



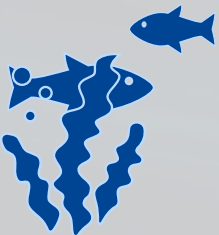
Protecting our seas and ocean

the EU framework

Conferenza finale SEA MARVEL - Dott. Fabio Pirrotta

*DG Environment
Marine environment & Clean water services
20 October 2023*

Policy context for the protection of Europe's seas



Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Directive 2008/56/EC



Clean, healthy & productive seas

Sustainable use

'Good environmental status'



MSFD 'descriptors'

Pressures & impacts

Non-indigenous species



Commercial fish & shellfish



Eutrophication



Hydrographical conditions



Contaminants (in environment)



Contaminants (in seafood)



Marine litter



Energy & underwater noise



State

Biodiversity



Marine food webs



Seabed habitats (integrity)



Ecosystem-based
approach

Marine strategies

Marine Strategy Framework Directive

WORKING TO ACHIEVE CLEAN HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE EUROPEAN SEAS



MEMBER STATES' **GOALS**

- **define** when **Good Environmental Status (GES)** is reached for **11 descriptors**
- **assess and monitor** the status of **each descriptor** in their **marine waters**
- **set specific targets to reduce pressures and impacts** from human activities
- **Identify and implement actions** to ensure GES

6-year cycle



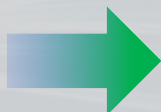
European
Commission



Decision on Good Environmental Status

Commission
Decision
(2017/848/EU)

Criteria &
methodological
standards



*To achieve
GES*

Specifications &
standardised
methods



*Monitoring &
assessment*

How we are making it easier to achieve the good
environmental status of marine waters



More flexibility
to concentrate
on problem
areas



More accurate
way to measure
achievement of
environmental
goals



Increased
regional and
sub-regional
cooperation



Enhanced
synergy with
existing EU
nature, water
and fisheries
legislation



Better
understanding
of human
impacts on
marine
environment



Regional cooperation

Four regions

Baltic Sea

North-east Atlantic Ocean

Sub regions

Greater North Sea

Celtic Seas

Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Coast

Macaronesia

Mediterranean Sea

Barcelona Convention
(UNEP-MAP)

Subregions

Western Mediterranean Sea

Adriatic Sea

Ionian Sea & Central Mediterranean Sea

Aegean-Levantine Sea

Black Sea

Protecting Europe's Seas and Oceans

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Source: Commission report on
MSFD implementation

[COM\(2020\)259](#)
[SWD\(2020\)60](#)
[SWD\(2020\)61](#)
[SWD\(2020\)62](#)



**Ambitious,
comprehensive,
effective**

The MSFD:

- provides a strategy for the **entire marine environment**
- protects **marine biodiversity**
- assesses the impact of **all human activities**
- drives new **research and legal initiatives**
- aims for **Good Environmental Status (GES)** for the EU's marine waters.



On the horizon

To reach GES for the EU's seas and oceans, we need:

- more ambitious and coherent definitions of **'good environmental status'**
- more **resources and collective action** to address key pressures
- coherent and effective **networks** of marine protected areas
- marine data that is **comparable** across regions.



A seagull's view

*4 marine regions
*5,720,000 km²



North-east Atlantic Ocean

- 41% of assessed fish and shellfish stocks are within safe limits.
- Over 25% of marine bird species have declined.
- 93% of fulmar birds assessed had ingested plastic.



Baltic Sea

- White-tailed eagle populations are recovering.
- The Baltic Proper harbour porpoise population is down to a few hundred.
- Certain fish regularly exceed maximum dioxin limits.



Mediterranean Sea

- Monk seal populations have stabilised.
- Around 40% of sharks, rays and skates are declining.
- 85% of turtles assessed had ingested litter.
- 87% of fish and shellfish species are overfished.



Black Sea

- Good cross-border cooperation between Romania and Bulgaria.
- 87% of fish and shellfish species are overfished.

Key and emerging challenges


underwater
noise


unsustainable
fishing


climate change


litter


non-indigenous
species


eutrophication


contaminants

Some facts & figures



The coastal sea bed disturbed due to **bottom trawling**.



From 32% to 53% of sharks rays and skates are threatened **by-catch**.



Coastal waters with poor **eutrophication** status.



Efforts to fight **chemical pollution** have led to reduced concentrations.



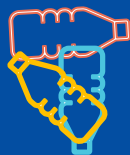
The accumulation of **plastics** in marine species is a growing risk.



Share of beach litter from **single use plastic**.

Assessment of state

Marine litter

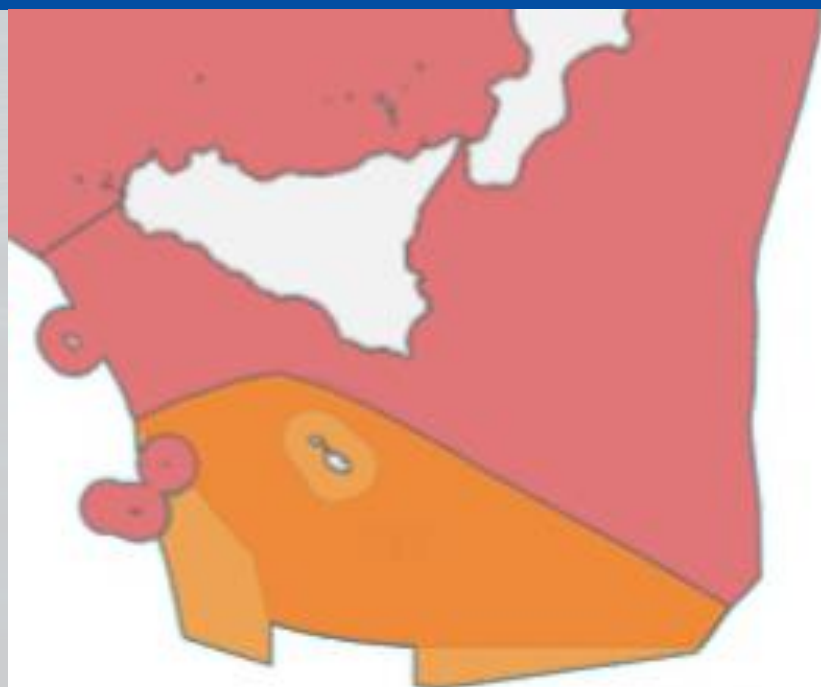


Non-indigenous species



As reported by Member States 2018

Commission assessment & recommendations →
[C\(2022\)1392](#) &
[SWD\(2022\)55](#)

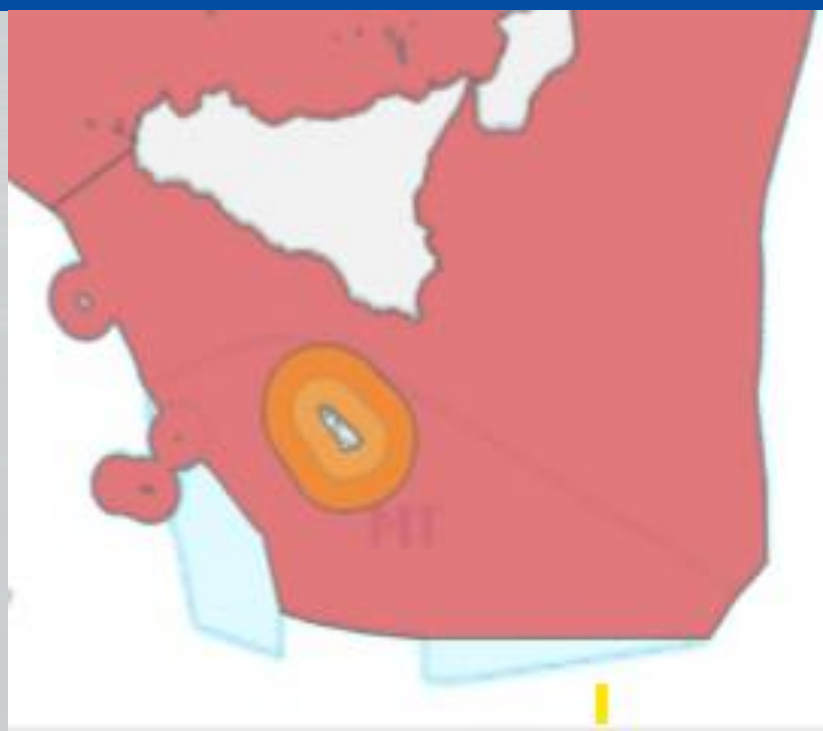
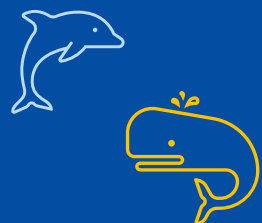


- GES achieved by 2018
- GES not achieved by 2018
- Not stated
- Mixed results

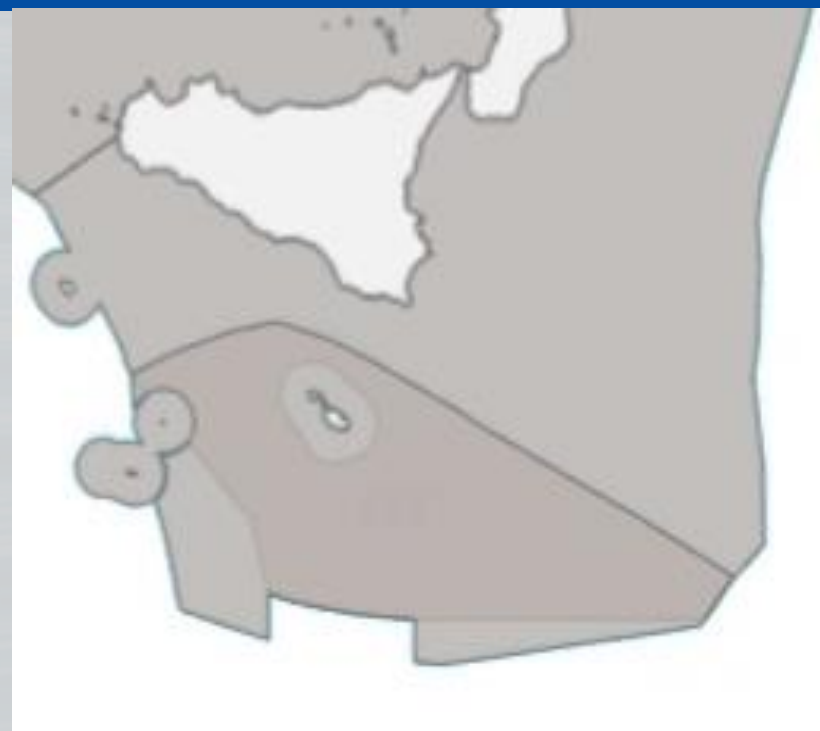
Source: [Wise marine dashboards](#)

Assessment of state

Cetaceans & turtles



Maritime traffic (continuous noise)



Member States had to report in 2018

Commission assessment & recommendations →

[C\(2022\)1392](#) &
[SWD\(2022\)55](#)

- GES achieved by 2018
- GES not achieved by 2018
- Not stated
- Mixed results

Source: [Wise marine dashboards](#)

MSFD review → objectives

To contribute to protection and preservation of the marine environment & enable sustainable use

1. Improve the regulatory framework
2. Improve implementation and enforcement
3. Improve regional cooperation and coordination
4. Improve policy coherence
5. Improve data management



Zero pollution action plan

Reduction targets for 2030

55% → health impacts from air pollution

30% → Reduce chronic transport noise disturbance

25% air pollution threats to biodiversity

50% → nutrient losses, use and risk of chemical pesticides, use of more hazardous pesticides, sale of antimicrobials for farmed animals & aquaculture

50% → plastic litter at sea

30% → microplastics release

Significant reduction of total waste generated

+ 33 actions

Biodiversity strategy for 2030

PROTECT NATURE

- Legally protect **at least 30% of the European Union's sea area**.
- **Strictly protect at least a third** of the EU's marine protected areas.
- **Effectively manage all protected areas**, defining clear conservation objectives and measures, and monitoring them appropriately.
- **Fisheries management measures must be established in all MPAs** according to clearly defined conservation objectives and on the basis of the best available scientific advice.

RESTORE NATURE

- **Nature Restoration Law** with **legally binding restoration targets**, including for the marine environment.
- Achieving good environmental status of marine ecosystems, including through strictly protected areas, must involve the **restoration of carbon-rich ecosystems** as well as important **fish spawning and nursery areas**.
- **Reduce bycatch** of sensitive species and the impact of bottom fishing **on the seabed**.
- *Action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems*

Marine action plan – What's in it?

- Improve **gear selectivity** and address **bycatch** of **sensitive species**



- Protect the **seabed**



- **Transition** and **knowledge**



- **Governance**



Concluding thoughts....

Marine waters →

ecologically **diverse** and **dynamic**

clean, healthy and **productive**

used at **sustainable** levels

safeguarding their potential use by current & future generations

Thank you



© European Union 2020

Unless otherwise noted the reuse of this presentation is authorised under the [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license. For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the EU, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective right holders.

