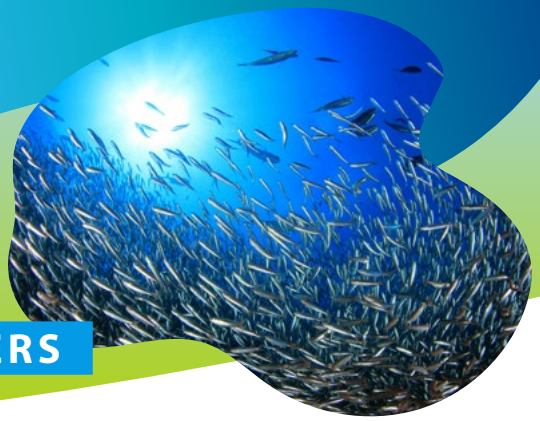
EUROPEAN UNION

# EU MISSIONS

## RESTORE OUR OCEAN AND WATERS



## Baseline study - Mediterranean Sea Lighthouse

**Mission Ocean and Waters lighthouses serve as sites to pilot, demonstrate, develop, and deploy Mission activities across EU seas and river basins. The objective of the Mediterranean Sea Lighthouse is to prevent and eliminate pollution, focusing on three specific targets:**

Decrease microplastics released into the environment **by at least 30%**

Reduce plastic litter at sea **by at least 50%**

Reduce nutrient losses, chemical pesticide use, and associated risks **by at least 50%**

**A baseline study was carried out in 2021-2022 and proposed a draft set of indicators to measure Mission progress towards its targets. It also analysed various elements and actions crucial for achieving Mission objectives, including:**

- Governance structures, institutions, stakeholder initiatives and networks, key projects
- Regional, national and macro-regional and Smart Specialisation Strategies, National Recovery and Resilience Plans
- Activities supporting citizen engagement and ocean literacy.

**The overall objective of the baseline study for the Mediterranean Sea was to map the situation in the sea basin in 2021-2022 and to:**

- Provide an overview of the state of pollution
- Identify pollution hotspots
- Review port waste management and capacities of countries to address pollution incidents
- Map existing data gaps in these areas.

*With a 2030 target, the EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters" aims to protect and restore the health of our ocean and waters through research and innovation, citizen engagement and blue investments.*

## MEDITERRANEAN SEA BASIN

**512 million** inhabitants (2018)

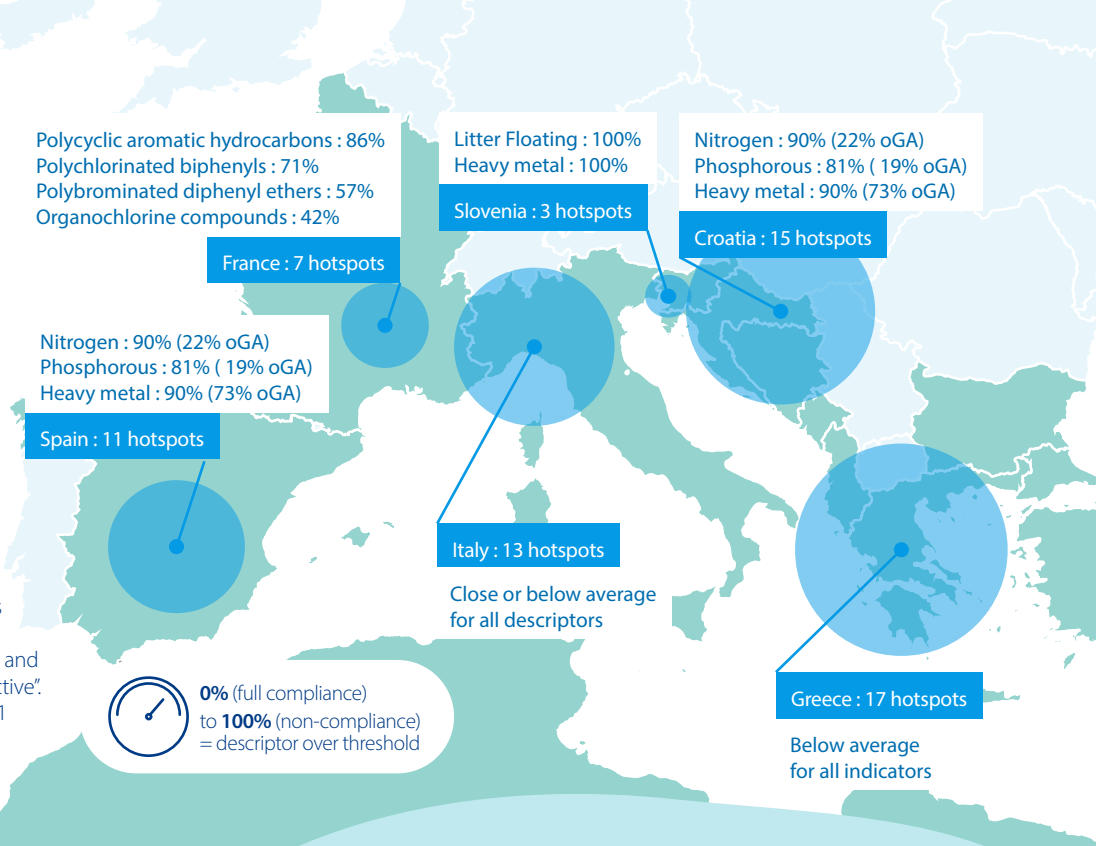
Area coverage **764 911.40 km²**

**Almost one third** of the Mediterranean population lives in the coastal area

# BASELINE STATE OF PLAY 2021 – 2022

## Mediterranean pollution hotspots and pressures from continental sources

- Identified 66 pollution hotspots in EU Mediterranean countries
- In 2016, 77% of these hotspots were not in compliance with two or more Maritime Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) descriptors
- The MSFD defines Good Environmental Status (GES) as "The environmental status of marine waters where these provide ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive". The concept of GES is defined through 11 descriptors, incl. D5: Eutrophication, D8: Contaminants, and D10: Marine litter.




# KEY FINDINGS

## Capacity to identify, monitor and react to larger pollution incidents

- Oil pollution in the Mediterranean Sea stems from various sources, such as shipping, oil and gas platforms, ports, oil terminals, land-based activities, military conflicts, natural oil seeps, and atmospheric inputs.
- Shipping activities are the primary cause of oil pollution.
- The results show that EU Member States have identified national reaction agencies and taken further actions to prepare for such accidents; however, the sources available cannot assess the effectiveness of this work.

## Waste management in ports

- Ship-generated wastes encompass oily waste, food waste, cooking oil, fishing nets, residues of cargo material.
- A major challenge for ports is establishing adequate reception facilities for ship-generated waste. The prevention of ship-source pollution relies heavily on these facilities, but the coordination with downstream management operations remains unresolved.
- Therefore, various fee systems are currently discussed to incentivise ships to deliver their waste at port.

## EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)

- A macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission in 2014, covering EU Member States and non-EU countries in the Adriatic and Ionian region.
- Promotes economic and social prosperity, with a focus on sustainable tourism, connectivity, blue growth, and environmental quality, including waste management and marine environmental protection.

Visit website

## Data gaps

- Under the MSFD, threshold values for good environmental status have not yet been designated at EU or Mediterranean level for several pollutants and related descriptors. As a result, some Member States have designated national threshold values; however, this has resulted in gaps and a lack of harmonisation.
- No EU-wide data on waste management in ports. Nonetheless, studies estimate that the gap between waste generated by ships and waste collected in ports ranges between 7 and 34 %.
- Lack of comprehensive data on capacities to address pollution incidents in the Mediterranean Sea.

**Link to the report**

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