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## TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEMES IN THE ADRIATIC SEA

*Hrvoje Kačić*

Paper presented at the round-table

**‘EU Maritime Policy and the (Northern) Adriatic’**

organized by the Maritime Law Association of Slovenia (MLAS)

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# TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEMES IN THE ADRIATIC SEA

*Hrvoje Kačić\*<sup>1</sup>*

The Adriatic Sea is a semi- enclosed sea representing an extremely valuable natural, cultural and historical heritage and consequently requires devotion from all adjacent countries to exercise all their capacities in the protection of respective precious treasures. There are indeed many elaborated measures by respective competent institutions in the performance of necessary duties. Nevertheless, there are still some important measures that should be implemented in order that the degree of protection of the Adriatic Sea and of the respective maritime and coastal environment reaches a higher level. One of those is the extension of the existing system of traffic separation schemes (routing measures) in the Adriatic Sea.

Traffic Separation Schemes (TSS) have been already established in the Northern Section of the Adriatic Sea covering respective solutions in the Eastern Part and the Western Part, and of course approved by the IMO. All three States having their coasts embracing the Northern Adriatic have agreed and accepted them, but we have to take into considerations that the Central and the Southern Sections of the Adriatic do not enjoy similar preventive protections. It has to be appreciated that permanent currents in the Adriatic Sea at its North East Sections maintain northly direction and consequently pollution that might take place in this area may also cause consequences to the Northern sector.

On behalf of Croatia I have to recognize that regarding to port approaches we have the Navigation Separation Line partly to and from the Port of Rijeka only, while Slovenia has established a Traffic Separation Line to and from the Port of Koper. Italy has introduced traffic separation schemes in the Gulf of Trieste in and off approaches to the ports of Trieste

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\* Professor of Maritime Law and Advocate, Dubrovnik-Zagreb, Member of the Croatian Maritime Law Association. Paper presented at the round-table 'EU Maritime Policy and the (Northern) Adriatic' organized by the Maritime Law Association of Slovenia (MLAS), EU Maritime Day 2011, 20 May 2011, Portorož, Slovenia.

and Monfalcone, to Gulf of Venice and to and from ports of Ancona, Bari, Brindisi and many other Italian ports.

Croatian institutions very often use as an excuse for not setting appropriate Navigation Separation Lines to the ports of Dubrovnik, Ploče, Split, Šibenik and Zadar, the fact that these solutions are linked with the establishment of Ships Routing System in the Central Adriatic, and therefore they wait for respective actions at international level.

I am therefore asking for your support and cooperation in achieving that the work of experts which is already at a very advanced stage is formulated and agreed as a joint proposal for the establishment of a system of traffic separation schemes in the Central Adriatic. Of course such proposal should be submitted jointly by Italy, Slovenia and Croatia to the IMO's Subcommittee on Safety of Navigation. It is essential that such proposal is formulated and submitted as soon as possible.

It is worth noting that already more than half century ago, the first system of the Navigation Separation Lines at open sea was established in the Atlantic Ocean on approaches to the Port of New York. Such solution was born and implemented after a dramatic collision that took place in which two large passenger ships were involved i.e. the Italian 'Andrea Doria' and the Swedish 'Stockholm', with tremendous consequences. The only purpose of this solution was to establish certain preventive measures in order to reduce the risks of similar casualties.

Ship routing systems have spread worldwide, and my concern and question is why we do not follow the example of the systems already in practice? An excellent example is represented by the existing system of routing measures in the Baltic Sea. I think that it would be useless to explain that the relationship of States bordering the Baltic Sea are at a more constructive level of coordination in their relationships than those of States bordering the Adriatic Sea.

Beside navigation of large tankers and bulk carriers there is an extremely high number of cruisers- passenger vessels with passenger exceeding 3.000, passengers (with crew staff reaching also up to 1.000 members) and impressive high speeds reaching about 30 nautical miles per hours. Reference should be furthermore made to the forthcoming presence of LNG carriers in the Adriatic Sea, which all together will result in a seriously increased risk to the safety of navigation. In the middle of tourist seasons there are about ten cruisers per day

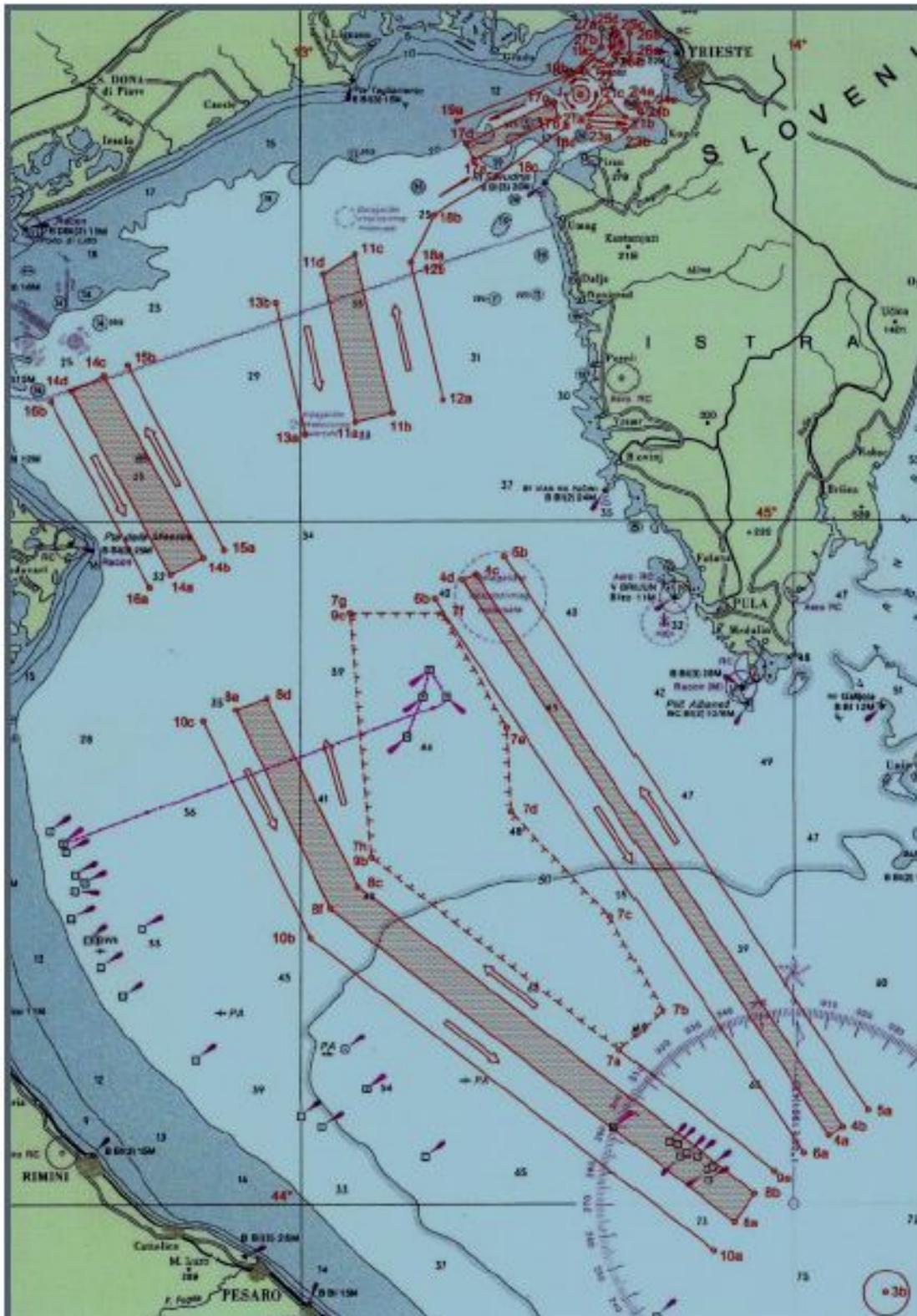
sailing to Venice and Dubrovnik ! Therefore it would be the duty of all concerned to exercise best efforts to achieve implementation of the proposed measures in order to prevent undesirable consequences to the Adriatic Sea. No doubt that the International Maritime Organization will without hesitation support the implementation of such solutions.

It has to be appreciated that the Adriatic Sea is recorded with regard to accidents and casualties as a high risks area. When it comes to accidents, IMO has recorded that in respect of frequency accidents the Adriatic Sea is recorded at a five times higher level than the world average, a fact mostly due to speed boats and yachts accidents. Furthermore, IMO noted that where routing systems have been established, cases of collisions and groundings are significantly reduced.

The further establishment of traffic separations schemes will result also in a more efficient control of vessels navigating in the Adriatic, including the discovery of illegal discharges of ballast waters and any other illegal behavior dangerous to our environment including spills of bunker oil and other abuses. Maritime traffic throughout the Adriatic Sea is increasing every year and it remains our duty to exercise all possibilities in order to minimize the risks of casualties and accidents. Any kind of reduction of maritime accidents would be to the benefit of our countries and a valuable advantage to all inhabitants connected with the Adriatic Sea Area.

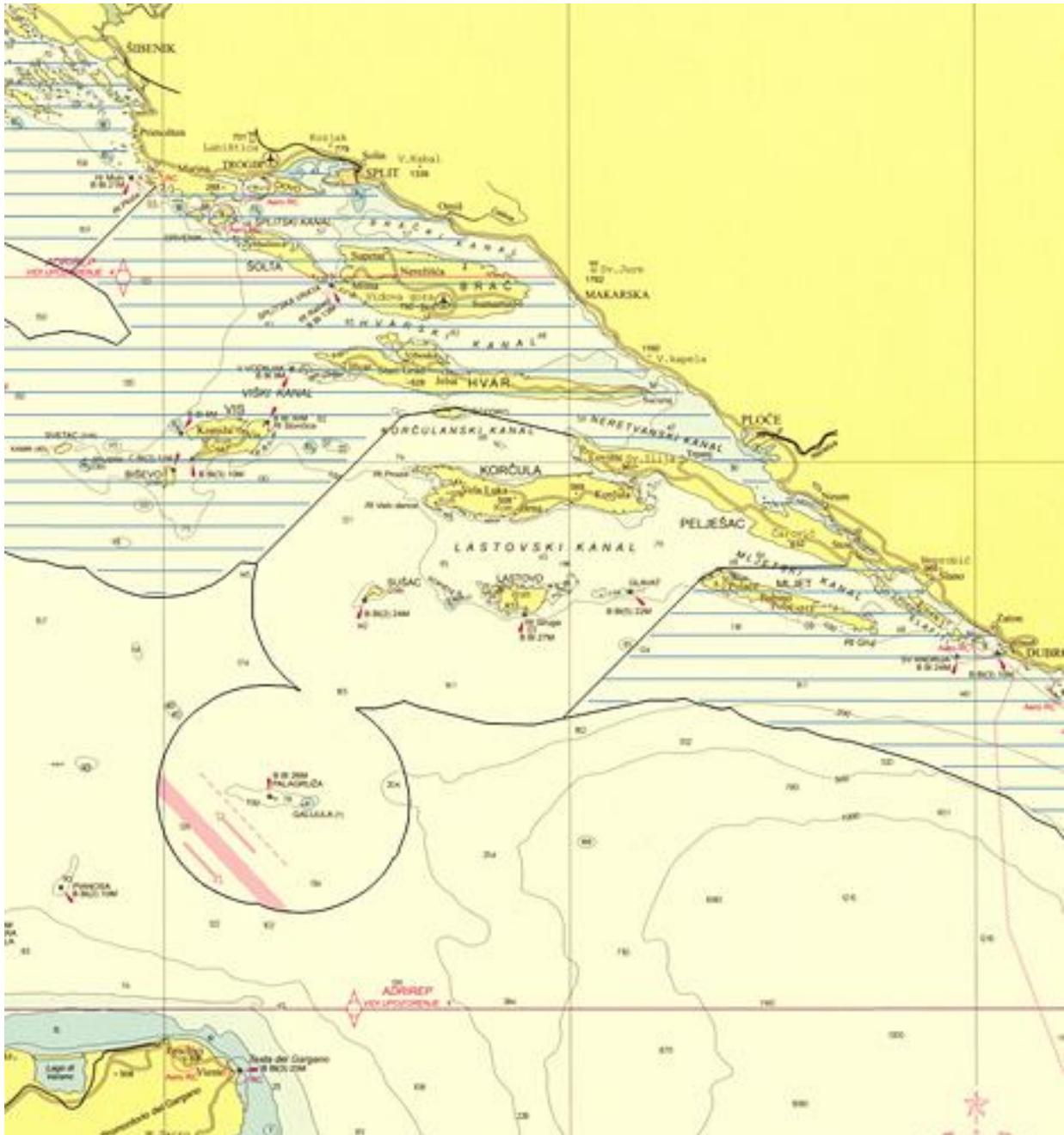
My dear Colleagues, let me conclude by asking you to exercise all your possibilities to influence officials in our countries and respective representatives in international institutions to concentrate in setting up systems of Traffic Separation Schemes also in the Central and the Southern Sectors of the Adriatic Sea.

**Map 1:** Existing traffic separation schemes in the Northern Adriatic<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Source: IMO, 'Routing of Ships, Ships Reporting and related Matters: Establishment of new recommended Traffic Separation Schemes and other new Routening Measures in the Adriatic Sea. Submitted by Albania, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia and Serbia and Montenegro', NAV 49/3/7, 27 March 2003,

**Map 2:** Existing traffic separation scheme in the Southern Adriatic (Palagruža) <sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Source:

<http://www.plovput.hr/Pomorstvo/Pomorskasignalizacija/Plovnopodručja/PPKorčula/tabid/384/language/hr-HR/Default.aspx>.