

Maritime Spatial Planning II, through concrete examples.

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In issuing its opinion in regard to the EU maritime and coastal initiatives (June 2009), the EU Committee of the Regions considers that the implementation of an innovative governance tool, designed in a spirit of multi-level governance and compliance with subsidiarity, is essential to setting strategic guidelines for spatial planning. This must happen at several levels, from the maritime basin to the local level covering all the activities that take place in that space. Established marine and coastal partnerships like the Brittany Coastal Charter have a vital role to play to contribute and facilitate the development of maritime spatial planning in relation with the development of specific maritime activities like it is already the case in the field of renewable marine energies.

The Regional Economic and Social Council of Brittany has recently published a report entitled “Marine energies in Brittany: it all depends on us!”. Three main strategic axis have been defined: 1) developing marine energies in Brittany for tackling the use of new energies challenge and contribute to France commitments on renewable energies whilst promoting local development; 2) defining an industrial conversion strategy through the promotion and support of a new industrial activity in regard to the development of the maritime economy, source of wealth and employment; 3) creating a research and expertise consortium of international rank. Besides the preparation of mapping tools (databank, GIS), new synergies between fishers and marine energies production are emphasized in regard to fishers’ involvement in areas identification using their marine environment knowledge, device optimisation coupled with fisheries enhancement initiatives, and fishers’ involvement in the installment and maintenance of marine farm fields along their abilities.

In Belgium, the “Gaufre” project, “Towards a Spatial Structure Plan for Sustainable Management of the Sea”, is presented as one of the pioneering project regarding the development of marine spatial planning. Main lessons are: 1) spatial planning at sea is a dynamic process and an ongoing exercise; 2) it is a pragmatic work that has to face the lack of required data; 3) it may be used through scenarios to define a common vision; 4) it should be done with stakeholders to overcome uncertainties; 5) it should be put into context at the higher regional or trans-national scale of large maritime basins.

As a conclusion, it is recalled that maritime spatial planning should be considered as one of the tools that enable the delivery of Integrated Coastal Management.