

PRE-EVENT BRIEF

ESPON-AESOP Roundtable: Coastal Planning in the North – New Governance and Planning Spaces for Sustainable Coastal Development

Virtual

8th September 2021, 13:00-16:30 (CEST)

Introduction



The roundtable will focus on researchers and national, regional, and local stakeholders dealing with coastal planning. Special attention will be given to the emergence of new governance and planning spaces with the attempt to push for more sustainable, balanced, resilient, and integrated development in coastal areas.

In particular, we will focus on collaborative and co-evolutionary coastal zone planning across governing levels, sectors/themes, and actors (public, private/civil). We will discuss both mandatory and non-mandatory strategy-making and planning activities. We will also discuss the related opportunities and challenges in the coordination of these planning activities.

The main question of this roundtable event is then *to seek out potential pathways for better integration and coordination of the variety of key issues at stake in coastal areas, such as climate change, tourism, cultural heritage, aquaculture, energy production, etc., for a new balanced development. The second question is how can such integration and coordination take place with respect to local communities, including their resources and views on development needs and place identity?*

An ESPON-AESOP joint event

The roundtable will draw on evidence and experience from the professional communities of the European Spatial Observatory Network (ESPON) and the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) in order to discuss new governance and planning approaches.

ESPON is a European Territorial Cooperation programme, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, operating since 2002 in the field of territorial evidence. The programme conducts applied research, studying territorial development in the EU and EFTA countries and targeted analyses responding in depth to specific place-based policy needs. In addition, ESPON offers tools for territorial observation and analyses, and engages in efforts to inform policymaking such as this roundtable.

AESOP, established in 1987, is a representative of the major Planning Schools of Europe, with over 150 members. It covers and expands on the core planning curriculum in Europe, hosts various events, a quality recognition program, the Young Academic Network, several Planning Journals and 16 Thematic Working Groups, where specific research challenges and opportunities are being debated to create more effective platforms for discussion and exchange of work amongst AESOP members. One of these thematic groups is the Nordic Planning group (PLANNORD) for networking and the exchange of planning challenges in the Nordic context, mainly (but not exclusively) comprising of Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Norway, and Denmark.

Focus on Nordic experiences

The roundtable will discuss recent research, experiences, and lessons learned concerning coastal policy and planning activities in the northern part of Europe.

This includes output from the PlanCoast project, funded by the Norwegian research council (NMBU, 2021). The PlanCoast project has investigated framework conditions for a more sustainable and resilient governance of areas and resources in the coastal zone. Many kinds of conflicts can be identified in coastal areas, due to various and often differing interests and activities such as aquaculture, energy production, transport, fishery, nature protection, tourism, and recreation. Housing and second homes on the coast are attractive, and people prefer to have good access to the coast, which also necessitates space. The PlanCoast project has looked into the governance, legislative, and administrative challenges of dealing with such conflicts across sectors and authorities.

In addition, the PERICLES project (Horizon 2020) (PERICLES, 2021) can provide knowledge on the sustainable use of maritime and coastal cultural heritage. Attention to cultural heritage can provide a sense of place, unity, and belonging to people. It can also help connect people and assist in renewing perspectives on how to be and act as a community in future development activities. The PERICLES project has discussed potential pathways for both protecting and using cultural heritage aspects. This has been based on studies in 8 case study regions throughout Europe, such as Denmark where several small coastal communities have been investigated. The Vilsund case in Northwest Denmark has shown interesting developments in local collaboration across municipal borders, between authorities, museums and local communities, and across sectors. In particular, the Vilsund case illustrates the challenges and opportunities of integrating intangible and immaterial cultural heritage into relevant policies.

The COAST project (COAST, 2020) intends to develop a 'Sustainable Resilient Coasts Toolbox' for local authorities. The project started in 2020 and is a collaboration between partners from Iceland, Finland, Ireland, and Northern Ireland. It focuses on challenges and developmental aspects of coastal areas and will seek to support local authorities in the protection, promotion, and development of the unique natural and cultural heritage of the coastal zone. One interesting study, which has recently started within COAST, is an investigation of the Westfjords of Iceland, where the National Planning Authority is in the process of creating a first Marine Spatial Plan of the area, acting as a testbed for creating Marine Spatial Plans in all coastal areas of Iceland. Here, a key challenge is to do so in cooperation with local communities and stakeholders, while keeping national interests in mind.

Finally, the challenges of coastal development and planning in the far north, in the Arctic, may be unique in some respects, e.g. due to the presence and role of indigenous cultures, accelerated climate change, and a renewed intensified view of the resource potentials of the North (mining, energy, aquaculture, etc.). Such challenges may require new professional practices at the local-regional level and often cross-municipal collaboration. Hence, an insight into and report from such practices is also presented in this roundtable.

The above-mentioned research projects and professional activities contain a wide range of conclusions and policy-relevant inputs concerning coastal development and governance. One of the most pressing points is that in order to enable the use of local communities and citizen participation as a resource for a more sustainable and resilient coastal planning there is a need for improved inclusion and recognition of local development perceptions and place identity. Moreover, it is suggested that policy processes for local development can benefit significantly from deliberative 'mobilisation' approaches and from realising the importance of building policies based on the local communities, their organisation, as well as their cultural settings and practices.

ESPON Evidence

The BRIDGES project explored the specific territorial development issues of territories with geographical specificities (TGS), including coastal areas. The project identifies remoteness and low accessibility of Northern Rural Coasts in combination with their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change as being the major factors of constraint and challenges. In order to cope with these issues, the Bridges project presents interesting insights and reflections. The project's focus on coastal areas concludes with policy perspectives for an improved and extended soft governance to enhance the resilience and prosperity of coasts.

COMPASS focused on a comparative report of the changes in territorial governance and planning systems in Europe from 2000 to 2016. For that purpose, it has compared territorial governance and spatial planning in 32 European countries, not only as a snapshot comparison, but also in respect to identifying trends for EU directives and policies. Here, the study discovered new innovations, especially with regard to their relationship with EU cohesion policies and territorial governance. Against this backdrop, further recommendations will be formulated in respect to the roundtable's objective towards better integration and coordination of the variety of key issues at stake in coastal area.

These and other insights from Northern Europe, will be matched with:

- Recent insights from the ESPON Topic Paper on Maritime Spatial Planning and Landsea Interaction (April 2020);
- The recommendations from the ESPON BRIDGES project (Balanced Regional Development in areas with Geographic Specificities, especially concerning Coastal Areas (October 2019) and

- The context analysis of the ESPON COMPASS project (Comparative Analysis of Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning Systems in Europe), especially in regard to the institutional recommendations.

We will conclude the roundtable with comments from policy stakeholders from several Nordic countries.

Agenda

13:00 - 13:10

Introduction

Welcome word by Dr. Wiktor Szydarowski, Director of ESPON-EGTC

13:10 - 14:10

Session 1: ESPON-evidence

Moderated by **Prof. Dr. Ir. Luuk Boelens**

- “Coastal governance and planning challenges in the North towards a more sustainable and integrated development” by Dr. Heather Ritchie, Ulster University (Northern Ireland), part of ICLRD (15 min)
- “Reflections on different coastal governance and planning systems – lessons to be learned from the ESPON COMPASS project” by Prof. Vincent Nadin (15 min)
- “Integrating territorial specificities of coastal areas in planning” by Dr. Franziska Sielker, University of Cambridge, BRIDGES project (15 min)
- Followed by a 15 minute Q&A

14:10 - 14:20

Break

14:20 - 15:20

Session 2: Good practices

Moderated by **Prof. Dr. Carsten Jahn Hansen**

- “PlanCoast and Nordic coastal planning – governance and planning challenges” by Knut Bjørn Stokke, NMBU and Carsten Jahn Hansen, Aalborg University (15 min)
- “COAST - the resilience of remote coastal communities in the face of climate change through community empowerment” by Maria Wilke, Agricultural University of Iceland (15 min)
- “Coastal development challenges and practices in the far North – integrating cultural heritage and cross-municipal collaboration”, Stein Arne Rånes, Troms & Finnmark County, Norway (15 min)
- Followed by a 15 minute Q&A

15:20 - 15:30

Break

15:30 - 16:20

Roundtable discussion ESPON and AESOP evidence in Nordic policymaking:

- Jane Kragh Andersen, Special Consultant at the Danish National Authority for Housing and Planning
- SE ministerial representative *tbc*

- Kristin Nordil, The Norwegian national department of Municipal and Modernisation Affairs
- Tiina Tihlman, Counsellor at the Finnish Ministry of Environment

Core questions for the debate in search of advice for policymakers and planners will be:

- How to evolve coastal governance and planning in the future?
- How to better include local communities?
- How can new governance and planning spaces help to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable coastal development?

16:20 - 16:30

Conclusions

Prof. Dr. Ir. Luuk Boelens (UGent)

References

BRIDGES (2019). Balanced Regional Development in areas with Geographic Specificities. ESPON 2019. <https://www.espon.eu/geographical-specificities>

COAST (2020). COAST – Sustainable Resilient Coasts. Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme, consulted online (2021.07.08): <https://coast.interreg-npa.eu>

COMPASS (2018). Comparative Analysis of Territorial Governance and Spatial Planning Systems in Europe. ESPON 2018. <https://www.espon.eu/planning-systems>

NMBU (2021). PlanCoast. Norges Miljø og Biovitenskapelige Universitet, consulted online (2021.07.08): <https://www.nmbu.no/prosjekter/plancoast>

PERICLES (2021). Pericles – Preserving and sustainably governing cultural heritage and landscapes in European Coastal and Maritime Regions. Horizon2020, consulted online (2021.07.08): <https://www.pericles-heritage.eu>



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ESPON 2021

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