

Establishment of Natura 2000 network in the marine environment

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Marine Conservation Policy in the context of the EU biodiversity policy

Biodiversity policy

Thematic Strategy for the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment

Nature Protection:
Natura 2000



*Council Declaration (Goteburg): Commitment to protect and restore habitats and natural systems and to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010.



What is Natura 2000?

- The EU wide ecological network of protected areas set up under the Habitats Directive
- Comprised of:
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under Habitats Directive for 200+ habitat types & 700+ species of plants and animals
 - Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under Birds Directive for 194 vulnerable bird species & migratory bird species (esp. wetlands)
- Major EU instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to fulfil global commitments of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Sets out a common approach/standard for conservation action across all Member States



What is Natura 2000?

- Key aim is to restore or maintain habitats and species of EU conservation concern at favourable conservation status
- Provides a common mechanism for protection of areas of high biodiversity importance for listed habitats and species
- Is a strong instrument for integration of biodiversity requirements into other EU policy areas (eg fisheries, agriculture, regional development etc.)
- Embraces nature reserves, national parks, private areas etc.
- Human activities not automatically excluded – emphasis is on ensuring that they are sustainable and compatible with conservation objective
- Total: 25.000 sites, ~20 % of EU 25 territory
- largely completed on land but needs to be extended to marine, especially offshore

 **How are Natura 2000 sites selected?**

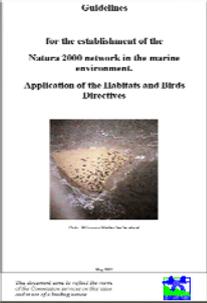
- Site designation process is exclusively based on scientific criteria.
- For SPAs - use ornithological criteria
 - Member States designate 'most suitable territories'
- for SACs - criteria given in Directive
 - Member States propose national lists of sites of Community importance
 - Commission & MS agree Community list
 - MS then designate the areas as SACs
- No legal difference between marine and terrestrial environments in relation to the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive.
- Future management challenges cannot be a basis for inaction.

 **Area of application of Marine Natura 2000 Network**

- **Obligation to apply nature legislation** not only in territorial waters, but also in waters where sovereign rights are exercised
- Recognition by a coastal State of an Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ) brings not only rights but obligations. If rights are exercised over natural (living and non-living) resources, obligations exist to apply the appropriate National and Community legislation. Same reasoning for the Continental shelf
- ECJ has confirmed application of Natura 2000 to offshore marine
- Natura 2000 network to be extended within the area where rights on the exploitation of natural resources are exercised: internal waters, territorial sea, EEZ and Continental shelf
- Most of EU countries have signed UNCLOS (EU15 + Poland and Lithuania in the Baltic Seas, Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia in the Mediterranean)

 **Challenges in establishing the Marine Natura 2000 Network**

- Application of Nature Conservation Directives to the Marine more challenging than originally expected.
- Reasons include: need for legal clarification, lack of scientific knowledge, high costs of carrying out research and survey in offshore marine areas...
- The Commission has prepared a **guidance document** on implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives in the Marine environment - a document of the Commission services (incl. DGs ENV + FISH) - prepared with the support of a Marine Expert group



 **Key elements of Commission's Marine NATURA 2000 Guidelines**

- Provide **overview of legal and policy context**
- List **Habitat types & species, including definitions** (develops a common understanding for selection of marine habitats types)
- Outline procedures for **site identification, assessment and site selection rationale** for SPAs (Birds Directive) and SACs (Habitats Directive)
- Provide guidance on aspects related to **management of Natura 2000 marine sites**, including matters relating to fisheries

 **Current state of affairs**

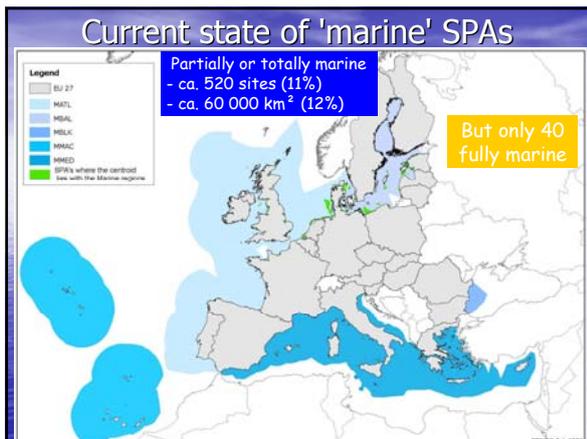
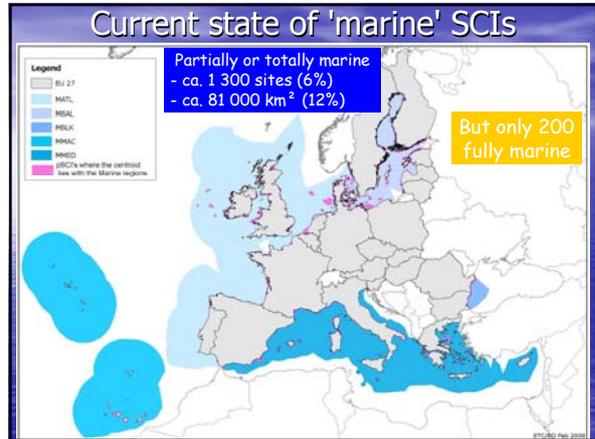
A significant number of sites have been designated in the marine, but nearly all of them concentrated in coastal areas

- More than 1500 sites having a marine component are concentrated in the first 12 miles
- Less than 20 sites in offshore waters (Germany, Sweden, Ireland, ...)

The offshore gap
90% of EU seas and oceans do not have protected sites, Natura 2000 covers only small % of marine area (coastal)

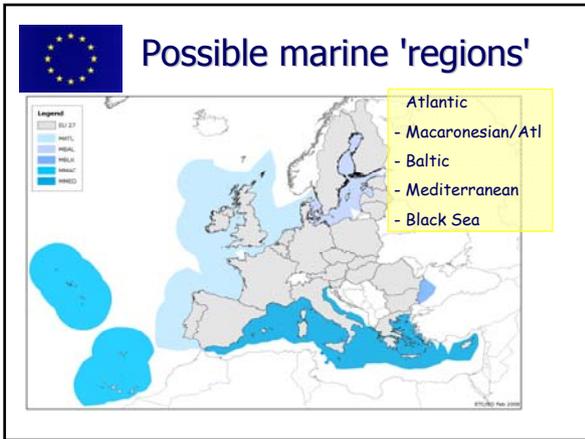



EU27
10.5 million km² of which
- 41% terrestrial
- 59% marine



 **Next steps**

- The Commission has requested MSs to step up progress on identification of offshore sites (Only Germany has largely completed its Natura 2000 proposals for marine environment)
- Submission by 2008 of substantial proposals
- Marine biogeographical seminar
 - assessment at Regional Sea level (Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean, Black Sea)
 - include revision of reservations stated in Community lists
- Further surveys for supplementary proposals after 2008 to fill gaps



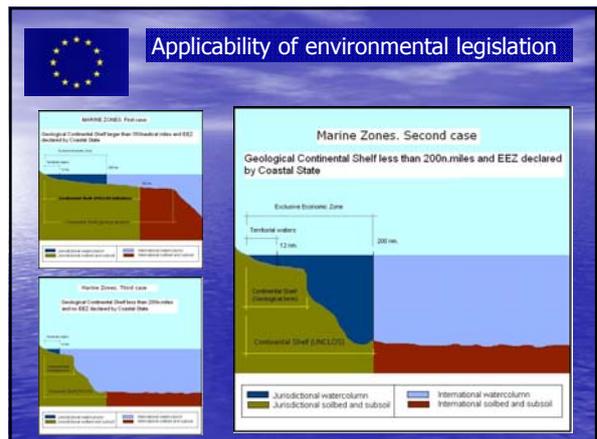
Next steps

- Need for synchronised and coherent designations
- These sites are at risk until given appropriate protection but this can only be supplied at Community level
- Need for early consideration of management measures, incl. fisheries management, in order to ensure timely implementation

Thank You !

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/marine/index_en.htm

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NATURA 2000 IN CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY COMMITMENTS

- EUR Council Declaration (*Goteburg 2001*) - Commitment to protect and restore habitats and natural systems and to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010.
- World Summit of Sustainable Development (*Johannesburg 2002*) - commitment to establish a globally representative system of marine and coastal protected areas by 2012.
- Biodiversity Convention: (CBD) - COP7 (*Kuala Lumpur 2004*) decision to establish by 2012 and maintain a network of marine and coastal protected areas that are effectively managed, ecologically based, consistent with international law and based on scientific information.
- Joint Ministerial Meeting of the Helsinki and OSPAR Commissions (*June 2003*) - complete by 2010 a joint network of well-managed marine protected areas that, together with the Natura 2000 network, would be ecologically coherent.
- EU biodiversity Communication & Action Plan (*May 2006*) – need to accelerate efforts to finalise the Natura 2000 network