Ref. Ares(2026)2556981 - 09/03/2026

EuroGOOS
European Global Ocean Observing System

Brussels, 9 March 2026

EuroGOOS Response Marine Strategy Framework Directive Revision Call for Evidence

EuroGOOS overall position

EuroGOOS welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), which remains the central legislative framework for protecting the marine environment and achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) in Europe's seas, operating alongside other key EU ocean governance instruments such as the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive and contributing to the broader evolution of EU ocean governance, including the forthcoming European Ocean Act.

Effective implementation of the MSFD depends fundamentally on sustained and coordinated marine monitoring systems capable of delivering reliable, long-term environmental data across European sea basins. Ocean observing provides the scientific foundation for assessing GES, detecting long-term environmental change, and supporting evidence-based marine policy.

The importance of sustained and coordinated ocean observing system for environmental protection and marine policy implementation has long been identified by the EuroGOOS community and was recently highlighted in EuroGOOS contributions to the European Ocean Act[1] and the EU Ocean Observation Initiative[2].

Evidence collected by EuroGOOS consistently shows that structural challenges continue to affect the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of marine monitoring and observing in Europe. A large share of ocean observing activities still lacks long-term financial stability, relying heavily on short-term project-based funding. This creates risks for the continuity of critical observing infrastructures and long-term time series that are essential for MSFD assessments.

In addition, fragmentation of responsibilities across governance levels, differences in monitoring challenges, needs, and capacity between Member States, as well as limited coordination of observing activities continue to constrain the efficiency and comparability of monitoring efforts.

[1] EuroGOOS Response to the Ocean Act Call for Evidence (2026) Feedback from: European Global Ocean Observing System (EuroGOOS)
[2] EuroGOOS Response to the EU Ocean Observation Initiative Call for Evidence (2026) Feedback from: European Global Ocean Observing System (EuroGOOS)

EuroGOOS AISBL
29 Rue Vautier - 1000 Brussels BELGIUM
Register of Legal Entities Brussels - Company number 0521.723.012
info@eurogoos.eu - http://eurogoos.eu - Tel: +32 (0) 2 788 76 66

EuroGOOS role

EuroGOOS was established in 1994 as the European component of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), an international initiative coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO. It brings together 48 member organisations from 19 European countries, including national agencies, public research institutes, universities, and specialised operational oceanographic organisations engaged in ocean observing, modelling, and forecasting.

In addition to its member organisations, EuroGOOS engages a wider operational community with over 140 organisations cooperating through the EuroGOOS Regional Ocean Observing Systems, observing platform networks, working groups, and communities of practice. In partnership with key European partners, EuroGOOS has been fostering the European Ocean Observing System (EOOS) Framework.

As a science-driven, independent organisation, EuroGOOS has continuously gathered operational, governance, and funding evidence across Europe, while delivering unique coordination support to European oceanographic communities and supporting ocean literacy and outreach to strengthen societal relevance and policy uptake.

Evidence from EuroGOOS studies

To support the effective implementation of the MSFD, several system-level improvements should be considered:

- **Strengthening the sustainability of long-term, continuous marine monitoring systems**

  Multidisciplinary sustained observations across physical, biogeochemical, and biological domains are essential. Ocean observing should be recognised as a public good requiring stable and long-term support.

- **Improving governance coherence and coordination**

  Coordinated monitoring frameworks should support land-sea continuity and better integration of coastal, transitional, and marine waters. Regional and transboundary specificities (ecological, biogeochemical, physicochemical, and geopolitical) add complexity and must be adequately considered.

- **Strengthening the use of European data services and the sustainability of upstream observations**

  European assets such as EMODnet, SeaDataNet, and Copernicus should be systematically used for MSFD assessments and reporting, while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the ocean observing systems that provide the underlying data streams.

- **Enhancing harmonisation and interoperability of monitoring approaches**

  Further coordination of observing methods and standards across Member States is needed, alongside standards and capacity sharing with Associated Member States and countries adhering to the EU policy frameworks (e.g. in the Black Sea).

- **Supporting innovation and cost-effective monitoring technologies**

  The development and deployment of cost-effective observation technologies can expand monitoring coverage and complement existing infrastructures through scalable sensors, platforms, and digital tools.

- **Investing in human capacity and knowledge transfer**

  Effective marine monitoring requires skilled technical and scientific personnel, supported by appropriate training frameworks and career pathways.

- **Strengthening ocean literacy and societal engagement**

  Advancing ocean literacy and citizen engagement is important for improving understanding of marine environmental challenges and supporting the effective implementation of MSFD measures.

Strengthening the sustainability, coordination, and interoperability of Europe's ocean observing systems would significantly enhance the capacity of Member States to implement the MSFD and to deliver robust, comparable, and policy-relevant assessments of the state of Europe's seas.

EuroGOOS and its community of operational oceanographic organisations stand ready to support the European Commission and Member States by providing system-level expertise connecting observing infrastructures, marine monitoring programmes, and policy implementation. Building on its long-standing role in coordinating and planning sustained ocean observations to support marine services, EuroGOOS facilitates cooperation across scales - from local and national monitoring systems to regional sea-basin coordination and global observing frameworks. Through these mechanisms, EuroGOOS contributes to strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing data quality and interoperability, and supporting the efficient use of European ocean observations and marine data for MSFD assessment, reporting, and implementation across European sea basins.