

Theme session J

CIA on the loose

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This session called for papers on Cumulative Affect Assessment (CIA) in the marine environment. In Europe, marine CIAs are required by the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) in relation to initial assessments. On a regular basis, EU Member States have to not only address but to assess the multiple ways human activities affect marine ecosystems. Some of these ways are well-known, others poorly, but even in the case of well-known functional relationships, the combined effects of several pressures acting upon ecosystem components concurrently is much more uncertain. In order to ensure good environmental status (GES) and to guarantee the continued delivery of crucial ecosystem services, we must not only be able to understand but also skilfully manage the cumulative effects of human pressures. In addition, the consequences of multiple management measures need to be better understood and assessed about cumulative effects.

The session, which suffered from unfortunate late-stage cancellations due to forces majeures, was organized in a workshop format. The workshop discussed various methods which have been and potentially could be utilized in order to improve the assessment of cumulative affects, rather than just assuming that affects from various activities are additive. Despite the cancellations and the unattractive time slot for the workshop at Friday 14–16, the workshop had approximately 20 participants and interesting discussions.

The presentations and discussion included the following topics:

- 1) State-of-the-art: what has been done so far in the field of CIAs?
- 2) Examples of CIA: case studies from the UK and Baltic; HELCOM and OSPAR processes, and
- 3) Way forward: What are they key issues to address next to go forward efficiently.

Workshops outcomes included

- 1) a process ultimately resulting in a review paper on concepts, methods and lessons learned with regard to CIA in European marine waters, and
- 2) The establishment of an informal European network on mapping cumulative pressures and affects.