

D1.3 Policies that may be applied to mitigate the impact of marine litter

Existing policies that directly or indirectly may be applied to mitigate the impact of marine litter are reviewed to identify where policy gaps might. This report also examines which actions and policies specifically designed to deal with marine litter reduction may be associated with legally-binding or 'hard' mechanisms (implemented under international, regional, EU or national legislation) or non legally-binding 'soft' mechanisms, under a range of formal or informal agreements.

Main policy gaps could be summarised as follows:

- ▶ Lack of specific National legislation on marine litter;
- ▶ Lack of full application of existing legislation in all European Countries;
- ▶ A greater coordination within subjects involved in law implementation;
- ▶ Clear distinction of a competent authority that oversees a specific framework involving marine litter;
- ▶ Lack of systematic knowledge among several stakeholders of existing rules to be applied;
- ▶ Lack of well established strategies to be followed at national and local level (selection of main measures to be adopted);
- ▶ Lack of mention to marine litter in some Directives (UWWTD, BWD, WFD);
- ▶ Inadequate landfill practices, and lack of measures to address the transboundary problem.

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The report concludes that modifications to dispositions of existing laws to assure a more effective reduction of marine litter could be helpful. Although “soft” mechanisms may be non-legally-binding, they can offer cost-effective and more flexible solutions for encouraging changes in behaviour and providing frameworks for eventual legally-binding agreements.

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