make a big difference worldwide.

Data. Manuel Frias from HELCOM Secretariat explained the data importance in MSP and the issues that maritime planners face when looking for an up-to-date data from neighbouring countries. Baltic LINes contributed to the MSP data availability by developing a decentralized data infrastructure 'BASEMAPS'. Data infrastructure collects the data from an original source and ensures that planners can always have an access to an up-to-date data. He reminded to always publish the data in open standards, to ease planning process, help to develop coherent plans across the borders and ensure better environment and blue growth.

MSP Challenge 2050. Harald Warmelink from Breda University of Applied Sciences stressed out that the importance of data has been an added value of developing the MSP Challenge simulation platform. Essentially MSP Challenge 2050 is a platform for a very comprehensive MSP simulation through dozens of real GIS data layers players can draw new plans and see the effects on shipping, energy and environment. People with different backgrounds and experience can learn and collaborate doing MSP, it shows complexity of MSP. What is the added value of MSP Challenge? People can learn and collaborate about

MSP by really doing the MSP. Online demo version is coming soon that will allow people all over the world explore MSP processes.

Planning Criteria. Riku Varjopuro from Finnish Environment Institute talked about an import task of the Baltic LINes project, namely, planning criteria. Work started with naming the planning issues, problems and mismatches in planning. He showed some examples of MSP planning issues in the Baltic Sea. During the project implementation Baltic LINes team compared the national planning criteria and approaches in countries, which is useful for planners to know, what kind of planning approaches are used across the region. They came to a conclusion that it will be challenging to propose a common criterion for all countries as the planning processes are different from country to country. In the end Baltic LINes project proposes a step wise approach for better, more coherent planning. He invited to download the reports developed under the project activities and to explore more about the work on planning criteria.

INSPIRATIONAL TALK

13 FEBRUARY 11.30-11.45

Claudia Bode, Thing Collective

During the inspirational talk Claudia Bode stressed out that marine planning in North Sea and Baltic Sea region is a great challenge and at the same great opportunity. North and Baltic Sea regions are a complex system with its own identity. We should look not only how we work together and how we complement each other. How to understand influences and connections between different pieces in order to coherent plan? How to make a common vision? How do we understand each other? Marine space is volumetric, fluid, constantly changing, without internal boundaries and inaccessible. She expressed the role of different representations that form the greater whole and should form a coherent base of common understanding. Representations allow us to imagine new futures and create common visions.

GUIDED MSP TOUR

13 FEBRUARY 11.45 – 13.00

During the virtual ‘sailing tour’ participants had a chance to explore MSPs and MSP processes of the North and Baltic Sea countries in more detail. Based on their indicated knowledge (shipping, offshore energy or marine environment), participants were divided over 12 groups to get a clear explanation about the MSP process in 3 pre-determined countries with a focus the chosen sector. During the entire conference information materials about the national MSPs were remain available.

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

The conference hosted 9 interactive workshops. During the workshops the Baltic LINes and NorthSEE project partners presented the project results about following topics:

- Energy sector – planning issues, criteria, tools
- Shipping sector – planning issues, criteria, tools
- Environmental impact
- Stakeholder involvement
- Other sea uses in MSP
- Data in MSPs
- Synergies and conflicts in MSP
- Future trends and scenarios
- Multi-level governance

Workshop results were summarised in one picture created by Cristian Ridder:

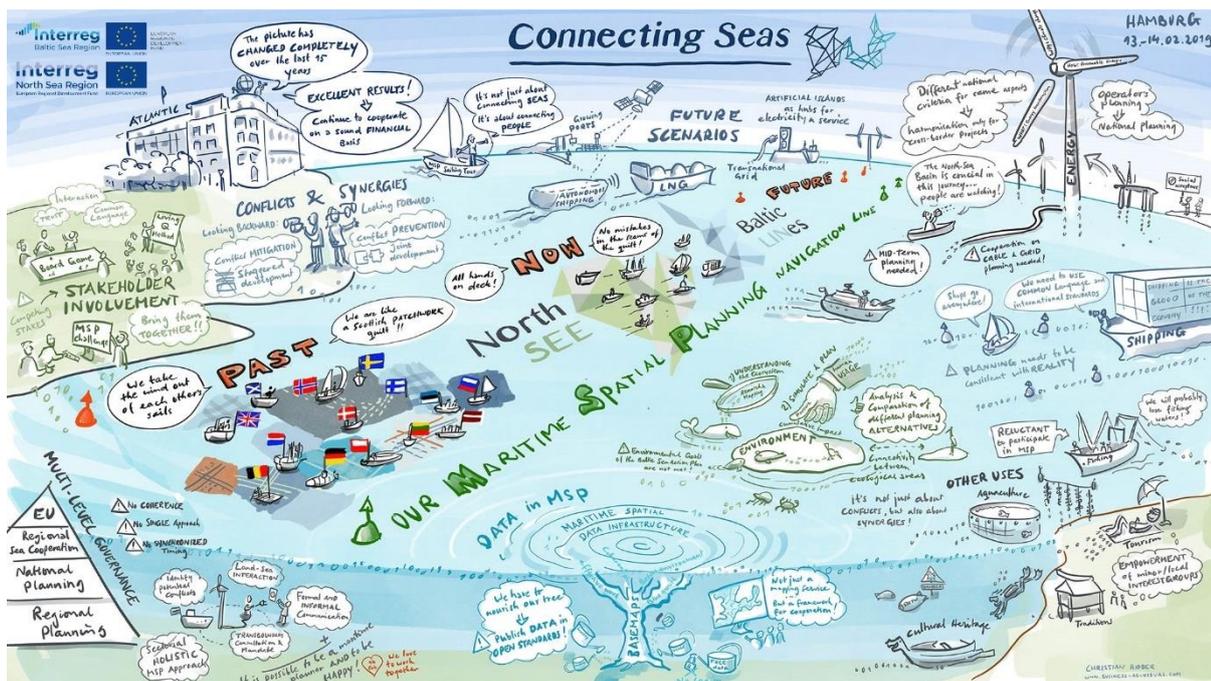


Figure 1. Summary of the Connecting Seas conference. Created by Cristian Ridder.

CONCLUDING PLENARY

14 FEBRUARY 11.15 – 13.30

Concluding plenary started with a summary of all workshop sessions when each workshop leader presented shortly the main conclusions from the workshop discussions. Afterwards visual artist presented the conference summary picture that was mainly created from the workshop conclusions.

Plenary was continued by a panel discussion about transboundary cooperation in MSP. It was moderated by Stephen Jay. Speakers:

- Lodewijk Abspoel, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, The Netherlands
- Thomas Johansson, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
- Alda Nikodemusa, VASAB Secretariat
- Dr. Nico Nolte, German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH)
- Sine Olsson Heltberg, Danish Maritime Authority

The closing plenary discussion summed up whole event. Speakers expressed their personal thoughts of this conference, among answers speakers named that this is great event to promote transboundary cooperation in MSP, emphasised the opportunity to work in international environment, were pleased to see development in MSP since the first projects dedicated to MSP, expressed future thoughts about MSP continuing in North Sea in a long run. They were happy to see that connectivity and coherence of national MSP plans are being considered and there are steps towards working across borders. Huge interest to learn deeper and wider perspective of MSP.

Speakers discussed topical issues in MSP in both Baltic and North Sea Regions and what can we learn from each other or adopt. Main discussion points:

- Recommendations by Baltic LINes – energy sector in Baltic Sea has to develop more closer corporation – to involve these significant sectors that needs transboundary cooperation.
- Ambitious energy tasks and plenty of space for offshore wind but there are technical problems on how to implement and make the plans reality.
- Political steering needs to be established in North Sea for MSP. HELCOM-VASAM MSP WG in the Baltic Sea is a great role model – for North Sea there should be such a cooperation network.
- Communication beyond MSP experts is crucial. You have to explain the plans to the different political levels, they should not be too technical but more understandable.
- Cooperation requires high-level representatives. MSP is political guided and stakeholder driven.

The plenary was closed by a final thank you words from:

- Juan Ronco Zapatero, DG Mare
- Axel Kristiansen, Secretariat of Interreg North Sea Region
- Dr. Kai Trümpler, German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH)