



Maritime Spatial Planning in Latvia

Latvian Marine Waters

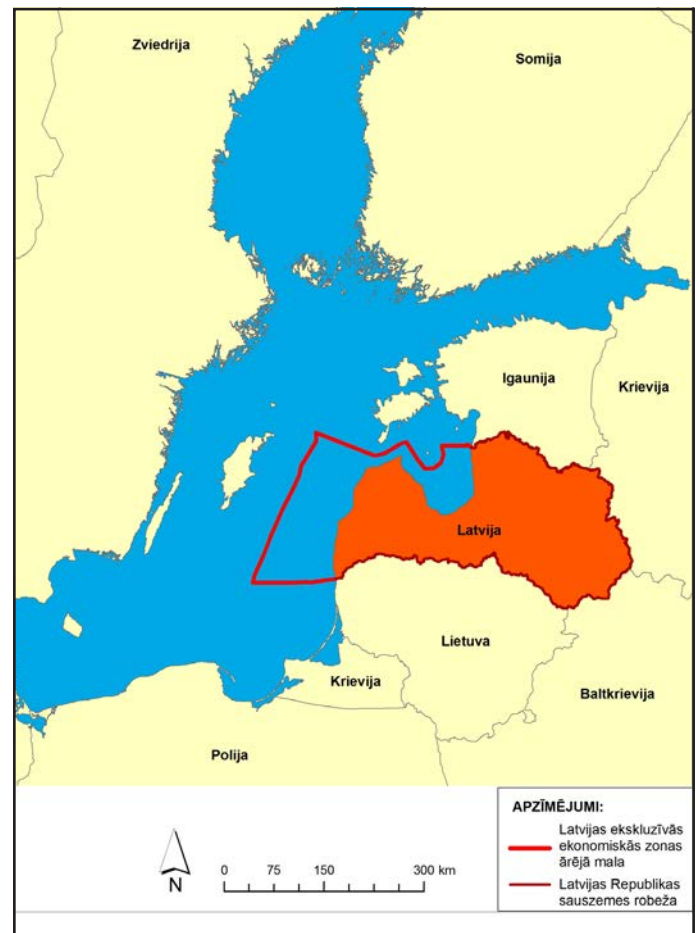
- The marine waters under Latvian jurisdiction include inland waters, territorial sea (12 nautical miles from the baseline) and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters.
- The total area of Baltic Sea waters (including the Gulf of Riga) Latvia's jurisdiction is 28 000 km².
- The Baltic Sea waters under Latvia's jurisdiction border with Lithuania, Estonia and Sweden.

Governance of the Sea Space

- Marine waters are owned by the state.
- The responsible authorities for the marine waters are the respective sectorial ministries.
- The Ministry of Finance on its part possesses seashore (up to a depth of 20 m) owned by the state.
- Current discussion: competencies of the municipalities in relation to seashore management and planning.

Use of the Sea Space

- Currently, use of the marine waters of Latvia is low.
- Current main uses: seafaring, ports, environmental protection, fishing, seashore tourism, sand sites, military territories and scientific activities in the sea (monitoring).
- Future uses: as in other seas, in the Baltic Sea there is increasing interest in development of wind parks in the open sea area (shore of Kurland). Oil extraction might be an option but it is hindered by the lack of a ratified border with Lithuania.



The waters under the jurisdiction of Latvia – inland waters, territorial sea and EEZ (source: LIAE)

Maritime Spatial Planning Legislation

- The Spatial Planning System Development Concept (accepted by decree No. 474 of 15 July, 2009) states that marine planning shall be defined by laws and regulations.
- The Marine Environment Protection and Management Law (effective since 18 November, 2010) states the need for maritime spatial planning.
- The Law on Territorial Development Planning (effective since 1 December, 2011) also states the need for maritime spatial planning.
- The informative report “On distribution of competencies among the authorities for maritime spatial planning” (12.04.2012. Section 40 of the Minutes of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 19), which defines responsibilities of the authorities in the development of the plan, also states that Maritime Spatial Planning shall be developed for land/shore territory that is functionally related with the sea.
- The regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 740 (2012) define the maritime planning development, implementation and supervision procedure.
- Law on Territorial Development Planning: future development will drive Maritime Spatial Planning as a national long-term territory development and planning instrument, which will define the use of the sea. Regulation: The Maritime Spatial Plan will be accepted by the Cabinet of Ministers and it will be binding for natural persons and entities.

Maritime Spatial Plans

- No effective maritime spatial planning in place.
- The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development has gained experience in maritime spatial planning through participation in different pilot projects such as BaltSeaPlan (<http://www.baltseaplan.eu/index.php/Latvian;839/1>), Plan Bothnia, GORWIND (<http://gorwind.msi.ttu.ee/home/info>) and PartiSeaPate.
- According to the Law on Territorial Development Planning, maritime spatial planning shall commence by 1 January, 2014. According to the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 740 “Marine planning development, implementation and supervision procedure” accepted on 30 October, 2012 the maritime spatial plan shall be developed by the Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology in cooperation with the Maritime Administration of Latvia.
- Maritime Spatial Planning will be developed taking into consideration the international liabilities of the Republic of Latvia and in cooperation with countries with which Latvia has a common sea border.

Maritime Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection

- Maritime planning development based on the ecosystem approach will commenced by 2014.
- According to the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment, there will be strategic environmental impact assessments for maritime planning.
- “Marine Protected Areas in the Eastern Baltic Sea” (2005-2009): proposition for development of seven marine protected areas in the territorial sea in the framework of a LIFE project, which in 2011 were included in the network of Natura 2000 that currently ensures protection of sea biotopes with significant importance.

Contact Point

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
Inguna Urtāne
Director, Spatial Planning Department
Tel. +371 66016523 - inguna.urtane@varam.gov.lv
<http://www.varam.gov.lv/>