

# Workshop on the European Green Deal – Challenges and opportunities for EU fisheries and aquaculture:

## Part II: Marine biodiversity aspects

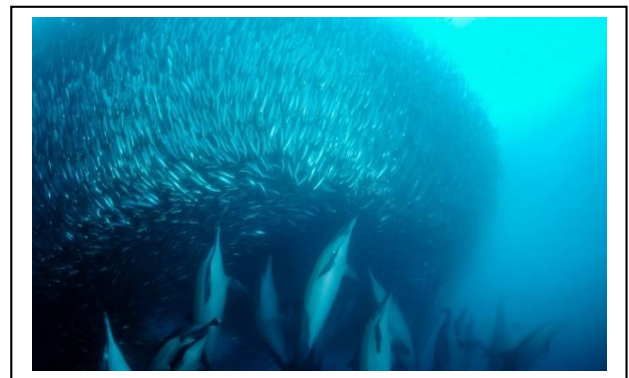

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The **European Green Deal** (EGD) is a group of policies aiming to reduce the European economy's fossil fuel dependency, with the target of carbon neutrality by 2050. Several strategies presented in the Green Deal are expected to have strong implications regarding marine spatial planning, as they call for the development of new activities in already busy coastal areas: an improved network of marine protected areas, offshore wind farms, and aquaculture developments.

### Main observations

The **reinforcement of the protected area network** is a critical element of the EGD, with an objective of 30% of the EU's sea waters protected by 2030, the implementation of strict protections for at least a third of the areas, and the definition of fisheries management measures in all areas. Currently covering nearly 450 000 square kilometres, the **marine protected areas** (MPAs) network must be tripled to reach the 30% objective.

**Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management** (EAFM) is essential for better integrating all new usages in management advice.



The extent of **OWFs** will increase dramatically in European waters in the coming decade, with a need to develop co-existence plans with fishing. The impacts of OWFs on marine biodiversity are complex and often incompatible with conservation objectives.

**Co-locating OWF and fishing activities** could become the European Union's new standard but would imply local fishing sector adaptations and insurance companies' revised policies. To effectively **integrate spatial protection** with **multi-use fishing and OWF**, systematic and participatory planning approaches exist and should be mobilised.

### Conclusions and policy recommendations

The study proposes **several recommendations** to better integrate marine biodiversity challenges in future regulations.

Regarding the development of **offshore wind farms** and **spatial protection measures**:

- 1) Reinforcing the **coordination between Member States** to develop coherent **marine spatial plans**, avoiding

### The study

explores the impacts, challenges and opportunities on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors created by the European Green Deal regarding marine biodiversity.

The **EU Strategy on offshore renewable energy** aims to increase the EU offshore wind capacity to 60 GW by 2030 and 300 GW by 2050. This will have major implications for **marine spatial planning** (MSP) requirements and the marine environment, with an expected footprint of future **offshore wind farms** (OWF) close to 50 000 to 60 000 square kilometres.

The continuous release of human-produced greenhouse gas emissions directly affects the **ocean: warming, acidification and deoxygenation**. Human-induced climate change significantly modifies the ecosystems' structure and the distribution of marine species, with most species shifting poleward. An important share of the coastal waters is in less than good status, despite the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Developing an


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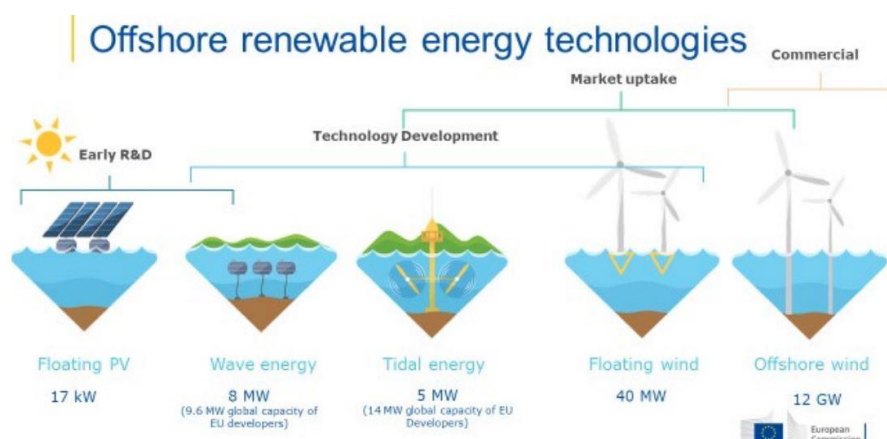
discontinuity between Member States. This is notably important for the development of a coherent network of **marine protected areas**.

- 2) Recognising that **industrial activities** are not compatible with **marine biodiversity conservation**.
- 3) Supporting **research activities** to elicit the **preferences in the use of marine space**, to better define the place of each industry. This could be achieved at sea basin level also to reinforce coordination between Member States.
- 4) Developing research to assess the **cumulative effects due to multiple offshore wind farms on marine biodiversity**: disruption of migration corridors, effect on local atmospheric conditions (wind, temperature), but also **on the fishing industry**: fishing assemblages, target species, fishing behaviour, the characteristics of the lost fishing opportunities and the varying characteristics of the different offshore.
- 5) Supporting **research** to identify key features at the sea basin level to avoid disruptions between **marine protected areas** due to **offshore developments** (wind energy notably).
- 6) Embracing systematic and **participatory planning** approaches for effectively **integrating spatial protection** with **multi-use fishing, aquaculture and offshore wind farms**.
- 7) Developing **support measures** for the fishing industry to be able to access **insurance policies** allowing them to **fish inside offshore wind farms** under conditions.

Regarding the **interactions of fishing activities and protected species**:

- 8) Reinforcing all **direct observation programmes** that are essential to estimate the cetacean populations, to allow population evaluations on a more frequent basis.
- 9) Improving the **EU-DCMAP** (Data collection multi-annual plans) to impose better sampling of segments at **risk of bycatch of protected species** (cetaceans, turtles and sea birds).
- 10) Supporting **research activities** in remote **electronic monitoring systems** to improve the information about **bycatch of protected species**.
- 11) Supporting **research activities** in identifying **new deterrent and avoidance techniques**, as most of them are species and gear specific.
- 12) Raising **awareness** of the importance for fishers to **report bycatch of protected species** for improving the **quality of the data available** to assess scientifically the population levels and for helping to understand the **factors explaining these bycatch**.
- 13) Providing **adequate training** to fishers for:
  - a) using all **mitigation measures** that can be deployed on their gear for **minimising the bycatch of protected species**;
  - b) handling **properly protected species in the eventuality of a bycatch**, to maximise the chances of survival after release.

*Offshore renewable energy technologies' current production capacity and market maturity*



Source: JRC (2019)

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