



OECMs in the context of EU biodiversity and fisheries policy

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Advancing progress towards the European Green Deal: OECMs' implementation in the fisheries sector
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MPAs and OECMs

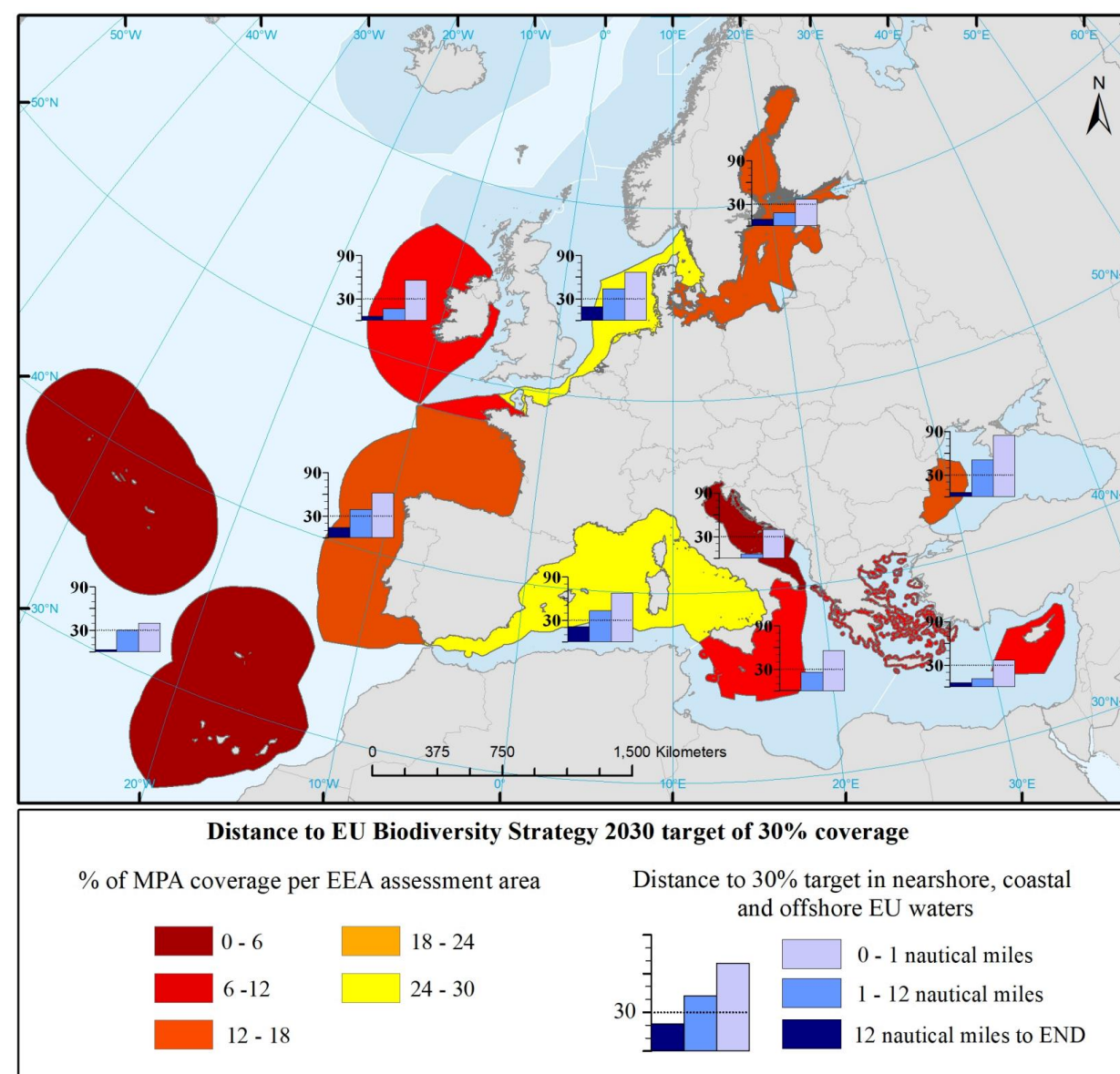
- **Marine protected areas** are the fundamental tool for conservation of marine biodiversity. **OECMs** are also increasingly recognized as a tool to contribute to that objective.
- **MPAs cover 12% of EU seas. 75% of MPAs are part of the Natura 2000 network** under EU nature legislation; additional areas protected under regional seas conventions or national law. **No wide use of OECMs so far.**
- Existing MPA network **not sufficiently large/coherent** to safeguard biodiversity.
- **Effective management is essential** to ensure protection and restoration of marine ecosystems and to deliver **important socio-economic benefits** through enhanced ecosystem services.

EU biodiversity policy – targets for 2030

- **Biodiversity strategy - coherent trans-European nature network:**
 1. Legally protect **at least 30%** of the European Union's sea area.
 2. **Strictly protect** at least a third of the EU's marine protected areas.
 3. **Effectively manage** all protected areas, defining clear conservation objectives and measures, and monitoring them appropriately.
- **Biodiversity strategy - EU restoration plan:**
 - **Nature Restoration Law** with legally binding restoration targets
 - Commitments to **reduce bycatch** of sensitive species and the impact of fishing **on seabed**

State of play

- EU MPA network currently covers 12% of EU seas (Natura 2000 >9%)
- Big effort is needed to reach the 30%/10% targets
- OECMs can play an important role



Source: [Spatial Analysis of Marine Protected Area Networks in Europe's Seas III](#)

Target: 30%



More information: <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/protected-areas> and <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/countries>

OECMs and Biodiversity strategy targets

- OECMs to be designated/recognised by Member States **in accordance with the CBD criteria and existing guidance** (e.g. IUCN).
- **OECMs can be counted towards the EU target if:**
 - the area is covered by a national or international legal or administrative act or a contractual arrangement **achieving long-term conservation outcomes**;
 - **conservation objectives and measures** are in place;
 - **effective management and monitoring** of the biodiversity in the area is in place.

OECMs and Biodiversity strategy targets

- **Criteria and guidelines for identification and designation of additional protected areas.**
- The initial **pledges of Member States** related to protected areas designations/OECMs will be discussed in the framework of regional seas meetings with the participation of national authorities, relevant stakeholders and experts (**2022-2023**)
- The Commission will **evaluate the progress by 2024** and decide whether stronger action, including EU legislation, is needed.

Overview of environmental issues



Main conservation measures

- Areas where fishing with specified gears is prohibited to protect sensitive habitats (Annex II of «Technical Measures» Regulation)
- Marine protected areas under the Birds and Habitats Directives (Natura 2000 areas)
- Protection of seabed habitats under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (under discussion)
- Measures to protect spawning grounds and juvenile habitats (Article 8 CFP)
- Measures adopted by MS on a national basis

Other measures applying to all EU waters

- Reduction in fishing mortality towards F_{msy} (on track in Northeast Atlantic, more needs to be done in Mediterranean Basin)
- Prohibition to catch, land, tranship & market sensitive species (cetaceans, corals, many sharks and endangered and vulnerable species)
- Restrictions in fishing over deep-water vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME Regulation)

Next steps

Action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems:

- Technical Measures Report published in September 2021;
- Targeted stakeholder consultation soon;
- the Action Plan will include actions for the Commission, for Member States and for stakeholders;
- recommendations to Member States will provide a basis for enhancing the implementation of EU legislation at national level as well as for the preparation of joint recommendations by Member State regional groups.

Reports

Report: Implementation of the Technical Measures Regulation (Article 31 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241):

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:583:FIN>

Commission staff working document: Implementation of the Technical Measures Regulation (Article 31 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241):

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=SWD:2021:268:FIN>

Thank you



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