



Regional seas around Europe - version 2, Oct. 2022

The regional seas around Europe are the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the North-east Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Two of these regions are further divided into subregions:

North-east Atlantic Ocean

- the Barents Sea;
- the Iceland Sea;
- the Norwegian Sea;
- the White 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 regional seas are harmonised with the boundaries established as the MSFD regions and subregions, as agreed by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive Committee in November 2016. The delineation of additional seas follows the boundaries established under Regional Sea Conventions and ICES ecoregions.

The present map is provided in ESRI shape- and ESRI Geodatabase formats.

Simple

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Maintenance and update frequency	As needed
EEA topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water

Continents, countries, sea regions of the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iceland Sea • White Sea • Barents Sea • Adriatic Sea • Bay of Biscay • Northeast Atlantic Ocean (40W) • Mediterranean Sea • Aegean Sea • Black Sea • Ionian Sea • Baltic Sea
GEMET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Strategy Framework Directive • marine environment
GEMET - INSPIRE themes, version 1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea regions • Area management/restriction/regulation zones and reporting units • Bio-geographical regions • Geographical names • Oceanographic geographical features
Keywords	
Spatial scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European
INSPIRE priority data set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine regions (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) • Marine sub-regions (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) • Directive 2008/56/EC
Keywords	
Access constraints	Other restrictions
Other constraints	<p>The map should not be understood as representing international marine borders. To this end, the following disclaimer will accompany the map: "This map serves as a working tool only and shall not be considered as an official or legally-binding map representing marine borders in accordance with international laws. This map shall be used without prejudice to the agreements that will be concluded between Member States or between Member States and non-EU states in respect of their marine borders.". No limitations to public access EEA standard re-use policy: unless otherwise indicated, re-use of content on the EEA website for commercial or non-commercial purposes is permitted free of charge, provided that the source is acknowledged (http://www.eea.europa.eu/legal/copyright). Copyright holder: European Environment Agency (EEA).</p>
Other constraints	no limitations to public access
Use constraints	Other restrictions
Other constraints	<p>EEA standard re-use policy: unless otherwise indicated, re-use of content on the EEA website for commercial or non-commercial purposes is permitted free of charge, provided that the source is acknowledged (http://www.eea.europa.eu/legal/copyright). Copyright holder: European Environment Agency (EEA).</p>
Spatial representation type	Vector
Denominator	100000
Language of dataset	English

Character set	UTF8
Topic category	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environment• Geoscientific information• Oceans• Boundaries

- o The Celtic Seas;
- o The Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Coast;
- o Macaronesia.

In the context of MSFD, the Iceland Sea, the Norwegian Sea, and the high seas are not included.

In the context of MSFD, the Mediterranean Sea includes:

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

The delineation of the marine regions and subregions under the MSFD was developed over the period 2010-2016 through the MSFD Common Implementation Strategy, supported by the EEA and the ETC-ICM. The map was adopted by EU Member States in the MSFD Committee in November 2016. The basis for the boundaries between the marine regions and subregions is described in an EEA report (Jensen, H.M, Panagiotidis, P. & Reker, J. 2017. Delineation of the MSFD Article 4 marine regions and subregions. Version 1.0 EEA, Copenhagen). The ICES ecoregions are being aligned with the MSFD region and subregion boundaries.

The landward boundary of all regions and subregions has used the "EEA coastline for analysis" (see <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/data/eea-coastline-for-analysis-2>); this is a practical solution because the MSFD landward boundary formally follows that defined for coastal waters under the Water Framework Directive, for which a consistent boundary is not yet available for all reporting countries.

Therefore, since it includes the delineation of marine regions and subregions agreed under the MSFD, the present map should take into account the following:

- a. The marine regions and subregions defined under the MSFD are intended for the sole purpose of supporting the implementation of the MSFD by Member States, stakeholders and the European Commission and its agencies.
- b. The present map provides boundaries of the marine regions and subregions as listed in MSFD Article 4, together with the delineation of other relevant seas surrounding Europe.
- c. The map is not intended to provide boundaries of the marine waters of Member States. This means that the map does not represent the geographic scope of application of the MSFD as the MSFD only applies to Member States' marine waters, which are understood to lie within the marine regions and subregions. Further, in those areas of Member States' marine waters, the map makes no distinction between the jurisdiction over both the water column and the seabed or only the seabed.
- d. As such the map should not be understood as representing international marine borders. To this end, the following disclaimer will accompany the map: "This map serves as a working tool only and shall not be considered as an official or legally-binding map representing marine borders in accordance with international laws. This map shall be used without prejudice to the agreements that will be concluded between Member States or between Member States and non-EU states in respect of their marine borders."
- e. As they are not intended to provide boundaries of Member States' marine waters, the landward boundaries used do not constitute the formal boundary of these marine waters, but instead use a harmonised coastline boundary for cartographic consistency.
- f. In the North-east Atlantic Ocean region, the outer boundary of the Celtic Seas, Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Coast and Macaronesia subregions is intended to fully encompass the marine waters of the relevant EU Member States. This includes the Continental Shelf areas where these extend beyond Exclusive Economic Zones. For the North-east Atlantic Ocean region, the boundaries shown in the present map include those Continental Shelf areas which have so far been reported by the Member States concerned. As and when Member States report modifications to the boundaries of their marine waters, such as further Continental Shelf areas following conclusions under UNCLOS processes, the map should be updated.
- g. Notwithstanding the need to update the map on the basis of point (f), the boundaries of the MSFD marine regions and subregions should be periodically reviewed to ensure they serve the purposes of the MSFD, and in particular an ecosystem-based approach to management of the marine environment. Such review should be undertaken in advance of the periodic updates of Article 8 and take into account the latest scientific evidence on the characteristics of the marine ecosystems, as reflected in MSFD Art. 3(2).

This map is an updated version of one of the layers in "Europe Seas - version 1, Dec. 2018" map, with the following updates:

- Wider Atlantic region delineated by the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the 'Oslo-Paris Convention') and previously representing North-east Atlantic Ocean region has been removed from the map.
- The Sea of Azov does not fall within the geographic scope of application of the Bucharest Convention. Therefore, it has a different Id than the Black Sea region, even though it is part of the MSFD Black Sea region.

	<div>- The Sea of Marmara, designated by national authorities as an inland water body located entirely within the borders of Turkey, is not included in this map .</div> <div>- The outward boundary of Macaronesia has been updated in order to fully encompass the latest marine waters reported by Portugal</div> <div>-The extended continental shelf area of Rockall/Hatton Bank have been excluded from the map.</div>
Source	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Europe's Seas - version 1, Dec. 2018EEA coastline for analysis (polygon) - version 3.0, March 2017EEA Marine waters for analysis - INTERNAL VERSION, Oct. 2022</div>

Metadata

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Overviews

This map serves as a working mean only and shall not be considered as an official or legally-binding map representing marine borders in accordance with international laws. This map shall be used without prejudice to the agreements that will be concluded between Member States or between Member States and non-EU Countries in respect of their marine borders.

Regional seas around Europe

Mediterranean Sea

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

Baltic Sea

- Baltic Sea

Black Sea

- Black Sea
- Black Sea - sea of Azov

North East Atlantic Ocean

- Barents Sea
- Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Coast
- Celtic Seas
- Greater North Sea, incl. the Kattegat and the English Channel
- Iceland Sea
- Macaronesia
- Norwegian Sea
- White Sea

