



POLICY TOOLS TO FIGHT MARINE LITTER

In this activity, learners are introduced to international efforts focused on fighting marine litter and pollution in general. They conduct research on major policy tools for the protection of the Regional Seas of Europe and study basic information including the aims of conventions and strategies, involved countries, targeted ecosystems, milestones and activities.

SUBJECTS

Social Studies, Language, Environmental Studies

LEARNERS' AGE

14-15 yrs

DURATION

90 minutes

OBJECTIVES

- To be aware of EU and regional policies and initiatives related to tackling marine litter.
- To understand marine litter is an issue of transnational concern.

INTERNET SOURCES

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD): <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/marine>

Barcelona Convention: www.unepmap.org Bucharest Convention: www.blacksea-commission.org

Helsinki Convention: www.helcom.fi OSPAR Convention: www.ospar.org

MARPOL Convention: www.imo.org/About/Conventions/ListOfConventions/Pages/

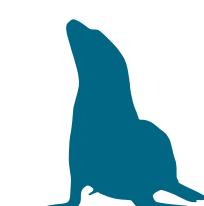
[International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-%28MARPOL%29.aspx](http://www.imo.org/About/Conventions/ListOfConventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-%28MARPOL%29.aspx)

Basel Convention: www.basel.int

UNCLOS Convention: www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm

SECTION D

WORKING TOWARD SOLUTIONS



Suitable laws are critical tools that can be used to tackle the issue of marine litter. Given the problem's global nature, international regulations are essential. The legal frameworks in force which address sea and land-based sources of marine litter are many and detailed. Yet they are complex and overlapping, covering global, regional, national and local levels. Despite the plethora of policy tools, enforcement remains a challenge...

At the EU level

The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) This Directive, adopted in 2008, is a key legal instrument providing a platform for Europe-wide action to tackle marine litter. It aims to protect the marine environment more effectively across Europe and achieve good environmental status of its marine waters by 2020. Member States are called upon to develop their own marine policy strategy in relation to eleven "descriptors" (one for marine litter). The strategy must contain (a) a detailed assessment on the state of the environment, (b) a definition of "good environmental status" and, (c) clear environmental targets and monitoring programmes. In 2012, Member States assessed their marine environment, identified the main pressures, and set targets and monitoring indicators. By 2015, they must develop a set of measures. To reach the 2020 target, a coherent, coordinated approach along with the involvement of neighbouring countries will be necessary.

Within MSFD a technical Working Group on marine litter was formed in 2010 whose role is to support Member States in dealing with it. This Group has carried out a marine litter status review, considering its sources, trends and impacts.

In addition to the MSFD, there are several relevant EU policy tools that pertain to marine litter such as the directives on waste, packaging, landfills, port reception facilities, water, bathing water, etc.

At the European Regional Seas level

The Barcelona Convention (Mediterranean Sea)

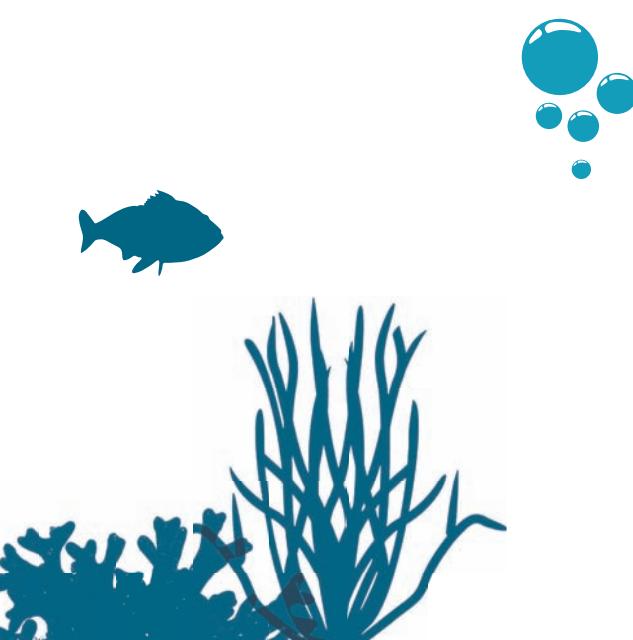
The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, known as The Barcelona Convention has been adopted by 22 Mediterranean countries. The Convention was initially adopted in 1976 and amended in 1995. Over time, its initial scope widened to include planning and integrated management of the coastal region in line with the principles of Sustainable Development. The Barcelona Convention generated seven protocols that address specific environmental protection issues in the Mediterranean. The Protocol on Land Based Sources and Activities addresses the importance of dealing with the problem of marine litter, while other protocols have direct and indirect references. In 2012, a Strategic Framework for Marine Litter Management was developed followed by a legally binding Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, adopted by the Contracting Parties in 2013.

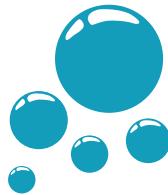
The Bucharest Convention (Black Sea)

The Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against pollution was signed in Bucharest in 1992 and adopted in 1994 with six Contracting Parties. The Bucharest Convention aims to fight pollution from land-based sources and maritime transport, achieve sustainable management of marine life resources and pursue sustainable development. The Convention includes three Protocols on pollution from land-based sources, dumping waste and accidents from oil spills. Since the issue is neither widely-accepted nor well known in the Black Sea region, there are still no specific legal instruments on marine litter management. The recent, not yet enforced, "Protocol on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Black Sea from Land-Based Sources and Activities" is of great importance as marine litter is listed as hazardous material.

The Helsinki Convention (Baltic Sea)

In 1974, a single convention signed by all riparian countries addressed all sources of pollution around the Baltic Sea. The Helsinki Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area entered into force in 1980. In light of political changes that were taking place in Europe at the time, an updated version was signed in 1992 by all Baltic Sea states and the European Community, and was adopted in 2000. The Convention aims to reduce pollution released through rivers, estuaries, outfalls and pipelines, dumping and shipping operations as well as through airborne pollutants. The Contracting Parties have adopted several recommendations for the protection of the marine environment, directly and indirectly relevant to marine litter. Until recently, marine litter was not considered a major problem in the Baltic due to the lack of comparable studies and reliable data but it has since become a question of growing concern, steadily gaining momentum.





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The OSPAR Convention (North-East Atlantic)

The OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, was adopted in 1992 and entered into force in 1998. It merged and updated the Oslo Convention (1972) on dumping waste at sea and the Paris Convention (1974) on land-based sources of marine pollution. The OSPAR Convention aims at combating pollution from land-based sources, dumping, incineration and offshore sources as well as with assessing marine environment quality. OSPAR and its predecessors have a long history of addressing marine litter issues. Marine litter constitutes a key part of the Convention's monitoring and assessment programme and supports direct reduction measures through the initiative "Fishing for Litter".

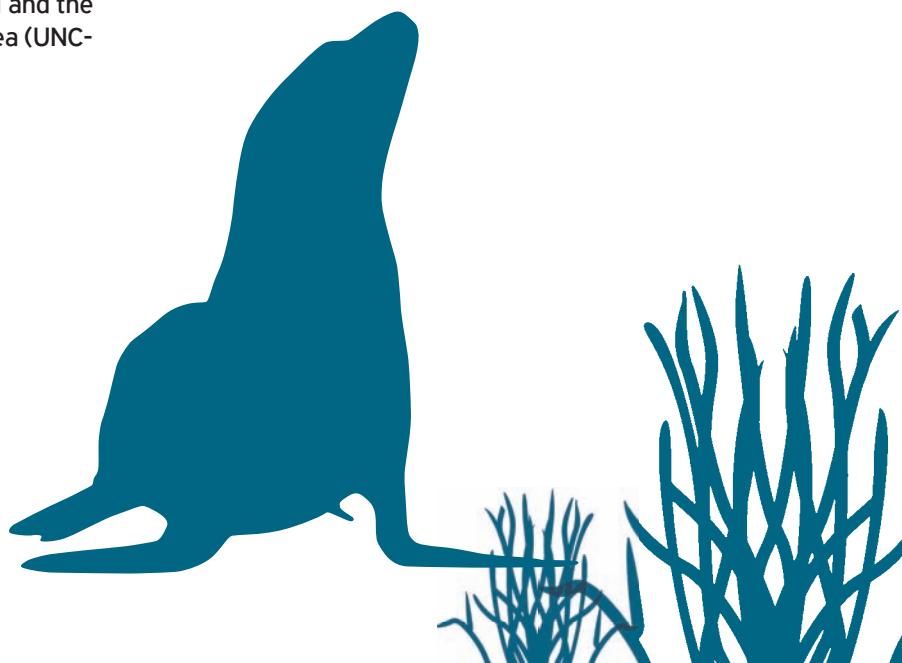
At the Global level

Numerous international conventions deal with marine litter, directly or indirectly. The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), Annex V in particular, deals specifically with preventing garbage pollution from fishing vessels, pleasure craft and commercial shipping. The London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter deals with managing all marine pollution sources. Other related conventions are The Basel Convention on the Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) aiming at marine resource management.

How anti-smoking laws resulted in the increase of cigarette butts in the streets

The recent bans on indoor smoking in many countries have 'moved' smokers outside. Smoking in the street, in parks, in cars without ashtrays and entrances without ash receptacles has led to increased littering of butts which eventually reach the seas through storm drains and run-off. In other words, there is a gap between the degree of enforcement of laws (anti-smoking vs anti-littering) to the detriment of the environment. Apart from rectifying this, public awareness and education along with prevention strategies such as promoting portable ashtrays and installing ash receptacles at transition points, can help curb this trend.

In any case, not smoking at all is the best solution for the health of people and the environment!





Materials and Equipment

Notebooks and pens

Instructions step by step

The educator explains the different levels of governance: local, national and international.

The learners read the information presented in the text boxes and then research and identify which policy tools (strategies, Conventions, etc.) their country has signed and adopted.

In groups, learners analyse these broad policy tools and find information on the following:

- What are the general aims of the Convention/strategy? Does the Convention relate to monitoring, enforcement or both?
- What countries are involved in the Convention?
- What ecosystems are targeted: coastal, marine, benthic?
- What are the measurable targets? By when must they be reached?
- What mechanisms are in place at the regional level to monitor its implementation?

Learners focus on their country's relevant legislation, frameworks and action plans that comply with the above policy tool. They then address the following questions:

- Is there an action plan in place?
- Which authority is responsible for its implementation?
- What major activities or measures does the action plan foresee?
- Have any results been documented?

Learners raise the issue with their local and national authorities by writing a letter or conducting an interview with e.g. a mayor, a parliamentarian, etc. The following questions may be used in such an interview:

- Are you aware of the policy tools and measures in place on the issue of marine litter?
- Are you able to implement them?
- If yes, when and how? / If not, why not?
- What factors must be considered for better enforcement?
- Who should be better informed?

Extension activity

Learners carry out a small-scale survey to see whether specific target groups are aware of the Conventions the country has signed. Such target audience could include for example, beach shop owners, fishermen, port administrators, merchant ship and cruise ship staff, etc. If this audience is poorly informed, learners think of an activity they could undertake to raise awareness.

