

# 8.- Area of land and sea protected by statutory designations

## Key message

- Maritime and terrestrial coastal zones are generally well protected
- The share of the territory designated is more substantial near the sea (less than 1km from the coast) than in the hinterland
- The share of European protection compared to national protection is very variable. It depends on national methods of identifying Natura 2000 sites.



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## Why monitor the area of land and sea protected by statutory designations?

The area of land and sea protected allows us to measure the commitment of the authorities to protect nature, landscapes and heritage in the coastal areas. There are different ways to protect those areas: local methods, national acts and European directives such as the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive.

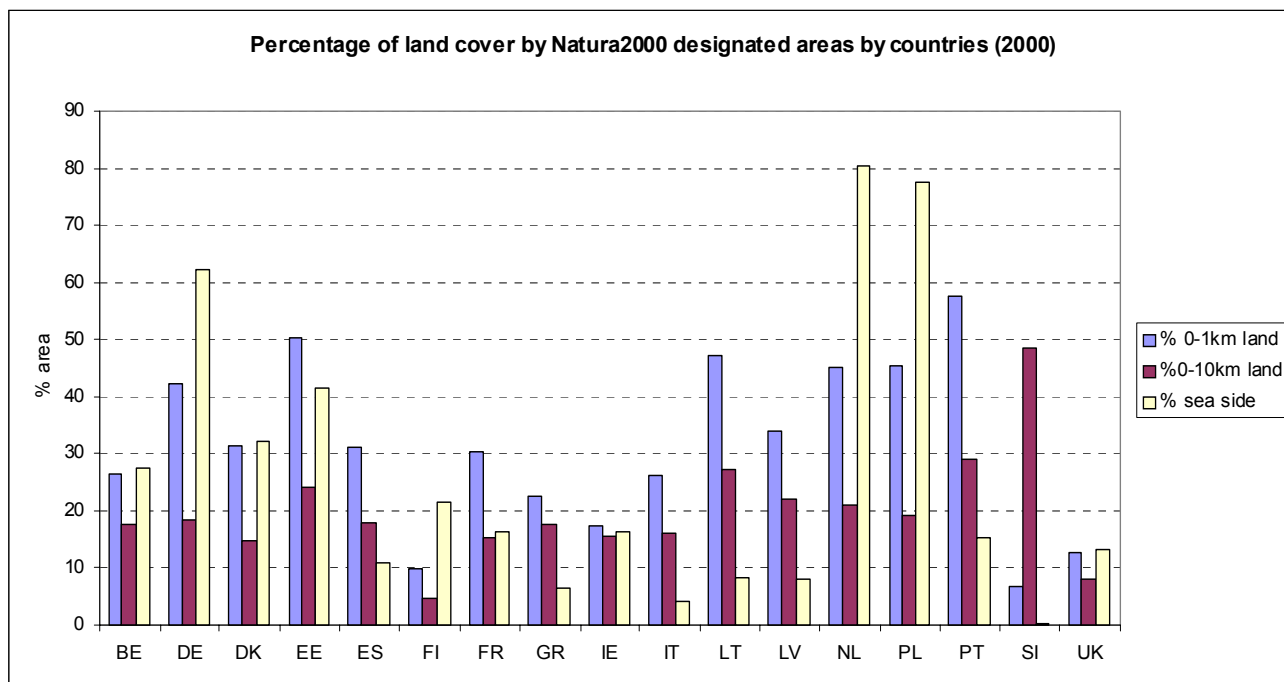
Like all interfaces between two distinct territories, the coast is a very rich ecologically, at sea as on land, with specific species of birds or plants for example. However, coastal areas are subject to substantial human pressure. Residential areas and population densities are also very important. In many countries, there are major conflicts between this anthropisation and the maintenance of natural areas. The area of natural spaces is decreasing on all coastlines. For that reason, it is important to measure what we are doing to protect them.

This indicator belongs to the set of 5 indicators that monitor progress towards achieving the second goal for coastal sustainability set out in the EU Recommendation concerning the implementation of ICZM - To protect, enhance and celebrate natural and cultural heritage.

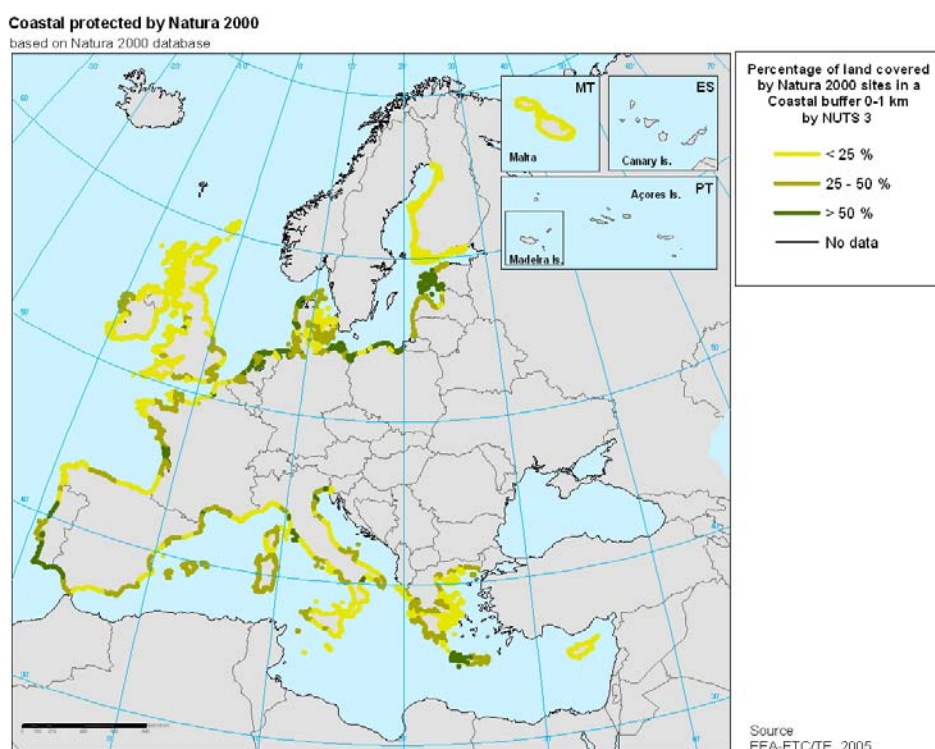
The indicator has one measurement: 8.1. Area protected for nature conservation, landscape or heritage which is represented on this Indicator Factsheet.

## What does the indicator show from European to local level?

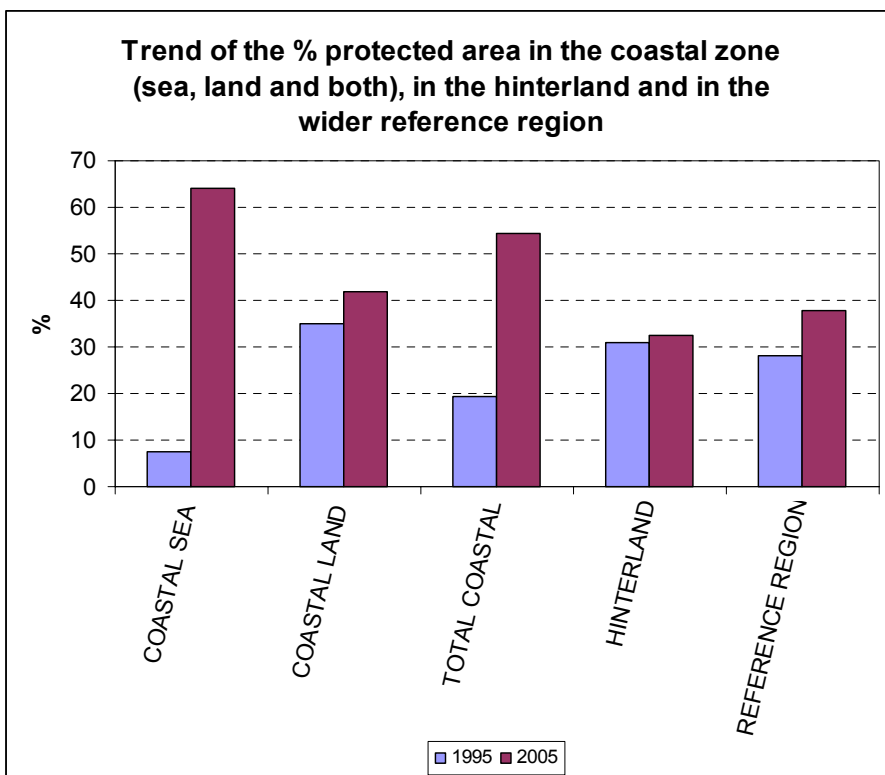
At the European level, it is very difficult to take into account all the national ways to protect nature, landscapes and heritage but, it is possible to work on the Natura 2000 database, which is homogeneous in all European countries. The values show that higher protection is located in the first kilometre inland and at the seaside, by comparison with the 10 km coastal strip. This reflects the importance of the marine and coastal natural habitats.



All the analyses carried out by the Deduce partners concerning indicator 8 show that the maritime and terrestrial coastal zones are generally well protected. By taking account of the Natura 2000 sites on all the European coasts, it can be seen that, in many countries, the share of the territory designated is more significant near the sea (less than 1km from the coast) than in the hinterland.



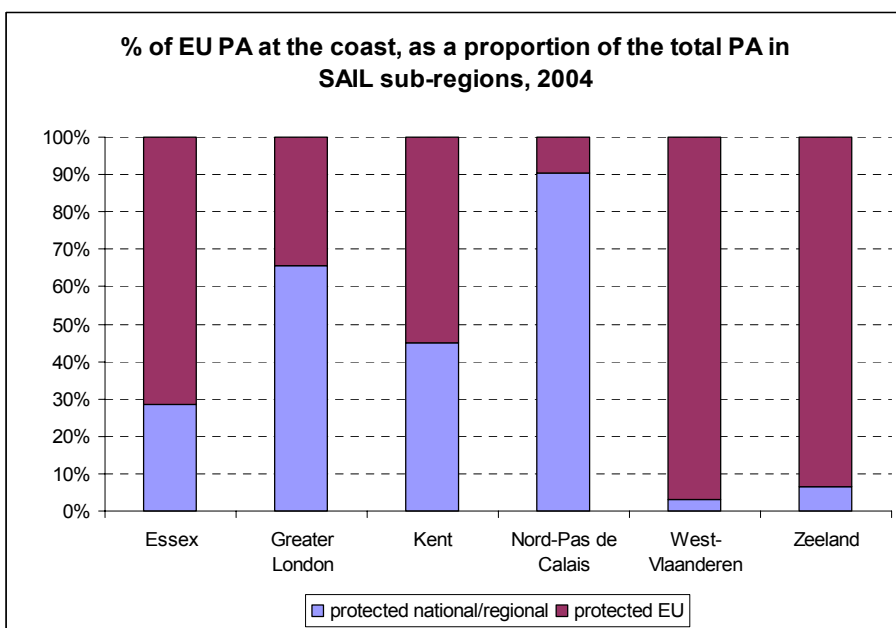
That shows the significance of the natural areas on the coasts and the value of their protection. In most European countries, the share of territories near the sea designated in Natura 2000 is higher than 20%. Conversely, in coastal seas (less than 10 kilometres from the coast), the share of the territories protected by Natura 2000 is more random. It depends on the policies of the different states and certainly on scientific knowledge, which is often disparate on marine biology.

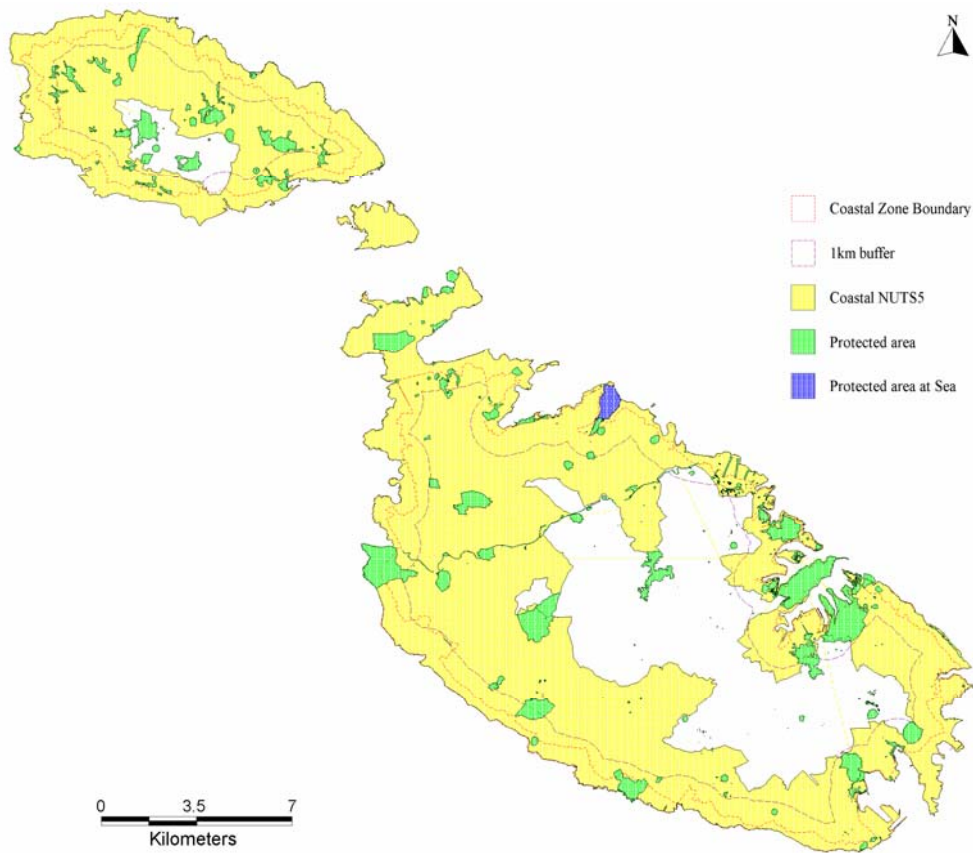


In Poland, the percentage of protected areas in the reference region of Pomorze is 39% and has increased by about 10% since 1995. That increase is mainly due to the establishment of Natura 2000 protected areas on the sea. The percentage of marine Natura 2000 areas in the sea buffer zone is around 63%.

This increase of Natura 2000 protected areas is detected by several DEDUCE partners. The designation of the sites is implemented gradually by each European country.

The share of European protection compared to national protection is very variable. For example in Sail sub-regions on the North Sea coasts, it varies between 10% in France (Nord-Pas de Calais) and more than 90% in Belgium (West-Vlaanderen). We cannot define an average level for the European coasts.





In most of the cases, we only have data available on natural heritage but nothing on cultural heritage.

It is different in Malta where we do have specific data on cultural heritage.

The proportion of land area protected by statutory designation increases closer to the coastline, indicating the degree of significance of the Maltese coast when compared to the inland areas.

Protection within the marine environment is relatively less than in the landward component of the coastal zone in all three categories.

## What are the implications for planning and managing the coastal zone?

Indicator 8 is very useful. It can be used at different geographic levels - from a coastal municipality to the whole European coast. This indicator makes it possible to understand the investment of the different authorities in the protection of their coasts. For example, this indicator is useful for assessing the Natura 2000 net in all of Europe and for measuring the specificity of the coasts.

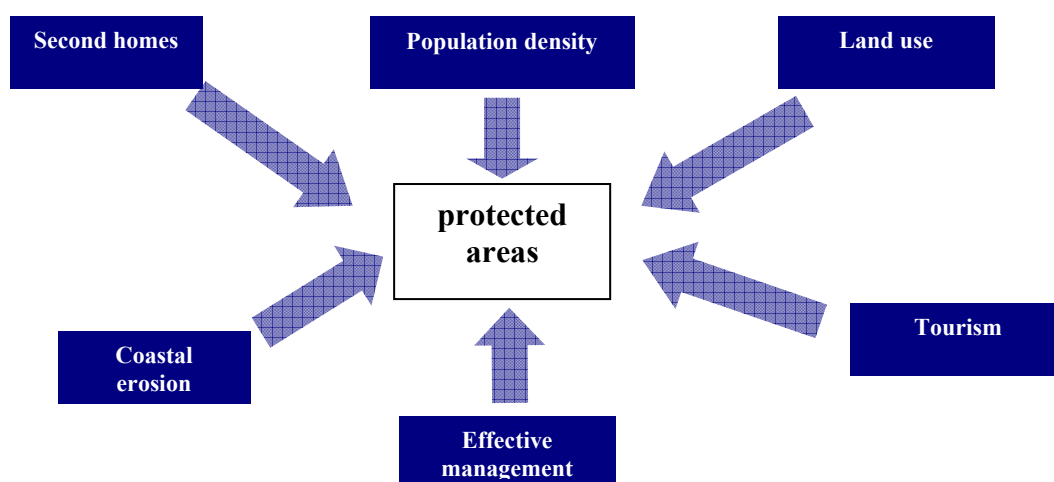
There is no policy target for nature/landscape/culture protection that explains if the share of the protected territory is adequate. That depends on the biological richness and the level of urbanisation of the coasts.

It is important to distinguish the different types of protection - nature protection, landscape protection, cultural site protection as well as methods of protection - regulatory protection, land acquisition, contractual protection as in Natura 2000 net, etc.

Each one of these protected areas indeed has its specificities and it appears difficult to give them the same weight - the Habitats Directive allows European countries to protect large surfaces of natural habitats, fauna and flora but not all these surfaces will be managed. On the other hand, the natural reserves are smaller but they are all managed in a sustainable way.

As the designation of Natura 2000 sites is finished in most European countries, we can imagine that the area of land and sea protected by statutory designation will remain stable for many years.

### Related indicators:



## Further work needed

This indicator needs to be evaluated together with the indicator on effective management (favourable conservation status) and the presence of management plans.

If we want to compare the level of protection in different countries or regions, it will be very important to have comparable data and to define different levels of protected areas clearly. This point is very important but it is not easy because there are several degrees of protection which are very different from each other.

## Data sources

### European Topic Center for Terrestrial Environment

Natura 2000 database, DG Env, European Commission

### Maritime Institute in Gdańsk

### Province of West-Flanders

UK: English Nature

FR: Direction Régionale de l'Environnement Nord Pas-de-Calais

BE: Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek en [www.kustatlas.be](http://www.kustatlas.be)

Z: Instituut voor Landbouw, natuur en Voedselkwaliteit

### MEPA

Mepa Gis Database

## Reliability of the indicator

The data used are reliable. They are the subject of regulatory assessments in all the European countries. Nevertheless, it appears difficult to compare the results between countries if an exact account of same types of protection is not held. National protection measures are very different from each other and only international protection measures such as those defined by Natura 2000 can be easily compared.



Projet cofinancé par la  
Union Européenne

