



MARITIME FORUM

Map of the Week – Seabed Litter Density

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The map of the week shows the density of seafloor litter (all categories) expressed as the average number of litter pieces collected by fish-trawl surveys over a period of one year.

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD [1]) aimed to achieve Good Environmental Status of the European Union's marine waters by 2020. However, the report '*Marine messages II - Navigating the course towards clean, healthy and productive seas through implementation of an ecosystem-based approach*'^[1] indicated that Europe's seas are not on track to meet this objective. The European Commission's report on the first implementation cycle of the MSFD showed that further efforts are needed to tackle predominant pressures including plastic litter.^[2]

Every year, millions of tons of litter end up in the ocean worldwide, leading to environmental, economic, health and aesthetic problems.^[3] Plastics, metals, cardboard and other waste are accumulating on shorelines, the seabed and surface waters.^[4] Marine litter adversely impacts marine ecosystems and biodiversity, including through ingestion of marine litter by species, their entanglement in it and consumption by species of microplastics - as well as the toxic substances released from the degradation of plastics.^[1] It can also cause serious economic damage.^[3] To address marine litter efficiently, it is necessary to implement measures both on land and at sea.

Litter prevention, litter collection and litter recycling are essential to a healthy ocean and to meeting [Sustainable Development Goal 14](#) [2] on Life Below Water. There are many initiatives in this field which aim to turn the tide. Below are some examples.

- As part of the [European Green Deal](#) [3], the European Commission put forward a zero-pollution ambition for Europe. Its [roadmap](#) [4] on an EU Action Plan "*Towards a Zero Pollution Ambition for air, water and soil – building a Healthier Planet for Healthier People*" outlines plans to achieve zero pollution.
- In the framework of the 2020 [#EUBeachCleanup](#) [5] global campaign for clean plastic free oceans, the European Union is inviting us to help, by reducing our water consumption, shopping for less packaging and sorting our waste.

- The [Marine LitterWatch](#) [6] App enables citizen communities to contribute to the knowledge base on marine litter data.
- The project [marGnet](#) [7] featured in the recent [Euronews Ocean episode](#) [8] on marine litter aims to monitor, map, prevent, remove and recycle marine litter found on the sea-floor as a result of sea-based activities.
- In the framework of the [EU4Ocean Coalition](#) [9] dedicated to ocean literacy and the sustainable management of the ocean, members of the [EU4Ocean Platform](#) [10] are cooperating in three Working Groups, one of which is focussing on a Healthy and Clean Ocean.

What can you do? Dive in to this week's map to visualise seabed litter density, learn about the above-mentioned initiatives and look for other projects tackling marine pollution.

[Access the map](#) [11]

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Links

[1] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32008L0056>

[2] <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal14>

[3] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

[4] https://ec.europa.eu/environment/news/commission-outlines-road-zero-pollution-action-plan-2020-10-01_en

[5] https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/eu-beach-cleanup-2020_en

[6] <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/europes-seas-and-coasts/assessments/marine-litterwatch>

[7] <http://www.margnet.eu/>

[8] <https://www.euronews.com/2020/10/21/the-dangers-of-marine-litter-and-the-innovative-methods-to-combat-it>

[9] <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/frontpage/1482>

[10] <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/frontpage/1483>

[11] https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/atlas/maritime_atlas/#lang=EN;p=w;bkgd=5;theme=479:0.8;c=324391.9536399925,6752023.954157636;z=4;e=t