



Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

PRE-EVENT BRIEF

ESPON Peer Learning Workshop The Future of Cruise Tourism in the Adriatic Sea

Virtual

27 October 2020

Introduction



The European seas have become an important area where interregional interests and challenges interact. Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) aims to reconcile these interactions in line with the spin off and interests at the adjoining landsides. Marine and terrestrial spatial planning are policy fields that inevitably have a strong, mutual influence on each other, which translates to the Land-Sea Interactions (LSI).

ESPON has already conducted several studies (MSP-LSI, ENSURE, TITAN, Locate, BT2050) that gathered territorial evidence and triggered discussions for these policy fields. This ESPON Peer Learning Workshop (PLW) will focus on one part of those challenges; the specific topic of cruise tourism in the field of MSP-LSI, and specifically for the Adriatic Sea basin. The PLW will gather various involved stakeholders from the academic, public and private sectors, in order to exchange experiences, views and approaches, and outline roads for future research and policy needs.

Since the increased globalisation and influence of neoliberalism from the mid-1980's onwards, the number of passengers per cruise vessel has more than quadrupled. At the same time, through mergers, takeovers and alliances, the global cruise market is now dominated by four major holdings, which also began to invest in tourist resorts and amenities at the embarkment points. Therewith the ESPON MSP-LSI report indicates the need for a higher Land-Sea Interaction of the cruise revenues in the host port cities. Cruise passengers tend to spend less money, on the visiting points especially, than land tourists do. Nevertheless, other studies have also pointed out the increasing impact of cruise tourism on the natural and heritable environment, subsequently stressing the need for the development of cruise tourism that protects the economic, socio-cultural and environmental interests in the coastal regions (ESPON MSP-LSI, 2019). Finally, the current COVID-19 pandemic already has exerted a strong influence on cruise tourism in the 2020. Although the impact of the pandemic on the future development of this sector is still unsure, the question remains whether the pandemic could act as a game changer in this respect, or whether we will return to the pre-pandemic situation in the post-COVID era.

Objective

Not every coastal region has the same approach to cruise tourism while drawing the possible benefits from and minimising the potential negative impacts on their cultural and environmental legacy. The main objective of this PLW is to share expert views on the topic with major stakeholders, particularly in Croatia and more generally in the Adriatic Sea. Policymakers, regional stakeholders and researchers will share their experiences and discuss selected issues related to cruise tourism. Three main questions will be discussed during the PLW:

- 1. How can coastal regions enhance the benefits and the added value of cruise tourism for the specific regions in question?**
- 2. How can MSP-LSI ensure a sustainable development of cruise tourism that is environmentally and culturally resilient?**
- 3. How to develop pandemic-proof cruise tourism and what would be its focus in the post-COVID period?**

The ESPON territorial evidence gathered in previous studies will serve as background and will nurture the discussions around these three questions. The interests and challenges of the cruise sector as well as approaches of coastal regions will further contextualise these discussions.

Goal and Expected Outcomes

The main goal of the event is to develop a better understanding of which policies and local practices can enhance the economic benefits of hosting port-cities without having a negative impact on its environmental and cultural heritage. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cruise sector is currently reflecting on how to adapt to the situation and readjust its activities. This transition period might be a window of opportunity to define common practices that are beneficial for the cruise sector and the host port-cities.

Based on the ESPON evidence and the experiences of stakeholders from host port cities and the cruise sector, this peer-learning workshop will aim to define basic good practices and approaches that can serve as base for future collaborations between the host port cities and the cruise sector.

Structure and Input

The starting point of the PLW is the territorial evidence developed in the ESPON studies. Observations on the cruise shipping value chain will be presented in order to have a broad view on the specific land-sea interactions in relation to cruise tourism. Some examples from the Croatian coast and islands will serve as case-studies and to further contextualise the evidence.

The evidence, observations and resulting policy recommendations will be combined with recent studies about sustainable alternatives for cruise visits, and optional future pathways for a more resilient LSI roadmap of cruise tourism in economic and environmental terms. These studies will serve as a major incentive to boost discussion and conception of possible more sustainable and pandemic-resilient alternatives. The participants will try to translate these alternatives in future policy roadmaps as concrete as possible.

In the third part of the PLW, we will give the floor to local policymakers to reflect on the evidence presented previously and explore the breeding ground for alternative policy measures in and around the Adriatic. A level playing field is important for these actions. Therefore, after these reflections the workshop will take the form of an open discussion between the invited stakeholders and try to find answers to the three questions mentioned before and respectively explore future policy needs or possible collaborations.

Agenda

- 13:15** **Opening words by** Vassilen Iotzov (ESPON EGTC)
- 13:30** **Part one:** ESPON evidence and policy recommendations (20 min each)
- The struggle of capturing the economic benefits by Prof. Dave Shaw of the University of Liverpool
- The role of MSP in a sustainable development of cruise tourism by Luuk Boelens representing the ESPON EGTC
- Q&A
- 14:30** **Break**
- 14:45** **Part two:** First academic reflections for post-COVID options (20 min each)
- Can Covid-19 become a game changer for a possible more resilient and sustainable cruise tourism? by Luc Renaud of the Université de Quebec
- Are there sustainable alternatives for cruise shipping at cultural & environmental fragile embarkment points? (tbc)
- Q&A
- 15:45** **Break**
- 16:00** Reflections of two local stakeholders
- Mr. Hrvoje Kulušić, Assistant Director of the Dubrovnik port infrastructure and security
- Ms Jelka Tepsic, Deputy Mayor of the city of Dubrovnik
- Discussion about future policy needs and possible policy pathways
- Moderated by Prof. Luuk Boelens
- 17:00** **Conclusions by** *Tom Goosse*



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Disclaimer

This delivery does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.