

# Framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy. Marine Strategy Framework Directive

2005/0211(COD) - 16/01/2017 - Follow-up document

The Commission presented a report evaluating Member States' monitoring programmes under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) (Directive 2008/56/EC).

Under the framework directive, Member States must take all necessary measures to achieve or maintain a "good environmental status" of the marine environment by 2020. The Directive contains eleven qualitative "descriptors" describing what the environment should resemble when good environmental status has been achieved.

The evaluation covers the monitoring programmes submitted by 20 Member States; three Member States (Malta, Greece and Poland) had not yet submitted their reports. The 20 Member States reported more than 200 monitoring programmes, including nearly 1000 sub programmes.

**Implementation:** only a few Member States (five in total) had operational monitoring programmes in 2014 and many expect them to be fully operational by 2018 or even 2020. By 2020, a total of 15 Member States should have implemented their programmes. Nevertheless, five Member States have either not announced their intentions or announced that their monitoring programmes will not be fully implemented even after 2020.

**Urgent progress is therefore needed** to meet the requirements of the MSFD including the 2018 updates of the initial assessment of their marine waters and good environmental status, and importantly the achievement of good environmental status by 2020.

**Coverage and overall adequacy:** analysis of monitoring programmes shows that further action is needed to ensure **appropriate coverage** of programmes. More progress needs to be made to ensure comparability of approaches across Member States and to ensure that programmes are improved.

The results show that the Member States' monitoring programmes are "**appropriate**", "**mostly appropriate**" or "**partially appropriate**" in meeting the requirements of the MSFD in terms of assessing environmental status.

For eight Member States, the Commission recommends that particular attention be paid to ensuring comprehensive coverage of **environmental objectives** in accordance with Article 10 of the Framework Directive.

There is also a need to ensure **better coverage for descriptors** for non-indigenous species, marine litter, underwater noise sources and biological diversity not covered by existing legislation.

**Spatial coverage:** the highest proportion (68%) of surveillance by Member States occurs in coastal waters, with a high proportion also occurring in territorial waters (57%) and in the EEZ (51%).

Monitoring programmes appear to exist where the pressures and impacts are likely to be greatest. This must nevertheless be confirmed by an appropriate risk analysis so that surveillance priorities are identified on a technical and scientific basis.

Furthermore, the Commission considers it essential to strengthen coordination between Member States, in particular through **regional and sub-regional action** to provide uniform and comparable data and to improve the spatial scope of monitoring programmes. The analysis revealed a moderate to high degree of coherence within the Member States of the Black Sea, North-East Atlantic and Baltic Sea regions respectively and a low to moderate degree in the Mediterranean Sea region.

**Next steps:** the Commission considers that Member States should **address as soon as possible the gaps identified** at regional and sub-regional level and step up their efforts to fully implement their monitoring programmes in order to avoid any gaps in assessing their marine waters due in 2018.

Where good environmental status and environmental targets have not yet been identified as part of the first phase of implementation, Member States are urged to do so without delay.

The Commission intends to:

- improve coherence in the implementation of EU legislation that has an impact on the marine environment.
- work jointly with Member States to ensure that the second phase of implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2018 and beyond) is more effective;
- consider the need to provide additional funding for strategic projects and support actions to facilitate the implementation of the Framework Directive;
- initiate a focused dialogue with Member States at risk of not meeting the requirements of the Framework Directive.