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*Report from the Commision to the European Parliament and the Council on the progress in  
establishing marine protected areas (as required by Article 21 of the Marine Strategy  
Framework Directive 2008/56/EC)*

[Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the  
progress in establishing marine protected areas](#) . European Commission. Environment.  
2016.

**Abstract:** A new Commission report shows significant progress in establishing protected areas in Europe's seas, with benefits for the economy and the environment. Under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the EU has committed to ensure the conservation of 10% of its coastal and marine areas by 2020. In 2012, 5.9 % of Europe's seas had already been designated as marine protected areas, and work is continuing with a view to achieve 10 % coverage by 2020. This objective is also reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Many marine species across Europe's seas are experiencing a decrease in population size and loss of habitat. Protected areas seek to reverse this trend by safeguarding ecosystems and species and rebuilding fish stocks, as well as ensuring the delivery of important ecosystem services such as coastal protection, flood management and tourism. The Commission will continue supporting Member States to designate, manage and control marine protected areas through financing mechanisms such as the LIFE Programme and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, while promoting inclusive governance structures for and research on marine protected areas.