

MMM law

Official reference	Wet van 20 januari 1999 ter bescherming van het mariene milieu en ter organisatie van de mariene ruimtelijke planning in de zeegebieden onder de rechtsbevoegdheid van België	
Relevant dates	Document	20/01/1999
	Publication	12/03/1999
	Entry into force	22/03/1999
Policy level	Federal	
Type of instrument	Law	
(Legal) coverage in the BNS	Territorial sea, exclusive economic zone, continental shelf	
Competent authorities in Belgium	Federal authorities; FPS Health, Food chain safety and Environment; DG Environment; Agency Marine Environment	

// abstract:

This law aims to protect the marine environment, or to restore it in case of damage and environmental degradation. To achieve this goal, the law provides for several instruments:

- Establishment of protected marine areas, including measures for their protection (e.g. a ban on certain activities or the conclusion of a users agreement);
- Protection of certain marine species in the sea. This also implies a ban on the introduction of non-indigenous species, and the catch of marine mammals and sea birds;
- A ban on certain activities, such as incineration at sea, direct discharges or dumping in marine areas (with a few exceptions such as the dumping of dredged material);
- Measures to prevent and reduce pollution caused by ships (and operators);
- It is stipulated which activities require a licence or an authorisation. These activities (as well as a few activities covered by other laws) are subject to an environmental impact assessment based on an environmental impact report, and to monitoring programmes and permanent environmental impact studies;
- Various emergency measures are listed, in case of serious risk of harming, hindering or disrupting the marine environment;
- In case of environmental damage, the polluter is responsible for the reparation.

This law also regulates the organisation and the procedures (planning procedure, public research, strategic environmental impact report and adaptation procedure) of the marine spatial planning (cf. wet van 22 juli 2012).

Finally, the law specifies the regulations governing surveillance and control, as well as the penalties.