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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

ANNEX VIII-g

Accompanying the

**proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council
on nature restoration**

{COM(2022) 304 final} - {SEC(2022) 256 final} - {SWD(2022) 168 final}

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Annex VIII-g: MARINE

Introduction

This paper provides information derived from the Member States' reports and assessments under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive. It is a background information to help identify possible restoration targets for the 'legal binding instrument' under the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030.

The 'marine' group includes six habitat types listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive (see Table 1). Three other habitats, normally considered marine, are included in the 'wetlands' group¹.

Table 1 – Marine Annex I habitat types selected for this analysis

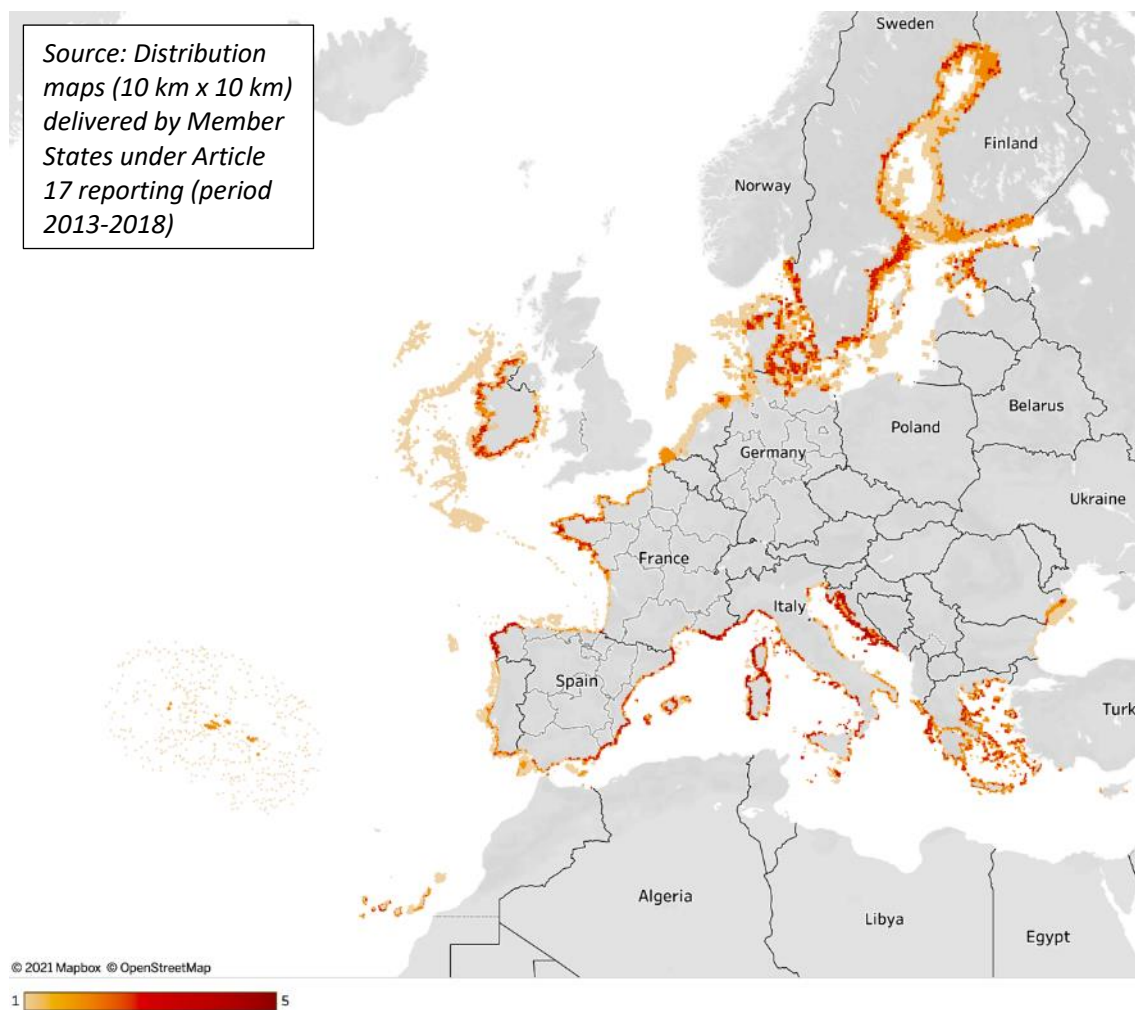
Marine habitats (6 types)	
1110	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
1120	Posidonia beds (<i>Posidonia oceanica</i>)
1160	Large shallow inlets and bays
1170	Reefs
1180	Submarine structures made by leaking gases
8330	Submerged or partially submerged sea caves

¹ 1130 – Estuaries, 1140 – Mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide, 1150 – Coastal lagoons

Marine Annex I coverage in the EU

The six habitat types selected cover over² **240 030 km²** (see Map 1); this excludes areas reported by Romania, which are known to be largely overestimated³.

Map 1 – Distribution of the 6 Annex I marine habitats in the EU



Note: the shades of brown indicate the number of habitat types per 10 km x 10 km grid cell.

Table 2 gives the areas of marine habitats for each Member State, including coverage by Natura 2000 network. Maps illustrating the distribution of each marine habitat in the EU are available in Annex A.

The habitat type with the largest area is 1170 – reefs (55 % of the total marine habitats), followed by 1110 – sandbanks (26 %) and 1160 – large shallow inlets and bays (16 %).

² Area of habitats calculated from the area reported by Member States as 'best estimate' or 'average of minimum/maximum'.

³ The average total area of marine habitats reported by Romania is 9 270 km².

From the 240 030 km² of marine habitats (excluding Romania), only **30%** is estimated to be inside the Natura 2000 network (about **71 255 km²**); this may be an underestimation since reports from Member States were not comprehensive in this regard (Table 2).

Table 2 – Area and proportion of marine Annex I habitats per Member State

	In the Member State		Inside Natura 2000	
	Marine habitats area (km ²)	Proportion of the marine habitats (%)	Marine area (km ²)	% marine area
Belgium	4 617.0	1.85	1 606.0	79.4
Bulgaria	116.6	0.05	42.7	76.3
Croatia (#)	798.4	0.32	1 037.2	129.9
Cyprus	398.6	0.16	204.4	51.3
Denmark	17 530.8	7.03	8 284.9	47.3
Estonia	3 077.0	1.23	659.0	21.4
Finland	3 495.0	1.40	839.0	24.0
France	41 067.8	16.47	11 488.5	28.0
Germany	15 814.9	6.34	10 798.8	68.3
Greece	10 850.0	4.35	1 119.0	10.3
Ireland	27 187.0	10.91	4 600.0	16.9
Italy	3 980.8	1.60	2 206.1	55.4
Latvia	1 037.8	0.42	670.6	64.6
Lithuania	461.0	0.18	187.9	40.8
Malta	297.6	0.12	261.7	87.9
Netherlands	12 907.0	5.18	9 338.0	72.3
Poland	864.9	0.35	864.9	100.0
Portugal	65 290.0	26.19	381.4	0.6
Romania (*)	9 269.5	3.72	5 169.5	55.8
Slovenia	0.1	0.00	0.1	45.8
Spain	12 648.7	5.07	10 638.8	84.1
Sweden	17 590.0	7.06	6 026.0	34.3
Total	249 300.6		76 424.4	30.7
Total (without Romania)	240 030.1		71 254.9	29.7

Notes: (*) areas reported by Romania likely to be overestimated; (#) Croatia reported a bigger area in the network than the total area of the habitat in the country.

Coverage by Natura 2000 sites greatly varies according to the Member State: **from 100 %** (Croatia, Poland) **to less than 1 %** (Portugal⁴). The degree of coverage by the network also varies from habitat to habitat: from only 6% for marine caves to over 50% for sandbanks and *Posidonia* beds (Table 3).

Table 3 – Area and proportion of marine habitats per sub-group

EU27 excluding Romania	Area of marine habitat (km ²)	Inside Natura 2000	
		marine area (km ²)	% marine area
1110	61 038	31 435	52
1120	8 015	3 997	50
1160	36 220	14 988	41
1170	126 488	20 173	16
1180	408	187	46
8330	7 863	475	6
TOTAL	240 030	71 255	30

Condition of habitats

Member States reported on the condition of habitat types under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive. This data can be used to estimate the area of marine habitats assessed as degraded (condition not-good) therefore, requiring restoration.

The area of Annex I marine habitats that would need to be restored, i.e., improved condition, is **at least 34 828 km²**, representing **15 %** of the total area of marine habitats reported (the values exclude Romania). However, the condition of habitats reported as 'unknown' (or not reported) is about 168 390 km² (70 % of the total habitat area). This means that the area requiring restoration is much bigger than 34 828 km²; for example, assuming that half of the 'unknown' area is in a not-good condition, the area to be restored would be over 119 000 km² or 203 200 km² if all the 'unknown' is assumed to be in a 'not-good' condition (70 % of the total marine habitats area). Table 4 gives information for each of the six marine habitats (excluding Romania) and Table 5 the condition areas and percentage for each of the Member States.

In addition to the habitat condition, Member States also reported on the 'favourable reference areas'⁵. Comparing this area with the actual habitat area allows to estimate how much area of the habitat would need to be re-created to achieve a good distribution and area of the habitat. Based on this data, it is estimated that a **strict minimum of 1 620 km²** would need to be **re-created** to achieve a 'favourable area'.

⁴ This very small percentage may be due to issues in the reported data.

⁵ The surface area in a given marine region considered the minimum necessary to ensure the long-term viability of the habitat type; this should include necessary areas for restoration or development for those habitat types for which the present coverage is not sufficient to ensure long-term viability.

However, these values are much higher since several Member States did not provide enough information in their reports to allow a more realistic estimation.

Table 4 – Condition of Annex I marine habitats

	Habitat area	Condition (area in km2)			Condition (in percentage)		
		Good	Not-good	Unknown	Good	Not-good	Unknown
Marine habitat	240 031.1	36 813.1	34 827.6	168 390.4	15	15	70
1110	61 038.0	11 891.7	14 204.7	34 941.6	13	36	52
1120	8 014.5	3 100.0	461.5	4 452.9	34	8	57
1160	36 220.2	2 488.0	13 297.3	20 434.9	13	25	62
1170	126 487.6	19 271.3	6 861.0	100 355.2	82	7	11
1180	407.5	25.0	0.0	382.5	76	16	8
8330	7 863.2	37.0	3.0	7 823.2	61	35	4

Note: Areas reported by Romania excluded from the table.

Table 5 – Condition of Annex I marine habitats per Member State

Member State	Marine area (km ²)			Unknown	Percentage		
	Total	Good	Not-good		Good	Not-good	Unknown
BE	4 617.0	2 750.0	477.0	1 390.0	60	10	30
BG	116.6	0.0	0.0	116.6	0	0	100
CY	398.6	433.2	0.0	-34.6	109	0	-9
DE	15 814.9	3 914.5	3 332.3	8 568.1	25	21	54
DK	17 530.8	443.8	12 083.1	5 003.9	3	69	29
EE	3 077.0	2 225.3	90.8	761.0	72	3	25
ES	12 648.7	0.0	0.0	12 648.7	0	0	100
FI	3 495.0	471.5	572.5	2 451.0	13	16	70
FR	41 067.8	16 289.5	1 693.0	23 085.3	40	4	56
GR	10 850.0	3 919.5	3 440.5	3 490.0	36	32	32
HR	798.4	0.0	0.0	798.4	0	0	100
IE	27 187.0	2 645.0	3 014.0	21 528.0	10	11	79
IT	3 980.8			3 980.8	0	0	100
LT	461.0	176.3	0.0	284.7	38	0	62
LV	1 037.8	0.0	984.5	53.3	0	95	5
MT	297.6	228.4	4.0	65.2	77	1	22
NL	12 907.0	2 671.0	8 916.0	1 320.0	21	69	10
PL	864.9	645.0	219.9	0.0	75	25	0
PT	65 290.0			65 290.0	0	0	100
RO	9 269.5	7 340.0	1 880.6	49.0	79	20	1
SE	17 590.0	0.0	0.0	17 590.0	0	0	100
SI	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	67	33	0

Note: (*) areas reported by Romania likely to be largely overestimated

Annex A

Map 2 – Distribution of habitat 1110 – Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water at all time



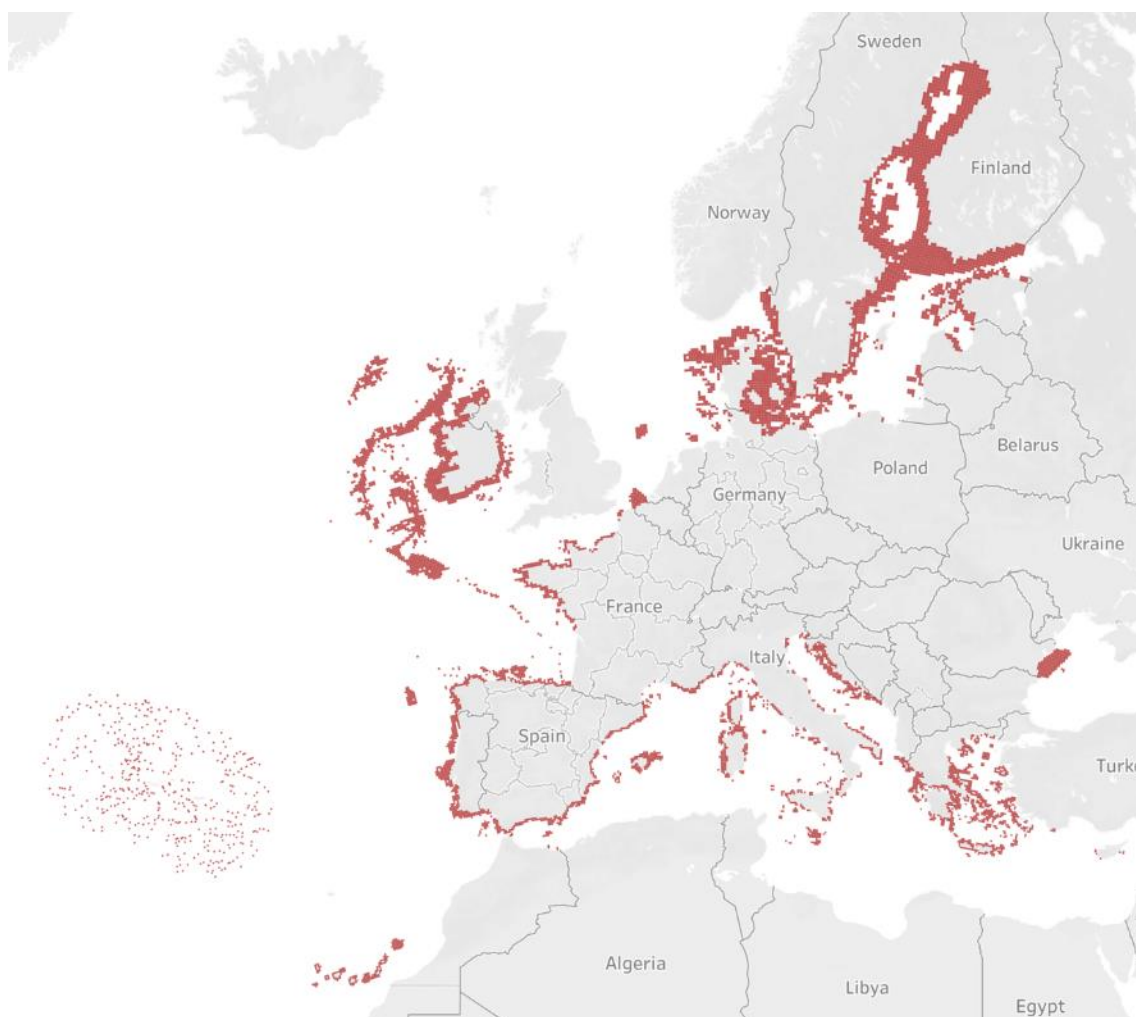
Map 3 – Distribution of habitat 1120 – *Posidonia* beds



Map 4 – Distribution of habitat 1160 – Large shallow inlets and bays



Map 5 – Distribution of habitat 1170 - Reefs



Map 5 – Distribution of habitat 1180 – Submarine structures made by leaking gases



Map 5 – Distribution of habitat 8330 – Submerged or partially submerged sea caves

