

Implementation of Marine Spatial Planning in Cyprus

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According to the European Commission, coastal and ocean activities should take place in an efficient, safe and sustainable way. Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) aims to bring together various users and map the marine and coastal resources in a sustainable way. The first step towards an integrated MSP in Cyprus was performed through the cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece–Cyprus 2007–2013” with acronym “Thal-Chor” that has been implemented between the years 2012–2014. An analysis of the coastal and ocean activities and their conflicts but also the existing legal framework related to the MSP in Cyprus was completed through “Thal-Chor”.

The successful results of “Thal-Chor”, in combination with the need to implement MSP in Cyprus but also the enforcement by the European Union to establish marine spatial plans by 2021, led ERATOSTHENES Research Centre (ERC) to work on a MSP project. The main objective of the project is to produce the final MSP plans that will be applied by Cyprus, as far as MSP is concerned, by following best practices from other EU countries, updating the work performed in “Thal-Chor” and updating the directives concerning MSP in Cyprus. This work highlights also how multidisciplinary backgrounds are integrated with geospatial tools to implement and monitor MSP activities in the coastal and marine environments. The importance of using geospatial tools such as GIS and Earth Observation in monitoring environmental aspects (e.g. hazards) related to MSP is highlighted with main emphasis on Cyprus and the east Mediterranean region.