



# **Activity Report 2020**

## **Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC)**

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## Brief Presentation of the Organisation

The Coastal & Marine Union – EUCC is a stakeholder and network association with expert members and NGO member organizations in 40 countries. Founded in 1989 with the aim of promoting a European approach to coastal conservation by bridging the gap between scientists, environmentalists, site managers, planners and policy makers, it is the largest network of coastal & marine practitioners and experts in Europe, with five international offices and focal points and national branches in ten countries. Our working area is Europe, the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

EUCC is dedicated to conserving and maintaining healthy seas and attractive coasts for both people and nature. To this end, EUCC seeks to:

- ✓ promote integrated marine and coastal management;
- ✓ work to limit the impacts of climate change;
- ✓ provide advice, information, communication and policy instruments;
- ✓ partake in coastal and marine research projects;
- ✓ raise awareness of environmental issues;
- ✓ develop partnerships with stakeholders.

EUCC promotes a specifically European approach to marine and coastal management and has become a European expert and NGO-network on Marine strategy issues (especially marine litter and underwater noise), Maritime Spatial Planning, Integrated Coastal Zone Management (Land - Sea Interaction), and Sustainable coastal and maritime tourism. We try to provide integration to as well as a focus on aspects that are so important in nowadays EU environmental policies, notably in the field of: sustainable development, nature conservation, climate change, overall water quality, and waste (marine litter).

EUCC has always tried to provide continuity as the focal point of a European NGO-platform for sustainable management of coastal regions and waters. Having been involved in numerous European programmes and projects since the 1990s, EUCC tries hard to ensure the continued availability of information, lessons learnt and best practice experience after the end of these projects. In this sense EUCC is the main “institutional memory” for the European coast and coastal waters. Maybe this explains why EUCC has developed into the centre of a network of NGOs linking with authorities at local and regional, trying to improve the implementation of EU environmental policies by regional and local authorities in 10 EU member states, through the QualityCoast initiative.

## Summary

EUCC activities in 2020 highlights include the following:

- ✓ The EUCC-team actively participated in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Coordination Group and its technical groups on Marine Litter and Underwater noise (Good Environmental Status GES descriptors nrs. 10 and 11).
- ✓ EUCC has been requested to coordinate, design, develop and implement technical support in various projects related with Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone management, and, coastal erosion and protection, considering the effects of climate change, following requests from the Structural Reform Support Service of the European Commission (DG REFORM).
- ✓ We have continued to follow the developments around the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive as Observer the EC MS Expert Group (MSEG) – on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) group led by EC DG MARE. We have attended several meetings since we joined as observers in 2017.
- ✓ Cooperation with NGOs, local and regional authorities throughout Europe, through the QualityCoast network. With the help of NGOs, implementation and awareness of European environmental policies is assessed at local authority level, esp. re: biodiversity and Natura 2000, MSFD priority topics (e.g. marine litter and underwater noise), sustainable fisheries, ICZM, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Elements included (a) monitoring and benchmarking local and regional performance in the implementation of EU environmental policies and legislation; (b) drafting recommendations; (c) promoting and facilitating the exchange of experiences and good practices. Participating regions include app. 100 coastal regions, towns and islands, including the Azores and the Canary Isles.
- ✓ Active cooperation with fishermen organizations for innovation contributing to sustainability.
- ✓ We promoted MSFD topics and EU ICM-principles in publications, exhibits and visitor centers.

## Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) and MSP

EUCC has built an extensive experience in international projects, in particular ones related to coastal best practices and ICM, in which wide engagement of coastal stakeholders and organisation of international events have taken place and EUCC has played a central role. Other projects in which EUCC implemented activities to support bridging the gap between policy makers and science include SPICOSA, CONSCIENCE, IMCORE, KnowSeas and ENCORA. Furthermore, EUCC is member of various EU working and technical groups such as the ICM Expert Group and coordinates both the MSFD Underwater Noise and Marine Litter Technical Groups, which have been set-up to provide guidance and recommendations to the MSFD-GES Working Group in respect to these two descriptors. At the Regional Seas level, EUCC has been following and contributing to the work as observer of the OSPAR and HELCOM Conventions, as well as following closely the Black Sea and Mediterranean regional seas developments. Its Mediterranean Centre is UNEP MAP Partner.

EUCC is observer of the Member States expert Group on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSEG on MSP) based on our strong position to support Member States and the EC by providing access to knowledge & experience to help implement aspects of the MSP Directive. It is a key time to enable EUCC to share lessons from 25 years of ICM leadership to support:

- a. methods to link MSP processes with already established terrestrial planning systems in order to facilitate consideration of land-sea interactions;
- b. transboundary MSP implementation across regional seas (which will help to deliver Good Environmental Status under the MSFD); and
- c. approaches to stakeholder engagement and public participation which ensure efficiency and continuity for societal engagement in the process across boundaries, including Member States' borders

Based on our experience and our commitment the EUCC has been recently requested to lead and coordinate technical support projects related to the implementation of MSP and ICZM, and coastal erosion protection planning and management by the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) of DG REFORM.

The follow-up of our involvement in this field led to further involvement of our team to support the development of new project proposals and ideas expected be materialized in the next years.

## Coastal & Maritime Tourism (QualityCoast)

With the QualityCoast programme, the Coastal & Marine Union - EUCC aims to establish a worldwide network of coastal communities that share similar values on sustainable development, nature and biodiversity, cultural heritage and identity, and social responsibility, at the same time maintaining high standards in the quality of their tourism. QualityCoast has been developed in the EU INTERREG IIC project Coastal Practice Network (CoPraNet) by 21 partners from 11 countries under the lead of the Coastal & Marine Union – EUCC. The QualityCoast programme was the result of the development of success indicators of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) at local level, in connection to the implementation of the EU Recommendation for ICZM (2002). QualityCoast provides new ways of cooperation between coastal communities. Communities join a network of like-minded communities and share their experiences and best practices in order to improve sustainability and social responsibility in tourism. Their performance in these fields is connected to international tourism marketing through certification under the supervision of an independent international jury issuing QualityCoast Awards. In the QualityCoast Award programme EUCC cooperates with approximately 100 coastal and island destinations.

In 2019, EUCC has been implementing the QualityCoast assessment and awards programme involving ca. 30 destinations, all European.

EUCC completed the Green Deal for sustainable tourism, together with the Dutch government and ten other organizations, including TUI Benelux, Corendon.com, Booking.com affiliate BookDifferent.com, and Green Destinations. This was the result of a strategic cooperation with the tourism industry that EUCC and ECNC had initiated in 2013. As part of the Green Deal, all information on QualityCoast destinations was included in the Green Destinations Database, along with many more data on ca. 800 European destinations. These data are since early 2014 displayed to consumers by BookDifferent ([www.bookdifferent.com/en/green-travel-destinations](http://www.bookdifferent.com/en/green-travel-destinations)).

[www.qualitycoast.info](http://www.qualitycoast.info)

**Main financing Agency:** Participating local and regional authorities, European Union

## EU Marine Strategy – MSFD

Regarding the **implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)**, EUCC has been actively involved from the beginning on the issue of Marine Litter and Underwater noise. Member States were expected to design and implement their monitoring programmes; in respect to these Descriptors 10 – Marine litter and 11- Underwater Noise they rely until a great extent on the recommendations of the technical groups, that EUCC has also been an expert member and has supported the activities of both TG Marine Litter and Underwater Noise under a specific contract (see list of ongoing projects). The main activities since 2014 were to provide technical support to the technical groups: the MSFD-Technical Group on Marine Litter (TG- ML) and MSFD Technical Group Underwater Noise (TG Noise).

During 2019, EUCC continue to support the preparation of technical documents related to these topics and disseminated key documents and our work continue -:

- To contribute to the implementation of the MSFD, in respect to Descriptor 10 – Marine Litter; bridging and disseminating other relevant initiatives;
- To increase public awareness regarding the ecological, socio-economic and human health impacts of our consumption and disposal behavior and promote a more responsible behaviour, following the hierarchy proposed by the Waste Framework Directive: prevention>re-use>recycling>disposal;
- Facilitate the bridging among stakeholders and different sectors in order to promote a more circular economy, prevent and re-value waste and its impacts;
- To contribute to the implementation of the MSFD, in respect to Descriptor 11 – Underwater Noise; bridging with other relevant initiatives.

The follow-up of our involvement in this field led to further involvement of our team to support the development of new project proposals and ideas expected be materialized in the next years.

## PROJECT INITIATIVES

### Supporting the development of a National Strategic Plan for Coastal Protection in Spain (2020-2022)

Since October 2020, the EUCC team is leading this project initiative, in cooperation with the Instituto de Hidráulica Ambiental de la Universidad de Cantabria (IH Cantabria), the University Institute ECOAQUA (IU-ECOQUA) of the Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) and a group of international experts, in response to a request from the Directorate General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) and the Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO).

The main goal is to develop the development of a National Strategic Plan for Coastal Protection in Spain, considering the effects of climate change.

The overall objectives and expected impact are as follows:

- reduction of coastal pressures, while protecting and preserving the shoreline mostly exposed to coastal dynamics.
- identification of sustainable, suitable, and effective protective solutions, that take into account the impacts of climate change, the integrated management of water resources, the contribution of sediments from rivers to the coastline and other land-sea interactions.
- regional harmonization and implementation of coastal protection solutions for the entire Spanish coastal territory, by establishing a consistent strategic framework at national level.

**Financing Agency:** European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) – DG REFORM

### Administrative, organizational and technical support for the MSFD Common Implementation Strategy Technical Groups on Marine Litter and Underwater Noise (2013-ongoing)

EUCC lead the execution of this service, concerning the support to TG Noise, as part of consecutive Framework contracts since 2013 for services related to “Emerging pressures, human activities and measures in the marine environment (including marine litter)”. The objective of the current service contract is to provide administrative, organizational and logistic support to the Technical Groups on Marine Litter and Underwater Noise, which include:

1. organizing and providing secretarial services for the periodic meetings of the technical groups on Marine Litter and Underwater Noise;
2. supporting the technical groups in their reporting obligations to the Working Group on GES, including coordinating input from group members and editing of the Guidance Reports for MS



and assisting the exchange of information on on-going activities in the TGs;

3. organizing workshops for Member States on the monitoring underwater noise and
4. maintaining a clear and effective web-based working platform for each of the two TGs, to support communication activities within the groups.

Throughout this support and the compilation of various technical reports, we highlight one recent TG Noise publication that we produced.

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> communication report providing key and updated information regarding the main European-funded projects and other relevant initiatives in this field. This report aims to be useful to experts, policy makers, and to those supporting Member States authorities in implementing the MSFD. In particular, for monitoring measures regarding underwater sound.

[Download here](#) the report: Management and monitoring of underwater noise in European Seas - Overview of main European-funded projects and other relevant initiatives. 2nd Communication Report. MSFD Common Implementation Strategy Technical Group on Underwater Noise (TG-Noise). December 2019

**Financing Agency:** European Commission DG ENV

## Strategies for Coastal Protection of the Balearic Islands considering the effects of climate change (2019-2022)

The EUC team with the Instituto de Hidráulica Ambiental de la Universidad de Cantabria "IHCantabria", MedCities and Sistema de Observación y Predicción Costero de las Islas Baleares "ICTS SOCIB", leads this project which started in December 2019. This project responds to a request from the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service and the Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO) and its objective is the development of Strategy for the Coastal Protection of the Balearic Islands, considering the effects of climate change. The overall objectives and expected impact are as follows:

- the reduction of risks derived from coastal erosion and flooding aiming for the protection and conservation of coastal assets (physical, natural and cultural) in the Balearic Islands
- the preservation of the physical equilibrium of the shore and the reduction of anthropogenic coastal erosion, maintaining unique coastal geomorphological features and the peculiar littoral landscape (particularly in natural areas), and
- availability of the coastal area for recreational and other uses.

**Financing Agency:** European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) – DG REFORM

## Strategies for Coastal Protection for the provinces of Cádiz, Málaga and Almería considering the effects of climate change (2019-2021)

The EUC team leads the development of this project, which started in February 2019, in cooperation with the Instituto de Hidráulica Ambiental de la Universidad de Cantabria "IH Cantabria", the University of Cadiz and MedCities. This project responds to a request from the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service and the Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITECO) concerning the development of Strategies for Coastal Protection considering the climate change effects for the provinces of Cadiz, Malaga and Almeria.

Working in close cooperation with MITECO, over 24 months the team carries out a diagnosis for better understanding of the coastal erosion problems, an analysis of possible scenarios and risk reduction options, and design the Coastal Protection Strategies along the coasts of Cádiz, Málaga and Almería. The Strategies will be developed considering other relevant key stakeholders in the provinces.

**Financing Agency:** European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) – DG REFORM

## Developing a Long-Term Awareness Raising Framework for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Management (ICZM) in Malta

EUC lead the work in response to a call from the European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service concerning the development of a long-term awareness raising framework for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in Malta. The main objective was to identify the most suitable awareness raising activities that could be adopted in Malta with a view to instill greater support to the implementation of the MSP Directive, including within the land-sea interface (LSI).

Our role was to deliver a framework which incorporated a toolbox of suitable awareness raising techniques that can be deployed as necessary by the Planning Authority in Malta, as part of its efforts to implement the MSP Directive. Oriented to address the context of the Maltese Islands and the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Environment and Development 2015 as Malta's Maritime Spatial Plan, the toolbox provided in the final guidance explained how each technique can best be deployed and monitored. An estimation of relevant costs will also be included, as far as possible.

**Financing Agency:** European Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) – DG REFORM

## Young Professionals Coastal Community (YPCC)

An example dealing with academic educations is the recent Climate of Coastal Cooperation initiative with young professionals, which has followed the publication of the “Climate of Coastal Cooperation” ([www.coastalcooperation.net](http://www.coastalcooperation.net)) production by the EUCC and the workshop held in LITTORAL Conference 2012. Since then at the Littoral Conferences of 2014, 2016 and 2018 dedicated workshops to present and engage with the young community were held. This initiative aims to establish a Young Professionals Coastal Community (YPCC), based on the principle that innovative, resilient, no/regret adaptive options should involve young professionals at an early stage through familiarizing them with the concepts and tools of ICZM.

[www.yfcc.eu](http://www.yfcc.eu)

## COASTLEARN - LONG DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMME

In terms of capacity building, the EUCC and the Mediterranean Centre lead and maintain the multidisciplinary international partnership which developed the first on-line, free of use distance training programme on ICZM, CoastLearn. This self-learning tool targets primarily coastal managers and planners working at local, sub-national, and national levels and is accessible on-line free of charge.

The programme aimed at making ICZM accessible to professionals in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea and Baltic Sea. Experts from educational and planning institutes in several (pre-) accession countries (including Turkey, Slovenia, Croatia) and NIS countries ensure that the package is tailored to the needs of the target audience. The training programme is presently available online, free accessible in English, Polish, Turkish, French, Russian, Latvian, Romanian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Bulgarian, Albanian and Arabic (one module available) versions.

**Financing agency:** several, including European Union

## Recovering Marine Litter

### **OceanWise: Wise reduction of EPS marine litter in the North-East Atlantic Ocean (2018-2021)**

OceanWise aims to jointly develop and implement a set of long-term measures to reduce the impact of expanded polystyrene (EPS) products as marine litter in the North-East Atlantic Ocean. Based on resource-efficiency, participatory methods and circular economy principles, the project will generate new and best practice within sectors considering the use, manufacturing, recycling and uptake of EPS.

The project is led by the Portuguese Ministry of Sea (DGRM) and comprises 12 other partners from 5 Atlantic Area countries – Portugal, Ireland, France, Spain and the United Kingdom.

EUCC co-initiated this project and supports the development and delivery of project contents and project management upon request.

**Financing agency:** European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) INTERREG Atlantic Area.

### **North Sea Fishing Nets Free (Noordzee Netten Vrij) (2016-2020)**

The EUCC, as part of the Healthy Seas initiative, cooperates with the Dutch North Sea Foundation and KIMO Netherlands & Belgium in this project to achieve the goal of freeing the North Sea from abandoned fishing nets.

As in other maritime sectors, it used to be the most normal thing that waste (including old fishing nets) were thrown overboard. That habit is changing rapidly in The Netherlands. The fishing sector is on the move and is committed to improving waste management on board and in ports, for example by participating in Healthy Seas and by participating in KIMO's Fishing for Litter project.

**Financing Agency:** Adessium Foundation

## Healthy Seas a journey from waste to wear (ECNC group) (2013 - 2019)

The Healthy Seas initiative is a joint venture of a non-governmental organization (ECNC Group) and two businesses (the Aquafil Group and Star Sock) in its journey from waste to wear. Healthy Seas recovers abandoned fishing nets that pollute our seas and coasts and regenerate the nylon into high-quality yarn which is turned into brand new sustainable textiles. Healthy Seas non-profit activities include the recovery of fishing nets by volunteer divers and their storage in special facilities, in addition to educational and prevention programs. In 2016 the fishing net recovery took place in Belgium, United Kingdom, Malta, Greece, Italy and The Netherlands. 75 volunteer divers and 650 fishing boats recovered and collected a total of 152 tons of fishing nets. For preventing marine litter, we collaborate with fishermen, fish farms, local communities and other stakeholders to prevent waste nets from ending up in the sea. Together we work on measures to dispose of nets in a responsible yet affordable way. We also work on raising public awareness of the environmental damage caused by ghost fishing gear and promote the ecological and economic importance of healthy seas.

<http://healthyseas.org>

**Main Financing Agency:** Adessium Foundation.

## Main publications in 2019 and 2020

### *Coastal & Marine magazine*

COASTAL & MARINE (formerly COASTLINE) is the illustrated magazine of the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC). The magazine aims at those professionally involved in coastal management, planning and conservation in Europe.

In 2019-20, two issues of our international magazine were published:

COASTAL & MARINE 19-1 [Special 'Blue mussel farming for improving water quality in the Baltic Sea'](#)

COASTAL & MARINE 19-2 [Special: 'Estimating and reducing the discharge of pharmaceutical substances into the South Baltic'](#)

COASTAL & MARINE 20-1 [Special 'Natural and cultural heritage of European coastal communities'](#)

### *Kust&Zee Gids (the Netherlands)*

Our free annual magazine in Dutch. Published in **May 2020-2021**: 60 pages, 200,000 copies, with information on sustainable tourism destinations, nature, coastal protection and management for the general public. <https://www.kustenzee.nl/publicaties>