



Marine Strategy Framework Directive: Seabed habitats

BENTHIS Final Symposium

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Marine Strategy Framework Directive

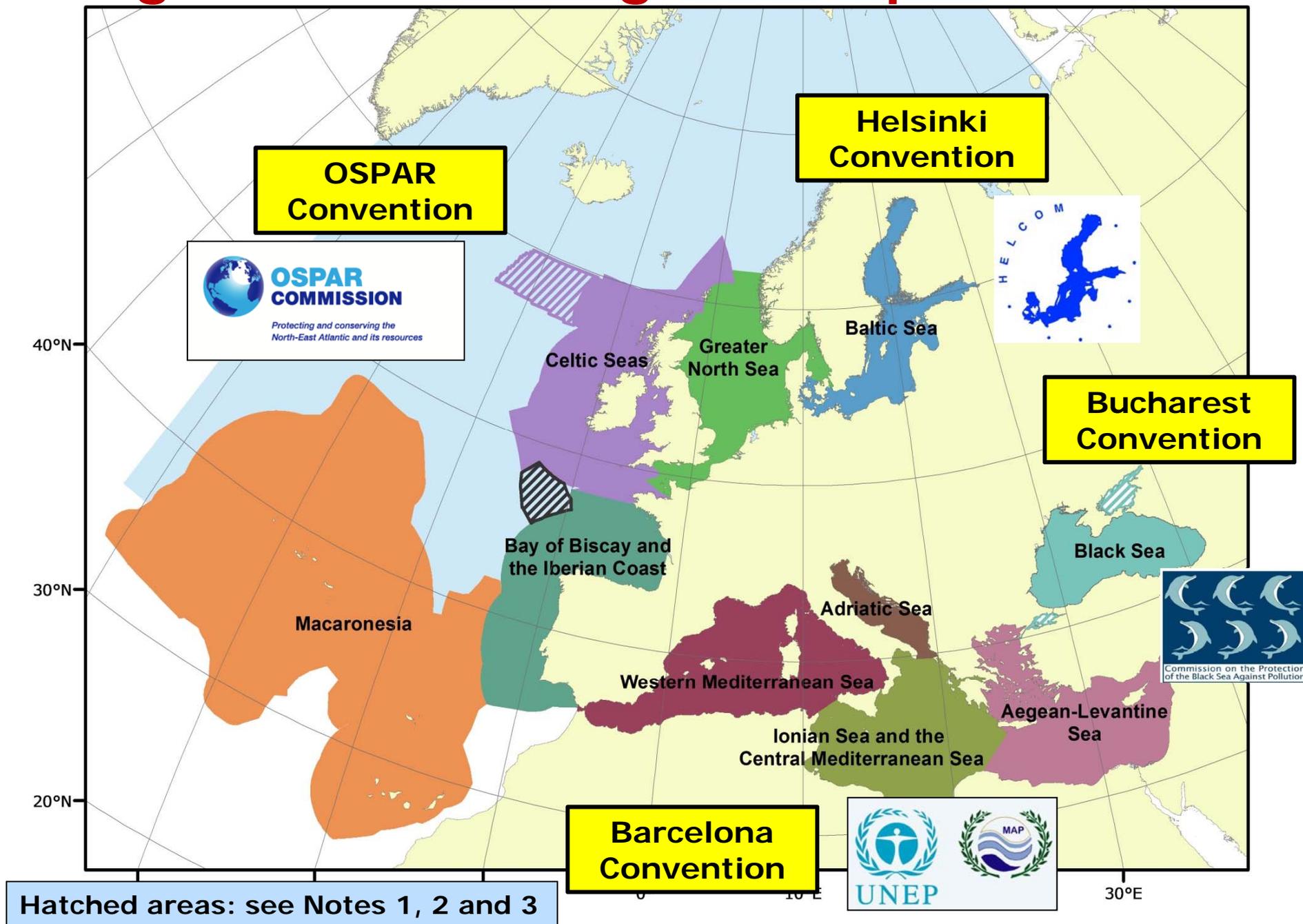
EU's legal instrument for the protection of our seas



Ecosystem-based, adaptive and integrated approach to the management of all human activities which have an impact on the marine environment



Regional and subregional implementation





MSFD progress on seabed habitats/ sea-floor integrity (D1/D6)

- *2012 Initial Assessment*
 - First assessment by Member States on state of seabed habitats and pressures upon them
 - Overall, poor ability to assess status across at the large scale of MS marine waters
 - Some MS reported extensive areas of physical disturbance
- *2014 Monitoring programmes*
 - Seabed habitats remain partially addressed
 - 25% of programmes in place by 2014
 - 60% of programmes in place by 2020
- *Commission assessments of MS reporting*
 - COM(2014) 97 + SWD(2014) 49; COM(2017) 3, SWD(2017) 1



Progress in assessing state of seabed habitats at regional scales

- *Processing of VMS and AIS data to assess distribution and frequency of bottom fishing*
 - **ICES, JRC, BENTHIS, others**
- *Compilation of spatial data on other human activities affecting seabed*
 - **HELCOM, OSPAR, EMODnet (human activities)**
- *Preparation of broad-scale seabed habitat maps*
 - **EMODnet (physical habitats)**
- *Assessments of habitat condition/sensitivity*
 - **HELCOM, OSPAR, BENTHIS**
- *Regional assessments: Baltic, North & Celtic Seas, Biscay/Iberian Coast, parts of Mediterranean*



Revised GES Decision 2010/477/EU and MSFD Annex III

- Provides a **clearer** basis for determination and assessment of GES, with **fewer criteria** (42)
- Greater **coherence with other EU legislation** and strengthens **regional/subregional coherence**
- **Threshold values** for criteria, or provision to define these at Union or (sub)regional level
- Specified ways to **express extent to which GES is achieved** (e.g. Z% of habitat or area in GES)
- Proposals **adopted** on 17 May 2017: Decision (EU) 2017/848 and Directive (EU) 2017/845





GES criteria for seabed habitats/ seafloor integrity

Elements	Criterion
Physical loss of the seabed	D6C1: Spatial extent and distribution
Physical disturbance to the seabed	D6C2: Spatial extent and distribution
Benthic broad habitat types	D6C3: Spatial extent of each habitat type which is adversely affected by physical disturbance
+	D6C4: Extent of habitat loss does not exceed a specified proportion of the natural extent of each habitat type in the assessment area
Other habitats (selected by MS)	D6C5: Extent of adverse effects on the condition of the habitat type does not exceed a specified proportion of the natural extent of the habitat type in the assessment area

Concluding remarks

Contribution of BENTHIS to MSFD process includes

- **Development and refinement of methods to:**
 - ❑ Map the extent, distribution and frequency of physical disturbance by bottom fishing
 - ❑ Assess the degree of adverse effects on seabed habitats

Ongoing work by ICES for Commission:

- **Advise on indicators to assess pressure and impact on the seafloor from bottom-contacting fishing**
- **Demonstrate trade-offs in catch/value of landings relative to impacts and recovery potential of the seafloor**
- **Advice to be published June 2017**



<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine>



Thank you for your attention!