

# NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR MARITIME SECURITY 2024



Catálogo de publicaciones de la Administración General del Estado  
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NIPO (edición on-line):  
Fecha de edición:

NATIONAL STRATEGY  
FOR  
**MARITIME SECURITY**  
  
2024

The National Maritime Security Council, a body that answers to the National Security Council, has been responsible for the development of the National Maritime Security Strategy 2024, a process in which Spain's ministries and National Intelligence Centre also participated.

The Spanish Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities also took part in this process, through the Sectoral Conference for National Security Issues.

The National Maritime Security Strategy also includes the contributions of independent experts, individuals of renowned prestige, knowledge, and experience, related to maritime security, from the academic and business fields.

The process was coordinated by the Department of National Security of the Office of the Presidency of the Government, in its capacity as Technical Secretariat and Permanent Working Body of the National Security Council.

STRATEGY NATIONAL  
FOR  
**MARITIME SECURITY**  
  
2024



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT

*Spain is a maritime country. Geography and history have traditionally associated its prosperity with the safety of the seas. Today, this perception is supported by international maritime trade figures and the large number of vessels that navigate our waters.*

*Spain's global outlook extends national interests beyond the horizon. Understanding the sea to be a space connecting people, cultures, goods and resources, we must recognize that international collaboration in the maritime sphere is absolutely essential.*

*We are living in difficult times. This Strategy is being adopted at a moment when crises have become the new normal. In addition to piracy, illicit trafficking, and the loss of marine biodiversity, we are also still dealing with the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and with a global supply chain that has been placed under considerable strain by the Russian Federation's illegal invasion of Ukraine. In this hugely complex context, the effects of heightened geostrategic competition are finding their way into the maritime environment and to the seabed.*

*The current state of affairs demands a policy to protect trade routes, coastal and seabed infrastructure, ocean resources, and the marine environment and marine biodiversity.*

*To this end, the 2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security offers a framework for collective improvement in which there is room for both the public authorities and for the private sector to advance full steam ahead in protecting Spain's maritime interests, to improve Spain's maritime capabilities and, in this way, to enhance the safety of the seas.*



Pedro Sánchez

President of the Government of Spain

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**T**he *2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security* presents the maritime domain as a global space of strategic importance. Starting from this premise, the first chapter of the Strategy considers the changes that will likely occur from here to 2030, during which period maritime spaces will be witness to heightened geostrategic competition. In economic terms, we are already noting a shift in centre of gravity towards the Indo-Pacific, with European political initiatives seeking to offset the effects of this trend with new policies promoting open strategic autonomy. Technology is assuming ever-greater importance in the maritime sector, and will be critical to its future decarbonization. In addition, combating the degradation of the marine habitat will also be essential.

In charting the course for the future, the Strategy characterizes Spain as *a maritime country with a global outlook*, whose interests lie both in the maritime spaces under Spain's national sovereignty and in international waters.

The second chapter identifies the risks and threats to maritime security and places hybrid strategies at the conceptual centre of the risk map. Such strategies involve coordinated actions aimed at exploiting the vulnerabilities of states and their institutions through the use of political destabilization, economic coercion, irregular immigration and the pressure of dependency on energy imports. Cyberattacks and influence campaigns, in addition to the use of military capabilities, can also form part of these strategies, which are being deployed in the maritime domain just as in any other. Real-life examples, such as the sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipeline, or damage caused to submarine telecommunications cables, currently place the security of such maritime infrastructure among the factors of greatest concern.

If we envisage the full array of risks and threats to maritime security as forming a triangle, the first vertex would represent acts targeted against national interests in the maritime sphere, as well as any other acts violating international and maritime law. Factors such as the protection of merchant and fishing fleets against threats such as piracy and armed robbery fall into this group, as well as all violent acts against maritime infrastructure and sea lines of communication. The second vertex of the triangle would represent illicit maritime trafficking and cross-border (or transnational) crime. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing also falls within this second group, as does the looting of underwater cultural heritage. Lastly,

the third vertex would represent all those actions representing a threat to the good environmental status of the marine environment, including its living resources.

With the risks and threats already defined, the third chapter of this Strategy proposes an approach for addressing a panorama in which high levels of uncertainty and inter-state competition have encroached into the maritime sphere. To said end, the *2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security* establishes the following three goals.

The first goal is to *protect Spain's maritime interests*, in the broadest sense of that term, and the Strategy therefore includes actions aimed at preserving the integrity and security of those marine spaces over which Spain exercises sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction pursuant to Spanish and international law, our coasts and coastline, and at protecting maritime infrastructure and the economic activities linked to the marine environment.

The second goal is to *improve Spain's maritime capabilities*. Taking account of the critical strategic value of industry and the private sector, the Strategy seeks to boost the maritime industry and the blue economy and to promote scientific research.

The third goal is to *enhance the safety of the seas*. To this end, the Strategy includes international actions, which reflect Spain's commitment to maritime security through a pro-active approach to guaranteeing international and maritime law. Spain's efforts to address global risks, such as climate change and marine pollution, will be channelled through this third line of action. To this end, priority must be given to multilateralism and to the application of the initiatives of the International Maritime Organization, the *Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*, the *European Union's Maritime Security Strategy and Integrated Maritime Policy*, as well as NATO's Maritime Strategy. This is why Spain's Strategy underscores the importance of promoting open strategic autonomy and the value of NATO for the collective defence of the Euro-Atlantic area.

Lastly, the Strategy identifies the role of the National Council for Maritime Security in enhancing inter-departmental coordination. This body is also responsible for supporting the National Security Council in its role as advisor to the President of the Government on the direction of national security policy in all aspects relating to maritime security.



# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

The *2013 National Maritime Security Strategy* constituted a milestone in national security architecture. For the first time, interests and goals were identified from a comprehensive perspective and an institutional framework was created through the National Council for Maritime Security. Thus, this sphere of particular interest for national security was raised to the political-strategic level.

Decisive advances have been made over the past decade. Greater coordination now exists between the public authorities, civil society and the private sector. This framework has enabled the strategic concept to materialize in concrete initiatives, such as drills, seminars and training initiatives, a comprehensive analysis of risks, and the effective management of the maritime security incidents which have occurred in recent years.

This new Strategy updates the content of its predecessor to reflect changes in the panorama of interests, risks and threats; the growing interrelation between physical and virtual spheres; as well as the proliferation of hybrid strategies. In this way, the new *2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security* establishes a diagnosis of the current situation and identifies the main trends that will determine its prognosis in the medium term.

The world map of Spain's maritime presence shows that our national interests are located along international shipping routes. This parameter—maritime presence—has been used as a criterion for the dynamic prioritization of the different maritime spaces important to Spain.

Spain's strategic approach to maritime security is proactive and views the current moment as an opportunity for improvement, where efforts to promote industry, the blue economy and science and innovation must also be aimed at contributing to greater safety.

This Strategy defines maritime security as *the combination of preventive and response measures aimed both at protecting the maritime environment from threats and intentional illegal acts, and at limiting the impact of natural hazards and accidents, and of harm to the environment and to people.*



Prosperity is closely linked to security. This axiom is especially true of a country of Spain's characteristics, given the extent to which our economy depends on international maritime trade, and on a tourist industry that is closely linked to the maritime environment. Looking to the future, renewable marine energies will be an economic sector of great strategic importance. From this perspective, the *2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security* also aims to take advantage of the economic and industrial activity of the maritime sector. Improving our knowledge of the maritime environment, modernizing capabilities, and promoting the industry and companies of the maritime sector in Spain are identified as priorities.

Strengthening inter-departmental cooperation with the participation of the administrations of Spain's Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities, and of the private sector, universities, and investment, development and innovation hubs will help bring us closer to achieving our objectives. With this approach, the three principles of the *2021 National Security Strategy* will be fully applied to maritime security:

### **More advance planning**

Focusing on prevention by improving capabilities in spheres such as maritime surveillance and by developing early warning systems will enable more effective action.

### **More integration**

The guiding principle of *greater integration* is central to the implementation of a maritime security policy in Spain. In a structure involving different public bodies with legally attributed responsibilities in maritime security, it is essential to have strengthened mechanisms for inter-departmental cooperation between public authorities, as well as with the private sector.

### **More resilience**

This refers both to protecting maritime spaces and routes and to improving the resilience of ports, maritime infrastructure and the economic activities dependent on the coastline, as well as the energy supply lines and telecommunications cables laid on the surface of the seabed.



A nautical chart of a coastal area, likely the Mediterranean Sea, showing various navigational symbols, depth soundings, and a large white arrow pointing right. The chart includes numerous depth soundings in meters and fathoms, as well as various navigational symbols such as buoys, lights, and markers. A large white arrow points from the bottom left towards the right side of the chart. The text is overlaid on the chart.

# Maritime Security: A Strategic Challenge for Spain

chapter 1

# Chapter 1

## MARITIME SECURITY: A STRATEGIC CHALLENGE FOR SPAIN

*The first chapter of the 2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security describes the singularity of Spain's position from the perspective of the maritime sphere as an inherently global space. In addition, it offers a clear definition of maritime security and identifies these spheres and spaces of strategic interest to Spain.*

**T**he 2021 National Security Strategy defines Spain as a European, Mediterranean, and Atlantic country which reaches out to the world in its commitment to international peace and security. This commitment is borne out by Spain's participation in the missions and operations undertaken by the international organizations to which it belongs.

Spain's national interests in the maritime sphere extend along the main shipping lanes and into those areas of maritime activity where Spain has vessels, enterprises and people.

## Spain, a maritime country with a global outlook

The history of Spain is closely linked to the sea. The seawaters and seabed have played key roles in a past that continues to shape our present and future identity. Raising awareness of the importance of the maritime sector in Spain forms part of the efforts invested in national security culture.

Spain has a broad area of responsibility for maritime search and rescue which extends over a marine surface of one and a half million square kilometres.

Its privileged geographical position and its historical legacy make Spain a maritime country. The peninsular territory, the Autonomous Cities of Ceuta and Melilla, the Balearic and Canary archipelagos and Spain's numerous islands, islets and outcrops include 10,000 km of coastline, according to the National Geographic Institute.

Spain's seaports and terminals therefore enjoy a privileged position in terms of international maritime trade, as well as for the transportation of people, goods, merchandise and resources.

Our coastline and jurisdictional waters host an ever-increasing volume of activity. Spain's sea ports and terminals are one of the country's main national assets. Goods pass through these ports, crude oil and gas are imported, and products of all types are exported.

Spain's sea ports and terminals are one of the country's main national assets

The gas vessels and six regasification terminals operating in Spain are of particular importance and our port infrastructure and coastal refineries and regasification terminals are elements of high strategic value.

In Spain, 90% of imports and 60% of exports are transported by sea. The 459 million annual tonnes of goods that enter and leave our ports give us an idea of the importance of maritime transport for the day-to-day functioning of our country. Moreover, according to 2022 data, Spain has an energy import dependency rate of 70%. Practically all of the petrol and natural gas imported to our country reaches Spain by sea.

More than 100,000 vessels pass through the Strait of Gibraltar each year and any incident affecting this maritime traffic could have serious consequences for the global economy. Therefore, given that we are responsible for protecting human life and safe navigation in a surface area three times our national territory, we are performing a task that is beneficial not only to the vessels that fly our flag, but the international community as a whole.

The Strait of Gibraltar is the closest geographical meeting point of the European and African continents, thus simultaneously facilitating North-South maritime and submarine flows as well as certain threats to national security, such as the illicit trafficking of narcotics and irregular maritime immigration.

Spain's geographical configuration, which in addition to the peninsular area includes islands, archipelagos such as the Balearic and the Canary Islands, and the Autonomous Cities of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa, makes maritime security particularly important to our country. In the maritime spaces surrounding these territories, as well as in other, border spaces, it is essential that we strengthen the mechanisms required to guarantee the defence of national interests, as well as those needed to properly manage risks and threats.

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Submarine cables and gas and oil pipelines of strategic importance pass through our maritime spaces

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Submarine cables and gas and oil pipelines of strategic importance pass through our maritime spaces, and their protection requires surveillance and international cooperation. Of particular relevance are the electrical and digital cables connecting the peninsula to Spain's Autonomous Cities and archipelagos, in addition to the large fibre optic cables that connect us to America, Africa and Asia, and some of the international electrical interconnections that provide Spain with greater security of supply.

The economic activity associated with the sea encompasses maritime transport, fishing and tourism, as well as the generation of renewable energy in coastal areas, and seabed mining. The sustainable economic development of the marine environment is known as the blue economy. According to OECD projections, the blue economy will double in volume from 2010 to 2030. Spain is the

country that makes the greatest contribution to the blue economy of the European Union in terms of employment and gross value added, providing more than 944,000 jobs and generating revenues of more than 32.7 billion euros. On the other hand, the so-called blue acceleration of the past 50 years is intensifying pressure on the marine environment. This heightened impact could jeopardize maritime security, increase the loss of biodiversity and degrade the functioning of maritime ecosystems. This would affect the sustainability of the goods and services with which these ecosystems provide us.

Maritime transport, like living marine resources and coastal tourism, is a vital contributor to the Spanish economy. However, the tonnage of the merchant fleet controlled by Spanish shipping companies does not properly reflect Spain's importance in the international maritime arena. Twenty-five per cent of seaborne trade is transported by Spanish shipping companies. The merchant fleet controlled by Spanish shipping companies has only 215 registered vessels of more than 300 tonnes, of which 112 are entered on the Special Register of Ships and Shipping Companies of the Canary Islands (data at 1 January 2023). This means that our interests lie in foreign hands, in many cases in vessels flying flags of convenience, representing a significant vulnerability and jeopardizing our strategic autonomy.

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Maritime transport, like living marine resources and coastal tourism, is a vital contributor to the Spanish economy

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As regards the fisheries sector, at global level there has been a levelling-off of production from capture fisheries compared with a notable increase in aquaculture in recent years. The world fishing fleet has decreased by 10% since 2015, due to the efforts of China and Europe to reduce their fleets. Spain is a leader within the European Union, with a fleet of 8,732 fishing boats operating in fishing grounds all over the planet, and a volume in catches of 780,000 tonnes, according to 2021 data. We are also a world leader in the construction of fishing vessels.

Another of the main drivers of our economy, tourism, is closely linked to the maritime sector. Specifically, Spain has 361 marinas, 180,000 pleasure boats and more than 3,000 km of beaches, in addition to a great number of hotels and other infrastructure

enabling the annual arrival of millions of tourists to its shores. Together with the current boom in cruise liner tourism, this means that the maritime sector is one of the largest contributors to the enhancement of Spain's appeal as a holiday destination.

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The protection of Spain's national maritime interests extends beyond our jurisdictional waters to all the seas and oceans of the planet

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In short, due to its historical legacy, geography, economy and its contribution to international peace and security, Spain is among the world's most influential countries in maritime affairs. The protection of Spain's national maritime interests extends beyond our jurisdictional waters to all the seas and oceans of the planet and is also aimed at those economic activities carried out on land which depend on the sea.

Our future depends on its safety and security and good environmental status.





Atlantic Area

Mediterranean Area

## AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

SPANISH SAR REGION

Canary Islands Area

**1.500.000 km<sup>2</sup>**  
Search and Rescue Area

3 times Spanish national territory



Region SAR

## The maritime domain: a global space of strategic importance

The maritime domain is a global space. Its physical characteristics, the historical presence of the nations on the seas and its legal delimitations have determined and shaped the use that humans make of it and have implications for the five aspects which lend the maritime domain its strategic nature.

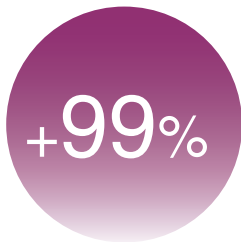


More than 80%  
of internationally  
traded goods are  
transported by sea

Firstly, it is of vital importance to global economics. Maritime transport is the backbone of international trade and of the world economy. More than 80% of internationally traded goods are transported by sea.

Secondly, it is a space of connection between countries, societies, cultures and citizens, united by sea lines of communication and by physical infrastructure such as gas and oil pipelines and energy and telecommunications cables.

Ninety-nine percent of the world's digital information is passed along submarine cables. Financial transactions, the exchange of digital information and the growing number of connected devices depend upon this infrastructure. The layout of cable lines is comparable, to a certain extent, to that of the main sea lines of communication.



99% percent of  
the world's digital  
information is passed  
along submarine cables

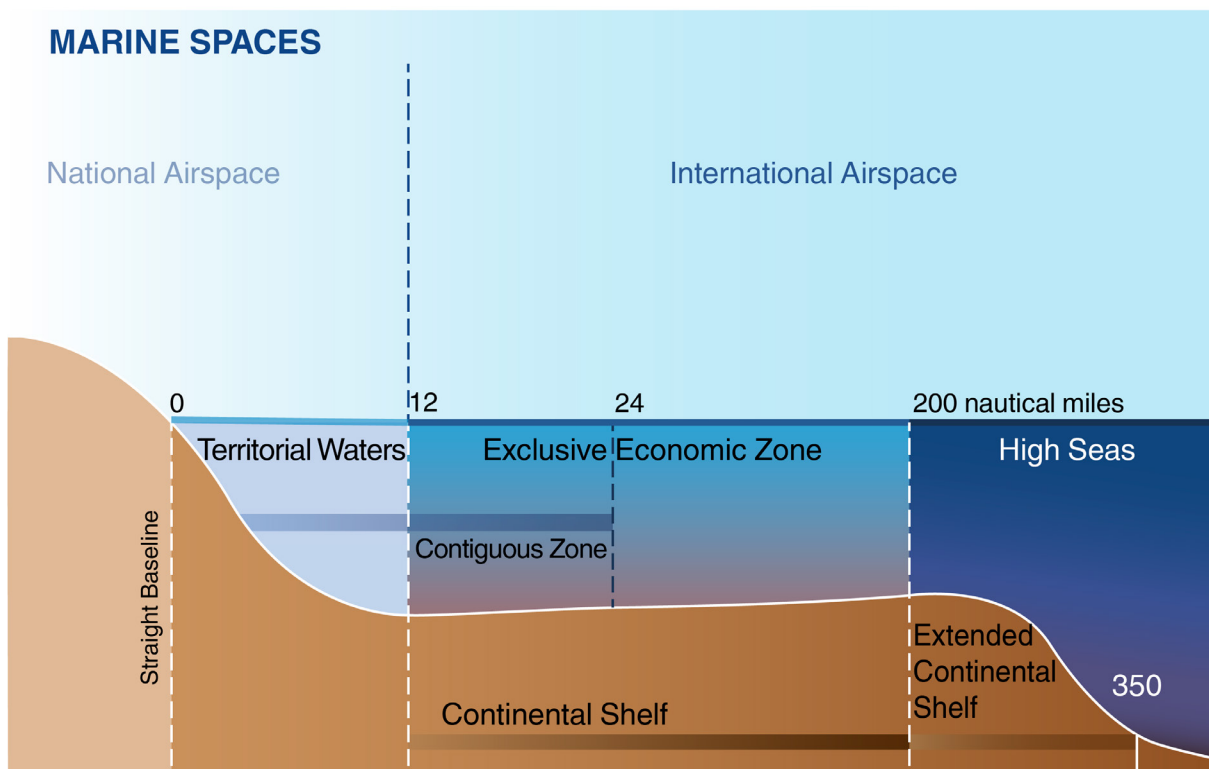
Thirdly, the coast, the oceans and the seabed are a source of wealth due to the living and non-living natural resources they host, as well as due to the economic activities that they support. Their sustainable exploitation is indispensable to ensuring the adequate availability of these resources.

+50%

The oceans absorb more than half of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

Fourthly, the sea is a domain that provides strategic versatility. Control of and access to the sea have always been key to promoting strategic interests of countries, international partnerships and coalitions. The presence of naval resources in unstable geographical areas makes them more secure.

Fifthly, the maritime sphere is a physical medium that plays a fundamental role in regulating the climate. The open ocean, coastal areas and the seabed are large natural ecosystems and a common good requiring protection. The future of the planet depends to a large extent on maintaining them in a good state of health. Covering 72% of the surface of the planet, the oceans absorb more than half of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the temperature of the oceans has a significant impact on the climate. The role of the oceans in the global water cycle contributes to mitigating the effects of climate change.



## Dynamics of transformation in the maritime environment: horizon 2030

The maritime sphere is not immune to the impacts of rapid social change. The dynamics of transformation identified in the 2021 National Security Strategy also apply to the maritime sphere, where the medium-term prognosis is one of change, with major implications for national security.





**In geopolitical terms**, the rise in strategic competition between major global powers is already evident in certain geographical areas such as the East Mediterranean, the Indo-Pacific and the South China Sea. The wealth provided by seabed resources means there is also competition for access. The limitations on the exploitation of certain land resources, as well as the greater knowledge of the possibilities offered by the marine environment mean that countries are increasingly looking to the sea in their search for alternative resources.



**In the economic sphere**, projections point towards growth in international maritime trade, as well as to substantial changes in the map of maritime routes due, among other issues, to the melting of Arctic ice. Moreover, the shift in centre of economic gravity towards the Indo-Pacific will affect the competitiveness of the maritime sector. One of the various impacts is the adoption of new technologies associated with environmental sustainability and the circular economy.



**Another development with respect to technology** technology is the upward trend in the use of artificial intelligence, both in logistical management systems and in maritime surveillance platforms and sensors. The use of uncrewed vessels is also on the rise. For its part, the ecological transition and the increase in the number of renewable energy generation facilities will entail the use of marine spaces to host new wind farms, photovoltaic green hydrogen production facilities and tidal energy facilities, among others. According to the International Energy Agency, marine wind energy will represent half of Europe's wind generation by 2040.



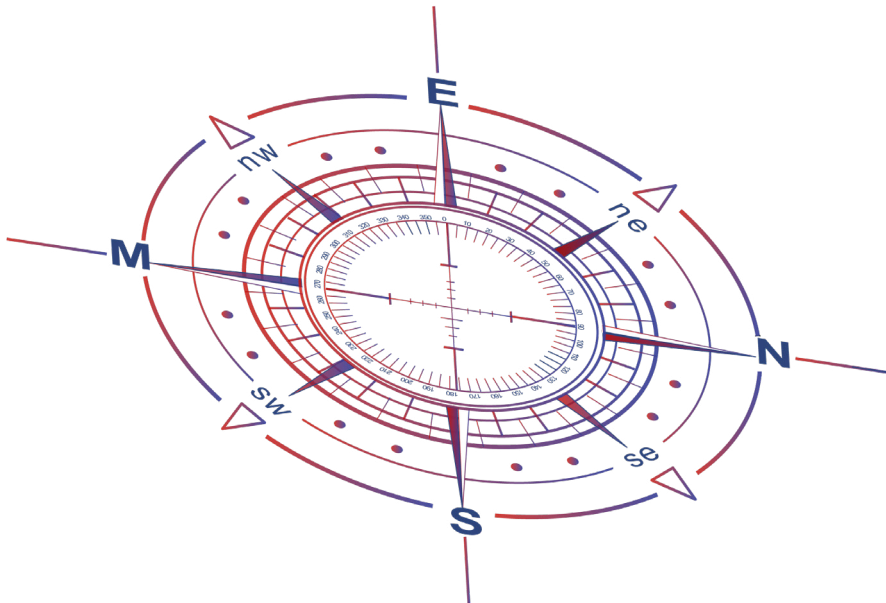
As regards **the environment**, marine biodiversity constitutes an asset offering opportunities for sustainable exploitation. However, the progressive degradation of the marine habitat is a major global concern. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels fell from 90% to 65% between 1974 and 2019. The geographical regions with the most abundant fish stocks are those with the most developed fisheries regulations, which underscores the need to promote regulated, sustainable fishing at global level.

## Strategic approach to maritime security in Spain

Spain's approach to maritime security reflects its absolute commitment to the international community, understanding, as we do, that a safe maritime environment is essential to the proper functioning of economic and social activity, to international peace, and to the environmental sustainability of the planet.

Maritime security can be defined as *the combination of preventive and response measures aimed both at protecting the maritime environment from threats and intentional illegal acts, and at limiting the impact of natural hazards, accidents, and of harm to the environment, economic activities and people.*

The *2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security* offers, moreover, a proactive stance, aimed both at protecting and promoting Spain's maritime interests and at taking advantage of the opportunities for improvement offered by the maritime environment.



Spain's national maritime interests are as follows:

- respect for and stability of our maritime territorial integrity;
- compliance with national legislation and international law in the maritime spaces under our sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction;
- human life at sea;
- freedom and safety of navigation;
- the blue economy;
- maritime trade and transport;
- the shipping industry and other maritime industries;
- vessels of national interest and their crews (merchant, fishing and pleasure fleets);
- ports and maritime infrastructure, including off-shore installations, oil pipelines, and submarine pipelines and cables, as well as critical infrastructure and infrastructure of relevance to maritime security located on the coast or on the seabed;
- the national tax and customs system;
- living and non-living marine resources;
- the marine and coastal environment;
- underwater cultural heritage;
- and maritime culture.

## Spaces of relevance to national maritime security

Spain has maritime interests the world over. Prioritizing areas of action is essential to optimizing efforts and the allocation of resources. Considering both the criteria set forth in the *2021 National Security Strategy* and Spain's geographic position and international relations and commitments, as well as our socioeconomic activity, the maritime spaces are prioritized as follows:

**Maritime spaces of preferential interest:** these include all maritime spaces over which Spain exercises sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction pursuant to international and Spanish law. They are spaces on whose security Spain's territorial integrity and the exercise of our national sovereignty depends, such as the sea lines of communication connecting the peninsula to Spain's islands, archipelagos and other territories, as well as all other spaces and sea lines of communication considered of preferential interest for circumstantial reasons.

**Maritime spaces of interest:** these include those international waters where an incident could have implications for national security or for national interests. They are spaces in which Spain has a notable presence and undertakes significant economic activity, such as international fishing grounds in which Spanish fishing vessels operate, or spaces of exceptional natural value, such as the waters included in Spain's protected marine areas.

Other maritime spaces of interest include areas from which energy or biogenetic resources are imported; areas where vestiges of Spanish underwater cultural heritage have been or found or are understood to be present; the marine areas in which Spain intends to extend its continental shelf in line with international law; the marine areas to which, at any time and in the framework of a national, EU or NATO mission, Spain has deployed naval forces; as well as any maritime space of particular relevance whose security, in the opinion of the National Security Council, is intertwined with the stability and development of Spain and the well-being of its citizens.

**Other maritime spaces of interest:** these consist in international waters where an incident could have implications for national security or for national interests.



Although not considered a maritime space as such, Spain's coastal areas, which host a multitude of economic activities, constitute another crucial space subject to maritime influence, sensitive as they are to the effects of climate change and to any vulnerability caused by or deriving from the maritime environment.

The inclusion of maritime spaces in any of the aforementioned categories will be subject to ongoing review as we monitor and gather data on the maritime environment. This will enable us to ensure that the degree of interest of such spaces is declared, to assess the necessity of taking action to improve or safeguard maritime security, and to categorize spaces as of interest or preferential interest pursuant to the criteria of the National Security Council.

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## PRIORITIZATION OF MARITIME SPACES

### **Maritime spaces of preferential interest:**

Jurisdictional waters (internal waters, the territorial sea, the contiguous zone and the exclusive economic zone); the continental shelf and extended continental shelf; and sea lines of communication connecting the Spanish peninsula to Spain's islands, archipelagos and other territories.

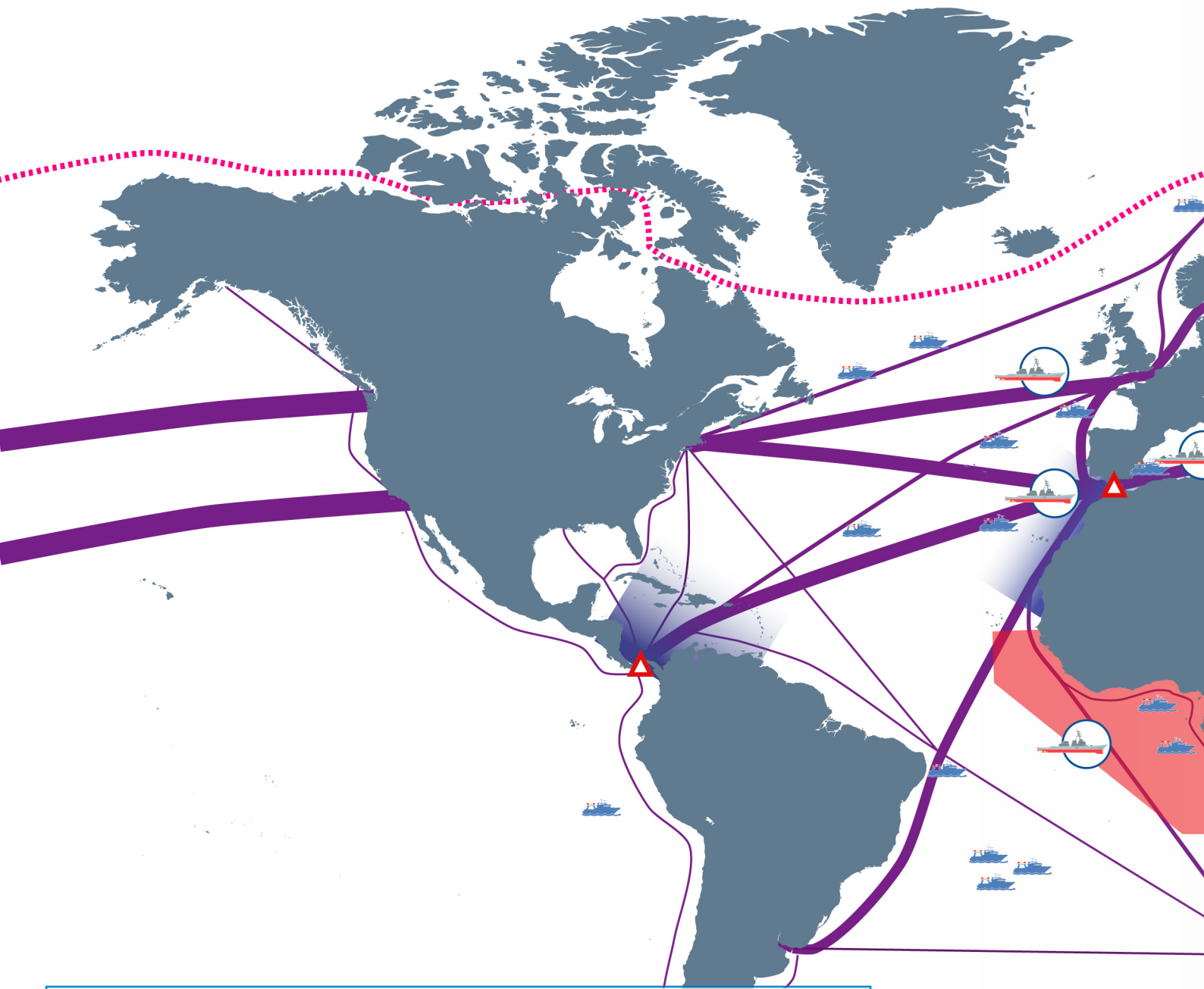
### **Maritime spaces of interest:**

Mediterranean Sea; Atlantic Margin, West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea; the Indo-Pacific: specifically, the Horn of Africa, the Persian Gulf and South-East Asia; international fishing grounds in which Spanish fishing vessels operate.

### **Other maritime spaces of interest:**

The Pacific; Antarctica; the Arctic.

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## LEGEND



Spanish naval presence



Fishing grounds



High risk areas for piracy



Areas of geopolitical tension



Illicit maritime trafficking



Maritime straits



Main shipping routes





A map of the Malpica Peninsula in Galicia, Spain, showing AIS tracks and depth contours. The map features a grid of depth contours in meters, ranging from 38 to 2000. AIS tracks are shown as lines with circular markers, indicating the movement of vessels. Key locations labeled include Punta de la Frouxeira, Cabo Prior, Ferrol, Punta de Axe, Punta del Roncudo, Punta Insua, and Punta Grande. A large white text overlay is centered on the map.

# Risks and Threats to maritime security

chapter 2

## Chapter 2

# RISKS AND THREATS TO MARITIME SECURITY

*The second chapter of the 2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security identifies the risks and threats to maritime security, such as hybrid strategies, threats against national interests, illicit trafficking and cross-border crime and environmental risks.*

**T**he sea is vulnerable to the escalation and materialization of a large number of the threats identified in Spain's *2021 National Security Strategy* (regional and geostrategic tensions, terrorism and violent radicalization, epidemics and pandemics, threats to critical infrastructure or to infrastructure of relevance to national security, emergencies and catastrophes, economic instability, cyberattacks, organized crime, irregular migratory flows, energy vulnerability, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the degradation of the natural environment). Indeed, the Strategy identifies the vulnerability of the maritime space as a threat to national security, which due to its physical and legal characteristics is a space in which any or all of these threats could materialize, whether directly, or as the result of a hybrid strategy. Such strategies test the limits of our national legislation, as well as those of the treaties and other maritime agreements to which Spain is party and the

regulations to which it is subject. The actions of which they consist, which occupy grey areas, seek to undermine security without crossing over the threshold into conventional armed aggression, with the consequent impacts on citizen prosperity and well-being.

Threats are understood as all those circumstances arising from deliberate or illicit acts that could jeopardize security. Risks to maritime security are understood as unintentional incidents resulting from accidents or of the effects of nature. This Strategy identifies four generic categories of risks and threats to national maritime security:

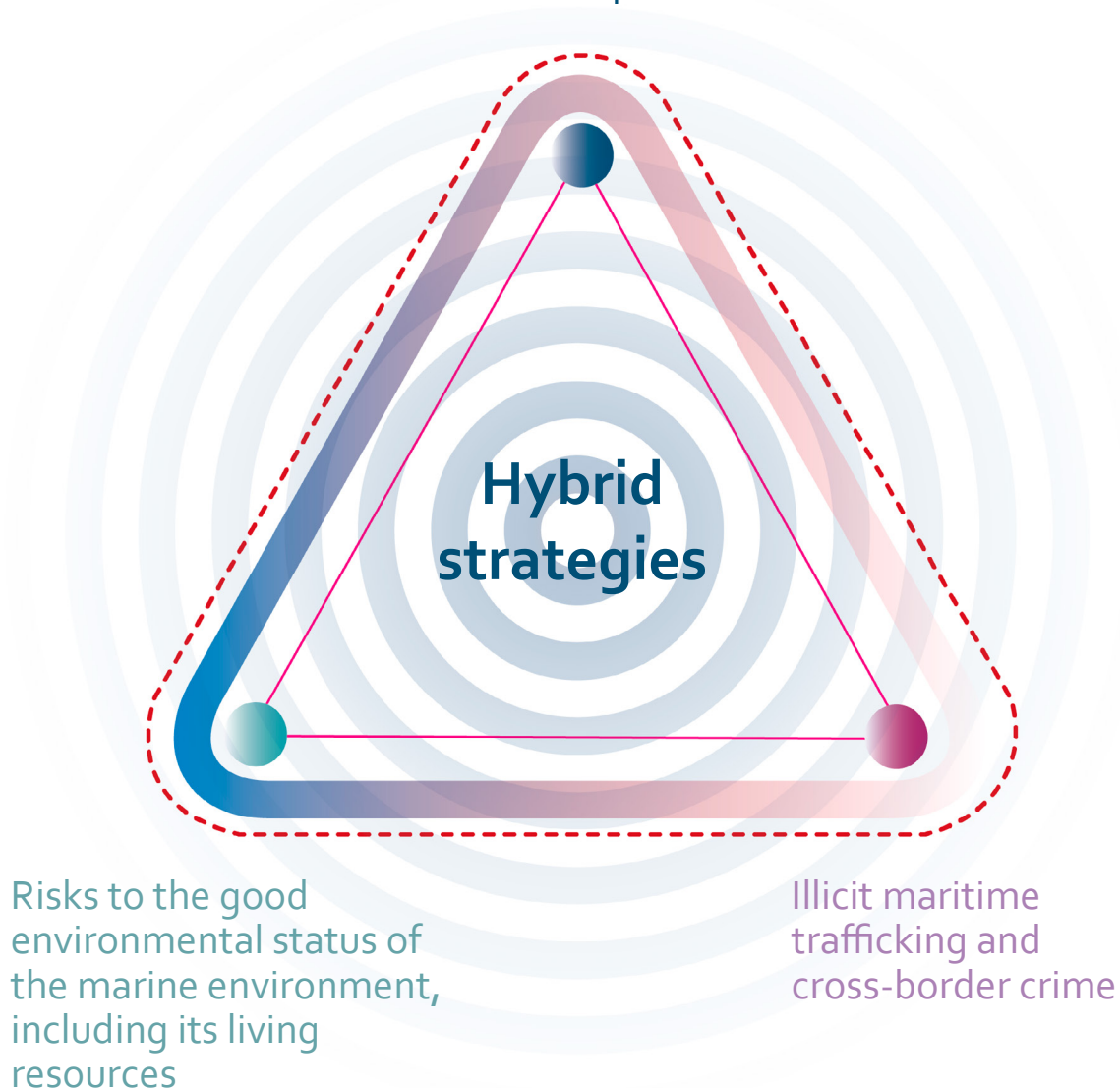
actions attributable to a hybrid strategy. This is a core category encompassing the entire spectrum of threats to maritime security;

threats against national interests in the maritime sphere;

illicit maritime trafficking and cross-border crime;

risks to the good environmental status of the marine environment, including its living resources, as well as the coastal impacts of climate change.

## Threats against national interests in the maritime sphere



## RISKS AND THREATS TO MARITIME SECURITY



## Hybrid strategies

Hybrid strategy is a term that encompasses all types of coordinated and synchronized actions aimed at exploiting the vulnerabilities of states and their institutions by seeking the political destabilization of national and international institutions through the use of economic coercion, energy supply pressure, cyberattacks, influence campaigns, terrorism and low-intensity violence, and military capabilities.

The particular characteristics of the law governing the use of the sea make this sphere particularly vulnerable to threats of this class, which fall within a legal grey area. The difficulty of applying the law and of attributing responsibility is a spur to such destabilizing actions, which may be carried out by state or non-state actors.

Specifically, maritime hybrid strategies encompass all such destabilizing actions carried out at sea and in port areas, and certain such actions carried out on the coast. They may relate to any one of the threats referred to in this Strategy; the differential factor is the underlying intention of the state or non-state actor responsible. The acts of sabotage carried out in the Baltic Sea on the Nord Stream I and II gas pipelines in September 2022, as well as certain assertive actions affecting merchant and fishing fleets, constitute clear examples of hybrid actions.

Spain's role as a recipient of vessels carrying liquefied natural gas for regasification and subsequent distribution to other European countries, and as an entry point for gas pipelines and submarine cables, means that hybrid strategies represent a very tangible threat, with other actions under this category including sabotage and cyberattacks targeted against vessels (and their cargo and passengers) as well as the remote seizure of control of operations. There may also be cases of deliberate marine pollution, unauthorized exploitation of natural resources, and even of activities aimed at encouraging uncontrolled waves of irregular immigration.

The difficult attribution of responsibility is a spur to such destabilizing actions



## Threats against national interests in the maritime sphere

In a context in which the main powers are rearming and geopolitical competition between them is intensifying, freedom of navigation and compliance with international maritime law are under threat in a number of geographical regions and along several maritime routes. In addition, there is competition for access to the wealth provided by seabed resources, and by the exploitation of maritime wind and solar resources. The limitations on the exploitation of certain land resources, as well as greater knowledge of the possibilities offered by the marine environment mean that countries are increasingly looking to the sea in their search for alternative resources.

There is competition for access to the wealth provided by seabed resources

Stability in areas such as the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is being seriously undermined by the illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. The risk for the maritime traffic crossing the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and the Persian Gulf is being heightened by the escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip, the instability in Yemen, as well as the frictions between regional powers in the Middle East.

Piracy and armed robbery remain a concern for the international merchant, fishing and pleasure fleet, as well as for their crew and passengers. Three areas are especially perilous: the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Guinea and South-East Asia (in particular, the Malacca and Singapore Straits).

Terrorist attacks carried out in the marine environment, whose characteristics make it especially vulnerable to such acts, do not only target vessels but also maritime infrastructure such as oil rigs, marine wind farms and submarine communications cables which, furthermore, can be used to access communication networks in order to conduct cyberattacks, or to attack the critical infrastructure attached to them.

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The use of autonomous marine vehicles has become a threat enhanced by their versatility as well as the ease of acquisition and use

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Maritime activities are highly dependent on technology. Any disruption of maritime radio communications or aids to navigation would have serious consequences for maritime security. This vulnerability increases the risk of cyberattacks against surveillance and control systems, critical maritime infrastructure and infrastructure of relevance to national security and navigation and communication systems. Moreover, the use of sea drones (including underwater drones as well as uncrewed air and surface vehicles) to carry out illicit acts has become a heightened threat due to their polyvalence, as well as their easy acquisition and use.

The close relationship between maritime security and the international economy means that crises, such as those stemming from the pandemic or from the invasion of Ukraine, have notable repercussions for the global supply chain and for economic and financial stability.

Moreover, incidents (whether deliberate or accidental) in any of the world's busiest, narrow maritime straits can have serious consequences for the global supply chain. The grounding of the Ever Given container ship in the Suez Canal in March 2021, and the drought of the summer of 2023, which hampered operations in the Panama Canal, had significant repercussions due to the delays caused to vessels, including a rise in fuel prices, imbalances in supply and demand, the destabilization of merchant container ships flows, and the congestion of vessels awaiting loading.



## Illicit maritime trafficking and cross-border (or transnational) crime

Cross-border or transnational crime is a phenomenon affecting human safety and entailing growing levels of violence which states are struggling to contain. The actors involved, including organized crime networks, are behind criminal activities such as smuggling, the trafficking of psychotropic substances, weaponry and weapons of mass destruction, the maritime exploitation of migrants, and IUU fishing. The plunder of vestiges of cultural and historical heritage is a further threat to security. Responding to such threats involves numerous actors and must be based on both national and international cooperation.

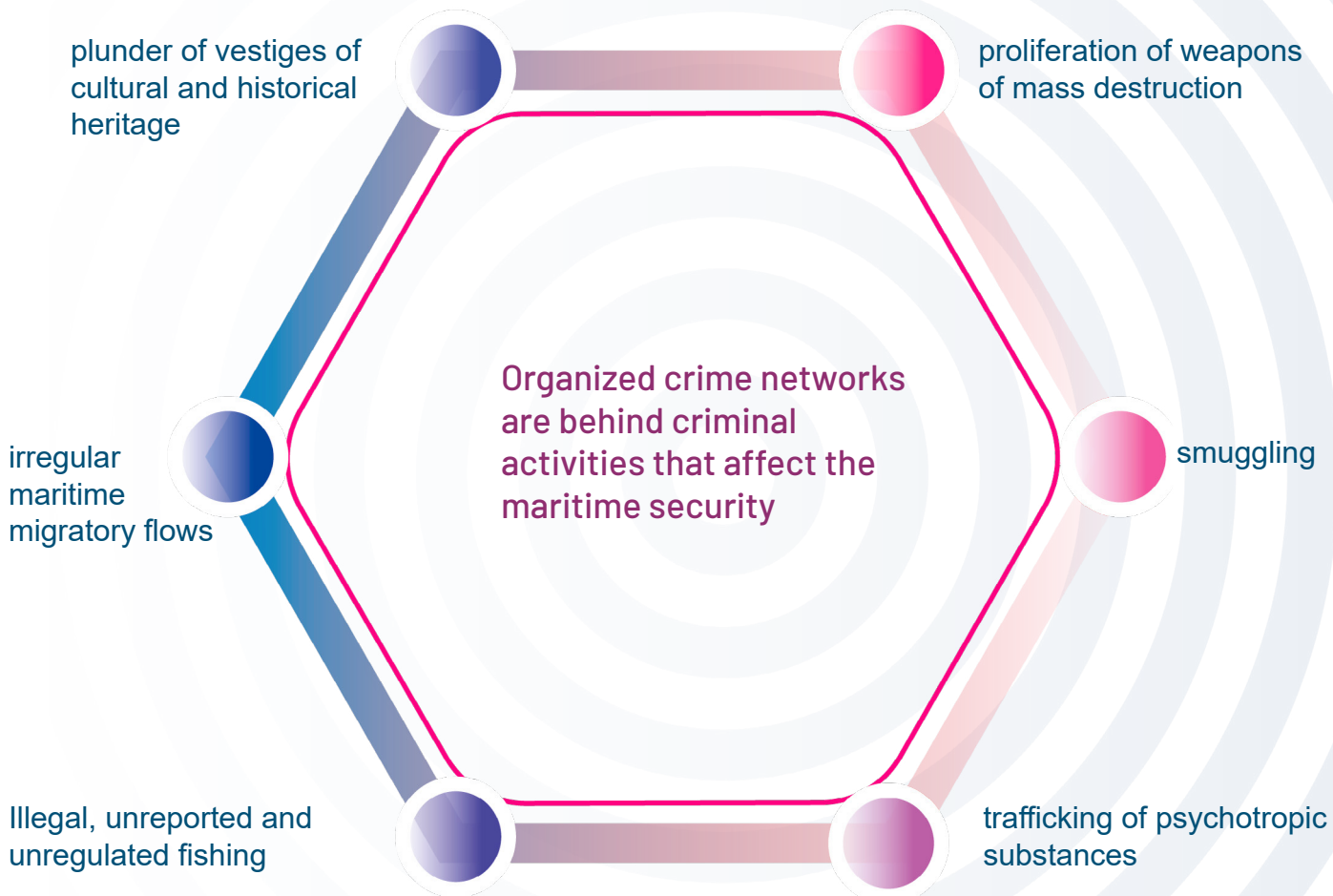
Smuggling and illicit trafficking of goods include the trafficking of weapons, psychotropic substances and their precursors, certain species of flora and fauna, waste, stolen vehicles, falsified products and all other types of prohibited goods.

Spain, as an EU external border country, is especially exposed to irregular maritime migratory flows. These flows represent a risk for the safety of navigation, and for the life and physical integrity of immigrants, who are vulnerable to exploitation at the hands of organized crime networks.

Immigrants are vulnerable to exploitation by organized crime networks

The inherent characteristics of the marine environment make it a propitious space for the proliferation of weapons, due, in particular, to the difficulty of monitoring activity in such a vast, borderless expanse and due to the privacy it offers, combined with the complexity of applying the law. Said proliferation also extends to dual-use goods and technology, including software, which may be put to civilian, military or nuclear uses.

Lastly, IUU fishing represents a serious concern. At world level, illegal catches have come to represent 15% of total production. Spain, as a fishing power, is fully committed to the fight against an illegal activity which affects both the marine habitat and the sustainability of a sector of significant importance to our country's economy.





## Risks to the good environmental status of the marine environment, including its living resources, as well as the coastal impacts of climate change

The effects of climate change include the increase in the number of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, the degradation of land and marine ecosystems, desertification, the greater incidence and frequency of heat waves, droughts, the lesser availability of water, Saharan dust intrusions, forest fires, floods and the loss of biodiversity. Another aggravating factor is the marine pollution generated by increasingly intense and accumulated human activity on the coasts. These pernicious effects lead to greater competition for resources and to the rise in migratory flows from those regions most exposed to its harmful consequences.

In the maritime sphere, it must be recognized that climate change is causing an increase in adverse weather events and storms, which could in turn trigger situations that compromise the safety of navigation and even the proper functioning of maritime infrastructure. Nor must we forget the impact that climate change and rising sea levels are having on marine borders, both those already established and on those that are yet to be delineated, as well as on infrastructure.

Furthermore, the very density of the maritime traffic close to our shores (in particular in the Strait of Gibraltar) can be a source of accidents and, combined with increasingly extreme weather events (in particular, in Galicia), means that there is always some degree of probability of such an accident occurring, with the consequent risk for human life at sea.

All those intentional acts that seek to damage the good environmental status of the marine environment are considered a threat to Maritime Security

In particular, all those intentional acts that seek to damage the good environmental status of the marine environment, as well as the pollution resulting from illegal landfills, and the unsustainable and unauthorized exploitation of natural resources, are considered a threat to maritime security.

These activities are not only harmful to marine species and habitats and the natural processes of their ecosystems, including their regeneration, but could also have potentially significant direct and indirect social, health and economic impacts on any of Spain's coastal regions. Moreover, there are pollutants, such as micro-plastics, which affect marine species directly and land species indirectly, and whose impacts on human health have yet to be sufficiently studied.







GOALS



chapter 3

## Chapter 3

### GOALS

*The third chapter of the 2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security establishes the goals which will guide Spain's strategic approach to maritime security in order to protect our maritime interests, improve our maritime capabilities and enhance the safety of the seas.*

**I**n a context of greater assertiveness and increased geopolitical competition between great powers, a context in which hybrid strategies abound, the *2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security* sets forth a strategic approach designed to guide state action applying the entire spectrum of security activities, including protection from deliberate threats and illegal activity as well as guarding against the impacts of climate change, as well as other unintended events.

Based on a broad view of security, the Strategy focuses on the strengthening of coordination between departments and public authorities in the decision-making process, and the adoption of preventive measures aimed at protecting maritime activities.

Moreover, this Strategy is proactive and views the current moment as an opportunity to enhance high-value strategic assets, such as the maritime industry and related economic sectors. To this end, it proposes a closer relationship between the public and private sectors.

Aiming to advance a comprehensive maritime security policy, the National Strategy for Maritime Security establishes three strategic goals:

Strategic Goal 1: To protect Spain's maritime interests at sea and from the sea;

Strategic Goal 2: To improve Spain's maritime capabilities;

Strategic Goal 3: To enhance the safety of the seas.

The *2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security* will be implemented by means of specific actions aimed to achieve each of the three strategic goals stated:

**To protect Spain's maritime interests at the sea and from the sea**, the maritime Strategy defines a series of actions aimed at preserving the safety and security of maritime areas over which Spain exercises its sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in accordance with international and Spanish law, as well as maritime infrastructure and economic activities dependent on or influenced by the sea.

**To improve Spain's maritime capabilities** the Strategy proposes proactive measures to strengthen the state's actions at sea and along the coast through the modernization of maritime security capabilities. This set of measures is closely related to promoting the maritime economy, understanding this sector as a key strategic asset for security and prosperity. It also includes the promotion of strategic autonomy and maritime industry. Moreover, the boost to scientific research shapes a vision of the present and future which links scientific innovation and technology to security.

**To enhance the safety of the seas**, the Strategy includes international actions, which reflect Spain's contribution as a country actively committed to maritime security in order to guarantee international and maritime law. Accordingly, the Strategy contains actions relating to international maritime security to guarantee freedom of navigation along sea lines of communication and areas of strategic interest, as well as to protect merchant, fishing and pleasure fleets. This third goal also comprises Spain's efforts to tackle global risks with local impacts, such as climate change and marine pollution.



# GOALS



Strategic Goal 1:

**To protect Spain's maritime interests at sea and from the sea**



Strategic Goal 2:

**To improve Spain's maritime capabilities**



Strategic Goal 3:

**To enhance the safety of the seas**

The detailed list of actions aimed to achieve the three strategic goals can be found in the Appendix to the *National Strategy for Maritime Security*.

Every action is linked to a progress indicator, which will be the basis for *measuring progress* towards the goals set.

To this end, a regular assessment process will be undertaken every three years, by means of a report which will be submitted to the National Security Council.

This report will be drawn up by the National Maritime Security Council.

## Protecting Spain's maritime interests at sea and from the sea

This goal is centred on the protection of sovereignty and the free exercise of rights and freedoms in maritime areas under Spanish jurisdiction through an increase in maritime security activity.

In a context of intense strategic competition and hybrid strategies, deterrence and the protection of maritime infrastructure are gaining significance

In a context of intense strategic competition and hybrid strategies, deterrence and the protection of maritime infrastructure are gaining significance. Risk analysis will be used as the basis on which to develop a planning process for measures and activities aiming to improve the resilience of elements such as submarine cables and maritime energy infrastructure.

Ports and other maritime facilities related to energy and industry are an essential link in the global supply chain. In the current socio-economic environment, which is marked by greater fragmentation of the globalization process, it is vital that their resilience be consolidated.

In this regard, and in order to address illicit maritime trafficking and cross-border crime, the resources and capabilities of the main actors in matters of Spanish maritime security must be enhanced and modernized. In particular, this Strategy proposes the integration of technologies based on artificial intelligence into maritime surveillance systems, platforms and sensors, as well as the addition of remote-controlled vehicles for maritime surveillance tasks.

As for activity to protect underwater cultural heritage, the main reference is still the *National Plan for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage*, where the administrations of Spain's Autonomous Communities play a key role as competent authorities for the update of maps of underwater archaeological sites.

Deterrence and protection of maritime infrastructure are gaining significance



In the fight against IUU fishing in Spain, this Strategy seeks a renewal of the national regulatory framework, in line with existing international agreements and regulations, as well as with the policies of the European Union and other organizations and institutions of which Spain is a member.

This Strategy also advocates sustainable development through the consolidation of the new *Maritime Spatial Planning* framework, aimed at the sustainable development of maritime sectors.

Finally, optimizing knowledge of the maritime environment requires that information be shared. On this basis, the effectiveness and efficiency of the state's action at sea can be improved. To this end, this Strategy identifies the forging of closer relationships between the different operation centres as an initiative that will enable an improvement of shared knowledge of the maritime environment.

Optimizing  
knowledge of  
the maritime  
environment requires  
that information  
be shared

## Improving Spain's maritime security capabilities

The *2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security* incorporates a vision of security where science and technology are key vectors for the improvement of Spain's maritime security capabilities. In other words, the maritime environment is also protected at factories, shipyards and laboratories.

From a proactive perspective, the current moment is an opportunity to make improvements to the maritime sector in fields such as industry, Spanish shipping activities, technology and science. All of these are closely interrelated, play an essential role in security as it is currently understood, and are necessary to lead the ever-accelerating drastic changes already underway, including the adoption of zero-emission propulsion fuel, autonomous navigation and renewable energy. It is also an opportunity to advance in the protection and security of strategic sectors, essential infrastructure and economic activities in the face of new risks, such as the possible consequences of climate change and rising sea levels.

The integration of new technologies is key to addressing aspects which go beyond physical security and access to facilities. In the current security environment, cybersecurity and data protection measures have become essential requirements. This is especially true in a context where there is an observable upward trend in maritime trade, and the management of containers and goods in general is becoming more complex. Aspects relating to information security, the adoption of artificial intelligence technologies in risk assessment processes, and the acquisition of advanced material detection systems necessitate the modernization of Spanish ports.

Therefore, interaction between public authorities and the private sector in all aspects relating to the sea is indispensable. This relationship must be smooth and constant, rather than focused on isolated cases.

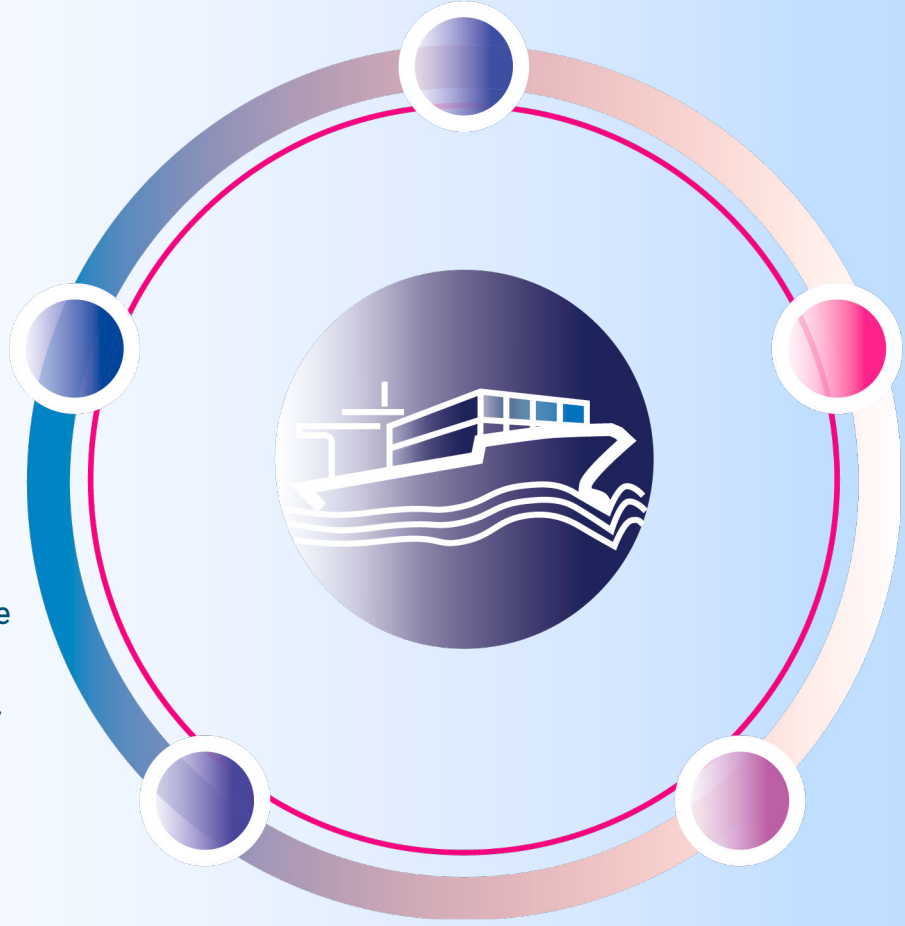
Prosperity is closely linked to security

The current moment is an opportunity to enhance the maritime sector

Industry, technology and science are indispensable variables in the safety equation

Marine renewable energies will be an incipient economic sector with a great strategic weight

The National Maritime Security Strategy incorporates measures for the international projection of our maritime interests



The private sector is an essential actor that contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the National Security Strategy in its maritime dimension as an active subject

## Enhancing the safety of the seas

International cooperation is necessary in this unique, continuous medium, defined by its lack of physical borders. Securing freedom of navigation along sea lines of communication, as well as guaranteeing the safety of fishing ships and crews operating in international fishing grounds, requires concerted action by countries which view strict compliance with international law as an instrument with which to counter threats such as piracy, armed robbery at sea, and violence at sea.

Furthermore, international cooperation with the European Union's agencies and bodies is vital to tackle issues such as crime, including organized crime and illicit trafficking by sea, all of which are closely linked. In particular, irregular immigration by sea is a challenge which requires synergies to be sought between action at the heart of the European Union and bilateral action in those areas which are of the greatest strategic interest for Spain.

The High Seas Treaty agreed to in 2023 in the framework of the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS) will contribute to the protection of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions. In addition to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, this treaty addresses questions on the sharing of the benefits of genetic marine resources; measures such as area-based management tools, including Marine Protected Areas; environmental impact assessments; and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology. Spain has already ratified the Convention, which will become effective once the agreement of at least 60 parties is obtained. Spain will encourage compliance with the measures seeking its effective implementation.

Furthermore, taking into account Spain's support of a "precautionary pause" on seabed mining in international waters, an analysis must be conducted in collaboration with other states—in particular, EU Member States within the framework of the 2022 Agenda for international ocean governance—and with the international scientific community of the full application of the precautionary principle in the safeguarding of the marine environment from mining in areas declared common heritage of humankind. In this regard, within the framework of the International Seabed Authority, whose Council Spain joined in 2023, Spain will seek the decision most favourable to Spanish interests in the search for balance and environmental sustainability, which can be endangered by deep-sea mining.

International  
coordination  
in maritime  
security is key  
to ...



... ensure free navigation on maritime communication routes

... guarantee the safety of fishing vessels and their crews operating in international fishing grounds

... deal with such interrelated phenomena as organized crime, delinquency and illicit trafficking by sea

... take effective action against irregular immigration by sea

... the preservation and sustainable use of the marine environment and marine biodiversity

4





# Maritime security in the context of National Security

chapter 4

## Chapter 4

# MARITIME SECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL SECURITY

*The fourth chapter of the 2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security describes the bodies of the National Security System whose duties are related to maritime security.*

The **National Security Council** is the Government's Delegate Committee for National Security, a body that assists the Spanish President in directing national security policies and the national security system, and also fulfils the duties it is assigned by Act 36/2015 of 28 of September on National Security.

The **Situation Committee** is the body responsible for supporting the National Security Council in directing and coordinating management of crisis situations, among them those of a predominantly maritime nature.

The **National Maritime Security Council** is a body that supports the National Security Council in fulfilling its duties and, in particular, assists the Spanish President in the



direction of the national security policy in matters of maritime security. It is chaired by the Chief of the Defence Staff. The Council reflects the multidisciplinary and cross-cutting character of maritime security. Its composition is open and flexible in order to bring together key stakeholders in maritime security, both from the public sector, such as the administrations of Spain's Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities, and the private sector, such as companies and business associations.

The **National Maritime Security Council** has a Unit for Information and Analysis of Risks and Threats to Maritime Security, whose main mission is to provide information periodically on medium- and long-term future risks and threats Spain may face, whether at sea or originating from the sea.

The **National Security Department of the Office of the Presidency of the Government** is charged with the duties of Technical Secretariat and permanent working body of the National Maritime Security Council.



## **National Security Council**

Government's Delegate Committee for National Security



## **Situation Committee**

Body responsible for supporting the National Security Council in directing and coordinating management of crisis situations



## **National Maritime Security Council**

Body that supports the National Security Council in fulfilling its duties and, in particular, assists the Spanish President in the direction of the national security policy in matters of maritime security



## **National Security Department of the Prime Minister's Office**

Technical Secretariat and permanent working body



A topographic map of a coastal region, likely the San Francisco Bay Area, is shown in a dark, semi-transparent style. The map features contour lines, water bodies, and various geographical markers. Overlaid on the map is the text 'APPENDIX LIST OF MEASURES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE THREE STRATEGIC GOALS'. The text is in a bold, white, sans-serif font. There are also several white arrows pointing in different directions across the map, and a small blue circle highlighting a specific area in the upper left quadrant.

# APPENDIX

## LIST OF MEASURES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE THREE STRATEGIC GOALS

# Appendix

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## MEASURES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE FIRST STRATEGIC GOAL:



To protect Spain's maritime interests at sea and from the sea



## Action 1:

Maintaining a high level of activity and presence in maritime areas under Spanish jurisdiction or sovereignty

The core purpose of maritime security is to protect sovereign rights at sea, and to defend Spain against all maritime threats. Carrying out acts of state at sea is synonymous with permanent and effective surveillance in maritime areas under Spanish sovereignty or jurisdiction, to which naval units, aircraft, remote-controlled aircraft, and electronic, satellite and optical surveillance systems all contribute.

Furthermore, in collaboration with other states and at international organizations of which Spain is a member, there will be an increase in surveillance and monitoring of compliance with international obligations stemming from Maritime Law and the Law of the Sea by ships carrying dangerous goods or which may pose a risk to navigation. This will be done specifically by means of the measures set forth at national level in the *Regulations on the Management of Maritime Navigation*.



## Bodies involved

Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities.



## Progress indicator

Every ministry will provide an indication of the degree of activity carried out in maritime areas under Spanish sovereignty or jurisdiction according to the number of units at sea, the surveillance surface covered, as well as the volume of maritime traffic managed and the number of ships denied port entry, stays in Spanish maritime areas, or operations in out-of-bounds areas, as specific indicators of measures to monitor ships which transport dangerous goods or pose a potential risk to navigation.



## Action 2:

### Advancing in the delimitation of Spanish maritime areas and in campaigns to extend the continental shelf

The establishment of marine boundaries with neighbouring countries enables support for Spain's activity at sea in defence of national interests, both in matters of sovereignty and in matters relating to the exploitation of resources. There must be progress in the establishment of boundaries of countries' maritime areas.

The extension of the continental shelf is a process which requires diplomatic efforts to protect national interests in an international negotiation process. On a domestic level, effective cooperation between public authorities is essential for its correct demarcation in defence of national interests.



### Bodies involved

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; Ministry of Defence.



### Progress indicator

Reports on the degree of progress in negotiations of boundaries in the campaigns to extend the continental shelf in the Celtic Sea and the Gulf of Biscay, the area around Galicia, and the area to the west of the Canary Islands.

## 03

### Action 3:

#### Enhancing the protection, surveillance and resilience of maritime infrastructure

A risk analysis of existing maritime infrastructure in areas under Spanish sovereignty will be carried out with the participation of the ministries involved and the private sector. It will be based on their degree of vulnerability, as a necessary prelude to the planning of measures for the protection of said infrastructure.

The second phase will see the design of a surveillance plan for infrastructure of interest located both within and without Spanish waters, with special attention paid to subsea infrastructure such as telecommunications cables and gas pipelines.

In the third phase, regulations on the protection of maritime infrastructure of interest will be developed, as a contribution to the enabling regulations of the European Union's Critical Entities Resilience Directive.

A ministry must be named responsible for the execution of each of the phases of this action.

In these three phases, public-private collaboration measures will be encouraged, given that the private sector both owns and operates critical and strategic infrastructure on the coast as well as at sea, especially underwater, without this entailing any release from obligations or responsibilities.





## Bodies involved

Ministry of Defence; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Industry and Tourism.



## Progress indicator

List of specific measures adopted for the protection of infrastructure of interest in maritime areas.

## Action 4:

### Making progress in the measures of the *National Protection Plan for Underwater Cultural Heritage*

The *National Protection Plan for Underwater Cultural Heritage* establishes the guidelines that actions by the different competent ministries must follow, in collaboration with the administrations of Spain's Autonomous Communities, in order to grant physical and legal protection to Spain's underwater cultural heritage Spanish from two perspectives:

- at a domestic level, the Plan establishes the basic lines of action to implement an efficient protection policy of sites in waters under Spanish sovereignty or jurisdiction.
- at international level, the Plan establishes lines of action to defend interests and rights relating to Spanish shipwrecks in waters belonging to other states or in international waters, within the framework of the UNESCO *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage*. Alternatively, in those states which are not party to this international agreement, ad hoc means of cooperation will be set up.

The production and updating of maps of underwater archaeological sites along the Spanish coastline is one of Spain's priorities as a party to the *Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage*. This is under the competence of Spain's regional administrations with the collaboration, when necessary, of the central administration. In order to optimize protection and surveillance of this heritage, which is of great cultural value for Spain, sites considered potentially to be of high archaeological value will be prioritized. Efforts will be made to restrict activity in certain areas of archaeological interest, in

pursuit of their conservation and protection. Furthermore, the Navy and the Civil Guard will be provided with the necessary means for the surveillance and protection of underwater sites in Spanish waters.

Moreover, as part of the efforts to raise awareness and reach out to the public, the role of specialized underwater archaeology centres will be boosted.



### Bodies involved

Ministry of Defence; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Culture; the administrations of Spain's Autonomous Communities.



### Progress indicator

List of projects carried out every year to protect underwater cultural heritage.

## Action 5:

### Updating the regulatory framework for fisheries

An update of the Spanish regulatory framework for fisheries will be sought to support actions to tackle IUU fishing in coherence with international and European legal frameworks. The new framework will include measures to prevent, discourage and eliminate IUU fishing through the following actions:

- effectively deterring Spanish nationals from carrying out IUU fishing operations anywhere on the seas. This will include measures to identify and check activities by nationals who are related to other countries' ships which fish outside EU waters.
- ensuring that fish products imported into Spain, as well as those exported or re-exported from Spain are caught in compliance with international conservation and management measures and, where appropriate, all other relevant rules applicable to fishing vessels, and that said products do not originate in IUU fishing. The aim is to prevent vessels which carry out these bad practices from using our ports to unload their catches, and in order to stem the flow of fish products from IUU fishing towards domestic and international markets.
- simplifying and updating the offences and penalties system to adapt it to the new European framework, and thus give the system greater legal certainty. This will be done by adapting the penalty system for fishing in external waters to the regulations in force in matters of administrative procedures.

- modernizing activities relating to monitoring, inspecting and combating IUU fishing as a guarantee of compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy, including the implementation of digital systems and devices in line with European regulations.
- boosting the figure of fishing inspectors and all other monitoring and inspection staff in order to optimize their work.



### Bodies involved

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.



### Progress indicator

Number of fishing inspections carried out each year and information regarding their effectiveness and scope.



## Action 6:

### Consolidating the new framework for maritime spatial planning

The purpose of maritime spatial planning is to encourage sustainable activities and growth in maritime sectors in a way which is compatible with respecting the value of maritime spaces, the conservation of their functionality and the sustainable exploitation of resources in the five marine areas: the northern Atlantic coast, the southern Atlantic coast, the Strait of Gibraltar and Alborán sea, the east coast and the Balearic Islands, and the Canary Islands.

The Spanish framework for maritime spatial planning will guarantee the appropriate distribution of powers to different state institutions and the contribution of the administrations of Spain's Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities in matters of maritime spatial planning.



### Bodies involved

Ministry of the Presidency of the Government, Justice and Relations with Parliament; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Ministry of Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business; Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities; and the administrations of Spain's coastal Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities.



### Progress indicator

The indicators of the programme to monitor the goals and effectiveness of Maritime Spatial Planning will be used.

## 07

**Action 7:****Increasing shared knowledge of the maritime environment**

Firstly, the interoperability of operation centres will be increased. This is a key tool for learning about the maritime environment. Therefore, moves must be made towards their total interoperability, in such a way that the maritime environment is managed in a comprehensive way, sharing more information. Moreover, greater efforts will be made to digitalize and modernize interdepartmental information exchange processes, in order to make progress regarding the automatic exchange of data and the application of the principles of digital transformation to ensure the consistency of data (single-instance data).

Without prejudice to existing interdepartmental agreements, we believe we must explore new ways of cooperating, especially in areas of interoperability, maritime surveillance, maritime search and rescue, deterring presence, prevention of environmental risks and organized crime, and fight against illicit trafficking by sea, as well as in matters of maritime policing and irregular migration.

To this end, regular meetings will be held with the heads of maritime security operations centres. The agenda and frequency of these meetings will be determined according to specific issues as they are identified.

Secondly, progress will be made in the assessment of risks and threats to maritime security through the modelling of risk scenarios and the promotion of an early warning and joint analysis system based on indicators. The Unit for Information and Analysis of Risks and Threats to Maritime Security is one of the mechanisms targeted by this proposal for improvements in the assessment of risks and threats to maritime security, as a basis for the adoption of initiatives and decision-making. This is a necessary preliminary step for the process of adapting existing maritime security plans to the current

situation, from a perspective of interdepartmental cooperation, in the aim of identifying priority fields of action, taking into account Spain's different plans and actions applicable to marine areas.

Thirdly, the list of current capabilities and resources will be kept up to date. Special interest will be paid to resources and capabilities aimed at underwater maritime security, and the surveillance and protection of critical subsea infrastructure and infrastructure of interest for security, as well as the cyber defence of the maritime sector.



## Bodies involved

National Maritime Security Council.



## Progress indicator

Degree of progress in the three interdepartmental initiatives mentioned (modernization of operation centres and improved maritime security information systems; risk analysis and identification of potential risk scenarios for maritime security; and the updating of the list of maritime security resources). These will include information regarding meetings between operation centres and their scope, or improvements achieved in the modelling of risk scenarios.





## MEASURES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SECOND STRATEGIC GOAL:



To improve Spain's maritime capabilities

## 08

**Action 8:****Reinforcing naval surveillance capabilities**

The modernization of capabilities with cutting-edge technological elements is essential to be able to perform efficient and appropriate naval surveillance in the face of an increasingly demanding environment, and to execute state action at sea effectively.

Measures will be put in place in order to integrate emerging technologies into currently existing sea and air units (remote-controlled aircraft and vessels, smart sensors, communication on the high seas incorporating dual technology and artificial intelligence) with the aim of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of maritime security capabilities.

In the current strategic context, it would be advisable to initiate programmes associated with the improvement of exploration capabilities and knowledge of the seabed. In particular, there will be a boost to the obtention of underwater capabilities for maritime intervention and action, surveillance, monitoring, protection, damage assessment and collection of proof, seeking to guarantee the safety of critical subsea infrastructure and other essential infrastructure, as well as other measures to tackle criminal use of submarines, semi-submersibles or remote-controlled vessels.

In this regard, the progressive modernization of the fleet, resources and oceanographic capabilities will contribute to improving activities relating to oceanography, marine biodiversity, fishing resources and climate change, as well as scientific production in matters of marine geophysics and mineral deposits on the seabed. In addition, these advanced capabilities will contribute to the preservation of underwater cultural heritage.



## Bodies involved

Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities; the administrations of Spain's coastal Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities.



## Progress indicator

List of modernization measures and newly acquired capabilities reinforcing maritime security functions.



## Action 9:

Reinforcing capabilities in maritime security functions, customs and anti-smuggling activities, maritime police and control of irregular immigration

Capabilities in maritime security functions, customs and anti-smuggling activities, maritime police, and the control of irregular immigration, defined in the document submitted to the National Security Council, will be strengthened by modernizing the fleet and coastal and port surveillance systems, using new technologies such as artificial intelligence. Moreover, measures will be taken to tackle criminal use of submarines, semi-submersibles and remote-controlled vessels. In addition, new remote-controlled aircraft (drones) will be introduced, which will contribute to these key aspects of the state's activity at sea. Efficiency will be encouraged, exploring interdepartmental procurement and/or operation processes.



### Bodies involved

Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of the Interior.



### Progress indicator

List of capability modernization measures strengthening maritime security functions related to maritime customs and anti-smuggling activities, maritime police and the control of irregular migration.



## Action 10:

### Advancing in the European Union's Permanent Structured Cooperation's maritime projects

Greater strategic autonomy will be sought at European level by advancing in all three maritime development projects within the framework of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO): the 4E programme (Essential Elements of European Escort), the development of the European corvette, and the project for a new system against remote-controlled submarines. The first project is led by Spain and comprises five areas: combat systems, communication and information systems, navigation systems, platform management systems and Integration of System of Systems.

In addition, autonomy in design, construction, operation and maintenance of naval and port units and infrastructure considered necessary to strengthen and support Spain's strategic maritime autonomy will be encouraged.



#### Bodies involved

Ministry of Defence.



#### Progress indicator

PESCO maritime projects which Spain leads or participates in, and their degree of progress.



## Action 11:

### Strengthening port security and global security of supply chains

Risk analysis processes will be optimized using a preventive approach, with the contribution of new capabilities offered by technology such as artificial intelligence. Furthermore, as part of the modernization process, measures to guarantee information security will be observed in all procurement processes for new material, such as goods surveillance scanners and systems. Special attention will be paid to the security of maritime terminals considered infrastructure of interest from a security point of view. In this context, the capabilities and monitoring procedures necessary to ensure global safety of supply chains will be assessed by the competent authorities.



## Bodies involved

Ministry of Finance; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility; and the administrations of Spain's coastal Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities.



## Progress indicator

Number of Specific Protection plans for each of the port infrastructures considered.

# 12

## Action 12:

### Strengthening the competitiveness of the shipbuilding industry

The initiatives set forth in the Strategic Project for the Recovery and Economic Transformation (PERTE) of the shipbuilding industry will be carried out. These seek to strengthen the competitiveness and increase the autonomy of the shipbuilding sector, including auxiliary companies and suppliers of cutting-edge technology, all of which are currently engaged in technological modernization, digital connectivity, environmental sustainability and circular economy processes, to move towards a competitive, digitalized and climate-neutral industry.

In addition, measures will be adopted to support Spain's shipbuilding industry by including the promotion of Spanish companies' high value-added skills and their high degree of technological development in the planning of international deployments.



#### Bodies involved

Ministry of Industry and Tourism.



#### Progress indicator

List of projects associated with the PERTE for the shipbuilding industry, indicating the number of projects, financial allocation and effective development.



# 13

## Action 13:

### Encouraging the identification of areas for innovation in the maritime sector

Initiatives proactively seeking opportunities to foster innovation will be encouraged. This is vital for the future, taking into account the progress of technological developments and the continued creation of new areas of conservation, exploitation and use of the sea and its resources.

To this end, Spain must develop a framework for the funding and promotion of private and public institutions that generate R&D&i applicable to maritime areas, and for collaboration between them. Along these lines, Spain's maritime interests must be included in every public funding strategy for R&D&i. The use of mechanisms such as innovative public procurement as a tool to accelerate innovation in the sector as defined in this strategy will also be promoted.

In particular, measures will be adopted so that the maritime sector may contribute to Spain's social transformation and economic growth by way of improvements in digital connectivity, cybersecurity and the deployment of artificial intelligence and advanced telecommunications technologies.



## Bodies involved

Ministries, especially the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, through the Centre for Industrial Technological Development, and the administrations of Spain's coastal Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities with powers in matters of maritime security.



## Progress indicator

List of initiatives undertaken by each ministry and by each administration of Spain's Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities with the participation of private entities in matters of shared interest as part of innovative public procurement.

## 14

**Acción 14:****Deepening relationships between public authorities, the private sector, knowledge centres and R&D&I generators**

An increase in formal ties with the private sector will be encouraged with a view to the key contribution that this sector could make to attaining goals in maritime security, without prejudice to obligations and liabilities established by law. Its purpose is cooperation, dialogue and strategic shared risk and opportunity analysis, which will guide the comprehensive line of action of all national actors in this field.

In particular, in order to comply effectively with one of this strategy's priorities, which is protecting merchant, fishing and pleasure fleets of national interest, it is essential to promote active communication between public authorities and the maritime industry to channel initiatives such as regulatory improvements and joint participation in matters of shared interest.

This will also include the acquisition of greater knowledge of factors which could affect the assessment of risks, or the state's adequate response to situations of special interest for national security. A third field of action is the participation of private entities in drills. Based on different scenarios, this will enable the preparation of different procedures and protocols to improve mutual support in addressing those situations which may arise.



## Bodies involved

Ministries and the administrations of Spain's coastal Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities with powers in matters of maritime security.



## Progress indicator

List of initiatives undertaken by each ministry, and by each administration of Spain's coastal Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities with the participation of private entities in matters of shared interest.

# 15

## Action 15:

### Promoting culture and communication on the maritime environment as a strategic national interest

Collaboration will be encouraged in order to raise awareness of maritime security and of its significance for the safety and well-being of Spain and its citizens. Maritime culture will be promoted and an increase sought in the take-up of maritime professions. Measures will be adopted to build knowledge and a comprehensive vision of the sea and its physical, legal and social characteristics, which is essential for all those involved in managing relevant activities. Mutual understanding of responsibilities, powers, capabilities and ties with the sea will help to increase the synergy needed to strengthen the state's capacity.

Strategic communication by public authorities will be encouraged in order to improve the public's awareness of the importance of the sea for Spain. Moreover, this measure will contribute to strengthening comprehensive response capabilities in the face of risks and threats to Spain's national security. Raising awareness of the importance of the maritime sector in Spain forms part of the efforts to build a national security culture.



#### Bodies involved

Ministries and the administrations of Spain's coastal Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities with powers in matters of maritime security.



#### Progress indicator

List of initiatives promoting maritime culture carried out by each ministry, and each administration of Spain's Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities.

List of measures adopted by each ministry, and by each administration of Spain's Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities to improve strategic communication on matters of maritime security.

## MEASURES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE THIRD STRATEGIC GOAL:



To enhance the safety of the seas

# 16

## Action 16:

Contributing to the joint efforts in maritime security of international organizations of which Spain is a member

Spain will actively contribute to the intensification of operations at sea as part of the international initiatives of the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy, as well as within the framework of the North Atlantic Alliance's naval position, both as a specific party within NATO's naval deployments and operations, and in specific operations for maritime security approved by the North Atlantic Council. Moreover, the difficulty of attribution in the case of actions against international submarine cables which cross the high seas, and the vulnerability of these cables, necessitates enhanced international cooperation in the surveillance and protection of said cables. This matter has led to the proposal of new initiatives in this field, especially at NATO.



### Bodies involved

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; Ministry of Defence.



### Progress indicator

List of activities and specific operations in which Spain has taken part, as well as the degree of contribution to international efforts in maritime security, especially as part of the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy and of NATO.



## Action 17:

Protecting lines of communication and fishing grounds in international waters of strategic interest for Spain

By way of naval presence in international waters of strategic interest for Spain, we will act to protect sea lines of communication from threats against maritime traffic and fishing including any kind of crime committed at sea.



## Bodies involved

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of the Interior.



## Progress indicator

Spanish deployment of units in geographic areas listed in this *2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security* as maritime areas of interest.



# 18

## Action 18:

### Boosting international cooperation to tackle illicit trafficking by sea and cross-border crime

Illicit trafficking by sea and cross-border crime are threats to national security characterized by close links between transnational criminal networks. Fighting these networks therefore requires a big effort in international cooperation, as well as appropriate exchanges of information between states and international organizations.

In particular, as a Member State, Spain seeks deeper cooperation mechanisms for European Union agencies in order to tackle significant challenges together at European level, including organized crime, irregular migratory flows and IUU fishing, based on principles of solidarity and shared responsibility between states. In addition, in matters of non-proliferation, Spain will contribute to the Proliferation Security Initiative.



## Bodies involved

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.



## Progress indicator

List of cooperation initiatives and operations within the framework of European Union agencies in the fight against drug trafficking on the high seas, cooperation in matters of irregular migration by sea and in the fight against IUU fishing. Moreover, there will be reports on the degree of activity in initiatives aimed at stopping the transport of weapons of mass destruction by sea in the framework of the *Proliferation Security Initiative*.

# 19

## Action 19:

### Strengthening cooperative security in international areas of strategic interest for Spain

Public authorities with powers relating to the seas will carry out operations to strengthen maritime capabilities in third countries. The aims of these activities may be complementary. Coordination of all these activities under the principle of unity of action or direction in order to design and plan said activities is an essential requirement to obtain greater efficiency in the use of resources and more effective foreign action in this field.



#### Bodies involved

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of the Interior.



#### Progress indicator

List of collective security initiatives carried out in third countries, both as part of international organizations and bilaterally.



## Action 20:

Deepening counterterrorist and judicial collaboration among EU Member States, as well as with third states

Counterterrorist and judicial collaboration will be reinforced, not only between EU Member States, but also with third states, using a multidisciplinary and pre-emptive approach.



### Bodies involved

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Defence.



### Progress indicator

Number of multilateral and bilateral agreements signed by Spain in matters of counterterrorist and judicial collaboration. List of multinational counterterrorist operations in the field of maritime security in which Spanish units have taken part.



## Action 21:

### Contribute to a cleaner ocean

We will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water), aimed at conserving the coast, the seas and oceans through the adoption of prevention, preparation and response measures. These include the use of drone aircraft equipped with cutting-edge sensors.

Moreover, plans to manage protected maritime areas will be drafted, in order to guarantee the conservation of the natural assets that led to these spaces obtaining protection. Along the same line of preventive action, we will revise and update marine strategies with an approach combining different sector-based policies, which include the circular economy and activities to increase knowledge and awareness in order to maintain the good environmental status of Spanish waters.



### Bodies involved

Ministry of Defence; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility; Ministry of Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; the administrations of Spain's coastal Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities.



### Progress indicator

The number of prevention plans launched for the conservation of natural spaces; the number of revised maritime strategies and the degree of fulfilment of SDG 14; and the number of management plans for protected marine spaces.

22

## Action 22:

Review of available information and studies relating to the impact of climate change on economic sectors linked to the sea. Map of effects and impacts

Available information and studies on the possible impacts of climate change on economic sectors linked to the sea will be examined with regard to variables such as the rise in sea levels and extreme weather events in coastal areas. Impacts and prospective measures will be reviewed in relation to essential infrastructure such as ports, energy generation, tourist and industrial facilities, pipes, treatment and discharge infrastructure in inhabited areas, regasification terminals and desalination plants.

Maps will be drawn showing affected areas and listing possible measures for each type of facility and problem identified, such as moving facilities, special maritime protection measures, or welfare initiatives in affected areas.

## Bodies involved



Ministries, especially the Ministry of Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, and the administrations of Spain's coastal Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities with powers in matters of maritime security.

## Progress indicator



List of existing information, studies and papers. Classes of impacts. Affected vulnerable economic sectors. Possible measures and type thereof. Initial planning. Maps of affected areas. This Action must provide sufficient information for a 20-year forecast, and adequate medium- and long-term planning 20 años vista, y la adecuada planificación a medio y largo plazo.





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