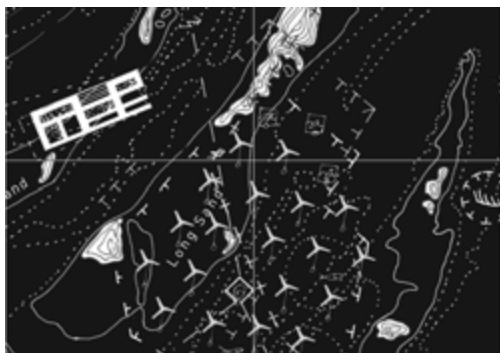


MANAGING THE SEA, A VISION OF THE FUTURE. THE 'FUTURE COMMONS 2070' MAP

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extract from 'Future Commons 2070', see www.magnificentsurroundings.org

We present the conference audience 'The Future Commons 2070' map, a design-based research project that addresses critical vision forming and synthetic imagination concerning the development of maritime spatial planning and ICZM on the Southern part of the North Sea. The map proposes a global vision of the sea and coastal area for and adjacent to the Belgian part of the North Sea, that outlines the key elements that develop the area into a Magnificent Surroundings+. In the concept of Magnificent Surroundings+ the sea is considered to become a common in 2070 and a synthesis is created between infrastructure and transport, energy production and ecological concerns in order to support this.

This project is part of the 'Magnificent Surroundings # North Sea and coastal area' research project and its purpose is to stimulate the awareness that the sea has this unique value to society: common interest. Everybody has the right to use the sea, to enjoy its benefits. Just like forests, water and the atmosphere, the sea can be considered as a 'common-pool resource', a natural common resource, quasi-free for anybody to enjoy. Although this seems evident, it cannot be taken for granted because natural common-pool resources are not inexhaustible, and hence, sensitive to problems like pollution, wastage and overuse. This is why the sea needs to be properly managed from a longterm perspective as a valuable future-orientated common good.

Oceans and seas are an immeasurable space, differing from the land in many respects, yet like all open space on earth, this immense area is increasingly under pressure. The increasing rate of land wastage is just one of the factors that will cause the demand to make open sea-space available for development ever more urgent. Throughout the centuries, maritime law has kept on connecting ever-larger maritime areas with their adjacent coastal states, and this is an ongoing trend. At the moment, a significant part of the surface of oceans and seas on earth is situated within the sovereignty of a coastal state (e.g. EEZ). However, the larger part of oceans and seas (e.g. 'international waters' or 'high seas') are not (yet) subjected to states' sovereignty, and are (to put it simply) intended for collective use; this part can be defined as a collective space on a worldwide scale. However, a collective status that has not been allocated or recognized explicitly is all too often demoted to the vulnerable status of 'freely available'... Clearly, maritime spatial planning is on the rise worldwide. Policy concerning this matter is evolving steadily. While Europe is setting out the basic outlines for its future marine and maritime policy options, project developers are already proposing their first initiatives.

In order to safeguard its status of common good the sea deserves due care and therefore, there is a need for a global vision of how to address this meta-question of commonality in maritime spatial planning. 'Planning' for the most part implicates accepting development, which, in terms of spatial use, translates as 'appropriation of extra space'. But Europe's intention to "guarantee economic growth in a climate of sustainable development" sounds a lot like its credo for planning on land, whereas planning and designing for marine areas is in fact a very different, location-time-specific matter. If we are prepared to validate this specificity, it seems more than probable that for maritime spatial planning, different planning principles from those for landlocked projects will be required.

The actual planning process needs to be backed up by existing fundamental scientific research, but it also requires global critical vision-defining research, in which an important role is reserved for design-based or projective research. In this type of research the default mode of thinking is imagineering and projectivity. Projectivity and imagineering, resulting in prefigurations, render prospective alternatives subject to discussion and anticipative reflection, also called proflection. Proflection enables reflecting on future possibilities and desirability, and in that sense, differs from scientific prediction which is rather reflecting on probabilities. Global critical vision-defining research based on designerly thinking is orientated to goal-setting (what do we want?) and thus provides a necessary complement to the (natural) sciences. Framed within this particular research context, The Future Commons 2070 prefigures the development of the Belgian part of the North Sea and coastal area into a commons-inspired Magnificent Surrounding+ and proposes policy and planning principles to achieve this.

The 'Future Commons' map shows what may, by 2070, have become a new European Union 'Southern North Sea' Zone, namely a EU-Maritime Commons (EU-MC) Zone. Starting from the conviction that a relation exists between overexploitation of natural resources and the current use and governance of oceans and seas, we propose that the governance of all EEZ on a global scale should be reconsidered with this reflection in mind. We are proposing 2070 as the target year by which EEZ will convert into "maritime commons". In accordance with this future vision, these marine commons will be administered with a view to putting the common good at the top of the agenda, meticulously striving for a more balanced use of natural resources and respect for the dynamics and evolution of nature and species in oceans and seas. This vision for a new EU-Maritime Commons Zone was generated by design-based research and as a result this map features an absolute first: a specific example of simultaneous spatial planning for the marine area off the coast and the adjacent inland coastal zone area. It proposes to bring the former EEZ, including the 'contiguous zone', under management of the European Union (or a similar supra-national power) and consequently to divide it into larger, supra-national natural-jurisdictional parts, based on its constituent ecosystems. Transcending the existing state structure will allow the implementation of an international, coherent land, water and seas policy. Within a coordinating European policy framework, the territorial zone remains to be administered regionally. The 'Future Commons 2070' project advocates conservation of the sea as a common and recognition of its growing importance, strongly regulated by the European Union. Securing the sea as a common good guarantees consolidation of its social, economic, environmental and spatial significance in a dynamic whole. In addition, establishing additional commons on land - inland extensions of the sea - will create opportunities and favourable conditions for managing the effects of climate change in coastal zones. With this exploration of an updated concept of commons, the present project intends to fuel the ethical debate on maritime spatial planning, starting from a basic socio-ecologically inspired concern.