

Objective of protecting the marine environment under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive probably not to be achieved by 2020

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Member States have made considerable efforts to develop their programmes of measures. They have integrated different national, EU and international policies and processes for the sole purpose of protecting the marine environment. Most Member States have also established new measures to specifically target pressures on the marine environment that would otherwise not be covered, thus showing the added value of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

However, for certain pressures transboundary nature, the lack of regional or EU coordination potentially leads to a fragmented and ineffective approach to tackling the pressure. In the case of plastic marine litter, the problem is now being addressed through action at EU level, notably through the European strategy for plastics in a circular economy and its subsequent actions.

Nevertheless, the assessment shows that not all the pressures on the marine environment are covered properly through the measures adopted by Member States. The programmes themselves have varying levels of ambition. Achieving good environmental status by 2020 across all European marine regions and for all the 11 descriptors of the Directive remains unlikely. Even though it is known that ecosystems are slow to respond to change, this is disappointing as it means the main obligation of the Directive - good environmental status - is unlikely to be fulfilled on time. In 2018, Member States are expected to report on the state of implementation of their programme of measures. This should provide a clearer understanding of where they stand with the implementation of all of their measures. Member States are also expected to report updates of their determination of good environmental status, targets, and assessment of environmental status by October 2018. The Commission will build on these different elements to issue an implementation report in 2019 which will review progress, ahead of the 2020 deadline for achieving good environmental status.

In conclusion, the Commission's assessment is that improvements - of varying degrees for different countries - are needed for all programmes of measures if they are to be considered as an appropriate framework to meet the requirements of the Directive. Applicable guidance on modifications necessary is included as a set of recommendations in the table below.

Country specific guidance is provided in the form of recommendations included in the staff working document accompanying this report.

Read

- the full report
- the background document “Commission Staff Working Document” (with detailed findings and guidance per Member State) and
- technical reports per country

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/eu-coast-and-marine-policy/implementation/reports_en.htm

(⇒ scroll down to “Step 5: programmes of measures”)