

Draft Agenda



DAY 1 | 28.10.2025

Session 1: Opening of conference

Inga Bērziņa, Minister, Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development, Latvia

Laura Anteina, Director General, Nature Conservation Agency, Latvia

Juris Aigars, Director, Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, Latvia

Session 2: Designating protected areas in Europe's seas

A broad stage-setting session discussing the approaches, achievements and challenges related to the practical implementation of the spatial marine biodiversity conservation measures in fulfilment of the EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030: criteria for designating, applying different categories of protection zones, and assessing effectiveness of protective measures.

Tbc representative of DG ENVIRONMENT: The Commission's view

Jannica Haldin, HELCOM, Finland: The Status in the Baltic

Darius Daunys, Klaipeda University, Lithuania: The neighbour's experience

Leonardo Tunesi, Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research / Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Italy: The experience in the Mediterranean and beyond.

Ingrīda Andersone, Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, Latvia: The LIFE REEF proposal for redressing the Latvian MPA network

Session 3: Integration of the network of MPAs into marine spatial planning and integrated coastal management

The process of Marine Spatial Planning in the EU is governed by the Directive 2014/89/EU - Maritime Spatial Planning. The MSP Directive establishes a flexible framework for identifying optimal solutions. According to the provision of the MSP Directive, the Member States are currently in the process of reviewing the initial plans. With the expectation of a fast expansion of the so-called Blue Economy, particularly the Marine Renewable Energy, it is of utmost importance to

harmonise the marine spatial planning with the conservation of marine biodiversity. In the Baltic Sea area, the two competent intergovernmental bodies, HELCOM and VASAB, have established a joint MSP WG. This session will examine the aspirations, solutions and lessons learned at different scales and settings.

Daniel Depellegrin, IH Cantabria, Spain: The overall framework

Jan Schmidtbauer Crona, SWAM, HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, Sweden: The achievements and lessons learned in the Baltic and Sweden

Solvita Strāķe, Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, Latvia: The achievements and lessons learned in Latvia

Session 4: Methodology of assessing cumulative impacts of pressures

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Ida Maria Bonnevie, Aalborg University, Denmark: *tbc*

Aurelija Armoskaite, Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, Latvia: *tbc*

DAY 2 | 29.10.2025

Session 5: Coastal fisheries management in MPAs

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Session 6: Stakeholder engagement in establishing the MPAs network: sharing the best experience and lessons learned

Organizing spatial protection of marine diversity cuts across strong interests of multiple stakeholders. These include both the historically established and socioeconomically important industries, such as shipping and fisheries and the rapidly developing “new” ones, as marine renewable energy and marine and coastal recreation and tourism. These are crucial for local communities. On the other hand, proper citizen involvement enhances data gathering and the real-life enforcement of protective measures. In these circumstances, it is critical to implement an inclusive, patient and balanced two-way stakeholder communication at all steps of establishing the MPAs. This session will share the best practices in this field.

Edvards Kušners, Latvijas Banka: Why to protect the nature and how to justify it with finances?

Andrea Blaškovič, Project MPA4Change, Croatia: Experience in Croatia, Mediterranean Sea

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Session 7: Final panel discussion, summary and closing off

tbc

Day 3 | 30.10.2025

Session 8: Field trip

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