

Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Title



Europe's marine environment is highly threatened by both pollution and the dramatic loss of marine biodiversity due to human activities. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), adopted in 2008 after several years of preparation and extensive consultation, is the first EU binding law designed to make a contribution to the preservation, protection and restoration of marine ecosystems. The Directive aims at achieving good environmental status (GES) in EU marine waters by 2020 at the latest. The scope of the MSFD is vast, covering all aspects of biodiversity including seabirds, and human pressures such as underwater noise, litter, commercial fishing and pollution.

To implement the Directive, EU Member States need to undertake a series of steps to progressively achieve good environmental status by 2020, which should ensure the maintenance of ecologically healthy, clean and productive seas as well as reducing adverse human impacts on marine ecosystems to sustainable levels. Member States have to work to implement measures both at the national and regional scale, through regional cooperation and the use, when appropriate, of Regional Sea Conventions, such as HELCOM and OSPAR.

The MSFD also recognizes the precautionary principle and requests the application of an ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities in order to minimize their impacts on the marine ecosystems. BirdLife has been actively engaging in the development and implementation of the Directive and urges all Member States to take an ambitious approach in this great challenge to improve the health of European marine ecosystems.

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