

Bottom trawling in the EU's marine “protected” areas (MPAs)

A recent analysis using satellite data, carried out by Oceana, has found that, in 2020, over 2.5 million hours of bottom fishing took place inside MPAs.¹ This data exposes the perpetuation of extensive destructive fishing in the EU. Germany, the Netherlands, France and Denmark have the most intensely trawled sites.

Exactly one year ago, we asked the European Commission what steps it would take to ensure that Member States implement adequate management and enforcement plans for their Natura 2000 sites, including MPAs.

As a follow-up, and given the previous answer given by the Commission that several infringement procedures were ongoing, we ask:

- What is the status of the infringement procedures against the twelve Member States, for the lack of establishment and implementation of conservation objectives and measures in Natura 2000 sites?
- What is the outcome of the Commission's investigation concerning compliance with relevant legal provisions for the other thirteen Member States?
- Given the commitments in the Biodiversity Strategy and the worrying findings of the above-mentioned analysis, will the Commission propose a ban of bottom trawling in all EU's MPAs in the upcoming Action Plan on the oceans?

¹ <https://europe.oceana.org/en/press-center/press-releases/over-25-million-hours-bottom-trawling-ploughed-europes-protected-areas>