

ANNEX I

Qualitative descriptors for determining good environmental status (referred to in Articles 3(5), 9(1), 9(3) and 24)

- (1) Biological diversity is maintained. The quality and occurrence of habitats and the distribution and abundance of species are in line with prevailing physiographic, geographic and climatic conditions.
- (2) Non-indigenous species introduced by human activities are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems.
- (3) Populations of all commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within safe biological limits, exhibiting a population age and size distribution that is indicative of a healthy stock.
- (4) All elements of the marine food webs, to the extent that they are known, occur at normal abundance and diversity and levels capable of ensuring the long-term abundance of the species and the retention of their full reproductive capacity.
- (5) Human-induced eutrophication is minimised, especially adverse effects thereof, such as losses in biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algae blooms and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters.
- (6) Sea-floor integrity is at a level that ensures that the structure and functions of the ecosystems are safeguarded and benthic ecosystems, in particular, are not adversely affected.
- (7) Permanent alteration of hydrographical conditions does not adversely affect marine ecosystems.
- (8) Concentrations of contaminants are at levels not giving rise to pollution effects.
- (9) Contaminants in fish and other seafood for human consumption do not exceed levels established by Community legislation or other relevant standards.
- (10) Properties and quantities of marine litter do not cause harm to the coastal and marine environment.
- (11) Introduction of energy, including underwater noise, is at levels that do not adversely affect the marine environment.

To determine the characteristics of good environmental status in a marine region or subregion as provided for in Article 9(1), Member States shall consider each of the qualitative descriptors listed in this Annex in order to identify those descriptors which are to be used to determine good environmental status for that marine region or subregion. When a Member State considers that it is not appropriate to use one or more of those descriptors, it shall provide the Commission with a justification in the framework of the notification made pursuant to Article 9(2).