

Natural and human land-sea interactions: Burgas Case Study, Bulgaria

Margarita Stancheva, Hristo Stanchev, Atanas Palazov, and Anton Krastev

Institute of Oceanology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Varna, Bulgaria (stancheva@io-bas.bg)

The Directive 2014/89/ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning sets the land-sea interactions as one of the minimum requirements for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP). Coastal areas are interconnected with the sea in both human use and natural values and many human activities on marine areas are functionally linked to the coast and vice versa. This research was elaborated in the frame of MARSPLAN-BS Project (DG MARE EU Commission) focused on a case study of land-sea interactions in Burgas Bay, south Bulgarian coast. The main goal of the project is to support the implementation of MSP for Black Sea.

Burgas is one of the most important ports at the Black Sea with significant infrastructure for supporting the economic activities and it is the largest Bulgarian Black Sea harbour. Burgas has a modern international airport, which handles most of the tourist flow during the peak summer season. The city is a center of culture, science and art of national importance and is distinguished with rapid developments over the recent years. In the surroundings of the study area there are valuable natural protected areas (Natura 2000) and wetlands, important Ramsar sites, such as: lakes of Atanasovsko, Burgas and Mandra. These lakes, together with the Pomorie Lake (adjacent in north direction) form the largest wetland in the country with exceptional conservation value of international and national importance. The intensity of both coastal and maritime activities in the study area have been constantly increased and new activities have been initiated or planned over the recent years, that area is often in conflict with other activities or the objectives of environmental protection.

In this context, the necessity of performing such an investigation at the area of Burgas comes up as a current challenge for sustainable economic development and protection of all wetlands and effective use of natural resources: those are in close proximity of the large city and the existence of various coastal and maritime activities that inevitably have an impact on the environment. The results are related to identified land-sea interactions in the Burgas case study area with a focus on biodiversity; identified impact of land infrastructure on the wetlands and maritime space; promoted participation of key stakeholders in the process; mapping the main land and sea uses and of natural values; identified, mapped and analysed users-users conflicts and users-environment conflicts; proposed planning solutions and recommendations.

The present study was supported by MARSPLAN-BS Project (Cross-Border Maritime Spatial Plan for the Black Sea – Romania, Bulgaria), funded by the European Commission, Grant Agreement no EASME/EMFF/2014/1.2.1.5/2/SI2.707672 MSP LOT1 Black Sea/ MARSPLAN-BS.