Management of Beaches in Croatia: Concessions, Permits, and the Public Interest

Goran Vojković
University North, Koprivnica, Croatia

Abstract

This paper analyses the new Croatian legal framework governing the economic use of beaches, with particular emphasis on concessions and permits introduced by the Maritime Domain and Seaports Act (MDSPA) of 2023. Beaches are a strategic tourism resource and managing them requires balancing general access with the imperatives of sustainable economic development. The first part presents the categorisation of beaches, statutory limitations on granting concessions, and specific safeguards to protect the public interest, such as the prohibition of fencing and the charging of entrance fees. The second part addresses the new regime of permits on the maritime domain. Furthermore, the paper emphasises the importance of planning through the Maritime Domain Management Plan, which is intended to reconcile the objectives of coastal preservation, general use, and economic exploitation. Finally, the analysis considers international conventions, EU directives, and strategic documents that frame the objectives of sustainable management of the coastal and marine environment, with relevance for beaches.

Keywords: maritime domain; concessions; permits; beaches; Croatia; coastal protection

Type of paper: Research article

Received: August 23, 2025
Accepted: February 20, 2026

DOI: 10.2478/crdj-2026-0010

Introduction

The sea and the seacoast in the Republic of Croatia have the status of *res communes omnium*, i.e. common goods of interest to the Republic of Croatia, are placed under special protection (Babac, 2009), and are excluded from legal commerce (*extra commercium*) (Aviani, 2009; Vojković, 2003). On the maritime domain, ownership rights and other real rights cannot be acquired on any legal basis (Jelavić, 2012; Jug, 2013). Consequently, economic activities at sea and along the seacoast may be carried out solely under public law instruments and under conditions prescribed by statute—specifically, through concessions (Vojković, 2023) and permits, which have replaced the former concession approvals (Matošević, 2025).

In Croatia, internal sea waters and the territorial sea, together with their seabed, subsoil, and submarine areas, as well as the part of the mainland which by its very nature is designated for general use and has been legally determined as such, constitute a specific legal institute referred to as the maritime domain. Among the numerous economic and other activities taking place on the maritime domain, this article focuses on beaches. In the Republic of Croatia, tourism accounts for a significant share of GDP (approximately 19%) (Roška & Šmider, 2024), with seasonal summer tourism along the Adriatic coast representing its most prominent form. Consequently, beaches constitute a particularly important and sensitive segment due to the strong overlap between the public interest (general use) and the economic imperatives of tourism development, which necessarily impose limitations on general use.

The normative development of this field commenced with the *Maritime Code* of 1994, continued with the *Maritime Domain and Seaports Act* of 2003, and reached a pivotal milestone with the new *Maritime Domain and Seaports Act* (MDSPA) of 2023. The MDSPA refines the legal institute of economic use, aligns the national system with Directive 2014/23/EU on the award of concession contracts, and functionally links the general *Concessions Act* (2017) with the specific rules governing the maritime domain (Staničić & Bogović, 2017). The MDSPA also introduces permits in place of the former concession approvals and provides a precise definition and classification of beaches.

Under Croatian law, the maritime domain is primarily designated for general use (Nakić, 2016), meaning that everyone has the right to use it in accordance with its nature and purpose (Popovski, 2016). Any restriction or exclusion must be expressly authorised by law and must remain proportionate to its intended purpose. Pursuant to the MDSPA, two instruments of economic use are available with respect to beaches: concessions (for interventions and services requiring substantial investment and longer periods of use) and permits (for simpler, seasonal, or small-scale activities that do not restrict general use), all of which must conform with the relevant planning documents.

The objective of this paper is to analyse the legal framework governing the economic use of beaches through concessions and permits, with particular emphasis on the limits designed to safeguard general use, as well as the practical implications for service quality, legal certainty, and regional development. The paper further highlights the

need to prepare high-quality planning documents to ensure both economic development and the protection of beaches as common goods and an essential element of the coastal landscape. In this context, the importance of the European and international legal framework in shaping the preparation of appropriate planning documents is also underlined.

This paper contributes to the existing literature by offering a systematic analysis of the newly introduced permit regime on beaches and by critically examining the internal coherence of public-interest safeguards under the 2023 MDSPA.

Methodology

This paper is based on a normative–dogmatic (doctrinal) legal research methodology (Dobinson & Johns, 2007, p. 28). The analysis focuses on the interpretation and systematic examination of the positive legal framework governing the maritime domain in the Republic of Croatia, with particular emphasis on the MDSA of 2023 and the implementing regulations adopted pursuant thereto.

The adoption of the MDSPA constitutes a significant change in the system of management of sea beaches in the Republic of Croatia. Although it may be argued that the fundamental structural elements established in the 1990s have formally remained in place (most notably the classification of beaches as part of the maritime domain, the balancing of commercial activities with the protection of the public interest, and the planning-based approach to economic use), this continuity is only apparent. The numerous regulatory changes introduced by the Act amount, in substance, to a largely new legal framework.

At the same time, the Act has introduced an important adjustment of the Croatian concession system, aligning it with the contemporary national model of concessions and its underlying regulatory principles.

In this context, the paper focuses on analysing the normative premises of the new system, rather than on an empirical, legal, or economic assessment of its implementation. At this stage, empirical research and any evaluation based on it would not be methodologically justified. It is only after the lapse of a reasonable period of time (typically encompassing at least several tourist seasons) that meaningful empirical research may be undertaken. Comparative references to selected EU Member States are used solely for contextualisation and do not amount to a comparative legal analysis.

The principal advantage of this methodological approach is its capacity to clarify legal concepts, identify normative inconsistencies, and assess the alignment of the domestic legal framework with overarching strategic and policy objectives. The paper's limitation is that it does not include empirical research or field-based analysis of the practical implementation of the statutory solutions, which remains an open direction for future research.

Much of the legal literature developed under the previous legislative framework, prior to 2023, has limited analytical value. Although such works retain their historical and theoretical significance, their conclusions cannot be fully applied to the newly established normative system. Consequently, the body of published scholarly research directly relevant to the current regulatory framework remains relatively limited. Several of these contributions are outlined below.

Kovačić and Favro (2024) analyse the new legislative framework for the management of sea beaches in the Republic of Croatia, with particular emphasis on institutional competences, forms of use, and the economic valorisation of beaches. Their contribution provides a useful overview of the core legal solutions introduced by the 2023 reform. In contrast, this article offers a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between concessions, permits, and the protection of the public interest in practice.

Novak (2024) examines the proprietary-law aspects of the maritime domain, with specific reference to sea beaches, and analyses the distinctive features of the legal regime governing the maritime domain within the Croatian legal system. That work provides an important theoretical starting point for understanding the public-law nature of beaches. At the same time, the present article focuses on the administrative-law instruments governing their economic use and management.

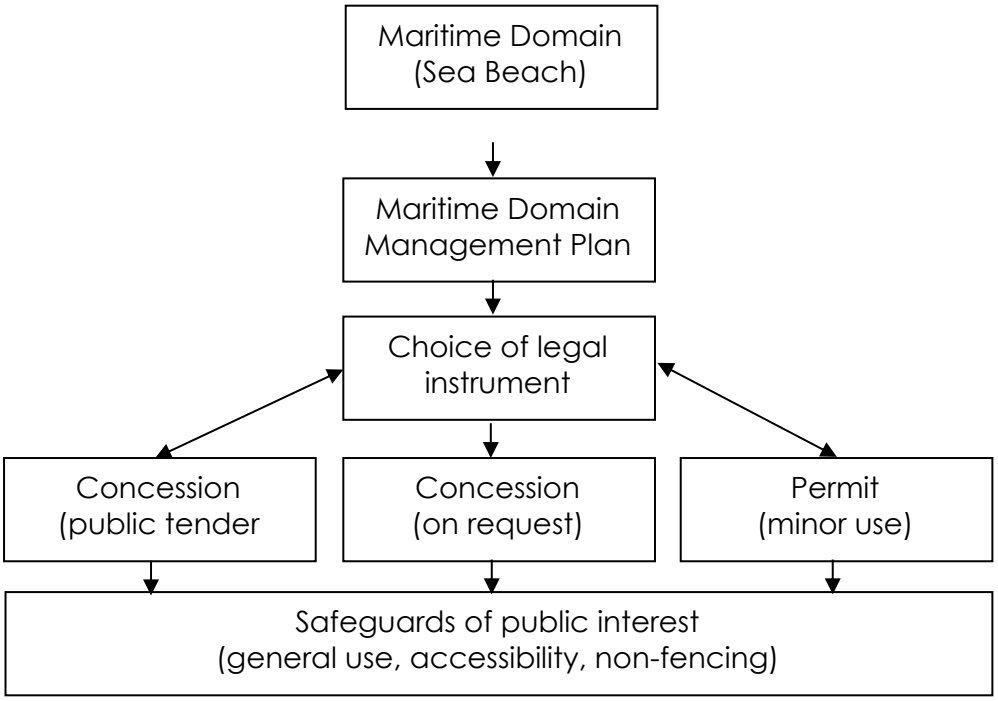
Finally, it should be noted that certain aspects of the topic were previously addressed in the form of a conference paper presented at ENTRenova 2024 (Vojković, 2024). The present article, however, represents a substantially revised and expanded version, offering a deeper normative analysis, incorporating the relevant EU and international legal frameworks, and explicitly addressing the role of planning instruments in the governance of beaches within the new legislative context.

To illustrate the normative structure of the new system of beach management, the paper includes a schematic overview of the applicable legal instruments and public interest safeguards (Figure 1).

Classification of Beaches

The MDSPA regulates beaches in a separate Part Four of the Act, expressly entitled "Beaches." Even a prima facie examination reveals that beaches are regulated in an exceptionally detailed manner—at a level that would ordinarily be expected in subordinate legislation rather than in the statutory text itself. The reason lies in the considerable economic, but also political, significance of beaches: Croatian public opinion is highly sensitive to any occupation of, or restrictions on, general use. The Government of the Republic of Croatia, as the proponent of the Act, expressly stated in the Explanatory Memorandum to the MDSPA: *"Given the fact that beaches are the most important part of the tourist offer on our coast, the regulation of beaches certainly deserves to be an essential part of the Act governing the sea and the seacoast."* (Final Proposal of the Maritime Domain and Seaports Act, 2023). Consequently, the inclusion in statutory law of matters that might nomotechnically fall within the scope of subordinate legislation may be regarded as justified.

Figure 1. Legal instruments for the economic use and management of sea beaches under the MDSPA.



Source: Author's work

The MDSPA classifies beaches into public beaches and beaches of special purpose. Public beaches are further subdivided into natural beaches and developed beaches. The following sections set out the provisions by which each of these categories is regulated in detail, beginning with public beaches.

In Article 78, the MDSPA first defines natural beaches. A natural beach is defined as a beach located either within or outside populated areas, lacking infrastructure, and fully preserving its natural features, whose land portion consists of natural materials (stone, sand, gravel, or their combinations, etc.). On such beaches, building construction is not permitted; only interventions in the area that, under special construction regulations, are not considered construction may be carried out. It is further expressly stipulated that a natural beach may not be fenced off, nor may access to it be otherwise restricted. Moreover, charging an entrance fee to a natural beach is prohibited, and a natural beach may not be excluded from general use.

In the subsequent Article 79, the MDSPA defines developed beaches. A developed beach is a beach located either within or outside populated areas, accessible to all under equal conditions, including persons with reduced mobility, whose natural features have been modified and whose land portion, directly connected to the sea, is equipped with infrastructure and facilities. It is particularly noteworthy—and commendable—that the new MDSPA expressly provides for access by persons with reduced mobility. A local self-government unit or a concessionaire is required to mark

and protect the developed beach from the seaward side and to display, at visible locations, an information board containing data on bathing water quality, an indication of whether pets are allowed, information on both the maritime and the land portions of the beach, and information on possible extraordinary events occurring at the beach. As with natural beaches, developed beaches may not be fenced off, nor may access to them be otherwise restricted, and the charging of entrance fees is prohibited. A developed beach may also not be excluded from general use.

It should be noted that, although not expressly addressed by the MDSPA, the concept of free and equal access to beaches should be interpreted broadly. It does not refer solely to access along the shoreline or from the sea, and encompasses reasonable physical access from the land. In this respect, the provisions of the MDSPA may be understood as an interpretative guideline for spatial planning instruments, which play a key role in ensuring effective, not merely formal, accessibility to beaches.

As previously noted, in addition to public beaches (subdivided into natural and developed beaches), the MDSPA also regulates beaches of special purpose. Article 80 of the Act governs these. A beach of special purpose is defined as a beach intended to meet the requirements of specific groups of users and their particular needs. Such a beach may be used based on a concession, which may be granted to: (1) a public institution within the health care system established by the Republic of Croatia or by a regional self-government unit, whose users are accommodated therein for treatment and/or rehabilitation; and (2) a legal person acting as concessionaire of a beach whose users are naturist tourists. Only in these two cases may access to the beach be restricted, meaning that such a beach may be excluded from general use. The intent of the legislator is clear: to establish a strict and narrowly justified exception under which access to a beach may be limited.

At this point, a general constitutional objection may be raised: such a beach may be requested by a public institution within the health care system whose founder is a public body (the State or a local or regional self-government unit), but not by a public institution established by another natural or legal person. The restriction, however, should be defined by reference to the function of the public institution rather than the identity of its founder.

Principles of Beach Management

The MDSPA sets out the competences for the management of beaches. Article 76 contains, inter alia, the fundamental classification of beaches, and further provides: *"A beach shall be managed by the local self-government unit, or by a public institution responsible for protected natural areas in accordance with the Maritime Domain Management Plan or the Maritime Domain Management Plan for protected natural areas, or by a concessionaire pursuant to the decision and concession agreement."* (Article 76, paragraph 3). From this formulation it follows that Maritime Domain Management Plans constitute the principal instruments for the management of beaches. They determine the direction and substance of all activities, ranging from the protection of

natural assets to the forms of economic use. Furthermore, the same article imposes a general obligation requiring those entrusted with beach management to protect and maintain it and to ensure the fulfilment of the public interest in its use. The introductory part of the MDSPA also emphasises that managing the maritime domain is a matter of public interest; however, this does not resolve the legal–administrative question of what, in fact, constitutes the "public interest" (Vuković, 2023).

Because the concept may be interpreted very broadly, there is a constant risk that the "public interest" may become merely a formal label. At the same time, in practice, partial, politically or economically motivated objectives are pursued, or management plans are adopted solely pro forma. This underlines the need for the preparation of management plans that are substantive, clear, and transparent, as will be discussed further below.

The local self-government unit, the public institution responsible for protected natural areas, and the concessionaire are all obliged to protect and maintain the beach and to ensure the fulfilment of the public interest in its use. The MDSPA expressly emphasises—and repeatedly reiterates in other provisions—that beaches must be accessible to all under equal conditions and that no beach may be excluded from general use. Thus, general use, which represents the general and equal enjoyment of a public good by citizens and other legal subjects (Popovski, 2016), constitutes the fundamental principle governing the use of beaches.

Another MDSPA provision also addresses the public interest: Article 81, entitled "Principle of Fulfilling the Public Interest." Paragraph 1 of that article stipulates that, when deciding which portion of a public beach the concessionaire may use for economic activities, the concession grantor must ensure and safeguard the public interest in the use of the beach. However, since the concession grantor is invariably a public body, it is already *ex definitione* bound to act in the public interest. This formulation therefore neither creates a new legal obligation nor clarifies the normative framework; it remains a declaratory statement and adds little normative value beyond reiterating a general obligation already binding on public authorities.

The same article prescribes quantitative limits on the economic use of beaches: for public beaches located within populated areas, up to 40% of the land portion and 20% of the maritime portion; and for beaches outside populated areas, up to 60% of the land portion and 40% of the maritime portion. Although these provisions are operationally relevant, by their nature they constitute substantive rules rather than legal principles. Their insertion into an article entitled "principle" results in normative inconsistency. The general clause in paragraph 1 remains legally inoperative, since public bodies must act in the public interest regardless of its inclusion. At the same time, the precise numerical limits are placed under the heading of a principle, although they are, in legal character, concrete rules. Such legislative drafting technique blurs the distinction between general principles and operative norms.

It may also be noted, in the context of safeguarding the public interest, that the MDSPA regulates in detail the issue of beach nourishment. Although such technical matters would ordinarily be expected to be governed at the level of subordinate legislation, the

decision to regulate them directly by statute reflects the particular sensitivity of the issue and the legislator's intent to prevent past shortcomings and inconsistencies observed in practice. In particular, this approach may be understood as a response to situations in which inappropriate materials, including construction waste or excavated soil from building sites, were used in beach filling operations, with adverse consequences for coastal morphology and environmental quality.

In summary, the MDSPA has preserved the existing legal conception of the beach as part of the maritime domain which, subject to strict exceptions, remains accessible to all, while providing a significantly more precise statutory elaboration. As a positive development, it must also be emphasised that, for the first time, the element of accessibility of beaches to persons with reduced mobility has been expressly included (Novak, 2024).

Economic Use of Beaches

Although *ex definitione* general use constitutes the fundamental principle governing the legal regime of the maritime domain, including beaches, the legislator, seeking to enable economic development and the utilisation of this important resource of the Republic of Croatia, has permitted their economic use.

Beaches remain *res communes omnium*, a component of the common good accessible to all; however, under the provisions of the MDSPA, economic activities may be conducted on a designated portion of their surface. Between complete freedom of use, which typically degenerates into general disorder and degradation, and full commercialisation, which excludes citizens, a compromise has been necessary.

In regulating beaches, a broad range of interests must be reconciled: from the economic interest in tourism-based exploitation of the coast, through the preservation of the marine environment and coastline, and the protection of legal certainty and acquired rights, to ensuring general accessibility of beaches for persons with reduced mobility and citizens of lower socio-economic status, for public health, recreation, and social inclusion (Novak, 2024). To avoid extremes, the legal framework introduces two distinct instruments: the concession, as a more complex form of long-term and more exclusive economic use, and the permit, as a simpler form of temporary use for activities that must not restrict general use.

Concessions on Beaches

Article 11 of the MDSPA provides that the maritime domain is, above all, subject to general use, but may also be granted for special use and for economic exploitation.

As noted, general use of the maritime domain means everyone has the right to use it in accordance with its nature and purpose (Kundih, 2000, p. 7). Special use of the maritime domain constitutes a time-limited right to use it for the performance of an activity that is not carried out for profit, with or without the right to use structures and

interventions in the area. The MDSPA itself gives illustrative examples: the needs of state administration bodies or legal entities vested with public authority, as well as the use of infrastructure (bridges, water supply, sewage, energy facilities, and similar).

For this paper, what matters is the economic use of the maritime domain. This constitutes a time-limited right to use the maritime domain, with or without the right to use structures and interventions in the area. In other words, economic use is the utilisation of the maritime domain aimed at generating economic profit through economic activities (Staničić & Bogović, 2017).

The right of economic use of the maritime domain is acquired through a concession. The MDSPA defines a concession on the maritime domain as a time-limited right of economic use, with or without the right to construct, which is acquired by means of a concession agreement (Tasić, 2018). A concession agreement constitutes a form of administrative contract (Horvat & Malenica, 2025).

The procedure for granting concessions is one of the most complex administrative procedures in Croatian administrative practice, beginning with the preparation of extensive documentation (Vojković, 2024). In concession-granting procedures, the *Concessions Act* (2017), aligned with the Concessions Directive (2014), applies. However, it is important to emphasise that the MDSPA is not merely a sectoral statute but also contains specific procedural provisions which supplement the general framework of the *Concessions Act*. In this way, the statute seeks to regulate with precision the particularities relating to the maritime domain, including, of course, beaches.

The MDSPA stipulates that a concession on the maritime domain shall be granted through a public tender, while, by exception, it may be granted upon request in cases expressly provided for by the Act itself. The Act expressly provides that a concession agreement on the maritime domain constitutes an administrative contract, as also stipulated in the general framework of the *Concessions Act*.

For the subsequent analysis, it is important to emphasise Article 49 of the MDSPA, which stipulates that a concession on the maritime domain may be granted only for purposes envisaged by the spatial plan. Among the illustrative examples of concession objects listed in the same article are beaches.

The MDSPA further regulates the preparatory actions preceding the granting of a concession, setting out specific requirements in relation to the *Concessions Act*. These actions include the assessment of needs and interests for granting a concession, ranging from the evaluation of the necessity of a particular service, through the consideration of private investment projects and their financial impacts, to other relevant factors. Such preparatory actions may be initiated solely by the competent authority or based on an expression of interest submitted by an economic operator, who must then provide documentation demonstrating compliance with spatial plans, anticipated effects, and the principles of maritime domain management. The procedure is subsequently carried out by a special expert commission for concessions, which every concession grantor must establish.

According to Article 52 of the MDSPA, concession grantors outside ports open to public traffic are the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the regional self-government units, with the option to delegate this authority to local self-government units. The practical impact of this option should not be overstated. Such delegation may be effective primarily in a limited number of larger coastal cities, which possess sufficient administrative capacity, professional staff, and planning experience. In contrast, most Croatian coastal municipalities are limited in size and institutional capacity, rendering them ill-equipped to manage complex concession procedures. As a result, the formal possibility of decentralisation does not, in itself, resolve the structural challenges of concession governance on beaches.

The concession grantor must prepare a Feasibility Study that determines the duration of the concession, the method of fee payment, the estimated value, the risks and costs assumed by the concessionaire, the expected profit, and the surface area of the maritime domain covered by the concession.

The duration of the concession is one of the fundamental issues in the procedure of granting all types of concessions, including those relating to beaches. Determining the concession term is not merely a technical matter. However, it has clear economic and legal implications: an excessively short term may discourage investment, as the concessionaire would lack sufficient time to recover the invested capital, whereas an excessively long term leads to market foreclosure, restricted competition, and the obstruction of the free movement of services. For this reason, the *Concessions Directive* (2014) emphasises in Recital 52 that the duration of a concession must be proportionate to the time required to recoup the investment and to obtain a reasonable return, considering the risks and obligations assumed by the concessionaire.

The provisions of the *Concessions Directive* have also been transposed into the Croatian legal system: Article 55 of the MDSPA stipulates that a concession shall be granted for a period that does not restrict competition more than is necessary for the amortisation of the investment. It is specifically prescribed that a concession on natural beaches may be granted for a maximum of five years. This limitation derives from the fact that construction on natural beaches is prohibited. Consequently, there is no need for longer concession terms to allow for the recovery of investments in construction works.

For other forms of the maritime domain, the legislator allows considerably longer concession terms. The Government of the Republic of Croatia may grant a concession for up to 50 years for projects of special state interest and for protected areas, and in exceptional cases for an even longer period—but only with the prior consent of the Croatian Parliament. This leaves room for strategic infrastructure projects or investments whose effects cannot be realised within a shorter period. Conversely, regional self-government units may grant concessions within their competence for up to 20 years. In practice, this means that most decisions on beach concessions will be taken at the regional or local level (as noted, regional self-government units may delegate this power to local self-government units).

In this context, the need for transparent and publicly accessible methodological criteria is particularly pronounced for concessions granted for shorter and medium-term durations, notably those limited to five years on natural beaches and those up to twenty years granted by regional self-government units. Given that such concessions are decided predominantly at the regional or local level and often involve a high volume of cases, clear guidance on the assessment of investment recovery, risk exposure, and proportionality would contribute to greater legal certainty and consistency of practice. By contrast, concessions granted by the Government or, in exceptional cases, with the consent of the Croatian Parliament, are typically subject to more extensive procedural scrutiny and detailed justification, thereby reducing the relative risk of arbitrary determinations.

All of this underscores the importance of planning documents, since it is precisely within them that the scope and modalities of development in each area are defined, and on which the duration of concessions ultimately depends.

Permits on Beaches

Shortly after introducing the concession model in the maritime domain, it became evident that the concession-granting procedure was lengthy and complex (Sobol, 1996, as cited in Kundih, 2000). For this reason, as early as 1996, the instrument of concession approval was introduced as a simpler mechanism for regulating a range of activities on the maritime domain that did not interfere with its general use, such as the sale of ice cream, the rental of canoes, deck chairs, or beach umbrellas (Borković, 2002, p. 599; Felić, 2022). However, since concession approvals proved to have numerous shortcomings, the new MDSPA replaced them with the instrument of permits on the maritime domain.

The permit regime on the maritime domain has a particularly significant impact on beaches, which at the same time represent the most valuable and most sensitive part of that domain (Kovačić & Komać, 2011). Beaches are locations of intensive tourist use (Perinić Lewis & Adžija, 2015), yet they must remain accessible to all, without restrictions on general use.

The substance of the permit regime on the maritime domain, compared to the former concession approvals, clearly demonstrates the legislator's attempt to enhance legal certainty and transparency (Baće, 2023). Article 71 of the MDSPA introduces a mandatory public tender procedure based on the Maritime Domain Management Plan, which local self-government units, public institutions responsible for protected natural areas, and port authorities must conduct. The tender must be published in official gazettes, on official websites, and in daily newspapers, and the statute even provides for a sanction. If the tender is not published by 1 February, no permits may be granted in that year. The legislator evidently introduced this solution to prevent "last-minute" publications and potential abuses. On beaches, where the demand for such activities is greatest, this obligation assumes particular importance.

The transition to the public tender model also means that, in cases where multiple candidates are interested, priority is given to the one offering the highest fee. In this way, the former "fastest finger" problem (so-called after the popular quiz show, where a concession approval was granted to the applicant who submitted the request first) is eliminated, while transparency and competitiveness are introduced. At the same time, local self-government units generate additional revenue, which ought to be invested in the maintenance, equipping, and protection of beaches. Beaches are in fact the most attractive locations within the permit regime, and therefore their potential contribution to local budgets is the greatest.

The decision granting a permit constitutes an administrative act, with explicitly prescribed content: it must specify the activity, the manner and scope of use, and must expressly prohibit any restriction or exclusion of general use. This confirms that the purpose of permits is to enable economic activities accompanying tourism, but only under the condition that they do not infringe upon the very essence of the public good, namely the right of citizens to free access to and use of the beach.

The MDSPA also sets the permit duration at two to five years, with the option of short-term permits of up to 20 days for occasional events such as concerts, fishermen's nights, or sporting events. Longer terms provide legal certainty and encourage economic operators to invest in higher-quality facilities (improved equipment, safety standards, and the arrangement of beaches), while short-term permits allow flexibility for temporary cultural and social events. In this way, beaches become not only a tourist resource but also a centre of local social life.

Article 72 of the MDSPA sets out in detail the rights and obligations of permit holders. They may carry out their activities solely within the scope and under the conditions specified in the permit, and they are expressly prohibited from transferring their rights to third parties. The permit grantor has a duty of supervision and must revoke the permit if the maritime domain is used beyond the authorised scope or if general use is restricted. This is particularly important regarding beaches, since it is precisely there that conflicts between commercial offerings and the public interest most frequently arise.

A key role in the operationalisation of the system is played by the *Regulation on the Types of Activities and the Amount of Minimum Fees for the Granting of Permits on the Maritime Domain* (2024). This Regulation exhaustively sets out the activities that may be carried out under a permit, ranging from the rental of equipment and vessels, hospitality services, and recreational activities to education (such as diving or sailing schools), temporary events, and advertising. Most of these activities are directly linked to beaches. The Regulation also prescribes minimum fees, ranging from EUR 100 for human-powered vessels to EUR 1,000 for jet skis, with the possibility of reducing the fee in the event of a repeated tender without bids.

The prescribed minimum fees should be understood primarily as a safeguard against potential abuses, as the public tender procedure allows the final fee to reflect market demand. In this sense, the combined use of minimum fees and competitive tendering constitutes an appropriate regulatory solution.

Planning of Economic Activities on Beaches

The management of the maritime domain, and in particular beaches, is inconceivable without previously adopted plans. Such plans are adopted for both legal and economic reasons. Should priority be given to a single concessionaire who, with greater investment, will enhance infrastructure, or is it more appropriate to allow a larger number of smaller permit holders to engage in a variety of activities—from renting deck chairs and umbrellas to selling ice cream or renting recreational equipment? Such decisions shape not only the tourism offer, but also the perception of the beach as a public good.

Planning is therefore not merely an administrative formality, but a fundamental precondition for the sustainable and lawful use of beaches. Since different activities may take place in the same area, ranging from quieter forms of leisure to dynamic attractions such as parasailing or banana boat rides, it is essential to determine in advance which activities are permitted, to what extent, and at which locations. Planning is, in essence, a political decision, and thus falls within the competence of political bodies.

Maritime Domain Management Plan

Croatian legislation prescribes the obligation to prepare a *Maritime Domain Management Plan*. According to Article 39 of the MDSPA, the executive body of a local self-government unit or the director of a public institution responsible for protected natural areas must prepare a five-year draft plan. Before adoption, the authority must conduct public consultation to ensure the participation of citizens and the interested public in the decision-making process. It hardly needs to be emphasised that this plan is of fundamental importance for economic activities on beaches.

The Plan itself is adopted by the representative body of the local self-government unit, or by the administrative council of the public institution responsible for protected natural areas, with the obligation to submit it to the regional self-government unit and to the competent port authority for approval. It is published in the official gazette or on official websites, thereby ensuring its public availability and transparency.

The adoption of the *Ordinance on the Content of the Maritime Domain Management Plan* (2023) further specifies the obligation imposed by the MDSPA on the representative bodies of local and regional self-government units. The Ordinance sets out in detail what the Maritime Domain Management Plan must contain: an overview of the status of the maritime domain, a list of planned activities and priorities, a financial implementation plan, measures for the maintenance and protection of beaches, a plan for the granting of permits and concessions, and a plan for monitoring their implementation. In this way, the plan is ensured not to remain a mere political declaration, but to serve as an operational document linking spatial planning, economic use, and the protection of the maritime domain.

The Maritime Domain Management Plan must align not only with the provisions of the Ordinance on the Content of the Maritime Domain Management Plan, but also with other strategic and spatial planning documents adopted by local and regional self-government units. In practice, however, the broader international and European framework for coastal zone management is often neglected (Novak, 2024). For this reason, the following section briefly presents the most important international documents that may serve as a point of reference and complement the domestic normative framework.

In addition, management plans must be consistent with spatial plans, since it is the latter that determines the permissible uses of space. This ensures that economic activities on beaches align with long-term spatial development and preserve the landscape.

The preparation and adoption of Maritime Domain Management Plans cannot be understood as a purely technical or administrative exercise. By their nature, such plans involve political decision-making, as they set development priorities, define acceptable forms of economic use, and balance commercial exploitation with public access. While the statutory framework provides procedural safeguards and substantive limits, the content of planning documents inevitably reflects the political preferences and strategic orientations of local and regional governing bodies, which may not always be aligned. In certain contexts, planning procedures may become arenas of political contestation, or be instrumentalised for broader political positioning, rather than serving as neutral tools of expert-driven spatial and economic coordination. Consequently, differences in governance approaches, institutional maturity, and local political dynamics may lead to divergent planning outcomes, even under an identical legal framework. This raises legitimate concerns regarding the consistency and predictability of beach management practices. In practice, planning instruments may range from substantively strategic documents to largely formalistic acts of compliance. From an economic perspective, such divergences directly affect investment predictability, transaction costs, and the stability of local tourism markets.

International and European Legal Framework for Beach Management

It should be emphasised that a wide range of international instruments may be applied to the management of beaches. However, in domestic practice they are rarely considered systematically. Croatia is bound by numerous international and European acts regulating the protection of the sea, the coast, and the sustainable use of natural resources. These instruments do not directly address beaches alone, but their principles and standards have immediate implications for the way in which beaches are planned and managed. The most important of these are listed below.

Significance attaches to the *Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution*, commonly known as the *Barcelona Convention* of 1976, revised in 1995 (Barcelona Convention and Protocols). This Convention forms the foundation of the regional system for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea. Croatia has ratified the

Convention, thereby making it part of its domestic law (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition of the Republic of Croatia, n.d.). The Convention obliges the contracting parties to undertake measures for the preservation of the marine environment and coastal areas. While the primary focus of the Barcelona Convention is not spatial planning, its protocols and programmatic documents contribute to the preservation of coastal beach ecosystems. For example, the *Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Protocol* requires establishing protected coastal zones, and the *Land-Based Sources Protocol* obliges parties to control the discharge of wastewater and waste, which indirectly affects beach quality.

Furthermore, of particular importance is the *Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management* (ICZM Protocol), adopted in 2008 (Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre [PAP/RAC], 2008), which provides the legal framework for the integrated management of coastal zones in the Mediterranean. The Protocol, annexed to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution (Novak, 2024), is based on the principle that the coastal zone must be regarded as a whole, where natural, social, and economic processes intertwine. In this respect, it also sets concrete restrictions, such as prohibiting construction within 100 meters of the coastline, except in exceptional cases. It emphasises the obligation to preserve public access to the sea. These principles are of direct relevance to the planning and management of beaches, which represent the most exposed and most intensively used parts of the coast. Croatia signed the Protocol in 2008 and ratified it in 2012 (Act on the Ratification of the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean, 2012). In this regard, the MDSPA provides a detailed statutory framework for beach nourishment and related interventions, closely aligned with the objectives set out in Article 23 of the ICZM Protocol on the prevention, mitigation, and anticipation of coastal erosion. While the ICZM Protocol formulates these obligations at the level of general principles, the Croatian legislator has operationalised them through concrete legal rules governing interventions on beaches. In this way, international commitments are translated into enforceable national standards.

In addition to binding instruments, it is also worth mentioning strategic documents such as the *Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016–2025: Investing in Environmental Sustainability to Achieve Social and Economic Development* (United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan – Plan Bleu [UNEP/MAP–Plan Bleu], 2016). This document does not possess the legal force of a convention or directive. However, it guides coastal states' policies on addressing the challenges of mass tourism, climate change, and biodiversity conservation. Although the term “beach” is not explicitly mentioned in the document, beaches are substantively encompassed through the concepts of sustainable coastal tourism, adaptation to coastal erosion, and the safeguarding of public access to coastal areas, in which the need to strike a balance between economic development and environmental protection is most clearly reflected.

In addition to international conventions, two European Union instruments have been implemented into Croatian law, although in practice the objectives set out in their

recitals are often overlooked; these instruments provide the broader context for their implementation.

At the European Union level, a key instrument is the *Marine Strategy Framework Directive* (2008/56/EC), which established the objective of achieving "good environmental status" and the obligation that all economic activities at sea and along the coast be aligned with environmental protection objectives. Croatia has transposed this Directive into its legal order through the *Environmental Protection Act* (2013) and accompanying secondary legislation, and operationalised it through the *Regulation on the Preparation and Implementation of Documents of the Marine Environment and Coastal Area Management Strategy* (2014). This clearly demonstrates that the planning of beach use does not take place solely within the framework of maritime domain legislation but is also linked to strategic planning instruments for environmental protection and the sustainable management of the sea and the coast.

In addition to binding environmental legislation, the European Union has articulated broader strategic policy frameworks relevant to the management of coastal and beach-related activities. The *EU Blue Economy strategy* (European Commission, 2021) and the *European Agenda for Tourism 2030* (Council of the European Union, 2022) emphasise the need to reconcile economic development in coastal areas with environmental sustainability, resilience, and social inclusion. Within these frameworks, beaches are implicitly recognised as multifunctional spaces that support tourism, local economic activity, ecosystem services, and social participation. Although these policy instruments do not possess direct regulatory force, they provide important strategic and interpretative guidance for Member States when shaping planning and management approaches in coastal zones. In this respect, it is particularly positive to note that the abstract objective of social inclusion has been translated into a concrete statutory requirement in Croatian law. The explicit obligation to ensure the accessibility of beaches for persons with reduced mobility under the MDSPA represents an example of good practice in transforming general EU policy principles into enforceable legal standards.

A binding legal dimension is added by the *Directive establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning* (2014/89/EU), which requires Member States to adopt maritime spatial plans. Croatia implemented this Directive through the *Physical Planning Act* (2025) and the corresponding strategic documents, thereby establishing a framework for the integrated planning of maritime space.

Collectively, these instruments, despite their differing legal force, frame national plans and decisions within a broader legal and political context and emphasise the obligation to integrate environmental protection and the public interest into all forms of economic use. Against this background, selected national examples briefly illustrate how comparable objectives are operationalised through different regulatory techniques.

While the European legal and policy framework establishes common objectives and constraints, it leaves Member States a considerable margin of discretion in shaping concrete regulatory solutions for beach management. This flexibility is reflected in the

diverse national approaches adopted across the Mediterranean, which illustrate different balances between economic use, environmental protection, and public access. The following examples from selected Mediterranean Member States serve to illustrate this diversity of regulatory approaches.

In Italy, beaches remain formally public, but extensive stretches are managed through state-owned maritime concessions for tourism and recreational uses, a regime that has long been examined in national scholarship as interacting with EU market freedoms (Cossiri, 2022). Recent reforms require mandatory public tenders for beach concessions by 2027, reflecting efforts to align with EU requirements on transparency and competition (Italy Law Firms, 2024).

The French approach to beach management is based on the concept of the natural maritime public domain (*domaine public maritime naturel*), which frames beaches as a collective resource subject to public-interest management. Within this framework, free public access remains a core value. At the same time, economic activities are permitted only temporarily and conditionally, reflecting a precautionary, protection-oriented approach to coastal governance (Ministère de la Transition écologique et de la Cohésion des territoires, 2023).

By contrast, Slovenia has not adopted a separate regulatory framework specifically dedicated to beaches. Instead, the management of coastal areas and bathing sites is integrated into the maritime spatial planning system, with coordination exercised through the *Maritime Spatial Plan of Slovenia* (2021), which provides the principal framework for organising uses of maritime space and the coastal zone.

Discussion

The legal framework established by the MDSPA of 2023 represents a clear normative advancement in the regulation of beaches in Croatia. By refining the distinction between concessions and permits, reaffirming the principle of general use, and placing planning instruments at the centre of decision-making, the Act seeks to reconcile economic use with the protection of the public interest and the coastal environment. In comparative and European terms, this approach is consistent with contemporary governance models that emphasise integration, proportionality, and sustainability.

At the same time, the framework's effectiveness cannot be assessed solely based on its normative coherence. The system relies heavily on planning documents as operational tools for balancing competing interests, while simultaneously presupposing the proper preparation and implementation of complex concession procedures. The preparation of concessions is a legally and administratively demanding process that requires substantial professional expertise and coordination among multiple administrative actors. This dual reliance on planning instruments and procedurally complex concessioning mechanisms places a significant burden on local and regional authorities, where most decisions concerning beaches are taken.

From this perspective, the success of the new regulatory model depends not only on the quality of legal norms, but also on the consistency and professionalism of their implementation. Clear methodological guidance, coordinated administrative support, and systematic supervision of implementation (such as monitoring the number, duration, and financial value of concessions) can enhance transparency and provide a factual basis for evaluating whether regulatory objectives are being achieved in practice. Such feedback mechanisms are essential for identifying practical shortcomings and for enabling incremental improvements to the regulatory framework based on observed outcomes.

While the new regulatory framework clearly constitutes a significant improvement over the previous framework, its credibility and effectiveness will ultimately depend on the legislator's readiness to address identified shortcomings without undue delay, instead of postponing necessary adjustments over prolonged periods, as has previously occurred.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the new legal framework governing the management and economic use of beaches in Croatia, with particular emphasis on the Maritime Domain and Seaports Act of 2023. The analysis demonstrates that the new model represents a substantial normative improvement compared to the previous regime. By clarifying the distinction between concessions and permits, reaffirming the principle of general use, and placing planning instruments at the centre of decision-making, the Act provides a more coherent and transparent basis for balancing economic activity, environmental protection, and the public interest. When viewed in a broader European and comparative context, the Croatian approach aligns with contemporary regulatory trends.

At the same time, the paper has identified several structural challenges that may affect the practical effectiveness of the new system. The regulatory model relies heavily on planning documents and on the proper preparation and implementation of procedurally complex concession procedures, thereby placing significant demands on administrative capacity, professional expertise, and institutional coordination, particularly at the local and regional levels. While these challenges do not undermine the framework's conceptual soundness, they underline the importance of consistent implementation, effective supervision, and timely corrective action in response to shortcomings revealed in practice.

The scope of this paper is subject to certain limitations. The analysis is primarily normative and doctrinal in nature and does not include an empirical assessment of the economic effects of the new regulatory framework. In addition, given the Act's recent adoption, reliable empirical data on its implementation are not yet available. These limitations, however, point directly to promising directions for future research. In particular, systematic monitoring of the effects of the new regulatory model would represent a significant step forward, both from an economic and a governance

perspective. Future studies should focus on collecting and analysing data on the number and structure of concessions and permits granted, their duration, the level of concession fees and other payments, the distribution of revenues between local and central authorities, and the incidence of infringements and enforcement actions. Equally important would be an assessment of the broader economic effects of beach-related activities, including their contribution to local economies and public revenues. Such an evidence-based approach, still largely absent from Croatian regulatory practice in this field, would not only enable a more informed evaluation of regulatory effectiveness, but also support data-driven policymaking in a sector of significant economic importance.

References

1. Aviani, D. (2009). Zasebno korištenje opće-uporabljivih dobara u Hrvatskoj: dometi i ograničenja [Separate use of general-use goods in Croatia: Scope and limitations]. *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Splitu, 46*(1), 123–150.
2. Babac, B. (2009). Vrednovanje javnih dobara – o protutočjima i proturječjima hrvatskoga pojma "dobara od interesa za Republiku Hrvatsku" [Valuation of public goods – On the contradictions of the Croatian notion of "goods of interest to the Republic of Croatia"]. *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Splitu, 46*(1), 27–70.
3. Baće, M. (2023). Dozvola na pomorskom dobru kao novi pomorskopravni institut u hrvatskom zakonodavstvu [The permit on the maritime domain as a new maritime law institute in Croatian legislation]. *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Splitu, 60*(4), 691–715. https://doi.org/10.31141/zrpfs.2023.60.150.691
4. Borković, I. (2002). *Upravno pravo* [Administrative law] (7th rev. ed.). Narodne novine.
5. Cossiri, A. (2022). Italian beach concessions: Towards a sustainable epilogue for the natural heritage and the coastal economy? *Italian Journal of Public Law, 14*(1), 304–321. https://www.ijpl.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/12.Cossiri_pdf.pdf
6. Council of the European Union. (2022). *European agenda for tourism 2030* (ST 15441/22). https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15441-2022-INIT/en/pdf
7. Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive), Official Journal of the European Union L 164, 19–40 (2008). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/56/oj
8. Directive 2014/23/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the award of concession contracts, Official Journal of the European Union L 94, 1–64 (2014). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/23/oj
9. Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning, Official Journal of the European Union L 257, 135–145 (2014). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/89/oj

10. Dobinson, I., & Johns, F. (2007). Qualitative legal research. In M. McConville & W. H. Chui (Eds.), *Research methods for law* (pp. 16–43). Edinburgh University Press.
11. European Commission. (2021). *On a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU: Transforming the EU's blue economy for a sustainable future* (COM(2021) 240 final). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0240
12. Felić, E. (2022, May 2). *Koncesijska odobrenja poduzetnici katkad dobiju tek kad sezona već počne* [Entrepreneurs sometimes receive concession approvals only after the season has already started]. Lider. https://lidermedia.hr/komentari/koncesijska-odobrenja-poduzetnici-katkad-dobiju-tek-kad-sezona-vec-pocne-142509
13. Horvat, B., & Malenica, I. (2025). Upravni ugovori i upravno sudovanje [Administrative contracts and administrative adjudication]. *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Splitu, 62*(2), 219–228. https://doi.org/10.31141/zrpfs.2025.62.156.219
14. Italy Law Firms. (2024). *Beach resorts concessions: Mandatory tenders by 2027*. https://italylawfirms.com/en/beach-resorts-concessions-mandatory-tenders-by-2027/
15. Jelavić, A. (2012). Pravni položaj pomorskog dobra [Legal status of the maritime domain]. *Naše more, 59*(1–2), 22–35.
16. Jug, J. (2013). Stvarna prava na pomorskom dobru? [Real rights on the maritime domain?]. *Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci, 34*(1), 277–303.
17. Kovačić, M., & Favro, S. (2024). Analysis of beaches and beach management in the context of the new Maritime Domain and Sea Ports Act. *Transactions on Maritime Science, 13*(1). https://doi.org/10.7225/toms.v13.n01.017
18. Kovačić, M., & Komać, A. (2011). Pitanja o upravljanju plažama u Hrvatskoj s naglaskom na Zadarsku županiju [Issues of beach management in Croatia with emphasis on Zadar County]. *Naše more, 58*(5–6), 244–255. https://hrcak.srce.hr/75541
19. Kundih, B. (2000). *Pomorsko dobro i granice pomorskog dobra* [Maritime domain and the boundaries of the maritime domain]. Edicija Božičević.
20. Matošević, G. (2025). Dozvole na pomorskom dobru [Permits on the maritime domain]. *Pravo i porezi, 34*(7), 17–21.
21. Ministère de la Transition écologique et de la Cohésion des territoires. (2023). *Le domaine public maritime naturel*. https://www.mer.gouv.fr/domaine-public-maritime-naturel
22. Ministry of Environmental Protection and Green Transition of the Republic of Croatia. (n.d.). *Konvencija o zaštiti morskoga okoliša i obalnog područja Sredozemlja (Barcelonska konvencija)* [Convention for the protection of the marine environment and the coastal region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention)]. https://mzozt.gov.hr/o-ministarstvu-1065/djelokrug/uprava-vodnoga-gospodarstva-i-zastite-mora-2033/konvencija-o-zastiti-morskoga-okolisa-i-obalnog-podrucja-sredozemlja-barcelonska-konvencija/1438

23. Nakić, J. (2016). Pomorsko dobro – opće ili javno dobro [Maritime domain – general or public good]. *Elektronički zbornik radova Veleučilišta u Šibeniku, 10*(1–2), 7–34.
24. Novak, M. (2024). Stvarnopravno uređenje plaža u Republici Hrvatskoj [Legal regime of beaches in the Republic of Croatia]. *Poredbeno pomorsko pravo, 63*(178), 207–272. https://doi.org/10.21857/9xn31cwqpy
25. Perinić Lewis, A., & Adžija, M. (2015). Globalna i lokalna plaža na primjeru dubrovačkih gradskih plaža i plažnih kultura [Global and local beaches: The case of Dubrovnik's urban beaches and beach cultures]. *Studia ethnologica Croatica, 27*(1), 415–447. https://doi.org/10.17234/SEC.27.11
26. Pomorski zakonik [Maritime Code], Narodne novine 17/1994 (1994). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1994_03_17_313.html
27. Popovski, A. (2016). Pravna priroda opće uporabe javnoga dobra [Legal nature of the general use of public goods]. *Pravni vjesnik, 32*(3–4), 183–200. https://hrcak.srce.hr/179268
28. Pravilnik o sadržaju plana upravljanja pomorskim dobrom [Ordinance on the content of the maritime domain management plan], Narodne novine 150/2023 (2023). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2023_12_150_2172.html
29. Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre. (2008). *Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean (ICZM Protocol)*. https://www.unep.org/unepmap/node/20874
30. Roška, V., & Šmider, A. (2024). Utjecaj turizma na BDP u Hrvatskoj [The impact of tourism on GDP in Croatia]. *Zbornik sveučilišta Libertas, 9*(10), 91–102. https://doi.org/10.46672/zsl.9.10.6
31. Staničić, F., & Bogović, M. (2017). Koncesije na pomorskom dobru – odnos Zakona o koncesijama i Zakona o pomorskom dobru i morskim lukama [Concessions on the maritime domain – Relation between the Concessions Act and the Maritime Domain and Seaports Act]. *Pravni vjesnik, 33*(1), 73–104.
32. Tasić, Z. (2018). Financiranje projekata na pomorskom dobru [Financing projects on the maritime domain]. *Poredbeno pomorsko pravo, 57*(172), 339–354. https://doi.org/10.21857/yvjrdcqrky
33. United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan – Plan Bleu. (2016). *Mediterranean strategy for sustainable development 2016–2025: Investing in environmental sustainability to achieve social and economic development*. https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/7097
34. Uredba o izradi i provedbi dokumenata Strategije upravljanja morskim okolišem i obalnim područjem [Regulation on the preparation and implementation of documents of the Marine Environment and Coastal Area Management Strategy], Narodne novine 112/2014, 39/2017, 112/2018 (2014). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_09_112_2141.html
35. Uredba o Pomorskem prostorskem planu Slovenije [Regulation on the Maritime Spatial Plan of Slovenia], Uradni list Republike Slovenije 114/2021 (2021). https://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?sop=2021-01-2528

36. Uredba o vrstama djelatnosti i visini minimalne naknade za dodjelu dozvola na pomorskom dobru [Regulation on the types of activities and the amount of minimum fee for granting permits on the maritime domain], Narodne novine 16/2024 (2024). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2024_02_16_274.html
37. Vojković, G. (2003). *Pomorsko dobro i koncesije* [Maritime domain and concessions]. Hrvatski hidrografski institut.
38. Vojković, G. (2023). Novi model koncesija na pomorskom dobru [The new concession model on the maritime domain]. *Pravo i porezi, 31*(10), 19–27.
39. Vojković, G. (2024). Concessions on beaches and concessions on demand in the new Croatian law. *ENTRENOVA – ENTerprise REsearch InNOVAtion Journal, 10*(1), 221–233. https://doi.org/10.54820/entrenova-2024-0019
40. Vuković, A. (2023, February 24). *Morske plaže i javni interes u Prijedlogu zakona o pomorskom dobru i morskim lukama* [Beaches and public interest in the Draft Maritime Domain and Seaports Act]. Informator.hr. https://informator.hr/strucni-clanci/morske-plaze-i-javni-interes-u-prijedlogu-zakona-o-pomorskom-dobru-i-morskim-lukama
41. Zakon o koncesijama [Concessions Act], Narodne novine 69/2017, 107/2020 (2017). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2017_07_69_1603.html
42. Zakon o pomorskom dobru i morskim lukama [Maritime Domain and Seaports Act], Narodne novine 158/2003, 100/2004, 141/2006, 38/2009, 123/2011, 56/2016, 98/2019 (2003). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2003_10_158_2257.html
43. Zakon o pomorskom dobru i morskim lukama [Maritime Domain and Seaports Act], Narodne novine 83/2023 (2023). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2023_07_83_1293.html
44. Zakon o pomorskom dobru i morskim lukama – konačni prijedlog [Final proposal of the Maritime Domain and Seaports Act] (P.Z. No. 439, July 6, 2023). Hrvatski sabor. https://www.sabor.hr/sites/default/files/uploads/sabor/2023-07-06/151410/PZ_439.pdf
45. Zakon o potvrđivanju Protokola o integralnom upravljanju obalnim područjem Sredozemlja [Act on the ratification of the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean], Narodne novine – Međunarodni ugovori 8/2012 (2012). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/medunarodni/2012_11_8_96.html
46. Zakon o prostornom uređenju [Physical Planning Act], Narodne novine 155/2025 (2025). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/full/2025_12_155_2315.html
47. Zakon o zaštiti okoliša [Environmental Protection Act], Narodne novine 80/2013 (2013). https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2013_06_80_1659.html

About the author

Prof. Goran Vojković, PhD (Split, 1971), graduated from the Faculty of Law in Split in 1996. At the same faculty, in the Postgraduate Studies in Maritime Law and Law of the Sea, he earned his Master's degree in 2003 with a thesis on the maritime domain of the Republic of Croatia, and his Doctorate in 2006 with a dissertation on the legal status of inland waterway ports. He gained professional experience in public administration and the private sector, and after completing his doctorate, he transitioned to the university sector. He served as an external member of the Committee on Legislation of the Croatian Parliament and as Chairman of the Governing Board of the Port Authority of Vukovar. In the business sector, he participated in implementing several European projects. He is a Full Professor at University North in Koprivnica and collaborates with other higher education institutions. The author can be contacted at **goran.vojkovic@unin.hr**