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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks

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PROPOSAL OF DELINEATION OF MARINE REGIONS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE BERN CONVENTION

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BACKGROUND AND RATIONAL

The Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted 20 headline targets for 2020, organised under five strategic goals. The goals and targets comprise both: (i.) aspirations for achievement at the global level; and (ii.) a flexible framework for the establishment of national or regional targets.

Within Strategic Goal C (Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity), two targets are devoted to Protected Areas and their objectives:

Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

While the Emerald Network contributes already to the protection of terrestrial areas, the non-EU Contracting Parties have up to date proposed only a few marine Emerald Network sites.

Furthermore, Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention are required under Resolution No. 8 (2012) to report on the conservation status of species and habitats of European importance and protected under the Bern Convention. Although the first reporting cycle covering the period 2013 – 2018 will focus on a subset of species excluding marine species and habitats, it is expected that the second reporting exercise in six years' time will consider all species and habitats listed respectively on Resolutions No. 6 (1998) and No. 4 (1996).

To encourage Parties to step up their efforts for defining marine protected areas under the Emerald Network and to set appropriate tools to evaluate the extent to which these sites contribute to the conservation of marine species and habitats protected under the Bern Convention and to enable the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) to consider marine species and habitats in the future, it is timely to introduce the discussions about marine regions and their delineation within the framework of the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks.

PROPOSAL

The definition and delineation of marine regions and sub-regions have been discussed among EU member States since 2008 for the implementation of the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#) (MSFD). They reached an agreement in 2016 on four regions which would suit also the needs of the Bern Convention as they encompass the marine waters surrounding the majority of Contracting Parties.

The four regions are the following: **The Baltic Sea, the North-East Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea.**

The North-East Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea regions are divided in four sub-regions each as follows:

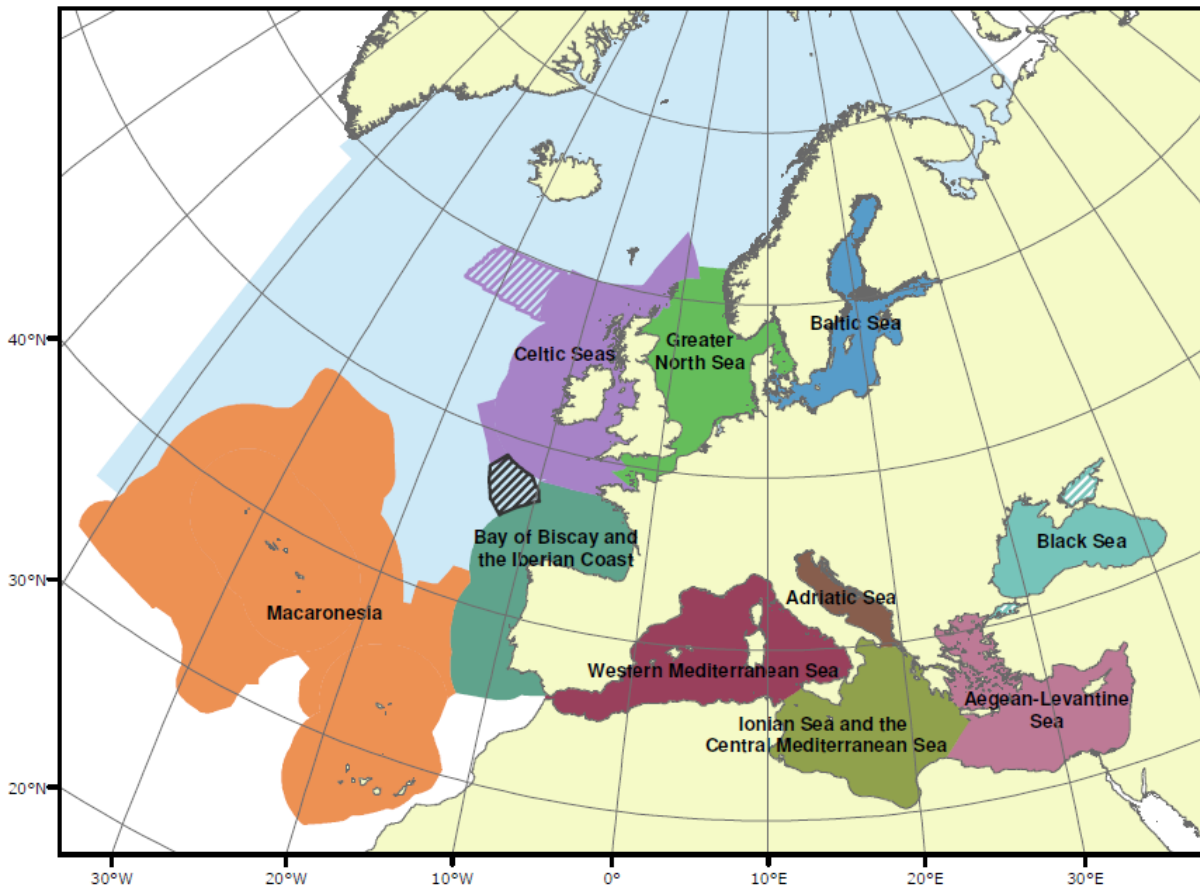
North-East Atlantic Sea

- The Greater North Sea, including the Kattegat and the English Channel
- The Celtic Seas
- The Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Coast
- Macaronesia

Mediterranean Sea

- The Western Mediterranean Sea
- The Adriatic Sea
- The Ionian Sea and the Central Mediterranean Sea
- The Aegean-Levantine Sea

The map agreed on within the framework of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive is represented here below:



And available at following link:

http://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?url=https://marine.discomap.eea.europa.eu/arcgis/rest/services/Marine/Marine_regions_subregions_v1/MapServer&source=sd

The proposal of the Secretariat is to capitalize on the EU marine regions and to extend them to the Contracting Parties and observer States not yet covered by the geographical scope of EU's map in particular to Iceland, Morocco and Norway as well as to the Russian Federation.

As preliminary remarks, Contracting Parties should note that:

The regions proposed are intended to be used exclusively for the biogeographical evaluation process within the framework of the Emerald Network and for the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012).

The associated map provides the boundaries of the marine regions but is not intended to provide boundaries of the marine waters of Contracting Parties and therefore should not be considered as representing international marine borders.

A disclaimer will accompany the map whenever it is used which reads: *The map serves as a working tool only and shall not be considered as an official and legally-binding map representing marine borders in accordance with international law. This map shall be used without prejudice to the agreements that will be concluded between Contracting Parties or between Parties and non-Parties in respect of their marine borders.*

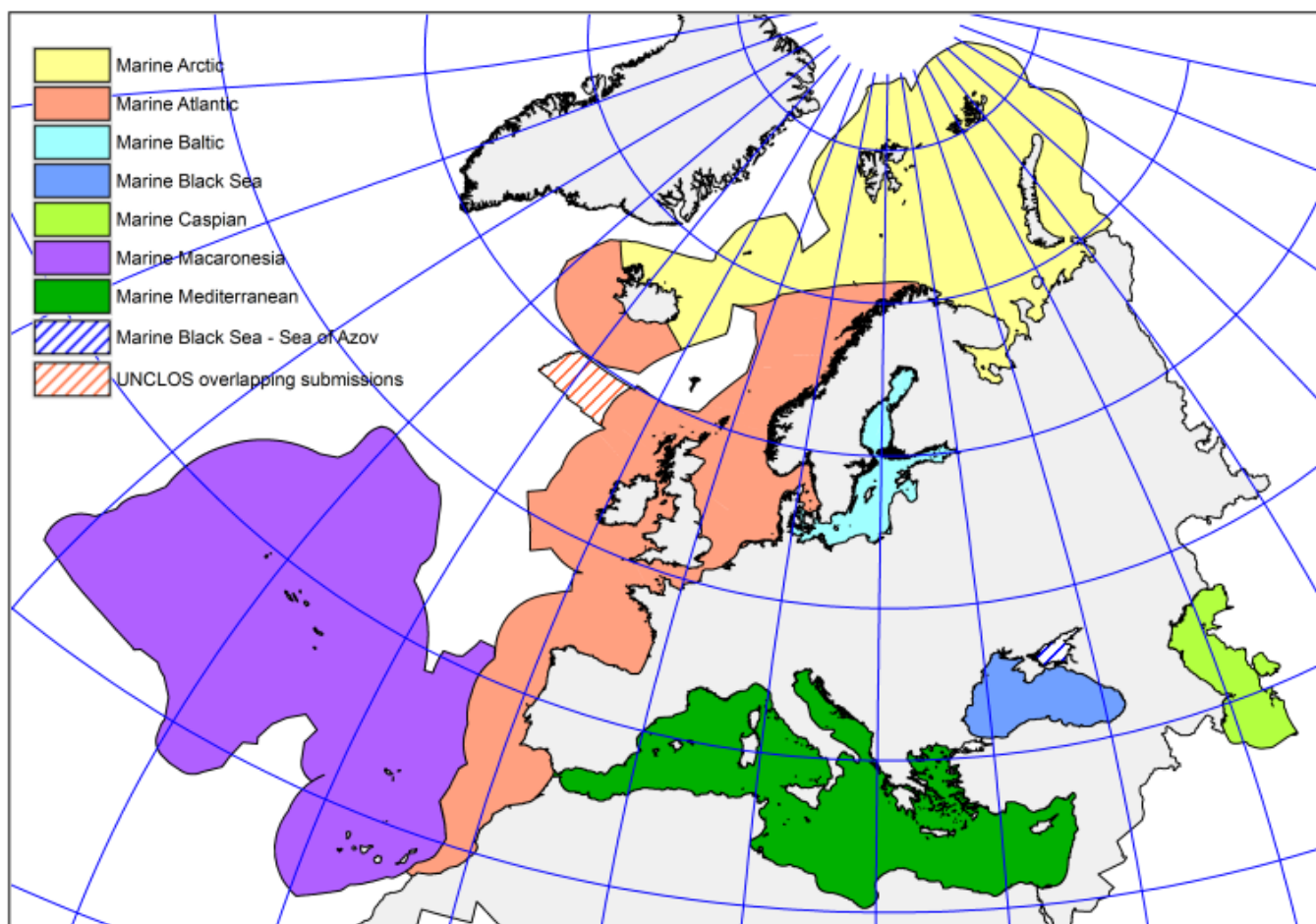
The following principles were considered for elaborating the proposal:

- The proposed map of marine regions is grounded on the map endorsed by the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#)
- As in the case of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the geographical distinction between “Marine” and “Terrestrial” is grounded on the [European Coastline shape file](#)
- The Marine Strategy Framework Directive considers both the Exclusive Economic Zones and the continental shelves. The same principle applies to the proposed map of marine regions.

- The proposed map of marine regions does not consider the sub-regions defined within the framework of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive excepted for the Macaronesia marine sub-region.
- In addition to the four marine regions defined within the framework of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the proposed map of marine regions considers two additional regions: the Arctic and Caspian marine regions.

Based on these principles the following map of marine regions is proposed for the non-EU Contracting Parties implementing the Emerald Network and for the purposes of the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012):

Marine regions in the framework of the Bern Convention



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Furthermore, the following adjustments were reflected on the proposed map:

- The Caspian shoreline was added to the map and defined as “Marine Caspian Region”;
- The Sea of Marmara is excluded from any marine region at the request of Turkish authorities;
- All Mediterranean sub-regions from were merged to form the “Marine Mediterranean Region”
- All North East Atlantic sub-regions were merged (with the exclusion of the Macaronesian sub-region) to form the “Atlantic Marine Region”;
- The “Atlantic Marine Region” was extended to the South by considering the Exclusive Economic Zone of Morocco so as to encompass the shoreline of Morocco.

The delineation of the “Arctic Marine Region” northern of the Atlantic Marine Region is grounded on the border line between “Sub-Arctic” and “Low Arctic” as defined by the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, Biodiversity working group of the Arctic Council (CAFF) and on the [Icelandic Waters ecoregion](#) as defined by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES).