



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

[REDACTED]
Federal Maritime and Hydrographic
Agency of Germany
EingangOdM@bsh.de

Your ref 04.12.2020

Our ref 11 January 2021 No 6-6/20/4634-13

Answer to the notification regarding the revision of
maritime spatial plans for the German exclusive
economic zone in the North Sea and Baltic Sea

[REDACTED]
Germany, acting as the Party of Origin, notified Estonia according to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) regarding the revision of maritime spatial plans for the German exclusive economic zone in the North Sea and Baltic Sea.

By a letter dated 10 March 2020, Germany notified Estonia regarding the revision of the German maritime spatial plans. An early opportunity to comment the concept for the revision of the maritime spatial plans and the draft scope of the environmental assessment in English was provided. The Ministry of the Environment of Estonia organized a public display of the aforementioned documentation. Based on the comments received, the Ministry of the Environment informed that Estonia does not intend to participate in the transboundary impact assessment procedure regarding the revision of the German maritime spatial plans.

Now the revision process has reached the draft revised maritime spatial plan and the environmental reports stage. By a letter dated 4 December 2020, Germany has initiated international consultations for the revision of the maritime spatial plans. The notification letter included an internet link of the webpage where the respective documentation in English has been uploaded.


The Ministry of the Environment of Estonia organized a public display of the aforementioned documentation. Information letters have been sent to numerous authorities and non-governmental organizations, also notice of the public consultation procedure has been given in the official publication *Ametlikud Teadaanded*. In the announcements, a reference has been made to the respective webpage where all the relevant documentation is available. Also information concerning the international consultation online meeting that will take place on 27 January 2021 has been added. The public display took place from 14 December 2020 to 6 January 2021. Statements were received from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications and the Estonian Fund for Nature (enclosed). A summary of the statements – written by the Ministry of the Environment – is included below. The Ministry of Rural Affairs informed that they do not have comments.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications has asked that the completed and also the maritime spatial plans under preparation in the Baltic Sea (i.e. impacts resulting from the implementation of the plans) are appropriately taken into account in preparing the German maritime spatial plan. This is also relevant with regard to the objectives and action plans of HELCOM and other international co-operation formats that maintain the state of the Baltic Sea.

The Estonian Fund for Nature is on the opinion that the maritime spatial plan and the environmental reports are comprehensive. However, there are controversies in the plan that affect the entire Baltic Sea ecosystem. In relation to subchapter 2.1 of the plan, more profound justification should be provided for the preference for maritime affairs. This should include a precise reference to the provisions of UNCLOS setting out the priority of shipping over the environment, or alternatively, this principle could be rephrased so that environmental needs are at least at the same level as shipping. The principle that the development of offshore wind energy must not take place at the expense of biodiversity should be brought out more clearly. The documentation should consider measures to prevent negative effects on birds and bats, also alternative ways of laying foundations to ramming should be considered. Mining should be excluded in protected areas and other sensitive marine areas (including loon stopover sites), the reservation of marine areas for hydrocarbon extraction should be disclaimed.

In addition, the Estonian Fund for Nature proposes that measures to reduce the negative environmental impact of fisheries, and in particular fish farming, should be implemented. Where appropriate, spatial restrictions should be imposed (also with regard to marine protected areas). Concerning Norwegian lobster fisheries reservation areas, a more selective approach to fishing that also takes into account the functioning of the ecosystem should be stipulated. The sea area between Skane and Rügen should be reserved as a migration corridor that needs to be conserved. In relation to subchapter 2.2.1 of the plan, the interrelationship between the different uses should be brought out more clearly. As a more general comment, the Estonian Fund for Nature has emphasized that the maritime planning process needs more effective international consistency and assessment of cumulative effects across the whole sea.

Sincerely Yours,



Point of Contact for the Espoo Convention

Annex:

- 1) statement by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications;
- 2) statement by the Estonian Fund for Nature.

